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City University of New York, Ph.D., 1976
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THE REPERTORY THEATER OF LINCOLN CENTER:

AESTHETICS AND ECONOMICS, 1960-1973

by

SARALEIGH CARNEY

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Theatre in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York.

1976

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

27 April 1976
date

Glenn M. Loney
Chairman of Examining Committee

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date

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PREFACE

The financial support of arts organizations in the United States has become a matter of public concern in the last twenty years. The age of the beneficent private philanthropist, who could provide the necessary funds from his personal fortune, has passed, but the age of public subsidy has not yet arrived. Thus, an increasing number of arts organizations are experiencing deficit gaps each season as the funds raised from income and contributions fall short of actual operating expenses.

The long-term impact of this situation on the arts in America is impossible to predict accurately, but the short-term effects appear ominous. The reduction of activity within an organization and increased pressure to provide programs which will meet general approval are the most apparent consequences. Less obvious but perhaps more harmful is the requirement that an arts administrator spend a significant portion of his time and energy securing support for the organization.

As the budget crunch becomes increasingly severe, the artist can find himself in an untenable position, compromising artistic ideals to ensure survival while being continually admonished about the practical realities of balancing expenditures and income. At some point, conflict

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between artistic principle and economic pressure can create a crisis. The administrator discovers that there are simply no more acceptable compromises or cutbacks; the board of directors realizes that insolvency and bankruptcy are unavoidable without a reduction in expenditures. Until that point is reached, there can usually be some mutual accommodation between artistic policy and the balance sheet; however, such maneuvering can finally debilitate the organization rather than ensuring its survival.

The Repertory Theater of Lincoln Center managed to pay its bills by reducing production costs and thus maintaining its operational budget at a constant level despite inflation and rising costs of labor and materials. This artistic belt-tightening preserved the theater at the expense of its growth and experimentation. The following study is an examination of this policy, its sources and its consequences. The theater's history was marked by a series of crises, some caused by the common economic burdens borne by performing arts organizations in this country, others caused by the cultural complex in which it was housed. The result of inadequate funding for artistic aspirations and performance at the Repertory Theater is sobering: the theater died.

Previous examinations of this theater's dilemma are largely restricted to magazine and newspaper articles which berate its artistic inadequacies without considering the financial context within which the theater was forced to

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operate. More significantly, little attention has been focused on the Lincoln Center environment. The key to the story of this theater is its relationship with Lincoln Center, Inc., and its dependency upon that parent organization. Lincoln Center, Inc., recruited the theater's board of directors, hired its original management, supervised the building of its theater, and remained influential in its affairs until the organization disbanded. Thus, the theater must be examined as part of the Lincoln Center complex, for the theater was not created ex nihilo, but grew out of a network of philanthropic and cultural associations that were instrumental in creating Lincoln Center itself. For the Repertory Theater, Lincoln Center was never a mere landlord.

It appears that organizations housed in marble palaces are particularly vulnerable to financial crises because of their high overhead. The constituents of Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts must pay substantial fees for maintenance and security, in addition to covering the bills for performance. Writing six years ago, Amyas Ames, Chairman of Lincoln Center, Inc., stated, "If we compare the total cost of heating, lighting, air conditioning, and attending the twelve theaters (13,800 seats) that make up the Center with the cost to the constituents in their old buildings, we find at least $1,500,000 in higher costs at Lincoln Center."[1]

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[1]Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts: Summary Report, 1956-1969 (New York: Lincoln Center, Inc., 1969), p. 40.

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The Repertory Theater, as a constituent of the center, paid its share of the high maintenance costs while trying to attract funding from patrons who had not already been wooed and won by its prestigious neighbors and from a public that looked at its architectural structure and was skeptical of its need. In July 1973, it managed to complete its tenth season and close its books as a new tenant was found for its building. It is possible that the theater was the weakest link in the Lincoln Center chain. Created by the cultural complex, it lacked an established artistic reputation and a tradition of financial support. Its venerable colleagues arrived with both; now, however, even they face unprecedented deficits, and extraordinary measures are being taken. In 1974, the Metropolitan Opera named Anthony Bliss, a former president of its board of directors, as executive director to deal with an anticipated $9-million deficit; in 1975 the post of managing director was abolished and Bliss became the final arbiter of artistic policy as well. In 1973 the City Center was unable to meet its deficit and announced that "we cannot live on love alone."

The optimistically viewed future of the arts in America, regularly invoked while Lincoln Center was being built, has not materialized. We already knew about deficits in the early 1960's, but the performing arts had just begun to tap new sources of funding. Alvin Toffler wrote that while organizations cried "crisis," they were lengthening their seasons, increasing the number of performances given,

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and developing as beneficiaries of foundation grants and corporate patronage. "The truth is that although we Americans go about financing our culture in ways that are splendidly haphazard, we are, in fact, financing it better than ever before."[2]

This haphazard support is no longer so splendid. Seasons are curtailed (Joffrey Ballet); seasons are cancelled (Dallas Symphony); new productions are postponed (Metropolitan Opera); and organizations collapse (National Ballet in Washington, D.C.). For these organizations, such measures do not reflect lack of audiences but lack of that margin of support between paid bills and accumulating indebtedness.

In the late 1950's and early 1960's, arts organizations did benefit from a shift in support priorities. Philanthropic interests which before had been largely devoted to education and health then branched out into the arts and humanities. Of special significance was the increased support from the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations. Before 1966, the Ford Foundation made its major contributions to higher education, hospitals, and medical schools, while its Humanities division, headed by W. McNeil Lowry, became a major force in arts funding, particularly in regional theater. After 1966, with McGeorge Bundy as president, the

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[2]Alvin Toffler, The Culture Consumers (New York: Vintage Books, 1973), p. 155. This work was originally published in 1964 and reissued in 1973.

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Foundation took an increased interest in international problems of population growth, family planning, and food shortages and in the national concerns of poverty, race, and urban living. "Funds for the humanities and the arts have risen from 3 percent to 16 percent and fallen to 8 percent" in the last five years.[3] Similar action has been taken by the Rockefeller Foundation. Under its new president, John Knowles, the Foundation has reduced its arts budget by almost 50 percent "in response to a reordering of priorities."[4]

The economics of performing arts organizations have been analyzed in three extensive studies. In 1965, the Rockefeller Panel published The Performing Arts: Problems and Prospects; in 1966, the Twentieth Century Fund issued Performing Arts: The Economic Dilemma by William J. Baumol and William G. Bowen; and, in 1974, the Ford Foundation presented The Finances of the Performing Arts. Each study has noted the financial plight of the performing arts, a chronic condition of income from the box office rarely meeting the cost of performance.

Here, the basic elements of modern economic theory,

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[3]"Ford Foundation to Slash Grants Over Next Four Years," New York Times, December 15, 1974, Section 1, p. 30; also "Ford Foundation Weighs Reducing Grants by 50%," New York Times, September 22, 1974, p. 37.

[4]Robert Brustein, "The Coming Crisis in the Arts," New York Times, September 15, 1974, Section 2, p. 12.

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in which growth is financed through increased efficiency and productivity, do not operate. The performing arts are labor-intensive, requiring an irreducible number of performers; "the costs, primarily wages, are set by the cost level of the economy; the earned income is limited by the inherent limit on the number of performances live performers can give and the number of seats in the halls."[5] Certain minimum requirements are built into each of the arts, and they cannot be altered by cost analysis, time-motion studies, or suggested personnel reductions.

> Whereas the amount of labor necessary to produce a typical manufactured product has constantly declined since the beginning of the industrial revolution, it requires about as many minutes for Richard II to tell his "sad stories of the death of kings" as it did on the stage of the Globe Theatre. Human ingenuity has devised ways to reduce the labor necessary to produce an automobile, but no one has yet succeeded in decreasing the human effort expended at a live performance of a 45 minute Schubert quartet much below a total of three man-hours.[6]

What these studies have not been able to tell us is what must be done to ensure the survival of the arts, other than raising more money. For example, the Ford study covers the period from 1965 to 1971, charting the pattern of income and expenditure of arts organizations collectively, as well as separately by art form. Based on statistical patterns

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[5]The Ford Foundation, The Finances of the Performing Arts (New York: Ford Foundation, 1974), Part I, p. 9.

[6]William J. Baumol and William G. Bowen, Performing Arts: The Economic Dilemma (Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1967), p. 164.

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in those six seasons, the study predicts the effects of organizational growth and inflation on financing the arts. "What this weighty, massive 446-page document manages to say . . . is that if you think the performing arts are in trouble now, just wait until 1981 . . ." when the increase in the earnings gap is estimated to be as great as six times its current level.[7] The earnings gap, the deficit, or, more simply, those bills which must be paid even when expenditures outdistance income, is not a recent phenomenon. In simpler, less inflationary times, deficits were regularly covered by the patronage of wealthy individuals who adopted a symphony or an opera as a favorite charity. Although the Ford study states that contributions from private individuals remain the preponderant source of funding, the increased size of deficits has forced many organizations to seek multiple contributors rather than rely on a single patron. Those organizations which did not broaden their base of support, such as the Harkness Ballet, have found their existence threatened by the fluctuating fortunes of that single patron.

Labor costs have also increased as artists demand higher salary levels, job security, and a guaranteed season. "The arts have always operated at a deficit in America. The deficit has been made up by the artists themselves. Now

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[7]Brustein, "The Coming Crisis in the Arts," p. 1.

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they are attempting to shift the burden."[8] That attempt has been only partially successful, and artists' salaries remain low. According to Eric Larrabee, the executive director of the New York State Council on the Arts, "Artists as professionals continue to be underpaid almost beyond belief, at levels which would horrify a self-respecting garbage collector."[9]

Unable to reduce labor costs or increase productivity, the arts administrator must compete for the funds available. The decrease in foundation support has not been mitigated by the expected increase in arts funding by corporate and governmental sources. Corporate support remains a largely untapped reservoir with such funds usually aimed at public service presentations in the media, much in the tradition of Texaco's sponsorship of Metropolitan Opera broadcasts. Government support is hampered by legislative critics such as New York State Senator Edwyn E. Mason. "I have no opposition to the arts," Mr. Mason said, "but the average taxpayer should not be required to spend money for ballet dancers and what passes for modern art. Many of the people who are employed are not productive people. We should send them back out where they can earn an honest living."[10]

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[8]Michael Straight, New Republic, March 13, 1965, cited by William Herman, "Theater as Enterprise," TDR, X, 1 (Fall, 1965), p. 112.

[9]Charles Michener, "The Money Chase," Newsweek, December 24, 1973, p. 86.

[10]"Arts Council Plans Direct Subsidies," New York Times, February 25, 1974, p. 20.

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On the federal level, government support represents a per capita expenditure of only twenty-nine cents, which is less than the amount spent by any other major country, including Canada whose per capita contribution is $1.40.[11] As Brustein cynically notes:

> Under the leadership of Nancy Hanks, appropriations for the arts have grown from $2.5 million in fiscal 1965 to $72 million in fiscal 1975, and there is every reason to hope that if the increase continues at the present rate, the contribution of the United States to the arts may soon be equal to that of the city of Vienna.[12]

Thus, the potential sources so confidently predicted even ten years ago are not available. Currently, support for the arts can be more aptly described as makeshift than as "magnificently haphazard," as Toffler characterized it.[13] A research report issued in 1975 by the National Committee for Cultural Resources recommends that state support of the arts be increased to:

> . . . an average of no less than 10 percent of the operating costs of [each state's] arts organizations and that Federal aid should provide an average of no less than 10 percent of the total cost of arts organizations throughout the country. . . . For the National Endowment for the Arts, this would translate into an appropriation of no less than $225 million in 1976-77.[14]

Until this level of public support is reached, however, the arts organizations in this country will continue in their annual pursuit of funding.

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[11]Charles Michener, "The Money Chase," p. 92.

[12]Brustein, "The Coming Crisis in the Arts," p. 12.

[13]See note 2.

[14]National Report on the Arts (New York: National Committee for Cultural Resources, 1975), p. 5.

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This pursuit is particularly difficult for the new or developing organization, which ironically may have been formed during the years when adequate funding seemed to be on the horizon, because valid artistic goals and demonstrated need are not enough to secure major grants.

> Among the tricks is knowing how to play ball with trustees, with politicians, with foundations. Nobody, after all, gives money for nothing. . . . [The position of artistic director] becomes a highly institutional job requiring political dexterity, trustee-juggling, foundation infighting, tea-time community relations and, not least, boxing out the other [organizations] in the power pattern . . .[15]

Such maneuvering rarely captures the imagination of the American public. Deficit financing, or the art of attracting a dollar to cover the one you have already spent, is an abstraction even to many audience members. Its reality is understood, however, by the administrators, who play the subsidy game, and those they employ, who depend upon their success. This study focuses on one arts organization within a large cultural center, which ultimately closed because it did not attract major foundation support. However, at least three factors in the Repertory Theater's history are shared by other organizations: an artistic policy that could not be implemented fully because of inadequate funding; the burden of a costly physical plant which depleted those funds available; and the demand for a high and consistent level of accomplishment which is more applicable to an assembly line than to the performing arts.

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[15]Martin Gottfried, A Theater Divided (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1967), p. 105

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Because Lincoln Center, Inc., was a significant force in the Repertory Theater's history, chapter one deals with the attitude toward the arts in the early 1950's and the important figures and organizations which were influential in the creation of the cultural center, and chapter two examines the development of the Lincoln Center idea under the leadership of John D. Rockefeller III. Within this framework, the concept of a repertory theater was developed, its artistic leadership chosen, and its physical plant designed, and this process is described in chapters three and four. Chapter five follows the theater under the direction of Robert Whitehead and Elia Kazan from the selection of a company through its first season in the ANTA-Washington Square Theater, and chapter six treats the second season and the events which led to a search for new artistic leadership. The selection of Jules Irving and Herbert Blau as successors is dealt with in chapter seven, and is followed by a discussion of their joint management, the new Vivian Beaumont Theater, and Blau's resignation in chapter eight. The subsequent seasons under Irving's artistic direction are described in two chapters, chapter nine dealing largely with his artistic policy, while chapter ten emphasizes the financial aspects of the theater operation, which led first to a controversial proposal to convert the theater building to a multi-purpose facility and finally to Irving's resignation. Chapter eleven examines briefly the New York Shakespeare Festival's move to Lincoln Center

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as the theater constituent replacing the Repertory Theater, and chapter twelve summarizes the conclusions of the study.

The source material for this work is largely public record--newspaper and magazine articles, chapters in several books, and material published by Lincoln Center itself. Many of the public papers and files of the theater were donated to the New York Public Library, but their usefulness is limited as the material is unsorted and uncatalogued. My work with this material was confined to administrative records. The theater's private papers are stored by Jules Irving in some thirty banana boxes in California, and the full comparison of private fact and the public record is material for another study. While these are probably contradictory in some instances, many apparant variants were resolved in the course of interviews, and the general outline of the theater's development and of its policies seems clear.

Supplementing the public record are numerous interviews with board members, administrative and artistic personnel, and others directly involved at some point in time with the theater or with policies affecting it. I regret that I was not able to talk with several people connected with the early planning and operation of the theater. For personal reasons, Robert Whitehead, Elia Kazan, and George D. Woods declined to discuss their work. This early period is well-documented in the public record, however. Among the numerous artists who worked at the

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Repertory Theater over the ten-year period, many of those contacted proved most cooperative, but others were unwilling to be interviewed. Thus, the interviews represent those people willing to discuss their association with the theater as members of the acting company, production staff, or administrators. Understandably, some were willing to speak for attribution while others were not. Attributable interviews are listed in the bibliography. Also, because it is not within the scope of this study to treat particular productions in detail but only as they related to or illuminated a particular policy, the selection of interview subjects was weighted toward those who were actively involved in on-going policy decisions.

I am grateful to the theater's staff for their candor and their kindness during my association with the Repertory Theater as Carl Weber's assistant on The Miser and for the opportunity to work on and observe subsequent productions in the 1969-70 and 1971-72 seasons. I am particularly indebted to Frank Bayer, Susan Bloch, and Douglas Schmidt for my practical introduction to the profound effect of inadequate funds on artistic decisions.

Henry Hewes and Robert Goldberg provided encouragement and support for the initial research as well as aid in obtaining several interviews. To those who agreed to be interviewed, I am indebted. Their recollections, observations and assessments of accomplishments as well as disappointments gave a personal vivacity to the inert material

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of newsprint and balance sheets. In particular, Jules Irving, Robert Hoguet, and John Lahr were most generous with their time. The staff of the Theatre Collection of the Library and Museum of the Performing Arts was invariably helpful in locating materials in storage and making them available for my use. Finally, I wish to acknowledge the assistance and guidance of Professors Glenn Loney, Albert Bermel, and Stanley Waren during the writing of this study. To Judith McNally, my debt is both personal and professional: for her support during the dissertation process and for her meticulous efforts as liaison in New York City during the preparation of the final typescript.

Because this study does not attempt an encyclopedic view of the considerable body of work produced by the Repertory Theater, the individual contributions of those associated with the theater could not be adequately indicated. However, it is hoped that it will provide a corrective to the popular, but often apocryphal, explanations of the theater's artistic and financial difficulties.

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FOR MICHAEL

AND

TO ALL THE CARNEYS

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CHAPTER ONE

> Lincoln Center was conceived in what I call "the golden Eisenhower years." -- Clarke Coggeshall, President, Repertory Theater of Lincoln Center Board.
>
> The great thing about the fifties was that nothing happened. -- Dick Clark on nostalgia, WCBS News, Sept. 9, 1974

In 1952, following the election of Eisenhower to the presidency, Charles Wilson, former president of General Motors, stated before the Senate Armed Forces Committee that for years "he had assumed that 'what was good for our country was good for General Motors, and vice versa.'" He was to be Eisenhower's Secretary of Defense, and his remarks reflected the attitudes of a Cabinet, characterized by a pundit as "eight millionaires and a plumber."[1]

Secretary Wilson's comment soon was condensed to "what is good for General Motors is good for America," and the country had a slogan that echoed back nearly thirty years to Calvin Coolidge: "The business of America is business." For two groups, Eisenhower's election had symbolic overtones. Val Jamison, a professor at the University of Utah, expressed the feeling of New Deal intellectuals

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[1]Eric F. Goldman, The Crucial Decade--And After: America, 1945-1960 (New York: Vintage Books, 1960), p. 239.

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saying, "It's not just that a great man has been defeated. It's that a whole era is ended, is totally repudiated, a whole era of brains and literacy and exciting thinking."[2] Businessmen, who had felt their ideas neglected and their profession disdained in that same era, saw the election as an opportunity for them and their philosophy to influence public policy, as "many a member of upper-income America celebrated the end of twenty hateful years."[3] In Adlai Stevenson's phrase, the New Dealers had been replaced by the car dealers.[4]

However, the car dealers were "decidedly not businessmen of the 1920's type, [but] part of the new more adaptable managerial class," that was neither conservative nor liberal but "practical."[5] American ideology has long had two components: practicality and a messianic vision of democracy and reform. The latter, however, has seldom been sufficiently appreciated by the rest of the world. Now, practicality--"technology, skill--everything that is suggested by the significant Americanism, 'know-how,'" reasserted its claim.[6] Practicality's most impressive product, consumer and distributor was business. To the magnate, "business in America at its highest levels appealed

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[2]Ibid., p. 235.

[3]Ibid., p. 239, 236.

[4]Ibid., p. 269.

[5]Ibid., p. 269.

[6]Richard Hofstadter, Anti-intellectualism in American Life (New York: Vintage Books, 1963), p. 238.

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not merely to greed and the lust for power but to the imagination; alluring to the builder, the gamester and the ruler in man, it offered more sport than hunting and more power than politics."[7]

With Eisenhower in the White House, political power was available also.

> An amiable, well-intentioned President was taking his model from leadership of pre-F.D.R. days. Government was "teamwork." You got together a team, primarily of executives from corporations, and put them to work on their specialties. You struck up cordial relations with Congress. Then the President presided over the ensuing co-operation much like a constitutional monarch and the nation moved gently, sensibly toward sound, economical, thoroughly American ways.[8]

"Sensible, sound, economical"--these were the keynotes of "the Eisenhower equilibrium,"[9] the "golden Eisenhower years," a period of economic prosperity and of the cold war which, while it threatened, paid so well that the growth and power of the military-industrial complex were based on its continuation.

That continuation forced recognition here and abroad of the United States' role as a world leader. Isolationist withdrawal between two oceans was not possible once armaments made distances irrelevant. The United States was now seen as the primary opponent of Communist expansion, and the outcome was sufficiently in doubt that no weapons were despised. American culture, previously scorned as arriviste

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[7]Ibid., p. 50.

[8]Goldman, p. 257.

[9]Goldman, Title of Ch. 12.

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and derivative, compared to Europe's traditional leadership in the arts, was viewed now as a potential ideological asset.

In addition, the Depression and the European political climate in the 1930's had reversed the trend of cultural expatriation. American writers, artists and intellectuals came home as "the United States ceased to be a place men fled from and became a place they fled to."[10] America--"a country without monuments or ruins . . . the country of those who fled from the past"--was a haven. While Europe's cultured civilization had witnessed the rise of Fascism, America's lack of antiquarian relics seemed to offer a cultural frontier in which creativity would be unhampered by mere tradition.[11]

Nor was the potential connection between world power and cultural ascendancy ignored.

> In 1947, the year when America came to Europe's rescue with the Marshall plan, Edmund Wilson, the least provincial of writers, found it possible to say upon returning from Europe that "the United States at the present time is politically more advanced than any other part of the world," and to speak of our twentieth-century culture as "a revival of the democratic creativeness which presided at the birth of the Republic and flourished up to the Civil War."[12]

Therefore, it was not long before we were exporting culture as well as industrial materials to rebuild Europe. In the 1920's an artist booked passage for Europe to escape American provincialism and to experience the ferment which

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[10]Hofstadter, p. 414.

[11]Ibid., p. 238.

[12]Ibid., p. 415.

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cosmopolitan traditions offered; in the 1950's artists were off to Europe again, but now under the sponsorship of the American National Theater and Academy, which became the organizational arm of the State Department's cultural exchange program in 1954; on its own, ANTA had been sponsoring such tours since 1949. It was a cultural crusade, the sort that Secretary of State John Foster Dulles called for. "'What we need to do,' Dulles declared, 'is to recapture the kind of crusading spirit of the early days of the Republic when we were certain that we had something better than anyone else and we knew the rest of the world needed it and wanted it and we were going to carry it around the world.'"[13]

The importance of culture in the cold war conflict was probably best illustrated by the emotional response on both sides to the epithet, "cultural barbarians." Pravda published an attack by a Russian writer on Dulles for reportedly calling the Soviet people cultural barbarians at a N.A.T.O. meeting, although Dulles denied having said it. The Pravda article compared Dulles to the supposedly cultured elite during the reign of the Czar, saying "Cultural cannibals have done away with culture in Washington," and compared the country of Senators McCarthy and Knowland to that of Franklin, Twain and Dreiser. Then, pointing to our problems of illiteracy, slums and juvenile crime as proof of the decay of American culture, the article suggested that

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[13]Goldman, p. 250.

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Americans refrain from attacks on the quality of other cultures until their own house was in better order.[14]

For all the conviction of the crusading spirit, the United States was still quick to take offense at criticism of the quality of culture that democracy had produced, possibly because "cultural superiority" was not as easily quantified and demonstrated as industrial, economic, and military achievements. What was remembered of the Pravda report was that we had been called cultural barbarians, and the response of ANTA (in its description of its International Exchange Program under the auspices of the State Department) is typical: "Now at last we have the means to counteract the propaganda attacks of our enemies who claim we are cultural barbarians. The emissaries who have already gone forth under I.E.P. auspices have returned with glowing reports of success--both as performers and as representatives of the American way of life."[15]

American businessmen also supported these cultural exports, both financially and philosophically. Urbane, well-travelled men, they found it annoying to hear the United States described still as the bastion of Babbittry and materialism. "'When one travels, one so often hears it said that the emphasis in our country is on the material

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[14]"Moscow Charges U. S. Blocks Talks," New York Times, May 22, 1955, pp. 1, 13.

[15]ANTA Twentieth Anniversary Presentation (New York: ANTA, 1955), p. 26.

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side.'"[16] "Our country has often been cited by friend, unfortunately, as well as foe, as a land which is only concerned with materialistic values, a place which gives small and insignificant attention to things of the spirit and things of the intellect."[17]

Abroad, New York City was seen as a "No-Man's Land as far as its cultural reputation was concerned . . . Most visitors simply saw New York as a financial institution--it was profits, it was money, money, money. And this was wrong."[18] The country needed a new image with respect to the arts. "Like so many other things, we Americans have taken our cultural activities for granted. We haven't thought of them as positive, dynamic, and essential assets in the great and dangerous international game that we must play today."[19]

Culture was also seen as a potent force in domestic life:

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[16]Seymour Peck, "A Rockefeller Enters 'Show Biz,'" New York Times, November 18, 1956, Section 6, p. 60, quoting John D. Rockefeller III.

[17]Testimony of William Schuman, Transcript of Public Hearing Before the City Planning Commission in the Matter of the Lincoln Square Urban Renewal Plan and Project, September 11, 1957 (New York: Department of City Planning, 1957), p. 66. [hereafter referred to as City Planning Hearing.]

[18]Ralph G. Martin, Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1971), p. 18, quoting Clarence Francis, Chairman of the Board of General Foods.

[19]The Performing Arts, I, 1 (March 12, 1959), p. 3, quoting C. D. Jackson, publisher of Time, from a speech given at the University Club on January 7, 1959.

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> The arts were no longer regarded as merely elitist. The view that they were instead populist and would solve ills in the social order took on an almost doctrinal urgency [inspiring in the early 1960's] such now-discarded cliches as "cultural upsurge" or "cultural boom."[20]

The Affluent Society gave Americans more money, leisure, and education, and the impact of this on the arts was seen as generally positive. John D. Rockefeller III:

> . . . observed that, "with the new leisure in this country people have been looking increasingly to the arts as a means of attaining satisfaction, of using free time..... [This contributes] to the health and happiness of people because art is one of the basic things people are striving for."[21]

Alvin Toffler, in his book The Culture Consumers, codified the "cultural explosion."

> The American attitude toward the arts has completed a 180-degree turn since the end of World War II. From one of apathy, indifference, and even hostility, it has become one of eager, if sometimes ignorant, enthusiasm. The distance traveled, and the speed of movement, have been startling, even in an age of rapidly shifting values. . . .
>
> Americans have not only, by and large, moved past the subsistence level, they have been changing their entire psychological attitude toward work and leisure. For along with having more money they are beginning to rethink the Puritan ethic that insisted on work and frowned on play, relaxation, and the muses. With the declining need to work people are liberated to spend, enjoy sensual satisfaction, to search for new and different delights--and they have increasing time to do so. . . .
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> Today it might be said that the first drudgery of providing for the material well-being of most Americans is also, historically speaking, pretty well over, and

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[20] The Finances of the Performing Arts, Part I, p. 21.

[21] Peck, "Show Biz," New York Times, November 18, 1956, Section 6, p. 62.

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> that a maturing nation is beginning to concern itself with the quality of existence. This is the meaning of the rise of the culture consumers.[22]

Enthusiasts like Toffler merrily cited statistics showing "this new appetite for the arts" in classical record sales, in the "paperback explosion," and attendance at live performances.[23] Subsequent analysis of these statistics shows that the "increase in population and per capita income [gave] the appearance of increased interest in the arts, but the percentage of people interested in the arts had not grown significantly. . . . [However] it did not matter that the 'cultural explosion' did not exist;" the appearance of increased interest was sufficient for those charged with planning new facilities to meet this demand.[24]

To create "quality" culture that would be accessible and "democratic" was a heady challenge. With American resources, know-how, and "the remarkable progress we have already made," it was surely possible that the foundation was being laid for the artistic flowering that would express America's cultural maturity while recognizing the classics that America had already created in literature, art, music, drama and dance.[25] "In the absence of either a strong hereditary aristocracy or state patronage," corporate wealth

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[22]Toffler, pp. 13, 44, 231.

[23]Ibid., pp. 15-16.

[24]Joseph Wesley Zeigler, Regional Theatre: The Revolutionary Stage (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1973), p. 63.

[25]Toffler, p. 230.

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was among the resources that cultural advocates counted on from American business and its top executives.[26]

> Sensitive of their reputation, fearful and resentful of criticism, often arrogant in their power, they can hardly help but be aware that the patronage of learning and art will add to their repute. To speak less cynically, they are also heirs of traditional moral canons of stewardship; they often feel a responsibility to do good with their money.[27]

However, tensions between the private patron and the object of his beneficence often remained.

> The contemporary businessman, who is disposed to think of himself as a man of practical achievement and a national benefactor, shouldering enormous responsibilities, [as a patron often feels subjected to the impracticality and] hostility of flighty men who have never met a payroll. . . . [On the other hand,] the intellectual is well aware of the elaborate apparatus which the businessman uses to mold our civilization to his purposes and his standards. The businessman is everywhere; he fills the coffers of the political parties; he owns or controls the influential press and the agencies of mass culture; he sits on university boards of trustees and local school boards; he mobilizes and finances cultural vigilantes; his voice dominates the rooms in which the real decisions are made.[28]

However, hostility from intellectuals and others dependent on a patron's largesse seldom daunts a businessman, especially an American businessman. Therefore, what culture needed was what American business needed.

> In the words of Devereux C. Josephs, former chairman of the New York Life Insurance Company, and a member of several cultural boards, arts organizations can profitably borrow from business "many procedures which have been tested out in the pragmatic arena of our competitive society--accounting, budget-making, managerial responsibility, organizational structure, building maintenance. . . ."[29]

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[26]Hofstadter, p. 244.

[27]Ibid., p. 236.

[28]Ibid., p. 235

[29]Toffler, p. 103.

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And business was about to seize an opportunity to show the performing arts the advantages of pragmatism.

> We are a people whose history has made us the land of the swift, total solution, brought about by ourselves alone. . . . No wonder our movies have a happy ending, and in ninety minutes. No wonder we are the only country in the world that has produced a popular saying like: "The difficult we do immediately; the impossible takes a little [more] time."[30]

Hugh Hardy later commented,

> The construction of a cultural center represents a vast marshalling of the resources of the mass society. Representing millions of dollars, years of effort, and layers of technological expertise, it is not surprising that this [twentieth] century architectural phenomenon perpetuates the corporate norm. These complexes are not the expression of personal choice. They do not represent the immediacy of an individual idea. They are raised to perpetuate cultural values most commonly held to be good--those of established value and taste.[31]

Therefore, the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, Inc., would become, it was hoped, a model of organizational planning and managerial efficiency as well as "'a symbol of American cultural maturity, affirming for people everywhere our faith in the life of the spirit . . .'" and helping "fulfill some of the needs of an anxious age."[32]

However, Lincoln Center was to be more than a practical exercise in the cooperation of business and art.

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[30]Goldman, p. 113.

[31]"The Overpermanent Architecture," Theatre I (New York: Drama Book Specialists, 1969), p. 15.

[32]John D. Rockefeller III, quoted in "Center Viewed as Arts Capital," New York Times, December 14, 1956, p. 62, and in Lincoln Center Summary Report 1956-1969, p. 6.

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It was a project with that crusading spirit. "'Aaron Copland said it could be a symbol of American regard for the arts.'"[33]

> America sorely needs a new, visible, artistically impeccable, majestic, cultural asset. Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts will be new. It will be visible to the people the world over. It will be artistically impeccable. It will be majestic in scope and execution, and it will be an American asset, an asset America sorely needs and of which all Americans will be proud.[34]

"'The thing that fascinated me was that New York now could be made the cultural center of the world.'"[35]

This fervor was echoed at the ground breaking on May 14, 1959. President Eisenhower said, "Here will develop a mighty influence for peace and understanding throughout the world," while Robert Moses noted, "Here we stake our claim that New York will become the World Center of the Performing Arts as it has already become the World Political Capital [with the building of the United Nations]."[36]

In addition to all that, Lincoln Center carried at its inception the burden of predestination. In the statement made on the project before the City Planning Commission, the center was described as "a unique product of our age. It could not have been built a hundred, fifty, or even ten years ago. Only the coincidence of five developments makes it

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[33]Peck, "Show Biz," New York Times, November 18, 1956, Section 6, p. 62.

[34]C. D. Jackson quoted in The Performing Arts, I, 1 (March 12, 1959), p. 3.

[35]Clarence Francis, quoted in Martin, p. 18.

[36]The Performing Arts, I, 6 (May 22, 1959), p. 2.

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possible today." Those developments were: 1) a growing audience (using the "culture explosion" statistics on classical recordings and higher attendance at concerts than at baseball games); 2) the increase in homegrown American talent; 3) the philanthropic shift toward the arts; 4) the need for new physical buildings by the Metropolitan Opera and the New York Philharmonic; and 5) a site upon which to build.[37]

Thus, Lincoln Center was inevitable, practical, and cultural; it was ideologically democratic as a product of private initiative, socially responsive to the needs of the people for cultural enrichment, and responsibly progressive in clearing slums. It was American, an outgrowth of an era that put its confidence in business and prospered. It was practical in its concern for the economic aspects of the arts. William Schuman wrote that "what seems crucial is the development of an effective, planned and balanced union of public and private sources of subsidy."[38]

Those involved with the Lincoln Center project were confident of the ability of American know-how to solve the problems faced by cultural institutions. Schuman called the building of Lincoln Center by combined public and private

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[37]"Text of Statement by Lincoln Center for the Arts," New York Times, September 12, 1957, p. 28.

[38]William Schuman, "The Idea: 'A Creative, Dynamic Force,'" New York Times, September 23, 1962, Section 6, Part 2, p. 38. [Special Lincoln Center issue on the opening of Philharmonic Hall.]

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funds "a twentieth century American solution for financing the performing arts." Supporters felt "perhaps Lincoln Center chose the right time to be born" as public awareness increased "that art--like health, education and welfare--is becoming a public responsibility."[39]

> I am confident in our cause. Support for the arts will come from all America. It will come from individual Americans who see in them one effective means of gaining creative fulfillment. It will come from American business that accepts contributions to the arts as proper to corporate citizenship. It will come from large foundations pioneering new frontiers in philanthropy; from small foundations meeting the cultural needs of their own communities. It will come from American government because of its concern for the well-being and happiness of all of the people.
>
> But the roots of my confidence are in the sure knowledge that the arts are needed, and that the American citizen is still the man Tocqueville said he was. He will, on his own initiative, take the steps to meet this need of our day. He will act--as an individual, as a stockholder, as a foundation trustee, as a voter. His acceptance of responsibility for the arts in his community will bring the arts to a new day and make them, more than ever, a positive force in the lives of each one of us.[40]

The origins of the Lincoln Center project were given mythic qualities as the arts center was described again and again as the product of a "grand coincidence," the result of three fortuitous, separate events: 1) the creation of the Lincoln Square Slum Clearance Project, 2) an offer of land in the project to the Metropolitan Opera for a new opera

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[39]Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, 1964 (New York: Lincoln Center, Inc., 1964), p. 105.

[40]John D. Rockefeller III, "Financing the Arts," Opera News, October 29, 1960, pp. 9-11.

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house, and 3) the need of the New York Philharmonic for a new concert hall.

While these events lack apparent causal connection, the "grand coincidence" was hardly accidental; however, the phrase that emphasized a fateful culmination, overseen by the Muses no doubt, was more marketable to the press and public than the fuller story of the wielding of power by the wealthy and well-placed. There does not appear to have been a Machiavellian master plan for an arts center, but the project also didn't "just happen."

There was nothing accidental about urban renewal in New York City in the mid-1950's. Robert Moses had a "'vision of a reborn West Side, marching north from Columbus Circle'" under the auspices of Title I of the Urban Renewal Law.[41] As the "prima donna assoluta of the city's . . . program," he was the man who decided quite literally which "buildings would be torn down and it was Robert Moses who decided that the lecture halls and the dormitories and the cultural center--and new apartment houses--would be erected in their place."[42]

However, while Moses had the modus operandi for land assemblage and condemnation of entire neighborhoods, while

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[41]Robert A. Caro, The Power Broker: Robert Moses and the Fall of New York (New York: Knopf, 1974), p. 1013.

[42]Martin Mayer, Bricks, Mortar and the Performing Arts (New York: The Twentieth Century Fund, 1970), p. 16; Caro, p. 6.

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he could suggest a use for the land and reject such potential uses (and sponsors) as he opposed, even Robert Moses could not create the desire for land at Lincoln Square. That, however, was not required of him. Several institutions needed land in over-developed and over-priced mid-town Manhattan, especially at the subsidized rates made possible by Title I.

Robert Caro's study of Robert Moses is a massive and admirable work, but his assessment of Moses' role at Lincoln Center seems to attribute to Moses entirely the very concept of a cultural center. One almost expects Moses to shout "Eureka" at the conclusion:

> Sitting beside him on a dozen daises, Fordham president Father Laurence J. McGinley was repeatedly mentioning to him that the university desperately needed a midtown campus but was unable to afford midtown real estate prices; Ruth Baker Pratt and other opera lovers kept mentioning to him at dinner parties that forcing the Metropolitan Opera to perform in its ancient, inadequate building on Thirty-ninth Street was scandalous; and then he read in the papers one morning that Carnegie Hall had just formally notified the New York Philharmonic that its lease would not be renewed after 1958. From the three coincidences, his mind leapt to a grand conception: razing eighteen square blocks of slums stretching north from the Coliseum and rearing on their ruins a huge, glittering cultural center that would house--in grandeur--not only university, opera and Philharmonic but a dozen other related institutions.[43]

A more balanced view would be that Moses suggested and Rockefeller developed the concept, and this is borne out in the letter from Rockefeller accepting Moses' resignation

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[43]Caro, p. 1013.

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from the Lincoln Center Board (due to a mandatory retirement policy). It is this evaluation which Moses himself cites as his contribution to the project. "There could have been no Lincoln Center without the availability of urban renewal. Your vision in seeing these possibilities in the early planning of the Lincoln Square Urban Renewal Project places you in the ranks of the founders of Lincoln Center. . . ."[44]

By Moses' own account, his interest in the project was focused more on the structures to be built than on the constituents to be housed; he lists the components of the cultural center by building, not by occupant.[45] It is, therefore, hard to accept Caro's view that Moses proposed and Rockefeller merely disposed. The only difference in his version of the origin of Lincoln Center is that Caro would have Moses recognize the significance of the three events and conceive a cultural center in toto, while the official history gives some of the credit to others. Still, both embody the "grand coincidence" theory; sadly the events which composed it only seem to have occurred in rapid succession because they were announced that way.

The first entrant into the Lincoln Square project was Fordham. Father Laurence J. McGinley wrote to Moses expressing interest "in the possibility you suggested of

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[44]Robert Moses, Public Works: A Dangerous Trade (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1970), p. 532.

[45]Ibid., p. 449.

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erecting a new building in part of the area north of Columbus Circle to be redeveloped under Title I." By February 17, 1955, Moses had a letter of intent to build from Fordham.[46]

The New York Times didn't carry the story until April 8, 1955, probably because Moses did not release the information until then. Under the title, "Slum-Razing Plan Offers Fordham Midtown Campus," this article also included the first reference to the possible participation of the Metropolitan Opera Association, an organization with which Moses had been conducting an on-and-off affair for nearly two decades concerning a site for a new opera house. ". . . Members of the Mayor's slum committee said they would not be [averse] to bringing into the area of a new Metropolitan Opera House."[47]

Finally, it would be wonderfully conspiratorial if Moses could also have been working behind the scenes for the demolition of Carnegie Hall, but the affection of the New York Philharmonic for its home was, at the time, inconstant; the lease announcement was not made until May; and the campaign mounted to save the Hall was ultimately successful. At the time of the "grand coincidence," the Philharmonic was not about to be put out of doors but was playing a calculated waiting game that depended on a decision

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[46]Ibid., pp. 517, 518.

[47]New York Times, April 8, 1955, p. 19.

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by the Metropolitan Opera to Moses' offer of "'a last chance opportunity' to acquire land within the Lincoln Square Urban Renewal Project."[48]

By 1955, an announcement that the Met was considering plans for a new opera house was not likely to attract much attention or excitement. After all, there were plans in the archives to replace the old house, built in 1883, dating from 1917.[49] The idea had been discussed in the 1930's with Mayor La Guardia by Cornelius Bliss and Charles Spofford of the Met Board. The Mayor in turn suggested, "what we really need is a music center, a place where music of all kinds will be performed, and maybe the New York Philharmonic will join in--something like that!" At that time, the New York Philharmonic's Board Chairman dismissed the idea, saying, "It would cost more money than any of us can afford."[50]

Still, La Guardia asked Robert Moses for his views on the feasibility of a music and art center at Rockefeller Center which had "originated with the idea of an opera house as the primary objective." Moses was harsh in his appraisal of Met patronage: "The lawyers are important in this context, as Metropolitan Opera has long since left the sublimated heights of altruism and benefaction under the patronage of Society, with a capital 'S,' and has descended to the

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[48]John D. Rockefeller III, "The Evolution: Birth of a Great Center," New York Times, September 23, 1962, Section 6, Part 2, p. 14.

[49]Martin, p. 128.

[50]Ibid., p. 10

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wrangling among representatives of estates as to how much each can get out of it. [September 20, 1938]."[51] Reportedly, "Moses [also] stated that opera was a dying art form supported by a 'bunch of social climbers,' and the mayor 'shouldn't touch it with a barge pole.'"[52]

In the late 1940's, Spofford suggested to then Mayor William O'Dwyer "'how nice it would be if the city were to help build a new Metropolitan Opera House in a corner of Central Park,'" the private preserve of Robert Moses as Parks Commissioner. O'Dwyer called Moses to arrange a meeting, and Moses was blunt: "'If he wants to put it in Central Park, tell him to save his carfare.'" Nonetheless Spofford went to see him. Moses would not consider the Central Park idea; however, as a result of that meeting, he would offer "the Metropolitan Opera a variety of sites [over the years], ranging from an area in Washington Square to an old trolley-car barn on Third Avenue."[53]

The offer that finally sparked some interest was a site in the Columbus Circle Project, and the cultural center almost ended up on Fifty-ninth Street. When Moses suggested Columbus Circle in May 1951 to the Met, he recommended that its new opera house be part of a music center and that the

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[51]Moses, pp. 513-515.

[52]Martin, p. 10.

[53]Ibid., p. 11.

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New York Philharmonic might be interested as well. Possible negotiations were also reported "with a leading ballet company."[54]

Meanwhile, a suggestion was made by members of the Met Board to representatives of the American National Theatre and Academy that a national theater be built in conjunction with the new opera house.[55] The ANTA Board voted "to accept in principle 'the invitation of the Metropolitan Opera to join in a new cultural center . . .'", and Roger L. Stevens was appointed chairman of the ANTA committee which would meet with the Met.[56]

However, in late March, the new opera house plan was dropped abruptly. "It was indicated that technical stumbling blocks had developed in meeting requirements of Title I of the Housing Act of 1949." According to Moses, "under the law there would have to be some housing. The Metropolitan would have taken up too much space. In addition, they did not have the money raised and they did not have any plans in progress."[57]

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[54]"900,000 is Pledged for New Opera Site," New York Times, January 15, 1952, pp. 1, 22.

[55]"National Theatre Group Studies Bid to Join Opera in Cultural Center," New York Times, January 18, 1952, p. 1.

[56]"Theatre Unit Joins Plans for Center," New York Times, January 19, 1952, p. 17.

[57]"Plan for New Opera Dropped," New York Times, March 29, 1952, p. 17.

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Moses had demanded that the Metropolitan Board "pledge a million dollars to prove their intention to build. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., quickly pledged half that amount."[58] When Moses withdrew the offer, the Met Board was short less than $200,000 of its goal. It was not the housing requirements or lack of money that caused Moses to change his mind, but the vocal opposition of George A. Sloan, chairman of the Metropolitan Board, to building a new opera house.[59]

The Met Board now split into two factions. "'We had a strong element on the Board that was wrapped in the gold-curtain nostalgia of the Old Met and wouldn't even consider leaving it, and they formed an Old House Committee,' Charles Spofford explained. 'But we also had C. D. Jackson, publisher of Time magazine, and Irving Olds, then President of U. S. Steel . . . and they spurred the idea of a New House Committee.'"[60]

While the in-fighting went on at the Met, in 1954 New York University announced plans for a creative arts center, and the New York Philharmonic was reported to be considering participation.[61] That May, discussion of the Columbia University New Fine Arts Center was also renewed. The project dated from 1948 but had been "shelved in the

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[58]Martin, p. 11

[59]Moses, p. 517. [60]Martin, p. 128.

[61]"NYU is Backing Vast Arts Center," New York Times, February 2, 1954, p. 1; followup article, February 4, 1954, p. 22.

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face of conflicting development plans." A meeting of representatives of professional arts organizations was arranged by Virginia Inness-Brown, President of the Greater New York Chapter of ANTA. Those present included Clarence Derwent and Robert W. Dowling, as representatives of National ANTA; Mrs. Martin Beck, President of the American Theatre Wing; Lincoln Kirstein, Director of City Center for Music and Drama; Lawrence Langner, Chairman of the American Academy of Dramatic Arts; and members of the Committee of Columbia Fine Arts Center, chaired by Oscar J. Campbell, were listed as Roger L. Stevens, and Robert Whitehead, both closely associated with the Greater New York Chapter and members of its board. One result of the meeting was that a study was initiated of a tie-in with the Columbia project. At the annual meeting at which the Columbia study was proposed, plans were also made for a fund-raising campaign for a non-profit resident company.[62]

As it turned out, ANTA tabled its plans for a resident company, the New York Philharmonic did not move to Washington Square, and Columbia University built its Fine Arts Center on its Morningside Heights campus, although Columbia did discuss the possibility of joining the Lincoln Square Project at one time.[63] The board battle at the Met

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[62]Notes on Special Meeting, Tuesday, May 25, 1954 (mimeographed), from the private files of Virginia Inness-Brown.

[63]Joan Peyser, "Lincoln Center: Planning for Music," Commentary, XXXI, 5 (May 1961), pp. 411-419.

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continued, and it was not until April 1955 that signs of a decisive victory appeared.[64] However, the announcement that George A. Sloan had submitted his resignation as Chairman of the Board was widely regarded as a defeat for those who supported the Old Met.

The Met Board accepted Sloan's resignation and at the same meeting gave approval to a resolution supporting a new opera house.[65] Howard Taubman summarized the situation:

> Mr. Sloan's resignation was regarded in informed circles as a move that might speed the acquisition of the new house. The former chairman made no secret of his fondness for the old opera house, built in 1883 and reminiscent of a gracious era. On numerous occasions he declared that while he would not stand in the way of a new house, his preference was for the old one, provided it could be modernized, particularly in the backstage areas. . . .
>
> For decades there have been plans for new structures, but this is probably the first time the board appears wholeheartedly behind the principle of a new house.[66]

Robert Moses reports that, following the change in the leadership of the Metropolitan, he received the resolution "adopted by the Metropolitan Board of Directors instructing its new Opera House Committee to advise the Slum Clearance Committee of its continued interest. On April 26th, we met with Colonel Hartfield, John W. Drye, Anthony Bliss and Charles Spofford of the Met."[67]

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[64]The announcement of Sloan's submitted resignation was carried by the New York Times, April 8, 1955, p. 19.

[65]"West Sixties Site Sought by Opera," New York Times, April 15, 1955, p. 1.

[66]Ibid., p. 21.

[67]Moses, p. 518.

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In May, after the New York Philharmonic received notification of non-renewal of its lease for Carnegie Hall after 1958, Arthur A. Houghton met with "Wallace K. Harrison to discuss the design for a new concert hall: 'Nothing too ambitious, not for a corner plot, just a single facade.'"[68]

> It was Harrison who now suggested to . . . Houghton, [as] President of the New York Philharmonic, that the Met and the Philharmonic might get together on a combined concept for a new home. . . . For almost a decade, . . . Harrison had been the architectural consultant for the Met; [he had been involved in the planning of Rockefeller Center and was the chief architect for the United Nations].
>
> Harrison's idea intrigued Houghton enough to set up a meeting on Randall's Island with Moses and Spofford. The meeting went well. . . . [Later,] they had dinner at the Knickerbocker Club and Harrison presented a vision of a single building with a great common foyer and two separate halls.
>
> Out of this group's excitement came the formation of a Joint Exploratory Committee made up of members from both the Met and the Philharmonic. [It was also suggested that] this group "should be augmented by a few citizens connected with neither organization, but representative of the public interest."[69]
>
> After the first meeting of the Exploratory Committee, Bliss explained, "I heard by chance that night that John Rockefeller had just finished a major job in philanthropy and was looking for another civic project that might interest him. I remember calling up Chuck Spofford and telling him I'd heard this. And Chuck said, 'Well, that's fine, because I'm dining with him over the weekend and I'll sound him out.'"[70]

The occasion of the Spofford-Rockefeller meeting was a weekend session in September 1955 of the Council on Foreign Relations in the Poconos. According to Rockefeller, it was

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[68]Rockefeller, New York Times, September 23, 1962, Section 6, Part 2, p. 14.

[69]Ibid.

[70]Martin, p. 13.

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there that Spofford told him of the "three coincidences." "It was, I felt, a fascinating set of circumstances."[71]

About a month after the meeting with Rockefeller, it was announced that a "new opera house has been approved by the Met." The lead paragraph in the New York Times read, "The board of directors of the Metropolitan Opera decided yesterday to inform Parks Commissioner Robert Moses that it would cooperate with him in sponsoring a new opera house in the Lincoln Square area."[72]

A day later, the Philharmonic's interest in Lincoln Square was confirmed by Moses. "He said he thought the Philharmonic would cooperate [in a music center]. The orchestra is reported to be interested."[73] The statement of Floyd G. Blair, President of the Philharmonic-Symphony Society confirmed this. He said "that a committee, headed by Arthur A. Houghton, had been negotiating with Mr. Moses for some time. The committee also has been working with the Metropolitan Opera committee negotiating with Mr. Moses."[74] As for Carnegie Hall, the orchestra had wanted to keep its options open. "If the new center at Lincoln Square materialized, the orchestra wanted to be part of it. It did not

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[71]New York Times, September 23, 1962, Section 6, Part 2, p. 14.

[72]"New Opera House Approved by 'Met'," New York Times, October 18, 1955, p. 1.

[73]"Philharmonic Eyes Lincoln Square Site," New York Times, October 19, 1955, p. 1.

[74]Ibid., p. 40.

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want to commit itself to buying Carnegie Hall until it was certain the center would not be built."[75]

So, how fateful was this "fascinating set of circumstances?" First, although Moses wanted a music center at Lincoln Square, he had also wanted one at Columbus Circle. When he felt rebuffed by the Met's Chairman of the Board, he built the Coliseum instead. Should the Old House Committee have won the internal struggle, Moses still could have turned to private housing developers and have used more than the required 51 percent of the condemned land for housing; Title I was, after all, part of the Housing Act. Fordham's midtown campus could still have been built, although the furor over this hand-in-glove arrangement between government agencies and a sectarian institution would probably have been more extensive if the smokescreen of the cultural center had not made the Fordham plan seem incidental.

Second, the Metropolitan had managed for seventy years in its old house, and "the desperate need" for a new one was not appreciated by many people. In fact, there was a vigorous fight to save the old house that was similar to the struggle over Carnegie Hall except in one respect: success. The Old Met was replaced by an office building, while Carnegie Hall became a public landmark.

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[75]Ibid.

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Third, the Philharmonic's desperation was largely manufactured by a desire to be part of a prestigious project. Once its lease was not renewable, it could buy Carnegie Hall; it could build a new hall, or it could join Lincoln Square if a music center was planned. There was a good deal of enlightened self-interest and personal ambition operating in the circumstances that so fascinated Rockefeller, not just impersonal cultural destiny.

Once Lincoln Square got moving, however, interest in belonging grew. City Center looked wistfully at the project, declaring its interest while noting its underdog status when compared to the financial resources of the Met or the Philharmonic.[76] Although not officially included in the planning, City Center was probably unofficially represented by Lincoln Kirstein of the New York City Ballet who was asked to join the Exploratory Committee. City Center had had a rift of its own in 1955 with Kirstein resigning as managing director of City Center in what was regarded as a conflict with the board over fiscal difficulties. However, Kirstein did remain as general director of the ballet, and the ballet stayed at City Center, so City Center wasn't left too far behind (or uninformed) as the planning began.[77]

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[76]"City Center Eyes Move to Project," New York Times, October 29, 1955, p. 13.

[77]New York Times, January 28, 1955, p. 1; February 6, 1955, p. 68.

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The Exploratory Committee was made up of representatives of "the small group of anonymous 'Dukes of New York,' who serve on most of the boards of most of the city's major public institutions."[78] Certainly, the makeup of the committee and the numerous ties between its members created the peculiar situation of an interlocking directorate setting about studying the need for a cultural center with the zeal of "noblesse oblige." It also gave particular bite to Kenneth Tynan's observation that "it is the 'cultural maturity' of modern capitalism, rather than of America, that will be on trial at Lincoln Square."[79]

It seems hardly necessary to mention the power of John D. Rockefeller III, the man chosen to chair the Exploratory Committee because "the Dukes needed a Prince," a prince of wealth and influence connected by his family to the worlds of government and finance in addition to his own extensive philanthropic work.[80] And the men on the Exploratory Committee were not unknown to Rockefeller through mutual involvement in the Council on Foreign Relations, the Rockefeller Foundation, and philanthropic boards. Similarly, the man with whom the Committee had to negotiate was Robert Moses who had close ties with the Rockefeller family, most notably in the building of the United Nations for which

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[78]Martin, pp. 10-11.

[79]Curtains (New York: Atheneum, 1961), p. 375.

[80]Martin, p. 13.

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John D. Rockefeller III's father had donated the land.[81] And finally the architect who had suggested a joint project for the Metropolitan Opera and the Philharmonic had been the chief architect for the United Nations and involved with the building of Rockefeller Center.

The ties of the members to each other were not much less complex. Charles Spofford, associated with Rockefeller on the Council on Foreign Relations as well as with Devereux C. Josephs, was a member of the Metropolitan Board and the Juilliard Board; Devereux C. Josephs, also associated with Rockefeller on the United Negro College Fund, was a member of the New York Public Library Board. Arthur A. Houghton, on the New York Public Library Board and a trustee of the Rockefeller Foundation, was president of the New York Philharmonic Board, of which David Keiser was Board Chairman. Irving Olds, a member of the New York Public Library Board, was a member of the Met Board as were Anthony Bliss and C. D. Jackson. Robert Blum, head of the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Letters, had worked with Rockefeller before, but was also an old friend of Robert Moses and therefore was picked to serve as liaison for the committee with Moses and city agencies. Wallace K. Harrison was the architect. The remaining members of the committee were Lincoln Kirstein, of the New York City Ballet, Rev. Laurence J. McGinley of Fordham, and George D. Stoddard, Chancellor of New York

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[81]Caro, p. 773, p. 1070.

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University and a member of the American Shakespeare Festival Board.[82]

In 1956, as the project moved forward, this was the most exclusive club in town, meeting at the Century Club the second Monday of the month. Perhaps there was no reason it should have been more inclusive, democratic, or representative. These were the men with the power to build a cultural center through either their wealthy or influential connections, and the advice of the powerless was neither necessary nor desirable when experts were filing happily into the Century Club to give their views, honored to be asked at all.

But that also did not make Lincoln Center divinely ordained or the result of a populist outcry for culture in the West Sixties. The project was just packaged that way. "The path to Lincoln Center was therefore clear: its sponsorship was of the best and it presented an extraordinary opportunity for civic improvement and 'long-term investment at modest profit.' . . . There would be a partnership between an organization trained in big enterprise which would make the decisions and spend the money, and the public, the ideal partner, not only silent but unaware."[83]

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[82]Martin, pp. 10, 11, 13-15, 17.

[83]Percival Goodman, "Lincoln Center: Emporium of the Arts," Dissent, VIII, 3 (Summer 1961), p. 333.

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All this makes it difficult to believe that:

> . . . the supermarket idea [of a cultural center] was not forced on the city at the gun point of influence . . . From every respect, looking back, Lincoln Center can be seen as a historical necessity, and to question that necessity is to question the mood and cultural climate of America and New York City. The Center was a child of its time and not responsible for its parentage.[84]

Certainly, the cultural climate was conducive to the idea, but the historical necessity was created by influential men who preferred that their decisions seem inevitable, and the view that Lincoln Center was the unavoidable product of an era prevailed, as they wished.

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[84]Clive Barnes, "Lincoln Center: Bravos and Barbs for America's Number One Cultural Supermarket," Holiday, XLIV (September 1968), p. 40.

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CHAPTER TWO

I

When the first public announcement of Rockefeller's involvement with Lincoln Center came in December 1955, it was reported in terms equally appropriate to the founding of a corporation. Culture would be assessed with a feasibility study, complete with organizational charts and capitalization projections:

> A committee headed by John D. Rockefeller 3rd has been formed to explore the feasibility of an artistic set-up that would take in ballet, concerts, chamber music, drama, light opera, and perhaps educational programs, as well as opera and symphony. . . . In addition to exploring the concept of a performing arts project, the committee will study the proper organizational relationships of the participating groups and the best methods of financing such a project.[1]

Supplementing the representatives of the Metropolitan and Philharmonic boards, Rockefeller sought "the busy men with a record of success and a broad range of contacts" for the committee.[2] The members were "distinguished men: the old salt . . . [including] a vice-president of Abraham and Straus, a director of Union Carbide, the

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[1]Harold C. Schonberg, "Rockefeller 3rd Will Direct Study of a Lincoln Center for Arts," New York Times, December 1, 1955, p. 1. It is not suggested that thorough study of the arts project was a mistake. However, business terms were consistently applied to the center's planning.

[2]Martin, p. 14.

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president of Steuben Glass, the chairman of Cuban-American Sugar, [and] a former chairman of U. S. Steel . . ."[3]

This team, composed largely of corporate executives, was "a group of nonprofessionals [in the arts] constantly tapping the minds and talents of the top professionals in the country. 'They would then sift all these collected ideas into an integrated concept,' said [David] Keiser [of Juilliard], 'but they were the ones who did the sifting.'"[4]

The professionals invited to appear before the committee were "experts," that is, they could offer to the committee not critical speculation, but "expertise, something that [would] serve its needs,"[5] something that could be added to the "overall concept" without disturbing the basic premise that a cultural center was a good idea. Therefore, following meetings with experts in the arts and education and a study for the committee by an engineering firm, the committee concluded that such a center would be "desirable and feasible [and] on June 22, 1956, we duly incorporated Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, Inc., as a non-profit membership organization . . ."[6]

The members of the Exploratory Committee became the original Board of Directors of Lincoln Center and Rockefeller

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[3]Goodman, Dissent, p. 334.

[4]Martin, p. 15. [5]Hofstadter, p. 428.

[6]Rockefeller, New York Times, September 23, 1962, Section 6, Part 2, p. 30.

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its president. Lincoln Center would "represent an attempt to make the Establishment respectable," but thus far the only Establishment instituions fully represented were the Met and the Philharmonic.[7] What the Exploratory Committee had been, and what the first Lincoln Center Board became, was an association based on attachment to these organizations. The great challenge taken on by the Lincoln Center Board was its own reconstitution as an umbrella organization, and the creation or transplanting of subsidiaries to join the Lincoln Square conglomerate.

The first major decision was to restrict the cultural center to the performing arts as it was felt that the visual arts were adequately represented and housed in New York.[8] Subsequent decisions focused on expansion. An "educational arm [which would] bridge the gap between training and professional performance" was proposed.[9] Dr. George D. Stoddard, then Chancellor and Executive Vice President of New York University, was brought in as an expert to give his views and remained to become a member of the committee and then the Board.[10] The proposed facility was discussed with Columbia University, which finally declined; the Juilliard School later accepted the center's invitation

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[7]Barnes, Holiday, p. 42.

[8]Lincoln Center 1964, p. 23.

[9]Ibid.

[10]Martin, p. 15.

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and moved to expand its programs to include dance and theatre as well as music.

Slowly, the plan grew. Several new organizations were formed under the aegis of the center: the performing arts branch of the New York Public library (1959), a repertory theatre (1960), a music theatre for operetta and musical comedy (1963), a chamber music society and a film society. New buildings were planned:

> New York had no satisfactory theater for dance; Lincoln Center would provide one. New York alone among the world's major centers has no established repertory theater; Lincoln Center would establish one. . . . [It would also build a recital hall.] The band shell [and Damrosch Park were] at Moses' insistence; the library-museum and the educational facility . . . reflected traditional Rockefeller concerns.[11]

Lincoln Center's artistic ambitions exceeded the area of real estate management. It set up the Lincoln Center Fund for education, artistic presentations, and grants to encourage new developments. These projects included sponsored performances for high school students in the tri-state area, seed money for new organizations like the repertory theatre company and for the conversion of Juilliard to its expanded program, and the financing for the summer festivals which began in 1966.[12]

Meanwhile the City Center remained on the sidelines although Rockefeller stated that his interest had

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[11]Mayer, p. 16.

[12]Toffler, p. 118.

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been "focused . . . on the performing arts" through discussions with Lincoln Kirstein and Newbold Morris, chairman of the City Center Board.[13] Kirstein was on the Exploratory Committee and then the Lincoln Center Board, but it seems clear that initially Kirstein was prepared to move the New York City Ballet to Lincoln Center with or without the other members of the City Center. "The New York City Ballet has no legal or official connection with the City Center of Music and Drama," Kirstein stated, although the Ballet had become a constituent of the Center under his directorship in 1949.[14] For its part, Lincoln Center would have been delighted to get the ballet without also having to extend an invitation to the New York City Opera, as the Met was firmly opposed to the City Center opera's inclusion.

Newbold Morris insisted however, the City Center would only "move to a building that would permit its four elements--opera, ballet, drama and operetta--to operate as a unit as they have done in the past."[15] Kirstein resigned from the Lincoln Center Board in 1959 due to an "unresolved serious difference of opinion;"[16] possibly this rift between

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[13]Rockefeller, New York Times, September 23, 1962, Section 6, Part 2, p. 14.

[14]"Rockefeller 3d Will Direct Study of a Lincoln Sq. Center for the Arts," New York Times, December 1, 1955, p. 44.

[15]Ibid. [16]Martin, p. 56.

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Kirstein and Lincoln Center gave the City Center some leverage. New York State was financing the State Theater which was to house the ballet, and City Center began to pressure for the inclusion of the New York City Opera as well. The state ruled that the publicly financed theatre was to be used by both, and the orchestra pit was enlarged accordingly in the plans.

"By lumping all the performing groups together, adding Fordham University and certain special housing, a project big enough for a proper public relations approach was conceived."[17] However, the public relations people occasionally got carried away with their own hyperbole. Two months after the ground-breaking, there was a report in the New York Times on July 19, 1959 of "poet Walt Whitman's 1871 prophecy of the construction of Lincoln Center."[18] Ironically, the stanza selected as prophetic is from "Song of the Exposition" in Leaves of Grass, a poem which as aptly describes a commercial convention at the Coliseum.[19] At least one critic would have found that comparison with Lincoln Center valid. "It is as grand as a suburban shopping center. [It is inconceivable that the answer for culture is other than geographical concentration.] The whole thing would lose its impact. It would not be big."[20]

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[17]Goodman, Dissent, p. 334.

[18]The Performing Arts, I, 8 (August 13, 1959), p. 4.

[19]See Appendix I.

[20]Goodman, Dissent, p. 335.

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If those who discussed Lincoln Center agreed on nothing else, they did agree that "nothing on this scale had ever been attempted for the arts." The initial estimate for the project, which proved far too low, was $75 million, and the Board believed that they could raise this from private sources.[21] Although the question of financing was constantly raised, "money did not seem a desperate problem at the time because all these men were accustomed to financial dealings. They knew where the money was and how to get it. Furthermore, the Rockefeller name was an enormous asset in any fund-raising . . ."[22]

Rockefeller discussed the task, saying "I believe I am correct in saying that the center is the largest civic project ever to be undertaken on a private philanthropic basis. Anywhere else in the world it would have to be carried out under government sponsorship."[23] "An idea as large as Lincoln Center needed support from the entire community [not only from private philanthropy]--foundations, business, labor and countless individual citizens as well as City, State and Federal governmental bodies. The great unknown for Lincoln Center was this: would the community finance a project of such scope and character?"[24]

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[21]Rockefeller, New York Times, September 23, 1962, Section 6, Part 2, p. 30.

[22]Martin, p. 16.

[23]"Center Viewed as Arts Capital," New York Times, December 14, 1956, p. 43.

[24]Lincoln Center 1964, p. 103.

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To assure that the outcome would be positive, Lincoln Center engaged a professional fund-raising firm that had done well for educational institutions and convinced Clarence Francis, chairman of the board of General Foods, to be the campaign manager.[25] The Board now turned to the intricacies of Title I slum clearance.

"Section 197 of the New York City Charter instructed the City Planning Commission to prepare a master plan. . . . The fact that [since 1940] there has been no master plan simply demonstrates that our people will not be coerced: New Yorkers believe in laissez faire and the planning of Lincoln Center is the proof."[26] Urban planners suggested that the "old world city planning idea of dispersing public buildings as points of interest in neutral surroundings"[27] could provide the means of improving "at least four zones of New York shabbiness . . . But such town-planning objections, however valid, [were] overruled by the spirit of momentum of Lincoln Center. The center was never envisaged as a group of local buildings."[28]

To supporters the grouping idea had merits. "The fact is that without grouping the various institutions into a single great center, there would simply never have been

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[25]Martin, p. 17.

[26]Goodman, Dissent, pp. 334, 335.

[27]Ibid., p. 335.

[28]Barnes, Holiday, p. 44.

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$160 million or even $75 million for that matter."[29] It was the grandeur and scope of the project that excited people.

> No city or state government and few foundations or businesses would have been as generous to the Metropolitan Opera or to the Philharmonic as they were to a collective project that embodied in a single dramatic form several of the principal elements of New York's cultural life. Moreover, the very combination of resources made it possible to assemble the staff and skills needed to conduct fund raising on so massive a scale. . .[30]

Opponents retorted that, of course, "Lincoln Center must be big, for anything less than a hundred million dollar deal isn't worth the time of the great financial and civic leaders who are backing 'this great cultural adventure' (to again quote our President [Eisenhower.])"[31]

> Perhaps Lincoln Center is an idea that average people cannot grasp: it is too big and new; only minds that have been molded by great organizations can appreciate works of this sort. And perhaps intellectuals cannot appreciate the simple principle that if one thing is good, then ten of them is ten times as good.[32]

The controversy over the cultural center became heated, and, at one time or another, critics were outraged by site choice; unfair competition which would be harmful to smaller organizations; parking; acoustics; hall capacity; choice of repertoire, art works and sculpture; price scale; traffic congestion; and insularity or elitism that was

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[29]Toffler, p. 123.

[30]Ibid., pp. 123-124.

[31]Goodman, Dissent, p. 338.

[32]Ibid., p. 333.

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reflected in the choices of who would be invited to join, design the physical plant, and administer the center.[33]

> One source of hostility is its very size. Lincoln Center is probably the single largest aggregation of buildings, artists and managerial personnel ever assembled in one place in the name of culture. It is an irresistible target for irresponsible criticism. . . . All told, the six constituents of Lincoln Center will, when it is in full operation, employ approximately 2,000 people. And the Center itself, responsible for coordinating the program of its constituents and for supplying them with certain central services, will have a staff of 250. The Center alone deals with no fewer than nine different unions. It is involved with pension plans, fringe benefits, insurance, finance, auditing, booking scheduling, real estate management, purchasing and a host of other specialized functions, not to speak of artistic direction.[34]

Supporters like Toffler saw the center as a step toward efficient management of the arts through central services; detractors saw it as an example of organizational giantism and cultural restraint of trade or as a regressive step in urban planning. The most eloquent opposition, however, did not come from the critics of the center, but from the people who lived on the Lincoln Square site and their representatives.

The City Planning Commission hearing was held on September 11, 1957 with James Felt, chairman, presiding. Felt was a member of the Moses team and head of a company which "had been handed the lucrative site-assemblage contract for Stuyvesant Town and Peter Cooper Village."[35]

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[33]Many of these are listed by Toffler, p. 119.

[34]Toffler, pp. 119-120. [35]Caro, p. 805.

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Moses himself, as usual, would not appear at the hearing, which heard sixty-three speakers and lasted nearly ten hours.

The initial presentation was made by William S. Lebwohl as representative of the Mayor's Committee on Slum Clearance. He never mentioned Fordham University by name but referred to "this particular educational center" which would concentrate "educational facilities which are now divided and scattered in various parts of the city."[36] The more detailed presentation for the cultural center was made by representatives of the Metropolitan, the Philharmonic and Juilliard as well as John D. Rockefeller III. However, the center's presentation was perfunctory as the outcome of the hearing was not in doubt. Passion was provided by the opposition which had only fervent feelings on its side and knew it.

Harris L. Present, of the New York City Council on Housing Relocation Practices, led the opposition.

> The project now is really three projects. 60th to 62nd Streets is a Fordham University campus. I don't see why it should not be mentioned as such, because there is no contemplation that any other collegiate institution be there. 62nd to 65th Streets, Columbus to Amsterdam, is the new cultural center, consisting of a new home for the Philharmonic Symphony Society, a new home for the Metropolitan Opera Association, a new school for the Juilliard School of Music, and some additional institutions that were non-existent, in essence. The third section is basically a housing section, with other improvements. Most of the housing, of course, would be of a luxury nature.[37]

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[36] City Planning Hearing, p. 6.

[37] Ibid., pp. 8-9.

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Fordham's participation raised the issue of the separation of church and state, and the opposition sought to block the Lincoln Square project on this basis. They maintained that the proposed sale of land to the college at less than its cost to the government represented subsidy of a sectarian organization. Not only Mr. Present and his neighborhood supporters through this was an issue.[38] Albert M. Cole, over-all federal administrator of Title I, thought so too.[39] Present took the case to court, but in December of 1957, the New York State Supreme Court dismissed the suit to block the project, denying that the sale of land to Fordham involved "gift or subsidy."

The prime target for the neighborhood remained relocation as practiced under Title I and Robert Moses. Those who lived in Lincoln Square maintained that the neighborhood was not as blighted as the Slum Clearance Committee insisted it was, but the courts were on the Committee's side, holding "that the entire area does not have to be substandard; only a substantial part."[40] The Slum Clearance Committee invoked the "substantially substandard" clause which was used as flexibly by Moses as the Housing Act provision "that a major portion of a redevelopment must be reserved for residential use in most instances."[41]

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[38]Ibid., p. 16. [39]Moses, p. 523.

[40]"Slum-Razing Plan Offers Fordham Midtown Campus," New York Times, April 8, 1955, p. 1

[41]Ibid.

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The previous record on relocation was not good. The Women's City Club studied the Manhattantown Project and issued reports in 1954 and 1956.

> In the textbooks, "slums" were synonymous with "dirt" and "blight." But, recalls Mrs. [Elinor] Black, "the thing that hit me was that most of the apartments you went into were well kept, clean." . . . "What hurt the most," Mrs. Black says, "was just the feeling of people trying to make a decent place for their family to live in these conditions." It is possible to read through scores of textbooks and tracts on housing conditions written in the 1940's and early 1950's without finding even a hint of the fact that many of these women volunteers, who had read the textbooks, now learned for the first time: to the people who lived in them, slums were home. . . . The more perceptive of the women learned that, while people who lived in the Manhattantown area did not have much in life, what they did have their neighborhood gave them.[42]

Residents of Lincoln Square did not need reports, and they knew about relocation because each slum clearance project that put people out of substandard housing forced them to move to other, low rent, substandard neighborhoods, which of course deteriorated further as landlords subdivided and overcrowding increased. Their findings, however, got no further than the transcript of the hearing.

> We are not directing ourselves to the problems of providing improved housing for the people who are living in bad housing. We are not planning for those people. We are planning rather to take away what they have, with the reason being that they are living under bad conditions. Then we say we can properly relocate them. [Look at the upper west side and] you will find thousands of families who, in the last five years, have turned around and caused a deterioration, a further deterioration in an area, because we are unable to relocate the people properly, despite all these razzle-dazzle figures that come out.[43]

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[42]Caro, pp. 970-971.

[43]Harris L. Present, City Planning Hearing, p. 11.

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At the time New York had an acute housing shortage, severe enough for the city to ask for a two year extension of the legislation which legalized cellar occupancy. Louis Okin, councilman for the district, agreed that a center that combined culture and education in mid-Manhattan would be a wonderful thing and wished there were such a place available for "a museum, a school for the performing arts, a Metropolitan Opera House, and even a place for the Philharmonic Society, whether it needs it or not. But, gentlemen, there is no place for it. There is no place for it because people are living there."[44]

No one who lived there would have maintained that the neighborhood was ideal. "They were living there because they had no place else to go. Their only alternative was the abyss [of Harlem]."[45] And the city had defaulted on relocation promises in the past.

> "'With every project--Title I or some expressway or whatever--he [Moses] would say, "Don't worry about the people living there. If they don't want to go anywhere else, we've always got room for them in public housing." But what he was doing was using the same public housing vacancies for many projects. The same vacancies that were alleged to be available for one project had already been allocated for a previous project--or perhaps ten previous projects.'"[46]

"Where is the City going to house the 7,000 or more families now living in Lincoln Square? Don't forget, this

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[44]City Planning Hearing, pp. 89-90.

[45]Caro, p. 972.

[46]Lawrence Orton, member, City Planning Commission, in Caro, p. 963.

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is not the only project that they have to move people from at the same time. . . . In talking about relocation, I am taking for granted that the City has the apartments needed, knowing full well that they haven't. They don't talk about the lousy job they have done in the past. [applause] Please don't applaud. You will make me feel like a big shot, and then I will have to approve the project."[47]

Moses' own account of relocation for Lincoln Square reveals little concern or understanding for those uprooted by his projects. Families were paid an average of $400 each for relocation, which is little compensation for a low-rent, rent-controlled apartment in this city.

> The relocation of numerous tenants from the Lincoln Square site had from the beginning caused resistance to the project. Tenants and owners organized and fought the project with every weapon at hand. . . After the clearing of the site and the development of the Square, there were few if any complaints from former tenants. They generally went in the end to quarters as good or better without any real hardship.[48]

While the Lincoln Square project was under discussion in the city government, Moses agreed to discuss it on a televized talk show with representatives from Lincoln Center, Inc. However, Moses refused to appear because he found the questions in the script as "unfriendly." The questions included these: "According to the Urban League

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[47]Aramis Gomez, City Planning Hearing, pp. 100-101.

[48]Moses, pp. 526-528.

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of Greater New York, Mr. Moses, New York City's slum-clearance program has been accused of being a minority clearance program. What do you say to that? What happens to the people--in this case, 15,000 of them--whose homes are being destroyed in the name of, shall we say, progress?"[49]

One critic saw the proposed housing in the project as part of the culture center scheme. Including 420 "middle-income apartments" and 4200 luxury apartments, "the new housing at Lincoln Center was perhaps cannily planned to create a convenient audience. The families . . . displaced by the project were surely not concert goers."[50]

Although Moses was not present at the hearing, his influence and his role in Title I were fully discussed.

> A newspaper the other day had an editorial stating that every committee that went before the City Planning Commission and the Board of Estimate attacked [Moses] and not the project that he planned. Well, in my case, it's different. What I know about this project and its faults, I could write a book. I personally do not blame Mr. Moses one little bit. I know by past experience that Mr. Moses doesn't care for the welfare of the people living on the site to be torn down. He never did and never will. I put the blame on Mr. Wagner and the members of the Board of Estimate. Mr. Moses doesn't have to answer to us. We don't elect him to office. But we do elect the Mayor and the Borough Presidents . . .[51]

"Mr. Moses has stated that he wants this project placed before the Board of Estimate by September 19th."[52]

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[49]"Moses Walks Out on TV Questions," New York Times, October 6, 1957, p. 59.

[50]Goodman, Dissent, p. 335.

[51]Aramis Gomez, City Planning Hearing, p. 100.

[52]Ibid., p. 104.

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The project did not arrive there according to the Moses timetable. The City Planning Commission took two weeks to send its unanimous approval of the project to the Board of Estimate (October 2, 1957). However, other snags had developed in the meantime.

> In April, Housing and Home Finance Agency Administrator, Albert M. Cole, over-all federal administrator of Title I, had attempted to go over Moses' head, refusing to provide funds for [Lincoln Center] until the city's Mayor and Board of Estimate met with him to decide "broad policy questions" about Title I's future in New York. Wagner let him know who would decide that future: "Would suggest your representatives meet with Slum Clearance Committee," the Mayor telegrammed. . . .
>
> [When the Manhattantown project erupted in scandal with revelations that development sponsors had not developed the site], Cole . . . decided to try again. He demanded new appraisals of the Lincoln Center real estate, by "independent" appraisers. When Moses refused, Cole charged publicly that during the HHFA's ten-year existence "the agency has had more trouble with Mr. Robert Moses than with any other single individual in all the cities of the United States."[53]

In addition to Cole's charges, the newspapers picked up the story of differing appraisals for Lincoln Square land and what appeared to be the manipulation of Title I process depending on whose property was affected.

> Although Moses had received an offer from certain reputable housing developers of $9.58 per square foot for land, he was selling the land to other, favored, developers for $7.00 per square foot; while the city was acquiring the rest of the huge site by blanket condemnation proceedings, it had for some unexplained reason found it advisable to take the building at 70 Columbus Avenue owned [by the Kennedys], not by condemnation but by purchase [so that] the land under theirs became worth $62.88 per square foot. . . .

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[53]Caro, pp. 1014-1015

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> Cole again asked Wagner and the Board to intercede. Moses' response was his usual offer to resign. . . . "Moses could push a button and the calls would pour in. . . ." Now Moses pushed that button. People in New York who had access to the White House used that access. Father McGinley and other key figures in the Catholic Archdiocese, key union leaders, key bankers, John D. Rockefeller 3rd himself--all were on the phone to Washington. "The amount of pressure he put on was just unbelievable," Cole says. "He just murdered me in there."
>
> A "compromise" was hastily announced: the HHFA would accept a new appraisal--by Moses' own appraisers, the same men who had made the original appraisals. . . . It was a striking display of power.[54]

Moses was more modest: "In November [1957] the Board of Estimate after prolonged public hearings approved all the contracts for the redevelopment of Lincoln Square, the largest, most complex, and most ambitious coordinated Title I project in the country."[55]

Mr. Gomez didn't see it that way: "Why, this is more like the Old West, where we, the poor people, are the Indians with valuable land that the settlers want. So, like long ago, they take the Indians and put them on a reservation. The settlers? Well, they can afford to pay $47.50 for a room so they lived happily ever after while the Indians starved for lack of housing in the reservation."[56]

The controversy and power struggle with the federal administrator, however, did result in a reduction of federal

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[54]Caro, pp. 1014-1016. [55]Moses, p. 524.

[56]City Planning Hearing, p. 102.

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funds for the project and the elimination of two proposals. A new police headquarters was cut as were six commercial theatres. The latter was proposed by "a group headed by Roger L. Stevens, a theatrical producer and real estate developer represented by Judge Samuel I. Rosenman. . . . Unfortunately, just as Federal aid for Lincoln Square was being reduced, the owners of existing rundown theatres in the Times Square area influenced the City administration against the Lincoln Square theatre plan . . ."[57]

An office structure that had been planned in association with the new Met "to generate rental revenues to defray expenses at the noncommercial center" was also scratched during the planning stages.

> Both Carnegie Hall and the old Metropolitan Opera House had benefited more extensively than casual observers realized from the income-producing stores and studios in their buildings. The decision to eliminate this office structure and to permit the city to preempt for itself the potentially profitable underground parking facility deprived the center of little less than a million dollars a year and profoundly limited its future as an independent entity with possible artistic functions apart from its services as a landlord to the institutions.[58]

Martin Mayer also points out that "the most obvious source of income [for a cultural complex] is the facilities naturally auxiliary to the theatrical function--garages, restaurants, and bars serve the audience drawn to the building,

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[57]Moses, p. 520. Rosenman was also a member of the Moses team.

[58]Mayer, p. 16.

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plus, ideally, others in the neighborhood." At Lincoln Center, the revenues from the restaurants and bars went to the constituent in whose building each is located, but none shared in the parking garage revenues.[59]

In Lincoln Center's Summary Report, the cost of the garage and plaza are combined. Government funds provided $10,150,000 while contributed funds amounted to $1,245,000 for a total of $11,395,000.[60] August Heckscher stated, in 1972, that the city would provide indirect help to the center as a result of a new lease on the garage. "This allows Lincoln Center to derive profits from the garage after its basic debts to the bond holders are paid off."[61] This debt to bondholders, despite a large federal grant, remains unexplained.

On February 28, 1958, Lincoln Center acquired its site "with advance contributions to our fund-raising campaign." On May 14, 1959 the ground-breaking ceremonies were held, and by the fall of that year the last family had left the site, presumably for better housing.[62]

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[59]Mayer, p. 3. Mayer later notes that the garage is "ill-designed," charging at that time "$2.25 per performance for 720 parking places and . . . run with a handful of unhelpful personnel. The garage, incidentally, cost the city nothing; it was built with a federal grant." Mayer, pp. 34-35.

[60]Mayer, p. 16.

[61]Private interview, December 1, 1972.

[62]Rockefeller, New York Times, September 23, 1962, Section 6, Part 2, p. 30.

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In a letter to Charles Spofford, Robert Moses assessed their achievement:

> Look at Lincoln Square. Here self-appointed critics who don't know acoustics from a cocktail cracker and claim to have sat on every musical chair in Carnegie are now vibrating over the deficiencies of the new Philharmonic. Something tells me these are the same noms de plume de ma tante who last week were organizing a league to save McSorley's bar.
>
> We have made progress at Lincoln Square . . . for a bold and complex multipurpose undertaking modestly described as slum clearance. The objective of Senator Taft and his associates, who drafted Title One of the Federal Housing Act to entice into the building of decayed centers of old cities private-initiative, enterprise, and philanthropy as partners of government, finds here its noblest expression. . . .
>
> The Philharmonic will be a magnificent building. It will have everything that human ingenuity and immense expenditure [italics added] can provide. We need not quarrel over styles. Let us say that it is a twentieth century eclectic structure, neither contemptuous of the past nor indifferent to modern invention and technology. . . .[63]

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[63]Moses, p. 529.

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II

The umbrella organization of Lincoln Center was viewed as the landlord of the cultural complex in which the constituents would be the tenants. "Each constituent [would] pay a fair rent to Lincoln Center for the use of its building. The Center [would] pass on to the constituent any benefits of large-scale, year-round operation and of the Center's tax exemption."[64] When the buildings were not used by the constituents, the Center would act as booking manager for the halls, so that the facilities could be used efficiently and in harmony with the goal of artistic services to be presented to the public.

The machinery of this arts confederation was characteristically traditional, an adaptation of the governing arrangement of most arts institutions. Each constituent is structured with a board of directors charged with the funding and public support of the institution. From this structure, representatives were drawn for the two coordinating units of the Center: the Lincoln Center Board and the Lincoln Center Council. On the former, each constituent is represented by its board members, usually the chairman and the president thereof. Additional members are chosen from "distinguished men of achievement in business and the

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[64]Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts Progress Report (New York: Lincoln Center, Inc., 1959), p. 11.

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professions who are devoted to the Lincoln Center idea."[65] On the latter, the artistic director of each constituent meets with the Center's top executives.

In theory, each institution is autonomous, independent; however, such terms are relative when board memberships are overlapping or interrelated. "The constituents are autonomous," says Herman Krawitz, frequent representative of the Met at Lincoln Center meetings, "but not independent of Lincoln Center; from time to time there are common purposes and goals which have to be pursued," and there are common services to be paid for according to the formulae determined by the Lincoln Center organization.[66]

In practice, questions of outside pressure and conflict of interest have arisen where the best interests of the Center and one or more constituents were not identical. In the 1973-74 season, this occurred when the Avery Fisher contribution was announced. According to Robert Hoguet, chairman of the board of the Repertory Theater, "You have Amyas Ames who's running Lincoln Center and running the Philharmonic, and there are people on both boards who feel that when money raising comes up, he steers it this way, and the other crowd objects. It isn't ideal."[67]

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[65]Schuman, New York Times, September 23, 1962, Section 6, Part 2, p. 11.

[66]Private interview, December 4, 1972.

[67]Private interview, June 21, 1974.

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The theoretical autonomy of each organization is stressed by Lincoln Center itself. Each organization "is responsible for its own fate. Lincoln Center doesn't subsidize any of the constituents. They got the place built, and they provide the central services; they are very active in the educational programs." But they are not responsible for an institution's survival.[68]

Ideally, of course, Lincoln Center encourages the growth, not the demise, of a constituent, and this encouragement was one of its intended functions. Economic benefits deriving from the complex were anticipated. Lincoln Center was built without a mortgage so that the complex "would not [be saddled] with a building bondage to add to its anticipated deficit."[69] The Center would provide central services at cost, and it was expected that combined efforts by the constituents would reduce expenses through efficient year-around operation under professional arts management, a "profession [which] must necessarily combine the skills of the businessman, the artist, the diplomat, and the gangster."[70]

Of these economic benefits, only lack of mortgage indebtedness materialized. Maintenance costs spiraled upward. The Juilliard School's costs for 1969-70, its first year at the Center, were estimated at four times that of its

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[68]Clarke Coggeshall, private interview, November 21, 1972.

[69]Martin, p. 18.

[70]Mayer, p. 9.

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costs the previous year in its old home on Morningside Heights.[71] In 1974-75, the Met anticipated maintenance costs of $3.8 million, more than a third of its projected earnings gap.

> More expensive homes, as many a rueful suburbanite knows, mean more expensive maintenance. In part, the additional expenses . . . reflect . . . larger quarters . . . But it is also true that new and luxurious surroundings create higher standards of maintenace. The scratched wall, the dirty floor, the loose baseboard, the burned-out bulb that were sad to see in an old building become positively offensive--to public as well as management--in a new facility. It seems fair to say that this problem was not foreseen at all. . . .
>
> Considerable savings for the performing institutions were envisioned in economies of scale [in advertising and promotion, fund-raising, purchasing, insurance, and personnel services both in the front and in the stage house] not unlike those actually enjoyed at Rockefeller Center, where centralized maintenance and purchasing have unquestionably reduced costs of operation. Unfortunately, the disciplines that profit-making landlord and profit-seeking tenant can impose on each other are not to be found in the relations between altruistic center and non-commercial "constituent." By the fall of 1969, nothing was left of central services at Lincoln Center except the sale of heat in the winter, air conditioning in the summer, and private security services for the grounds all year round . . .[72]

As landlord, Lincoln Center built the complex and owns the Metropolitan Opera House, Avery Fisher Hall (formerly Philharmonic Hall), the Juilliard School, and the Vivian Beaumont Theater, which are leased to the constituents on a cost-only basis [the maintenance costs mentioned above]. "Except for Philharmonic Hall all tenants maintain their own homes. In turn, Lincoln Center leases [from New York City] the New York State Theater and sublets it to City

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[71]Mayer, p. 19. [72]Ibid., p. 19.

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Center. The City of New York [also] owns the Library and Museum and the New York Public Library operates it."[73]

Those buildings owned by the city are supported by it in some measure.

> The city pays . . . $300,000 subsidy to the State Theater [for maintenance. The city also pays] the $200,000 annual cost of maintaining the plazas in front of the buildings, which are legally under the jurisdiction of the Parks Department.[74]

Lincoln Center, Inc., bears some portion of the operating costs of Philharmonic and Alice Tully Halls, which "continue to require a net cost subsidy from [the Center] estimated at $244,000."[75] The maintenance costs are pro-rated with the aid of a complicated formula "based on numerous factors such as facility size and wealth of the tenant company, but it is never entirely fair."[76] Thus, it appears that only the opera house, Juilliard, and the Beaumont Theater bear their share of the costs without aid from either the City or Lincoln Center itself.

One change in 1968, however, benefited all the constituents, because the maintenance costs also include payment for private security guards.

> [The] city made Lincoln Center a formal police post . . . [as a result of protests by the constituents about their private security costs. There are] three officers on

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[73]Martin, p. 173. [74]Mayer, p. 34.

[75]Lincoln Center Summary Report, p. 30.

[76]Herman Krawitz, private interview, December 4, 1972.

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duty and policemen passing on scooters at stated intervals; this gesture saved Lincoln Center about $60,000 a year in security costs and probably cost the city about that much. [This amount, however, and other costs to and grants by the city for the center are probably less than its profits from the parking garage.][77]

John W. Mazzola, executive vice-president and general manager of Lincoln Center, describes his institution today as "a co-op apartment house" where the budget and the duties of the management are decided every year at a tenants' meeting, in this case the meeting of a "general services committee." But the analogy is imperfect. The Lincoln Center management was not chosen by and does not serve the tenants, and Lincoln Center retains independent operating responsibilities. And unlike the officer of a co-op apartment house, the executives of Lincoln Center do not live in the property. Ironically, and symbolically, the Lincoln Center offices are not at Lincoln Center.[78]

However, Lincoln Center did not envision itself only as a landlord but also as a facilitator of artistic cooperation, encouraging "the highest standards of artistic achievement and public service on the part of its constituents, and [fostering] the development of close artistic and operating relations among them . . . [in the areas of education and artistic advancement through the Lincoln Center Fund]."[79] In 1969, Lincoln Center was physically complete and, in addition to providing homes for existing organizations, had encouraged the formation of the following new constituents: The Repertory Theater of Lincoln Center, The Music Theater of Lincoln Center, Library and Museum of the Performing Arts, Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center,

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[77]Mayer, p. 35.

[78]Ibid., pp. 30-31.

[79]Lincoln Center Progress Report, June 1959, p. 11.

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and the Film Society of Lincoln Center.[80] Lincoln Center had also been responsible for "an interesting and potentially significant artistic function . . . [the organization of] Summer Festivals with educational service provided by specific programs . . . ," held in 1967 (with a deficit of $775,000), and in 1968 (with a deficit of $850,000).[81]

However, during the 1968-69 season, Lincoln Center was faced with a financial crisis: its special fund for Lincoln Center, Inc.,'s own programs had "dwindled to almost nothing."[82] The educational program was covered by earlier designated gifts and therefore was not affected by Lincoln Center's "policy of retrenchment."[83] However, other existing programs were: "the Summer Festival [was] cancelled, the Teacher's Institute postponed, the Film Festival re-evaluated, . . ." and the administrative staff reduced.[84]

> What is left to Lincoln Center as a unit is its tourist trade and educational functions. The guided tours of the buildings are apparently the city's fourth most popular tourist attraction, drawing 300,000 customers a year; the revenues are absorbed by the salaries of . . . guides and by the costs of additional security and cleaning services within the buildings. Educationally, Lincoln Center has become the coordinating unit for most of the professional musical performances offered in the region's schools or to school children at concert halls.[85]

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[80] Lincoln Center Summary Report, 1956-1969, pp. 22-23.

[81] Mayer, p. 30.

[82] Martin, p. 177.

[83] Summary Report, p. 34.

[84] Martin, p. 177.

[85] Mayer, p. 34.

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The educational program "in the course of a year has taken the performing arts--ballet dancers, actors, singers, musicians--directly to 1.2 million students in a tri-state area . . .", and it is among the Center's proudest accomplishments.[86]

Beyond the cooperative educational program, the artistic exchange among constituents has been minimal, and relations within the center have been badly strained on occasion.

> The source of these hostilities is difficult to pin down. A case can be made that the trouble has been caused entirely by abrasive personalities in managements and on boards; or that propinquity violates a territorial imperative of performing institutions; or that everybody is broke, which conduces to rage in the West Sixties as it does in Brownsville; or that the history of the specific contractual arrangements between the center and its constituents has prevented the growth of sound relationships.[87]

"Lincoln Center is really a real estate enterprise with a bunch of buildings," said Robert L. Hoguet, Repertory Theater Board Chairman.[88]

Although Amyas Ames, as Chairman of the Lincoln Center Board, can point to the Center as "'a symbol of our aspirations, and a statement of our belief that the artistic basis of the country depends on ongoing enthusiasm,'"[89] for others Lincoln Center is merely a huge bureaucracy.

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[86]Martin, p. 176. [87]Mayer, p. 20.

[88]Robert L. Hoguet, private interview, New York, November 24, 1972.

[89]Mayer, p. 15.

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> Even the smaller things--Lincoln Center's prolonged failure to stop the seepage of water in the reflecting pool, for example--add to the image of a small-minded civic authority. That this view is unfair is irrelevant.
>
> Lincoln Center is a vast organization. Vast organizations customarily act humorlessly and not always efficiently. But when Lincoln Center acts without humor or efficiency, people, especially intellectually minded people, do not say: "Ah, that is dear old Lincoln doing what comes naturally to it." Rather they use some simpler comment, such as "bloody, stupid bastards," forgetting that some degree of bloodiness, stupidity and bastardy is part of the nature of the beast. For a place like Lincoln Center, it is more natural for its reflecting pool to leak than not to leak.[90]

The size and cost of Lincoln Center's physical plant are as immense as its organizational web. Covering more than eleven acres of land, the Center's space needs were finally 35 million cubic feet.[91] "The total cost of the project was $186 million, which--to put the figures in perspective--is a little more than double the entire annual box office income of all the nation's professional symphony orchestras, opera and ballet companies, and repertory theaters put together."[92]

In order to raise the necessary funds to build the center without mortgage or other indebtedness, Lincoln Center retained Kersting, Brown & Co. as professional fund raisers. Clarence Francis, Chairman of the Board of General Foods, was named campaign manager. "Working as a team, Rockefeller and Francis went, almost literally, ringing doorbells. But they went where the money was to be found--to the heads of

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[90]Barnes, Holiday, pp. 42-44.

[91]Lincoln Center Summary Report, 1956-1969, p. 13.

[92]Mayer, p. 15.

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the largest corporations in the country."[93] In 1959, Rockefeller spoke to members of the New York Board of Trade.

> "Today we all realize that the responsibility of business goes beyond the building of sales. Yet it was only thirty years ago that corporate philanthropy--the most measurable aspect of corporate citizenry--had its beginnings in a trickle of freely given contributions to community agencies." [And it is only in the last ten years that] American corporations considered the value and the needs of the arts.[94]

Clarence Francis used a variety of appeals including "self-interest, gratitude, and the dividends that accrue from general community well-being" in meetings with corporate executives.[95] By March, 1961, 258 corporations had contributed over $5 million.[96] At the conclusion of the fund drive, corporate gifts amounted to $10,710,000 or 5.8 percent of the total from private sources."[97] The largest corporate gift was $450,000 from Texaco, [long time] sponsor of the Metropolitan Opera's broadcasts. New York's biggest banks, Chase Manhattan and First National City, gave $250,000 each, setting an example for proportional gifts from fifteen other banks." Other donors included life insurance companies, the three major networks, U. S. Rubber,

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[93]Martin, pp. 17-18.

[94]John S. Wilson, "A New Band of Angels," Theatre Arts, XLV, 5 (May, 1961), p. 64.

[95]Ibid.

[96]Summary Report, p. 15.

[97]Martin, p. 172.

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Continental Can, Macy's Seagram, Standard Oil of New Jersey, and Time magazine.[98]

Foundations, both individual and corporate contributed $62,819,000 or 34 percent of the total private gifts. "Industrialist Albert A. List [gave] $1,000,000 . . . through [his] foundation, of which $200,000 [was] earmarked for use in the stimulation of the creation of fine posters announcing productions at the center."[99] The V. Beaumont Allen Foundation contributed funds for the repertory theatre. Corporate foundations included the New York Times, the Shell Companies, and the U. S. Steel Foundations.[100] More than 20 percent of the total funds from private sources came from the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations, $25 million from the former and $15 million from the latter.[101]

Individual contributions amounted to another 34 percent or $62,712,000. Foreign governments and groups contributed $5,180,000 or 2.8 percent, while investment income brought in $6,223,000 or 3.4 percent. This brought total private sources of funds to 80 percent or $147,644,000. However, what is potentially more significant is Lincoln Center's analysis of private funds by number and size

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[98]Wilson, p. 64.

[99]Ibid., p. 66.

[100]Ibid.

[101]Martin, p. 172.

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of donation.[102] Briefly, there were approximately 8,000 gifts of $100 or more; $1000 seat endowments number 2,558; and those who contributed over $100,000 were designated as Patrons of Lincoln Center.[103] According to the Summary Report, there are 87 individual and 89 foundation and corporate patrons. However, on pages 44 and 45 of the same report, these Patrons are listed by name and number 200. Thus, this later list must also include the gifts over one million dollars. In any case, it is clear that 91.5 percent of the private funds for Lincoln Center came from no more than 200 sources, with two sources, the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations, providing 20 percent of that.

The significance of the above is that it reveals the comparatively small number of donors responsible for funding the center, and most certainly it does not represent broad-based, pluralistic support for the arts complex. Lincoln Center's initial funding relied on the traditional sources of cultural support, the wealthy foundation and the wealthy individual. As the Capital Fund approached its deadline in

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[102]The following Table is from the Summary Report, p. 15.

Table 4

Size of gift	Number	Total	
$1+	8,848	$500,000	.4%
$1,000+	2,164	$3,821,000	2.7%
$10,000+	306	$7,700,000	5.4%
$100,000+	163	$27,900,000	19.7%
$1,000,000+	24	$101,500,000	71.8%
TOTAL (not including investment income)	11,505	$141,421,000	100.0%

[103]Summary Report, p. 11.

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June, 1969, $2.5 million remained to be raised to meet the goal of $185.4 million. "Rockefeller and Lawrence A. Wein tried to corral a handful of wealthy friends to pay it off, but even their persuasive powers didn't work. So the two men decided to do it by themselves--each contributed $1.25 million . . ."[104]

The advance made by Lincoln Center in attracting corporate funds to the arts was a major one, although such support has not grown as anticipated and remains inadequately tapped even by Lincoln Center's "United Fund" which solicits contributions from business on behalf of all constituents and of the Center itself. However, although Lincoln Center pleaded the community's responsibility to the arts and extolled the community's support, the Center had a restricted idea of community: the community was its leaders. The following statement by William Schuman is representative:

> The enormously complex task of realizing the Lincoln Center idea has been the self-imposed responsibility of devoted men and women from all segments of our society. Lincoln Center exists because leaders in the arts, education, business, labor, the professions, philanthropy and government do, in fact, believe that the arts are a true measure of a civilization, and Lincoln Center is rising because Americans believe deeply enough in the importance of the arts to give generously of their time and resources to create it.[105]

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[104]Martin, p. 178.

[105]New York Times, September 23, 1962, Section 6, Part 2, p. 11.

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Lincoln Center did not attract a truly diversified "base of patronage [which] cushions the institution against the ordinary fluctuations of the business cycle . . . [and which] helps root the arts institution in the community."[106] It did not attract such diversity because it chose not to do so. However, this reliance of Lincoln Center on the large contribution has hurt both landlord and tenant. Those who felt a vested interest in the creation and completion of the Center contributed generously. Some donors could also provide continuing support, but many must have felt that they had given amply already. "They had an awfully hard time finishing the buildings as it was," said Robert Hoguet. "Everyone who was involved with [the Center] put more money into it than they ever had any thought of having to put into it."[107]

"'Now comes the real challenge,' said Mazzola. 'We've got the bricks and mortar, but we have to persuade everybody that our mission isn't accomplished--it's just begun! We need operating money. We need money to keep going and keep growing.'"[108] However, his appeal to "everybody seems directed not to the small, anonymous donor but to the foundations, to the governmental agencies charged

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[106]Toffler, p. 178.

[107]Robert Hoguet, private interview, New York, November 24, 1972.

[108]Martin, p. 178.

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with arts funding, and to powerful and wealthy individuals. And, Lincoln Center, Inc., is not alone in its need for operating capital. Each constituent is in the same position, and frequently it seems that each competes not only with its colleagues at the Center but also with its landlord for the funds available from such sources. Additionally, Lincoln Center organizations are not the only cultural institutions seeking funds or worthy of support; there is rigorous competition on the city, state and national levels.

Government funds made up the remaining 20 percent in funding for the center: New York City, $14,970,000; New York State, $15,383,000; and the federal government, $6,767,000. "City money built the Library and Museum and new sidewalks and streets; State money built the New York State Theater [as part of the New York World's Fair]; federal funds were funneled in via the Slum Clearance Law, and provided most of the money for the underground garage."[109]

The use of public funds for the Center is more than justified by its "strongly positive effect on the surrounding real estate. The increased value of the land produces increased assessment for tax purposes."[110] The tourists attracted to the center increase trade for neighboring businesses, while the Center itself pays $40 million "to and in support of artists" and provide services which are

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[109]Martin, p. 172.

[110]Mayer, p. 4.

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"compelling reasons for people to come to the city and state and for residents to stay there."[111]

In fact, the financial benefits which have accrued to the city from the arts complex is perhaps the most persuasive argument for increased aid from local government. According to John Mazzola, "'Tax evaluations have skyrocketed in this area. New buildings have brought city more than $20 million in new taxes. By 1972, those taxes will probably be more than $30 million, and Lincoln Center is mostly responsible for that."[112] Amyas Ames cites other, more aesthetic advantages: "The annual cost of the beauty and spaciousness of Lincoln Center [is] now being paid by [the constituents]. It is a burden they cannot bear and they should not be asked to bear. They are assets of this city, and this state. They should be favored."[113]

> A strong case can be made for the proposition that the performing arts center is a public facility just as important as the museum and public library and should be maintained from tax funds. In times of financial stringency, however, legislative bodies will be tempted to eliminate appropriations for this purpose--indeed, all box offices, cultural and otherwise, are targets for taxation rather than for subsidy. . . . [However,] allocating to the arts center some of the increased real estate tax receipts is not the gift of subsidy but the payment of just rewards.[114]

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[111]Amyas Ames, Summary Report, p. 40.

[112]Martin, p. 178.

[113]Summary Report, pp. 40-41.

[114]Mayer, p. 4.

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In the area of private philanthropy, a frequent criterion is the extent of community support, measured in financial contributions, that an organization has attracted. Lincoln Center's record is formidable in terms of dollar amount, but it is less admirable when assessed in terms of financial support by a diversified and involved community. A distinction must be made here between fund-raising philosophy and artistic practice. Lincoln Center and its constituents have made a notable contribution in public service through education programs, student admissions and free public performances sponsored on the Lincoln Center grounds in addition to constituent participation in cultural events in city parks. Joseph Papp, prior to his association with Lincoln Center,

> . . . once asserted in a piece of promotional literature . . . "the belief that every citizen needs and is entitled to a theater--just as he needs and is entitled to schools, libraries and museums." Though they would not have put it this way (or this well)--and though their very much larger audiences give them some right to irritation at the bellicose populism Papp pronounces to their discredit--the managers of the performing companies at Lincoln Center share the attitude entirely.[115]

Broader participation through the active soliciting of small donations, however, will not happen until the more newsworthy sources are exhausted.

Hugh Hardy summarizes the role of the culture center:

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[115]Mayer, p. 43.

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> No matter how enobling its architecutre, the Official Culture Center represents a removal from everyday urban reality. It is an aberration in the pattern of the city, housing events that do not allow direct participation and do not spring from the situations or activities of the surrounding community.[116]

Because the Center was financed, planned and represented by the wealthy and socially prominent, it is with this select group that the Center is identified. To many, it belongs to the elite much as the Old Met belonged to the wealthy box holders who were known as members of the Diamond Horseshoe. Although located on Manhattan's upper west side, the Center is isolated from that community. Thus, wooing the small donor may become increasingly difficult. Each constituent could rally supporters in a crisis because of past service and through appeals to the loyalty of its audience. But who thinks of Lincoln Center as "mine"?

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[116]"The Overpermanent Architecture," Theatre 1, p. 15.

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CHAPTER THREE

Discussions about a constituent representing drama at Lincoln Center began early in the planning of the complex. Rockefeller's committee met with several individuals including Joseph Verner Reed, president of the American Shakespeare Festival and Academy; Roger L. Stevens, of the Producers Theatre and treasurer of National ANTA; and Richard F. Walsh of I.A.T.S.E., a major theatrical union; among others, and in February of 1956 "they endorsed the idea that provisions for ballet and drama, as well as music, should be included in the project."[1] Five months later, "a repertory theatre for dramatic classics [was mentioned as a] previously unannounced feature now seriously under consideration."[2]

> The Lincoln Center Board sought out the experts. Most of the advisors were in general agreement on some negative proposals: Leave the Broadway musicals to Broadway; leave to Off-Broadway the uncharted areas of the offbeat; forget about the "cocktail school" of so-called sophisticated drama. Repertory theater, in their view, also should not compete for that part of the general public who had deserted the theater for the movies fifty years ago and later left movies for television. If television was a supermarket, they said, repertory theater should be the gourmet shop.[3]

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[1]"Musical Arts Group Hears Center Plans," New York Times, February 19, 1956, p. 95.

[2]"Lincoln Sq. Plan Developing Toward World Cultural Center," New York Times, July 23, 1956, p. 1.

[3]Martin, pp. 89-90.

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Later that year Rockefeller discussed Lincoln Center and gave some indication of his conception of the theatre, as he talked "enthusiastically of the plan for a popular-priced repertory theatre . . . to bring back American classics by O'Neill, Sherwood, Rice, Wilder, Odets, as well as the Shakespearean works . . ."[4] In the following year, however, plans for a theatre did not move forward. A sketch of the over-all project included "a theatre for drama in repertory," but the theatre itself remained a vague, tentative idea.[5]

Elsewhere, the idea of repertory had become a crusade. Regional theatres appeared and survived as an alternative "to what their creators saw as the commercial values of Broadway--quick success, star power, the businessman's literature, and money as a god. The first regional theatres after World War II became a new world dedicated to the establishment of new theatrical values--permanence, the ensemble company of actors, classics on the stage, and art as a goal."[6] Vocal support for repertory came from National ANTA and from performers. "Wherever the unemployed of Actors' Equity foregather in Automats, or stars throw house parties, repertory is extolled as the home of art

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[4]Peck, "Show Biz," New York Times, November 18, 1956, Section 6, p. 15.

[5]"New Center on the West Side," New York Times, December 8, 1957, Section 6, p. 14.

[6]Zeigler, p. 16.

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and the actor's friend. It means steady work, surcease from monotony, a chance to match one's mettle against the classics."[7] It was a movement of moral fervor with a touch of self-righteousness:

> In the past fifteen years, a new kind of theatre has been created in this country by a bunch of determined pragmatists who declined to stagnate idealistically in New York like those high-minded types to exacerbate the Broadway rat race while nourishing it, or grow gray doing daring scenes at the Actors Studio while gnawing the tidbits thrown their way by television.[8]

The existence of repertory theatres was encouraged as a matter of civic pride: "The community which possesses no repertory theatre merits scorn. 'What, you have no repertory company in your town or state? You are hardly a cultured folk.' That should be the attitude."[9] The lack of a professional repertory theatre was also seen as a black mark against our national culture, for the United States alone of the major nations had no national theatre. "New York should have several similar [repertory] theatres, as London at present has three, Paris four, Moscow many."[10] And Moss Hart defined repertory as "Something every other

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[7]"Actor's Friend," Newsweek, March 23, 1964, p. 70.

[8]Theodore Hoffman, "Who the Hell is Herbert Blau?" Show, V, 3 (April 1965), p. 39.

[9]Harold Clurman, "The Subject Is Not Roses," in Theatre, The Annual of the Repertory Theater of Lincoln Center, Vol. II, Barry Hyams, ed. (New York: Playbill, Inc., 1965), p. 11.

[10]Harold Clurman, The Naked Image (New York: Macmillan Co., 1966), p. 149.

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country in the world except the richest country in the world can afford."[11]

Attempts to create a repertory theatre in New York had been made before with ultimate failure, and many felt, as one director said, that there were "too many diversions in other theatres in New York. The New York public supports the theatre only to a certain point. We must depend on the visiting fireman [and] he wants to see 'How to Succeed in Business.'"[12]

The first serious attempt in this century to form a repertory theatre in New York was "The New Theatre" (November 8, 1909-April 8, 1911). Its purpose was "to give the public a permanent, non-profit theater conducted on the lines of the Comedie Francaise."[13] Called the "Millionaires' Playhouse," the theatre was on Central Park West between 62nd and 63rd Streets. It "had Winthrop Ames as its director and Lee Shubert as its manager; a distinguished acting company, [a beautiful and rent-free playhouse], and

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[11] Chapter One, I, 4 (April 1954), p. 4.

[12] "Past Pitfalls Haunt Future Repertory," New York World Telegram and Sun, September 26, 1963. [Scrapbook] This article and others which bear the notation "Scrapbook" were located in the comprehensive scrapbooks kept by the theater's press department. These articles have no page references provided in the scrapbooks, but the articles are arranged chronologically and can be located in the Theatre Research Collection of the Library of the Performing Arts at Lincoln Center. Complete bibliographical information for the scrapbooks is provided in the bibliography.

[13] Ibid.

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a surplus fund of $600,000."[14] "Money . . . flowed in torrents from the fortunes of the millionaire founders, John Jacob Astor, J. Pierpont Morgan, Otto H. Kahn, August Belmont, Cornelius Vanderbilt, Henry Clay Frick, George J. Gould, Harry Payne Whitney, Frank A. Munsey."[15]

"The idea of the millionaire promoters was that success in the theatre, as in Big Business, was merely a matter of spending money. So instead of building a small intimate theatre where plays could be given their proper perspective, they had provided a vast auditorium, splendidly decorated, but with faulty acoustics and a stage so far away that the actors were almost inaudible."[16]

"From the first, critics moaned that the theatre's auditorium and stage were too overwhelmingly large. Henry Miller called the theatre 'a dramatization of the Diamond Horseshoe.'"[17] The inclusion of light opera in the program resulted in a house that had "twice the ideal seating capacity for drama"; there was no endowment, but a "mammoth petty cash account of $600,000, which led to waste and extravagance on staff and services."[18]

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[14]Oliver M. Sayler, "Repertory Now!" Theatre Arts, XLII (June 1958), p. 23.

[15]"Past Pitfalls. . .," September 26, 1963. [Scrapbook]

[16]Arthur Hornblow, A History of the Theatre in America, Vol. II (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1919), p. 324.

[17]"Past Pitfalls . . .," September 26, 1963.

[18]Sayler, p. 78.

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For the initial production of Antony and Cleopatra, "E. H. Sothern and Julia Marlowe were specially engaged for the star parts for 'a limited period' . . . [a mistake] for it was a departure from the stock company idea from the very start."[19] Lacking an authoritative director who could mold individuals into an acting company, the New Theatre was also hurt by weak plays, the expense of scenery transfer to and from storage, and a business manager who had other interests to care for in addition to the new playhouse. The theatre lasted two seasons.[20]

Eva Le Gallienne opened her Civic Repertory Theatre on 14th Street on October 25, 1926. Her interest in repertory had its roots in her early memories of European theatre, and she was further encouraged by the Moscow Art Theatre's visit to New York in 1923-24.[21] She produced seven seasons before the theatre closed in 1933. "'It was a subsidized theatre and the depression killed it,' she recalled . . . 'I found I just couldn't get backing.'"[22] During the Civic's life, however, there were triumphs: a successful Cherry Orchard which she refused to move uptown, a "superb" Romeo and Juliet, company loyalty, and appearances

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[19]Hornblow, p. 323.

[20]Sayler, p. 78.

[21]Ibid., p. 23.

[22]"Past Pitfalls . . .," September 26, 1963. [Scrapbook]

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by Alla Nazimova and Jacob Ben-Ami. There were problems: the occasional selection of poor plays, a box-office scale that was too low ($1.50 top), and her loyalty which prevented her hiring "the best actors her budget could have bought."[23]

However, with her audiences (she played the last two seasons to 95 percent of capacity), the theatre could have survived if it had had an endowment. Le Gallienne had subsidy: a nominal rental from Otto Kahn, union concessions, subscriptions, and several donors who nearly covered production costs. When grants from her donors ceased, "the Civic Repertory ceased--an ironic illustration of the comparative efficacies of subsidy vs. endowment."[24] Still, "years after it had vanished, the Le Gallienne Civic Repertory Company was recalled as a model of what the theater might be as a cultural resource rather than a commercial outlet."[25]

Le Gallienne's next effort was the American Repertory Theatre, Inc., which was founded with producer Cheryl Crawford and actress Margaret Webster and began producing in November, 1946. "It lasted less than four months at the International Theatre in Columbus Circle."[26] Having raised $300,000 by offering stock to the public at $500 per share,

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[23]Sayler, p. 78.

[24]Ibid., p. 79.

[25]The Ford Foundation, Part I, p. 23.

[26]Sayler, p. 79.

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the theatre was soon in difficulty due to a strange choice of plays and lack of either subsidy or endowment. During its last month, it lost $5,000 to $6,000 a week and closed in February, 1947.[27]

Also, strictly speaking, with its rotation of plays on a half-weekly basis, it was not a repertory theatre. It is necessary that the term "repertory" be exactly defined as it is a term much-abused in usage.

> The term cannot be defined to suit particular wishes. Repertory means the daily change of program and that is the only thing it can mean. I am sticky about this because I believe the repertory system to be necessary if the theater is to produce great plays, particularly unpopular ones, and is to establish a company capable of performing them well.[28]

> Repertory is not stock. Repertory is not the planned production of one, two, three, four or more weeks each, even with the nucleus of a permanent acting company. A repertory theatre is a theatre that presents two or more plays in a varying sequence within any given week, week after week, in contrast with the typical Broadway theatre that presents the same play, performance after performance . . .[29]

It is not a term which means "prestigious" or "classical"; repertory is a method of producing plays, and only in theatre does it require advocates.

> If the present process of conducting theatre were extended to the other arts, all of them traditionally operated on what corresponds to a repertory basis, this is what we'd encounter:

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[27]"Past Pitfalls . . ." September 26, 1963. [Scrapbook]

[28]Gottfried, p. 90.

[29]Sayler, p. 22.

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> In music we'd be dependent on endless repetition of the present output of Aaron Copland, Vaughn Williams, Leonard Bernstein and their brethren, with brief revivals, perhaps once in ten years of The Messiah and the Ninth Symphony. [The same analogy can be applied to opera, art and literature.]
>
> Sound fantastic? Incredible? Insane? So is our abject dependence on the long-run system in the theatre. So is our continued neglect of the repertory theatre.[30]

The first national attempt to address the issue of an American National Theatre resulted in the founding by Congressional Charter in 1935 of the American National Theatre and Academy, sponsored in the Senate by Robert F. Wagner of New York.

> As described in its preamble, [it] was designed to be "a people's project, organized and conducted in their interest, free from commercialism, but with the firm intent of being as far as possible self-supporting. A national theatre should bring to the people throughout the country their heritage of the great drama of the past and the best of the present, which has been too frequently unavailable to them under existing conditions."[31]

Robert Sherwood, as president of ANTA before World War II, saw it "as a professional producing organization that would tour at popular prices a balanced series of five plays a season--classics, revivals, musicals, and current dramas--to a great many large cities not [then] on any active road circuit. At that time the project looked feasible, useful and creative." But the war kept it from ever being attempted.[32]

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[30]Ibid., p. 80.

[31]Zeigler, p. 10.

[32]Brooks Atkinson, "One Bright Ray," New York Times, June 8, 1952, Section 2, p. 1.

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In 1946, ANTA introduced the Breen-Porterfield Plan "to help found and support theatres in other parts of the country." This paternal plan was both expensive and cavalier, ignoring indigenous theatres already established, and it was not very successful.[33] However, it was the spur for organizing a staff and recruiting volunteers to make National ANTA more than a paper organization.

The ANTA Playhouse was acquired on March 31, 1950, and in October the first of two play series was launched with individual producers responsible for each of ten productions. The next year Robert Whitehead became managing director of the play series, which Arthur Gelb at the time called the "most controversial job on the Rialto today."[34] That season ANTA's series was of "representative American plays, old and new . . ." Golden Boy with John Garfield extended its run, Mrs. McThing with Helen Hayes was also prolonged, and then toured nationally, and Four Saints in Three Acts was the "U. S. contribution to the Congress for Cultural Freedom." Also produced were Desire Under the Elms, directed by Harold Clurman, and Sunday Breakfast by Emery Rubio and Miriam Balf.[35]

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[33]Ibid.

[34]New York Times, September 9, 1951, Section 2, p. 3.

[35]ANTA Twentieth Anniversary Presentation, p. 12.

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At the conclusion of the Whitehead season, Brooks Atkinson wrote:

> The current play series, under Mr. Whitehead's direction, is Mr. Sherwood's old plan in miniature--unintentionally as far as ANTA's planning goes, but inevitably because it is logical and sound for such an institution. Putting on good plays with taste and skill is the right thing to do. There is no more fundamental organization in the theatre than a script and some actors under the direction of a competent fanatic.[36]

At around the same time, a regional chapter of ANTA was organizing which would become the Greater New York Chapter of ANTA, or, Chapter One, when chartered in May 1952. Robert Whitehead and Henry Hewes, who became Chapter One's executive director, discussed the idea of a permanent acting company performing in repertory, an idea which already interested Whitehead.[37] He had approached the ANTA play series as "plans for making ANTA into 'a real national theatre.'"

> "The idea," he said, " is to have a workshop that will eventually become the core from which a permanent or at least semi-permanent acting company will be formed at the playhouse. This is the same principle as the one behind the Old Vic. But here we have put the cart before the horse. I guess it's typically American, in a way, that we have a building to house a company--but no company."[38]

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[36]New York Times, June 8, 1975, Section 2, p. 1.

[37]Henry Hewes, private interview, New York, June 13, 1974.

[38]Arthur Gelb, "Ideas for a Program," New York Times, May 25, 1952, Section 2, p. 1.

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It was hoped that the workshop, organized around "a nucleus of promising young actors, [would function] apart from the play series, [be trained] under the direction of Harold Clurman and Stella Adler, and eventually comprise the backbone of all ANTA production casts." This would be "the core from which America's first national theatre, with a genuinely indigenous style and vitality, could spring."[39]

However, lack of time and of funding kept the workshop from developing, and in the meantime Whitehead found

> . . . that the very actors he wanted to "train" in his workshop were the ones he was already casting in his play series. . . . "I now feel that instead of keeping members of the repertory group hidden out in a workshop for two or three years," says Whitehead, "we should throw them into productions right away and let them work together to build the national theatre."[40]

Hewes had often talked with Virginia Inness-Brown about the need for a national theatre and for a permanent company.[41] Thus, it was quite natural that Chapter One under Mrs. Inness-Brown's presidency should have as one of its aims "the founding and establishing of a Permanent Resident Company in New York City." The company was to be hired on an annual basis, "capable of performing in repertory the classics, as well as modern plays." An academy would work in conjunction with the company, selecting

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[39]Ibid., "ANTA's Play Series in Retrospect," New York Times, May 25, 1952, Section 2, p. 1.

[40]Ibid.

[41]Hewes interview; Virginia Inness-Brown, private interview, June 29, 1974.

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talented students for training on scholarship and for eventual membership in the company.[42]

Work toward this goal began with authorization from the National ANTA Board for Chapter One "to proceed with a survey to determine the feasibility of establishing a permanent resident company in New York City"; the survey and questionnaire were prepared by Mrs. Inness-Brown, Henry Hewes, and Milton Ward. Chapter One also moved forward with the idea of an academy with its endorsement of affiliation between the proposed resident company and Columbia University's Arts Center Project.[43]

In January 1954, the idea of a resident company was discussed by a panel that included Robert Anderson, Abe Burrows, Sol Hurok, and Maureen Stapleton. As a result, a committee was formed to investigate possible government aid for the project.[44] Briefly, it appeared that there was a possible company. "The Ensemble," organized by Leo Kerz (scene designer), Joseph Kramm (author of The Shrike), and Harry Horner (director and scene designer for Paramount), requested support from Chapter One, which booked them into the Bijou Theatre on which the chapter held the lease. But Kerz and Horner withdrew from the project, and it was cancelled.[45]

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[42]ANTA Twentieth Anniversary Presentation, p. 9.

[43]Chapter One, I, 1 (January 1954), p. 2.

[44]Ibid., p. 1.

[45]Ibid., I, 3 (March 1954), p. 4; I, 6 (September 1954), p. 1.

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Meanwhile, in April 1955, the chapter formed its Theatre Building Committee whose aim was to "educate architects and theatre builders as to the necessity of seeking advice from theatre experts before drawing up their plans." Jo Mielziner was chairman, Ed Kook vice-chairman; members included Lincoln Kirstein and Eero Saarinen.[46] In November, the Committee on State Aid for a Permanent Repertory Company prepared for a vigorous campaign for state legislation that would grant aid to a company that would tour the state.[47]

Of course it was during this same period that the Lincoln Square project was in its early stages, and Chapter One presented its ideas for a constituent in drama to Rockefeller "as early as the beginning of 1956."[48] As president of the chapter, Mrs. Inness-Brown discussed the project with some of her associates from ANTA including Mrs. Vivian Beaumont Allen, a vice-president of Chapter One; Robert Whitehead, Roger L. Stevens, and Robert W. Dowling, all of whom served on both the National ANTA and Chapter One boards of directors, were consulted in that capacity. Another board member of Chapter One with an active interest in the Lincoln Square project was Mrs. Anthony Bliss.

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[46]Ibid., II, 4 (April 1955), p. 2; II, 5 (May 1955), p. 1.

[47]Chapter One, II, 8 (November 1955), p. 1.

[48]Mrs. H. Alwyn Inness-Brown, "Theatre in Tomorrow's World," paper presented before A.E.T.A. in Chicago at the Speech and Theatre Convention, December 30, 1958, p. 5. (mimeographed)

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Mrs. Inness-Brown contacted Rockefeller concerning a theatre at Lincoln Center.

> I called him on the phone, and I said, "Mr. Rockefeller, you must have the theatre represented there because after all the theatre is a reflection of our times." He said, "well, this means a great increase in budget; do you have a donor?" I replied, "yes, I think I do." . . . Mrs. Allen had offered me a theatre, but I thought Lincoln Center is going to be the place, and she became enthusiastic when I told her she should have a living memorial, not a dead one.[49]

On May 5, 1958, Mrs. Allen's gift to Lincoln Center was announced in the New York Times:

> Mrs. Allen, who inherited a fortune from a nation-wide chain of department stores [Mays], has been a patron of opera, musical and dramatic art in New York for many years. Her gift was the first made to the center by an individual rather than an organization [and also the first gift] to be earmarked for a specific purpose. . . .
>
> The repertory theatre will provide a permanent stage for a resident company playing the great classics, reviving notable modern plays, and doing new, experimental works. The company would be somewhat similar to the Old Vic in London, or the Comedie Francaise in Paris. . . .
>
> It is not known whether $3,000,000 will be enough to build the fine modern theatre the planners envision . . . [with 1,200 seats] which is the capacity of the average legitimate theatre in the Broadway area. . . . It may well be also that productions devoted to cultural repertory at moderate admission prices would have to be subsidized in part.[50]

Some were surprised at the size of the donation and the method that Mrs. Allen used in making the gift. "Mrs. Allen's gift is unusual in these days of carefully hedged

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[49]Mrs. Inness-Brown, private interview, June 29, 1974.

[50]"Woman Gives Lincoln Sq. Center 3 Million for Repertory Theatre," New York Times, May 5, 1958, p. 1.

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tax arrangements. Individuals who are prepared to give such large amounts are more apt to do it through foundations created for just such purposes . . ."[51] In fact, Mrs. Allen did have a foundation set up for her philanthropic efforts, but she chose in this instance to give the money from her personal fortune. Nor was this her only gift for the repertory theatre. Mrs. Inness-Brown estimates that the total amount was at least five million and may have been as high as nine million dollars, the amount over the initial three million coming from the foundation.[52] During the theatre's early years, the foundation was a very substantial supporter; it is now liquidated, ". . . but to the degree she was able, she did provide ongoing support which went toward operating expenses."[53] At the time of the original gift, Mrs. Allen stated: "I have long been interested in the development of the American theatre. It has been my cherished hope that our country might one day have a national theatre comparable in distinction and achievement to the Comedie Francais."[54]

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[51]John S. Wilson, "A New Band of Angels," Theatre Arts, XLV, 5 (May 1961), p. 66.

[52]Mrs. Inness-Brown, private interview, East Boothbay, Maine, August 24, 1974.

[53]Clarke Coggeshall, private interview, New York, November 21, 1972.

[54]Eva Le Gallienne, "Repertory . . . When?" Theatre Arts, XLII, 9 (September 1958), p. 15, quoting Mrs. Allen.

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So Lincoln Center was to have a repertory theatre. Unable to ". . . agree that there then existed a single outstanding repertory company, [Lincoln Center decided that it] should start its own."[55] The first step toward that end was retaining a consultant on repertory theatre and forming an advisory council for the Lincoln Center Board. On May 16, 1958, the appointment of Robert Whitehead to the post of consultant was announced.[56] Whitehead, 42, was the vice-president in charge of production for the Producers' Theatre, which he had joined in 1953, and whose other officers were Robert W. Dowling and Roger L. Stevens. After the ANTA permanent company had failed to materialize, Whitehead suggested that a company "should be one of the goals of [Producers' Theatre]. It never worked out."[57]

Whitehead was also a member of the advisory council and liaison to the board. The council would "aid Lincoln Center in the creation of a permanent company and assist in fixing the design of the 1,200-seat theatre." Rockefeller announced that the council "would make general policy and eventually would be called upon to form a non-profit organization 'which can assure for drama at Lincoln Center the

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[55]Martin, p. 17.

[56]New York Times, May 16, 1958, p. 27.

[57]Don Ross, "Whitehead on Lincoln Square," New York Herald Tribune, August 30, 1959, Section 4, p. 1.

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highest in artistic standards, continuity of operation and financial stability.'"[58]

The ten council members were: Walter Kerr, critic, New York Herald Tribune; Sanford Meisner, director of The Neighborhood Playhouse; Eva Le Gallienne, actress, founder of the Civic Repertory Theatre and co-founder of American Repertory Theatre; Cheryl Crawford, producer, co-founder of American Repertory Theatre, of Actors Studio, Inc., and of the Group Theatre; Elia Kazan, director, co-founder of the Actors Studio, Inc.; Jo Mielziner, scene designer; Roger L. Stevens, Producers' Theatre and the Playwrights Company; Robert W. Dowling, Producers' Theatre and President of City Investing; and Vivian Beaumont Allen. In addition, Crawford, Mielziner, Stevens, Whitehead, Dowling and Allen were all associated with ANTA or Chapter One as life member, member of the board, or officer. Two members represented Lincoln Center--Stoddard and Schuman.

Thus, the Repertory Theatre Advisory Council, like the Lincoln Center Board itself, was made up of people whose interests, livelihood and associations were closely interwoven. And this fabric was the stuff of consensus, not through pre-planning, but through a screening process. This process eliminated "foreign" ideas unintentionally but effectively through its reliance on people who lived in New York, "saw the same people, used the same sources, belonged

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[58]New York Times, May 16, 1958, p. 27.

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to the same background groups, and swore by the same omens."[59] This process did not remove competition, ambition, differences of opinion, or aspiration to power, but it did narrow down the potential candidates and possible options.

In 1958, all that was certain was that Robert Whitehead would play an important role in the theatre, probably as "its top executive."[60] Thus, Whitehead's statements were significant. Lincoln Center retained him as its consultant and therefore as its spokesman on the sort of theatre that would emerge at the Center. Whitehead's published comments in interviews and in articles bearing his name are remarkably consistent from the time of his appointment until the incorporation of the Repertory Theater Association in 1960. As Harold Clurman stated at a later date (1964),

> The first step is to define aims. The repertory system by itself is a measure of convenience; it can prove a drawback. A permanent company should be a great asset; it may turn into a deadweight. A subscription audience is extremely useful; it has occasionally acted as a block.
>
> It is not enough to say that the goal of the new enterprises should be to offer "good theatre." As Stanislavsky told Norris Houghton, no one has ever deliberately tried to found a bad theatre.[61]

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[59]Timothy Crouse, The Boys on the Bus (New York: Ballantine Books, 1974), p. 40. Study of consensus in the Washington political press.

[60]Laurence Barrett, "Whitehead is Advisor on Lincoln Sq. Center," New York Herald Tribune, May 16, 1958. [Scrapbook]

[61]Harold Clurman, The Naked Image, p. 148.

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Initially, the aims of the repertory theatre were defined and articulated by Whitehead.

> Our prime objective will be to establish an American dramatic tradition. It may take a lifetime. We must bring together the very best the country has to offer. But if present plans are implemented with intelligence and imagination, it would be the most important thing ever done in the American theater.[62]
>
> . . . it is no coincidence that the emergence of Lincoln Center is taking place at a point in history when America faces its responsibility as a world power and influence. It is the evolving pattern of a nation's maturity in which Lincoln Center simply takes part. In living up to this responsibility and carrying it out successfully we will acquire a new stature. It has never been said that it would be easy, but since our whole survival is at stake, there can be no question of failure. At this moment, Lincoln Center, like the Nation itself, truly stands upon the threshold.[63]
>
> . . . we have reached a point in our development where we must find some expression that is our own, that has a stature, strength and style specifically our own.
>
> Our theatre passed through a period of being an imitation of Europe. Then, following the First World War, we began to reject all that. We began to draw and rely upon our native talent, on a grass-roots truth, discarding the European schools of technique and making our style simply a realistic expression of ourselves. Out of this came a good deal of fine work. The American theatre truly began to achieve a character of its own. But that character has begun to be used up. It must now be fused with a much fuller technique and consequently with a bolder style and a more deeply expressive content. . . .[64]

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[62]Barrett, New York Herald Tribune, May 16, 1958. [Scrapbook]

[63]Robert Whitehead, "The Lincoln Center Theater," The Performing Arts, I, 9 (September 17, 1959), p. 3.

[64]"Whitehead on Rep, Lincoln Center," Playbill, IV, 10 (February 29, 1960), pp. 3-4. This quotation is continued in note 66; note 65 is an interpolation.

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> We have developed the true expression of native talent, but the process of enriching that native talent, of giving it maturity and stature can only emerge through the planned continuity of a theatre such as is now being developed in our Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts.[65]
>
> A repertory theatre is, I think, the only way to achieve this.[66]

Whitehead's invocation of America's political and cultural maturity is not an isolated instance; he is also quoted in the same vein in the Repertory Theater's official publication, Theatre, Vol. I, in 1964.[67] It was a view that conformed with those expressed earlier by Rockefeller and other Lincoln Center representatives.

At this time, Whitehead did not denounce the commercial theatre of Broadway from which he had come and where he continued to produce actively into the early 1960's. Rather there was a certain disdain for the isolated art theatre. Many aspects of his plan reflected his Broadway background: he would produce plays serially rather than in rotating repertory and sign stars to contracts in his company.

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[65]Whitehead, The Performing Arts, I, 9, p. 2.

[66]Ibid., Playbill, IV, 10, p. 4.

[67]Barry Hyams, ed., Theatre, The Annual of the Repertory Theater of Lincoln Center, I, (New York: Playbill, Inc., 1964), p. 52.

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> But nobody ever really sat down and said, "now we're going to have a repertory theatre where there's permanency and culture." Apart from other considerations, such a theatre might have turned out to be quite a bore.[68]

> Mr. Whitehead made his mark as a Broadway producer and he wants it known that the theatre in Lincoln Center, though uptown, will really be a part of the Broadway theatre.
>
> "We won't have a nice serious isolated group of people with pure motives at Lincoln Center," [Whitehead] said. "We'll be a part of the chaos and organized catastrophe of the Broadway theater and somehow we will make something worthwhile of it."[69]

> . . . the emphasis [according to Whitehead] is to be on cultural values rather than quick cash return . . . [and] another aim is national importance, rather than parochial arty accomplishment.[70]

> Instead of the traditional European pattern, in which several plays are presented weekly, Mr. Whitehead said he favored the production of four or five plays during a season, each play to run a month or so, with the more successful returning at the end of the season.
>
> Mr. Whitehead said past American efforts in repertory had failed in part because they had not succeeded in exciting the public's enthusiasm.[71]

This belief in public relations, in the correlation of a repertory theatre's success with its ability to excite the public, continued for years. In September, 1963, when reminded of past failures of repertory in New York, he

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[68]Whitehead, Playbill, IV, 10, p. 4.

[69]Ross, New York Herald Tribune, August 30, 1959,

[70]William Glover, "Here's Something New in the Performing Arts," (Associated Press article), The Shreveport Times, August 17, 1958. [Scrapbook]

[71]New York Times, May 16, 1958, p. 27.

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replied, "'What took place in the past is never important if the present is exciting and good. I just feel this is the most exciting and vigorous movement that the American theater could possibly embark upon.'"[72]

As for his idea that he could have a repertory theatre with a permanent company doing one production after another, there were partisans on both sides. Martin Gottfried, among others, was appalled by this stock system masquerading as repertory. Whitehead responded by offering a compromise: plays would alternate on a half weekly basis. Howard Taubman approved this solution: "By presenting three consecutive repetitions of a play, the company will not tie itself to killing demands of incessant change. By offering three different plays a week it will remain faithful to its ideals of repertory."[73] Purists remained dissatisfied with this compromise.

Whitehead advocated the creation of a permanent company from the beginning. "The core of the drama project is development of a permanent acting company."[74]

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[72]"Past Pitfalls . . .," New York World Telegram and Sun, September 26, 1963. [Scrapbook]

[73]New York Times, November 26, 1961, Section 2, p. 1.

[74]Glover, The Shreveport Times, August 17, 1958. [Scrapbook]

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> Mr. Whitehead envisioned an organization consisting of a managing director and two producing directors entrusted with the training and development of the acting company. The company would have twenty top actors. Stars would be signed to season contracts. There would also be a studio where selected young players would receive free training.[75]

"He [also] declared it 'unquestionably possible' to convince established talent to commit themselves to the repertory theatre for extended period."

> "It is true," he said, "that a company fully conditioned to working together can achieve greater and more exciting objectives. But repertory merely for the sake of repertory is meaningless. Its only value is in creating a more alive and exciting evening in the theatre."[77]

A year later, during May and June of 1959, Whitehead toured repertory theatres in England, France, Italy, Germany, and Austria, and in December visited the theatres in the U.S.S.R. He felt that the United States had reached a "stage in our development [in which] there is a strong enough need for the things only a repertory theatre can fulfill. Trying to define this need made me want to go to Europe."[78]

When he returned, he reported that the trip had been inspirational.

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[75]New York Times, May 16, 1958, p. 27.

[76]New York Herald Tribune, May 16, 1958. [Scrapbook]

[77]New York Times, May 16, 1958, p. 27.

[78]Whitehead, Playbill, IV, 10, p. 4.

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> "It changed my entire thinking about repertory theatre here," [Whitehead said. . . . He was most impressed with the work in the German theatre, especially that of the Berliner Ensemble.] "They have achieved amazing range and style and they have standards of production we would do well to emulate. There is nothing like talented actors and directors working together over a period of time. Their accomplishment can be breath-taking."[79]

> Watching those theatres in operation, the realization was born that we were on the brink of a creative revolution in America, as if we were about to enter a golden age in the next fifteen years, idealistic and unsophisticated though that may sound.[80]

> Unlike Broadway, such a theater [as ours] will not draw upon anywhere in the world in casting its productions. This limitation is its greatest strength. Through a permanent company, cast from the finest professionals in America, working on a continuing and ever-expanding program, and through the organic relationship of the Juilliard drama school, where students will be chosen for talent only, [and which will] eventually . . . become the main source upon which the main company will draw, the Lincoln Center theater will . . . nourish and invigorate its own growth.[81]

Few critics questioned the value of a permanent company, but some were concerned about the equation of stars with the casting requirements of a varied repertoire of plays. Whitehead's announced preference in play choice, however, was as controversial as his loose definition of repertory. He advocated concentration on American plays, "'both old and new, but [I] would not exclude European and classical works. The vitality with which these are presented

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[79]"Gossip of the Rialto," New York Times, June 28, 1959, Section 2, p. 1.

[80]Whitehead, Playbill, IV, 10, p. 4.

[81]Ibid., The Performing Arts, I, 9, p. 2.

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will make them American in character."[82] His avowed interest, however, was in contemporary plays.[83]

"'The life of the theater is in its new work,' said Whitehead, [for he finds American dramatic literature limited and feels] 'it is the new theater's business to help increase it. With the exception of O'Neill's, most of the American plays produced since the first world war have proved to be ephemeral.'"[84]

In an article Whitehead wrote for Theatre Arts, he stated, "Such a theatre must develop new work . . . Because new work is the very life of the theatre, it is also essential in the make-up of Lincoln Center, since the new playhouse cannot be allowed to become a museum."[85] Not everyone agreed with this. Tyrone Guthrie's attitude toward museums was more charitable.

> Suppose a repertory theatre to have a more intelligent and purposeful policy and to conduct its affairs more efficiently than any of the managements at present operating. Its mere existence will not automatically call into being a crop of dramatic masterpieces. I see no reason to believe that, even in the present conditions of anarchy, there are many produceable plays lying around managers' offices or in their authors' desks. There are some, no doubt, but these mute, inglorious, Miltons, Molieres, Maughams or Millers are

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[82]New York Herald Tribune, May 16, 1958. [Scrapbook]

[83]Betty Lee, Toronto Globe and Mail, January 25, 1964. [Scrapbook]

[84]Ross, New York Herald Tribune, August 30, 1959, Section 4, p. 1.

[85]Robert Whitehead, "American Festival Fundamentals," Theatre Arts, June 1960, p. 64.

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> no more likely to be offered expression and glory by a repertory theatre than by the multitude of private producers who in New York, to do them justice, have a creditable record of enterprise.
>
> The principal public service that I can foresee for a repertory theatre is that in any given season at least three or four classical masterpieces would be in its program.[86]

Oliver Sayler, who wrote about such theatres as the Moscow Art and the Max Reinhardt company, and a staunch advocate of repertory, had written in Theatre Arts two years earlier that "To limit our first new repertory theatre to contemporary American plays would be nothing short of chauvinism. So long as we have a Metropolitan Opera we can indulge an American opera or a modern opera. But first the Metropolitan!"[87]

There was validity in the early criticism concerning rotating repertory. Its reputed value as a method of production is that the system can adapt, that it is flexible. A popular production can be presented frequently and, in effect, subsidize a play with more limited appeal which might have only one performance each week. In addition, rotating repertory has obvious advantages for actors, of economic security and artistic variety. This system is not the only valid method of theatrical production, however, though Americans regard the European repertory companies with envy.

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[86]Tyrone Guthrie, "Repertory Theatre: Ideal or Deception," New York Times, April 26, 1959, Section 6, p. 40.

[87]Oliver M. Sayler, Theatre Arts, June 1958, p. 24.

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Whitehead's artistic preference for less rigorous scheduling did not, therefore, automatically lower the theatrical standards for a theatre at Lincoln Center. However, calling it a repertory theatre was an error in nomenclature and a miscalculation, because it invited criticism that the organization was either opportunistic or was compromising its avowed purpose from the outset.

The preference for new works by American authors was a calculated risk that the new plays would also be good. Whitehead's choice also represented the contemporary appraisal of American acting, which admitted that while our actors served current plays well many lacked the scope and training required for the classics. If Whitehead could attract established performers to his permanent company, his artistic intentions need not have been called into question. Most other theatres outside the Broadway arena relied on the talents of competent, unknown actors as a necessary economic policy, not from artistic choice.

Whitehead wanted to create a theatre that seems reminiscent of his ANTA play series in which he produced five plays with some stars and a pool of younger actors. That had been ambitious and successful. Further, the stated aim at Lincoln Center was to create an American theatre comparable in stature and skill to that of the European institutions, not an American copy of an Old World original.

This artistic philosophy could not be properly judged until the organization, upon which it was based, had

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been formed, funded, and allowed to perform for some time. Just as pennant-winning teams in sports are not recruited in a single season nor evaluated on the basis of the coach's prophecies, so Whitehead's organization was going to require time to learn individual strengths and weaknesses, to develop a method of working together and to select personnel based on the company's needs.

In one area, however, Whitehead displayed unexpected naivete: the cost of creating and maintaining a theatre. Although at Lincoln Center he would not need to assemble a creative team anew for single productions upon which all the stakes would ride, he could not rely on the decreased unit cost of production that results from the extended run of a hit play.[88] Kenneth Tynan commented succinctly on Whitehead's financial forecast:

> But where will the actors, directors, and authors come from? Who will pay them? Mr. Whitehead's guess is that the theatre will need a minimum of $750,000 to see it through its first year. After that, he thinks it will be able to pay its own way.
>
> To my thinking this is a fatal error. . . . [The Lincoln Square Theatre] must not be asked to compete with Broadway on Broadway's terms, any more than the public library is asked to compete with Scribner's bookshop. It should be demanded of the new theatre that it should lose a solid, whacking sum of money each year, just as the Metropolitan Opera House makes an annual deficit of half a million dollars.[89]

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[88]"[Presenting] exact repeats of the same program night after night [the Broadway theatre is] engaged in what might be called 'quasi-mass-production.' . . . [The] product [is] presented to the audience again and again until there are no further ticket buyers." Toffler, p. 164.

[89]Tynan, pp. 374-375.

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Oliver Sayler was more emphatic about the financial needs of a repertory theatre:

> Endowment--not subsidy. All theatre must have subsidy in one form or another: subscription, theatre parties, rent concessions, the good faith and credit of the producer or the pledges of his angels. But subsidy is not enough for repertory. Since repertory builds for time instead of for the moment, the income from endowment is the only safe subsidy. Annual grants-in-aid may approximate the dependability of endowment in tradition-respecting Europe, but in volatile America nothing short of securities safe for widows and orphans will suffice. That means a production capitalization of from $3,000,000 to $5,000,000 for the company alone. I do not maintain that a top-heavy endowment in its entirety must be banked before the wheels start moving. . . . But the concept, the goal of endowment must be accepted from the start, and more than a token of it should be on hand as an example and a nest egg.[90]

By August of 1959, Whitehead was talking about continuing subsidy.

> Although Mr. Whitehead expects that many of the productions will be money makers, he foresees that the Lincoln Center theater will need a subsidy to keep going. He is worried about this money problem and thinks the best solution might be for some big foundation to set aside a fund from which the theater could draw the income when necessary.
>
> "It seems to be pretty well agreed that Beethoven and Verdi have to be subsidized. But the theater will have no such tradition behind it. As a matter of fact, one of our jobs will be to break tradition and create new traditions as we go along. So how do we get financial security? We certainly don't want our board meeting to be panicked by continually thinking how in hell we're going to get enough money to get through the next year."[91]

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[90]Sayler, p. 24.

[91]Ross, New York Herald Tribune, August 30, 1959, Section 4, p. 1.

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> "[Our theatre never] will be self-supporting. As a producer I find subsidies difficult to accept. I keep thinking, if we only had 400 more seats. The idea of doing capacity business and losing money is painful, but it's the way we'll have to operate. Right now Lincoln Center is helping us; after that the board of directors will have to make up the deficit--like the Met."[92]

In 1964, "after years of plugging for profit, [Whitehead] now finds himself plugging just as fervently for non-profit. 'To do this of course requires a subsidy,' he says. 'Such a theater can never be financially a self-supporting operation. In fact, if it were ever to become a profitable enterprise that would literally be the first step toward its destruction.'"[93]

How pleased Lincoln Center was with Whitehead's conversion to "subsidy as necessity" can be only guessed. However, with the theatre building and the rest of the physical plant costing more than anticipated--the estimated cost of the theatre doubled before the building was completed--Lincoln Center probably did not see itself as a benefactor to the theatre beyond an initial grant of $500,000 to allow Whitehead to organize a company and put it into rehearsal before construction of the building was completed.

At the time of his appointment as consultant to Lincoln Center, Whitehead was well-thought of in the theatrical community. Brooks Atkinson had written of him as

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[92]Leonard Harris, "Elia Kazan Tells Plans for Center," New York World Telegram and Sun, July 22, 1963. [Scrapbook]

[93]New York Times, January 24, 1964, p. 19.

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"a competent fanatic" in his handling of the ANTA play series:

> Theatres are founded and maintained by competent fanatics. There is no continuing theatre of any consequence without a fanatic at the root of it. Nothing permanent happens in a theatre until a fanatic sets it in motion. Doubtless a fanatic needs help now and then, but a fanatic does not need help as much as a theatre needs a fanatic.[94]

Lincoln Center, however, did not see Whitehead as a zealot but as a successful theatrical producer. The center's profile of Whitehead in its house organ, The Performing Arts, is revealing for what it emphasizes:

> In October, 1947, a former actor produced a play on Broadway rejected by other managements as "non-commercial." This venture launched a notable production career and established an impressive Broadway record for quality plays.
>
> That first production was Medea in the Robinson Jeffers version, starring Judith Anderson, and the producer was Robert Whitehead, whose name has since become synonymous with artistic theatre and who has proved consistently that good plays are not necessarily "death at the box office." . . . Mr. Whitehead combines idealism, taste and vision with a healthy realism and a strong business sense.[95]

Julius Novick wrote of the beginnings of the Repertory Theater as a direct contrast to those of other art theatres:

> Traditionally, an art theatre begins with a theatre artist profoundly dissatisfied with the lack of opportunity for meaningful work offered by the commercial theatre, and willing to sacrifice years of his life to

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[94] New York Times, June 8, 1952, Section 2, p. 1.

[95] The Performing Arts, III, 9, pp. 7-8.

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> create new opportunities for himself and others. Sometimes there are two such fanatics; sometimes a group . . . . But the Repertory Theatre of Lincoln Center must be one of the very few theatres ever to have begun as a slum-clearance project.[96]

More accurately, the theatre was an indirect product of the slum clearance project, but Novick's point is apt. Fanatics do not form committees or commission feasibility studies; they simply do what they must do. At the time, New York's The Living Theatre was the city's only dramatic repertory group, "doctrinaire and very uneven, [but showing] a vitality and purity of intention found nowhere else in town."[97] If Lincoln Center had wanted zealots, it would have invited the Living Theatre to join the project.

The Lincoln Center theatre was not intended to be the Theatre-Libre. It was to be a worthy neighbor for the Met and the Philharmonic, established with a munificent donation and developed through consultation with experts, a sedate process incompatible with idealistic frenzy. The strongest emotion that could have survived such discussion and scrutiny was enthusiasm.

> "The trouble with the whole thing," a Broadway producer remarked to me, a propos of the Lincoln Square Theatre, "is that there's nobody in on it who really gives a burning damn." He exaggerated, of course; but

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[96]Julius Novick, Beyond Broadway: The Quest for Permanent Theatres. Dramabook (New York: Hill & Wang, 1969), p. 180.

[97]Robert Hatch, "The Case for Repertory," Horizon, V, 3 (January 1963), p. 107.

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> not, I think, absurdly. Many burning damns, in addition to a lot of money, will have to be given if this great chance is to be fully seized. . . .[98]

Meanwhile, plans for the theatre began amid cautious prognosis and occasional optimism.

> To build Lincoln Center the place, it was necessary to accept Lincoln Center the idea. The question is whether one was worth the other. In the instance of the repertory theater, since such a theater did not exist before Lincoln Center was built, no case can be made for a good thing having been spoiled. At worst, the possibility for a great thing will have been fumbled.[99]

> We have reason to be pleased, but it is too soon to celebrate. As Van Wyck Brooks many years ago said (in effect): America is the land of promising first acts. An American characteristic which may frustrate our hope in the new theatres is impatience. We must not expect miracles overnight. Time is required to mature all concerned: the directorate of the various theatres, their personnel, their audiences. We have no settled tradition to proceed from. We must learn.[100]

> There must be somewhere an artistic director with passion, zeal, and knowledge enough to create a tradition of repertory drama in a city--and a country--where it has never existed. His name might be Kazan . . .[101]

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[98]Tynan, p. 375.

[99]Gottfried, Theater Divided, p. 149.

[100]Clurman, The Naked Image, p. 148.

[101]Tynan, p. 375.

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CHAPTER FOUR

I

Elia Kazan became Robert Whitehead's associate at Lincoln Center in October 1959. His appointment as consultant for the repertory theatre was a step up from his prior membership on the Advisory Council. "'We face a couple of years of very careful planning,' Mr. Whitehead said . . . 'Mr. Kazan will share with me the problems of planning, and when the theater gets started he will probably direct one or two of about five plays in the first season.'"[1]

John D. Rockefeller 3rd also commented on the Kazan appointment: "'From the earliest days of the planning of Lincoln Center, we have had the considerable benefit of the interest and generous counsel of Elia Kazan. All of us at the center are pleased that Mr. Kazan has accepted Mr. Whitehead's invitation to share in bringing the repertory theatre to reality.'"[2]

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[1]Stuart Little, "Lincoln Center Appoints Elia Kazan as Consultant," New York Herald Tribune, October 22, 1959. [Scrapbook]

[2]"Kazan Named to Aid Lincoln Repertory," New York Times, October 22, 1959, p. 46.

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"At first, the Lincoln Center board was great with Kazan and Whitehead," Arthur Miller observed some years later, "because Whitehead had a reputation as a tasteful and successful producer, and Kazan--well, Kazan was Kazan."[3] In some circles, Kazan's appointment was seen as a coup, the enlisting of one of Broadway's most successful directors for the theatre at Lincoln Center. In others, the selection of Kazan in addition to Whitehead was received less cordially.

> . . . the superficial assumption underlying the selection of Kazan and Whitehead [was] that the troubles with the American theatre were exclusively external. The original reasoning might have gone something like this: Broadway actors, directors and playwrights function under impossible artistic conditions; change these conditions, and the quality of their art will change. . . .
>
> Now there was some truth in this analysis, but only a very small portion of the truth. For instead of being hamstrung by hostile conditions, the Broadway professional was actually functioning in a system which he had created, and which was perfectly tailored to his needs. . . . the inability of American actors to merge into an ensemble owes a good deal to method training, which encourages the performer to concentrate primarily on internal problems of the self, while the disappearance of great plays from the commercial theatre has as much to do with the ignorance, incapacity, and indifference of the professional as with the venality of the producer. The career of Kazan himself is a perfect illustration of this. For years, he was in a position to direct any play he wanted, and for years he limited his objectives to the work of Williams, Miller, Anderson, MacLeish, and Inge. . . .[4]

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[3]"Arthur Miller vs. Lincoln Center," New York Times, April 16, 1972, Section 2, p. 5.

[4]Robert Brustein, Seasons of Discontent (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1965), pp. 249-250.

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Kazan joined the Group Theater in 1932 and "emerged as a success in 1937 in [Clifford] Odets's 'Golden Boy,' in the part of a gambler and gunman."[5] Five years later, he directed Thornton Wilder's The Skin of Our Teeth.

> Since, at age 33, he had little to lose, he was willing to tackle the Wilder play, a highly dubious property before opening night, and the formidable, preselected cast, including Fredric March, Florence Eldridge, and Tallulah Bankhead. The play was a hit, running for 359 performances, and Kazan became one of the most sought-after directors in America.[6]

The Skin of Our Teeth won the Pulitzer Prize, as did two Tennessee Williams plays directed by Kazan--A Streetcar Named Desire and Cat on a Hot Tin Roof. Two of Kazan's films, On the Waterfront and Gentleman's Agreement, won him Oscars.[7]

> "Yes, we've got show business in America and not a theatre or film art," Kazan says, reflecting on his career. "By luck, once in a while, something comes through this mess made by freaks, this floating crap game. But I have done my best all the time--my flops have simply been my failures. I think of Shakespeare. He wrote five good plays and five pretty good plays. . . . [sic] No man is a machine. You can say this about me, though: I've always done the scripts I wanted with the actors I wanted the way I wanted. That's the way I've played the game and I'm proud of it."[8]
>
> "I'm going to work for Lincoln Center," Kazan says, "as long as I can do what I want to do. When I can't do that, I'll quit."[9]

For Whitehead, Kazan's appointment was "evidence of the group's vision: "We wanted a living theatre aimed at a more

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[5]"Elia Kazan," New York Times, January 24, 1964, p. 19.

[6]Thomas B. Morgan, "Elia Kazan's Great Expectations," Harper's Magazine, September, 1962, p. 73.

[7]New York Times, January 24, 1964, p. 19.

[8]Morgan, p. 73. [9]Ibid., p. 66.

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civilized world, an institution with a recognizable stamp, and we felt Kazan would give us this.'"[10]

In April 1960, Whitehead and Kazan discussed their plans for the theatre. These statements formed the basis for much subsequent criticism of the Lincoln Center theatre, although those with misgivings usually pointed out that the team had ample time for second thoughts. The early statements, however, are consistent with those made as much as three years later. Whitehead and Kazan knew what they wanted their theatre to be and that was what they began to create.

> Sometime in January, 1961, Elia Kazan and Robert Whitehead will take leave of the commercial theatre. "I am not going to direct any Broadway plays for maybe three, four years," Kazan said recently. Whitehead added, "Me--I am giving up the Producers Theatre for a long time, maybe for the rest of my life."
>
> Their plays will be performed not in long runs of consecutive performances, but in repertory twice a week. And modern classics like 'The Glass Menagerie' and 'Death of a Salesman' will be revived and reinterpreted. "Everybody," Kazan says, "should see 'Death of a Salesman' every five years."
>
> Then, thirty of our leading actors and actresses, including Geraldine Page and Christopher Plummer, will be removed for a long time from the pool of talent available to the bourgeois impresarios of the 44th Street ambiance.[11]

The salaries would be between Equity minimum and Broadway scale: "someone of Miss Page's status might receive $800 a

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[10]Ibid., p. 67.

[11]"Whitehead and Kazan Strategy," New York Times, April 17, 1960, Section 2, p. 1.

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week." There would be long rehearsal periods and "no stars in the company," the members of which would be listed alphabetically. No threat to commercial productions was posed by the new organization because it aimed at a different audience and its ticket scale would be "almost as high as Broadway, except for special student performances."[12]

> On the other hand, both men shun the idea of the dutifully dull repertory theatre given over to "pseudo-realistic productions of 'The Wild Duck,' always that same damned 'Wild Duck.'" Whitehead said they would avoid the smell of the library and the precious revivals of minor plays like 'King John.'
>
> Kazan said, "Why should anybody go to the theatre out of a sense of duty? If we do a classic, it has to have meaning for us today and it's got to be exciting. Why should anybody go to our new theatre unless we're different? Why should anybody support us unless we're exciting?" . . .
>
> [Kazan described] "a theatre of color and spectacle, of mobility in the use of stage dynamics, of a utilization of the arts of the painter, the singer, the choreographer, the pantomimist."[13]

Potential productions included The Forty Days of Musa Dagh, Marco Millions, Dreiser's Sister Carrie and Zola's Germinal. Each season, according to Whitehead, would have five new productions: two new plays by leading American writers, such as O'Neill or Wilder.[14]

During this planning period, Whitehead and Kazan made a key decision: the Actors Studio would not be invited to join the Lincoln Center theatre. The Studio had been founded in 1947 by Elia Kazan, Cheryl Crawford, and Robert

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[12]Ibid.

[13]Ibid., p. 3.

[14]Ibid.

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Lewis "as a training ground for young professionals." Kazan taught the class with actors who had prior professional experience, while Lewis worked with a class of those who had little experience. By 1951, Kazan was recruiting instructors, owing to Lewis' departure, and because his own directorial chores took up more of his time. During that year, Lee Strasberg joined the Actors Studio.[15]

Strasberg had been, with Cheryl Crawford and Harold Clurman, a founder of the Group Theatre, of which Kazan and Lewis had been members, and at the Studio, he "returned to the methods and techniques he used in the Group," emphasizing "deep intense personal soul-searching."[16] According to Strasberg, the Studio was discussing participation in Lincoln Center as early as 1956-57. "[We] had presented a plan [by 1959] based on the concept of a large enough company to be a floating permanent company, an idea developed by me . . . of an American repertoire together with the world classics."[17] However, Gordon Rogoff, administrative director of the Studio in 1959 and 1960, recalls that the question of joining Lincoln Center was an issue between Kazan, still one of the directors of the Studio, and

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[15]Paul Gray, "Stanislavsky and America: a Critical Anthology," TDR, IX, 2 (Winter 1964), [T 26], pp. 42-43.

[16]Ibid., p. 44.

[17]Lee Strasberg, letter, TDR, XI, 1 (Fall 1966), [T 33], p. 236.

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Strasberg, as well as between Kazan and the Lincoln Center Board.[18]

In 1959, Kazan wrote a letter to Whitehead concerning Strasberg's suitability as head of the training program for the new company.

> The question is not who knows a lot or who's done a lot somewhere else or, even, who'll give us the best advice. The question is who is going to do the job here. Who is going to show up every day and do the job in the '60s. And I don't believe that _____ is, and I don't believe _____ is. I know he isn't because I know him of old. . . .
>
> But Lee Strasberg will. He has been doing it for 15 years or 30 years, depending on how you look at it, and he will. You know he will . . .
>
> And he is here, and he is a teacher and nothing else, and he is at the peak of his powers and he wants to do it. . . . His whole life has been a gruesome miscarriage and a great, great loss if because of some well-intentioned bungling by Edgar Young [Lincoln Center vice-president] or John Rockefeller or whoever-thehell, Lee didn't get this job.[19]

Whitehead, however, was opposed to a direct connection with the Studio because of Strasberg.

> We didn't want Strasberg. I feel that Strasberg is responsible for the cult that destroyed the healthy idea--the outrageous cry-out necessary to our drama in the thirties. Through Strasberg the psycho-sexual interpretation of the subtext has become a major force now. At Lincoln Center we will be anti-psychoanalytic. We want to establish a new character for our performers, as well as the theatre.[20]

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[18]Gordon Rogoff, "Lee Strasberg: Burning Ice," TDR, IX, 1 (Winter 1964), [T 26], p. 132.

[19]Jerry Tallmer, "Storm Over Lincoln Center," New York Post, December 27, 1964. [Scrapbook] The ellipses and blanks are Tallmer's.

[20]Gray, TDR, IX, 2, pp. 53-54, quoting Robert Whitehead.

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When an association with Lincoln Center did not materialize, and then Kazan accepted the post of co-producing director there, Strasberg felt, "It was a serious blow to us. We had to decide. I frankly wasn't sure what the Studio could do. The people had chosen to remain together, not just for individual development but as a theatre."[21] The eventual decision was that the Studio should form its own company. Shortly thereafter, Kazan announced his resignation as a Studio director. "'I felt I couldn't wear two hats,' he says. 'Between the Center and the Studio, I would have been competing with myself!'"[22]

> The time is now coming for active production at the Lincoln Center Repertory Theatre. . . At the same time, the Actors Studio has embarked upon its own program of production. While I am in general sympathy with this program, I must now recognize that it overlaps and even competes with some of the activity for which I'll be responsible at the repertory theatre.[23]

The same day, "there was a note from Kazan posted at the Studio:

> To All: I resigned as a director--only. That was necessary. But I'm still with you and very much for any and all efforts you make. I'm sure that whatever you do will bring credit to our years of work and to Lee's teaching.
>
> --The First Member"[24]

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[21]Richard F. Shepard, "'Problems' of Success," New York Times, May 26, 1963, Section 2, p. 1.

[22]Morgan, p. 68.

[23]"Kazan Quits Actors Studio Post," New York Times, May 28, 1964, p. 24, quoting Elia Kazan.

[24]Gray, p. 54.

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Strasberg's comments were less philosophical. With the Actors Studio theater, "'we hope to set the pattern for theatre activity throughout the country.' He insisted that it was a mistake on the part of Lincoln Center to exclude the Actors Studio, which is 'the most significant internationally recognized American contribution to the theatre,'"[25] In an interview in 1975, he amplified his earlier remarks:

> Lincoln Center was another great, lost opportunity. There was a possibility that Actors Studio would be the organizing unit; instead they chose Mr. Kazan, who decided to go without the Studio. It was a mistake on his part; how can you do something if your artistic credo is being questioned? . . .[26]

The Studio's theatre was organized with Strasberg as artistic director; Cheryl Crawford, executive producer; Roger L. Stevens, general administrator; and Geraldine Page and John Stuart Dudley as members of the administrative board. Kazan was still optimistic about signing Studio members for his own company, "but a decided coolness now [existed] between Kazan and the old bunch."[27]

Almost a year later, the following item appeared in Leonard Lyon's column:

> Not since Trotsky left Lenin and Stalin has any rift caused as much rancor as Elia Kazan's departure from the Actors Studio to head the Lincoln Center Theater. Performers became heated partisans, and rival repertory groups were established. The Actors Studio was

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[25]New York Times, May 28, 1962, p. 24.

[26]Joan Barthel, "The Master of the Method Plays a Role Himself," New York Times, February 2, 1975, Section 2, p. 13.

[27]Morgan, p. 68.

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> the first to reach Broadway with "Strange Interlude." Kazan's theater remains to be built.
>
> On Sunday afternoon the Actors Studio softball team gathered in Central Park for the opening of the Broadway Show League games. Johnny Strasberg noticed Elia Kazan, carrying a baseball glove. Kazan said: "I'm here to play with the Lincoln Center team," but none of his teammates showed up. Kazan, at last, rejoined the Actors Studio team.[28]

Kazan, however, never saw himself as a team player, and that was a major factor in ruling out the Studio at Lincoln Center. In a theatre, according to Kazan, there was room for one viewpoint only; by going to Lincoln Center alone, he made sure that viewpoint would be his own.

> "The Actors Studio Theatre is run by a committee. I wouldn't sit on a committee with Jesus Christ, much less Stanislavski, and you can quote me. I'm me! They're already jelled up there. We are just starting at Lincoln Center. Theatre should represent one single viewpoint--Lincoln Center is my faults, my virtues . . ."[29]

By 1962, Kazan was certainly the more audible of the two co-producing directors.

At the same time, it appeared that he had virtually unlimited resources upon which to draw in his theatre.

> He will be able to rehearse plays for as many as thirty weeks, ten times the average Broadway rehearsal period. (Kazan rehearsed the cast of J.B. a few years back "for exactly 19 goddamn days.") At the end of his fiscal year he won't be required to balance his considerable budget, let alone earn a profit for angels. If he shows a loss on ticket sales, the deficit will be made up by patrons such as Mrs. Vivian Beaumont Allen . . . Most important, Kazan will have a choice of plays, players,

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[28]"The Lyons Den," New York Post, April 23, 1963. [Scrapbook]

[29]Gray, p. 57.

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> and methods of production limited by his own aims and not much else. He must make certain decisions with Robert Whitehead, his co-director whose functions are largely administrative. He must also satisfy Laurence Rockefeller [sic], chief sponsor, and William Schuman, president of the Center. But these men are inclined now to defer to Kazan in artistic matters.[30]

The major question, therefore, was the sort of theatre that Kazan wished to create. "'I have a great belief,' Kazan says, 'that just below the surface there is a great gap between what we profess and what we do. It's a disease. You can die from it. I want to show it up.'"[31] Thus, Kazan suggested that his statements on artistic matters were to be taken seriously as the aims of his theatre.

On the occasion of the dedication of Philharmonic Hall, the New York Times published a special Lincoln Center section. The article on the theatre, called "Theater: New Stages, New Plays, New Actors," was written by Kazan, and it amounted to a Kazan Manifesto, incorporating his views on play choice, casting, theatre architecture, and artistic aspirations.

> We want to make the theatre necessary again as great theaters in eras past were necessary. They dealt with the big themes of their day. They brought clarity to feeling and meaning to existence. . . .
> . . . if you read the blueprints carefully, they are saying that we put the playwright first. . . . [The playwrights] responded to a promise of freedom--of freedom from the box set, of freedom from the smash-hit-or-nothing requirements of Broadway. Whether in repertory or in our small theatre, we will be able to

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[30]Morgan, p. 66. [31]Ibid., p. 72.

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> do plays which are unpopular, plays which offend some part of the audience because of content or form, plays that are against the trend whether spiritually, artistically or politically.[32]
>
> At Lincoln Center, we expect on occasion to say, "We're going to show you this play whether you like it or not, simply because we believe it deserves your attention," or even more arrogantly, "We don't even think it's important whether you 'like' the play--whatever that means. Theater is an art. It can't all be a matter of merchandising. It is important in this case that this author's voice be raised and that it be heard." . . .
>
> . . . So, we have, hopefully dedicated ourselves to doing the best of the new plays. . . . [In addition] There is a whole repertory of American plays written over the last forty years that have become contemporary classics. These plays must be kept alive, and that means kept onstage. They describe the American experience and the contemporary condition. They delineate our lives. They are our theater heritage. They are part of our national wealth and they should be so valued.[33]

Kazan had written about American dramatic literature in virtually identical words for the New York Times four years earlier. At that time the plays he listed were: Desire Under the Elms, Awake and Sing, Abe Lincoln in Illinois, Our Town, The Skin of Our Teeth, The Glass Menagerie, A Streetcar Named Desire, Come Back Little Sheba, Death

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[32]New York Times, September 23, 1962, Section 6, Part 2, p. 18.

[33]Ibid., p. 26. This view was in line with that of Rockefeller ("bring back American classics by O'Neill, Sherwood, Rice, Wilder, Odets, as well as the Shakespearean works . . .") [New York Times, November 18, 1956, Section 6, p. 15.), but a direct contrast to that of Whitehead earlier ("With the exception of O'Neill's, most of the American plays produced since the first world war have proved to be ephemeral.") [New York Herald Tribune, August 30, 1959, Section 4, pp. 1-2.]

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of a Salesman, and Long Day's Journey into Night.[34]

> At the same time we are planning to do classics of other periods and countries, the Greeks, the Elizabethans, Moliere, Calderon, Ibsen, Chekhov, the whole perfectly familiar library. But we hope with a difference. . . .
>
> The style of each production has to be created new and alive for that production. It comes from the director of the occasion, how he sees and feels the play, what he wants to bring out, what he thinks it means, what he feels the author wanted to say. . . . So just as we turn to the practicing playwrights of our day, we will turn to the talented directors of our day for revivals of contemporary classics and for new insights on the library of plays from all ages.[35]

Kazan's artistic credo was received with varying degrees of apprehension and criticism. Martin Gottfried noted, "Given the kinds of people who control Lincoln Center, it came as no surprise . . . that right-wing Broadway people were named as directors [of the theater]. . . . Neither [Whitehead nor Kazan, however,] had the faintest interest in or sense of either classical or new theater."[36] In "Repertory Fever," Robert Brustein examined in detail the initial statements made by the co-producers and was harsh in his evaluation of the aims summarized in the phrases: "classics vital in contemporary terms" and "avoid the smell of the library." Nor was he impressed with the planned

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[34]"Ten Best for a Repertory Theatre," New York Times, November 9, 1958, Section 6, p. 74. The other participants also listed American plays with Helen Hayes selecting five; Cornelia Otis Skinner and Norris Houghton, three; Sean O'Casey, two; and Tyrone Guthrie, one.

[35]New York Times, September 23, 1962, Section 6, Part 2, p. 26.

[36]A Theater Divided, p. 149.

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emphasis on American plays. "The cycle of 'American classics,' after two or three plays by O'Neill, and (this is a generous estimate) one each by Wilder, Williams, and Miller, will be totally exhausted."[37]

Robert Hatch expanded on the idea of American theatre classics in an article written three years after Brustein's.

> When the point comes up here, everyone instantly mentions O'Neill, and then babel ensues. Thornton Wilder, Maxwell Anderson, Lillian Hellman, Elmer Rice, Robert Sherwood, Arthur Miller, Tennessee Williams? Yes, all these and others who come perhaps less quickly to mind are suitable. . . . [However,] an all-American repertory would be composed entirely of excellent side dishes and no main course... . .
>
> Repertory in America, therefore, must acknowledge its native poverty and offer itself as a world stage. It must hope to develop a style that is at once receptive to a wide variety of sources and yet has a cohesive American texture [as the New York City Ballet has done with its productions that have about them] a lucidity, a colloquialism, a lean energy and youthful expression of delighted discovery that are essentially American [while serving well their European sources.][38]

Brustein, however, was not optimistic about the two classical European plays, promised each season: ". . . what works could be chosen when all the European dramas 'smell of the library'?'[39]

Three other matters reflected Kazan's commercial theatre background and seemed Broadway echoes to his critics.

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[37]Brustein, Seasons of Discontent, p. 216.

[38]Hatch, p. 108.

[39]Brustein, Seasons of Discontent, p. 216.

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"'Leading American actors'? With pay scales up to the astronomical portions of a star? Look out! . . ." Out-of-town tryouts and near-Broadway price scale for tickets were received no better.[40]

Thomas Morgan, writing in 1962, was equally rigorous.

> For Lincoln Center, Kazan's single-mindedness, his personal magnetism, and his professional know-how can be invaluable. . . .[41] [However,] he seems to have thought much more about creating a theatre to which people flock than about what might or should be presented to them. For instance, long before he had read Arthur Miller's play or had any idea what it was about, he made up his mind that he wanted it for the repertory company's opening show. Also he has signed up a play by S. N. Behrman, who seems a strange choice, given the pioneering ambitions of the Center. While Kazan has taken himself out of Broadway, it appears that Broadway has not yet been taken out of Kazan . . .[42]
>
> He found the command to succeed at the box office onerous but, for himself, unavoidable, and he lived with it rather than turn to off-Broadway, experimental, or even university theatre. "I've been making my living doing the things I most want to do," Kazan says. "I am what I am. I can think of no other way to be."
>
> Kazan's "stamp," thus far, is a mixture of artistic and commercial values hardly calculated to rescue the American theatre from the one on Broadway. It would be unsportsmanlike to put down Kazan as he begins his new venture. Presidents of the United States are not the only ones who grow and change in their jobs. . . .[43]

Kazan was aware of these criticisms and responded to them.

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[40]Ibid, p. 217; Hatch p. 106.

[41]Morgan, p. 72.

[42]Ibid., p. 68. Kazan announced in the New York Times, (April 7, 1961, p. 26), that he was ending his relationship with Broadway because its economics and short rehearsals are "inimical to the theatre."

[43]Ibid., p. 75.

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> Why such venom from these people [intellectuals and theatre professionals]? If I didn't know better I'd say that the only possible explanation is that they are so angry because somehow they feel threatened. But who's threatening anybody?
>
> The critics of the Repertory Theater of Lincoln Center say we are not what we should be. Of course, they all differ as to what that should be. But we didn't set out to imitate the Old Vic, or the Bristol Rep, or the Comedie Francaise, or the Berliner Ensemble, or Planchon's wonderful group [Theatre de la Cite de Villeurbanne], or the Moscow Art Theater. These institutions grew from different soil. We set out, simply to become ourselves.[44]

It was not only critics, intellectuals, and members of rival companies, however, who had reservations. Kazan stated, "As to my own feelings--never in anything I undertook has the prognosis of my friends been so negative. At first they were incredulous. 'What are you going to do that for?' 'It won't work!' And so on."[45]

> Do I think this theater can succeed? No, not in the way success is recognized in the trade. It won't make money. It will have bad years. It will be, as it already has been--before we've started--the butt of criticism and scorn.
>
> But it will also succeed because we are going to make the effort and the effort, the activity itself, is the thing. . . . The final faith of any artist must be that if a thing is meaningful and alive to him, it will prove so to others. So in that faith, we will go ahead. And see what happens.[46]

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[44]Elia Kazan, "On Process," New York Times, August 9, 1964, Section 2, p. 1. Barry Hyams wrote in a similar vein in the Los Angeles Times, February 18, 1968, p. 24 (calendar section). "Two years [before After the Fall opened], the obituaries had already begun to appear. . . . It did not matter what [Whitehead and Kazan said about their goals.] The words fell on deaf ears. The doctrinaires listened only to themselves as they shrieked down furlongs of magazine columns in an intellectual game played without ground rules, without moderation."

[45]New York Times, September 23, 1962, Section 6, Part 2, p. 29.

[46]Ibid.

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II

In the midst of these heated discussions of the theatre's artistic plans, those same plans began to take physical shape in architectural drawings. Critics hoping to influence the co-directors' thinking in aesthetic matters hoped in vain. The artistic policy reflected the men who articulated it, and Whitehead and Kazan clearly felt that their basic beliefs had been approved and endorsed by Lincoln Center in its selection of them as co-directors. Matters of detail remained to be worked out, but the overall conception did not admit of any need for revision. Though critics might argue that this was not the sort of theatre that was necessary or desirable, Whitehead and Kazan were consistent about the theatre that could be expected. "To some people, it seemed out of order that the first thing Whitehead and I worked on, the first thing we announced, was a plan for a building. But in fact, the building is a declaration in reinforced concrete."[47]

> Mr. Whitehead exhibited a photograph of an ancient stone open air amphitheatre at Vaucluse in France which he recently visited [1959]. The stage juts out into the audience and is enclosed on three sides by it. "Of course our theater will have upholstered seats and a roof but this is the feeling I want. . . . I think

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[47]Ibid., p. 18.

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> what we will try to get is a compromise between the eighteenth century proscenium theater, where the action is set behind a frame and this Roman theater where it comes out into the audience." [Whitehead said][48]

Eero Saarinen was selected as the architect for the new building, and Jo Mielziner was named as theatrical consultant in November, 1958.[49] Saarinen had designed the auditorium and chapel at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the General Motors Technical Center near Detroit, the Milwaukee County War Memorial Center, and the Women's Residence Hall at Vassar College, among others.[50] Mielziner had designed scenery for over two hundred plays, musicals, operas and ballets; his Broadway design credits included Look Homeward Angel, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, Picnic, South Pacific, Death of a Salesman and Strange Interlude.

The New York Times reported,

> Various managers have long expressed the need of bringing a first-hand knowledge of the theatre to the architectural drawing board at the beginning of plans. . . . Mr. Mielziner has been a prospect for the task since he was named last spring to [the Advisory Council]. His appointment yesterday widely was approved [sic] in theatrical circles.[51]

Mielziner was also chairman of the Board of Standards and Planning for the Living Theatre, a standing committee of

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[48]New York Herald Tribune, August 30, 1959, Section 4, p. 1.

[49]New York Times, November 17, 1958, p. 33; November 21, 1958, p. 23.

[50]New York Times, November 17, 1958, p. 33.

[51]New York Times, November 21, 1958, p. 23.

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Chapter One of ANTA, of which Saarinen was also a member. One of the committee's announced purposes was "to stress the advantages to be gained by the employment of theatre specialists from the very beginning of the planning and the importance of retaining these consultants right through to the conclusion of the project."[52] This purpose was seconded in the New York Times on November 23, 1958: "the building of a theatre calls for a theatre man's experience. . . Good judgment and common sense have prevailed at the Lincoln Center . . ."[53]

Following his appointment, Saarinen joined the meetings of the architects for Lincoln Center who were wrestling with the aesthetic problem of creating "six distinctive buildings blending into one architectural whole [while providing], for each of the arts, a place of performance as close to ideal as economics would permit."[54] The other members were Max Abramovitz of Harrison and Abramovitz, designing Philharmonic Hall; Philip Johnson, the New York State Theatre; Gordon Bunshaft of Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, the Library-Museum; Wallace K. Harrison of Harrison and Abramovitz, the Metropolitan Opera House; and Pietro Belluschi and Catalano & Westerman, the Juilliard School.[55]

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[52]Chapter One, April 1962, p. 9.

[53]Lewis Funke, "Rialto Gossip," Section 2, p. 1.

[54]Rockefeller, New York Times, September 23, 1962, Section 6, Part,2, p. 31.

[55]Lincoln Center Summary Report, 1956-1969, p. 16.

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Initially the architects met alone, but when there was little progress toward an over-all design, Rockefeller "was asked to join the group."[56] An early decision concerned open versus closed buildings, and Abramovitz made the case for "'glassy, open buildings, and a day-and-night thing.'" Rockefeller pointed out that if they agreed to accept this concept, all would have to abide by the decision in the Center; all agreed. "'The six of us may have had different ideas,' said Philip Johnson, 'but, after all, we were on the same side of the fence.'"[57] All had been influenced by the "International Style," a term coined by Johnson and Henry-Russell Hitchcock, Jr., in 1932, "in which space is enclosed by thin planes of surfaces as opposed to the suggestion of mass and solidity; in which the emphasis is on interior volume rather than exterior mass; in which the use of large glass areas is a recurrent feature; in which the forms are generally severely geometric."[58]

According to Jo Mielziner, in a building program there are three areas of responsibility. "The architect manipulates the sculptural effects of space, building materials, and social amenities."[59] He is also responsible

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[56]Rockefeller, New York Times, September 23, 1962, p. 31.

[57]Martin, p. 20.

[58]Harold Schonberg, "Six Architects in Search of a Center," New York Times, February 8, 1959, Section 6, p. 24. In an earlier article in the Times, the architectural style was described as "monumental modern." (July 23, 1956, p. 1).

[59]Jo Mielziner, The Shapes of Our Theatres (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, 1970), p. 17.

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for the building's exterior.[60] "The consultant integrates traditional theatre practice with sometimes inventive developments of that practice." And it is the client who "basically . . . governs overall economics."[61]

As a builder of the complex, Lincoln Center, Inc., determined priorities. An early decision involved the question of audience capacity. Financially, as the number of seats available for sale increase, the unit cost of production per seat decreases. Aesthetically, acoustics and visibility argue for a smaller house. "Determining audience capacity and setting up a budget are inseparable factors." Analysis of capacity in relation to a budget must also consider whether the building is to be commercially viable or subsidized.[62] At Lincoln Center, having "committed ourselves to standards of quality . . .the inevitable result [was] a conflict of quality vs. economics."[63] Finally, the center chose smaller capacities, which prepared the ground for charges of elitist practice.

> John D. Rockefeller, III, had insisted from the beginning that "Lincoln Center is for the many." It would seem to follow from this that the Repertory Theater should have the largest possible seating capacity, to make room for as many of the many as possible and to help keep the prices low enough so that the many could

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[60]Ibid., pp. 21-22.

[61]Ibid., p. 17.

[62]Ibid., p. 103.

[63]Rockefeller, New York Times, September 23, 1962, Section 6, Part 2, p. 32.

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> afford to come. Thus the Theatre National Populaire of Paris has 3,000 seats, and even the Comedie Francaise has 1,438; the Festival Theatre in . . . Stratford, Ontario, seats 2,258. The capacity [for the Repertory Theatre] varies between 1,070 and 1,100, depending on whether the thrust stage is in use. So much for the many.[64]

> Another continuing problem from the beginning has been the necessity to design buildings according to the specified need of our constituent organizations and at the same time have Lincoln Center as a whole responsible for their financing. The architect's position is difficult: he deals not with a single owner, but with two--one who sets the specifications and another who pays the bills. [In 1960] we took corrective steps by forming individual subcommittees of our building committee to deal with particular buildings.[65]

Before planning could concentrate on individual buildings, however, it was necessary to plan the over-all site of the complex and the relationship of one building to another. "Designing the buildings is the least of their worries. Those buildings have to be placed in a setting where they will have esthetic relationship to each other: and one man's esthetic is another man's poison."[66] "Our site planning was impeded because two-thirds of the southernmost block was earmarked for a public park (later named Damrosch Park) which Mr. Moses, acting then as Parks Commissioner, deemed to be essential."[67] Moses "battled for

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[64]Novick, p. 182. The same criticism was levelled at Philharmonic Hall and the Metropolitan Opera House.

[65]Rockefeller, New York Times, September 23, 1962, p. 32.

[66]"Six Architects in Search of a Center," New York Times, February 8, 1959, pp. 22-24

[67]Rockefeller, p. 32.

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the inclusion of the 2.34-acre open space in the Lincoln Center project when everyone else involved had opposed such 'waste' of land [and] persuaded the Guggenheim and Damrosch families to donate the necessary funds" for the park facilities.[68] In fact, "the crucial site planning decision . . . [was made by] Robert Moses himself. . . . [He] decided there had been enough shilly-shallying. 'The park,' he said, and pointed with his pencil, 'will be there.' The Center has the charm, then of being located by architectural hazard. . ."[69]

"The architects complained because the location limited their flexibility; the Met staff worried about the noise; . . . the city fretted because the cost estimates [for the park] kept mounting."[70] And Mrs. V. Beaumont Allen suggested that the area set aside for the theatre building was too small. Officially, Lincoln Center stated the theatre site was adequate. "Another spokesman for the center, who refused to be identified, said the architects thought [the] eleven and a half acres were not ample." However, "Moses refused to cut down the size of the proposed park."[71] Ultimately, these space considerations affected not only site planning but the capacity of the theatre, which has "the largest number of seats in the area the theatre was given

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[68]Caro, p. 1157.

[69]Goodman, Dissent, p. 335.

[70]Martin, p. 174.

[71]"Lincoln Center Theatre Donor Fears Site May Be Too Small," New York Times, February 16, 1959, p. 23.

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on the Lincoln Center ground plan."[72] Space limitations were such that the Center had "to combine two buildings in one . . .", the Library-Museum and the theatre.[73]

"Despite the irregularity of the site, we believe our architects succeeded in 'balancing' Damrosch Park by a landscaped North Plaza on the other side of the new Metropolitan Opera House [and] . . . we have achieved the openness and greenery we wanted."[74] The cost of maintenance for these outdoor plazas and the park is paid by the city, while "the Center itself pays for the fountain [in the main plaza which] . . . costs $25,000 a year to operate . . . [and the reflecting pool in the North Plaza.]"[75]

Lincoln Center also became well acquainted with "the delay that attends an interplay between architecture and politics."[76] Plans for the theatre building were delayed by the city's refusal to approve an appropriation for the Library-Museum in July 1961.[77] Four months later, there was still no appropriation. Finally, "at the request of Mayor Wagner, the City Planning Commission, after a special

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[72]Jo Mielziner, private interview, New York City, August 5, 1974.

[73]Rockefeller, New York Times, p. 32.

[74]Ibid.

[75]Martin, p. 174.

[76]Rockefeller, p. 32.

[77]Howard Taubman, New York Times, July 9, 1961, Section 2, p. 1.

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hearing yesterday, approved an amendment to the 1961 capital budget to provide $7,587,000 toward the Library-Museum part of the building."[78]

The vagaries of city government were not the only problems facing the architect of the new theatre building, however. The well-established constituents, such as the Met and the Philharmonic, "gave the client (the future operating owner), the architect and his technical consultants a clear picture of their operations for working out thorough and detailed programs."[79] The newly-created constituents needed more time to create their building programs, "but a conflict of timetables arose. In spite of goodwill and desire on the part of the funding, general programming, and building committees, the results are far from being completely successful."[80]

> In the case of the Beaumont Theater, everyone--the directors of Lincoln Center, the building committee, and the two specially selected producing directors--worked feverishly to achieve a perfect repertory theatre. But there were major disagreements about how to prepare a newly founded acting company. The pressure by the parent body of the Lincoln Center complex to go ahead with steel and concrete, not to mention expensive imported travertine [marble], created conflict with the theatre professionals, who knew full well that an acting company is never born on its two feet. . . . [The result was that Saarinen and Mielziner] were forced to second-guess in creating a definitive building and operating program. . . .[81]

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[78]"Flexible Theatre for Repertory is Designed for Lincoln Center," New York Times, November 14, 1961, p. 1.

[79]Mielziner, p. 127. [80]Ibid.

[81]Mielziner, pp. 127-128.

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Saarinen and Mielziner agreed on certain basic concepts:

> First, neither of us believed in anything but single-form stages; we both were completely opposed to a Multi-form Stage.[82] If our original proposition had been accepted, we would have had the upstairs theatre slightly smaller and the downstairs theatre slightly larger. One of them would have been pure Thrust Stage and the other pure Proscenium.[83] The question of which form would be which size would have been left to the building committee. . . .
>
> We were overruled. In fact, some members of the committee even talked about a basic multi-use scheme for the Beaumont. We turned that down completely, but we realized that we would have to accept the compromise of a dual form design. Our original proposition would have been the wiser decision, and ultimately far cheaper both in initial costs and in subsequent operating costs.[84]

It cannot be determined who suggested initially that the main stage of the Beaumont be dual purpose. Possible designs and models "were shown to the building committee of the Repertory Company and to a group of theatre critics."[85]

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[82]The Multiform Stage: "Inspired by the Total Theatre scheme [designed by Walter Gropius in 1929], . . ., engineers have attempted tour-de-force theatres that could be altered from Proscenium Stage arrangements to Open Thrust arrangements--and even to the Arena shape. Engineering and mechanical ingenuity, coupled with accurate electronic controls, have made these chimeras appear attainable. It is my feeling, however, that this concept has never been successfully realized." Mielziner, pp. 81-82.

[83]"For all Multiform Stages, there is a price paid--not only in dollars, but also in sacrifice of function. No Multiform Stage can be either a perfect Thrust or a perfect Proscenium Stage. Yes, they work. But the added expense, both in design and construction and ultimately in operational costs, is not worth the loss of unified purpose [of a single stage shape]." Mielziner, p. 85.

[84]Mielziner, p. 89.

[85]Ibid.

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Kazan recalled,

> There were countless discussions of the pros and cons of the so-called "thrust," the protrusion of the stage into the auditorium. Eloquent and forcefully reasoned pressure was brought on us to commit our theater to that kind of stage. Its partisans said in essence that the great theater experience comes when the performance is in the audience so that the spectator is watching the actor and at the same time thoroughly aware of his community with the other members of the audience. And further, that everything false in the old theater of illusion is thus cleansed out and swept away.[86]

Walter Kerr, at that time the New York Herald Tribune's theatre critic and an original member of the Advisory Council, was firmly in the thrust stage camp. His article, "Angle of Vision," is the apparent source of Kazan's comments on advocacy of this stage form.[87] Here, Kerr even invoked Kazan's work on Broadway to make his case.

> The impulse that has dictated the shape of the off-Broadway stage burns just as feverishly, if much less freely, in the imaginations of the established professionals who do most of their work uptown. Is Elia Kazan satisfied with the picture-frame stage, the defined curtain line, the sharp division between platform and auditorium that waits for him as he crawls out of a taxicab to rehearse a company of actors on Forty-fifth Street? Apparently not. For Cat on a Hot Tin Roof he had designer Jo Mielziner throw a pie-shaped apron across the orchestra pit so that Barbara Bel Geddes could tiptoe out on it and soliloquize into our faces. For J. B. he expanded this platform and dropped steps from it to the orchestra floor so that Christopher Plummer could dance back and forth between the action and the rest of us; he also abandoned the curtain that normally protects us from the stagehands until the play has begun, invited designer Boris Aronson to construct a setting of interlocking platforms

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[86]Kazan, New York Times, September 23, 1962, Section 6, Part 2, p. 18.

[87]Walter Kerr, The Theater In Spite of Itself (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1963), pp. 87-105.

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> that tilted toward us so that we could see the stage floor, and then carefully called our attention to all these formalized features by taking three or four minutes at the opening of the evening to have men in overalls stroll out, test them, and complete the job of rigging.[88]

Kerr recalls, "Most of my own participation [on the Advisory Council] had to do with discussions [of] the shape of the stage and auditorium. I argued hard and long for a thrust stage without a proscenium arch (I wasn't alone in this, of course). As you will have noticed, I didn't win."[89]

Robert Brustein, however, noted the "essentially realistic" mode of contemporary American plays and found the proscenium arch acceptable. "For years, Walter Kerr and Brooks Atkinson [have] been hammering away at the proscenium stage, declaring that it was responsible for the mediocrity of our drama, and that only an open stage could inspire American masterpieces. [However,] the proscenium arch is perfectly adequate to our contemporary plays . . ."[90] Nor was he alone. "[Others] asserted that the thrust stage is merely a vogue and, at that, already passing. They warned us that if we committed ourselves to anything so inflexible we would in a short time have a white elephant on our hands."[91]

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[88]Ibid., pp. 92-93.

[89]Letter from Walter Kerr to author, June 22, 1974.

[90]Brustein, Seasons of Discontent, pp. 249-250.

[91]Kazan, New York Times, September 23, 1962, p. 18.

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Mielziner was among those who stated a preference for a proscenium stage.

> Basically, the Proscenium is one of the most flexible theatre shapes because any and all styles of production can be effectively realized. . . . The limitation of this theatre shape is that it tends to be less intimate than either Theatre-in-the-Round or the Open-Thrust Stage. Yet it must also be remembered that many playwrights want the kind of separation between audience and actor that the Proscenium shape gives. On the whole, if I were limited to a single stage form, I would choose a flexible Proscenium with an ample forestage.[92]

The final decision, however, for the larger theatre was that it should be designed "so that it could be used as a Proscenium theatre and as an Open-Thrust Stage; and that we, as designers, should find some practical means of making the changeover relatively simple."[93] Regardless of the source of the dual purpose idea,[94] Kazan was its most persuasive spokesman.

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[92]Mielziner, pp. 72-73.

[93]Ibid., p. 89.

[94]Mielziner stated that he and Saarinen advocated a single purpose design for the main theatre and for the small one. "We got it for the small theatre only. Upstairs the board insisted on the compromise." He recalled Kerr's support of a thrust stage, and maintained that he had not suggested that Kerr was responsible for the compromise design. Private interview, August 5, 1974.

In Enter Joseph Papp, Stuart Little ascribes the origin of the idea to Kerr: "Mielziner traced this notion to Papp's old friend Walter Kerr, who was one of a number of critics consulted by the original Beaumont board when the theatre was in planning. On Kerr's strong urging and against Mielziner's better judgment, the board ordered the dual purpose theater with an extraordinary wide stage opening of fifty-six feet. Instead of this Mielziner wanted a proscenium theater with a stage opening of no more than forty feet." (New York: Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, Inc., 1974), p. 298.

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> It seemed to us that this was not an either/or situation. In fact we felt there was danger in any rigid stylistic decision. We didn't want to be stuck behind a great immovable picture frame. Nor did we want a great rigid protruding tongue that we would have to use and fill regardless of the text we were producing. A building shouldn't force itself on a production. The style of production should not be predetermined but should come out of the play.
>
> We were told, "You can't be everything to everybody!" We considered and decided in effect, "Why not?" We can be to each author what he needs. . . . We believe that the style of a performance should come from one source and from that source only and that is the particular nature of each author and his play.
>
> So we said to the architects, Eero Saarinen and Jo Mielziner, that we wanted a theater where plays could be lived out in the midst of an audience--and at the same time, a theater which could quickly revert to what is called a conventional arrangement. Or any variation in between.[95]

The significance of the decision to build a dual-purpose theatre lies not in who may have suggested it but who accepted the compromise. Whitehead spoke of such a theatre as early as August 1959, and Kazan apparently agreed. Although the final decision was in the theatre board's hands, it is difficult to believe that the board would force the co-directors to accept a theatre design to which they were opposed. Or that Whitehead and Kazan would accept an artistic defeat of such proportions and continue to work at Lincoln Center.

The board's decision, however, entailed an economic commitment in terms of increased construction and operating costs, for which the board would have to be responsible. The choice of a dual purpose stage required the installation

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[95]Kazan, New York Times, September 23, 1962, p. 18.

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of elaborate technical equipment to facilitate changes in a theatre planning to operate on a repertory basis. It was probable that during a changeover not only scenery would have to be moved but the form of the stage itself changed. The mechanical system devised by Mielziner was designed to accomplish this in two hours with minimum manual handling.

Another device included in the plans was

> . . . an annular ring [which] may be described as a rotating doughnut, . . . set into the stage floor. The circular part of the stage inside the ring remains stable, while the ring itself rotates by motorized controls or on casters under the stage by a hand winch. The prime use of the ring is to bring on or take off scenery; to move properties downstage in an open scene change. As the ring turns to strike one scene, the following set of props comes into the downstage playing area. [The ring also operates as a traditional turntable when it is necessary to turn an entire set to the audience.][96]

Mielziner also designed a "saturation lighting" system for the theatre to aid in changeovers.

> The entire area of the stage and forestage has its own prefixed lighting equipment. Each acting area is covered with front light from ceiling ports, a Stage Right and Stage Left light, and a backstage light, each in two colors. When the theatre is changed to its Open-Thrust Stage shape, similar equipment, which is focused on those areas, is merely switched on.[97]

Because the theatre was designed for rotating repertory of both modern and classical plays, the Beaumont theatre has a vast backstage, to provide "sufficient 'live' storage onstage for as many as five productions at one time."[98]

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[96]Mielziner, pp. 110-112.

[97]Ibid., p. 106.

[98]Ibid., p. 109.

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Ideally, "these flexible systems [would give] the repertory company additional rehearsal time and also [lower] ever-burdensome operating costs. Certainly, however, it added enormously to construction expenses and to the maintenance of the theatre."[99] Kazan wrote,

> We look forward to continuous operation with several productions in live storage, ready to be brought on quickly, and easily, and so our backstage provides for this. Money is not available for everything we planned, but the space is there, free and waiting, and we do have a revolving table with an outer ring that can work separately, and we do have wagons which permit a quick change of large settings. Technically, we are prepared for the demands of a repertory of plays produced boldly and imaginatively without limitations.[100]

Preliminary drawings were shown in December 1960 at the annual meeting of Chapter One of ANTA. "Mielziner stated, 'We were forced to find fresh approaches to the relationship between the audience seating and the stage facilities. It was decided that intimacy and flexibility would be the keynote of this theatre building. . . .' The new theatre [will] feature a fan-shape seating arrangement and a steeply pitched floor offering excellent sight lines to all patrons."[101]

Whitehead described the process of making numerous models and drawings as an "effort to attain theatricality with greater strength [which] was what eventually brought us

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[99]Ibid., p. 106.

[100]Kazan, New York Times, September 23, 1962, p. 18.

[101]"Lincoln Sq. Plan on Theatre Aired," New York Times, December 29, 1960, p. 18.

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to Model O. Actually its form had no precise precedent in this country or elsewhere though many of its elements existed in Stratford, Ontario, in Chichester, England, the Tyrone Guthrie Theatre in Minneapolis, the Loeb Theatre in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and the classic Greek and Roman theatres."[102]

Model O was, however, still a compromise.

> Even a theatre that can be changed to create only two of the basic stage shapes is a compromise. . . . [It] must be admitted that a stage that can be changed from Arena shape to Open-Thrust shape may not be so serious a compromise. The real difficulty is in designing a theatre that will accommodate both the axial vision demanded by the Proscenium Stage and the radial vision that is basic to the Open-Thrust Stage.[103]

Clive Barnes summarized the consequences of this compromise, noting:

> Inside, [the theatre] is neither one thing nor another. It is incredible that experienced theatre people approved a stage that seems to neatly combine all possible disadvantages accruing to the thrust stage,

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[102]Hyams, Theatre, Vol. 1, p. 51. The Stratford Theatre: "The auditorium is based on a steeply banked, semi-circular, Greco-Roman, three-sided seating arrangement; it surrounds an Open-Thrust Stage that has many basic elements of the Elizabethan stage. Besides entrances from the rear wall, Guthrie also used vomitories, which are entrances and exits to the stage from below the audience seating areas. [The Minneapolis theatre is a variation of this.] Corrections were made in the sight lines at extreme left and right. [Here, Guthrie] included facilities for hanging scenery behind the Thrust. [This theatre was innovative with its] token Proscenium behind the Thrust Stage." Mielziner, p. 78.

[103]Mielziner, p. 85.

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> the proscenium arch and open arena stage. Some of the sight lines are remarkable. On the other hand, it exists. There have been worse theatres than the Vivian Beaumont--and doubtless will be more in the future. The company has been given a bed and must lie in it.[104]

Mielziner commented, "It's a compromise design which I would never do again and which I regretted doing at the time. I just wish we had held out. We pleaded with them but we were instructed by the board to make the compromise, and today I wouldn't do it."[105]

III

The board which made the final design decision was formed in February 1960 when the theatre was organized on an official basis. As vice-president of the Center, Charles Spofford "said that the decision to create the new association had been made at a meeting of the center's board of directors."[106] Thus, the Repertory Theater of Lincoln Center was created with directors selected to "serve as a nucleus of a board of directors . . ."[107]

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[104]"Those Repertory Brats," New York Times, December 13, 1967, p. 53.

[105]Mielziner, private interview, New York City, August 5, 1974.

[106]"Lincoln Arts Center Establishes Repertory Drama Corporation," New York Times, February 16, 1960, p. 39.

[107]The Performing Arts, I, 18 (February 26, 1960), p. 4.

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The association's precursor was the Advisory Council as it was constituted in 1959, by which time six new members were added. Three were life members of ANTA: Mrs. Vincent Astor, Mrs. William Woodward, Sr., and Joseph Verner Reed. The other new members were Mrs. George Hamlin Shaw, Mrs. Howard Cullman, and George D. Woods.[108] Of these, Mrs. Cullman's husband joined the Repertory Theater board as did Mr. Woods. The other initial directors were Mrs. Vivian Beaumont Allen, George Stoddard, Charles Spofford, and Thomas J. Watson, Jr. Mrs. Allen and Mr. Stoddard had been members of the Advisory Council, Mr. Spofford represented Lincoln Center, and Mr. Watson was president of International Business Machines Corporation. Howard S. Cullman was a member of the Metropolitan Opera Association, president of Cullman Brothers (cigar tobacco merchants), U. S. Commissioner for the Brussels World's Fair, and honorary chairman of the Port of New York Authority.[109] "The theatre was a new entity when Lincoln Center started; the Philharmonic and the Opera were old ones. So when they were going to start a theatre, they said, 'who's our board,' and they just took a few people from the Lincoln Center Board."[110]

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[108] Lincoln Center Progress Report, 1959, p. 9.

[109] The Performing Arts, I, 18 (February 26, 1960), p. 4.

[110] Robert Hoguet, private interview, New York City, June 21, 1974.

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George D. Woods was the first board president. Mr. Woods was chairman of the board of The First Boston Corporation, an investment banking firm, and director of Campbell Soup Company, Chase International Investment Corporation, Commonwealth Oil Refining, Co., Inc. (Puerto Rico), The Industrial Credit and Investment Corporation of India (Bombay), Kaiser Steel Corporation, The New York Times Company, and Pittsburgh Plate Glass Company.[111] His interest in theatre was discussed in a profile prepared by Lincoln Center.

> An acknowledged whiz at finding and raising new capital, he has on occasion been a perfect "angel" for theatrical producers. Almost thirty years ago [the early 1930's], when things were rather quiet on Wall Street, he joined with his friend Courtney Burr to finance and produce the Boradway hit, "Sailor Beware." "At this point I looked around and said: 'How long has this been going on?' and really got interested." . . .
>
> Woods really had the Broadway bug. With the late Norman Bel Geddes he sponsored Sidney Kingsley's prize-winning "Dead End," and currently he is identified with Edward Spector Productions, Inc. One of his major interests, however, was the circus. A friend of John Ringling North for many years, he was a director, treasurer and financial advisor to "The Greatest Show on Earth." While his interest was supposed to be purely financial, he could be found in Sarasota each spring getting a preview of the big opening at Madison Square Garden.[112]

When the Repertory Theater Association was formed, its first act was to appoint Whitehead and Kazan "to head the professional company."[113] In organizational structure,

[111] The Performing Arts, II, 15 (March 3, 1961), p. 4.

[112] Ibid.

[113] New York Times, February 16, 1960, p. 39.

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the theatre was similar to regional theatres all over the country. However, within the regional theatre grouping, there were two sorts of theatres: "acorn theatres" which had been founded on a small scale without money, power or much publicity, and "oak tree theatres" which in some measure were brought into being by civic enthusiasm.

> The early acorn theatres were started by anonymous people seeking places in which to work and to define their own untested talents. Their anonymity forced them to start small, to work with no money and no power and with people as unknown as themselves. The oak tree theatres . . . could bring civic power to bear upon their purpose; they could be not only embraced by the Establishment but willed into being by it.
>
> . . . The acorn leaders had banished Broadway without having fully experienced it; theirs was an abstract, philosophical rejection of the central theatre. The creators of the first oak tree theatres were saying "no" to Broadway after many years experience there . . . For the first time, there were people banishing something they knew firsthand.[114]

A fairly representative acorn theatre is the Arena Stage in Washington, D. C. Formed in 1950 as an Equity company, the Arena is run by Zelda Fichandler.

> Zelda chose her own board, and naturally, like any realistic administrator, she chose people who would complement her personality and not overturn her decisions. In this she was typical of the leaders of acorn theatres, who when they began were neither friendly with powerful people nor secure enough to create groups that could conceivably challenge their authority.[115]

The New York Shakespeare Festival, run by Joseph Papp, is another example of the type. There Papp not only runs the theatre but sits on his own board as president.

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[114]Zeigler, p. 65.

[115]Ibid., p. 35.

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The Tyrone Guthrie Theatre in Minneapolis and the Repertory Theater of Lincoln Center belong to the oak tree theatre grouping. In the case of the Repertory Theater, the initiative to create a theatre was taken by Lincoln Center, Inc., once it was primed with Mrs. Allen's donation. Whitehead and Kazan were then brought in. Here, the institution preceded the artists, and this would influence the history of the organization, for in the acorn theatres, "the artist chooses and rules his employers, whereas [in oak tree theatres] the employers choose and rule."[116]

The Board's primary responsibility was "finding the [financial] support [to create and] to sustain the theatre."[117] The amount needed to accomplish this was uncertain. Harold Clurman took heart because the theatre wasn't expected to make money. "It is a sign of sanity that the organizers of the Repertory Theater of Lincoln Center recognize that even if they play at capacity for fifty-two weeks every season they cannot look forward to a profit!"[118] Whitehead expressed the same sentiments.

> . . . we're not ever going to become a money-making proposition. Not even if we play to standing room every time we open our doors. . . . Okay, so we'll be termed a financial failure. But I feel we'll only be a real success if we lose a million dollars a year. Let's hope our subsidies keep coming in.[119]

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[116]Ibid., p. 77.

[117]Ibid., pp. 2-3.

[118]The Naked Image, p. 149.

[119]Betty Lee, "A Man for All Seasons of Lincoln Repertory," The Globe and Mail (Toronto), January 25, 1964. [Scrapbook]

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And this from the man "once credited with the remark, 'It's artistically unhealthy not to make money . . .'!"[120]

At this point, however, the physical plant had a higher priority than subsidy or endowment.

> Buildings are the curse of the creative man. . . . The pattern is all laid out in advance. First there will be lunches in boardrooms, cocktails for the press, and promises to the community that the American theater is about to have a permanent, stable, comfortably padded home.
>
> An architect will be named and he will consult with absolutely everybody, trying to decide whether the dressing rooms shall be a quarter mile or a half mile from the stage, whether the auditorium shall be ski-sloped or shoebox-shaped, whether the stage machinery shall come up through the basement or down through the roof. With a confident smile, the architect will announce that he has satisfied everybody by compromising everything, and construction will begin.
>
> During all the time of planning, and during all the time of construction (which can, mercifully, be a very long time), euphoria reigns undiminished. As the girders are slipped into place, between work stoppages, more and more happy facts become available to the public: this new building has overlooked nothing, it can accommodate eighty actors decently, store as many as eighteen productions for repertory, admit 1,200 or 2,000 paying customers each night.[121]

However, at the same time, cost estimates for the building are growing faster than the building. As Robert Hatch observed,

> Lincoln Center is budgeted at present at $132 to $140 million for construction and land, $10 million for "education and artistic achievement." That works out at a ratio of 14 to one for body and soul. I hope the soul is not being shortchanged. Particularly, I hope

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[120]"Repertory Plans Grow for Lincoln Center," New York World Telegram and Sun, February 19, 1960. [Scrapbook]

[121]Kerr, The Theater In Spite of Itself, pp. 258-259.

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> that Messrs. Whitehead and Kazan get a sum close enough to $5 million [as an endowment] that they are not constrained to the jackdaw practices of Broadway.[122]

The endowment issue was soon a purely academic one. Robert Hoguet asked, "Suppose you had been in charge of putting Lincoln Center together and everybody had wanted a theatre, and you'd been the one king pin. Finally enough money had been raised for the theatre but with no endowment. Would you have said, "No, we'll not have a theatre"?[123]

Perhaps.

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[122]Hatch, Horizon, p. 109.

[123]Private interview, New York City, November 24, 1972.

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CHAPTER FIVE

Following the approval of final plans for the physical plant the Repertory Theater began selecting actors for the company and augmenting its staff. Robert Lewis, co-founder of the Actors Studio, was appointed head of the actors' training program. Anna Sokolow, dancer and choreographer, was chosen as instructor in body movement, and Arthur Lessac was named as instructor in voice, speech, and diction.[1]

Whitehead and Kazan planned a thirty-member company, 15 experienced professionals and 15 younger performers to be selected from the training program.[2] Auditions for that program began in May 1962, and, in September, thirty-five trainees, all under twenty-five years of age, had been picked from over 1500 applicants.

As the program began, Kazan discussed the formation of a company.

> Now about actors. It is perfectly obvious that the program of a repertory theater is something that is not sympathetic to all actors nor even to most actors. It is equally obvious that most actors are not technically prepared and trained to play repertory. . . .

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[1]New York Times, May 16, 1962, p. 34.

[2]Herbert Kupferberg, "The Repertory Theater of Lincoln Center," Theatre 4 (New York: Scribner's, 1972), p. 133.

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> Generally nothing more is required of an actor than to be himself, completely himself and always himself. . . . But now, possibly, it's time to be presumptuous to take chances beyond the commonplace, and even an occasional flight into the oversized. And, hopefully, all without losing the special virtue that our good actors have beyond those of any other people in the world: emotional immediacy. . . .
>
> So we have been looking for a particular kind of actor for our troupe. We won't find them all right away, but in time, slowly, we will put together such a company.[3]

Robert Lewis emphasized that the training program was not to be an acting school, but a "specialized program [to prepare these apprentices] to be able to perform plays in any style and period, including contemporary, but definitely not limited to that." He sought a middle ground between the Method's emphasis on "truthful emotion for the actor" and a technical facility where the "manner of expression is all."

> I would like to demonstrate that we can relate our voice and movement work to the inner experience; what's more, show that the former should derive from the latter. I am not, in other words, going to settle for this OR that, but insist on this AND that. I am calling for a third force.[4]

Lewis planned the program as a process. Initial work would be on etudes "designed to force the actor into patterns of behavior which will extend his expressive range to many periods of history and to characters not usually encountered in contemporary plays [including] work on songs

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[3]New York Times, September 23, 1962, Section 6, Part 2, pp. 26-28.

[4]Robert Lewis, "Director's Credo," New York Times, December 9, 1962, Section 2, pp. 5-7.

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and dances [of various nations, periods, and social class.]" The next step would emphasize poetic scenes, and the process would culminate in rehearsing plays which would employ all aspects of prior study.[5]

After eight months, Lewis left the program.

> I was only committed for those eight months. . . . When they asked me to find an approach to acting with some sense of style, I grabbed it--for myself as much as for them. I learned a great deal. We found out a lot about voice training, for example. . . .[6] I couldn't do what I wanted so I wanted out. I'm supposed to direct a classic play for them--but we'll see. The program is accommodation from the word "go"--I'm afraid it might destroy the artistic work.[7]

Part of the problem in the training program was the pressure of competition.

> Bobby Lewis couldn't finish what he started out to do. Kazan and Whitehead would sit in lots of times, though not always. It was not very much like a school. It was like one long audition and everybody felt they had to deliver. Half of us were going to make it and half of us weren't. Lewis was trying to teach us style but he couldn't communicate it very clearly or translate it for the actor. Factions, talk, petty jealousies broke out--mostly due to the constant pressure of not learning but being watched. But we all held together just the same. As we went along it became clearer that it was Kazan's theatre and Kazan's school. We did a lot of body work and voice work but none of it seemed to correlate with our acting lessons in any way. We found ourselves not working on style. We were all getting used to a new teacher.[8]

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[5]Ibid.

[6]Ibid., "Would You Please Talk to Those People?, (interview) TDR, IX, 2 (Winter 1964), p. 113.

[7]Gray, p. 55.

[8]Ibid., p. 56, quoting an actor in training at Lincoln Center.

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Fifteen actors were selected from the training program: Stanley Beck, Mariclare Costello, Scott Cunningham, Faye Dunaway, Crystal Field, Clint Kimbrough, John Phillip Law, Barbara Loden, Austin Pendleton, Barry Primus, Patricia Roe, Lanna Saunders, Harold Scott, Diane Shalet, and Jack Waltzer. When rehearsals started, said Lewis, "my training period was over. All of the parts were given to actors hired from outside with the exception of Barbara Loden. All the rest of my group were just walking on and off--so nothing was used of the eight months."[9]

Lewis' disappointment is understandable, because it had been hoped that the training program might alleviate some of the difficulties involved in the creation of a company. Most theatres lack the financial means to employ a company that includes both actors trained for the classics and those trained for contemporary plays.

> Very few American actors are prepared to do both types of plays. The problem exists for the Tyrone Guthrie Theatre as well as for the Repertory Theater of Lincoln Center. In Dr. Guthrie's book, he asserts that the actors chosen for his theatre must have daily exercise in speech and voice for at least five years before they achieve the ability to give full value to the language of classic drama. In the interim he is constrained, and willing, to produce Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, and the like, while the actors are still novices in this regard.[10]

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[9]Lewis, TDR, IX, 2 (Winter 1964), p. 113.

[10]Clurman, "The Subject is Not Roses," Theatre, Vol. II, p. 116.

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Another difficulty is the casting of secondary parts which "demand experienced skill, the weight that age alone confers." Actors in their forties and fifties with this ability can earn substantial incomes in film and television.

> They cannot easily afford the luxury of an ill-paid artistic engagement; they are unlikely to want to afford it if it involves nothing better than a series of rather thankless roles.
>
> By this age, artistic ambition and enthusiasm begin to take second place to prudence and comfort. The management has the choice of engaging men of the right age who cannot get better engagements . . . or else putting youngsters into roles for which they have neither the physical nor the imaginative equipment.[11]

The company selected by Kazan lacked classical training for the most part, "although there is no doubt that [many of the] actors in the inaugural company had power on the stage in the realistic tradition which Kazan himself had mastered."[12]

> The company, as it exists at this moment, was born out of this season's production needs and next season's ideas. We sought people who were not only talented actors, but who, we felt, were equipped as human beings to help in this kind of movement. There are actors who are not with us who, we wish, were. New people will enter over the years; others after spending two or more seasons with us possibly may leave. It will take some years to build the company, time, trial and error to achieve an ensemble. . .[13]

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[11]Tyrone Guthrie, New York Times, April 26, 1959, Section 6, pp. 40-42.

[12]Zeigler, p. 143.

[13]Whitehead in Hyams, ed., Theatre, Vol. I, pp. 51-52.

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The first established actor to sign was Jason Robards, Jr. He was not simply joining the company but was "set to play the leading role in Arthur Miller's new play, After the Fall," an announcement with more the flavor of Broadway casting than the creation of an ensemble.[14] Whitehead's statement on the signing did little to minimize that impression.

> "I think he is admirably suited to the qualities demanded by Mr. Miller's play. The result should be extremely advantageous to both parties." Mr. Whitehead pointed out that it has been the company's objective to achieve a sort of continuity in repertory. But, he added, this could not be attained unless performers gave more of their time. He made it clear, however, that the Lincoln Center theatre venture would not use "the guest-star system."[15]

Later signings included: James Greene, Hal Holbrook, Salome Jens, Virginia Kaye, Zohra Lampert, Paul Mann, Ralph Meeker, Patricia Roe, David J. Stewart, Michael Strong, David Wayne and Joseph Wiseman. Mildred Dunnock was signed for the second season and given a leave of absence for the first. Of course, signed contracts do not make a company, and they are not generally expected to, because the creation of an ensemble is a process. However, "a charter member of the Repertory Theater [charged] that its actors were not really selected to be part of a company, not chosen for the flexibility and versatility that repertory demands, but, in large part, simply cast for roles in After the Fall."[16]

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[14] New York Times, April 27, 1963, p. 15.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Novick, p. 194.

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Kazan saw the problems differently.

> You always type-cast in one sense. Not for externals, but because you say to yourself, "That person has the role in him." You find a little river of experience in the person that's like the thing in the part. Then the actor knows the part experientially rather than logically.
>
> It's also important for a director to know a lot about his actors as people. Not that you talk about their lives, but you begin to find out what affects them, what they love and hate, what's meaningful to them, how they react, how they do things. And that's the advantage of a company. As it becomes permanent you get to know the people you're working with. You don't need to say so much to them.[17]

> . . . When we started, our actors were all trained differently. . . . I've always tried to keep the same kind of actor. But now the problem's much bigger than holding a few actors together. We're trying to make a company. . . .
>
> In time, a company should become comparatively homogeneous in technique. If they work with the same sort of director, in the same spirit, and with each other, they develop the same goals. . . . until these goals become theirs, represent their own yearning and their own experience, they don't mean anything.[18]

However, company life can also make extraordinary demands on actors: "hours, working conditions, and personal relationships are . . . intensely concentrated and inbred . . ."[19] In addition, "playing in repertory can do one of three things to an actor. It can make him surprisingly flexible, it can teach him to make the most of his equipment by permitting him to specialize in a line of

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[17]Kazan, "Look, There's the American Theatre," TDR, IX, 2 (Winter, 1964), [T 26], p. 74.

[18]Ibid., pp. 69-70.

[19]Rene Auberjonois in Schechner, "The REgional Theatre: Four Views," TDR, XIII, 1 (Fall, 1968), [T 41], p. 25.

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stock-company parts, and it can unnerve him altogether."[20] As in most vocations, many are called but few are chosen.

While Whitehead and Kazan labored over the foundations of a company, the company's future home was plagued with construction delays, including a change in architectural plans to include office space for the company whose offices were to have been in the Juilliard School.[21] Whitehead was informed in the spring of 1962 that the theatre would not be ready for the projected October 1963 opening. The completion date was moved ahead to January 1964, then the summer of that year.

Whitehead and Kazan were not happy about inaugurating their theatre project in the midst of the New York World's Fair.

> "We felt rebellious about this," Mr. Whitehead said. In fact, we told the center's board that being a subsidiary to the fair imperilled our objective." Mr. Whitehead said this view had been endorsed enthusiastically by George D. Woods [the president of the Repertory Theater Board.][22]

> "It seemed to me," Whitehead said later, "that we would be smothered by the Fair's publicity. There was talk of a mutual promotion between Lincoln Center and the Fair, and it seemed to us that we might be taking a chance on losing our own separate and special identity. People might think of us as the midtown branch of the Fair. Nevertheless, we were prepared to go ahead with it."[23]

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[20]Walter Kerr, Thirty Plays Hath November (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1969), p. 261

[21]New York Times, March 29, 1962, p. 29.

[22]"Repertory Group to Perform in 1963," New York Times, May 29, 1962, p. 33.

[23]John Keating, "Theater Going Up," New York Times, September 15, 1963, Section 2, p. 3.

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When further delay pushed the opening date to the fall of 1964, Whitehead and Kazan chose to reinstate the original opening date of Fall 1963 by housing the company in temporary quarters. "They first thought of setting up shop in the Colonial Theater, a former movie-house and television studio, [now the Harkness Theater], at Broadway and 63rd Street in the Lincoln Square neighborhood, then shifted their sights to Broadway."[24] There were no plans to raise additional capital as the theatre building was exceeding its $8.2-million budget and was still $2-million short of that goal. It was suggested that the Center might "have to reopen contractor bids, causing the anticipated delay" to keep the project within budget.[25]

With Lincoln Center guaranteeing $500,000 of the cost of the first season from the Lincoln Center Fund and tentatively approving a rental plan, Whitehead sought a theatre in which the Vivian Beaumont stage could be approximated. Two factors encouraged Whitehead and Kazan in their determination to open on schedule. They had optioned new plays by Arthur Miller and S. N. Behrman, and they felt they could not ask the authors to withhold the plays from production for as much as two years. Also they had a responsibility to the actors selected for the training program.

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[24]Ibid.

[25]"Repertory Group to Perform in 1963," New York Times, May 29, 1962, p. 63.

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> "The company," [Whitehead] said, "is more important than the theatre building. The same delay could happen again. I didn't want to be pushed around by the building program anymore." The project, therefore, will begin in familiar Broadway surroundings in the fall of 1963. Mr. Whitehead is not sorry that it has worked out this way. . . . "We'd have to live up to that theater," says Whitehead. "It's like having to be great in a second." . . . Starting off in an ordinary theatre, Mr. Whitehead believes, will take a little of the pressure off the actors. It will allow them to get used to working together, to find a style and a way of playing. It will focus attention on the players rather than on the structure. "This way, if we're good," Mr. Whitehead says, "in a sense, we will have deserved the house."[26]

After some reflection, however, the idea of renting a Broadway house was abandoned. Placing the company in a conventional commercial house had "the unsatisfactory ring of 'taking a new idea into an old environment.' Worse still, it invited judgment of the new theater by the standards of Broadway."[27] Instead, Whitehead and Kazan recommended the construction of a temporary theatre on the site allocated for the Juilliard School where construction would not begin for at least two years. Of the building plans examined, a prefabricated steel structure manufactured by the Butler Steel Corporation seemed the most feasible.

> Used primarily for warehouses (although the Roman Catholic Church of St. John Vianney in the Bronx is currently housed in one), the Butler structure was simple, sturdy, would blot out traffic noises as a

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[26]Stuart Little, "Repertory Theater," New York Herald Tribune, September 23, 1962, Section 7, pp. 10-11

[27]New York Herald Tribune, April 21, 1963, Section 4, pp. 1-3.

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> tent would not, and could be readily adapted to the kind of theatre Mr. Whitehead and his associates had in mind.[28]

Although the Lincoln Center Board had approved the idea earlier, they balked when confronted with the tentative designs. "It would be an execrable eyesore," commented on board member. The steel structure would be incompatible with the overall architectural design of the Center.

> Arguments grew heated, tempers grew short, and, for a time, it looked as though the entire repertory project was in danger--at the very least, of getting a complete change of management. The matter came to a vote on January 30 and the opponents of the plan to put up the steel prefab in Lincoln Center carried the day.[29]

The Repertory Theater Board supported Lincoln Center in this, offering Whitehead the option of opening in a Broadway house or not at all.[30] A New York Post editorial condemned the Lincoln Center stand:

> The rejection of the steel prefab may be a tip-off on what is wrong with the center. Architectural snobbism and planning perfection have prevailed to the point of driving out humanity, warmth, and spontaneity. The tent would not have blended in with the cement, glass and steel structures surrounding it, but it would have fulfilled a need and function. Its oddness would have given piquant note to the center. A long time ago, a great philosopher observed that cities are made by men, not by walls, buildings or ships. The Lincoln Center planners have yet to learn that lesson.[31]

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[28]Keating, p. 3. [29]Ibid.

[30]New York Herald Tribune, April 21, 1963, Section 4, p. 3.

[31]Lincoln Center Incident," New York Post, April 4, 1963. [Repertory Theater Scrapbook]

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In order for the temporary theatre to be financially feasible, the Repertory Theater needed a rent-free site. Therefore, by denying the theater use of the Juilliard site, Lincoln Center should have been able to quash the idea of a warehouse theater. The project was revived, however, through the good offices of George D. Stoddard, Chancellor of New York University and a member of the Lincoln Center Board of Trustees Committee on the Repertory Company. New York University offered a site on their property at 40 West 4th Street on Washington Square.

With an available site, the remaining difficulty was capitalization. "The estimated cost of the building, approximately $400,000, would not be appreciably higher than the yearly rental and operation of a Broadway theater and would be much less than the cost of rebuilding a conventional theater to conform with the Vivian Beaumont layout."[32] At this point another issue emerged. Although Lincoln Center did not want the steel construction on its own property, it also did not want it anywhere else.

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[32]Keating, p. 3. S. N. Behrman recalled, "The idea of building a theatre with the sole object of demolishing it, seemed to me, to put it charitably, bizarre. . . . I only made mild inquiry about the conomics of building theatres for demolition. Mr. Whitehead then switched from art to economics; he stopped drawing the doomed theatre and began putting down figures. He said the cost of the structure would be less than the rental of a Broadway theatre for a year and a half." Theatre, Vol. I, p. viii.

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> "That's when the antagonism with the [Whitehead and Kazan] administration began," says one party to the proceedings. "Whitehead and Kazan didn't want to wait for the Beaumont to be finished; they wanted to get their feet wet downtown. But the Board didn't want the excitement downtown; they wanted it at Lincoln Center.[33]

The use of the New York University site was reportedly vetoed by the Repertory Theater Board president, George D. Woods. Therefore, Kazan and Whitehead sought outside capitalization,

> . . . thereby making it an independent operation not subject to supervision by the top brass of Lincoln Center. Robert W. Dowling, the realty tycoon and financier, was persuaded to run interference on the project, not only using the American National Theater and Academy name to sponsor the fund campaign, but wielding his influence as Mayor Wagner's cultural deputy to expedite permits and waivers from the various municipal departments and agencies. . . .
>
> [Although Kazan and Whitehead] won the first tussle, Woods reportedly took the situation with less than philosophical cheer . . .[34]

So complete was Lincoln Center's divorce from the temporary theater, called the ANTA-Washington Square Theater, that The Performing Arts, the Center's fund-raising campaign newsletter, never acknowledged that it was being built, mentioning neither the theater's design nor its construction.

Following a series of cliff-hanging delays over rental terms and building permits, the groundbreaking ceremony was held on July 10, 1963. Kazan and Whitehead noted the benefits that could accrue to the commercial theatre

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[33]Kupferberg, Theatre 4, p. 134.

[34]"Lincoln Rep's Internal Stress," Variety, May 22, 1963, p. 71.

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from the growth of repertory. Whitehead said that the new enterprise "should get people back into the pattern of going to the theatre for the sake of theatre, not just to see the latest ballyhooed hit."[35]

The event was reported widely, however, as a rejection of Broadway, described by S. N. Behrman as "all those uncomfortable real estate investments around 42nd Street." Peggy Wood, actress and President of ANTA, commented, "Our brag about [New York] being the nation's drama center is going to have to be readjusted as long as main activity is confined to the slum district of Times Square."[36]

With their housing difficulties settled, Whitehead and Kazan hired Robert Downing and Frederic de Wilde as production stage managers, then sent them off to examine repertory operations in Stratford, Connecticut; Stratford, Ontario; and Minneapolis.[37] Harold Clurman was named executive consultant to the company to help "prepare future program, guide its educational and training program and develop the acting company." He would also direct for the company during its second season.[38]

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[35]Jack Gaver, "Sees Repertory Growth as Aid to B'way," New York Morning Telegram, July 29, 1963. (UPI release) [Scrapbook]

[36]"Broadway Gets Digs at Theatre Groundbreaking," The Post (Houston, Texas), July 11, 1963. (AP release) [Scrapbook]

[37]Downing gives an account of his first season with the company in "Season One: The Long Way Home," Drama Survey, III, 4 (Fall 1964), pp. 531-540.

[38]New York Times, September 20, 1963, p. 27.

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Only two full-page advertisements in the New York Times were required for the subscription campaign of three plays to be performed in repertory. Elia Kazan would stage Arthur Miller's After the Fall and S. N. Behrman's But For Whom Charlie, while Jose Quintero directed O'Neill's Marco Millions. For this all-American season featuring two new plays and an O'Neill revival, the campaign sold 76 percent of the total available seats or 46,500 subscriptions. The price scale for subscription tickets ranged from two to five dollars during the week, and three to six dollars on weekends, about $1.50 lower than Broadway scale for a straight dramatic play.

Rehearsals for After the Fall began on October 24, 1963. Arthur Miller read the script to the cast for the first time, after Kazan addressed the company.

> We have come together to make a theatre. We are organizing a group of human beings to try to make art, not business. We have not come together to sell entertainment. This new theatre will first of all respect its audience. It hopes to reveal to them their lives. . . . For we believe that the theatre is not an escape from life but a part of the act of living, even a necessary part of it.
>
> Since we are Americans, this will be an American theatre. It will be centered in New York City, but it will not be aimed at one section or group in our country. We hope it will be a world theatre, expressing the way we Americans see the world. While it will not limit itself to our time and our period, it must inevitably see things from the platform of this day.[39]

William Goyen, who observed the company during this period, wrote,

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[39]Kazan, in Theatre, Vol. I, p. 77.

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> Actors came in and went out pertly. They seemed vigorous, exhilarated, fresh. When I talked with them they spoke with the tone of relief and reinvigoration of people who have been saved from something; they had the fervor of converts and the kind of energetic gratitude that rescued people show . . . .
>
> Around a table in a farther part of the huge old room sat Arthur Miller, Elia Kazan, Barbara Loden and Jason Robards Jr. Barbara and Jason would read a few lines of dialogue, then Arthur would interrupt and explain something--with glee and childlike relish. "Gadg" Kazan waited, watched, relished. He seemed to let Arthur have his full say without interfering, except occasionally to agree heartily with Arthur or even to embellish Arthur's comments. . . . This was a playwright's theater I was in. . . .
>
> Arthur moved among the actors like one of them. He seemed to have nothing to hide from them. He was their benevolent hostage, he was warm and real and unpretentious and spoke of his play as plainly and domestically as if it were bread on the table.[40]

While Fall rehearsals continued, Marco Millions began the process on November 18, followed by Charlie on December 12. For Marco Millions,

> Jose Quintero appeared to be choreographing [the] movements [of a very large cast.] I couldn't make much sense out of what was going on. Where Gadg was simple and lucid and direct with the actors . . ., Jose was intense and often unclear and confusing in what he said. . . .
>
> But already the gloom that issued from [After the Fall] was affecting the company. . . . The people caught in the deepening relationships and realities of the characters in this world of Miller's were shadowed by it. Barbara Loden was three times trying to leave the play. It was Kazan who lightened her and kidded with her and strengthened her, and Miller, too. . . . It was [Kazan's] good humor and Miller's warm reality that buoyed the company and kept within them a sense of family and unity.[41]

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[40]William Goyen, "After the Fall of a Dream," Show, (September, 1964), p. 45.

[41]Ibid., p. 46.

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Beyond the play, the world impinged on the company. Robards' former wife was suing him; President Kennedy was assassinated; Kazan's wife, Molly, died after suffering a stroke; and each event rattled the already depressed company. The temporary theater was behind schedule, and the night of the Gala Preview, all the second-hand motion picture seats had not been installed.

> Miller, Whitehead, Kazan and I worked to put down as many as we could. (A memory of the early previews is the sound of crashing seats . . . and of mice, always with us. . . .) [As previews began,] on the mice skipped, on the tolling music tolled, on the seats fell.[42]

The temporary theater had no impressive exterior and "might well have been taken for a small industrial plant of some sort." The lobby was too small; legroom between rows, cramped.[43] There was no proscenium arch or stage curtain; no forestage tunnels for actors' entrances and exits; and the stage level was approximately twelve feet below the street.

> Since this was only a temporary theatre, a stage house was omitted. . . . Nor could we afford a fully sound-proof structure. . . . We had neither enough space for adequate lobbies or lounges, nor enough toilet rooms, but as a theatre it worked. The audience was enthusiastic; the design was vigorous and simple . . .[44]

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[42]Ibid., p. 86.

[43]Edward F. Kook, "Temporary Theatre, Permanent Example," Saturday Review, XLVII (February 22, 1964), p. 30.

[44]Mielziner, p. 123.

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The seating arrangement was "as old and tried as the Greek and Roman theatres with their steeply banked rows of seats."[45] Mielziner also "colored his seats in shades of blue that [were] darker for those seats located near the sides than for those at the center." The visual effect reduced audience awareness of empty seats while achieving "a greater auditorium darkness at performances when the house [was] full . . ."[46]

Onstage, Mielziner had provided "irregular step arrangements [which reflected] his own taste as an artist ..." and which proved most effective in After the Fall. However, they also posed problems.

> Beautiful as these modeled steps and platforms are, the designers of subsequent productions must work with them, too. While each designer can rearrange these elements according to his own taste, he cannot reshape the elements themselves to express his own distinctive character as fully as he might like.[47]

Additionally, both the theatre downtown and the Beaumont would be "box set proof," according to Mielziner.

> And that's almost better than being bomb-proof! The box set is no longer necessary in a theatre designed for the dramatization of ideas, visual ideas, not naturalism. Naturalism would look stupid in this theatre where backgrounds may be abstract or where fragments of reality imply a setting.[48]

David Hays, designer for Marco Millions, was also enthusiastic about the new downtown stage.

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[45] Mielziner, in Theatre, Vol. I, p. 55.

[46] Kook, p. 30.

[47] Ibid.

[48] Theatre, Vol. I, p. 71.

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> We sought new ways of handling scenery because we are becoming more concerned with the vitality, the live presence of scenery as it relates to the presence of live actors. Somewhat belatedly we are coming to a point where we are not trying to compete with film and television, both of which can supply realistic backgrounds and special effects in many ways superior to those on stage.[49]

He also felt that the stage could be used effectively for most plays.

> The open stage is an inevitable, simpler, more direct form of theatre. But we do have to seek new technical ways of mounting scenery and ways of suggesting things which will make for less and less scenery . . . . There is more vitality, a more direct impact, even with plays in which the stage direction specifically presupposes a proscenium.[50]

In intention, however, the stage was seen as a forum for contemporary plays.

> I think repertory can handle anything, but this theatre's interest will be in contemporary plays. We want writers of today to look at that extraordinary stage down there and ache to write for it. That's a stage that deals with ideas. On that stage, you can discuss the predicament of man. On that stage you can create plays that will actually change one's attitude toward life. I wonder where those plays are now? Broadway simply isn't producing them.[51]

Three months later, Howard Taubman wrote that, even in the midst of preparations for its second season, the Repertory Theater had to evaluate its progress and reassess

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[49]Ibid., p. 72.

[50]Ibid., pp. 72-74.

[51]Lee, "A Man for All Seasons. . .", The Globe and Mail (Toronto), January 25, 1964, quoting Robert Whitehead. [Scrapbook]

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its goals. "The first season, despite its accomplishments, has left doubts, and the future is full of questions."[52]

Although many had reservations about the acting company or the staging of the plays, the larger issue was the philosophy underlying play selection. The only revival of the season, Marco Millions, had not been well-received. The production was "beautiful to look at; . . . [Quintero and Hays] found a mode of simplified spectacularity that suited the new stage very well." However, the play itself is among O'Neill's lesser works, "a cliche-laden . . . parable."[53] Also, according to William Goyen, who observed the first season's preparations, Marco "never overcame a basic early energylessness. At the end of the first run-through, Jose angrily told the cast that the play they had given him that afternoon was like something underwater."[54]

The new plays by Miller and Behrman were attacked by commercial producers as well as some critics as works that could have been done on Broadway. "The whole point of resident theater is to present plays that the commercial theater does not or cannot produce," argued Martin Gottfried.[55] The consensus was that the Behrman play would have been better served on 45th Street. "With its realistic East

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[52]"Looking Ahead," New York Times, March 22, 1964, Section 2, p. 1.

[53]Novick, p. 186. [54]Goyen, Show, p. 55.

[55]A Theatre Divided, p. 150.

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Sixties setting and its conventional structure, it would have been more comfortable on a proscenium stage. It offers no special problems, and might have been better cast uptown."[56] Julius Novick disagreed: "the real problem was the play: not only was it one long banality, it was a banality thirty years outmoded."[57]

The Miller work, on the other hand, seemed particularly suited to the new stage and required the longer rehearsal period that Broadway could not provide. Besides, "Miller would never have finished the play if the Repertory Theater had not existed."[58] "Because Kazan had stocked the Lincoln Center company with actors appealing to his . . . realistic theater tastes, and particularly with After the Fall in mind, the Miller play was extremely well done. . . . Kazan directed superbly, as well he should have. It was a play written exactly to his style."[59] The play was a hit, controversial as well as commercial. "The company seemed

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[56]New York Times, March 22, 1964, Section 2, p. 1.

[57]Novick, p. 186.

[58]Ibid., p. 185. Miller was even attacked for this. "When Mr. Miller gave this play to Lincoln Center, he did so--as he repeated frequently in an article for the New York Times [January 19, 1964, Section 2, p. 1.]--at considerable financial sacrifice because he believed in the aims of the company. But the play had already been sold, reputedly for a staggering sum, to that highbrow cultural organ, the Saturday Evening Post; it later enjoyed a whopping movie sale; and it is now being prepared for a road tour by a commercial producing unit having no connection with Lincoln Center. If this is what Mr. Miller calls self-sacrifice, what would he call self-interest?" Robert Brustein, "The Curse of Official Culture," The New Republic, November 7, 1964, p. 88.

[59]Gottfried, Theater Divided, p. 152.

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to enjoy the sensational aspect of the play and to defend its depth and power at the same time . . ."[60] Although Miller reiterated that his work was no more autobiographical than any of his others, there was no gainsaying the resemblance of the character of Maggie to Miller's late ex-wife, Marilyn Monroe, a resemblance magnified by the visual impact of Barbara Loden in a blonde wig.

There were rumblings in the company, however, even as After the Fall opened.

> The reasons ranged from criticism of the antithetical methods of the two directors working on "After the Fall" and "Marco Millions," to an underlying lack of cohesion between two productions, one now fully drawn, the other sketching [sic] to find its shape. . . . [Soon] minor grumblings were . . . heard, particularly by those doubling in "After the Fall" and "But For Whom Charlie." It was, naturally, over-straining for Jason Robards to work so intensely onstage for three and a half hours without cease in the Miller play and to begin daily rehearsals in the Behrman play without much rest.[61]

The ANTA-Washington Square Theater itself was warmly received as a "delightful gift package . . . [which] enhances theatergoing",[62] and which Goyen rather poetically described: "the astonishingly small and delicate stage painted deep-water blue . . . like a curious misshaped pool at the bottom of a gray crater."[63] However, the stage which

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[60]Goyen, p. 87.

[61]Ibid., pp. 86-87.

[62]Taubman, New York Times, March 22, 1964, Section 2, p. 1.

[63]Goyen, p. 47.

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provided such a suitable home for the Miller play seemed not so hospitable to the other two.

> . . . it seems to me . . . that the power and gloom of Miller's play cast such a deep shadow over the theater obviously designed to give it life, that neither of the other two plays--one an insipid spectacle whose underlying meaning was never projected, the other a slight and outworn sophistication--could penetrate it.[64]

Internally, too, things were breaking down. Barbara Loden, in a small part in the Behrman play, and Jason Robards were replaced in But For Whom Charlie after it opened.

> This was another step, to my mind, of the breakup of the repertory schema which by its nature involves interchange between play and play, no matter what the size of the part or the quality of the role . . . Quite clearly, the cast of "After the Fall" was behaving like the cast of a hit play and the performers found themselves instinctively demanding the rights, special privileges, luxuries, and rewards of selling a successful play to standing queues of ticket-buyers. . . . The repertory idea could not yet adjust to an old Broadway gestalt. Who could blame the actors, really?[65]

In the course of the first season, much of the idealism, promise, and goodwill of the enterprise got tarnished. One source of conflict was the artistic restrictions on the company which did not apply to its leadership. Kazan's contract stipulated that he would not direct for the stage except at Lincoln Center but it allowed him to work in films as well. "It will be possible for me to take time out to make a motion picture, but I wouldn't do more

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[64]Ibid., p. 89.

[65]Goyen, p. 88.

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than one every two years."[66] It is unlikely that Kazan's contractual arrangement was not known to the company, but the practical fact of outside activity denied others was unhealthy. One result was Robards' outburst that spring in which he "threatened publicly to 'kill' Kazan for putting him on stage in 'After the Fall' and leaving him without a shred of direction."[67] Goyen commented, "You tell an actor like Robards he can't do television, he can't do films, he has to spend all his time rehearsing . . . When he finds out that Kazan is on tour with a new film, it's demoralizing."[68] "A conflict of objectives dominated and fouled the repertory theater from the outset: commercial theater or subsidized theater; theater of hits or theater of plays in repertory; resident directors committed to the life of the company or fugitive directors . . ."[69]

For a theatre that had seemed so sure of its destination and the process necessary to reach it, the Repertory Theater now appeared uncertain of its purpose. At the end of the subscription season, the two unsuccessful plays were withdrawn and Miller's work ran alone throughout the summer.

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[66]Gaver, "Sees Repertory Growth . . .," New York Morning Telegram, July 29, 1963. [Scrapbook]

[67]"Inside Job," Newsweek, December 21, 1964, p. 74.

[68]"Goyen on Kazan," New York Herald Tribune, August 22, 1964. [Scrapbook]

[69]Goyen, p. 89.

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In the two major roles, Robards and Loden alternated with Hal Holbrook and Jennifer West. An actress playing in Dutchman Off-Broadway, West was hired to appear with Holbrook at Tuesday and Saturday matinees. So much for repertory and casting from within the company.

The choice of plays for the second season, as originally announced, seemed to take its cue from criticism of the first season's emphasis on contemporary American plays. Labeled "World Theater Repertory," and selected by Kazan, Whitehead, and Harold Clurman, the second season would include no new plays. Instead, the theatre would present Middleton and Rowley's The Changeling; Moliere's Tartuffe; Anouilh's Antigone; and a fourth "contemporary European classic."[65] The theatre had originally stated that it would consider the classics within its purview, but the contrast between the two seasons was so marked that the security of the theater's artistic viewpoint was called into question. For good or ill, the plays for the first season were plays which Kazan had wanted to do and which were in the contemporary realistic tradition with which the co-directors were most comfortable. The plays chosen for the second season were a departure from that tradition. "A whole world of drama, plays of the remote and recent past, which New York does not get, except in sporadic, often indifferent productions, should be the province of the

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[70]Ibid.

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Repertory Theater. The sovereign concern should be quality, and, if possible, great art."[71] A worthy statement, but from the critic for the New York Times, not the artistic management.

On the other hand, if Whitehead and Kazan were responding to criticism, it could well have been because they felt battered by it. Their endeavor had been "criticized with the bitterness which is felt toward a relation who is both a late-comer into the family and, on the surface, a favorite of fortune."[72] Arthur Miller recalled,

> Before there was a single production at the ANTA theater downtown, before an actor had walked onto that stage, the mere announcement of the project set off an incomprehensible eruption of ridicule, cynicism and outright hostility in many theater people and the press. I am still unable to understand why. . . . We can't seem to connect prestige with repertory as we do with Broadway, God save the mark, while at the same time we are on our knees before the Royal Shakespeare and British National Theaters.[73]

Kazan voiced much the same feeling in an article for the New York Times, following the first season.[74] According to Novick, Kazan

> . . . had a case. As the Establishment theatre par excellence, the Lincoln Center Repertory was sure of the good will of Establishment spokesmen such as the Times and Mrs. Lyndon B. Johnson. . . . But it came

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[71]Taubman, New York Times, March 22, 1964, Section 2, p. 1.

[72]Alan Pryce-Jones, in Theatre, Vol. II, p. xiv.

[73]"Arthur Miller vs. Lincoln Center," New York Times, April 16, 1972, Section 2, p. 5.

[74]"On Process," August 9, 1964, Section 2, p. 1.

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> in for a good deal of ill-will, even hatred, as well. Part of this was sheer jealousy. No American theatre had ever had so much given to it: so much recognition, so much real estate, so much money, so much power to do as it wished; and many people, especially in the theatrical profession, just couldn't stand it. Another part of the ill-will came from deep and widespread suspicions, cherished especially by the intellectuals, against anything identified with the Establishment--suspicions that events often prove to be not unfounded. And the very expectation that the new theatre aroused was in constant danger of turning into disappointment; of him to whom much is given, much--sometimes impossibly much--is demanded.[75]

The result was the assessment of the Whitehead-Kazan regime as ". . . a saga of ineptitude, opportunism, egomania, atrocious lack of taste and thorough-going betrayal of everybody's hopes" by Richard Gilman,[76] and the awarding to the group of an "anti-Obie for outstanding disservice to the American theatre." This award, at the annual Village Voice off-Broadway presentation, was "'greeted with gasps, with shocked laughter, with stunned silence--and then with tumultuous applause.'"[77] "The season was a scandal," stated Robert Brustein, not because of the acting, direction, or choice of plays, all of which time might

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[75]Novick, p. 183.

[76]Common and Uncommon Masks (New York: Random House, 1971), p. 265. His article, "Sorrows of Lincoln Center," was written in 1966, after the first administration had been replaced.

[77]Richard Schechner and Theodore Hoffman, "Disservice to the American Theatre," TDR, IX, 1 (Fall 1964), p. 18. This article protests the award. Gordon Rogoff, who served as an Obie award judge along with Richard Gilman and Michael Smith, defended the award as having "contributed surely a little towards the decision to broaden the repertory's scope." "Pro Anti-Obie," TDR, IX, 2 (Winter 1964), pp. 17-20.

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remedy, but "because the company failed so signally to live up to its policy statements."[78] Brustein, however, had written the company off at the conclusion of his review of After the Fall, before he had seen the other two plays of the season.

> The generation which Mr. Miller discredits in After the Fall is one that eventually came to control Broadway, passing off its ambition as altruism, its expediency as honesty, its avarice as integrity, its lust for fame as love of art. Now, grown fat and prosperous and exhausted, it has institutionalized the bankrupt Broadway vision in the fashionable culture emporium of Lincoln Center. Recently, S. N. Behrman, who will provide the third radical experiment offered by the Lincoln Center repertory, mused, "I'd rather wait for Lefty than wait for Godot." Well, while Lefty is being awaited by the playwrights, directors, technicians, and actors of this forward-looking group, the rest of us had better find some empty basement theatre in which to wait for Godot.[79]

No one, including Whitehead and Kazan, denied that there had been problems with the first season; but the mistakes were being made in a temporary theatre, where "productions . . ., if they failed, would not irretrievably tarnish the ultimate hope. . . . [Whitehead made mistakes,] as did the colleagues he chose to work with. Beyond doubt, he made more than he hoped he'd make. . . . [But] Testing was being done in public and the public . . . was at least saying what it wouldn't [accept]; and that was something for producer and staff to be learning."[80]

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[78]"The Curse of Official Culture," The New Republic, p. 88.

[79]Seasons of Discontent, p. 247.

[80]Kerr, Thirty Plays Hath November, p. 272.

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> It had been fashionable to express dismay over the Lincoln Center Repertory Theater from the beginning, and while the dismay was justified, it gradually became something more or less than genuine. There was some glee in it.
>
> Not satisfied with pointing out the defects of the first season . . . --and the defects were real . . .-- a goodly number of critical voices had elected to saddle the venture not only with its own sins but with all the sins of the American theater, and particularly the commercial American theatre, for twenty years past. Because it had not sufficiently broken with the Broadway system the new organization had been treated as though it had invented the Broadway system, and perhaps murdered William Desmond Taylor as well. Scorn was not enough for it; it had to be put on the sacrificial pyre as expiation for everybody's crimes. Directors Whitehead and Kazan could only have been baffled by the inherited blood-guilt heaped on their heads.[81]

Eloquent attempts were made to explain the organization's first season. Kazan wrote a piece for the Associated Press in June 1964, stating,

> A year ago we were making speeches and writing statements on the topic: What's Wrong With Broadway and How We're Going To Fix It! We were all idealism and reform. But with a year's passing our attention has shifted from the problems of others to those of our own. And it's become clear that the job we've taken on is just too tough to persist in for any reasons of altruism. . . .
>
> I don't think the Repertory Theater has brought off a miracle its first season. But I do think we're on a track that will, in time, bring us to something unique and even extraordinary. And right now that is the important thing: to be on the right track. The rest is time and process.[82]

Harold Clurman discussed the first season as the "apprenticeship [of an] infant organization," composed of people "who have repeatedly proved their ability to put on

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[81]Ibid., pp. 267-268.

[82]Kazan, AP article, June 1964. [Scrapbook]

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'good shows,' but their conjunction as a permanent troupe under the still unusual circumstances of the repertory system made their first year together a period of learning."[83] Kazan added,

> We designed our stage on the premise that nothing would change: no flies, no wings, nothing but a turn-table for Marco Millions. We learned that it's not ideal for all presentations. . . . [But For Whom Charlie] . . . is a charming play. It charms me. People ask: What the hell did you do it for? I did it because I like it. You don't like it? That's not my problem.[84]

According to Clurman, criticism that demands that every play must be of "enduring eminence . . . is the antithesis of the creative attitude. John Osborne's eventual status in literary history is far less important to a functioning theatre than his value for audiences right now."[85]

> A repertory theatre, being a new thing with us, is expected to please everybody. A company of this kind which resolves to devote itself largely to plays of classic stamp displeases those who feel that what we most sorely need in our theatre is more American dramatists. Others find the concentration on contemporary American plays parochial and disheartening because such new plays rarely measure up to the "highest standards" . . . For some reason, a new repertory company, in New York particularly, is expected to satisfy both groups at the same time and, American fashion, right away. Where there should be several repertory companies, it so happens that it has proved next to impossible to establish even one.[86]

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[83]Clurman, in Theatre, Vol. II, p. 115.

[84]Kazan, TDR, IX, 1 [T 26], p. 61.

[85]Clurman, "Festivity and Ritual," The Nation, CCII (May 16, 1966), p. 586.

[86]Clurman, in Theatre, Vol. II, p. 119.

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However, there were aspects of the organization which Clurman criticized as a participant.

> My chief criticism of the Whitehead-Kazan conduct of the Repertory Theatre of Lincoln Center when I went to work for them was that they had been hasty in the formation and education of their company. (I refer to education for a permanent Theatre.) "In the theatre, as in so many other things, Americans build from the roof," I said, quoting Jacques Copeau. . . .[87]
>
> [However,] the original company . . . while generally deficient on the distaff side, gave promise in its male contingent of growing into a better ensemble than any which had been presented in the United States in years.[88]

Perhaps the basic problem was typical American impatience on the part of critics, audiences, and of Lincoln Center. "No theatre may look forward to a secure future where it is expected to prove a 'smash' in its initial productions. . . .[89] We are too concentrated on sensations, names, electrifying phenomena, bewitching personalities, and not enough on organic growth. We are eager for the fruit; we do not care about the tree."[90]

But there was still optimism.

> We'll get better as we go along. Bob [Whitehead] and Arthur [Miller] and Harold [Clurman] and I have a brotherly feeling about the problems around us. We're not just a theatre. We're not asking the audience to judge us on that basis alone. We're saying to the audience, "You will see something here that will touch you some way or other, will relate to your life." That's what we say when we sell subscriptions. In four or five years we'll produce two or three shows that will be emblematic. You'll say, "look, there's the American theatre."[91]

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[87]Ibid., "Festivity and Ritual," in The Nation, p. 585.

[88]Ibid., p. 584.

[89]Ibid., The Naked Image, p. 150. [90]Ibid., p. 153.

[91]Kazan, TDR, IX, 1 [T 26], p. 83.

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CHAPTER SIX

William Schuman became President of Lincoln Center, Inc. on January 1, 1962. Described by Ralph Martin as "a sharp, analytical man with a warm personality and a lively wit," Schuman had served as President of the Juilliard School of music from 1945 until assuming the Lincoln Center post. ". . . [It] was Schuman, more than anyone else, who had persuaded the Board of Directors to accept Juilliard as part of Lincoln Center."[1] He was also known as a major American composer, who, "in addition to his nine symphonies . . . has composed everything from ballet to chamber music to opera."[2]

Schuman shared with John D. Rockefeller III, now chairman of the board, the concept of the Center as a force in its own right in the arts. Schuman's "vision was that Lincoln Center be more than a collection of buildings--it would be an integrating force for the performing arts all over the world."[3] This vision, which Schuman sought to implement, was, however, in direct conflict with the desire of constituents for exclusive territorial rights to the

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[1]Martin, p. 172. [2]Ibid.

[3]Ibid., p. 173.

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buildings which housed them. The right of Lincoln Center to control the booking of a building quickly became an issue which threatened City Center's participation at the Center.

During the early stages of the Center's planning, a dance theater, which would serve "primarily as a home for the New York City Ballet," was designed to face the home of the New York Philharmonic across the plaza. "Plans for [the building which is now known as the State Theater] were already well advanced when the state decided to pick up the cost of construction as part of its contribution to the New York World's Fair of 1964 and 1965. The theater then became, at least in theory, a multipurpose hall."[4] "When the building opened [on April 23, 1964], it was firmly controlled by Lincoln Center, which booked into it international attractions to fit the idea of a world's fair. The City Ballet played for a fee, as though on tour."[5]

Lincoln Center had a similar plan for opening the Vivian Beaumont Theater with an outside attraction, and Whitehead and Kazan opposed this vigorously, "though it is understandable that Lincoln Center would like us to open the Vivian Beaumont for the second summer of the World's Fair."[6] In a statement to the members of the Repertory Theater Board, Whitehead and Kazan wrote on April 4, 1964:

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[4]May, p. 22. See pp. 38-39 for details of the controversy concerning the size of the orchestra pit for this theater.

[5]Ibid., p. 23.

[6]Joint letter to the Members of the Repertory Theater Board, April 4, 1964, p. 1. [Mimeographed]

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We met today with the architects and engineers at the theater site, who tell us that though the building itself will be completed in January, the stage equipment will not be finally installed until three months later. This means that unless this schedule is greatly accelerated, the theater cannot be in sound operating condition earlier than mid-May or June. We know that a theater is not only a "house" but also a piece of intricate machinery with many delicate parts, all of which must function perfectly. The early months of our occupancy therefore must be used to rehearse, prepare and live with the many unknowns of the new theater.

In addition, mounting a production at the end of the subscription season downtown will, we believe, compromise the acting company by limiting rehearsal time, and in turn, compromise the opening of a great new theater building. It must be added that the late spring is a disadvantageous time for such a premiere. . . . The situation may best be dramatized by contemplating the prospect of opening a regular Metropolitan season in April or May. Obviously Messrs. Bing and Bliss would decline.

Though we realise [sic] the problems, financial and otherwise, what we need is a serious period of rehearsal through June, July and August of '65 in the Vivian Beaumont toward the opening of a subscription season there in September or early October.

Another area of objection to a spring '65 opening is the possible consequences to one of our most valuable assets, our subscription audience. They must have a full and fair opportunity to share in our Lincoln Center opening. Indeed, many of the 18,500 persons who have subscribed to our first season did so to ensure their future attendance at the Vivian Beaumont Theater. We have already seen, in the falling off of subscription attendance for the later series this spring, that this audience is a winter season crowd.

If we insist that in order to retain their rights to subscription seating, these supporters of the Rep attend the first play at the Vivian Beaumont in the summer, we are courting appalling ill-will, and doing so with the most important segment of our future support . . .

We are also opposed to opening the Vivian Beaumont with an outside attraction that would dilute the occasion of our own opening, and we reject the idea of our opening for a one-month engagement and then turning the theater over to an outside attraction as plainly impractical.[7]

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[7]Ibid., pp. 1-3.

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Another reason for Whitehead's and Kazan's reluctance to begin operating the theatre at Lincoln Center was that they had made a rental commitment to their independently-financed theater downtown until January 1966. As the downtown operation was not popular with Lincoln Center, it is likely that Whitehead's and Kazan's stand on this issue seemed to some to derive more from a desire to protect their obligations rather than from the genuine difficulties that they perceived in the proposed plans for opening the new theater.

Despite continued opposition by the Repertory Theater management, the New York Times reported on July 13, 1964, that William Schuman had invited six theater organizations to appear at the Beaumont during the summer of 1965. Invitations were sent to the Tyrone Guthrie Theater, the Arena Stage, the Association of Producing Artists (A.P.A.), the Actor's Workshop, the Theater Group of Los Angeles, and the Alley Theater.

When this plan did not prove workable, approaches were made to Alexander H. Cohen to produce a limited engagement of Shaw's Caesar and Cleopatra with Rex Harrison. Over Whitehead's and Kazan's objections that such a plan imperiled the non-commercial identity of the Repertory Theater, the negotiations continued. As late as December 1964, Schuman stated, "The only reason any production, aside from the repertory company's productions, was considered was a desire to use the building when it was ready. No

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decision [on the production] has yet been reached by the Repertory Theater or Lincoln Center."[8] According to Arthur Miller, "This charade went on for months, mind you; they were on the verge of signing a contract with Cohen. In other words, they wanted a show in there at which you could really dress."[9]

The conflict over the right of Lincoln Center to book a theater became a pitched battle in October 1964 when the New York City Ballet threatened to withdraw from Lincoln Center altogether if the City Center was not given full control of the State Theater by means of a sublease. Lincoln Kirstein as general director of the ballet, and Morton Baum, as chairman of the City Center's finance committee, charged that Lincoln Center "seeks to 'hijack' the theater."[10]

Schuman was specifically named in reports of the controversy. "Some cultural observers have recently said that Mr. Schuman is seeking to assume a greater degree of artistic control over the Lincoln Center constituents and that this is being resented." Mr. Schuman replied that this was not the case. "'The constituents of Lincoln Center are autonomous units,' he said. 'This is our philosophy and this is the way we operate. At no time has anyone at

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[8]"Lincoln Center Will Continue Seeking Director from Met," New York Times, December 6, 1964, p. 88.

[9]Arthur Miller, "Arthur Miller vs. Lincoln Center," New York Times, April 16, 1972, Section 2, pp. 1-5.

[10]New York Times, October 2, 1964, p. 1.

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Lincoln Center attempted to interfere with the artistic policies of any of its independent federated groups. Lincoln Center itself is charged with carrying out a program which complements those of its constituents.'"[11]

The difficulty, however, was that the constituents did not necessarily agree that Lincoln Center's program was complementary or cooperative when it exerted pressure on a constituent concerning the use of the physical plant in which it resided. The quarrel between landlord and tenant soon had the overtones of a threat to creative freedom.[12] A settlement of the four-year dispute was not announced until January 11, 1965, when John D. Rockefeller III stated that an agreement had been reached which made City Center a constituent of Lincoln Center and which gave City Center the desired sublease on the State Theater.[13]

Meanwhile, the Repertory Theater Board elected a new president to succeed George D. Woods, "who relinquished his post because his duties as head of the International Bank of Reconstruction and Development keeps him in Washington." Woods agreed to become chairman of the theater board and continued as a member of the Lincoln Center Board.[14]

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[11] New York Times, December 6, 1964, p. 88.

[12] This feeling was reflected in Martin Gottfried's articles for Women's Wear Daily, especially in one dated December 14, 1964.

[13] New York Times, January 11, 1965, pp. 1, 30.

[14] "Lincoln Troupe Gets New Head," New York Times, September 28, 1964, p. 20.

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The new president was Robert L. Hoguet, Jr., executive vice-president of the First National City Bank of New York in charge of its trust and investment division. At that time, Hoguet was also a trustee of Barnard College, the Hospital for Special Surgery, the French Institute and the Federation des Alliances Francaises aux Etats-Unis. As Chairperson of the Women's Committee for Lincoln Center, Constance Hoguet, his wife, was active in the fund campaign and development activities of Lincoln Center.[15] Through her interest in the project, Hoguet had become involved in the fund-raising efforts.[16] Members of the Lincoln Center Board, variously reported to be Rockefeller and Spofford,[17] or Woods and Schuman, persuaded Hoguet to accept the post.[18]

> Hoguet is in no sense a man of the theatre; he seems not even to be particularly interested in it. He believes in culture, however, and in the obligation of the business community to the community at large. He assumed the presidency of the Repertory Theater out of a desire to serve, as another businessman might interest himself in the affairs of a university or a hospital. . . .
>
> When asked what he and his fellow businessmen had to contribute to such a theatre as that of Lincoln Center, Hoguet named fund-raising--for he realizes that a non-commercial theatre cannot be expected to show a profit--help in the thousand nonartistic problems that come up in the course of such a sizable operation, and bringing their "objectivity" to bear on the selection of the theatre's management personnel. . . .[19]

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[15]Ibid.

[16]Martin, p. 92.

[17]Ibid.

[18]Hoguet, private interview, June 21, 1974.

[19]Novick, pp. 195-196.

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There was a change in the theater's internal administration as well. During the first season, both Whitehead and Kazan were responsible for the managerial and artistic decisions in their positions as co-producing directors. Kazan's role as director of two of the season's three plays was more conspicuous than Whitehead's, although a New York Times profile on Whitehead reported,

> In his new job, Mr. Whitehead is watching every penny as assiduously as if he had to show a profit. His partner, Mr. Kazan, calls him "a businessman with a soul." He worries about an overhead light that fails. He also worries about Page 46 of the script.[20]

Whitehead's devotion to the project was also commented on by "one public relations man who works continually with him: 'For Bob, there is nothing else in life but the Lincoln rep. Absolutely nothing.'"[21]

During the first season, Kazan discussed his disinclination for administration with Whitehead, Miller, and Clurman.

> "The demands of sharing the administrative job with Bob were enormous; they never let up. Also, I did three productions in eleven months for the Repertory Theater." Kazan glanced up to see if I understood what a workload that was. . . . "I realized I'd either have to give up movie-making and writing, or the Repertory Theater. Also, I am not an administrator by taste. I run my movie company pretty well, but administering a theater is not my life--not my choice. . . ."[22]

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[20]New York Times, January 24, 1964, p. 19.

[21]Betty Lee, "A Man for All Seasons of Lincoln Rep," The Globe and Mail (Toronto), January 25, 1964. [Scrapbook]

[22]"Kazan: Rep Theater Demands Authority," New York World Telegram and Sun, December 21, 1964. [Scrapbook]

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"We agreed that Bob, Arthur Miller, Harold Clurman, and I would meet as an artistic policy-shaping council, with the final decisions by Bob and me. . . . It functioned very well."[23]

> The theater actually had been run by Bob and the three advisors since July; the four of us had quietly re-organized it ourselves. I was consulted on all artistic matters--never on financial--which was fine. . . . [Before The Changeling opened] . . . I wrote to Schuman and John Rockefeller..... suggesting that the theater be reorganized and how it should be done. I presented my letter to them personally. They read it, said they understood, but did not commit themselves further at that time.[24]

Kazan would not direct elsewhere but would be free to write and work on film projects. This decision "left Whitehead the sole person managing the theater day in and day out. . . . At the same time, Whitehead had grown very disenchanted with the board; a particular animosity had sprung up betwsen him and George Woods."[25]

A sore point between the theater administrators and the board was the question of the operating deficit. Although board members publicly intoned that such a program was inevitably a deficit operation, there was considerable disagreement as to how much of a deficit was reasonable,

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[23]New York Times, December 10, 1964, p. 60.

[24]New York World Telegram and Sun, December 21, 1964. [Scrapbook]

[25]Michael Burke, private interview, New York City, July 26, 1974.

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anticipated, or bearable. In the Whitehead-Kazan letter of April 4, the co-directors summarized their position:

> Finally, we must assure you that we do not accept the financial burdens of this operation lightly. They are continual sources of serious concern to us but we simply do not know how to make a top effort in the field of repertory in the United States except in the way we are doing. We must again point out that no other repertory theater in the world of this kind has been able to make itself self-supporting. There are some areas where we feel costs can be reduced but there are other areas where greater costs must be assumed.
>
> For example, production costs at the Vivian Beaumont Theater will probably be higher. It has a proscenium form which will be used for some productions, and that picture frame creates scenic expenses. The costs of running the building itself will be higher than downtown.
>
> We have high hopes. We feel we have just made a start. We would like your ideas on all the above points. We are now in the act of planning our next two seasons. So this is the time for all of you, together or separately, officially or personally, to say to us what you have to say.[26]

As the second season opened, Whitehead discussed the financial situation with Stuart Little.

> Financially, the facts are just what Whitehead predicted all along. Lincoln Center is a deficit theater and will continue in the red. The total cost of a full year's operation . . . is $1,750,000. At capacity, the theatre can gross almost as much, and be able to recoup everything except the $170,000 the theater expects to lay out this year on four new productions, costumes, scenery, lights. Last season the theater did about 80% of capacity. On that basis, the yearly deficit is $500,000. And that isn't all. "As we get better, our deficits will get bigger," Whitehead promised.[27]

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[26]Letter to the Repertory Theater Board, April 4, 1964, p. 4.

[27]"Second Round at Lincoln Center," New York Herald Tribune, October 25, 1964 [magazine section], p. 56.

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Of course, the deficit would be larger than anticipated if ticket sales were down. Thus, the deficit issue became more acute when the subscriptions for the second season dropped from 46,500 to 29,500, or 55 percent of capacity.[28] ". . . the board of directors--accustomed to success in business and bewildered at finding it so elusive in the theatre--were in a state between uneasiness and panic."[29]

The anticipated deficit for the first year was $750,000, but, according to Whitehead, the actual deficit was only $600,000. Toward this the Vivian Beaumont Allen Foundation contributed $300,000, which left an equal amount to be raised by the board. Already faced with this burden, the board was then presented "with a budget for 1965-66 that included another sizeable deficit; some board members argued that the budget should be cut and the company made self-supporting."[30]

Michael Burke, at that time a vice-president at CBS and a member of the board since 1962, has recalled,

> As plans progressed for the new building and moving into it, and more specifically as our business developed downtown, one found that the budgets and estimates of

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[28]"Repertory Board to Discuss Funds," New York Times, October 27, 1964. [Scrapbook]

[29]Herbert Kupferberg, "The Repertory Theater at Lincoln Center," Theatre 4 (New York: Scribners, 1972), p. 134.

[30]Jack Poggi, Theater in America: The Impact of Economic Forces, 1870-1967 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1968), pp. 221-222.

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> costs that Whitehead had first predicted were far off the target, that the losses were going to be much more severe than one had anticipated. Specifically, as we got near moving into the Beaumont, it appeared we weren't going to be operating at a break-even level which everyone had thought up until that moment, but we were going to suffer considerable losses.[31]

Apparently the fervent discussions of the necessity for endowment to cover deficits or of minimal subsidy requirements had not penetrated the board room. Kazan was accurate when he "remarked that the board was 'never really quite ready to swallow the fact that this was going to cost a lot of money.'"[32]

Regardless, the fact remained that Woods and Hoguet

> . . . were both unhappy with the Repertory's financial administration. They complained that they could not get facts and figures from Kazan and Whitehead; they couldn't even find out how much of a deficit was anticipated--something they had to know before fund-raising could be started. The feeling was that Kazan was a fine director and Whitehead a creative producer, but that the money seemed to be slipping too easily past both of them.[33]

According to Hoguet,

> Mr. Whitehead never had a budget as far as I know or as far as I was able to determine. When I came into the picture, I saw down and said, "What's your program, what are you going to do next year, who are you going to hire, what kind of plays and what's it going to cost." "Well, I don't have a budget . . .," you know. Then he came back with a few odds and ends of figures . . .[34]

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[31]Private interview, New York City, July 26, 1974.

[32]Poggi, p. 222.

[33]Martin, p. 91.

[34]Private interview, New York City, June 21, 1974.

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The source of the difficulty between board and management was less a question of budgets and deficits and more a conflict in administrative philosophy. Whitehead's background in the commercial theater conditioned him to the operational realities of the limited partnership agreement. On Broadway, the investors are limited partners, barred legally from any direct participation in administrative or artistic choices, all of which are determined by the general partners or producers. Whitehead was unprepared for the active participation of the board in the theater's affairs. The board, on the other hand, was composed of people who had served on other boards where financial responsibility was joined with financial policy. The board was unprepared for and resentful of being guarantors of the theater's financial stability without being fully informed of the financial arrangements. Thus, both parties were unhappy with the situation, the board feeling locked out while Whitehead resented the board's balking at his requests for money.

> "Since the week we opened last January," [Whitehead said,] "there's seldom been money available from the board. It's been a struggle month after month to pay the bills. Each time I found myself forced to express this need for money it created a great uneasiness on the part of the board . . ."[35]

The board's viewpoint that the theater's management was unsatisfactory was supported by William Schuman. Robert Hoguet recalled,

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[35]"Lincoln Center Loses Whitehead," New York Times, December 8, 1964, p. 55.

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> I have to admit that part of the doubts in my own mind about how Whitehead was performing were influenced by Schuman. Schuman is an immensely articulate, convincing man. But you have to bear in mind that the theater was a child, unlike the Opera or the Philharmonic. The family [Lincoln Center] brought the child into the world, so the family had to support it and be in on the act. I think it would have been hard for Lincoln Center to have brought a Repertory Board into being and to have said, "Now you're on your own." They needed Lincoln Center's money, they had their finger in the pie. It was all normal, natural, and understandable.[36]

While all this administrative juggling continued, Kazan began rehearsing The Changeling on June 20, 1964. According to Whitehead, the play was selected because although "one of the most studied and written-about plays in the English language . . . in no one's recollection had a full-scale professional production ever been done in the United States. . . . It tells a story that stimulated our imagination, its characters born out of a violence and greed as prevalent today as when it was written almost 350 years ago. Most importantly, of all the plays we examined this was the one that director Elia Kazan felt most enthused about."[37]

Kazan confirmed this enthusiasm. "We're starting the second season not with a big work of Shakespeare's but with something where the blank verse is rather simple. The verse in The Changeling is terribly direct and spare and

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[36]Private interview, New York City, June 21, 1974.

[37]"Whitehead on The Changeling," New York World Telegram and Sun, October 24, 1964. [Scrapbook]

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strong. It is within the range of the young people in the company and we're casting it mostly with the people who were in the original training program [13 of the cast of 17]."[38] In his approach to the play, he attempted "to combine the psychological penetration of the best tradition of American acting . . . with the size and the eloquence and rhetorical clarity and freedom of the best elements of the classic tradition . . ."[39]

When presented to the public in late October 1964 as the theatre's first venture in classical drama, the production was roundly criticized as ill-conceived, lacking directorial motivation or clear understanding, and performed without style, skill, or vocal ability. Kazan's work was assessed particularly harshly. Martin Gottfried wrote, "Insecure and anxious, he staged the Middleton-Rowley as if it were a season's worth of playlets in a city's worth of theaters. What was comic was played broadly, what was serious was played moodily--each scene, one at a time, as if in its own little bottle."[40]

Richard Schechner noted that Kazan, while discussing the play intelligently, had not been able to transfer his understanding to the stage. Kazan had said,

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[38]TDR, IX, 1 [T 26], p. 81.

[39]Ibid., p. 79.

[40]A Theater Divided, p. 153.

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> ". . . it is the tragedy of the not naturally bad but irresponsible and undeveloped nature, caught in the consequences of its own action. In every age and in every civilization there are instances of the same thing: the unmoral nature suddenly trapped in the inexorable toils of morality--of morality not made by man but by Nature--and forced to take the consequences of an act which it had planned lightheartedly. . . ."[41]

However, Schechner observed, "It is precisely these 'unmoral' qualities that Kazan avoids."[42] Indeed, the quality of remorse that Kazan had understood so well in the plays of Miller and Williams was antithetical to the vision of The Changeling with its obdurant protagonists.[43]

Walter Kerr, dismissing the choice of play as "foolish," was equally critical of the results. "To cast such a play with a company of actors taking its first steps into . . . the classic repertory was to ask for the disaster we promptly got . . . [However,] Play, company, staging and stage were made of wax in a way that was not to have been expected." Kerr anticipated that the company's first classical effort would be "experimental, groping, unfinished, preparatory" as the company experienced "growing pains." He discovered that "Here the situation was quite different. . . . Mr. Kazan was not guiding twenty or thirty apprentices toward the bright beacon of poetry or of period style for the simple reason that he himself has no apparent affinity for poetry or period style."[44]

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[41]"New York: Sentimentalist Kazan," TDR, IX, 3 [T 27], p. 195.

[42]Ibid.

[43]Ibid., pp. 196-197

[44]Thirty Plays, pp. 268-270.

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Elsewhere, the production was described as "an artistic disaster of almost 'camp' proportions,"[45] "a fiasco."[46] Julius Novick suggests, however, that "it was not quite so bad as all that." Among the virtues were David Hays' setting and Barry Primus' performance in a leading role. "Yet it is undeniable that The Changeling was badly done. Kazan's famous gift for abnormal psychology had deserted him. . . . It is no wonder that some critics, in their ignorance, took the play for mere Grand Guignol." Finally, the play which had been planned to show off the younger company members only demonstrated that they were "not remotely ready for it. . . . The weakness of the company was cruelly exposed."[47]

Kazan sought to answer his critics in an article for Show magazine, but his response only clarified the flaws in his concept.[48] He also defended the company's performance as faithful to his direction.

> We have never asked for any special consideration from the critics. If Barbara Loden's voice is limited, or Zohra Lampert's, they should say so and add "Dammit, go to work on your voice!"[49] Both those girls are working. As for Barbara's Beatrice, she was doing precisely what I asked her to do. I'm responsible for that interpretation. I wanted Beatrice to be almost a child. . . .

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[45]Zeigler, p. 144.

[46]Novick, p. 188.

[47]Ibid., pp. 188-189.

[48]"Adlibs on 'The Changeling' and Its Critics," Show, V, 1, p. 38.

[49]The critics had noted that Loden's little girl voice was as inappropriate for Beatrice as it had been effective for Maggie in After the Fall.

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> I wanted her to be willful, spoiled, arrogant, insistent on what she wants at all cost, blind to consequences--a fifteen year-old of that time, unswervingly demanding under her mask of compliance.[50]

Although the company was in rehearsal for nearly four months, Kazan maintained that the production had been rushed toward the end of rehearsals.

> It seems to me we needed the equivalent of a couple of weeks in Boston, maybe three. That would have helped.
> I learned a lot. Well, let's say, I hope I did. I learned, for one thing, how very important speech is. I learned that I move actors around too much for a play that depends so much on its poetry. One of my faults is overelaboration. I think I was correctly criticized in this respect. Too many variations on each theme, a little too much of everything. . . . What if I had it to do over again? I wouldn't do anything essentially different. I'd certainly try to make the same kind of attack better, and be further progressed by the time we opened.[51]

In addition to critical disapproval, the production suffered from poor attendance and was withdrawn from the repertory after thirty-two performances. The board's uneasiness prior to the opening of The Changeling was not soothed by the production's critical reception.

With Harold Clurman directing Miller's Incident at Vichy using the older members of the company, the theater was much more successful with what was, after all, its metier--contemporary, realistic drama. The production opened on December 3, 1964 and was well-received; however, the theater had no time to relish its success. Two days later, on December 5, the newspapers carried Rudolf Bing's

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[50] Show, V, 1, p. 39. [51] Ibid., p. 41.

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denunciation of Lincoln Center as "'a free-for-all jungle where constituents can raid each other."[52] William Schuman had offered Herman Krawitz, an assistant manager of the Met, the position as head of the Repertory Theater.

What followed was a cultural debacle which rocked the entire center. Called "a bungled--and rather ruthless--attempt,"[53] "a personnel change clumsy enough to be worthy of a CIA-inspired South American coup,"[54] and "a grotesque administrative flap during which every division of Lincoln Center was at the others' throats,"[55] Schuman's offer to Krawitz had repercussions which neither the Repertory Theater Board nor Lincoln Center had anticipated.

The events which led to the offer can be reconstructed as follows. Following Kazan's letter suggesting that the theater be reorganized, Schuman discussed the management of the theater with Hoguet and Woods, who "raised the question of a new administrator for the Repertory . . ."[56] Hoguet recalled,

> Kazan and Whitehead were not at all fired. Whitehead bothered me when I came in because he is a man of great artistic competence obviously, but he had no understanding of figures, no budgets. Anyone who was

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[52]"Bing Attack Airs Dispute on Theater of Lincoln Center," New York Times, December 5, 1964, p. 1.

[53]Brustein, Seasons of Discontent, p. 262.

[54]Gottfried, A Theater Divided, p. 154.

[55]Gilman, p. 266.

[56]Martin, p. 92.

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> attempting to follow it [the theater] and keep it from getting in to trouble financially had no means of doing so. I never saw a budget from him. So I was concerned, and, without saying anything to Kazan or Whitehead, I began to look around for somebody to supplement the team.[57]

Schuman, in turn, suggested Herman Krawitz as a replacement for Whitehead. Woods and Hoguet, as well as Charles Spofford, now vice-chairman of the center, chairman of the Met's executive committee, and a member of the theater's board, agreed to pursue the suggestion. Rockefeller recommended "that any such change must be made through the front door--that Schuman should discuss it with Anthony A. Bliss, President of the Met."[58]

Mr. Bliss was out of town, however, so "'the first approach,' according to Mr. Hoguet, 'was made to another member of the opera board . . . and we got quite a green light on it.'"[59] When Bliss returned, Schuman met with him, but Bliss opposed the suggestion. Instead of dropping the matter, "Schuman passed the ball back to Hoguet for

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[57]Private interview, November 24, 1972.

When the offer was made public by Bing, the New York Times quoted Mr. Hoguet as follows: "Mr. Whitehead has a contract until January, 1966. He has made a major contribution and he has been a central force here. But we've got problems and we're looking to strengthen our management team. Mr. Kazan has indicated in the last six weeks that while he would like to continue to be part of the family, he doesn't want to be part of the active, day-to-day management. He wants to direct from time to time, and we want him to direct." "Lincoln Center Will Continue Seeking Director From Met," December 6, 1964, p. 88.

[58]Martin, p. 92.

[59]"Lincoln Center and Met Feud," New York Herald Tribune, December 7, 1964. [Scrapbook]

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continued discussion."[60] However, at the same time, Schuman was sounding out Krawitz's possible interest in the offer.

According to Krawitz, "I was approached on behalf of Hoguet and Schuman by Schuyler Chapin, . . . and I was asked by Chapin to speak to Schuman and Hoguet. In the course of that discussion they formally offered me the position to take over from Whitehead and Kazan. I refused."[61] "It was an attractive offer, but there were many problems involved. I immediately discussed it with Mr. Bing. And I kept him posted on the situation at all times."[62] After Krawitz's initial refusal, he was approached with "a more tempting offer and then refused that, too . . ."[63] Among those lacking solid information on these developments were members of the Repertory Theater Board. "Yesterday a board member of the Repertory Theater who asked not to be identified, was critical of the situation. 'The replacement of Mr. Whitehead never came to a discussion or any kind of formal vote despite the fact that a replacement has been sought.'"[64]

Further, Rudolf Bing had been neither informed nor consulted by Schuman, Woods, or Hoguet in this effort to

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[60]Martin, p. 92.

[61]Private interview, New York City, December 4, 1972.

[62]Martin, p. 92. [63]Ibid.

[64]"Lincoln Center Defied By Bliss," New York Times, December 7, 1964, p. 45.

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hire away one of his assistant managers. Nor had anyone been in touch with Whitehead, still under contract for another year, to advise him either of their active displeasure or of their interest in seeking a replacement. Schuman "had not called Mr. Bing--presuming Mr. Bliss would do this, and he had not called Mr. Whitehead, which somebody else was supposed to have done and had not."[65]

There was, however, a larger question in this cultural wheeling and dealing: why was Herman Krawitz suggested for Whitehead's position, and why was he pursued after refusing the initial offer? His duties at the Met were in the technical and business areas, and in that capacity he had worked closely with Wallace Harrison, the architect for the Met, on the new house at Lincoln Center. "While the architecture is Harrison's, the functional layout of rooms and facilities has been Krawitz's."[66]

Although he had started out in the theater, he "had not worked in the legitimate theater for eleven years and . . . had passed those years in the employ of one of the most profoundly conservative artistic bodies in existence, the Metropolitan Opera."[67] Certainly, he was experienced in the problems of repertory as the Met's "most active negotiator with fifteen unions . . . [and as] the Company's

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[65]Martin, p. 92.

[66]John Ferris, "Man at the Center: Herman Krawitz," Opera News, XXIX (January 16, 1965), p. 11.

[67]Novick, p. 196.

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business and technical administrator . . . He shares in preparing and supervising the budget; he is the building's landlord; he coordinates new productions and oversees the maintenance and refurbishing of new and old productions in a repertory of almost 75 works."[68]

Not unnaturally, some critics saw the offer to Krawitz as positive proof that the board was

> . . . more upset by the company's financial condition than by its artistic inadequacies, and is reluctant to support a deficit operation. In crisis, Lincoln Center exposes its naked heart, where the old money motives are still pumping beneath the surface of the cultural cant, and we are right back where we were, in the midst of a familiar commercial anatomy.[69]

There was also some question as to Schuman's motives in suggesting that Krawitz be head of the theater. Variety reported that ". . . trade whisper has it, William Schuman envisioned himself as the artistic guidelines fellow for the Repertory Company, with Herman Krawitz as deal maker and administrator . . ."[70] Although Krawitz maintained that the offer gave him complete control in artistic as well as administrative matters,[71] Hoguet stated at the time "that if Mr. Krawitz were hired 'he would be the boss of the theater but would have additional artistic help.'"[72]

When asked about this almost ten years later, Hoguet replied,

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[68]Ferris, p. 11.

[69]Brustein, Seasons . . ., p. 262.

[70]"A Rip in Rep," December 16, 1964. [Scrapbook]

[71]Krawitz interview, December 4, 1972.

[72]New York Times, December 6, 1964, p. 88.

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> I think Schuman had a feeling that Krawitz could supply the administration, managerial, organizing, talent, and he, Bill Schuman, could from where he sat supply some of the artistic input. [The suggestion that we approach Krawitz was a bad one, but] I was very new, quite impressed with Mr. Schuman, and quite sensitive to any suggestions he would make. . . .[73]

It seems unlikely, however, that Schuman's advocacy of Krawitz was merely an ill-disguised power play. More importantly, Krawitz had demonstrated that he could play as a member of a team that included a board of directors. What Schuman and the Repertory Board sought was an administrator with whom they would have "rapport," a word which, according to Kazan, "means just one thing: making decisions together." In the midst of the controversy, Schuman admitted "that his board of directors was not really dismayed by the Repertory Theater's heavy expenses or its spotty productions but simply by its 'disastrous' management. And he lamented the lack of rapport between artists and businessmen." Kazan commented, "'I don't mind making decisions with Bob Whitehead because he is equipped by training and skill to make decisions with me. But I am not making decisions with Bill Schuman.'"[74]

Whatever Schuman's ideas on the artistic management of the company may have been, the plan collapsed. Krawitz recalled, "What caused Bing to be upset was that they reopened the question and, so to speak, raised the ante . . ."[75]

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[73]Private interview, June 21, 1974.

[74]Tom Prideaux, "The Center That Set Off a Tempest," Life, January 22, 1965, p. 46.

[75]Private interview, December 4, 1972.

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When the approach to Krawitz, "this feeling-out--the sort of thing that goes on in business and academic worlds all the time--became known, there was hell to pay."[76]

Although Hoguet maintained that the affair had been conducted properly (and Spofford backed him in this), Bliss disagreed, "'In many businesses, if you want to hire someone, you sound him out and then you go to his employer. But this was a different situation. We're supposedly one coordinated family. . . ."[77] Bing was equally emphatic:

> I am deeply disturbed over the matter because I see in the way it's been handled the breakdown of the Lincoln Center concept, that is, a group of constituents, of sister organizations who, under the umbrella of Lincoln Center, work toward a higher goal of artistic achievement. If, because of the president of Lincoln Center, it is apparently deteriorating to a free-for-all jungle where constituents can raid each other at will, this does not seem to me to jibe with these lofty ideals.[78]

Bing also detailed the sequence of events from the Met's point of view:

> [On November 27] Schuman told Bliss that he had recommended Krawitz to Hoguet. Bliss was as upset as I became when I heard about it. In the first place, Krawitz is an outstandingly able man, and secondly he is the liaison to the new Metropolitan who has been more deeply involved with the development of the new Met than anyone else.
>
> Yet Schuman, fully aware of Krawitz's involvement here, recommends him to Hoguet. Then Bliss, by pure accident, meets Hoguet on Saturday [November 28]. Bliss tells him how important Krawitz is to us and

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[76]George P. Elliott, "A Center in Search of a Role," New York Times, September 11, 1966, Section 6, Part 2, p. 46.

[77]"Bing Attack Airs Dispute on Theater of Lincoln Center," New York Times, December 5, 1964, p. 24.

[78]Ibid.

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> that we do not wish to relrease him from his contract. [On Sunday and Monday, Hoguet and Krawitz met.] At the second meeting [November 30] there was a watering down of the original offer, but yesterday [December 3] Mr. Schuman called Mr. Krawitz and offered him undisputed control of the repertory theater.
>
> [As a result, Bing said he planned to resign from the Lincoln Center Council.] I have no confidence in this setup if this is allowed to happen. . . .[79]

At this point, it was improbable that Whitehead would find it possible to continue with the Repertory Theater. However, a press conference, held by Schuman, Spofford, and Hoguet on December 5, concerning the controversy, certainly ended whatever chance there might have been for the board to heal the rupture with its current administrator. Despite the New York Times article of that morning, despite Lincoln Center's feeling that an immediate press conference was needed to present its view of the matter, no one felt that it was necessary to meet with Whitehead or contact him. Although Hoguet was complimentary toward Whitehead's contributions to the theater, he reaffirmed his interest in hiring Krawitz. "'I would like to have Mr. Krawitz and while I have not contacted other members of the theater's board, I have no reason to believe they won't be sympathetic. I would anticipate no difficulty in coming to mutually agreeable terms should we be able to persuade the Metropolitan to let him go.'"[80]

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[79]Ibid.

[80]New York Times, December 6, 1964, p. 88.

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The Met, however, remained firm. "'Mr. Krawitz has not asked for a release [from his contract] at any time,' Mr. Bliss said. 'There is a regular monthly meeting of the Metropolitan's executive committee on Thursday. If Mr. Krawitz asks for his release, I will call a special meeting of the committee and strongly recommend that no release be granted.'"[81] A corollary to the controversy was an internal conflict within the Met itself, Bliss as president of the Met Board opposing the hiring away of Krawitz, while Spofford as chairman of the executive committee supported Schuman's effort.

Whitehead, who had refused previously to comment on Bing's charges against Schuman, held a press conference the evening of December 7. In a prepared statement he announced,

> [Mr. Schuman's] activities, along with those of certain Repertory board members, have constituted such a breach of arrangements with the repertory company that I believe I can treat the breach as a wrongful discharge, and I am accepting it as such, effective immediately.[82]

He was particularly critical of Schuman.

> I do not think he is a constructive force at Lincoln Center. Obviously, no one can function efficiently while Mr. Schuman is negotiating behind his back and permitting uncontradicted public announcements that the business manager of the opera will be made the administrative and artistic head of the Repertory Theater--announcements which Mr. Robert Hoguet, despite his kind words regarding my work, has never seen fit to deny. As a result, any further working arrangement with Mr. Schuman is doomed.

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[81]Ibid., December 7, 1964, p. 45.

[82]Ibid., December 8, 1964, p. 55.

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> I have no feelings toward Mr. Hoguet since he became president only last September. I only think it's unfortunate he had to be led so completely by Mr. Schuman, whose business I always understood was not to interfere with Lincoln Center constituents.[83]

Whitehead also stated that "he had notified Mr. Hoguet of his decision" that afternoon.[84] The differing perspectives on the affair are best illustrated by the contrast in the statements of Whitehead and Hoguet. According to Whitehead, the fall of 1964 had been "a time of 'rage, sorrow, and frustration'"[85] and the result of the crisis was "'like a love affair that's deep inside you and it's suddenly over.'"[86]

Hoguet's perception was quite different.

> I never and the Board never fired Whitehead. He chose to resign when he became aware of the fact that we were a little unhappy and looking around and talking to one or two people [like] this fellow Krawitz at the opera. We never crystallized what we wanted to do.
>
> If we could find somebody who was perhaps as good artistically but financially organized, we would have gone ahead. But [Whitehead] just brought the whole thing to a head . . .[87]
>
> I never suggested to Bob Whitehead in any way that he quit. It was in the back of my mind some time to have a talk with him and see if we couldn't marry him to somebody or make some kind of arrangement. But he's a sensitive man as all artists are, and he didn't resign to me; he resigned to the New York Times.[88]

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[83]Ibid., December 8, 1964, pp. 1, 55.

[84]Ibid., December 8, 1964, p. 55.

[85]Martin, p. 92.

[86]New York Times, December 8, 1964, p. 55.

[87]Private interview, June 21, 1974.

[88]Private interview, November 24, 1972.

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"Hoguet [still] professes surprise at [Whitehead's] resignation: 'I just began nosing around for a possible successor and he got huffy and quit,' is the way the banker puts it."[89] George Elliott wrote, "According to Hoguet, [Whitehead and Kazan] might well still be directing the theater if only they had. . . . Had what? Well, behaved more like businessmen."[90]

However, Whitehead was not even certain what the problems with the Board were.

> If they were dissatisfied with the financial handling, then how can they say they can respect my contract because financially we've lived well beneath the contract. The contract stipulates that the first year's operation would render up to a certain deficit. Our first year's operation will be considerably less. If I went above the figure in the contract, I would have broken the terms of my contract.
>
> If the dissatisfaction was on the creative side, which I can understand because we ourselves don't feel satisfied with the creative work, then why do they seek a business manager?[91]

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[89]Kupferberg, Theatre 4, p. 135.

The New York Times said, "It was reliably reported that Lincoln Center officials have at various times offered the job of artistic director of the Repertory Theater to Tyrone Guthrie, the artistic director of the [Minnesota Theatre Company] and one of its founders; Michael Langham, head of the Stratford (Ont.) Shakespeare Festival; John Houseman, the director; and Oliver Rea, managing director of the Tyrone Guthrie Theater. All said no." December 5, 1964, p. 24.

[90]Elliott, New York Times, September 11, 1966, Section 6, Part 2, p. 46.

"I think Whitehead's a fine man. He just made a mistake. He might have continued running it all the way through." Robert L. Hoguet, private interview, June 21, 1974.

[91]New York Times, December 8, 1964, p. 55.

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Although a deficit level was stipulated in Whitehead's contract, that deficit level would become unmanageable if the board's best efforts to raise money to cover the deficit were not meeting with success. Apparently, the board had not only underestimated the cost of such an operation; they had also overrated their ability to meet such financial demands. The quandary for both sides was that the achievement of the project as planned would cost more than the board was either able or willing to pay. "Each side felt betrayed by the other, but each also felt betrayed by its own [former] high hopes . . . for the Repertory Theater." Schuman saw himself as a "whipping boy" in what now seemed a classic conflict between Big Business and Art, while Whitehead felt he had been Lincoln Center's "scapegoat."[92]

Arthur Miller joined Whitehead in criticizing Schuman:

> "I feel that the indications are that Mr. Schuman is reaching toward cost cutting rather than the central problem, which is to create a repertory system. The truth is that Mr. Whitehead's estimates have all been more than met.
>
> "It seems to be a tragic misuse of power to explode this situation just when the company of actors is demonstrating that the idea behind the theater is alive."[93]

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[92]Prideaux, p. 46.

[93]New York Times, December 8, 1964, p. 55.

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By the next day, the entire theater was caught up in the fray. The company, performing Changeling and Vichy in repertory, while rehearsing Tartuffe for a January opening, was now leaderless. Whitehead met with the company, encouraging them to carry on their work and thanking them for their telegram in his support that had been sent to Hoguet. Meanwhile, Hoguet announced that the board planned "further discussions" with Whitehead and that the wishes of Krawitz not to leave the Met would be respected.[94] That same day, Maureen Stapleton, signed for the leading role in the company's fourth production, The Madwoman of Chaillot, withdrew to protest Whitehead's ouster, stating "that without Whitehead she 'wouldn't cross the street to see "Madwoman,"' much less act in it."[95]

The following day, December 9, Kazan threatened to end his association with the theater and sought to have Whitehead reinstated, while Whitehead had his first conference with board member Michael Burke. Supporting Whitehead, Kazan said:

> For four years Bob worked for absolutely nothing preparing the whole thing. You're never going to get anyone as fair, as honest, as intelligent as Bob. He's made an enormous contribution to the Repertory Theater. He's careful with money. His main goal is to create something to draw people into the theater.
>
> I grant we're open to criticism artistically. We did make mistakes, but I am as much responsible for

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[94]New York Times, December 9, 1964, p. 60.

[95]"Inside Job," Newsweek, December 21, 1964, p. 74.

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> them as Bob. We told the board what it would cost two years ago . . . I don't think the board has an easy job. Raising money for a deficit operation is a tough job. Everywhere else in the world [we'd have government subsidy].
>
> I'm not saying we're the best to run it. Maybe we're not. Bringing someone in to try to save a few dollars is not the nub of the problem. It's whether this country can afford something like this [repertory theater].[96]

Burke and Whitehead conferred for nearly a week, but the board's best offer was an attempt to keep Whitehead only through the end of the season, which was no offer at all. Said Whitehead, "'It became clear that any permanent reconciliation was out of the question and it became a matter only of arranging the departure terms.'"[97] In the meantime, dissension among the board members surfaced upon the resignation of Joseph Verner Reed, executive producer of the American Shakespeare Festival. Protesting the "'behind-the-scenes machinations,'" Reed stated that his resignation was forced by Lincoln Center's

> ". . . shameful and shocking treatment of Robert Whitehead. I could not allow myself to be part of what has been done to my friend Bob Whitehead," Mr. Reed said. "And I strongly protest the dealings of William Schuman with our board. The board knew nothing about this [production of Caesar and Cleopatra] until Mr. Schuman told us." Plans for the Shaw play have been dropped.
>
> "It has never been determined," Mr. Reed went on, "if the board is to put its faith in an artistic director or a bookkeeper--a manager. Anyone with any knowledge of the theater, a good theater, knows where the faith should be.

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[96]"Kazan May Quit Lincoln Theater," New York Times, December 10, 1964, p. 60.

[97]New York Times, December 16, 1964, p. 26.

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> "Actually, I think we could be very capable of running this venture if we were left alone . . . Bob Whitehead was never given a chance. I don't believe he was ever really informed or told the truth. I didn't know. I had to read the newspapers on the days of our meetings."[98]

On December 15, Whitehead announced that his talks with the board had been unsuccessful. Although Schuman could not be reached for comment, "a Lincoln Center press official said he knew that Mr. Schuman felt 'this is a Repertory Theater matter, and [Schuman] has not been involved in the negotiations. This is a matter for an autonomous institution to work out.'"[99] Michael Burke recalled, "There really wasn't any way he could have stayed. The climate was just too untenable for him; he couldn't have stayed in any capacity."[100]

With the collapse of the talks with Whitehead, Kazan and Miller also ended their association with the Repertory Theater. Kazan stated, upon "learning that Mr. Whitehead had definitely left the company, 'If he's not there, I'm not there.'"[101] Miller agreed.

> I won't give them any further plays. . . . A lesson can be learned from all this that between the financial support for Lincoln Center and its artistic use there

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[98]"Reed Quits Lincoln Repertory Board," New York Times, December 14, 1964, p. 49.

[99]New York Herald Tribune, December 16, 1964, p. 26.

[100]Private interview, July 26, 1974.

[101]"Lincoln Theater Talks Collapse," New York Times, December 16, 1964, p. 52.

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> has to be a group of men [The theater board] that owes its first allegiance to the artistic purpose involved and not to another group of men [the Lincoln Center board] who know nothing about this.[102]

That night, a meeting of "the entire company of actors, stage directors, stage hands and other members of the working repertory company" was called. David Wayne, a leading member of the troupe, said, "We're like a ship without a captain. . . . [We must assess] our purpose, where we are, where we're going and whether there is a chance of going anywhere without Bob Whitehead. He was the repertory theater."[103] Seven members of the company sent a telegram to Hoguet, to which he replied, asking that they meet with him on December 18. The Hoguet telegram read in part:

> The Repertory Theater of Lincoln Center has many problems. We think we can solve them. We think the repertory idea is a sound one and that it has a place in the theater in New York City. We have many advantages. We will soon have our own fine playhouse to work in. We have a loyal subscription list. Our performing company is in being and gains experience and stature every day. . . . [Now] we must all stand silently together . . .[104]

The aftermath of the "Krawitz affair" scarred Lincoln Center as well as the theater.

> [Schuman's] one major disappointment [in his work at Lincoln Center was the] lack of universal brotherhood. He says: "I expected everyone to be on fire with the

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[102] New York Herald Tribune, December 16, 1964, p. 26.

[103] Ibid., p. 23.

[104] "Meeting Planned in Repertory Rift," New York Times, December 18, 1964, p. 28.

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> idea and the image of Lincoln Center, so that everyone could work together. Unfortunately, not everyone has a sense of brotherhood."[105]

In January 1965, Kazan commented, "'I think Bill is very hurt by the broadside attacks on him. He is not wholly responsible for all of this. But I wouldn't have fired my secretary in the way Bob Whitehead was fired.'"[106] Schuman, however, refused to speak to the press on the matter, maintaining "a dignified silence, which did not help him with the general press and public. But at the next Lincoln Center Board meeting he was given a standing ovation."[107] However, the constituents and the theater community were less impressed with a dignified silence which followed vigorous participation in the decisions and actions which had caused the crisis.

Schuman, described as "a practical visionary" by friends,[108] corrupted his vision of cultural brotherhood through actions which yielded finally unsatisfactory results for the center and the theater. Nor was the Repertory Theater Board spared by critics for its behavior.

"The whole affair made it clear that the ultimate authority at the Repertory Theater was its board of directors,

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[105]Barnes, Holiday, p. 42.

[106]Prideaux, Life, p. 43.

[107]Martin, p. 92.

[108]"Lincoln Center Artistic Chief Quits Post," Newsday, December 8, 1964. [Scrapbook]

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a group consisting mostly of businessmen, and led by the president of the theater, Robert L. Hoguet, Jr., . . ."[109]

> No one has any doubts that Hoguet is an excellent banker--I have an account with his bank myself--but how well fitted he and his directors are to appoint artists and influence artistic decisions is open to question. Lincoln Center directors, all of them, are a fine body of men--some are even men of learning--but one wonders how useful they are to the artistic rather than the economic running of Lincoln Center, and whether they have the right to order around artists, who are among our greatest natural resources and belong to the nation, not to any snob-oriented power drive of financial interests.[110]

Herbert Kupferberg saw the situation at the Repertory Theater as underlining

> . . . the question of whether Lincoln Center is in the business of culture or of culture as a business . . . No one at Lincoln Center, it need hardly be said, is out to make a profit or reap a return on an investment. But especially for a board of directors made up of bankers, business executives and lawyers, all known for their interest in the arts, it is understandable if the Center's progress were measured in terms of capacity houses, box-office queues and all the other accoutrements of the hit show. Of all commodities, success is the hardest to resist.[111]

Harold Clurman, however, rejected the speculation that Whitehead's departure resulted from lack of critical success. Whitehead's fate was not so much that of an administrator who has made mistakes, as it was that of a corporate executive who has bucked the authority of the controlling conglomerate.

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[109]Novick, p. 195.

[110]Barnes, Holiday, p. 42.

[111]"The Mess at Lincoln Center," New York Herald Tribune, December 27, 1964, "New York" section, p. 6.

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> The brute fact is that none of the criticisms--justified or not--levelled at Whitehead and Kazan were the causes for the overthrow of their regime. The board of directors were eager to retain Kazan and Miller on the theatre's roster. Whitehead was the target. And this was not due to any administrative negligence or to such calamities as The Changeling about which Whitehead was as unhappy as anyone else, but to the fact that he had literally forced the board's hand in building the ANTA-Washington Square Theatre, an action to which the most powerful member of the board was unalterably opposed. The complaints I have mentioned and perhaps others more valid were merely convenient pretexts.[112]

Still, the lack of achievement by the Whitehead-Kazan regime rankled. "Why, with so much time, so much talent, so much money at their disposal, did Whitehead and Kazan so egregiously fail to develop a classical ensemble?"[113] One difficulty was that years of theorizing and planning for the Lincoln Center theater could not make up for the lack of practical experience with the classical repertoire. Here, Kazan and some of the colleagues he had initially chosen were novices.

However, the company had not had the benefit of a full year of actually working together when the Whitehead crisis broke. In the year from the first rehearsals of After the Fall, the company presented five works, three of which were premieres, while undergoing the inevitable sifting and realignment of talent. It was not an easy time for artists, any more than it was for administrators. Hal Holbrook recalled,

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[112]"Festivity and Ritual," The Nation, p. 584.

[113]Novick, p. 193.

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> We started with a tremendous, almost idiotic enthusiasm--as if it were all heaven. Then we found out it wasn't; we met realistic stumbling blocks. Then, when we began to reform our morale in a more realistic way, we were hit by the troubles this fall. The company has withstood them far better than anyone could imagine. After being smashed in the head for a year, it's remarkable that they could agree on the worth of the whole enterprise.[114]

Critics noted the company's lack of "the versatility and craftsmanship which [are] generally associated with repertory work . . . [finding the company] to be a combination of Broadway professionalism and the Actors Studio beatnik, expressionistic viewpoint." However, the cause of this "hodgepodge of divergent elements" was inherent in the company's origins within the center.[115]

> Had the company started off--as all repertory companies must--from the ground up, there might not be the confusion that exists today. The actors would have been younger and generally nameless. There would have at least been the prospect of something new and worthwhile . . .
>
> However, it's difficult to fill a cultural palace with unknowns. In fact, it's ridiculous because you can't justify the high cost of a cultural palace like Lincoln Center unless you have impressive names to fill the stage and to attract the audience.[116]

To the company's chagrin, it proved equally ridiculous to have hoped for public and critical good will during a period of public trial and error.

> The learning process was plainly under way. Mr. Whitehead had originally estimated that it would require two

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[114]"A Critic of Rep Critics," New York World Telegram and Sun, January 9, 1965. [Scrapbook]

[115]Aaron Einfrank, "The Lincoln Rep is Falling Apart," The Telegram (Toronto), December 19, 1964, magazine section, p. 9.

[116]Ibid.

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> years for some sort of clarity, and some sort of maturity, to assert itself. By the middle of the second season changes were in progress. It had become all too apparent that the original acting company was not robust enough for the demands repertory made on it. As a result, some players were leaving, and a much more flexible policy of inviting outsiders in for particular productions--and possibly tenure--was being tried.[117]

According to Arthur Miller, a stronger company was emerging just when Lincoln Center and the board became impatient. "When they canned Whitehead, there were fourteen of the best American actors about to sign with Lincoln Center . . . . in a season or two you would have had a marvelous company which no Broadway show could afford to hire, and they were possibly going to act for salaries close to minimum."[118] "In the transition under way, fresh mistakes would unquestionably be made. . . . It would not, in any case, have had to repeat its earlier fumbles."[119]

The theater's production of Tartuffe provided it with the success in the classical repertoire which had previously eluded it, and indicated, according to Novick, that "in spite of everything we do have good classical actors if you know where to look for them. William Ball found a number of them for his pickup Tartuffe who put the regular company to shame."[120]

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[117]Kerr, Thirty Plays . . ., pp. 272-273.

[118]"Arthur Miller vs. Lincoln Center," New York Times, April 16, 1972, p. 5.

[119]Kerr, Thirty Plays . . ., p. 273.

[120]Novick, p. 193.

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This production, although rehearsed and opened in the midst of the administrative crisis and subsequent resignations, had been planned under the Whitehead-Kazan regime with William Ball as its director. Invited by Whitehead and Kazan, who also agreed to Ball using some actors with whom he had worked previously, Ball selected Joyce Ebert, Michael O'Sullivan, and Sada Thompson for his production before The Changeling had opened. It is inaccurate to imply, as Martin Gottfried does, that this production was unrelated to the ongoing work of the theater. The artistic freedom, to which Gottfried attributes Ball's success, did not simply spring forth because Tartuffe opened "during the lame-duck period of the Kazan-Whitehead regime."[121] Surely, Whitehead and Kazan deserve some credit for having selected Ball and for agreeing to the augmentation of the company for that production. The Prologue, recited by Hal Holbrook, indicated that Whitehead's association with the theater and the production was clear in the minds of the company.

> I come from the Fire Commissioner
> And his words are these:
> Smoking in the outer lobby please;
> For his Honor is concerned
> Lest this theater and all be burned
> And you be kept eternally in doubt
> As to how this play comes out.
> Finally the company is delighted
> To dedicate this production to Robert Whitehead.[122]

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[121]Gottfried, A Theater Divided, p. 155.

[122]Quoted by Henry Hewes, June 1974.

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The planned production of Madwoman was cancelled when a suitable replacement for Maureen Stapleton could not be found. The second season, with After the Fall in repertory with Incident at Vichy and Tartuffe, ended on May 29, 1965. The frequent admonitions concerning the need for time and patience had gone unheeded, and the Lincoln Center venture, viewed by some as the coming of age for a theatrical generation with its roots in the Group Theater, had collapsed. Earlier, Kazan had compared the Group with the planned Repertory Theater:

> The Group was a real outgrowth of the thirties. We were all unemployed underdogs in revolt against everything that was being done in the theatre. We now [at Lincoln Center] have a big challenge because we have money, some power, good actors. . . . We need time. Everyone thinks of the Group as Waiting for Lefty, Awake and Sing, Golden Boy. That was 1935. The Group started in 1928. Seven years! Do you know how long seven years is?[123]

Richard Schechner, commenting on interviews conducted with former members of the Group now at Lincoln Center, wrote,

> Maturing in the thirties when theatre really was a conspiracy, locked out of power by Broadway and a world war, tricked later by the belief that they could reform that which was so hopelessly corrupt that it could only corrupt them, the veterans of the Group Theatre have at last, and late, come into their own. It is exciting and sad to hear the oldest of them, men in their fifties and sixties, talk like young kids outlining plans that twenty years' work would barely fulfill.[124]

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[123] TDR, IX, 1 [T 26], p. 82.

[124] "Twilight of the Gods," TDR, IX, 1 [T 26], p. 16.

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Thus, the collapse of the venture was seen by some observers as

> . . . the final failure of the serious wing of the postwar Broadway theater, of which Whitehead and Kazan and their colleagues had been for many years among the leaders. The Repertory Theater experiment was an unsuccessful attempt on the part of the Broadway Establishment to find a viable alternative to the Broadway system.[125]

With the plans of at least five years for a national theater and of the hopes of three decades in ruins, Kazan mused, "I never did say I was the perfect person to run this theater. I don't know if there is a perfect person. But I wanted to do it, and I was willing to do it."[126]

In the meantime, Lincoln Center and the Repertory Board were confronted with a nearly completed building and with, as a result of their own tactless dealings with Whitehead, no one to take up residence. When efforts to keep Whitehead for the remainder of the season failed, the Repertory Theater Board began its search for a successor to fill the Vivian Beaumont on schedule the following fall. Predictably, their well-publicized tactics with their former administrator cast a shadow over their recruiting efforts. Further, having planned the project with a Broadway producer and a director and having then offered the post to Met's business and technical manager, the Repertory Board apparently lacked any "clear idea of what kind of men they needed to

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[125]Novick, p. 179.

[126]"Kazan: Rep Theater Demands Authority," New York World-Telegram and Sun, December 21, 1964.

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run the Repertory Theater."[127] Kazan warned, "As for the future, they won't get a very talented person if they just want a servant. Whoever runs the Repertory Theater must have total authority. There is no other way."[128]

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[127]Novick, p. 196.

[128]"Kazan: Rep Theater Demands Authority," New York World Telegram and Sun, December 21, 1964. [Scrapbook]

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CHAPTER SEVEN

Following Whitehead's and Kazan's first season, Robert Brustein had chastised them for violating the purpose of a repertory theater, which, "as almost everyone knows, is to stage the interesting works of the past, and the stimulating works of the present; it is not to transplant commercial plays into more congenial surroundings."[1] Brustein went on to recommend

> . . . a complete change in personnel. . . . So as not to deprive Broadway of one of its few genuine assets, I would like to see Kazan returned to his original hunting grounds, and Lincoln Center handed over to a more capable producer. . . . Three years ago, I suggested Joseph Papp as head of the classical side of Lincoln Center; as the experimental troupe, I should like to propose The Living Theatre or the Actor's Workshop. . . . For if Americans are really serious about developing a genuine culture and not mere cultural pretense, then we will have to start institutionalizing our artistic virtues instead of our commercial vices.[2]

Now, in the midst of resignations and recriminations, the theater's board[3] had the opportunity to reconsider their

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[1]Brustein, Seasons of Discontent, p. 251. [2]Ibid.

[3]At that time, the members of the boards were: Robert Hoguet, George D. Woods, Michael Burke, Eugene R. Black, Jr. (partner in Lazard Freres & Co.), Howard S. Cullman (president of Cullman Brothers, Inc.), Mrs. Arthur Wallace Pope (daughter of Vivian Beaumont Allen), Samuel I. Rosenman (president of the New York City Bar Association and former State Supreme Court Justice); Charles M. Spofford and George D. Stoddard, members of the Lincoln Center Board. New York Times, December 9, 1964, p. 60.

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aims at Lincoln Center and to select someone who, in their view, might prove successful where Whitehead and Kazan had not done so. In January 1965, the theater board and the Lincoln Center Board met and, according to Schuyler G. Chapin,

> We reassessed the purpose of the repertory theater. In a way, those first experiences proved a blessing, because they had revealed flaws in our approach. We decided we wanted repertory of the best new and old American work, and of classic and modern works from other countries. We wanted the best and most suitable people for the artistic directorship.[4]

Whatever flaws may have existed in the original approach, however, the reassessment of purpose apparently yielded nothing outside the scope of the theater's original aims. Still, the board had a building to fill.

Walter Kerr described this dilemma and that of the person hired to remedy the situation:

> Eventually, of course, a managing director is invited to enter the building, on tiptoe, with the board at his back. He is already in trouble. He is in trouble simply because the building, as the mountain climber said, is there. Here are mountains of money, masses of stone, acres of architecture, sea scapes of carpeting, pyramids of promises all to be lived up to. The director enters a void big enough to frighten the most hardened existentialist. "Here," he is told as he is handed the keys, "fill it."
>
> And he knows he must fill it with actors who are not only bigger than Burbage but bigger than Rockefeller, with productions that do justice to Ben Jonson and Jean-Paul Sartre equally, with audiences in furs and audiences in pea jackets who mustn't cancel their subscriptions in a fury after the first wispy season. Who wouldn't quiver? Who wouldn't fail?"[5]

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[4]Hollis Alpert, "Lincoln Center: New York's Cultural Landmark," Women's Day, November 1965, p. 76, quoting Chapin.

[5]Kerr, Thirty Plays, pp. 259-260.

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However, the board persevered in its search, relying on procedures that had proved successful in executive recruitment. "In [the] words [of business and government], reputation is a reliable index to excellence from the point of view of the men at the top who want to get things done. . . ."[6] Therefore, the board and its representatives consulted the experts, including theater critics Howard Taubman and Richard Gilman.

> When asked whom he consulted in listing candidates to choose from, Hoguet replied: "I don't know a thing about physics, but if I were made head of the Atomic Energy Commission and had to appoint five top physicists to the commission, I would sit at that phone and within four or five hours I would have the names of the leading fifteen candidates for the post and know which ones were available."[7]

For the New York Times, Richard Gilman had reviewed a new book, The Impossible Theater: A Manifesto by Herbert Blau, co-founder of The Actor's Workshop in San Francisco. His review appeared on December 13, 1964,[8] and Gilman recalled,

> After remarking on its opaque, occasionally undecipherable style, I went on to say that it was nevertheless "in some ways the most important, certainly the most passionate, statement of what it means to fuse art and theatre in America." The next day I was told that the board of the Lincoln Center Repertory Theater, which was at that moment in mortal crisis, had ordered half a dozen copies of the book, apparently on the strength of my review.

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[6]Elliott, "A Center in Search of a Role," New York Times, September 11, 1966, Section 6, p. 46.

[7]Ibid.

[8]New York Times, Section 7, p. 6.

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> A few days later I was asked to lunch by an executive of Lincoln Center who first wanted to know why my published comments on the Repertory Theater had been so harsh and then, moving from a condition of injured feeling to one of abject inquiry, whom I might recommend to take over its troubled destiny. After a moment's hesitation I mentioned Blau and Jules Irving. . . . The man from Lincoln Center replied, "Oh yes, we've heard about them," and a little while later we said goodbye.[9]

Other critics who had praised the work of the Actor's Workshop included Howard Taubman, Robert Brustein, and Harold Clurman. Blau had also written an article "on moral blandness in the theater" which had appeared recently in the New York Times,[10] and, therefore, he was, with the publication of his book, highly visible as a spokesman for the regional theater movement. In fact, Robert Hoguet while "getting a haircut in the Waldorf-Astoria barbershop . . . chanced upon an article in the Saturday Review about the Actor's Workshop . . ."[11] The article, "The American Theatre '64: Its Problems and Promise," written by Henry Hewes, included a discussion of Carl Weber's production of The Caucasian Chalk Circle, done "with drastically insufficient stage facilities," and co-founder Jules Irving's production of Pinter's The Caretaker, with Robert Symonds.

Hewes wrote, "This theatre organization contains dedicated actors and directors working with a strong sense

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[9]Gilman, p. 264.

[10]New York Times, November 8, 1964, Section 2, p. 3.

[11]Kupferberg, Theatre 4, p. 135.

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of purpose. . . . Of all the permanent resident companies around the United States, none deserves or needs an adequate theatre building more than the Actor's Workshop."[12] Also in that issue was an article by Blau which included views on the regional theater revolution and its connection with the Establishment.

> A while ago, I gave a talk to the Actor's Workshop company in the more intimate of our two theatres . . . We had just refurbished the theatre, and some of the company were a little disdainful of the decor. . . . But I had always felt the Workshop has brought a certain middle-class solidity to its passion for estrangement, and I remarked, "What if tomorrow we were offered a $2,000,000 building? . . . Would we be the same theatre?" I don't think we would, but I would certainly hope we would bring to that new theatre (everyone agreed we should accept it) what we learned when we were less affluent, so that--whatever our accommodations--they would have to provide for our old premises. The premises: that it is the function of a theatre to inquire into moral crisis, questions of identity, the texture and shape of anxiety; to explore the forms of conflict that are minimized or concealed in our mass media; and to provide for those who work in it some active critical relationship to the community, which it serves without servitude.
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> . . . . . .
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> If the new growth of the regional theatres constitutes a sort of revolution in the American theatre, it is also substantially without revolutionaries. . . . The apparent absence of revolutionaries doesn't mean that nothing significant has taken place or will take place. It may entail a redefinition of the revolutionary process, which usually means assaulting the bastions and breaking down walls. For the first time, the Establishment is opening its doors--and coffers--to the potentially dissident. . . . It may be that dissent can be undermined by institutionalizing it; but there is another possibility--once inside the walls of Troy . . .[13]

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[12] Saturday Review, February 22, 1964, p. 44.

[13] "I Don't Wanna Play," Saturday Review, February 22, 1964, p. 39.

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According to Hoguet, he discussed the Actor's Workshop with Schuyler Chapin, "who was at that time Schuman's assistant. I called him up, and he said 'Wonderful idea;' so, it was between the article and talking to Schuyler Chapin that the idea [of approaching the Actor's Workshop] developed."[14] At the same time the board again approached some of the directors who had rejected earlier offers: Tyrone Guthrie, Michael Langham, John Hirsch, Ellis Rabb, and Harold Clurman.

Michael Burke also had an exploratory meeting with Joseph Papp, whom Robert Brustein had earlier suggested as head of the theater. Burke recalled,

> Bill Fitelson, the theatrical lawyer, called me one day and said, "I know you're searching for a fellow to head the theater and I think I have a fellow for you in the person of Joseph Papp. Will you see him?" I did, and I must say that at that moment I did not think Joe Papp was our fellow, but he was worthy of serious consideration.[15]

The next day Papp announced to the press that he had been offered the position.[16] He also stated his terms for accepting the post: ". . . he would be interested only in a five-year agreement. He would insist on his own board of directors and complete control over programming, ticket policy, and revenue."[17] Hoguet's reaction was immediate.

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[14]Private interview, June 21, 1974.

[15]Private interview, July 26, 1974.

[16]New York Times, January 12, 1965, p. 32.

[17]Little, Enter Joseph Papp, p. 223.

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"It was an exploratory meeting, and I was infuriated when he said he'd been offered the job, and so was Mike. I just put a line through his name right then because you want to feel you can work with somebody."[18] Burke agreed. "I thought it a severe tactical error he'd made, and it was indiscreet of him. His statement showed a lack of judgment, and that made people more wary of considering him."[19]

Hoguet maintains that Papp was never offered the job.

> First off, I was the boss at the time, George Woods was in the act, we decided to interview five or six fellows, and Papp was one of them. In the world of business affairs, you talk with someone about a possibility, and people are realists and say it's a possibility. In the artistic world, you talk about a possibility, and they think they've been offered the job.[20]

In the meantime, Schuyler Chapin visited the Actor's Workshop in San Francisco. "'What struck me most,' Chapin said . . . 'was the deep feeling of commitment on the part of everyone connected with the company. Blau and Irving were also teachers who believed in the educational aspects of theater.'"[21] Following Chapin's positive report, Hoguet and Burke went to San Francisco for three days to talk to Blau and Irving, while also attending rehearsals and watching a performance of Uncle Vanya.[22]

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[18]Private interview, June 21, 1974.

[19]Private interview, July 26, 1974.

[20]Private interview, June 21, 1974.

[21]Alpert, Women's Day, p. 76.

[22]New York Times, January 26, 1965, p. 44.

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The discussions in San Francisco included the question of the board's financial support for the Repertory Theater. Jules Irving has since stated that at that time the Workshop was at its "lowest ebb economically" because it no longer had any national foundation grants. Irving continued,

> Artistically we were straining at the leash because [lack of] money kept us from growing and expanding, and we faced the problems of cutbacks. We were not getting large contributions from the city, although we had a reasonable, not sizeable, subscription list. There was talk of building us a theater, there was talk of a Ford grant, but only if there was strong evidence of support from the community. We had gone through a serious situation following the Ford Foundation grant which basically supported the acting company. Now [McNeil] Lowry [of the Ford Foundation] was saying, "I'm not going to support the theater unless there is community support." and San Francisco was saying they wouldn't support us unless there was some outside economic infusion.[23]

The hope of future additional support from the Ford Foundation was not bright, for Lowry had expressed approval of Spartan survival at all costs in the professional theater. "Nothing so much as the raw need to survive pares a resident theatre . . . to the essentials of professionalism or makes it a better place for hard-nosed apprenticeship."[24]

> [The Spartan effect] has much to do with the drive or fanaticism . . . of the person who has made his choice, and will eschew anything else--money, the elite identification with a university degree, even health--to develop the talent he hopes he has. It comes also

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[23]Private interview, Los Angeles, October 30, 1974.

[24]Lowry, Speech to the Association of Graduate Schools, reprinted in ETJ, XIV (May 1962), p. 110.

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> from the pride of doing for oneself, of making ends meet, of giving society what it will pay for even if what it pays is inadequate to sustain a normal life . . .[25]
>
> Wherever Spartan restrictions are logical and natural, they should be applied to the whole enterprise of professional training in the arts.[26]

In September 1965, Lowry also insisted that the nonprofit theater movement must now test its ability to survive without subsidy,[27] for the Ford Foundation felt "that it should 'not support a given recipient indefinitely' . . ."[28] Richard Schechner observed that the Foundation thus assigned to "those individuals and institutions it aids the difficult task of generating local interest and finances. It makes of theatre (and the other arts) an industry which, in times of 'depression,' needs only 'pump-priming' until the usual 'laws' of supply and demand can healthily assert themselves."[29] However, in San Francisco, the pump had been primed, and now Spartan suffering was less bearable. The theater, having finally been able to pay its actors a living wage, now found it impossible to ask them to return to jobs as warehousemen to earn their livings. Irving recalled, "If we had had any long-range commitments from the state, city, or foundations, I'm guessing now we would not have accepted

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[25]Ibid., p. 108.

[26]Ibid., p. 110.

[27]New York Times, September 3, 1965, p. 16.

[28]Richard Schechner, "Ford, Rockefeller, and Theatre," TDR, X, 1 (Fall 1965) [T 29], p. 26.

[29]Ibid.

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nor had the right to accept the invitation [from Lincoln Center.] But there were no commitments; we were cutting back to survive, and lo!, that invitation was there."[30]

In the discussions with Hoguet and Burke, Irving recalls that Blau asked, "What kind of guarantee can you give us economically" because of the financial difficulties in San Francisco. "Hoguet made no promises. [And there were] no guarantees. . . . Hoguet told us, 'You may well be going out into the middle of the lake, and you guys have to decide whether it's worth taking that chance.'"[31]

Burke recalled:

> It was a gamble. My serious reservation, and one discussed quite openly with them, was whether they could take a provincial operation which looked great in California and move it to New York, which is a highly sophisticated climate where you have to be a hit from the first day. No warm up. No spring training. You'd have to come out of the box with a winner. That was my reservation about them: whether they had the capacity to take the good work they had done in California and bring it to New York.
>
> I really wanted to test their confidence when I threw up all of the obstacles they'd be running into, perhaps even hostility they would be facing in New York, developing out of the affection the theater held for Kazan and Whitehead. They'd be bucking that as well.[32]

The board was learning that reputation in the arts was not as reliable a guide as it is in business, and it was learning ". . . something about how very complicated things are in the arts."[33]

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[30]Private interview, October 30, 1974.

[31]Ibid. [32]Burke, private interview, July 26, 1974.

[33]Elliott, New York Times, September 11, 1966, Section 6, Part 2, p. 46.

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Attractive as the New York offer seemed, the leadership of the Workshop had to reckon with the effect that accepting this invitation would have on the theater that they had spent fourteen years creating and sustaining, on the people within the company, and on the community from which they had drawn a loyal group of subscribers. Without doubt, there were reservations about going to Lincoln Center, but those reservations were balanced with the prospect of diminished activity in San Francisco due to lack of funding. While visitors from New York observed the Workshop operation, Blau, Irving, their wives, Beatrice Manley and Priscilla Pointer, who were also actresses in the company, Alan Mandell, general manager, and Robert Symonds, a leading actor and director of the company, held frequent meetings to weigh the invitation. According to Irving, "the decision was finally made by the Workshop leadership on what was the potential in San Francisco against the potential in New York. Based on the then current situation in San Francisco, the decision to go to New York was almost inevitable."[34]

In fact, Blau had written a piece for the Repertory Theater's annual publication well before any question of going to Lincoln Center arose. Called "The Valley to the Waterers," the article echoed the conclusion of Brecht's The Caucasian Chalk Circle, that the resources of society belong to those who can best develop and use them. Blau

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[34]Private interview, Los Angeles, October 30, 1974.

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saw the Workshop as the best exemplar of "repertory theater as a quest."

Blau wrote,

> Indwelling [sic] in the concept of repertory is a restoration of a sense of history. . . . Repertory implies continuity, reliable presence, a body of work, permanence in change. This is especially significant in a country driven by principle to possession by incessant change, reckless about its past, and ill at ease with its ghosts . . .[35]

When reminded of the article, Blau replied, "The valley to the waterers? We really had worked hard for the recognition. . . . I thought we deserved it. Nobody in the country deserved those resources [at Lincoln Center] more than we did insofar as they were in any way desirable."[36]

Blau did not see the Lincoln Center offer as a guarantee of assimilation by the Establishment. Rather, the invitation seemed an opportunity for confrontation with the Establishment from a powerful position within it. Blau stated,

> From my point of view, Lincoln Center represented the greatest public platform in the country. It may have been an act of hubris, but I felt we could [take] possession of that stage in the middle of the Establishment and say something eloquent. That at least was the rationalization for it. Of course . . . [there] may have been baser motives like ambition, desire for power, all kinds of things. But it wasn't simply going to New York.[37]

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[35]Theatre, Vol. II, p. 103.

[36]Private interview, September 1, 1974.

[37]Ibid.

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Although Blau "probably had been the most polemical person in the country about staying out of New York,"[38] in his advocacy of decentralizing the American theater and ending its dependence upon Broadway he had not necessarily rejected New York itself.

> . . . the Broadway death image is not mine. I don't think Broadway will die, but at the moment I couldn't care less, and I don't recommend staying around in expectation of a corpse. Or, whether it is ready or not, a rebirth. . . . Nor is there any reason why, as we raise the old banner of Decentralization, we should exclude New York, which badly needs some permanent theaters of its own.[39]

Robert Hoguet announced the appointment of Blau and Irving as Directors of the Repertory Theater on January 25, 1965. Lincoln Center, a product of the cultural competition of the Cold War, had selected directors whose theatrical reputations on a national level were based on "productions that demonstrate the dilemma [of this ideological and political conflict] and its consequences for the theater."[40]

The disparity between the institution and those it had hired was that those who had created Lincoln Center saw culture, whatever its other merits, as a pragmatic tool in the improvement of the American national image abroad; while Blau and Irving, but perhaps especially Blau, saw theater

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[38]Ibid.

[39]The Impossible Theater (New York: Collier Books, 1965) [paper edition], p. 42.

[40]Ibid., p. 5.

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as the mode for confronting the socio-political issues which had made such ideological competition possible.

> In Herbert Blau and Jules Irving, [the board] found directors whose philosophy was antipathetic to theirs and who put on plays that most of the board members didn't like. Nevertheless, having learned something from their earlier experience, Hoguet and Burke recommended these two as being both the best spoken-of leaders of the theatrical counter-establishment and also experienced business managers.[41]

Hoguet stated, "While they will be in continual touch with our board of directors on budget matters, the artistic and creative control will rest entirely with them."[42]

The appointments were effective March 1, 1965, and both Blau and Irving signed three year contracts, having joint responsibilities in artistic and administrative matters.[43] Reaction in New York to the announcement ranged from pleasure to bewilderment and hostility. Richard Schechner wrote of the replacement of Whitehead and Kazan with Blau and Irving, "The momentous stage direction reads: 'Exit the thirties. Enter the sixties.'"[44] Richard Gilman agreed, saying the appointment pleased "almost everyone seriously concerned with the fate of drama as an art."[45]

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[41]Elliott, New York Times, September 11, 1966, Section 6, Part 2, p. 46.

[42]"Lincoln Center Names Directors," New York Times, January 26, 1965, p. 39.

[43]Ibid., pp. 39, 44.

[44]TDR, IX, 3 [T 27], p. 198.

[45]Gilman, p. 265.

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Martin Gottfried was less charitable: "While the first directors were professionals with backward, commercial tastes and no sense of theater literature, the replacements were near amateurs who could quickly jot down every play that should be produced by a resident theater."[46] Others like Arthur Miller puzzled over the selection.

> . . . why did they reach all the way to California for Irving and Blau to run a New York theater? At the time, I thought it was because of the onslaught of your so-called intellectual critics . . . [Irving and Blau] had run a small provincial company which had gotten good reviews in the local press, and everybody loved them out there. I figured the board looked around and said, "Who is loved?" and found Irving and Blau, poor fellows.[47]

For those unfamiliar with the new directors and their theater, Mark Harris wrote an article for the New York Times, describing Blau and Irving and the Actor's Workshop, where his play, Friedman & Son, had been produced.[48] The article, however, encouraged controversy over the appointments by "depicting the pair as young Lochinvars come out of the West to save the fabulous invalid . . ."[49] Theodore Hoffman, another friend of the new co-directors, caught the confusion and hostility of the situation in his

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[46]A Theater Divided, p. 156.

[47]Miller, New York Times, April 16, 1972, Section 2, p. 5.

[48]"Blau and Irving Come Out of the West," February 21, 1965, Section 6, pp. 17, 64.

[49]Zeigler, p. 157.

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title for a Show magazine article: "Who The Hell Is Herbert Blau?"[50]

One answer to that question was provided by Blau's book, and the answer was not necessarily reassuring, as the book begins:

> The purpose of this book is to talk up a revolution. Where there are rumblings, I want to cheer them on. I intend to be incendiary and subversive, maybe even un-American. I shall probably hurt some people unintentionally; there are some I want to hurt. I may as well confess right now the full extent of my animus: there are times when, confronted with the despicable behavior of people in the American theater, I feel like the lunatic Lear on the heath, wanting to "kill, kill, kill, kill, kill, kill."[51]

Although viewed by some as a West Coast interloper, Blau, like Irving, was a native New Yorker and an alumnus of New York University, where Blau had edited the student daily and where he met Jules Irving. Irving, president of the Green Room Players at the university, had made his Broadway debut at the age of thirteen in The American Way with Fredric March and had appeared both on and off Broadway and in summer stock. After service in World War II, both attended Stanford University and later taught at San Francisco State College, Irving as Professor of Drama, and Blau as Professor of English and World Literature. Both men had married New York actresses, and together in 1952, they formed The Actor's Workshop, which in thirteen years presented nearly one hundred plays.

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[50] Show, V, 3 (April 1965), pp. 38-49, 88.

[51] The Impossible Theater, p. 3.

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After a visit to the Workshop in 1963, Harold Clurman wrote,

> I have the impression that they have succeeded . . . [in] creating a Theatre in this city gaily indifferent to the art. The statement is tentative because I have seen too little of the Workshop's program to pronounce a firm judgment. But observing the company at rehearsals of Genet's The Balcony and seeing its production of Brecht's Galileo, I am impressed by the freedom, intelligence, ability and security of the company as a whole. . . .
>
> At present The Actor's Workshop commands a permanent company of about thirty-five (besides part-time adherents), a company that is resolved to stay permanent. . . . A number of the actors--very few of them native to San Francisco--have been at the Workshop for more than five years. Will the Tyrone Guthrie Theatre be able to develop such a company? Not, I venture to say, for some time. . . . The Actor's Workshop is at the moment almost the only American organization that has embraced its community and settled down to its own work as an independent artistic unit.[52]

As an admirer, Mark Harris saw the formation of the Workshop as an exercise in dedication:

> . . . the Workshop was built neither with private funds nor public blessing, but by the partnership of Irving and Blau, who from time to time mortgaged their homes to rescue their theater, who thrived for thirteen years more or less without sleep, who held two full-time jobs each, who endured public abuse, whose leading ladies worked for nothing, whose leading actors were part-time warehousemen, whose general manager slept in the office.[53]

The Workshop

> . . . was intended to be a place where each individual could pursue his craft. . . ., a studio that would provide a congenial atmosphere for experimentation, not only with esoteric drama but also with [Blau's and Irving's] own untested and unknown talents.[54]

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[52]The Naked Image, pp. 144-145.

[53]Harris, p. 67.

[54]Zeigler, p. 53.

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However, according to Zeigler,

> What is more important is that the Workshop, while the most decentralized of theaters geographically, was the only one which assumed that it would become a central ideological force, and this gave it a special distinction. [In the theater's official biography, Irving and Blau stated their conviction] "that the destiny of the American theater lies as far off-Broadway as possible, in permanent companies dedicated to ensemble playing."[55]

Zeigler worked at the Workshop during Blau's and Irving's final season in San Francisco, and he observed that the philosophy for the theater that developed within this partnership

> . . . had two co-existing and complimentary facets. One was the pragmatic philosophy centered around Jules Irving; this is what kept the Workshop afloat, built it as an institution, and secured money from the Ford Foundation. The other philosophy was the idealistic one of Herbert Blau, which always sought larger social and universal meanings in the tentative activities of the theater in San Francisco.[56]

The partners themselves feel, however, that the image of one as practical manager and the other as visionary theorist is inaccurate. Blau commented,

> I'm really quite capable of managing things. Jules and I had different instincts, and he really enjoyed managing. He's a genius at it, and [the Lincoln Center theater] would never have survived without him. I happen not to like it though that doesn't mean I couldn't or wouldn't do it . . . We consulted on practically every aspect of management, and there were certain management with which I was very much involved.[57]

Irving agreed.

> We didn't have that simplistic or obvious a split. It was an amazing partnership. . . . The pragmatic things

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[55]Ibid., p. 52. [56]Ibid., p. 147.

[57]Private interview, September 1, 1974.

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> fell to my lot and I did all those things because I wanted the theater to stay alive. . . . Herb is far more practical than most people believe, and perhaps he likes the image of being an unpragmatic man; but there were certainly times when I went off, and Herb had to pull me down to some sense of reality.[58]

In his book, Blau described his partner as "voluble, with a bright, bantering mind, and the sort of political nature that doesn't suffer needlessly from playing the game because he never took it to be anything else.. . ."[59] Appropriately, Irving has a reputation as a fine, canny poker player.[60] Mark Harris saw Jules as a showman--

> . . . flamboyant, impeccable in dress, given to tears and sentiment. [Without Blau], Irving would probably have developed a theater different from The Actor's Workshop. In an accepted sense, it would have prospered, earning mountains of money, and running all opposition out of town . . .[61]

Blau described himself as "bookish and intellectual . . . [and] personally in the habit of seeing analogies between the slightest gesture on stage and the fate of nations . . ."[62]

Thus, Blau could write about the Workshop,

> Our career has always seemed to me--paranoia be privileged--a manifestation of the Cold War, impacted with unnegotiable anxieties and always on the edge of survival. . . .[63] I was not fooling myself that

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[58]Private interview, Los Angeles, October 30, 1974.

[59]The Impossible Theater, p. 114.

[60]Ibid., p. 115.

[61]Harris, p. 17.

[62]The Impossible Theater, p. 170.

[63]Ibid., p. 88.

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> everyone else saw things the same way. I would not concede the analogies but I also wanted to stay with the facts. To this moment I am wary of using the editorial we.[64]

In Zeigler's view,

> Of the two leaders, Blau was the more virulent in his distaste for tradition and accommodation. Irving, more a promoter and much more pragmatic, was better able to ride the bumps and take advantage of crisis for the benefit of the institution. . . . Still, both men made the same and united choices: to be experimental, to embrace blatantly unpopular ideas, to stretch beyond their immediate obvious capabilities, and to speak out against rigidities of form and formality. Through these choices, they preserved the freedom to be themselves, but at the same time they forfeited the acceptance and stability that a more socially reasonable policy could have insured.[65]

Another facet of the Workshop was that although Irving and Blau "were absolute masters of their institutions, . . . yet in the Workshop there was a communal spirit akin to that of the Group Theatre. The company was a coming together of families; not only the Irvings and Blaus but also another half-dozen husband-and-wife teams worked together regularly."[66] In January 1965 the theater had 120 members, about half of them full-time, salaried actors, technicians, and office staff.[67]

The company operated two proscenium theaters: the Marines' Memorial Theater, with 640 seats, where, in a

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[64]Ibid., p. 126.

[65]Zeigler, pp. 56-57. [66]Ibid., p. 59.

[67]"Workshop Leaders to Lincoln Center," San Francisco Examiner, January 26, 1965, p. 6.

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forty-two week season, seven plays were presented, and the Encore Theater, with 139 seats, where four plays were presented. Actors' salaries ranged from a maximum of $250.00 a week to a minimum of $72.50.[68] Irving recalled that visitors from outside were often appalled by the Workshop's meager facilities, but that the theaters, "while not ideal, were functional." He also feels that the theater's public image was distorted by the emphasis in the local and national press on the Workshop's experimental work.

> Although it was a balanced repertoire, I think we had gotten a rather false reputation of being an avant-garde, experimental theater based on our having done the first productions of Pinter and of Brecht's Mother Courage in America. There were also well-received productions at the Encore like Endgame--but that played only one night a week, a Sunday night, and was being supported by performances during the rest of the week of The Chalk Garden. Even Waiting for Godot was not on subscription originally, and played on Thursday nights, while the rest of the season was made up of classics. Godot was not put on subscription until the demand for tickets increased. We did do particular plays to generate the funds we needed at the Box Office, and although it was not a question of compromise--they were plays we wanted to do--they were also commercial choices.[69]

While the Workshop led the other regional theaters in its productions of new works by American playwrights,[70] a reading of the list of plays produced by the Workshop each season bears out Irving's statement that the repertoire was a balanced one.[71] However, many observers then felt, as

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[68]Sandra Schmidt, "The Regional Theatre: Some Statistics," TDR, X, 1 [T 29] (Fall 1965), p. 52.

[69]Private interview, Los Angeles, October 30, 1974.

[70]Zeigler, pp. 57, 189. [71]See Appendix III.

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Zeigler now does, that as a Workshop philosophy developed, they turned to avant-garde and negativistic work. . . . The negativism comes through in Jules Irving's comment, 'I don't want to be doing Mary, Mary when the bomb drops'--not if, but when."[72]

The Workshop took itself seriously. Blau states, "Soon, when put the question, I would say the purpose of the Workshop was to save the world. . . . [The] plays compelled us to face the issues as they are not often faced in Washington, and the issues in turn, prodded by voices from within us, came back to plague and shape the plays."[73] It was this approach that kept the theater from establishing itself firmly within the community, this approach that "forfeited acceptance," in Zeigler's view.[74]

> [The Workshop's] approach to its work was more than non-Establishment--it was anti-Establishment. . . . While the Workshop did move downtown, did later represent the United States at the Brussels World's Fair and San Francisco at the Seattle World's Fair, did present its production of Waiting for Godot in New York, did receive grants from the Ford Foundation, and did win accolades in the national and world press, it never found wide acceptance and solace in its home city. . . . In fact, through its thirteen-year life in San Francisco, the Workshop had a hate affair with the city. . . . The programmed chic of San Francisco could not accommodate [the theater], which was always shabbily housed, radically opinionated, and sometimes "holier than thou" in its . . . pronouncements.[75]

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[72]Zeigler, p. 57.

[73]The Impossible Theater, p. 181.

[74]Zeigler, p. 57.

[75]Ibid., pp. 55-56.

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Blau discussed the relationship of the Workshop to San Francisco on several occasions, and certainly he rejected success for the theater based on the fulfillment of community expectations.

> [A San Francisco] reviewer felt compelled to say openly to me and my colleagues you have been "well-endowed by the Ford Foundation, presumably to bring 'community theatre' to the Bay Area"; none of this "precious stuff" you have been doing is community theatre, and you better think of giving us what the community wants.
>
> Even if the reviewer did represent the voice of the community, the point missed is that we had never accepted money from anybody on the grounds described. . . . For ourselves, and for our audience, we have always assumed the right of provisional failures; we do not mind being challenged, but we will not be dissuaded from this most crucial task--and we do not see how we can fulfill it unless we refuse to accept anybody's predispositions about what is and what is not "community theatre" . . .[76]

However, states Zeigler, "The Actor's Workshop . . . never worked realistically or consistently at breaking down community apathy and even distrust. . . . San Francisco may have been unsupportive, but the story of the Workshop is not a simple story of perfect people being cruelly rejected by a philistine community."[77]

The Workshop had about 5,000 subscribers (or 37 percent of the audience).[78] Zeigler notes that the Arena Stage had a list three times as large during the same period

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[76]Blau, "Decentralization: New Frontiers and Old Dead Ends," TDR, VII, 4 [T 20] (Summer 1963), p. 75.

[77]Zeigler, p. 61.

[78]Schmidt, p. 52.

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in a city of comparable size.[79] However in Irving's view, the Workshop's low subscription figures resulted more from its facilities with the theater on the second floor than from its play choices. There was also the matter of the theater's name, which reinforced "the image in San Francisco that we were indeed a workshop, an experimental theater. Discussions were held about changing the name, especially when the aura of workshop and experimentation was encouraged by national attention to our noncommercial works."[80]

However, there is also some point to Blau's assertion that subscribers outraged were subscribers lost,[81] and Blau's program notes, written in his capacity as the company's literary advisor and signed by him, did generate controversy. According to Zeigler, "Blau in particular reveled in writing newspaper articles and program notes that bluntly alienated, even insulted, the popular attitudes of the city."[82]

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[79]Zeigler, p. 56.

[80]Private interview, October 30, 1974.

[81]"The Valley to the Waterers," p. 107.

[82]Zeigler, p. 56. Zeigler also notes that as the theater's director of public relations, he had "the smallest publicity budget in the country for a theatre its size." Later he adds, "In cultural circles, we tend to assume that the institution is always right in such a situation and that the community is always wrong. There is real danger in such an assumption. I remember discovering at one point that the general mailing list used to promote productions . . . had shrunk from 20,000 names to under 16,000. Further investigation revealed that rather than go to the bother of changing addresses when people moved, members of the dedicated Workshop staff through the years had simply thrown the old address plates away." p. 61.

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Realistically, Blau recognized that "you will not run a theater at all if you are not interested in an audience," but in the same sentence he lashed out at the hypocrite "who claims, having nothing to say of which the audience might disapprove, that the Public is always right."[83] Further, he conceded his ambivalence toward the audience and, by extension, the wider public of which it was composed.

> As a student, and working with actors, I have recited all the platitudes about loving the audience, and feeling them there, and feeling them love you, and I had theorized in writing about that mystic current and that mysterious consensus of opinion that is something other than mob thought and, by strange subliminal connections, is wiser than any of its members. I suppose I remain in the theater because, finally, I believe this. But there was always something in me that resisted believing in it, and I must confess to distrusting audiences more than I love them.[84]

While lack of audience acceptance led to insufficient financial resources, Blau and his colleagues felt accommodation of the community was too high a price for institutional security. Yet there were benefits in their position, for the development of, and national attention to, the theater's work resulted from this insistence on achieving its own goals. Still, accomplishment and recognition brought their own demands.

> You begin to yearn for the older simplicity. There are those who want to retreat, just as there are those who will always remain studio actors. But like the archetypal actor in the center of an acting area, something kept us moving: ambition, pride, defiance, foolishness, a sense of Manifest Destiny.[85]

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[83] The Impossible Theater, p. 167. [84] Ibid., p. 165.

[85] Ibid., p. 163.

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That "Manifest Destiny" was national significance for the Workshop and the opportunity to affect American theater, a destiny which seemed confirmed by the Lincoln Center invitation. Zeigler asserts, "The move was the 'Manifest Destiny' Blau had ordered for his theater."[86] In a letter to Workshop subscribers written by Blau after the Lincoln Center agreement, he stated,

> Whatever failure of recognition there may have been in San Francisco, the Idea which is The Actor's Workshop has made its way in the world. The offer from Lincoln Center, as we see it, is the most material certification of that Idea.
>
> Our appointment, then is not a San Francisco issue or a New York issue but a national issue. And it is being seen precisely that way all over the world, except perhaps in San Francisco.
>
> And let all of us realize what the opportunity is now. The resources at Lincoln Center are by far the best that America has to offer to the Idea developed here. There is no other situation in the American theater which could have induced us to leave San Francisco. . . .
>
> Let us emphasize, however, that our decision to accept the offer from Lincoln Center was not based on deficits here or the failure to provide us with a theater building. While we wished for better civic support, the existence of The Workshop was never contingent on it. . . . Be assured that when the offer came from Lincoln Center, we neither leaped nor took it lightly. We know what our responsibilities are, but we also know what our purposes have been. In the earliest, darkest and most miniscule days of The Actor's Workshop . . . we tried to conceive of a theater whose influence would extend across the country. . . .
>
> We don't underestimate the size of the job, or the difficulties before us in that environment. We appraised them carefully. We can count the blocks from Lincoln Center to Shubert Alley as well as anyone, but ideologically we shall remain as we always have been, three thousand miles from Broadway and what it represents.

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[86]Zeigler, p. 149.

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> We have been given a mandate to do at Lincoln Center what we have done here, and more so--and there's no doubt that if it can be done, there will be a revolution in the American theater that will have repercussions everywhere. If there is eminence in our new position, we fully intend to use it to encourage precisely the things to which we have given voice and example before. . . .[87]

According to Zeigler,

> Although the agreement specified a co-directorship and represented a move for the partnership, the fact is that Blau was the central figure in the negotiations with Lincoln Center. He was better known than Jules Irving at the time because of his recently praised book; his genius was on paper and could be studied in New York, whereas Irving's genius was manifest only in The Actor's Workshop itself.[88]

Later that year, Irving wrote: "Our idea of an impossible theater germinated in San Francisco for thirteen years and then we left in a flurry of love-hate hysteria to try it, as they say, in the big time. The lovers-and-haters never understood that we always thought San Francisco was the big time."[89] Irving recalled,

> Whatever happened positively in San Francisco still at that point in our history fell far short of what we hoped to be. Coming to New York with what we thought were the resources available to us, [it seemed] every gap that existed in San Francisco would conceivably be filled. The whole aspect of training, for example. We had tried training programs to help the company grow, but there was never enough time. Most of our actors had to earn a living some place else because we couldn't afford to pay top-notch people to come in. One of the reasons we came to New York was that now, at long last, we could afford the kind of training we

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[87]Zeigler, pp. 151-152, quoting letter to subscribers, February 2, 1965.

[88]Ibid., p. 147.

[89]Irving, "Theater in a Big Ball Park," Special AP Byline, June 13, 1965. [Scrapbook]

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> wanted--not only for the actors we were bringing with us from San Francisco, but to create an ambiance and atmosphere in which a company could constantly grow.[90]

However, the decision to take key people--the leading dozen actors and an equal number of administrative and technical staff--[91]angered some, who charged that doing so would decimate the Workshop and probably result in its dissolution, and others, who maintained that the action indicated a disdain for the supply of talent available in New York. What such allegations ignored was that the creation and growth of a company had been a major premise of The Workshop and remained a principal artistic goal of the new directors of Lincoln Center. To them, it seemed appropriate to begin their work in New York with a core of people with whom they had worked successfully in the past.

In an article published the day before Irving and Blau assumed their posts in New York, Stanley Eichelbaum wrote,

> A great many rash and angry words have been uttered or written--some of them by me--since Blau and Irving accepted their new $40,000-a-year jobs and invited the cream of their company--some 20 performers and technicians--to follow them to New York. Priscilla Pointer (Mrs. Irving) and Beatrice Manley (Mrs. Blau) naturally will depart for Lincoln Center, but so will all the other key performers, like Robert Symonds, Tom Rosqui, Robert Phalen, Ray Fry and Elizabeth Huddle.
>
> Nearly 100 Workshop people will remain behind, their future quite clouded, until a new professional company can be organized under different . . . leadership. [However,] Blau and Irving had no choice but to accept their new positions in greener, more significant pastures . . .

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[90]Private interview, Los Angeles, October 30, 1974.

[91]Zeigler, p. 154.

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> What the two partners will have in New York, then, is the hoped-for dream they could never realize in San Francisco, including an all-important permanent theater. And with New York's population, it is certain that Blau and Irving's company will attract more than 5,000 subscribers, the maximum support they ever had here for a dedicated repertory program Blau once described as "intelligent, deep, vivacious and life-giving plays." . . . [a repertoire of] either outstanding classics or contemporary works with a strong social conscience.
>
> Much of what they presented was too cerebral or opaque, even for serious audiences. And a lot of it was absurdist claptrap or gloomy intellectual propaganda that deserved to fail . . . Let's hope that Blau will lose some of his arrogant Messianic notions which kept people away from the Workshop on the grounds that it was "too much like going to church," as one disenchanted subscriber put it not long ago.
>
> And let's hope that Irving, who is more personable and practical than his partner, will be able to restrain some of Blau's sanctimonious and peculiar ideas about his theater's role in the Cold War.[92]

The Workshop in San Francisco did continue for another season, with Kenneth Kitch, a young actor-technician, taking over and bringing in director John Hancock. However, when Hancock accepted an offer from the Pittsburgh Playhouse, Kitch also went along.[93] Apparently, the new management was unable to surmount the burdens of inadequate funding and facilities as Blau and Irving had done, while lacking the original leaders' determination to maintain the theater which they had created despite these hindrances.[94]

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[92]"Blau and Irving's 'Dream' Situation at Lincoln Center," San Francisco Examiner, February 28, 1965. [Scrapbook]

[93]Zeigler, p. 154.

[94]The History of the San Francisco Actor's Workshop by Keith F. Fowler, a two-volume dissertation (Yale, February 1969) contains a detailed examination of this fourteen year period.

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"In going to New York we left ourselves open to take whatever leap forward we could which we had not been able to take in San Francisco. Therefore, it became a question of augmenting our company, of developing a larger company comparable to the eighty-five members of the National Theatre of Great Britain."[95] Accordingly, Blau and Irving included in their original plans those members of the Lincoln Center company who had been hired under the Whitehead-Kazan administration and wished to stay on.

At a meeting of the Lincoln Center company in February,

> A member of the company reported the two directors attempted "to allay our anxieties about what was going to happen" and said contracts now extending through January, 1966 would be honored. After that, the directors implied, each side would be free to make changes. . . . "Blau and Irving seemed honest, forthright and tough-minded," said Hal Holbrook, a leading member of the company. "They seemed confident in their ideas and abilities without seeming overconfident. They discussed ideas only on the basis of 'this is what we'd like to do if we can.'"[96]

Irving recalled, "Some of them had signed long-term contracts because of their long-standing relationship with Bob Whitehead. They didn't know us, so they preferred not to stay, and we agreed to release those who wished from their contracts."[97] Among the several people who requested releases were David Wayne and Hal Holbrook.

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[95]Jules Irving, Private interview, October 30, 1974.

[96]"New Repertory Directors Taking Week-Long Look at the Operation," New York Herald Tribune, February 18, 1965. [Scrapbook]

[97]Private interview, October 30, 1974.

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Plans for the Lincoln Center operation remained tentative:

> "This is a very big operation and it would be foolish for us to announce things now that we might have to take back in a couple of weeks," Mr. Blau said. . . . "In one sense the future program will be determined by our past work. We're the same people we were in San Francisco, although I am sure we will change here. We're not going to deny ourselves. But I am enough of an environmental determinist to know that we can't escape being affected by our surroundings. What are theaters, after all? They are determined by time, space and people."[98]

Irving said their determination to "remain three thousand miles from Broadway philosophically" while located twenty blocks from it physically stemmed from their commitment to "the concept of an institutional theater as opposed to the individual entrepreneur system; that was the fundamental difference." It was an affirmation of the ideals of the great European theaters such as the Moscow Art Theater, based on permanent companies and ensemble playing.[99]

Irving continued, We would have a building "that was created to house an institutional theater in repertory, and I assumed that on the part of the board there would be a philosophical understanding that, to maintain facilities and run a company, reasonable amounts [of money] would have to be raised. I did not go with stars in my eyes from a money standpoint, but I thought there was a greater potential

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[98]New York Herald Tribune, February 18, 1965. [Scrapbook]

[99]Private interview, October 30, 1974.

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for raising that money in New York than there was in San Francisco."[100]

So, on March 1, 1965, Herbert Blau and Jules Irving became co-directors of the Lincoln Center Repertory Theater with contracts extending to March 1968. Theodore Hoffman wrote:

> The theatre of Blau and Irving wasn't exactly the toast of San Francisco, and Shubert Alley probably won't like them either, until someone--probably Norman Mailer--discovers they're really sweet gutsy guys. But they'll flutter the dovecotes all right, attract plenty of violent partisans, make lots of provocative copy for the Sunday drama sections and probably drive the board of directors to as many secret discussions as the last regime.[101]

Meanwhile, Blau and Irving had a season to plan, a company to select, and a theater to open.

> Behind the stage, down a labyrinthine corridor, Blau and Irving have their offices, both functionally decorated except for nearly matching antique roll-top desks. Blau and Irving bought them fourteen years ago, for $15 a piece, in San Francisco, the first furniture in their Actor's Workshop, and brought them East when they moved to Lincoln Center--a note of sentiment and independence in the supermodern surroundings. "When we first arrived," observed Irving last week, "a certain amount of Angst set in, but soon there was a sense of normalcy. We're still in repertory, we discovered, only with much better resources. It's as if America gave you all the marbles and said, 'Go play.'"[102]

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[100]Ibid.

[101]"Who the Hell Is Herbert Blau?", p. 39.

[102]"All the Marbles," Newsweek, September 27, 1965, p. 101.

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CHAPTER EIGHT

I

"Irving and Blau arrived in New York in the spring of 1965 with neither the unadulterated good wishes of those friends they had left behind nor the high hopes of the commercial New York theater crowd lying in wait for them . . ."[1] "They were faced with watchful critics and audiences, some of whom expected to see them achieve instant success, while others, perhaps mindful of the Greek notion of hubris, expected to see them topple."[2]

Two months after their arrival and five months before their first production, Howard Taubman succinctly commented on the situation: "Sufficient unto the day is the back-biting thereof."[3] Later, he pinpointed one source of this hostility for "those who would hate [the Blau-Irving regime] for a multitude of reasons. Not the least of these reasons is that these intellectuals imported from a struggling resident company on the West Coast have had the temerity to sound off unflatteringly about the practices and standards of the commercial theater."[4]

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[1]Zeigler, pp. 156-157. [2]Poggi, p. 223.

[3]New York Times, May 2, 1965, Section 2, p. 1.

[4]"Room for Two Kinds of Stage World," New York Times, October 31, 1965, Section 2, p. 1.

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The co-directors expected criticism, if not outright opposition. Irving wrote, "Now the $64 question is posed both cynically and hopefully: 'Will these guys change? Will New York buy it?' Certainly the answers will be forthcoming, and perhaps sooner than we'd like to have them, but the real issue is that we are what we are and we've been invited to play."[5] The arena was Lincoln Center, and the goal of the game continued to be the creation of an institutional theater in the backyard of the American commercial theater establishment.

Whitehead and Kazan had been unsuccessful. If two directors from San Francisco, who had created the beginnings of such a theater on an annual budget that was less than their anticipated deficit in New York, were to succeed where two leaders of the commercial theater had not, it would be an indictment of the New York theater in which many of the original supporters of the Lincoln Center enterprise had spent a lifetime. Some of these supporters felt that the promise of Kazan's and Whitehead's regime had been aborted by meddling bankers, that the co-directors could have developed a significant theater had they been given more time. Feeling that the businessmen on the board had denied that regime the predicted period of development and needed patience, the New York theatrical community had united behind Whitehead and Kazan when the Lincoln Center coup was exposed. Thus, these Lochinvars, Blau and Irving, could

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[5]"Theater in a Big Ball Park," AP Special Byline, June 13, 1965. [Scrapbook]

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expect little tolerance from that community for anything less than artistic success and critical approval.

Of course, the new directors had to deal with their own board and Lincoln Center as well. Blau recalled that the board did not interfere during the first season. "The board is very pragmatic--if what we wanted to do had materialized, they would have supported us completely." He was well aware, however, that freedom from board interference depended upon successful work. "You knew that [if it was not successful] they were going to get nervous . . ."[6]

In June 1965, Blau and Irving sent their first letter to the theater's subscribers:

> In or out of the theater action speaks louder than words. But before the action begins, . . . we want to greet you personally, bring you up to date, and establish the grounds of a continuing dialogue. You will hear from us regularly and we should like to hear from you, in or out of the theater, about whatever's on your mind. Producers make productions, a Community makes a theater. We took this job as a public trust.
>
> We have been in New York since March preparing for the opening in October of the new Vivian Beaumont Theater at Lincoln Center. . . . There is an eloquence in our new stage. It should summon up audacity in the plays we do and the way we do them. To take up the challenge of the theater we have chosen to open with a revolutionary play, Georg Buechner's Danton's Death. Noble in conception, it is radical to its depths. As we read today of Santo Domingo or the Viet Cong, the play's image of the French Revolution becomes a prophecy of tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow.
>
> We are completing negotiations for the other three plays in our first season at Lincoln Center. . . . In varying tone, style, and period, the plays will contribute to a design for the whole season. It's been our conviction that a theater means more to you if the

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[6]Private interview, New York City, September 1, 1974.

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> plays mean something to each other. Their common field of action is the world we hold collectively in trust. They may laugh or rage or sing, but they'll say what's on our minds. And they will entertain you by entertaining the questions that drama--historically addicted to crises--won't let any of us avoid. In a theater that takes its energy from the world, the play is not the thing, only the passing shadow of it.
> . . . . . .
>
> The company is reforming and is already at work. We are preparing to affirm some old principles on our new premises: The theater was born of Woe and Wonder. Mystery is its mission, Joy and Energy are its end. Imagination, we trust, is the Guardian Angel of both our stages [the Beaumont main stage and the Forum].
>
> Come, act with us. There is adventure in store. We shall create our theater together.[7]

Subsequently, the directors announced that Danton's Death would be followed by Wycherly's The Country Wife, Sartre's The Condemned of Altona, and Brecht's The Caucasian Chalk Circle.

Blau stated, "All our plays in the past have been in the nature of an inquiry. . . . We were then very much concerned with survival--not that we are not still concerned with survival. But the plays of the next decade will reflect different concerns."[8] Blau's interests had shifted while he was still at the Workshop. Before his book was published, he had stated that "the time had come for the theater to end its pursuit of alienation and negativism and to embark instead on a period of affirmation in its choice

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[7]Letter to Subscribers, Repertory Theater of Lincoln Center, June 1965.

[8]"New Repertory Directors Taking Week-long Look . . .," New York Herald Tribune, February 18, 1965. [Scrapbook]

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of plays and their mounting . . ."[9] The Workshop's way of looking at recent history had, in Blau's view, given "direct, almost incontrovertible, testimony to the absurd" in an era defined by political ambiguity and tension. Now the activism of the early 1960's raised new political and theatrical questions. Direct social action probed the issues of individual responsibility, required one to ask, "What do you say?"[10]

In this light, Blau explained the choice of plays for the 1965-66 season in an article for the New York Herald Tribune. Danton's Death, "a revolutionary play with reservations about the Revolution," reveals "that any revolution, whatever its just cause, may become through the annihilation of reason . . . a Reign of Terror." The Country Wife depicts an age "where corruption has become a social code." Wycherly shows that "hypocrites and liars . . . can be very powerful, even [infecting] the innocent . . . [but] that they can also be very funny . . ." In this play, society discovers that the exposure and denunciation of the corrupt can also "jeopardize the profitable order of things." On the other hand, the American premiere of the Sartre play is "an occasion to explore the collective guilt of the twentieth century, with its hideous tests and controls and macabre

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[9]Zeigler, pp. 147-148.

[10]Blau, "Beyond the Absurd," Lecture, Canton, New York, March, 1966.

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divisions of responsibility," becoming an indictment of "anywhere affluence lives in peaceful co-existence with unpardonable crime." Finally, The Caucasian Chalk Circle demonstrates "the strategy of the revolutionary, working artfully for social change," which ultimately rewards those who help themselves.[11]

Blau's interpretations of the works reflected his admitted penchant for politicizing material and occasionally distorting it in order to make his point, but the plays selected for the season also represented the sort of repertoire that many critics had advocated as the ideal program for the efforts of an institutional theater--the classics and modern works unlikely to be produced commercially.

However, while there was general approval for the projected season, the co-directors were criticized for their decision to present each production for a six-week run rather than in rotating repertory as Kazan and Whitehead had done. According to Blau and Irving, after the regular subscription season, an additional six weeks of rotating repertory would be selected from earlier productions. By following this procedure, they hoped in time to assemble a number of productions for regular rotation which had proved successful with audiences. Although this move was criticized as an abandonment of repertory, a conversion

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[11]"Nobody Owns The Revolution," New York Herald Tribune, August 15, 1965. [Scrapbook]

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into stock company operation, the directors wanted, in their first New York season, to train and develop a company as well as familiarize themselves with the physical and mechanical properties of a new theater building. In their view, it was not feasible to take on the added burden of a rotating schedule. Rotating repertory was postponed, not abandoned.

The high cost of such a schedule had affected Whitehead and Kazan at the ANTA-Washington Square Theater. In a repertory system, more popular productions theoretically support a production with limited appeal. However, in the first season only After the Fall had proved of sufficient interest to be continued through the summer, and it was therefore the only possible replacement in the second season's repertory schedule, to alternate with Incident at Vichy and Tartuffe, when The Changeling was withdrawn. In this case, the repertory theory was inverted, with one popular production attempting to carry the financial burden of the rest of the season. Thus, the policy of sequential productions initiated by Blau and Irving offered, in principle, a cushion of time before each new production and another for evaluating its potential for the rotating schedule in the new theater.

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II

After five years of anticipation, audiences were eager to see the Vivian Beaumont Theater, and by mid-September 27,000 subscribers, 60 percent of the season capacity, had been recruited. The season's total was 39,300.

Built entirely with private funds, the new theater cost $10,326,000. Part of the higher cost was due to a 23 percent increase in construction costs.[12] Much has been made of the cost of the Beaumont. Julius Novick points out that "The Tyrone Guthrie Theatre in Minneapolis, by comparison, which has room for a considerably larger audience [1437], cost only 2.25 million dollars,"[13] although the Guthrie might have cost much more if it had been built in New York City. A more telling comparison of the cost of the Beaumont is with the building costs for the other Lincoln Center constituents.

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[12]Lincoln Center Summary Report, 1956-1969, p. 13.

[13]Novick, p. 182.

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Physical Plant in Order of Cost[14]

		Capacity
Metropolitan Opera House	$46,877,000	3784
Juilliard School	$29,748,000	[plus List Hall: 144 Alice Tully Hall: 1096 Theater: 1026 Recital Hall: 278 Workshop: 206
Avery Fisher Hall [Philharmonic]	$21,036,000	2836
New York State Theater	$19,488,000	2729
Outdoor Plazas and Parking Garage	$11,395,000	
Vivian Beaumont Theater	$10,326,000	1140 [Forum: 299]
Library	$ 8,021,000	
Central Mechanical Plant	$ 3,710,000	
Commissary	$ 1,380,000	

[14]Lincoln Center Summary Report, p. 16. The figures do not include the cost of land or works of art placed in the buildings. The total land cost for the center was $8,583,000; the total cost of art works was $892,000.

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Nor is the theater costly by (approximate) cost per seat. The Metropolitan remains the most expensive at an approximate cost per seat of $12,020, and is followed by Avery Fisher Hall, $7,513; the Beaumont, $7,376; and the State Theater, $7,213.[15] The theater was not inexpensive, but as a part of Lincoln Center it was not unusually costly.

As an architectural unit, Lincoln Center was the target of much criticism. Martin Gottfried wrote, "Frank Lloyd Wright once said that the United Nations Building looked like a tombstone. Lincoln Center looks like a graveyard . . ."[16] Hugh Hardy, in an article on the results of art center architecture, commented,

> In short, the architect is asked to design a contemporary building which will serve to enshrine 19th century forms of the performing arts. The results are uneven and in some cases degrading. By and large the solutions attempt a "modern" interpretation of some pretty well traveled ground. Although it is perhaps unfair to cite the deja-vu extreme of the Metropolitan Opera House, all these official buildings lean heavily on the past. . . . An architecture of overpermanence, they honor a complacent illusion of order which limits the activities they seek to encourage.[17]

However, Eero Saarinen's design for the Beaumont was frequently singled out as superior. Clive Barnes called it

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[15]For the purposes of computation, the capacity of the Met (main hall: 3784 plus List Hall: 144 = 3928) was considered 3900; of Avery Fisher Hall 2800 (2836 actual); of the Beaumont 1400 (main hall: 1140 plus Forum: 299 = 1439); and of the State Theater 2700 (2729 actual).

[16]A Theater Divided, p. 148.

[17]"The Overpermanent Architecture," Theatre 1, pp. 17-18.

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"an external masterpiece of theater design . . .,"[18] while Ada Louise Huxtable commented,

> With a totally new esthetic and technology, the twentieth century is making dramatic contributions to the history of the art of building. But not [at Lincoln Center]. The only place one senses the possibilities is standing in front of the Vivian Beaumont Theater, a design of strong, structural good looks that offers, with its fronting pool and Henry Moore sculpture, the only honestly contemporary vista in the place. This is the sole moment that lifts the spirit of those to whom the twentieth century is a very exciting time to be alive, and for whom the fleeting sensuosity of lighting effects and matching travertine is not enough. Even the Beaumont Theater formula was done better by Mies at Barcelona in 1929.[19]

Although the theater's exterior received praise and the building itself was honored by the New York Concrete Industry Board as the best concrete structure built in the city in 1965,[20] the Beaumont's interior--both auditorium and stage--was much criticized as the compromise house that it is. Clive Barnes summarized the contrast.

> The best-looking building at Lincoln Center, the Vivian Beaumont Theater, is also the least effective. All the buildings have been designed to look their best at night--after all, theaters are for night people--but few theaters have ever looked so glamorous at night as the Vivian Beaumont, with its expanse of glass revealing a silkily expensive interior. And yet, though this theater is a charmer, its technical aspects are far less fortunate. Under the artistic and technical advisement of Jo Mielziner--one of our more tedious if more respectable stage designers--the Beaumont falls short of excellence. The sightlines are not too good,

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[18]"Britain's New National, a Theater for All Seasons," New York Times, September 19, 1974, p. 52.

[19]"Adding Up the Score," New York Times, September 25, 1966, Section 2, p. 29.

[20]New York Times, November 14, 1965, Section 8, p. 1.

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> and in design the theater seems a strange compromise between the thrust stage and the arena stage, while still clinging to a nostalgia for the proscenium arch. The dressing rooms are rather good, but technically the theater is no prize.[21]

The Beaumont is a strange compromise, and, as Mielziner had foreseen, both stage forms had suffered in the attempt to build a theater that could function as a proscenium house as well as a thrust. Douglas Schmidt, the company's resident designer for four years, agreed that the Beaumont did not benefit from the attempt. "It's no one's fault really. They just wanted too much out of the space that they had. The mechanics that Mielziner devised to change the theater from one stage form to the other are very ingenious and quite impressive. Unfortunately, I think it was money ill-spent [to create a multi-use space]."[22] However, once the compromise was accepted and shaped in reinforced concrete, the artistic consequences were momentous for the Repertory Theater. Schmidt stated, "I think a large part of the problems there had to do with the physical facilities, just the building. I think it is a misconception that great theater will surface and survive under any [physical] circumstances."[23]

Although Irving stated, "We have no prejudice against buildings that are architecturally splendid,"[24] the

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[21]Barnes, Holiday, p. 92.

[22]Private interview, New York, June 26, 1974.

[23]Ibid.

[24]"Theater in a Big Ball Park," June 13, 1965. [Scrapbook]

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directors soon realized that the Beaumont had serious problems as a theater. Sightlines for the side sections and the loge were defective; the accuracy of much of the modern equipment had been over-estimated; and the acoustics were not good, although the furthest seats were no more than sixty-four feet from the stage. It was not long before the references to the theater as an "imperfect plant" outweighed those attesting to its eloquence.

In theory, the ANTA-Washington Square Theater had approximated the stage-audience relationship of the Beaumont. In fact, the downtown theater was one-half of the compromise; it had a thrust stage, no proscenium arch, limited backstage space, with the auditorium steeply pitched and wrapped around the thrust. The intimacy of that house was aided by the steel structure's spatial relationship to the stage; downtown the height of the theater from stage floor to ceiling was thirty feet. At the Beaumont, the maximum height of the proscenium opening alone was thirty-six feet. The contrast between the two theaters in scale was commented upon soon after the uptown theater opened. "The width and height of the Vivian Beaumont stage are formidable challenges. They have, by their very scope, an overwhelming effect. . ."[25]

The designer, according to Douglas Schmidt, had to reduce and/or limit the volume of the stage which the actor would have to fill.

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[25]Taubman, New York Times, December 19, 1965, Section 2, p. 1.

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> It's a very, very difficult house to act in, and this involves more than just the problems of voice and audibility. The place is just so gigantic that it takes an immensely heroic actor to fill that space with his presence, and let's face it, how many plays are full casts of heroic characters? As a result, the characterization got blown up beyond what the character was or it just became insignificant compared to the other people who were also trying to act to the space.[26]

It is this aspect of the theater to which Robert Brustein referred:

> There is something seriously wrong with the spatial relationships at the Vivian Beaumont: a heavy curtain of air seems to divide the audience off from the actors. In order to penetrate this curtain, directors feel compelled to fill the stage with bustle and movement, designers are tempted to overproduce, and actors tend to stress their points more emphatically than necessary.[27]

Besides the scale, both actors and audience had difficulties with audibility and visibility. The theater proved to be difficult for actors to judge their projection in, and their fear that the audience might not hear lines encouraged declamation at the expense of characterization. Although there is no theater in which the seats are uniformly good, the sightlines for the side sections were poor unless the acting area for a production favored the thrust portion of the stage. Schmidt noted,

> The arrangement of the seats is such that it will afford comfortable viewing of the thrust area. Unfortunately the seats are oriented to face a point down in the center of the auditorium, not on the stage. When you attempt to

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[26]Private interview, June 26, 1974.

[27]The Third Theatre (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969), p. 178.

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> do a proscenium-style production, you have the considerable problem of the audience not facing the stage. The original plan, as I understand it, was to put swivel seats on the sides. Apparently that was either too expensive or took up too much space; in any case they didn't do it, and it makes it very difficult for people seated on the sides to enjoy a proscenium production in that house.[28]

After viewing two productions in the Beaumont, Howard Taubman wrote,

> [One] problem is the theater itself. It is striking, graceful and modern. But auditorium and stage need a lot of getting used to. I do not complain about a comfortably upholstered seat or ample leg room. . . . But I begin to think that the decor of an auditorium should alert rather than soothe the senses.[29]

Gordon Rogoff's comments were more ruthless:

> This is the house that jackasses built, plushy red on blue lulling one to sleep even before the production has a chance to do the same. Too large an auditorium for varied repertory, too distantly deep for the sightlines of those sitting on the side of the amphitheatre curve, too niminy-piminy in its apron thrust, it must be the all-purpose theatre that absolutely defines lack of purpose.[30]

Walter Kerr, an original advocate of a thrust stage for the new theater, was also not satisfied with the compromised result.

> The stage itself remains a question mark. It was conceivable that the pool of playing space which comes of combining the area under the proscenium arch with a fair-sized circular lip in the auditorium proper might yet be used with such vigorous imagination that we

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[28]Private interview, June 26, 1974.

[29]New York Times, December 19, 1965, Section 2, p. 1.

[30]"Notes Toward a Definition of Impossible Theatre," TDR, X, 3 (Spring 1966), pp. 193-194.

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should learn to see the advantages of combining an old-fashioned picture-frame house with new-fashioned apron-stage projection.

One thing should be emphasized, though. [At its full extension, the Beaumont apron is not a thrust stage. The acting area remains a visual rectangle which extends] across the curtain line from right to left, as it always does in the proscenium theater . . . There is no law that says a new stage must be a thrust stage. . . . But there is a virtue in keeping definitions, as well as experiences, clear in our heads. . . . On the occasion of its baptism, the identity of the [Beaumont's] physical stage was . . . blurred . . .[31]

In addition, the theater had serious mechanical and technical shortcomings. The proscenium panels were designed to be raised mechanically. However, one panel on either side of the stage had not been motorized. "When they decided to motorize those, they used a different motor and controls which never matched and which couldn't be coordinated with the original mechanism. They did try to use them during one or two productions, but they did not work properly. I never tried to use them. We trimmed them for each show, and even that was time-consuming."[32]

The stage floor was also too high in relation to the first row of seats.

You can get away with that height--2'9" sticks in my mind--if the audience isn't sitting right up on top of it as they are at the Beaumont--if there's an orchestra pit, something. Any time you wanted to put furniture on the stage, you had to design some kind of steps to get the playing platform which was built over the thrust low enough so that the audience could see over the furniture. And as you did that, the sightlines from

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[31]Thirty Plays, pp. 276-277.

[32]Douglas Schmidt, private interview, June 26, 1974.

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> the balcony became less and less good. You could never go right down to the auditorium floor--then the balcony couldn't see what was going on. If anyone sat down, their heads went right out of sightlines.[33]

There was also the permanent turntable with a separate annular ring. Forty-six feet in diameter, the turntable "limited terribly where you could trap the stage because all of the mechanics for the turntable were under there. That was a major drawback to that theater. The turntable itself had too many problems--it didn't go the right speed, it was too big, it was center stage which wasn't where you always needed one."[34]

The turntable and annular ring had been devised by Mielziner for open scene changes. The entire turntable could be used to revolve a whole scenic unit, the ring to bring furniture and props on and off stage. However, this use conformed with Mielziner's aesthetics of minimal, suggestive scenery.

While the theater was being built, Mielziner described it as "box-set-proof" because "the box-set is no longer necessary in a theatre designed for the dramatization of . . . visual ideas, not naturalism. Naturalism would look stupid in this theatre where backgrounds may be abstract or where fragments of realism imply a setting."[35]

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[33]Ibid. [34]Ibid.

[35]Quoted in Hyams, "A Theatre--Heart and Mind," Theatre, Vol. I, p. 73.

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While scenic elements were used with some success on the open stage of the ANTA-Washington Square Theater by both Mielziner and David Hays, the Beaumont's space endangers such abstract design. This holds particularly true when the acting area is extended to behind the proscenium.

The volume of the stage is so great that the acting company may appear dwarfed or lost in a void. In this respect, according to Hugh Hardy, the theater is typical of buildings in cultural centers. "Their stages, for instance, don't enhance scenery, they require it. Tons of it, as much as their specially trussed battens will hold."[36] In addition, the ambience invites the audience to expect that the exterior opulence is simply a preview to the theater's interior wonders. Those suggestive "fragments of realism," which in another theater would be scenically compelling and evocative, can easily appear paltry and even shabby on the Beaumont stage.

Mielziner states that "there are many areas in all sets that are, in a sense, secondary atmospheric background rather than vital playing areas. . . . When, for example, the Lincoln Center's Beaumont Theater is used in its Proscenium form, the area onstage planned for use is in the shape of a triangle--not a box. When the Proscenium width is forty feet, the depth of the triangle upstage is thirty-two feet (measuring from the face of the apron).

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[36]"The Overpermanent Architecture," Theatre 1, p. 17.

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When the panels are opened to fifty-eight feet, the triangle extends to forty-seven feet upstage."[37] However, the greater the depth used, the poorer the sightlines become for the side sections, and while audience members in those seats may indeed be able to see the vital playing areas, they were also quick to complain about watching the actors perform in front of the masking for the wings instead of scenery.

Gradually, the area behind the proscenium was used primarily to provide a scenic backdrop, and the stage action was pushed forward onto the thrust. According to Schmidt, "The house actually works best in the thrust position. . . . It's kind of a hybrid--the main action takes place on the thrust, and then if we needed to go back for a scenic effect or some other production value, we could, but you didn't put the actors back there much."[38]

In 1963, Edward F. Kook, as president of Century Lighting Company, had announced that the Beaumont would use a computerized lighting system, at an estimated cost of $100,000. Based on a system invented by George C. Izenour, this new model, called PUNCH, was considered an improvement over earlier ones which could hold only several cards for lighting cues at a time. In principle, a production's light cues would be recorded on cards by a card-punching machine,

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[37]Mielziner, The Shapes of Our Theatres, p. 136.

[38]Douglas Schmidt, private interview, June 26, 1974.

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then placed into a card-reading machine to reproduce the lighting onstage.[39] Shortly before the Beaumont opened, Henry Hewes described the theater's lighting system in some detail.

> . . . The stage is equipped with 565 spotlights--more than double the number used to light a Broadway musical--so that there will not have to be a lot of re-angling and refocusing between matinee and evening [when the theater is on a rotating repertory schedule]. And to facilitate control of these lights, the theater will use a remarkable new remote-control switchboard called PUNCH, which permits the operator an infinite number of pre-set changes. . . . Instead of the old laborious and time-consuming process of writing down the desired position for each of the theater's 180 dimmers, for each of the hundred or so light changes a show may require, he will now merely push a button and these positions will be instantly recorded on a punchcard. . . . [When the cards are inserted in proper order,] the desired lighting change will be reproduced automatically by the switchboard. However, the operator will control the speed at which each change is made . . .[40]

In performance, PUNCH did not live up to its advance billing--it was time-consuming and suffered from mechanical malfunctions. John Gleason, the company's resident lighting designer for six years, explained:

> It was ill-conceived, ill-designed, and ill-built. The idea was out of date by the time the system was installed. There were only two other systems similar to it in existence which had been replaced by the time the Beaumont replaced theirs. They just never worked. Part of the problem was that all of the equipment was purchased from other companies and then had to be interfaced with each other. None of it was made for theatrical use, and much of it could not fully hold up under the wear and tear.[41]

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[39]"Lincoln Center Theater to Utilize an Electronic Lighting System," New York Times, September 6, 1963, p. 34.

[40]Hewes, "The Possible Theater," Saturday Review, October 2, 1965, pp. 28, 76.

[41]Private interview, New York, June 24, 1974.

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According to Gleason, four punch cards were required for each cue which took four and a half minutes to record. "You could not punch up just one dimmer, even if that was all you needed. You still have to punch four sets of cards for all 180 dimmers and have 179 of them with a reading of zero." Gleason estimated that the time required to light A Streetcar Named Desire, which had nearly 200 cues, could have been as much as 25 hours--three minutes to set each cue and four and one-half to record it. With the new board installed for the 1972-73 season, Streetcar was lit in a little more than three hours.[42]

However, PUNCH not only required lengthy time for setting up and adjusting the lights; it also did not work properly. Each computer card held the information for 45 dimmers, and frequently the card puncher would reach dimmer 44 on the first card and shut itself off. If the operator could get the machine running again, it was necessary to begin with the first card and hope that the machine would not shut itself down once again at dimmer 44. The card puncher theoretically could duplicate a cue already set up on stage. The "duplicate" button was pressed, and the machine would punch up four new cards, giving exactly the same set-up. "Practically, it never duplicated the same set-up twice so it was pot luck all around." If the card

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[42]Ibid.

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puncher managed to operate correctly, the next hurdle was the read-out machine which was to reproduce the recorded cues onstage, but which frequently mangled the cards in the process. "It used to eat the cards alive," said Gleason. "If a show was running on cards, and there were a couple that they tried that way, after the show was set, the cards had to be punched up on plastic."[43]

Gleason added,

> I liked the Beaumont as a theater. I was comfortable working there. My first show for the Repertory Theater was Bill Ball's Tartuffe downtown; uptown I worked on The Alchemist and Yerma in the 1966-67 season. The next year I became the resident designer, but it took about two years to learn all the problems. . . . People always mention light spill in the audience, but you have some spill into the auditorium in any theater. I didn't find it much of a problem, because when we needed total isolation onstage we could get it.
>
> The real problem with lighting a production in that theater is that you need three dimensionality all around the actor because what is front light for one side of the audience is backlight for the other. With the mounting positions in the ceiling, I could get virtually 360° coverage of an actor. However, the angles from those positions were extremely steep. The lowest angle possible still left eye sockets on the actor which we couldn't wipe out. In a proscenium house you do that with front lighting, wiping out shadows of nose and chin as well as giving facial illumination. I couldn't get that in the Beaumont.[44]

However encumbering imperfect sightlines and mechanical malfunctions were, it was the burdensome, high maintenance cost for this facility that would play the crucial part in this theater's future. Arthur Miller recalled,

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[43]Ibid. [44]Ibid.

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> [Whitehead's] one aim was a repertory theater, but he told [Lincoln Center] there was no rule which said they had to build a repertory theater and suggested that maybe they should just build a place to put on plays, which would cost much less than a repertory installation.
>
> They told Whitehead no, don't bother your head about costs, just build the nicest theater you can imagine. But when the point arrived at which the operational budget began to come up, it turned out that they had never established a budget on how much would be allotted to the building, and how much was reserved for paying salaries for actors, and so forth. . . . It's like building a new department store with practically no merchandise or employees.[45]

Having built a theater with an expansive backstage for the live storage of up to five productions in repertory, Lincoln Center turned it over to the new directors without provision for the greatly increased running costs of a rotating schedule. Minimally, the building committee had failed to assess realistically the operating and maintenance costs of such a facility and the eventual ability of the theater's board to support it. As a result, Lincoln Center was guilty of a common error in building programs, the "failure to present the architects with a thoroughly analyzed statement concerning their aims and the requirements of the proposed theatre."[46] The consequences of this error in financial planning would affect the subsequent history of the Repertory Theater as profoundly as did the decision to build a dual-purpose house.

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[45] New York Times, April 16, 1972, Section 2, p. 1.

[46] Mielziner, The Shapes of Our Theatres, p. 128.

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As the theater neared completion in July 1965, the playwright Kenneth H. Brown visited it, and then wrote a letter to the editors of the Tulane Drama Review. His assessment is of interest because it is not colored by the success or failure of a particular production in the theater.

> . . . The vulgarity and waste is appalling. . . . The place has no life, no warmth, no connection with man and his dream. It is a massive, impossible plant which can no more be concerned with understanding than the A&P can be concerned with the dissatisfaction of a single customer. It will employ hundreds of people who will be expendable, except perhaps for the men who operate the IBM light board, and there will be no identity of purpose or sense of individual accomplishment unless it is in spite of the nature and construction of the building.
>
> The backstage area is large enough to house an average sized apartment building. The stage itself is, I am sure, capable of supporting the entire Ringling Brothers circus. The auditorium is a frightening conglomeration of automatic devices and modern architectural effects topped off with the identifying characteristic of those who built it: red plush. In short, it is just too much, and it's limited because it has no limitations. . . .
>
> If there is to be a saving grace, it will be the Forum Theatre, a 299-seat auditorium which appears to be intelligently designed and constructed. However, it is obviously of secondary importance, and it seems significant that it was built below street level as a sort of a cellar to the giant upstairs. . . .
>
> I have known Jules Irving and Herbert Blau for a few years. I saw some of their productions in San Francisco, and I am thoroughly convinced of their dedication to and capacity for excellence in the theatre . . . Here the struggle [to realize their own dreams, if not merely to survive] has been taken away and replaced by a very unhealthy challenge: they are forced to live up to the expectations of a group of people who are so saturated with false ideals that it is impossible to know what will satisfy them. The necessity of satisfying them at all is, of course, disastrous.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> If Irving and Blau do not live up to whatever it is that the management expects of them, they will be replaced, as were Kazan and Whitehead. Thus, the Repertory Theatre is a corporation like all other corporations.

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> The presidents, presently Blau and Irving, have been selected by the board of directors and may be dismissed at any time regardless of contracts signed or promises made. . . .
>
> Better to understand the corporate atmosphere, it should not be overlooked that there is a private entrance for the patrons who contribute the most, a private elevator, and even a private smoking room. These facilities will provide the largest stock-holders with a separateness from theatre-goers much like the executive privacy of big business. . . .
>
> The Lincoln Center Repertory Theatre is a monster that is currently being manipulated and brought into motion by two devoted men. But no matter how hard they try, they will never be able to breathe a soul into it. No monster yet ever had any feelings, and this one will be no different from the rest. It will live and rear its head and consume and exhibit itself, but it will never care one way or the other.[47]

While Brown's letter fairly bristles with the intellectual's hostility for the affluent businessmen on cultural boards, it does capture the slightly intimidating, overstuffed atmosphere of the Beaumont. No one has ever called the Beaumont main stage and auditorium intimate.

III

However, in the summer of 1965, Blau and Irving could not foresee the handicaps of the new theater, for many of them surfaced only after the building was in use. Some could be remedied with experience in using the space, but others would require physical changes or improvisations. In the meantime, while contractors worked on the building,

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[47]"The Affluent Society Builds A Theatre," TDR, X, 3 (Winter 1965), [T 30], pp. 234-236.

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the directors set up a training program for their new company, which included classes in mime with Carlo Mazzone and voice coaching by Henry Jacobi.

At that time, Irving wrote, "Our kind of theater . . . is a single artist made up of single artists. Our very life is continuing, collective experimentation."[48] "Training has become the by-word and high standards the goal. With full respect for the play, the company has now become the thing."[49]

The first phase of preparation was work on "small practice scenes of Ionesco, Buechner, and Duerrenmatt [to bring together the actors from San Francisco with those who remained] from the Whitehead-Kazan regime. Blau said the fusion [of the two groups] was entirely satisfactory. 'We have come together with greater conviviality than we could have imagined.'"[50] In late June, the second phase began in which the actors used the stage in the new theater. Half the company worked under Irving's direction on a section of Brecht's A Man's A Man, while Blau directed the others in a section of Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida. Through work on these crowd and battle scenes the directors aimed to explore this new stage fully before rehearsals for Danton's

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[48]"Theater in a Big Ball Park," June 13, 1965. [Scrapbook]

[49]"Theater: U. S. A.," U. S. Travel Service, July 1965. [Scrapbook]

[50]"New York 'Fusion' By Irving and Blau," San Francisco Examiner, June 29, 1965. [Scrapbook]

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Death began in early August. Blau said that the purpose of these projects was to demonstrate "the range of things and suggest the sort of materials we will be interested in, the themes and techniques we hope to use," and not to "establish any methodology" or state "any overarticulated goals."[51]

Howard Taubman wrote, however, that Blau's and Irving's decision to bring a nucleus of people from their San Francisco company was:

> . . . a pivotal decision bound to antagonize many elements of the theatrical community. . . . What is more, they indicated that to achieve their ideal of an acting ensemble they would have to depend more on their own training program than on local acting resources.[52] In organizing their first company they have proceeded on this theory. They have retained some members of last season's Lincoln Center Repertory Theater and have picked up a few other players available in New York. They have engaged no glamorous stars.[53]

In fact, the company of forty for the first production included eleven members of the Whitehead Kazan company, fifteen members from the Actor's Workshop, and fourteen New York actors. The absence of glamorous stars was a philosophical decision, although those who had criticized their use in the first regime as a reliance on the commercial names were now critical of Blau and Irving for their refusal to do just that. There was a marked difference in salary scale between the Whitehead-Kazan regime and

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[51]Ibid.

[52]The need for a training program in order to develop an ensemble was a major premise under Whitehead and Kazan as well.

[53]"Room for Two Kinds of Stage World," New York Times, October 31, 1965, Section 2, p. 1.

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that of Blau and Irving. Under the former, the top salary was $800 per week which was received by Jason Robards and David Wayne; under the latter, the top salary for the actors they hired was $300 per week.

Blau and Irving, despite the antagonism, made an effort to join the New York theatrical community and to use its resources. For Danton's Death, the breakdown of principal roles was three from the Whitehead-Kazan company, including Paul Mann as Collot d'Herbois and David J. Stewart as Lacroix; four from the San Francisco group, including Robert Symonds as Robespierre; and nine New York actors, including Alan Bergmann as Danton, Claudette Nevins as his wife, Roscoe Lee Browne as St. Just, Robert Stattel as Camille Desmoulins, Gail Fisher as his wife, and James Earl Jones as Philippeau. Thus, there was some bewilderment and anger when the company was regarded as alien. Irving recalled, "We really wanted to embrace the talent that existed in the New York theatrical community to augment whatever we had."[54] Blau added,

> We were not unrealistic people in terms of casting, and we also felt it was necessary to cast New York actors for the integrated morale of the company. We wanted a company, and we felt we had to indicate that we would not be relying on San Francisco people for all major roles, so we cast New Yorkers in most of the major roles for Danton. In the crowd scenes, we thought it would be efficacious to have the Workshop people do the walk-ons in order to instill an ensemble idea, and that worked reasonably well.[55]

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[54]Private interview, October 30, 1974.

[55]Private interview, September 1, 1974.

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Among the technical people, Frederic de Wilde, who had been co-production stage manager since the Repertory Theater's inception, remained with the company as did stage manager Howard Fischer who had been with the theater for its two seasons downtown. Jo Mielziner was invited to design the scenery and lighting for the Beaumont's inaugural production.

Mielziner originally planned to use rear projections as a major scenic element for Danton, but this plan was later revised when the Beaumont's sightlines for rear projections proved poor. Then, a concept which would bring the action downstage was adopted. Blau's view of the production involved the use of the new theater's mechanical equipment. He recalled, "We did try to use the equipment partially because of my interest in 'risking the Baroque.' Because I was interested in that as an aesthetic idea, I tried to make conceptual use of the mechanical devices."[56]

The thrust area consisted "mostly of steps and . . . most of the play's scenes are staged in the maximum width and depth of the proscenium stage behind it. When the curtain rises to reveal Jo Mielziner's inspired abstraction of Paris in the form of perspective line settings of that period, decorated only by statues, a marvelous dramatic

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[56]Ibid.

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atmosphere is set."[57] "This suggests the sweep of Paris itself, and is broken only by three courtroom desks which slide down stage towards us for the various revolutionary tribunals."[58]

Blau recalled, "The company's rehearsals were spirited, and this was true of the New York actors as well as the San Francisco actors. Those rehearsals were really ardent, and people thought we had a bangup thing going for a long time. It didn't bang up."[59] "If you have a 'bomb,' the company usually tips it, but there was no warning. 'Audience comment' slips passed out at each of the seven previews were returned in large numbers between 100 and 125 each night--and in Blau's estimate they were 85% 'good to magnificent.'"[60]

However, Richard Gilman wrote, "As the summer wore on . . . I began to hear disquieting rumors of difficulties at the Repertory Theater, problems in casting and staging that were afflicting the first production. . . . [Most of the New York actors signed] had struck me as exceedingly problematic choices. . . ."[61]

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[57]Henry Hewes, "The Impossibilities Are Limited," Saturday Review, November 6, 1965, p. 41.

[58]Herbert Whittaker, "Lincoln Repertory Faces Mistrust," The Globe and Mail (Toronto), November 16, 1965. [Scrapbook]

[59]Private interview, September 1, 1974.

[60]"Repertory--'Ineffective and Puzzling'," New York Herald Tribune, January 17, 1966. [Scrapbook]

[61]Gilman, p. 267.

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Blau recalled the technical difficulties, saying that the proscenium panels didn't close properly. In addition, "it is true that the power of the devices was overestimated, and a lot of things that were planned never worked properly. This was unfortunate, but as a production there were still some spectacular things."[62]

Theodore Hoffman had predicted the effects of Blau's work:

> Come September, . . . when a Blau production jars its way into an opening night audience's innards at the new Vivian Beaumont, full of actors caught up in discordant visual images and infected with a raging emotional zeal that sparks off more ideas than an audience can absorb, resounding with strident rhythms, surrounded by emblematic scenery that takes on a life of its own and struggles to join the characters in the play, the whole creating an intransigent meaning that irritates half the audience into combative frustration. . . .[63]

However, the theater was in the midst of a major controversy even before the production officially opened. The first preview of Danton was held on October 12, 1965, and on October 14, the New York Times carried an article on Blau's note on the play which appeared in the mimeographed program.[64] The controversial portion read:

> The French revolution was a series of small nuclear explosions climaxed by a reign of terror. It came at the end of the eighteenth century when enlightenment looked over the abyss to anarchy and, in our own time,

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[62]Private interview, September 1, 1974.

[63]"Who the Hell is Herbert Blau?", Show, p. 39.

[64]New York Times, p. 56.

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> absolute unreason. The terror was designed by the Committee of Public Safety as an instrument of order. "Terror, but not chaos." The bloodletting seemed required by history.
>
> Terror, according to Robespierre, Castro, Verwoerd, Mao Tse Tung and President Johnson, is the moral whip of virtue.
>
> This is not to equalize all aberrations of power, but to recognize--as Büchner did at twenty-one--that nobody has a premium on tyranny. By fault or default, from whatever good motives, we are all executioners. "What is it in us that whores, lies, steals and kills?" The question may be a hard tack for a new season. But we may as well begin where our world leaves us: with the balance of terror. . . .
>
> The heroes of the [French] Revolution were responsible for murder, rape, arson, cannibalism, atrocity of every kind, and the horror is they were no more (or less) sadists than the men responsible today for releasing napalm over the jungles.[65]

Those who recalled that the June letter to subscribers had contained a reference to the contemporary significance of the play should not have been shocked that the program notes would emphasize this correlation. However, the Times quoted "several playgoers who had been incensed at seeing President Johnson's name in such company--too incensed, presumably, to notice the care with which the implied comparison was qualified. The offending article, temperate as it was, was quickly withdrawn; the program for the performances carried only a historical note that could offend no one."[66] For Novick, the deletion of that portion of the program note cited above gave "an indication of Blau's and Irving's insecurity and willingness to please

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[65]Hewes, "The Impossibilities Are Limited," Saturday Review, p. 41, quoting program note.

[66]Novick, pp. 200-201.

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their new public . . . [while] they had been famous for their unwillingness to cater to their San Francisco public."[67]

Blau maintains, however, that the decision had nothing to do with the audience but rose out of consideration for the acting company. He stated,

> The program note shouldn't have been withdrawn. That is the only thing done at Lincoln Center of which I have ever been ashamed. . . .
>
> Over half of the company were actors who were not used to being committed that way, and I felt I hadn't the right to insist on my statement. The Workshop actors were always nervous about these things too, but they were used to it because they had endured it for so many years. For them it wasn't the first time there was controversy over a program note. . . . However, once it was there it should never have been withdrawn. I withdrew it because I thought I was being decent; now I think I was indecent to myself to do it.[68]

Besides, the deletion did not appease anyone. Howard Taubman wrote,

> Obviously it was poor judgment to alienate any section of the audience even before the official opening of the new regime's initial production. Blau and Irving could not for a moment delude themselves into thinking that the essay would not be noticed. It is inconceivable that they did not wish the words to sing.
>
> Was the essay a case of borrowing trouble? Since Blau and Irving are earnest, thoughtful men, it must be assumed that they knew what they were doing. But they would be a lot wiser if they permitted their deeds--the plays and performances at the Beaumont Theater--to speak for their principles.[69]

Of course, Blau had not assumed that the program note would go unnoticed. He later commented,

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[67]Novick, p. 200.

[68]Private interview, September 1, 1974.

[69]"Room for Two Kinds of Stage World," New York Times, October 31, 1965, Section 2, p. 1.

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> Take for example the notorious sentence in the program. . . . I thought I wrote that sentence with a great deal of precision, and qualified it considerably afterwards. . . . I simply wanted to say that nobody has a premium of tyranny. Those who objected to my classifying President Johnson with "other dictators" amazed me, simply because I don't consider these men "other dictators." . . .
>
> The purpose of the note, which I did not construe as a political note, was to establish certain preoccupations that we found in our work with [the play]: The people in Danton's Death are a group of self-defeating idealists. . . .
>
> I think it is also naive to say that the play is about alienation, despair, or bondage. Any second-rate interpreter knows that it's obviously a play which verges on a nihilistic vision. [However,] it's also a play that asks the basic existential questions such as: what is it in us that whores, lies, thieves, and kills?[70]

While, as Blau maintained, some may not have been prepared to examine this issue, others were annoyed by the arrogance of the essay, much as members of the San Francisco public had been in the past. Further, it was naive to expect that the program note would not be seen as a political statement.

In the meantime, there were official ceremonies to attend. The Vivian Beaumont Theater was dedicated on October 14; a gala benefit of the play was held on October 20, which raised $100,000 toward the company's anticipated deficit, and on the following evening, Danton's Death was seen by the critics. Many of the critics had reservations

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[70]Schechner, ed., "'The New Establishment'?: Fragments of the TDR Theatre Conference," TDR, X, 4 (Summer 1966), [T 32], quoting Herbert Blau, pp. 122-123. Blau is apparently referring to Robert Brustein's criticism of Danton where he used the terms alienation, despair, and bondage. See The Third Theatre, pp. 163-164.

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about the new theater facility, which have been mentioned; for those who also had reservations about the new directors, the opening of Danton was an opportunity to condemn the whole enterprise. For those who had supported the appointments, this first New York production provoked misgivings. Whatever Blau's concept for the production had been (and there were a variety of interpretations of what it was), the consensus was that the concept had not been realized onstage.

Walter Kerr suggested,

> . . . Lincoln Center had arranged to have opening night and amateur night at the same time. The fumbling had begun again, late. What passed on the stage for passion was noisy hysteria; what offered itself as dramatic color was the garish surface posturing of penny dreadfuls. The glowing new playhouse was pleasing to enter, and the . . . machinery that rolled forums forward and back was impressive. But, as we tried to attend to the play, we became uncomfortably aware of the predicament we were in. What we were looking at, alas, was a million-dollar dreadful.[71]

Henry Hewes commented, "There are dangers in this attitude [of refusing to allow] their work to be led by consideration of what their audiences' responses are likely to be. . . . The mere selection of [Danton] . . . suggests that Mr. Blau has yielded to the temptations of beginning with the impossiblest challenge. [While he chose it as a work that can] reveal our own times to us, he has achieved this mainly in his [original] program note . . . [but such ideas] only count insofar as they are borne out on the

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[71]Kerr, Thirty Plays, pp. 275-276.

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stage. . . ."[72] Taubman also questioned Blau's choice of Danton: "The caliber of most of the acting in [the production] is no endorsement of their policies [of depending on their own training program]. With very few exceptions the company is nowhere near ready for so difficult a play. It was daring as well as foolhardy of Mr. Blau to undertake it."[73]

Robert Brustein disagreed: "As far as the repertory ideal is concerned, there is a world of difference between failing a masterpiece and failing a work that should never have been produced; and if the choice of Danton's Death smacks a little of hubris, it also smacks of courage and ambitiousness, without which no permanent company would be worth a second thought."[74] Danton is an excellent play, although structurally flawed and difficult to perform. Thus, while applauding the choice, Brustein was critical of the results.

> What are we to conclude from this first production . . .? I think, at this early stage, the wisest thing would be to resist conclusions. I have seen the Blau-Irving troupe do brilliant work in San Francisco; it was occasionally erratic there, it will no doubt be occasionally erratic here; and we must refrain from applying our commercial hit-flop standards to a company that will assuredly develop from play to play. . . .
>
> Still, something troubles me. For the very qualities that distinguished [the Workshop] . . .--the vigor, healthiness, joy, informality, and exuberance--are

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[72] Saturday Review, November 6, 1965, p. 41.

[73] New York Times, October 31, 1965, Section 2, p. 1.

[74] The Third Theatre, p. 163.

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> notably lacking in this New York incarnation. Certainly, the directors are already showing signs of transformation. Their ads pronounce their theatre a shrine; . . . and they have now dedicated their first season to the "still unfulfilled principles of the Revolution which is the subject of our first play . . . Liberty Fraternity, and Exuberance among men."
>
> Besides indicating what might have gone wrong in the interpretation of Danton's Death (which is more about bondage, alienation and despair among men), a statement like that suggests that a lot of creative energy that might be more effectively channeled into a rigorous confrontation of the plays is now being wasted in public posturing. . . . If anything is to be achieved there, the directors will have to resist the temptation to become two more stone columns in a stately facade, and loosen into their old quiet work of producing good shows.[75]

Both Blau and Mielziner were criticized for their use or misuse of the theater's mechanical facilities. Gordon Rogoff wrote, "How odd it is that Blau, the enemy of what he calls 'prodigal motion' and 'atomic-powered windlasses' should be so much in the power of machinery. . . ."[76] He was also critical of the production's lack of clarity:

> I do not agree with [Blau's] suggestion . . . that the theatre is a political institution, merely the sense he conveys in both word and action that he places the political first. Worse, I cannot imagine how he can make any artistic choice clear for actors when he cannot make any philosophical or political choices clear to me.[77]

Brustein also noted the emphasis on "the mechanical gadgetry" with the result that "Blau lets the play get swamped by technology." He found the music "a whining

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[75]Ibid., pp. 163-164.

[76]"Notes Toward a Definition of Impossible Theatre," TDR, X, 3 (Spring 1966) [T 31], p. 193.

[77]Ibid., p. 196.

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electronic score," the costumes overly elegant, which with "the neat perspective setting never suggest for a moment that Paris is a slaughterhouse."

> Worst of all, Jo Mielziner has been permitted to indulge an obvious weakness for revolving trolleys, lateral tracks, moveable screens, airborne balloons, and huge sliding set pieces (these included a convention hall, a revolutionary tribunal, and, finally, a full-scale guillotine, complete with scaffold and tumbril.) I had the feeling . . . that the production would have benefited enormously from the exertions of a good, dedicated machine wrecker. For Blau seems so preoccupied with the technical aspects of his production that he has neglected to establish the values of individual scenes: the play is, at the same time, both overproduced and underdirected.[78]

The harshest assessment came from Richard Gilman, perhaps following the dictum that those with the greatest expectations will be the most disappointed. He later wrote,

> As I look back, I think my feeling of shame and embarrassment was greater that night [that Danton opened] than it had been at the opening of Kazan's The Changeling. . . . So complete was the debacle . . . that I found it impossible to take comfort in the thought that Büchner's play was, after all, extraordinarily difficult to stage well. To tell the truth, I gave up then, along with most of my colleagues; from then on it was up to Blau and Irving to demonstrate not that they deserved our trust and expectation but that they did not deserve our contempt.[79]

Zeigler records a poignant incident after the opening night performance of Danton. He saw the move from San Francisco to New York as "not only an exhilarating experience but a bittersweet one as well." For the party

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[78]The Third Theatre, p. 162.

[79]Gilman, pp. 268-269.

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in the lobby, a dance floor had been set up, and "there was more than a touch of irony . . . [in the dance band's] opening song [which] was the most popular of that year--'I Left My Heart in San Francisco'."[80]

At the time, Blau openly discussed his feelings about the play's critical reception. "Danton is a very great play. We should have done it. It's obvious something went wrong. But if we ever had a chance to do it again in a different way I would like another crack at it. The worst criticism, the criticism that hurt me personally most as a director, was that we had no ideas about it or attitudes in it." Blau added, "A couple of things were miscast. Certain things I did in Danton didn't pay off. The machinery (the use of stage trucks to advance and retract scenic elements) prevailed against the play."[81]

Blau also spoke about his experience in New York at a TDR conference held on November 21, 1965:

> I came into this meeting today to hear myself attacked, for I must say that that's the most conspicuous experience I've had in New York so far. . . . Given the difficulties we've had in the reception of our production of Danton, we might be amazed, shattered, astonished, disturbed, maybe even paralyzed if it weren't for the fact that we have put in (or at least some of those who are with us now have) thirteen or more years together doing this very kind of work--some good, some bad, some atrociously misguided, and some of it, I think, very exalted, precise, and as close to our contemporary aspirations as we could manage. . . .
> . . . . . .

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[80]Zeigler, p. 155.

[81]"Repertory--'Ineffective and Puzzling'," New York Herald Tribune, January 17, 1966. [Scrapbook]

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> It seems unquestionable that whatever you take your theatre to be you've got to prove it on stage. It's either got to be there or it's not there. And apparently for many of you whatever it was I felt about Danton's Death it did not make it on stage.
>
> Therefore, here in the midst of the Establishment, we have the same mission we had in San Francisco: If we didn't do it this time, we will do it next time. We will do it by applying ourselves to our craft, by trying to train our actors, . . . by finding ways of imbedding whatever good ideas we have more concretely in the experience that you perceive when you are in the theatre looking at that stage.
>
> Some people have implied that "The knives are out for you." That's nonsense, the knives are always out for you. The only way to deal with the knives is to be powerful in your art.[82]

Shortly after Danton closed, James Earl Jones summarized his experience with the company:

> . . . But at the Beaumont Theater the focus is not on the actor. The actor as a creature is not fully used. There is an assumption [in repertory theater] that if you get the right kind of setting, the right kind of blocking, the right kind of music, anybody can do the job. . . I went there to explore and I left because [I wasn't exploring] nor was I explored. . . . The directors are too tolerant--this is it--of a play's weaknesses, and of acting weaknesses, to bring about the stimulation that could correct those weaknesses. It's an act of kindness. [The situation is complex] and this is why you can't just take an ax and start going after people--because there is such kindness, such an apparent desire to be good, to do good. It's just that sometimes you have to face the fact that it's bad writing, or bad acting."[83]

The next production was The Country Wife, directed by Robert Symonds. What "had been a delightful success at the Workshop only a year before [with the same actress,

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[82]Schechner, ed. "'The New Establishment'? . . ." TDR, X, 4 (Summer, 1966) [T 32], pp. 121-124, quoting Herbert Blau.

[83]"James Earl Jones; What the Doctor Ordered," New York Post, December 5, 1965, Section 3, p. 35.

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Elizabeth Huddle, in the title role] was dwarfed by the vastness of the new theater."[84] Symonds commented, "The Beaumont was designed to destroy the box set. Well, that's fine, except that so many dramas are written with that set in mind. The thrust stage is great for Greek drama, but it's tough on Restoration comedy. That type of comedy calls for a lot of people coming in and out of a lot of doors, and a thrust stage has no doors."[85] Therefore, the play was performed within the proscenium, using the turntable to revolve the set, but the upstage placement diminished the production.

At this point whatever critical tolerance remained seemed to evaporate. Taubman wrote, based on the first two productions, that the theater was "confronted by urgent major problems. It is, indeed, not too soon for an agonizing reappraisal." While praising the directors' choice of plays for an institutional theater and granting "the right to falter and err" in creating such a theater in New York, Taubman noted three problem areas. The first was the physical plant itself, but in Taubman's view better acting and direction could solve the Beaumont's flaws.

> The company they have assembled for their first season needs drastic overhauling. Apart from a small nucleus of able performers, the talent is not there. Few actors in this country, of course, have the training

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[84]Zeigler, p. 159.

[85]Martin, p. 92, quoting Symonds.

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> and experience for plays [of widely divergent styles]. But it is hard to believe that the Repertory Theater of Lincoln Center could not do better--a lot better. Acting is not the only problem at Lincoln Center. Directing is another. . . . "Danton's Death" under Blau's direction was a pale shadow of what Buchner's forward-looking drama should have been. "The Country Wife," staged by Symonds, was bright in its externals: [the revolving stage, sets, costumes, and music]. But the gleamingly wicked and witty style that Wycherly's satire demands is missing. The failure cannot be blamed entirely on the actors' lack of flair; it lies heavily on the director.[86]

Blau and Irving discussed the problems that they faced a month later, and they indicated that they were

> . . . frankly puzzled over their inability so far to do their best work at Lincoln Center. . . . [The] co-directors concede that something has gone wrong and that they are unable to say exactly what and why. But they abruptly reject the offered suggestion that opening with two difficult classics, instead of modern ones, hurt. And about the last place they seem to be searching for the source of their failure is the acting company. "My chief regret," Blau says, "is that so many fine talents were demeaned. I'd much rather take the rap myself than have them take it."[87]

In early February, the Repertory Theater opened the American premiere of Sartre's The Condemned of Altona, which "deals with a German family haunted by guilt for its share in World War II . . ." and by extension with the French role in Algeria and the American role in Vietnam.[88] Gilman, who admired the play, admitted that it was a flawed work.[89]

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[86]New York Times, December 19, 1965, Section 2, p. 1.

[87]"Repertory--'Ineffective and Puzzling'," New York Herald Tribune, January 17, 1966. [Scrapbook]

[88]Novick, p. 201.

[89]Gilman, p. 269.

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Novick found the play obscure, approving of Blau's production while disliking the play.[90] However, Gilman suggested that his production accentuated the play's imperfections. It was the company's third critical failure in a row. The negative implications of the directors' lack of success thus far were such that, according to the New York Times, Lincoln Center "reportedly assures Blau and Irving that they will remain at least another season."[91]

In the midst of this, Irving began rehearsals for the New York premiere of Brecht's The Caucasian Chalk Circle, his directorial debut at Lincoln Center. Two years earlier, Carl Weber's mounting of the play for the Workshop had been highly praised; now Irving's production at Lincoln Center was also well-received as "Mr. Irving showed that he knew how to stage a spectacle."[92] Novick wrote that there was general approval for the acting company and admiration for the physical production designed by James Hart Stearns, a former member of the Workshop. In Novick's view, "everybody by that time wanted a chance to be nice to poor battered Blau and Irving; the critics liked the production; its run was extended."[93] Zeigler noted, "its moderate success allowed the new directors to catch their breath."[94]

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[90]Novick, p. 201.

[91]February 14, 1966, p. 35.

[92]Novick, p. 202.

[93]Ibid.

[94]Zeigler, p. 159.

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But there were critics who remained disparaging of the new regime. Richard Schechner noted that "New York Times reviewer Stanley Kauffmann suggested that Blau limit himself 'to administration and policy' [as did Martin Gottfried who added that Irving should join Blau in the position and hire another artistic director.[95]] Tribune reviewer Walter Kerr has actively campaigned for installing the APA at Lincoln Center."[96]

Kauffmann's article on the first season appeared on April 17, 1966, and he was among the first to note that Blau's and Irving's San Francisco work had apparently been over-praised and to offer, by way of explanation, the suggestion that critics visiting the hinterlands are often overcome with gratitude and sympathy that a theater exists out there at all.

> We are entitled to believe that these directors were overpraised in San Francisco because of their first season in New York. . . . [For] purposes of relevant comparison, let me use as a standard the work I have so far seen of resident theaters. On that basis, the Blau-Irving company in New York is no less spotty than most of the less-celebrated resident companies I have seen, and the level of direction throughout this first season has been notably lower than the level in the other theaters taken as a whole. . . .
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> In short, the Actor's Workshop has in essence been moved to New York and has shrunk in a different context. Their principles and aims have not been compromised, but the standards of judgment applied to them have changed. Readers may remember my emphasis on this danger in

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[95]The Theatre Divided, p. 159.

[96]"Blau and Irving at Lincoln Center: II," TDR, XI, 1 (Fall 1966), [T 33], p. 21.

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> articles about out-of-town theaters. Critics and audiences in the metropolitan area, whatever else may be true of them, do not need to be grateful for the mere fact of a theater's existence. The Blau-Irving group seem to be the first major victims of a fallacy grounded in sympathy. [And the results of this fallacy are critical] admiration for the divergence from commercial policies and surprise because the work is better than one might have expected outside New York.[97]

To those who might answer that the Workshop had not been transplanted, that Blau and Irving were trying to create a new theater in New York with the inevitable problems of a new plant, new actors, and a new environment, Kauffmann replied,

> There is no point in arguing that grave problems are involved: budget, availability of actors, and so on. These problems are completely irrelevant to us. We don't go to the theater to "understand" budget problems or availability problems or the problems of repertory growth or any other problems. Concessions, as against imaginable perfection, can always be made, but they have to be earned--by the quality of the work seen. What we want when we go to an art theater is art--not the reasons why art could not yet be made.[98]

Kauffmann also maintained that the success of The Caucasian Chalk Circle was in no way a sign of the development or improvement of the company, as other critics had hopefully suggested. It was an accident of scheduling which gave only the appearance of growth because the Brecht play was actually the most accessible work in the season. This judgment provoked some angry response, particularly because

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[97]"Blau and Irving--Some Inescapable Truths," New York Times, April 17, 1966, Section 2, p. 1.

[98]Ibid.

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this production marked the first time the play had been successfully presented in New York.

Keith Fowler, who had observed the Workshop in San Francisco, wrote that an

> . . . understandable mistake [of the first season had been] giving two of the first three shows to Herbert Blau [whom Fowler saw as the] company's dramaturg, not a director . . .[99] I call this an understandable error because Blau has in recent years become the personified symbol of the Workshop's principles . . . and because New York, knowing about the Actor's Workshop mainly through Blau's writings, in effect presented Blau with a mandate to demonstrate his theories in his art . . . But, despite the overemphasis on Blau and despite the company's lack of impressive individual talent, the group possesses a strength which has finally been revealed in "The Caucasian Chalk Circle." . . . It is Irving rather than Blau who has the benefit of a life's experience in the theater plus the advantage of agreement with Blau's uncompromising principles. I, for one, take it as a sign of future (if not present) growth that . . . the company has offered us good Brecht at the hands of a sensitive director.[100]

For those critics who had previously praised Blau's and Irving's work, this first season was in some sense a professional embarrassment. For those who knew of the directors' work only from their colleagues' reports, which had generally emphasized the Workshop's most avant-garde

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[99]This view is supported by Bernard Dukore in "The First Actor's Workshop: A Balance Sheet," Players Magazine, XLII, 3 (December 1965), pp. 76-77. Dukore was also critical of the Workshop's tendency to distort material in order to make a contemporary point, sometimes without success, and of the general quality of the acting and directorial talent. A Dukore article appearing in TDR the same year ("West Coast Theatre: The Pleasures of Companies," (Spring 1965) [T 27] pp. 198-207) was, according to the author, "drastically rewritten by Schechner and/or Munk and published despite my protest." Interestingly, the TDR piece is considerably less critical of the Workshop's defects.

[100]Letter to the Editor, New York Times, May 15, 1966, Section 2, p. 8.

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productions, unrealistic expectations had been created which Blau and Irving would not be able to fulfill. The directors' failures exposed the fallibility of critical perception. While this does not mitigate the first season's disasters, it may account for the tone of disappointment tinged with outrage which occurs in much of the criticism.

Gilman noted,

> That Blau and Irving had been overrated was obvious, but no sort of illumination. For they were as much victims as agents. They had been operating far from the center of taste and judgment, so that their standards and procedures could not be tested against others . . . and in our rush to repudiate New York, or rather Broadway, as the arbiter of dramatic art, we had forgotten that the country has no other. . . . But the matter goes beyond this. Like certain other theatre intellectuals, Blau's and Irving's ideas (which I still admire . . .) are ideas about the theatre . . . They are not useful ideas about dramatic values and of theatrical art. . . . It is the kind of deficiency that no amount of enthusiasm and dedication can atone for, and what makes its revelation now so painful is that for years people who care about drama and despise the commercial theatre have been pinning their hopes on just such spirit and dedication. . . . This year's fiasco at Lincoln Center is not a proof of the impotence of those who advocate thought in the theatre . . . it merely demonstrates that such advocacy has to be buttressed with skill and taste, that good intentions are no more guarantees of good work in the theatre than anywhere else. But at least the intentions have been large and demanding. . . .[101]

Gilman was not the only friend of the Workshop to raise "questions . . . about the artistic competency of Blau, Irving, and their company."[102] Another was Robert Brustein, who found the directors' refusal to overhaul their

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[101]Gilman, pp. 270-272.

[102]Schechner, "Blau and Irving at Lincoln Center: II," TDR, XI, 1 (Fall 1966), p. 21.

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acting company "courageous [but also] foolhardy . . ." His suggestion was that Blau and Irving "either . . . abandon the main stage . . . and continue work on its smaller experimental stage [the place he had suggested for them originally] or . . . abandon most of the present company and close up ranks with the finest available repertory-trained performers. . . . I think it is time to admit that the spirit of the Actor's Workshop is simply not transferable to Lincoln Center. . . ."[103]

Schechner was one of the few who argued for more time: "Blau and Irving were not brought to New York to become business managers or producers. And musical chairs is the last game the LCR Board [sic] should be thinking of now. Having replaced one company already, (and wisely), the Board should move cautiously for fear that Lincoln Center artistic personnel will feel that life in that plush building is 'nasty, brutish and short'."[104]

The predicted deficit for the season had been about $400,000; the actual deficit was $722,000. However, the Vivian Beaumont Foundation had announced an additional grant to the theater in December 1965 which provided $300,000 toward the season's costs. This grant, in addition to other grants and contributions, resulted in a small surplus of $58,000.

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[103]The Third Theatre, p. 172.

[104]Schechner, "Blau and Irving at Lincoln Center: II," p. 22.

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Yet there is no doubt that the theater's board was anxious. The success of the Brecht play eased some of their concern, and although the level of subscription dropped to 31,400 (from 39,300), nearly 40 percent of the subscribers renewed for the next season. There was "still a mandate, still a willingness, albeit cautious, to give Irving and Blau a chance. . . . They still had far to go [however] to satisfy the New York critics, who were by now thoroughly disenchanted . . ."[105]

During the first season, Blau and Irving also inaugurated several projects. The first was the theater's annual secondary school touring company, which was cosponsored by the Lincoln Center Fund and the New York Department of Education. Called Comedy Through the Ages, the school production visited sixty-eight schools the first year. The second project was established in conjunction with the Pratt Institute to use student graphic artwork for the theater's production posters; the success of this merited an article in the May/June issue of Print in 1967. The third project was an effort to reach the community and establish a basis for discussion. A weekly thirty minute radio program called "Theater Dialogues" was presented by the Repertory Theater on WNCN-FM and broadcast on Sunday evenings. The series ran for thirty-two weeks, from May 1966 to January 1967, and included discussions of the regional theater movement, actors' views on repertory, the roles of the designer and of the stage manager as well as topics based on the Repertory Theater's productions.

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[105]Zeigler, p. 160.

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In early August, Blau and Irving announced their second season: Ben Jonson's The Alchemist, directed by Irving; Garcia Lorca's Yerma, directed by John Hirsch, then director of the Manitoba Theatre Center in Canada and guest director at Stratford, Ontario; the world premiere of Leo Lehman's The East Wind, directed by Symonds; and Brecht's Galileo, directed by Blau, with Rod Steiger in the title role. The directors also announced their intention to produce in the Forum Theater "a series of new plays by American writers . . . A new play will be done in the Forum because it is searching for something original in form of because it has a lot on its mind or because it exercises a writer of considerable promise who may have a good deal to say another time. . . ."[106] The first production, In 3 Zones, by Wilford Leach and directed by Blau, would open the theater on December 3, 1966.

The directors were also adding to the company roster for specific productions. In addition to casting Steiger in Galileo, the directors hired Gloria Foster and Frank Langella for Yerma and Nancy Marchand and Michael O'Sullivan for The Alchemist. However, several new actors were also

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[106]Novick, p. 203, quoting the directors.

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engaged for the season, including Philip Bosco, Aline MacMahon, and George Voskovec.

Irving's production of The Alchemist opened the season. Novick wrote, "This time the play was eminently stage-worthy, and some pretty good actors had been assembled for it. But Irving seemed to have no idea in particular of what to do with them."[107] The production was poorly received, and for those pessimistic about the Repertory Theater, the gloom deepened.

Just as the production closed, Michael O'Sullivan, who had appeared at the Workshop previously and had played the title role in William Ball's Tartuffe downtown, gave an interview in which he blasted Blau for interfering with Irving's staging of The Alchemist while praising Irving as "an excellent manager." He stated, "I just don't think [Blau] comprehends what theater is all about. Nor do I feel he respects his actors or his audience. He doesn't know how to work with actors; he abuses actors . . . In other words, I'm mad at him." O'Sullivan also found fault with the theater: "The best possible use of the auditorium I can think of is to flood it and put a whale in there."[108] He felt that there was hostility toward the theatre as a result of Blau's book: "People were waiting to see what he would do . . . as a matter of fact [he has not been able to carry

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[107]Novick, p. 202.

[108]"Star Quit Beaumont, Blast Blau," New York Post, November 29, 1966. [Scrapbook]

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out] any of the brilliant ideas he had argued for in the book." There was also the matter of audition procedure: "You see two or three underlings before you see Blau and Irving."[109]

Later O'Sullivan tempered some of his remarks, saying there had been "no malice intended" in his earlier statements. However, he then added that he thought Blau lacked managerial sense.

> The pressures at Lincoln Center are tremendous. So are the expectations and professional demands. And Herb, in his insular way, alienated the critics, the audience, and the entire theatrical colony. . . . [But] what New Yorkers don't realize is how intimidating the [Beaumont] theater is--eerie, sterile, fluorescently white backstage with corridors that remind me of the S. S. Titanic.[110]

Blau and Irving, however, had other troubles besides an outraged actor. John Hirsch's production of Yerma in a new translation by W. S. Merwin had opened on December 8 to mixed reviews. The critics had approved the decision to augment the company with guest actors and a guest director; now while praising Foster's performance in the title role and Langella's as her husband, and granting the professionalism of the production, most of the critics were unmoved by the play itself, based as it is on the conflicts within a deeply religious peasant culture.

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[109]"Some Harsh Words at Lincoln Center," San Francisco Chronicle, December 5, 1966. [Scrapbook]

[110]"No Malice Intended O'Sullivan Explains," San Francisco Examiner, December 15, 1966. [Scrapbook]

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A basic premise in the creation of this theater had been the rejection of commercialism with its emphasis on the "hit" play. Yet, critical approval remained important as a measure of the theater's accomplishments because it influenced public opinion and, obviously, ticket sales. Few cultural organizations are prepared to underwrite an effort that regularly fails to attract public support. As board member Michael Burke might have put it, the Repertory Theater's season record so far was disappointing: one win, four losses, one tie.

Downstairs in the Forum, In 3 Zones had also run into difficulty. The December 3rd opening had been postponed "due to technical problems," and then, on December 21st, the New York Times reported that the production was "postponed indefinitely."[111] The official account explained that the technical difficulties had led to a time conflict with the Beaumont's production schedule. However, the causes of the cancellation went deeper.

According to Zeigler,

> In 3 Zones . . . proved Blau's brilliance of mind but also his incapacity to mount his ideas in workable fashion. In its use of film and other media, it was ahead of its time, but by the time In 3 Zones reached its preview performances, Blau had spent almost the entire Forum budget for the whole season, and the production itself was a mess. The premiere was cancelled.[112]

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[111] New York Times, December 21, 1966, p. 44.

[112] Zeigler, p. 160.

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Blau says the production was over its budget, although not by how much; however, he stated it was his decision not to open. "In 3 Zones was not what I wanted it to be. It was the best production done in New York in about ten years, but it was not what I wanted it to be and I didn't want to put it on."[113]

In fact, Blau was increasingly unhappy with the situation at Lincoln Center. The high purposes with which he had come to New York now appeared untenable. In the first season's subscription brochure, the directors had stated, "The stage will be a crossroads, a meeting hall, a shrine, a playground, a battleground and an Open Society--a place of wonder and confrontation where the prophetic soul of the world, in an age of revolutions, may do it dreaming on things to come." In the Dedication Booklet prepared for the Vivian Beaumont, they added, "Theater is a public service; like architecture, it can betray its function or it can be the highest expression of a community determined to put into action what it pretends to believe." Those premises were now being called into question, and for Blau without those premises there was no use in continuing the struggle.

In the article which Robert Hoguet had seen in the barbershop, Blau had written,

> The very breakout of regional theatres is part of the convolution that is bringing art back into society. . . . But given a world of ambiguous power, our secret

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[113]Private interview, September 1, 1974.

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> anxiety may be that the play is next to nothing, the theatre impotent and unnecessary, with as much relevance as a pacifist in the Pentagon.
>
> Are we necessary? . . . [If] only out of personal impulsion, I believe it is our task to believe we are necessary and to make ourselves indispensable. And where that impulsion doesn't exist, I don't wanna play![114]

It was apparent that as critical success continued to elude Blau and Irving their theatrical principles would be considered superfluous; compromise would be required to satisfy the demands of the press, the public, the board. Blau holds no brief against boards, saying that participatory organizations can be just as difficult to work within. As he recalled the situation, he said,

> The board really wanted us to succeed, but the critical climate was impossible. Our best friends were saying nasty things about us, so it reached a point where the expectations about that theater had been so wrenched out of shape . . . And the board was scared. . . .
>
> You knew when what you were doing didn't work, the board would get nervous, and why shouldn't they? In a sense, I would have gotten nervous long before they did. If I were the head of a board and I'd hired someone who was clobbered the way we were, I'd get nervous pretty fast. What the hell did they know about us? They don't know very much about theater at all, much less about us.[115]

Michael Burke spent some time trying to convince Blau that his theories would not work in New York and that some compromise had to be reached. Burke said,

> Perhaps we had to get people, almost a star system. Pure repertory wasn't going to just spring from his brow and be a success instantly. In the meantime, we

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[114]Blau, "I Don't Wanna Play," Saturday Review, p. 39.

[115]Blau, private interview, September 1, 1974.

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> had tickets to sell, seats to fill and money to bring in at the box office. I tried to make him see that we had to make some compromise with the ideal of repertory but he was unbending.[116]

Meanwhile, according to Irving, Blau "just became increasingly troubled and unhappy here. I could see it grow. We talked about the problem, the lack of receptivity to his work and he just made up his mind."[117] Later, when asked to expand on this statement, Irving replied that this was a very subjective period. "For a year and a half, Herb was clobbered left and right in the press. The very people who had supported him were in the vanguard of the attack. He didn't understand why they didn't come to him personally instead of attacking him in print. It just seemed as though once he had fouled up, they had something to write about, and they stopped being in his camp."[118]

The situation finally came to a head in a meeting with Hoguet, who recalled, "My interview with Blau at the time was a very peaceful one. He had a contract, and I just said, 'Herb, are you making it or not? Does it make sense to go on?'"[119] As Blau sees it now, "It was clear that we couldn't do what we were doing, and I didn't want to do

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[116]Burke, private interview, July 26, 1974.

[117]"Crisis at Lincoln Center," New York Times, January 26, 1967, Section 2, p. 1.

[118]Irving, private interview, October 30, 1974.

[119]Hoguet, private interview, November 24, 1972.

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anything else, so there was no choice. Jules and I are different, and it came to a point where what was possible for him was impossible for me."[120]

In a letter dated January 12, 1966, Blau wrote to Hoguet:

> Whatever has been done or not been done since I came to Lincoln Center, this much is now clear: the climate is no longer right for me to do what I came to do in the form I had in mind. I am therefore submitting my resignation from the directorship of the Repertory Theater. Perhaps my going will clear the atmosphere so the theater may move freshly in whatever course of action it must take now.
>
> The board has been fair and encouraging. Your own decency has been invariable. I want to thank you for that. You know my long and deep affection for Jules. There is nobody better endowed to do what is still possible and necessary to be done.[121]

Hoguet replied that he accepted the resignation "on behalf of our board . . . although I do so with considerable regret. Your references to the board and to me are most generous. We for our part are extremely grateful to you for your unremitting and dedicated efforts during the past two years. In closing, let me say that we share your sentiments about Jules and his talents."[122]

Hoguet released a statement to the press on January 13, announcing Blau's resignation and adding, "We are very happy that Jules Irving has, in response to our request,

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[120]Blau, private interview, September 1, 1974.

[121]Quoted in "Herbert Blau Quits Lincoln Repertory," New York Times, January 14, 1967, p. 19.

[122]Ibid.

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agreed to continue as director of the theater." Denying reports that Blau had been forced to resign, Hoguet pinpointed the cause of the resignation: "I think all you have to do is look at your own paper [New York Times] and other papers. I think we're referring to the critical climate." Irving would remain because "the climate has been more inimical to one than to the other."[123]

When reached for comment, Irving stated,

> I obviously feel the climate is right for me. I want to make it absolutely clear that the resignation was not prompted by any differences between Herb and me. I cherish his friendship. . . . It's a relationship that I have enjoyed overwhelmingly. There has been no clear division [of duties]. His resignation represents a serious professional and personal loss. We've always overlapped responsibilities, both artistically and administratively. As for plans for the future, I need time for reflection and reassessment. My immediate job is to put on "Galileo" [which Blau was to have directed] and "The East Wind" which opens February 9.[124]

Blau did not comment on his action until he accepted a post at City College: "It's quite simple. I came to do a specific job, and I'm regretful that I didn't achieve it. Perhaps the times are not yet right for the theater I envisioned. When a situation isn't going in the direction you wish, and there is no chance it will, there is nothing to do but alter your course."[125]

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[123]"Herbert Blau Quits Lincoln Repertory," New York Times, January 14, 1967, p. 19.

[124]Ibid.

[125]New York Times, February 20, 1967, p. 39.

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According to Zeigler,

> The essential change in the "climate" was, I think, Blau's realization that he was in over (or under) his head. He had come into a situation that was intellectually not ready for him, and for which he was not ready politically or dynamically. Despite the acuity of his mind, he proved unable to function in the maelstrom that is the New York scene. His idealism could not accommodate the details, let alone the plays of power. He and Irving had decided to manage the Repertory Theater as a team (unlike the arrangement at the Workshop, which Irving managed alone), but Blau turned out to be not only uninterested in management but unsuited to it, too. He might have stayed on to function as a literary manager for Jules Irving, as Kenneth Tynan served Laurence Olivier at the National Theater in England--and he would have been superb in his job--but having once stood in the primary spotlight, he could not accept such a supportive function.[126]

As for Blau's relationship with the Board, "it was not merely a matter of repertory or finances; basically what seems to have happened was that neither Blau nor the board found what they had hoped for in each other."[127] It is conceivable that they also did not understand one another; on the one hand, there was Blau, seeing events against the backdrop of the Cold War; on the other hand there was the board, composed of men who were not much affected by changes in the political scene, who in fact were engaged in the business of increasing corporate profits, a business that benefited from the growth of the military-industrial complex. The board was not aware of what it had taken on in hiring Blau or it was not aware enough.[128]

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[126] Zeigler, pp. 161-162.

[127] Kupferberg, Theatre 4, p. 138.

[128] Robert Hoguet, private interview, June 21, 1974.

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> Blau insisted that from the beginning he had made very clear to the board members his idiosyncracies and his ideas and had warned them that they would find him difficult. Blau also maintained that they had obviously understood and accepted these ground rules. [But Blau and the board lacked a common vocabulary.] They did not really understand what Blau was saying in his involuted way, or else they did not choose to hear him; at the same time Blau did not see that he was not getting through to them.[129]

The reasons given for Blau's resignation--his own unhappiness at the Center, the lack of critical approval for his work, and the board's dissatisfaction with Blau's absolute unwillingness to modify his ideas--are all partially true. However, the responsibility for Blau's departure cannot rest with critics and board members alone.

Robert Brustein wrote that Blau's resignation "is a melancholy decision for which we all bear some measure of responsibility. . . . The audiences began clamoring for hits. The critics--including myself--became impatient for results. And all the pressures usually surrounding commercial New York presentations were brought to bear on a situation that required relaxation, patience, and an opportunity for growth."[130] What is ignored here is Blau's role in all this. He did alienate supporters, actors, and audiences, not only with doctrinaire statements but also through his inability to translate concepts about plays into workable theatrical productions. Nor was he able to

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[129]Zeigler, p. 161.

[130]The Third Theater, pp. 177-178.

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work as a member of a team which inevitably included the members of the theater board. Robert Hoguet remarked,

> Herbert Blau was a great idealist, and his idealism rated so high in his own scheme of things that he thought he could impose his idealism on other people. He didn't seem to realize that other people have likes and dislikes of their own. . . . Also he didn't have the genius Jules did for dealing with people, for keeping an organization together, being popular and hanging on.[131]

Burke concurred: "Irving was more practical and realistic . . . and he stayed on."[132]

As is frequently the case, the ideals of pragmatism and organization were used to justify Blau's resignation. Yet, there was also an element of anti-intellectualism in the evaluation of these board members of the relative abilities of Blau and Irving. Irving had gifts that a good corporate executive could appreciate; Blau's capabilities coupled with his idealism seemed less valuable when they were not widely appreciated.

> "Jules is one in a million, a fellow who knows the whole literature," Robert Hoguet emphasized. "He not only knows how to recognize great creativity in other people, but he's an extraordinary organizer, a tough, hard-boiled guy who can read a balance sheet just as well as the vice-president of a bank."[133]

As Hofstadter comments in another context, few people are constitutionally opposed to intellectuals. "In fact, anti-intellectualism is usually the incidental consequence of some other intention, often some justifiable intention.

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[131]Private interview, November 24, 1972.

[132]Private interview, July 26, 1974. [133]Martin, p. 97.

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Hardly anyone believes himself to be against thought and culture. Men do not rise in the morning, grin at themselves in the mirror, and say: 'Ah, today I shall torment an intellectual and strangle an idea!'"[134]

Thus, when Blau did not succeed, the board became understandably upset. According to Blau, they reacted "like the good corporate people they were, but even then, they were reasonably graceful about the situation. They weren't thugs, and in fact I don't blame them."[135] He added,

> It's one thing in a small experimental theater to say that you have the privilege to fail because without money your privileges are somewhat constricted anyway. At Lincoln Center you are not privileged to fail. You'd have to be a nut to believe you can go into that context in this culture and claim the privileges you had before. I think I am reasonably idealistic, but I was never unrealistic about that.[136]

So the man who had brought the Actor's Workshop to national attention, resulting in the invitation to come to Lincoln Center, was gone.[137] Irving was now on his own, and his first task would be to chart a new course that would bear his individual stamp. From this time on, the head of the Repertory Theater would have to act first and make policy statements later.

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[134]Hofstadter, p. 22.

[135]Private interview, September 1, 1974. [136]Ibid.

[137]Blau joined the faculty at City College in New York, and later went to California Institute of the Arts with Robert Corrigan. Following a dispute there, he was on the faculty of Oberlin College where he formed "Kraken," an alternative theater group. Since September 1974, he has been Dean of Humanities at the University of Maryland in Baltimore, and he has reorganized "Kraken" in that city.

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CHAPTER NINE

I

Jules Irving's decision to remain at the Repertory Theater was a complex one. He and Blau had been friends and co-workers for more than fifteen years, and Blau's resignation was a personal as well as professional loss to him. They remained close friends, and Blau urged Irving to stay. But, Irving's position as sole director of the theater was a difficult one. The initial hopes for the enterprise had been tarnished by the uneven and frequently disappointing records of two artistic administrations. Later that year Irving wrote,

> The Beaumont is unique, not only in terms of the controversies it provokes, but in terms of the expectations it arouses. . . . [We] are being designated--potentially--as the National Theater of America. We simply are not in a position to say--to our audiences, to our critics, to the world at large--that what we are doing is building a future repertory company of the highest standards. . . Certainly, such patience as the world had with us has long been exhausted. We are here to attempt to succeed, and to do so now. We have no divine right to fail, and, of course, we don't claim any such right. The architecture here looks too good [to invoke such a right].[1]

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[1]Jules Irving, "We Have No Divine Right to Fail," New York Times, December 17, 1967, Section 2, p. 3.

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Further, Herbert Blau had been an outspoken and controversial public figure in New York during his tenure at Lincoln Center, and, while the link between Blau and Irving was clear to the theatrical community, Irving himself was not well-known. Now he faced the difficult task of promoting his own artistic interests without disparaging those of Blau.

In his decision to stay, Irving had the support of the board which responded positively to his business sense and organizational ability. Of greater importance, however, in the ultimate decision was the simple fact that Irving liked his job. He was stimulated by the challenge of producing in New York, and he brought to that challenge his poker-playing experience with the Actor's Workshop.

> . . . the special hazard and the challenge of this situation [at Lincoln Center is that] we are expected to produce on the highest level of excellence. That challenge is fine with me, it's terribly exciting, but it certainly intensifies our problems at the same time.
>
> [Whitehead and Kazan] spoke of the virtue of a repertory theater, as contrasted with Broadway, as being an institution in which you could invoke the right to fail. I have come to realize that one does not really have that luxury in New York. If one invokes the right to fail here, one has to take the consequences of failure--which can be extinction.[2]
>
> One of the privileges of working in the Actor's Workshop was that we were not functioning in the glare of the spotlight. There was a chance to experiment.

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[2]Bernard Taper, "Time, Talent and Money: An Interview with Jules Irving," Lincoln Center Journal, November 1967, p. 14.

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> Coming here was an overwhelmingly complex move. . . . The best way I can describe the period is as one of deep travail, of trying to make a theatre work at the top of the mountain.[3]

Thus, after nearly two years in New York, Irving was also well-aware of the difficulties which he would face in the Repertory Theater.

During the period following Blau's resignation, an additional burden on Irving was the assumption by many theater people that his role was a temporary one, that of caretaker. One writer suggested every major Broadway producer as a possible choice for the post of administrative director, and, to fill the presumed gap in artistic leadership, he also named several commercial directors, including Mike Nichols who "might be willing to wrestle with the dragons of repertory."[4] Rumors proliferated that the board had contacted Theodore Mann of the Circle in the Square and/or the producers Richard Barr and Clinton Wilder and their associate Edward Albee. Though each stated that he had not been approached, each also offered the information that if he were, he would accept the position.[5]

Two weeks after Blau's resignation, Robert Hoguet received a telegram from several people in the arts

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[3]Glenn Loney, ed., "In the Words of Jules Irving," Cue, January 17, 1970, p. 15.

[4]Edward Sothern Hipp, "And Then There Was One," Newark Evening News, January 22, 1967, pp. E1, E4.

[5]"Scene Shifting," Newsweek, February 6, 1967, p. 106.

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recommending that Harold Clurman be named artistic director. Hoguet replied, "We have received a number of suggestions and we're happy to have the ideas of interested people. However, the board has every confidence in Jules Irving and is happy that he's there to do the job."[6] He insisted that he had approached no one and did not intend to do so. Since the invitation to Blau and Irving, Hoguet said, "for two years I have talked to absolutely nobody."[7] It was reported in Variety that Irving was furious about these attempts to undermine his position, and in April 1967, Hoguet announced that Irving's contract had been extended to May 1, 1970, presumably to quash speculation on the security of Irving's position at the theater.

However, Irving and his close associates were deeply affected by the apparent eagerness of New York theatre colleagues to jump into the breach, and the ramifications of this public display of no-confidence were felt for some time. Staff members felt that the Repertory Theater was conspicuously vulnerable to attack from within the profession as well as from without, and the development of serious problems with a main stage production had the effect

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[6]"Repertory Urged to Hire Clurman," New York Times, January 27, 1967, p. 31. Those signing the telegram were: Tennessee Williams, Arthur Miller, William Inge, Leonard Bernstein, Boris Aronson, Aaron Copland, Cheryl Crawford, Oliver Smith, and Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.

[7]"Scene Shifting," Newsweek, February 6, 1967, p. 106.

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of turning the theatre into a besieged camp. As a result, loyalty to the theater and to Irving as its leader was a prized quality within the organization; and the suggestion of criticism in any outside forum was viewed as the betrayal of a privileged confidence, because any internal criticism, once made public, seemed a potential wedge offered to any interloper who coveted the directorship of the theater. Those associated with the theater were not blind to its deficiencies; devoted staff offered blunt criticism among themselves. However, there was always an active awareness that the theater's grip on survival was tenuous, and a belief that most outsiders remained stubbornly unaware of its struggles and problems. Thus, any fuel added to public criticism was tantamount to defection. As late as December 1969, Irving noted that the controversies about the theater "haven't been eliminated but they have subsided and now we can concentrate on our work. Before, everyone was too busy worrying about who'd be sitting in this chair next."[8]

The most immediate task was the completion of the 1966-67 season. The world premiere of The East Wind was in rehearsal, and the planned production of Galileo now lacked a lead actor, as well as a director, for Rod Steiger had withdrawn from the production two weeks prior to Blau's resignation. Irving also needed something that would divert

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[8]"Lincoln Repertory: Busy and Collected," New York Times, December 9, 1969, p. 66.

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public attention from the Repertory Theater's problems, encourage the next season's subscription drive, and demonstrate a new direction for the theater.

Earlier in the season, Irving and Blau discussed the feasibility of a guest production, and Irving had pursued this idea. Blau recalled that the board wanted "something different" and that in their pragmatic approach "they don't care what's different as long as it works. That was the one clarity in New York--with an all-star cast, you could get pretty general critical acclaim."[9]

On January 24, 1967, Irving announced that the opening subscription production would be a revival of Lillian Hellman's The Little Foxes, directed by Mike Nichols, with a guest company including Anne Bancroft, Margaret Leighton, E. G. Marshall, and George C. Scott. It was a compromise that promised to attract a large subscription audience and provide the theater with a financial base to support its own acting company. Irving recalled that he had acted similarly in San Francisco when Miss Julie, with Viveca Lindfors, was presented to boost subscriptions for the Actor's Workshop.

The announcement, however, generated harsh criticism that the Repertory Theater "had broken [its] promise" to

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[9]Blau, private interview, September 1, 1974.

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remain three thousand miles from Broadway,[10] had "become preoccupied with 'success',"[11] and had abandoned the repertory ideal of a permanent ensemble. Irving, on the other hand, saw the guest production as a means of providing additional time for preparation and rehearsal of the company's indigenous productions and of opening up the theater to a variety of artists. Like his predecessors, Irving's long-range goal throughout his career at Lincoln Center was the creation of a permanent company and the establishment of a repertory theater in the tradition of the great European art theaters. A photograph of 102 members of the Actor's Workshop still reminds him of the example of the Moscow Art Theater. Blau has since noted that Irving might have been a successful commercial producer at Lincoln Center if he had not tried to maintain the concept of a company. "In some sense his greatest liability was the years at the Workshop which prevented him from going all the way with commercial productions. Instead, he made that place operate as though it were the Actor's Workshop, marble walls and all."[12]

At the beginning of his first season alone, Irving noted,

> Originally you start with a full resident company, a group of actors, as we did in San Francisco; as Robert Whitehead and Elia Kazan did. But it takes time to

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[10]Novick, p. 204.

[11]Barry Hyams, Los Angeles Times, February 18, 1968, Calendar section, p. 24.

[12]Private interview, September 1, 1974.

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> assemble a first-rate company. I make no predictions as to when that will happen. There is no shift in the overall objective. The shift is in the way one does it. And despite what some people say, we're not turning this into a booking house.[13]

> A theater such as ours must frankly fight for time. I intend to do whatever is necessary to give this company time to grow and find itself, to develop an identity and a perspective.[14]

However, he also indicated that a significant ingredient had been ignored in this development:

> Patience and time. And talent. And money. These virtues, everybody agrees, are essential for the creation of a repertory theater. And they sound impressive. But they are, surely, insufficient. There is something left out of account here, and it is, very simply, success.[15]

He added, years later, "It was the only time I ever did it. I wanted to create the illusion of success, to show strength, to undo what had been said about us."[16]

Ultimately, this move attracted 39,700 subscribers for the season and garnered warm critical praise for the production. However, the immediate result was a dispute with Actors' Equity concerning the use of British actors at Lincoln Center. Irving had signed Anthony Quayle for Galileo and Margaret Leighton for Foxes. American actors protested these Lincoln Center hirings which had to be approved by the Equity governing council.

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[13]New York Times, September 9, 1967, p. 24.

[14]Taper, p. 14.

[15]New York Times, December 17, 1967, Section 2, p. 3.

[16]Kupferberg, Theatre 4, p. 138.

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This was the first instance of different policies for Lincoln Center productions than for commercial Broadway ventures. At that time, a Broadway producer could hire aliens, if they were approved by the immigration authorities, while the Repertory Theater had to secure the approval of Equity as well.[17] The hirings were approved eventually by Equity, but the rank and file persisted in picketing the openings of The East Wind and Galileo in protest, and Geraldine Chaplin was replaced in the Foxes cast at Lincoln Center because she was not an American actress.[18]

Although The East Wind was not successful, Irving feels that Galileo and the production of St. Joan the following season signaled a breakthrough in the company's use of its problematic theater: the depth of the stage was used for scenic effects but not as a major acting area.[19] Galileo was extended beyond the regular subscription run and proved successful with the critics. Julius Novick suggested that the production provided an example of:

> . . . viable policy for the future: good and significant plays for which the audience is ready . . ., performed by a resident company augmented, when necessary, by well-known--but well-cast and highly talented--actors

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[17]Kerr, Thirty Plays, p. 126.

[18]She resumed the role when the production moved to Broadway.

[19]Irving, private interview, Los Angeles, October 30, 1974.

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> from outside. This is not noble and foolhardy, as the old Workshop policy may have been. It leaves to others the tasks of discovery and confrontation that the Workshop seems to have performed. But it is a useful and sensible way to run the Repertory Theater of Lincoln Center.[20]

Excepting the invitational production of Foxes, Irving's projects for his first solo season reflected this policy. "Devoting himself exclusively to managing the theater, Irving ruled himself out of directing for the Beaumont main stage; instead he hired guest directors . . . for all major productions."[21] John Hirsch returned to direct St. Joan, with Diana Sands, who remained with the theater to appear as Cassandra in Anthony Quayle's production of Tiger at the Gates. For the final production of that season, Carl Weber was chosen to direct Cyrano de Bergerac, with Richard Basehart, who was replaced by Robert Symonds after Basehart withdrew during previews.

The choice of plays reflected Irving's concern with the physical requirements of the main stage: all had "a common theatricality and sweep, ideally suited to the size and scope of the Beaumont stage."[22] Irving also initiated a casting policy which drew on the experience with Galileo. Actors from outside the company would be encouraged to appear with the Repertory Theater. Although the goal of a

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[20]Novick, p. 207.

[21]Zeigler, p. 163.

[22]Taper, p. 14.

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company remained, the means of achieving this became the development of a pool of actors who would appear at the theater without necessarily committing themselves to an entire season.

While in San Francisco, Irving and Blau had been able to develop a company through gradual work with the same personnel on a continuing basis, Irving felt the standards of achievement at Lincoln Center ruled out this approach. It had been the basis for the initial seasons under Whitehead and Kazan, who had hired actors for as much as two-and-a-half year contracts, as well as of Irving and Blau, who had originally hired actors on seasonal contracts. However, "Irving himself is eager to defend his policy, and he makes a strong case for it, with the aid of words like 'practical,' 'sensible,' and 'pragmatic.'"[23]

> I will ask our great actors to come for a season at least, of course, but, if they say no, I will take no for an answer: I will ask them to come for three plays, or two, or even one. I hope once they're here, they will want to stay on or come back. In any case, we are not going to deny them (and ourselves) the opportunity of returning to our theater, and essaying some of the great roles of the classic repertory. And, what's more, I think that their presence, even if transient, need have no disastrous effect on the growth of a national company. On the contrary, from recent experience, I believe that such example and stimulation sharpen a company and speed up its progress.[24]

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[23]Novick, p. 207.

[24]New York Times, December 17, 1967, Section 2, p. 3.

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> The whole idea of an exclusive company may, in fact, by now be dying out. We mustn't forget that an actor--like an artist--may need a periodic change of working environment. . . . One thing is certain: we shall welcome those who want to join us, on their terms, in the subtle assurance that their terms and ours are going to be the same very soon. Our ultimate aim, however, remains what it has always been: the establishment of an integral company. It will never be otherwise.[25]

In accord with this aim, Irving hired resident designers for the theater in scenery and lighting--David Hays and John Gleason. Nor was the concept of rotating repertory overlooked. The designers were given the task of preparing an overall scheme for the three plays of that season and of preparing "for the possibility that any two, or all three, would be rotated at the end of the season."[26] Because the thrust arrangement had proved to be the best for an audience-actor relationship, the designers developed a floor plan that reshaped the thrust area "from a perfect square into an asymmetrical shape with levels . . . [and with] scenic elements for each play [backing] the thrust." The solution for the mechanical problems in the lighting control system was to operate the board manually.[27]

According to Douglas Schmidt, who succeeded Hays as resident scenic designer, Irving was involved closely with all attempts to improve the main stage. "Jules probably

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[25]Ibid., pp. 3-5.

[26]John Gleason, "Lighting for Repertory at the Vivian Beaumont," Theatre Crafts, II, 6 (November/December 1968), p. 31.

[27]Ibid.

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should have made more of this than he did. You got the impression that all he did there was produce plays, but he was very concerned with the problems of the place." Numerous plans were prepared to rectify the theater's acoustics with a sound system or to remove the first row of seats, but there was rarely the money to implement them.[28]

During the 1967-68 season, Irving discussed the use of the Beaumont in the thrust arrangement and suggested improvements.[29] He noted that the productions which had used the proscenium arrangement had not been as effective as those utilizing the thrust. However, if the theater was to be used in the thrust arrangement only, certain plays could not be done there successfully, such as American farce and Restoration comedy, because the repartee in the dialogue was lost when actors, "of necessity, have their backs to some of the audience . . ." Further, American actors had been trained basically for the proscenium stage, and they would have to develop and "explore resources they have not been previously required to draw upon." Some changes in the theater's physical structure were also being considered "to enhance its qualities as an open stage. We're thinking, for instance, of building a superstructure over the thrust. This would create a more definite line of

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[28]Private interview, June 26, 1974.

[29]The suggested physical changes of removing the front row and adding a superstructure over the thrust were not actually made during Irving's tenure.

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focus and vision. It would also enable us to have more flexible lighting effects."[30] While the suggested modifications were not made, the thrust arrangement dominated production work for several seasons with occasional forays behind the proscenium for added depth.

This arrangement was also used for the guest production of Foxes, although it was contended that Nichols did not use the thrust well because he staged the play for easy transfer to a Broadway proscenium house. However, Foxes gave the Repertory Theater the glamour of a sold-out hit and went far toward demonstrating the kind of insurance that a "name" could provide for a production.

William Goldman has noted that Foxes was "another triumph in a string of triumphs for Nichols . . ." and that "with the reception of this work, Mike Nichols became a culture hero. Broadway had not produced anyone comparable since Kazan almost ten years before."[31] However, not everyone was enthralled with this production. "Almost everyone I talked to felt that the work was atrocious: obviously, much of this is simple envy." However, Goldman felt that the criticism could not be completely dismissed.[32]

Goldman details examples of directorial cleverness for its own sake and of character treatment that was

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[30]Taper, p. 15.

[31]William Goldman, The Season (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1969), p. 263.

[32]Ibid., p. 264.

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inappropriate and unbelievable, concluding "Nichols has taken an excellent melodrama, given it an execrable production, and triumphed nonetheless."[33] Negative criticism of Foxes was overpowered by the brilliance of the Nichols mystique, and this fact could not have been lost on Irving who, by his own admission, was a man fighting for time and needing success. The critics not only ignored the production's flaws, but were also ecstatic about Nichols' achievement to the point of hoisting the tattered banner of an American national theater once again.

Walter Kerr wrote,

> Mike Nichols' brilliant production of The Little Foxes at Lincoln Center left me filled with admiration and a kind of panic. . . . it had come into being out of bounds and against the rules. . . . We have the notion [that in order to create a national theater performers must be] carefully nursed over a very prolonged period in a wide variety of styles until sometime--ten years from now, twenty years from now--we will at last be ready to announce that we are . . . qualified to compete in the international arena. I don't dismiss . . . this long-range vision. I'm for it.
>
> But in the meantime, . . . we are denying ourselves . . . the pride and gratification we might have. The country is full of good actors; otherwise there wouldn't have been so many of them on the Vivian Beaumont stage. Five or six other companies just as good as The Little Foxes company could be called together instantly if anyone cared, or had the power to call them together. . . .
>
> We might be better off learning to grab. If Saint Subber and Mike Nichols can put such a company together, let them do it. . . . If the Beaumont half turns into a booking house, and if the booking possesses the sting and the amplitude, the reach and the rightness, of this Little Foxes, let it. Ideals are excellent. Being an idealist, I'm sure they'll win in the end. . . .

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[33]Ibid., p. 263.

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> [But] Given a choice, I'd be rash. I'd be willing to start the American National Theater with this one production and then holler for help. I'll bet that another, by hook or by crook, would come.
>
> I haven't always thought this way. But something actual stared me in the face.[34]

The national theater issue was also taken up by Clive Barnes during this season. While chiding the Repertory Theater for its sequential production schedule and its small number of actors on seasonal contracts[35]--"One can even question whether it is a repertory, or whether it is a company--that it appears at Lincoln Center is at least beyond dispute"[36]--Barnes went on to discuss the Repertory Theater and the A.P.A. company, under Ellis Rabb, as potential heirs to the national theater title.

> Many people find the occasion to inform me of the glories of Britain's Royal Shakespeare Company and its National Theater. I do, in fact, know about them. More to the point I know the deplorable, yet always hopeful, organizations that only a few years ago preceded them.
> . . . . . .
>
> If you want to see this year, next year, or even in ten years time, a company at either the Lyceum or the Vivian Beaumont that can match either the Royal Shakespeare or Britain's National Theater, please forget it. Take up the movies, or go to the ballet. In the drama, we have problems. . . . We have to find an acceptable national repertory . . . [and] We also have to find an acceptable American approach to classic drama. . . .
> . . . . . .
>
> A national theater (preferably with two opposing wings) will be a long time in building. Hearts will be broken, blood will be spilled, evenings will be wasted and money thrown down exquisitely artistic drains.

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[34]Kerr, Thirty Plays, pp. 129-132.

[35]The theater had 16 actors under contract that season.

[36]Barnes, "Those Repertory Brats," New York Times, December 13, 1967, p. 53.

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> But we need these two companies. Let us fight about them, quarrel with them. . . . but let us try to love them--love them as naughty children who need to grow up, but of whom we are secretly proud.[37]

Irving also addressed himself to the issue:

> But enough of the past, and now to work. I expect we shall stumble again, pick ourselves up, run, jump, possibly leap, and one day receive one of those historical tributes from your own Mr. Kerr. . . . But there is time to argue about such a noble project, and a time to act. If this country is to have a national theater--and it will be a disgrace if it doesn't--now is the time to throw away the crystal ball and get on with the huge job at hand.[38]

The Repertory Theater's potential as the standard bearer for an American national theater and its level of accomplishment measured against this standard is a recurring motif. Barnes took up the question again at the end of the 1967-68 season, stating that Irving had "toned down the adventurousness of the repertory. . . . Indeed last season the company produced many plays that might just as well have been done commercially on Broadway."[39] Certainly, St. Joan, Tiger at the Gates, and Cyrano were choices less daring than Danton's Death; however, the fact remains that they were not done on Broadway and were unlikely to be, as Broadway to date has shown little inclination to produce commercial revivals of classics, ancient or modern, which were not blessed with the imprimatur of a British company.

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[37]Ibid.

[38]Irving, "We Have No Divine Right to Fail," New York Times, December 17, 1967, Section 2, p. 5.

[39]Barnes, Holiday, September 1968, p. 94.

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While Barnes acknowledged that "national repertory companies are not created overnight," a critical commonplace that was becoming increasingly trite regardless of who used it, and that the Repertory Theater "is the orphan . . . and the problem child [at Lincoln Center, surrounded by institutions with] established reputations and their own regular audiences," he offered Irving only halfhearted encouragement.[40]

> Whether Irving ultimately will turn out to be the right director for the company is debatable. But he should be given the right he claims, of proving whether he can make it or not. A national theater does take time to fashion, and it behooves us to be patient--not too tolerant, perhaps, but patient.[41]

Irving, however, had absorbed the Mike Nichols lesson thoroughly. Gambles in programming had far better odds if hedged with "name" casting or direction, and "names" were more reliable security for survival than critical patience with the development of a company.

During this season, the Repertory Theater also opened its Forum Theater. The artistic purpose of this smaller house had been one of experimentation and innovation ever since the announcement of the original building plans by Whitehead and Kazan.[42] With a grant of $25,000 from the

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[40]Ibid.

[41]Ibid.

[42]The Performing Arts, II, 14, p. 2.

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Rockefeller Foundation to underwrite production expenses, the Forum opened on November 10, 1967, with productions of two one-acts by Mayo Simon, Happiness and Walking to Waldheim, which critics found conventional although well-performed. Following these, Irving sought the permission of Equity to transfer Roy Dotrice's one-man show, Brief Lives, to the Forum. The show had received good notices but was not attracting patrons in sufficient numbers to remain open on Broadway. Dotrice is British, however, and Equity refused to approve the transfer, objecting to the idea as the subsidization of foreign plays by Lincoln Center.[43] Therefore, the Forum was dark until March when Ron Cowen's Summertree, a play about a young soldier, was premiered. The play was well served by the production and received a favorable critical response. The run was extended two additional months. David Birney received the Clarence Derwent and Theater World awards for his portrayal of the soldier, and the theater itself was singled out by the Outer Critics' Circle for "outstanding contribution to the American theater in the Forum."

The productions on the main stage also fared well, with the Cyrano run being extended at the end of the regular subscription season. Irving's satisfaction with having survived this season without public crisis was marred,

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[43]New York Times, January 1, 1968, p. 10; January 4, 1968, p. 29; January 6, 1968, p. 28; January 10, 1968, p. 53; January 18, 1968, p. 38.

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however, by an article of Walter Kerr's comparing the Repertory Theater and the A.P.A. company. Kerr stated that the A.P.A. was "infinitely superior," on an artistic level, to the company at Lincoln Center which was more financially successful only because of its unfair advantage in being considered somehow official and "vaguely 'municipal.'"[44]

This image of the monied Repertory Theater, safely buffered in its programming by subscription and subsidy, probably frustrated Irving more than it angered him. At the end of his third season in New York, Irving was the director of a theater in which the problem of covering the inevitable deficit each season was as acute as that he had faced in San Francisco, and whose ability to attract financial support was hampered by its handsome architecture, which belied the company's precarious economic situation. Considerable effort was expended in securing foundation grants and private support, which were barely sufficient to offset the burden of high operating costs at Lincoln Center.

Thus, to have Kerr confirm the mistaken image of the theater as unfairly preferred and financially buttressed, despite any artistic deficiencies, was damaging to the on-going fund-raising effort; and, by distorting the company's fiscal situation, it encouraged criticism of

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[44]New York Times, May 5, 1968, Section 2, p. 1.

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artistic accomplishment based on ample resources. Irving's reply to the Kerr article stated that the company was faced by constant economic crisis, and, receiving no support from New York City, could not, therefore, be called a "municipal" theater.[45] However, the image of the Repertory Theater as heavily subsidized persisted.

II

Adequate funding for the 1968-69 season was crucial because the Repertory Theater planned to present two main stage productions in rotating repertory, and even conservative estimates of the additional costs were considerable. Irving had managed a casting coup with his invitation to Lee J. Cobb, who would return to the stage after a fifteen year absence as Lear in the company's first Shakespeare production. King Lear, directed by Gerald Freedman and designed by Ming Cho Lee, would alternate with the New York premiere of William Gibson's A Cry of Players, directed by Gene Frankel and designed by David Hays. Set in sixteenth-century England, the latter play featured Anne Bancroft and Frank Langella.

Irving stated, "It was important for us to have Cobb--who couldn't come for more than one show--because I

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[45] New York Times, May 26, 1968, Section 2, p. 1.

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felt he had the kind of stature and American tradition which would make it a distinctively American Lear."[46] Another consideration in this casting choice was the attempt to bring people together who would commit themselves to company work. Originally, Irving hoped to have the principals appear in both plays; therefore, he offered Bancroft Goneril or Regan in Lear and Langella either Edmund or Edgar. For Irving, rotating repertory was not as important as establishing a permanent company, and, according to him, rotation was fraught with difficulty; in addition to the increased financial costs, there was also the problem of convincing actors to appear in both plays. Bancroft turned down a part in Lear because she did not want to lose rehearsal time from Cry of Players, and she encouraged Langella to do the same. Irving recalled that Cobb's understandable response was that he then would not do their play.[47]

Following the alternation of King Lear and A Cry of Players, there were planned main stage productions of Heinar Kipphardt's In the Matter of J. Robert Oppenheimer and a new translation of Aristophanes' The Birds, directed by Joe Layton. On the issue of play selection, Irving had stated, "My philosophy of theater is pragmatic. I put on plays which e te me, which I would like to work on, and

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[46]Cue, January 17, 1970, p. 15.

[47]Irving, private interview, April 3, 1975.

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see on our stage--and my primary aim is to communicate that excitement to the audience."[48] This philosophy included new plays although Irving was aware that the risks were far greater with an untried work than with a proven classic. The Kipphardt play had interested Irving for some time, but there were obstacles to its production. Oppenheimer, while alive, had opposed the play being done, and later Robert Whitehead held the play option for Broadway. When the option became available, Irving picked it up. Oppenheimer had its American premiere in Los Angeles in May 1968, directed by Gordon Davison, whom Irving had asked to direct at the Beaumont. As guest director, Davidson staged the New York premiere as well.[49]

The issue of board influence in such policy decisions was handled by Irving in this way: "The board has no approval rights on a play. But I insist on consulting them on my selections. . . . In six years, nobody has ever said: "Don't do that play.'"[50] Irving recalled, however, that the Kipphardt play was discussed at length, and ultimately the board supported his choice.[51]

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[48]Taper, p. 14.

[49]Irving, private interview, April 3, 1975.

[50]Kupferberg, Theatre 4, p. 142.

[51]Hoguet also recalled that the play was much discussed because some board members were wary of it.

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The final main stage production was The Miser, directed by Carl Weber and selected when problems developed with a translation of The Birds. Irving and Robert Symonds, the associate director of the theater, discussed the project initially. Symonds had played Harpagon in San Francisco and had seen Weber's production of the play at the Front Street Theater in Memphis. Weber and Symonds had worked together on The Caucasian Chalk Circle in San Francisco and on Cyrano at Lincoln Center. Symonds felt that the production concept in Memphis, basing the play on social realism rather than farce, was a good choice.

There were also practical matters to consider. The Oppenheimer production had been very successful, and Irving planned to bring it back for a summer run, possibly rotating it with Miser. In casting, Miser had roles for key company members and for some people who had worked at the theater previously. Irving saw it as an opportunity to mount a "company" production or close to it. Weber accepted these provisos. Production costs were a factor: Miser required one set, a cast of sixteen for speaking roles, and three attendants.

However, there were problems. Zeigler describes Weber in San Francisco as "not so much a director as a field marshal. The Workshop actors . . . were irritated and even frightened by Weber's literal approach: 'Three steps northwest, zen a 37-degree turn and a vun and vun-half inch smile, pleece.' Yet despite the tension and absolutism of

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rehearsals, the actors kept trudging for Weber . . ."[52] In The Miser, some actors trudged; some did not.

Weber emphasized repeatedly his concept that the play was not a farce but a comedy firmly based in the social and economic realities of the seventeenth century. Stage business was to be developed from the scene's context and character motivation, not as comic bits with laughs as their goal. He pointed out that the comedy in the play came from the conflicts in points of view and that Moliere's contemporaries saw his plays as realistic, treating a rising class preoccupied with material possessions, which is also a contemporary theme today. He criticized stylization, affected use of the language of the play, sight gags, and slapstick, but he did not always win.

His relentlessness in pursuing an aim until he got the effect he wanted worked for Weber more often with matters of scenic design than it did with acting problems. Ironically, the set ended up as a symbol for the production, wavering between farce and social realism; it was a visual metaphor of the production's own uncertainty.

The cast was divided on Weber's direction: he was too decisive and unyielding, or he wasn't decisive enough. His fixed conception of a scene's quality, not in the specific business as much as in point of view, infuriated

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[52]Zeigler, p. 59. The material which follows, unless otherwise cited, is based on the author's observations as Mr. Weber's assistant.

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half the cast, while his willingness to experiment within the concept encouraged insecurity in the others. In addition, those actors with the fewest lines were the most creative in elaborate "schtick" and comic business and the most resentful when Weber insisted that the business be cut. This conflict gradually spread to those in larger roles who became increasingly concerned that they wouldn't be funny, and Weber was tactless on occasion in his handling of the situation. As a result, even if the actor got to keep his pratfall in, he felt injured nonetheless, and company morale declined each week.

As the artistic director of the theater, Irving was present at runthroughs; he also held meetings with Weber, the production staff, and John Lahr, who had recently joined the theater as literary advisor. He saw his role as attempting to resolve disputes without ordering the director to do something.[53] The morale was low: one actor left the production, feeling he had been miscast; another refused to come to rehearsal at one point. Irving was under pressure to have the show open on schedule because it would affect the subscription series in addition to increasing production costs if the opening were postponed.

The theater's financial situation at this point surely influenced Irving. He was not one to go to the public complaining about inadequate funding, and he was

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[53]Irving, private interview, December 6, 1972.

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also aware of the effect such an action would have on his relationship with his board. Instead, he appealed directly to his board for additional funds, but his appeals did not motivate increased effort to meet the theater's financial needs. On two different occasions, one of them during this season, Irving went to his board for more money only to be told that if he could not manage with what he had, then the theater could go dark. Thus, Irving was faced with a continual dilemma: keeping the theater open, while continually devising cost-cutting strategems, or watching the theater close. One direct result was that the theater was understaffed; the staff was overworked, and energy was regularly diverted from artistic concerns to bringing in a production at the lowest possible cost.

It is worth noting that during this season Lincoln Center was beset with its own financial crisis. Amyas Ames, chairman of the Lincoln Center board, announced a drastic overhaul of the corporation, stating that otherwise Lincoln Center could be bankrupt by 1970.[54] The summer festival was scratched, staff was cut, and efforts were redoubled to complete the capital fund drive by July 1969. However, that drive was only completed on schedule with gifts of $1.25 million from John D. Rockefeller III and Lawrence A. Wein.[55]

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[54]New York Times, January 14, 1969, p. 34.

[55]New York Times, July 2, 1969, p. 34.

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Lincoln Center was competing with itself in the campaign to complete the drive for capital funds to liquidate its mortgage and in the effort to raise funds for operating expenses.[56] In addition, of course, it was also competing with its constituents, each of whom had a deficit to cover. The Repertory Theater's position in this competition for public and private philanthropy could not have been less advantageous.

Irving thought of himself, however, as a director, not as a cost accountant. Yet, he had directed only one play in his solo administration, a Forum production of James Hanley's The Inner Journey, which opened on March 20, 1969.[57] He must have felt some frustration with this situation. Further, each production also carried his name, so as the artistic director Irving sought to exert his influence on what would finally appear onstage.

Thus, during The Miser's problem period, Irving felt that Weber was not succeeding in finding a behavior pattern for American actors, and that this contributed to the morale problem. He began working behind the scenes on character building; he talked with the actors in an attempt, he has said, to help them find the spine of the character and to rebuild confidence so that they could move from the

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[56]Martin, p. 178.

[57]Reviewed in New York Times, March 21, 1969, p. 42.

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conceptual idea to its action.[58] It must be added that in this situation he had the support of his staff, for the following incident described by John Lahr occurred during this production: "Once, when an actress had torn up a director's notes and refused to take his direction, one of Jules' assistants stood up in the meeting, faced his Leader and said: 'You talk to her, Jules. You can do it. You're the only one.' The Lone Ranger rides again."[59]

Weber, on the other hand, recalled that dealing with the actress had been complicated by her awareness that Irving was unhappy with her performance, and that that awareness had made it increasingly difficult for anyone to deal with her. Weber contrasted the Miser situation with his experience in San Francisco, when Irving had been most supportive during the terrible difficulties that had plagued that production; now he felt Irving's experience in New York had made him wary because he could not take the risk of failure.[60]

For instance, during a difficult stage of production like the first run-throughs, when the concept is there but not necessarily functioning, Irving did not say, let's make it function; instead, the original concept was abandoned,

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[58]Irving, private interview, September 29, 1969.

[59]Lahr, "I lost it at the theatre," Plays and Players, January 1973, p. 12.

[60]This is not the same as invoking the right to fail.

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and other things were tried. However, because the new things were random, they seldom worked better than the original idea.[61] So, after a Miser runthrough, Irving discussed the production concept. Weber had staged an opening pantomime with the miser hiding his cash box; Irving wanted the humor in the pantomime clarified, "to let the audience know that this is a comedy." He felt that Symonds should be funny, somehow vulnerable in his miserliness, and that the production needed passion, a sense of intense needs and desires, that the passion should be there as we observe the clashes of people with single purposes. To support this, he invoked the play's commedia roots, and suggested that here the basis for the conflict might be found, without falling into cliche.[62] In an essay on the production, however, Irving discussed the concept quite differently and went on to suggest that the style of this production was what he wished to see developed in the company.

> This Miser, then, was committed to simplicity of thought and action, to a truth which conformed to patterns of life as the actors observed them, and to the text of the play Moliere wrote. Traditional stage business and artificial stage effects were discarded in favor of a real, and sometimes dark, seventeenth century environment which served Moliere as a framework for his ridicule.[63]

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[61]Carl Weber, private interview, December 29, 1972.

[62]Author's notes on meeting held April 18, 1969.

[63]Irving, "Repertory: Discovering the Style for Moliere," The Miser, Caedmon Records TRS 338 (Theatre Recording Society Production Folio), p. 10.

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Weber's concept did not get such support during the rehearsal period. Then, actors' pleas that they were being told to cut humorous stage business found Irving's sympathetic ear, and those pleas increased as their feeling that the audience would not find them funny was supported by notes from the various members of the theater. The conflict between notes from the director, taking out comic bits, and notes from others in the theater reached such a point that an actor actually hid in another dressing room to avoid being told to cut some comic business after hearing how unfunny he was in the part.

Some members of the cast defended Irving's mediation of conflicts with Weber, feeling Irving was more sympathetic to their problems and easier to approach. As a result, however, the production veered away from Weber's view that the humor came out of the situation and toward increasingly physical and visual slapstick. The production opened on schedule.[64]

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[64]The section on The Miser is based on the author's notes during rehearsals, unless otherwise cited.

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III

John Lahr, who joined the theater during this production as literary advisor, wrote later:

> Jules will be writing his memoirs soon, and I hope I'm in them. But I bet I'm not. That's the first thing you learn as a literary advisor: the victories belong to the Artistic Director, and the failures belong to you.
> . . . . . .
> [When the critic becomes a literary advisor, he finds that he] is now a player in someone else's grand fantasy. Jules sees himself as St. George tilting his spear at the stodgy board of trustees. "Going to the mat" is a favourite phrase. "SuperJules" stages his fights for principle and artistic integrity.
>
> He is also the Great Appeaser, living to fight another day. Sampling opinion, talking confidentially to his minions, he weighs things carefully, running his hand through his tightly cropped, wavy hair. Then, he acts.[65]

Because Lahr worked closely with Irving, he had an opportunity to observe the manner in which Irving ran the Repertory Theater, and he describes it as "participatory autocracy," which "was a clever way of sounding his staff, keeping up their enthusiasm yet keeping them all totally under his thumb." In Lahr's view, the staff was bad but loyal, composed, with few exceptions, of "hard-working toadies. Jules knew this and sometimes would even kid [an associate] about it."

As a result, it was possible to ascertain the status

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[65]Lahr, Plays and Players, p. 12.

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of a proposal before asking Irving directly. "As you trudged the corridors on the way, each flunky would recount the 'Irving line' and by the time you go to Jules' office, the temperature of the project was clear." His usual tactic on productions "was to put down all the plays so he could say--if they failed--'I told you,' and if they succeeded, it was a combination of bettor's luck and hard teamwork."

In working with other directors, Irving kept a tight rein on the production which, Lahr thinks, was felt and resented. "As a director, Jules' best characteristic is his affability, but he doesn't have a real artistic approach to work. His is the politician's attitude: cause and effect." Play selection, which tended largely toward the classics, depended to some extent on what directors were available and willing to work at the theater, but an important factor in selecting directors was "whom Jules liked to work with because they could be trusted to do sound productions without rocking the managerial boat." Among these were John Hirsch and Carl Weber. "Even Dan Sullivan, his talented protege, was so close to the Irving menage that Jules' wishes--if unheeded--were not unfelt. Jules hated situations--like the Katselas lock-out--[in the production of Camino Real] where he was powerless to effect changes."

Irving could also be "quite unwittingly funny." In a game of Monopoly with an actor, Irving took him aside and said, "If you want that part in Dizenzo's new play, give me Boardwalk." This is a true story, says Lahr, "and typical

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of Jules. Whether at poker or at the theater, he loved to win." Another aspect of Irving was indicated by a book in his office on the use of Machiavelli's principles in management. "He was and is a poker player who liked to maneuver, bluff, and control while seeming to be a bystander."

Lahr agreed that Irving did like to manipulate people, of which the struggle during Miser was an example, and cites an incident that occurred during the same period.

> Often, I feel, he would create crisis in order to turn it into a situation which he and only he could solve. After the first preview of The Year Boston Won the Pennant, [John Ford] Noonan and I were waiting in the lobby to take his notes. He appeared and said, "I'm closing the show." He walked, without further explanation, up to his office. Of course, he didn't close the show. And this was a horrible thing to do to a playwright and an equally green literary advisor, but from that point on, having played that card, he was--and let it be known--in control.

One of the difficulties in writing about Irving and the Repertory Theater is that there was a continual overlap of personal and professional relationships which many people who worked in the theater for any length of time were drawn into. Some people had been together since the days of the Actor's Workshop, and others were absorbed by the amount of time that was committed to the theater while working there. Lahr and his wife, Anthea, were a part of this family. "The Lincoln Center clan was very tight. It was more like a commune than a team, with Priscilla [Pointer; Mrs. Irving], Jules, Dan Sullivan, Symonds, Alan Mandell [general manager] all within screaming distance both at work and at home."

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As Lahr pointed out,

> I like Jules a lot; and whatever I say about him reflects a love-hate relationship that a son has for a father, which is a role Jules LOVES to play. . . . He handled people with a politician's sense of the right gesture. He was the model of tact and surface consideration, . . . and he was good at bringing off consensus victories. His ruthlessness was nothing compared with Papp or Merrick or even that minor-league martinet Peter Zeisler [with whom Lahr worked at the Guthrie. Nor was Jules] the megalomanic that Joe Papp is. Maybe the theater needs the madmen. But Jules--always the teacher--did responsible, thorough work which, if it wasn't inspired, was sometimes excellent.
>
> Jules is a combination of ruthlessness and sentimentality, humor and stubbornness. . . . [and he] was an excellent administrator. Running that theater is a bitch of a job--and Jules handled fund-raising, planning, and staff problems very well. This talent, which is considerable, could not be assessed by critics because they never saw him except at opening nights. But Jules was a fair man, who genuinely tried to be loyal to "his people." To his credit, he never told me what to do, but let me find my own level. When we quit, it was gentle and mutual disaffiliation.[66]

It must be noted that Irving's method of handling production problems was generally rewarded by the critics with good notices. Thus, Zeigler writes, "The 1968-69 season ended in glory for Jules Irving. When Oppenheimer was followed immediately by an effective staging of The Miser, the New York Times critic Clive Barnes rather offhandedly ventured the idea that the Repertory Theater 'is--like it or lump it--at present, our national theater.' Jules Irving, who had been striving 'at the top of the mountain,' now seemed to belong there, at least as a visitor."[67]

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[66]All quotations are taken from John Lahr's letter of August 30, 1974 to the author.

[67]Zeigler, p. 165.

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It is appropriate to note, however, that, in Barnes' discussion of Weber's staging, the issue of social realism never came up (nor was it noted by the other critics). "Mr. Weber, with a refreshing coolness of vision, sees 'The Miser' as a farce," wrote Barnes, adding that the staging "has a succinctness, a directness, an honesty that cannot but charm," which serves the director's purpose which is "simply to entertain and divert, an aim that would never be far from Moliere's heart."[68] In short, The Miser was a model of Irving's knack for consensus victories.

For the 1969-70 season, the Repertory Theater presented four American plays on the main stage, which Irving described as "a kaleidoscopic view of America, through the eyes of five young playwrights, each looking at us at a particular time."[69] William Saroyan's The Time of Your Life opened the season, directed by John Hirsch, with James Broderick as Joe, Biff McGuire as Tom, and Susan Tyrell as Kitty. It was followed by Tennessee Williams' Camino Real directed by Milton Katselas, with a cast including Jessica Tandy, Al Pacino, Patrick McVey, and Sylvia Syms; Sam Shepard's Operation Sidewinder, a world premiere directed by Michael Schultz, and George S. Kaufman and Marc Connelly's Beggar on Horseback, directed by Hirsch, with Leonard Frye and Susan Watson.

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[68]Barnes, "Farcical Miser," New York Times, May 9, 1969, p. 35.

[69]Cue, January 17, 1970, p. 15.

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John Lahr recalled that "being with the theater was like fighting an endless campaign. Each season, even the 'best American' season, tried to be special, and, in the case of the American season, succeeded, although the critics, having demanded an over-view in planning, then didn't discuss the plays' inter-relations as they were chosen."[70] He felt that the critics' complaints about play selection were groundless and noted that Irving took "a kind of perverse delight" in asking for their suggestions. "People like John Simon and Martin Gottfried were always flattered to be called in and asked what plays they would suggest. Jules, the poker-player, was calling their bluff."[71]

The selection of plays for a season was done by Irving, Lahr, Robert Symonds, Alan Mandel, and "unofficially but definitely a force, Priscilla [Pointer]."[72] A director whom Irving wished to use that season, such as John Hirsch, would also be included in the process. According to Lahr, "everyone read everything: obviously, the result was chaos." The major problem in this process was the necessity of planning ahead. "Because Jules was always involved in a great many productions--overseeing, sometimes directing--things were left till late. This meant greater cost and

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[70]Lahr letter of August 30, 1974 to author.

[71]Ibid.

[72]Ibid.

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confusion since, after threatening to choose a season two months ahead of the deadline, we'd usually have no more than two weeks to select plays for both [the main stage and the Forum]."[73]

Gradually, says Lahr, a system of selection evolved. "There were times when Jules would come in with six different pieces of paper--each with a Beaumont season written on it. . . . Although Jules' reputation rests on the work he did [in the Forum], it is my genuine belief that he didn't care as much about this area as the bread-and-butter issue of getting four winners upstairs."

> Jules, always the gambler, was weighing his reputation and responsibility to which he paid great lip-service with the realpolitik of [selling] seats. At Lincoln Center--basically a Broadway audience--the Subscriber had power. And Jules wouldn't transgress tastes that he read as clearly as an Esso map. This attitude meant that what we chose for [the main stage] was primarily a sampling from the History of the Theater 101 . . . Often, we would have the choice of two or three premieres of European plays. And there were always rumors that Arthur Miller might allow this, and Tennessee Williams could be approached. So we juggled possibilities, while Jules sent out feelers on various projects and performers. But, in truth, the formula would only allow for one new (read adventurous) project a season on the Beaumont stage.[74]

For the Camino Real project, Tennessee Williams had decided on Milton Katselas, fresh from his Broadway success, Butterflies Are Free. Lahr recalled that "a year after Time had consigned our greatest dramatist to the

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[73]Ibid.

[74]Ibid.

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garbage heap of history, Jules [chose] the play because he hoped to salvage Williams' waning reputation."[75] However, Katselas did not prove as amenable to suggestion as Hirsch and Weber had been. Lahr was told to give his notes to Irving who would relay them to Katselas. Katselas had been furious after receiving Lahr's notes and had told Irving, "This was a complete put-down. It's like getting a letter from Kenneth Tynan." Then, when Irving gave Katselas ten pages of notes after the run-through on December 31, 1969, the director had replied, "Geez, these are more notes than I even took." As Lahr suggests, "Katselas just doesn't see there's something wrong with the focus of a play where Kilroy can forget his golden gloves, as Al Pacino did last Sunday."[76]

From Lahr's diary: "1-1-70--Jules to Katselas. 'Take these notes and shove them up your ass with the rest of the ones I gave you.'" There was less than a week before the play opened. On opening night, January 7, Lahr wrote:

> The show was terrible. Everything I hate in theatre. Senseless spectacle. No concept. No ideas. Laboured performances. Katselas claims Camino is a dream and what happens on stage needs no justification. So that's why it looks like midnight when the script calls for hot mid-day sun in the town square; why the fountain slides on stage with the over-dressed Lincoln Center beggars. They crawl like commandos. It's the audience's idea of the poor. Byron's last speech is all

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[75]Lahr, Plays and Players, p. 13.

[76]Ibid.

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> chockta: torches and monks with hoods. Byron's lines: "Make voyages. Attempt them. There is nothing else" are mocked in this static, cowardly production. . . .
>
> Later, Jules passed me in the hall. . . . "Another great evening in the theatre," Jules says. It makes me sad. We're all sad; we could have done better for Williams, but Williams wanted the Katselas production he'd seen in L.A. . . . [As we left,] the stage manager said: "There are a few of us who are very ashamed of this show. After six hours of rehearsal, I'd rush home and read a book. It's the first time in a day I'd seen an idea." . . . Jules said, as if in consolation, that three shows were going at Lincoln Center. "The plant's operating at full steam." It's a production factory![77]

This was a season in which the terminology of manufacturing seemed apt. The theater and its productions were dominated by machines. The pinball machine in The Time of Your Life; a talking computer in the Forum for The Increased Difficulty of Concentration; a Volkswagen, a Cadillac, and a mechanized snake for Operation Sidewinder; and finally the transformation of the stage for Beggar on Horseback in the style of a Busby Berkeley musical; all were intriguing and visually effective, but the physical productions during this season overshadowed the plays. The main stage is one of those stages that requires scenery.[78] The designer's task of limiting the volume of the acting space to something in human scale is awesome because the theatre itself raises high expectations of physical production. During this season, the physical aspects of the productions more than lived up to their surroundings.

[77]Ibid.

[78]Hugh Hardy, "The Overpermanent Architecture," p. 17.

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Not everyone, however, was pleased by these efforts. Walter Kerr wrote,

> Coming directly on the heels of the overproduced, though undernourished, "Operation Sidewinder," the current revival of "Beggar on Horseback" beggars description and may very possibly bankrupt the house. Every time a new costume flashes in from the wings . . . you gasp, not at what you are seeing, but at its probable cost.[79]

In fact, the designer, Michael Annals, had accomplished the dazzling display with sleight of hand more than with money. Although more expensive than most Repertory Theater productions, Beggar's pre-opening costs, including salaries, were less than $200,000. John Gleason suggested that one of the problems for the theater was that they managed to produce such costly-looking productions for so little money that no one ever believed that the theater was forced to do productions "on the cheap."[80]

The Repertory Theater's gamble in this season was the premiere of Sam Shepard's Operation Sidewinder. Lahr described the play's vision of America as "a country of aliens, cut off from history, from the land, from themselves, from any unifying creative force."[81] Although Lahr conceded flaws in the work, he felt that this production was an important step for the Repertory Theater to take:

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[79]"Oh, Dear, The Trouble It's In," New York Times, May 24, 1970, Section 2, p. 1.

[80]Private interview, June 24, 1974.

[81]John Lahr, "On-stage," The Village Voice, March 19, 1970, p. 43.

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"a good play, a good young writer, and a main stage production which had been dropped out of timidity by Brustein at Yale."[82] "In a year of violent, insane guerrilla bombings in our cities and equally violent and insane government repressions, 'Operation Sidewinder' has a visionary thoroughness: it gets a great deal of the American moment on stage."[83]

"The play did terrible box office. It was way ahead of the audience, and it shows Jules' courageous producing instinct at its best."[84] However, the New York Times review damned with faint praise:

> In brief, the people re-enacting this symbolic charade are not dramatically engaging. We care about Mr. Shepard's thoughts more than about Mr. Shepard's characters, and I wonder whether this is any way to write a play. . . . As a result, I feel he has written, and indeed very cleverly, a rather bad play about a rather good subject. He must take heart in that he is reversing an all-too-common procedure. . . .
>
> It is pleasant to see the Lincoln Center Repertory Company essay a world premiere, and they are to be congratulated on it being by a young author. I hope they will try again another season.[85]

Lahr wrote later, "The sight of Jules pacing the backstage corridors after the first preview . . . still chills me. . . . Shepard's play was one of the most exciting and original works of the 60's, and although Lincoln Center didn't do it justice, to do it at all was

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[82]Lahr letter, August 30, 1974.

[83]Village Voice, March 19, 1970, p. 43.

[84]Lahr letter.

[85]New York Times, March 13, 1970, p. 33.

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important. Jules stared at those Subscribers' comments; by the end of the count, it was Lincoln Center 0, Subscribers 50."[86]

> From [Lahr's] dairy 2/27/70--Jules calls me in to the stage manager's office--white light, blackboards. "I just want you to read these." He hands me the audience reaction comments. Except for two, the comments are horrific. "Terrible, terrible, terrible." "Infantile." "The artistic director and anyone connected with this should be fired." Jules paces the floor, rapping knuckles on table. "You know I'm an emotional guy--when the theater takes a big step like this, we've got to do it well. And I don't think we are. The level of acting is amateurish, John. Fine for La Mama but not here . . . I just had to talk to somebody . . ." Of course, this was Jules' way of giving me a zinger.[87]

At this point, "political problems called him away. American Indian actors were protesting Shepard's Hopi snake ritual. Down the hall, I could hear one shouting: 'I'm not wooden Indian.' The Great Appeaser swung into action."[88]

The subscribers were not alone in their dislike for the production. Board members were offended by the language as well. Robert Montgomery, an actor in television and films, had become board president of the theater in January 1969; he resigned from this position in April 1970, less than a month after Sidewinder opened to largely unfavorable notices.[89] Although no explanation for this action was given by either Robert Hoguet, board chairman, or Jules

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[86]Lahr, Plays and Players, p. 12. [87]Lahr letter.

[88]Plays and Players, p. 12.

[89]New York Times, January 22, 1969, p. 54; April 8, 1970, p. 37.

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Irving, Lahr recalled Irving "'going to the mat' (as he said) with Robert Montgomery . . . who'd suggested a PRO-war play, There Shall Be No Night," for this season.[90] Sidewinder could not have been to Montgomery's taste. The board formed an executive committee to take over the duties of the board president until a successor could be named.[91]

Irving attributed the play's failure to his not "hedging his bet" by casting a star.

> Jules was cynical about [the advantage that could be given a risky production with star casting,] and the critics' response bore him out. Jules knew in his heart that the critics generally didn't know what made a good performance and a bad one. They just didn't know. Time and again, bad performances were outrageously overpraised . . . Jules knew if he cast a star, he was hedging his bet. Audiences would come, critics would be pleased, and he and the theater would flourish. This ploy worked fairly well. The plays, if they were not great productions, gave the Subscribers a good evening out. Costs were high, and Jules couldn't afford too many unsuccessful productions.

Lahr also became cynical about the relationship between Lincoln Center and the New York critics:

> [I] became outraged at the ignorance that paraded as confident opinion. Clive Barnes dismissed The Time of Your Life in his review as second or third rate; yet in the same year he would include it in his Dodd, Mead collection of The 100 Best American Plays. Brustein made a good living putting down Irving at Lincoln Center, although the work got better than it had been in San Francisco, not worse. It's just that Brustein changed. Lincoln Center had an image to fight as well as the problems of each production.[92]

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[90]Lahr letter.

[91]The executive committee included Robert Hoguet, George D. Woods, Clarke Coggeshall, Mrs. Leon Hess, and Carroll L. Wainwright, Jr.

[92]Lahr letter.

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During his tenure with Lincoln Center, Lahr writes that he learned quickly these mechanics of "the cultural protection racket" of star casting. In the opening night review for the New York Times,

> Barnes asks (in a notice which calls the play "great" and the production "stunning"): "Have you noticed how American dramatists give us the story of their lives rather than their view of the world?" What is a "view of the world," anyway, but generalizations from private pain? Barnes called Katselas' production--this muddled, unthinking mess--a "model of clarity." I ring Jules to "congratulate" him. He replies, "Every word of it is true." Jules pauses. "Learning anything, John?"[93]

[93]Lahr, Plays and Players, p. 13.

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CHAPTER TEN

I

For the 1970-71 season at the Repertory Theater, Irving attempted to assemble a company selected from actors who had worked at the theater previously (David Birney, Stephen Elliott) or with John Hirsch, who was scheduled to direct two main stage productions (Martha Henry, James Blendick), or those associated with the A.P.A. company (Sydney Walker, Frances Sternhagen). As Irving often noted, the creation of a company was conditioned by economic and artistic considerations which affected both the theater and the actor.

The top company salary was $500 per week, but only a very few were paid that; the average salary was closer to $215.[1] The young actor was often caught in a conflict between his commitment to a company which could not pay very well and the demands of career advancement. The established actor was frequently reluctant to risk appearing in secondary parts even in alternation with large ones. According to Irving, Hume Cronyn and Jessica Tandy would have joined the company if other actors could be found who would switch

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[1]Kupferberg, Theatre 4, p. 148.

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back and forth in this way, but he could not find those others.[2]

The observations of those actors working at the theater for some time reflected these philosophical and professional conflicts. David Birney joined the theater for the entire 1970-71 season, and he pointed out that many actors were committed to the idea of a company, a theater where the actor could do the parts he wanted to play and balance those with parts which would be good for the actor's development or good for the company. Birney stated, however, "You discover that this situation doesn't really exist in regional theater. There's a star system even there, and you know that you must keep moving in a sense, because, after a few seasons, the theater will have used you up. Usually, there isn't any budget for any sense of continuity, and besides, how many parts are there each season for a young actor, especially for a young woman?"[3] Although a number of actors did sign for a full season at the Beaumont in 1970-71, Birney recalled, "God knows how many people were approached for the season and refused because their own survival depended on being able to appear in a variety of work, including the mass media?"[4]

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[2]Private interview, Los Angeles, April 3, 1975.

[3]Private interview, June 1974.

[4]Ibid.

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Philip Bosco, who was a member of the company for seven seasons, recalled that there were complaints within the company about casting and whether people were used to their own best advantage as well as the company's, but then added that such complaints are heard everywhere. Still, Bosco regretted that the theater never managed to keep more than a handful of actors together and so never formed a unit, a company that could develop.[5]

Irving was aware of the burden placed on those members seen year after year. "Inevitably, they were over-exposed or cast in roles that were not to their advantage. The National Theater of Great Britain has eighty-five members, and a company's size affects its ability to cast well and prevent over-familiarity. We seldom had more than a dozen people under contract for the entire season."[6] According to John Lahr, "Casting was a great area of disagreement, but with Irving and two of his closest friends--Bob [Symonds] and Priscilla [Pointer]--so close to the decisions, there was no way to get around this problem. It hurt the quality of work even if it kept harmony and happiness among the team."[7]

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[5]Private interview, July 21, 1973.

[6]Private interview, April 3, 1975.

[7]Letter to author, August 30, 1974.

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Irving's loyalty to his people was a quality that was always recognized, although it was both praised and deplored on an artistic basis. Loyalty to that small core did keep the germ of a company alive, but, said Lahr, "it [also] accounted for a lot of the critical flack . . . [directed at Irving because] many of the actors [who had come East from the Actor's Workshop] were really not up to the roles they got."[8] On the other hand, Irving's casting strategy meant that people were frequently brought in because they seemed better suited to a part which might have afforded an opportunity for growth to a company member.

Stephen Elliott noted, "It was demoralizing for actors to see people who had been with the company for years in small parts. Some stayed because it was a job, but others left if they felt good parts weren't coming to them."[9] Another actor pointed out that in most regional theaters one found a group of actors whom the director liked, whom he trusted to do the job competently. "Of course this group is usually far from the ideal of a company, but for Christ's sake, there was barely the budget to do the plays at the Repertory Theater, much less have a group that would train and grow together. So, it depends on your point of view whether you see people staying out of loyalty or because they couldn't get work elsewhere." One advantage

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[8]Ibid.

[9]Private interview, December 13, 1972.

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that these people had is that they were comfortable in that theater, and it took more than one play to adjust to the Beaumont's peculiar actor-audience relationship.[10]

Aline McMahon, who appeared in several productions there, stated, "In a curious way the thrust stage encourages you to enlarge the scope of the part. . . . [You] feel you're playing in an enormous amphitheatre. . . . Even though the audience is very close to you, the actor feels no intimacy at all."[11] Douglas Schmidt agreed. "I think it is a misconception that great theater will surface and survive under any conditions. I saw brilliant performances in rehearsal halls; Phil Bosco did some tremendous work and more often than not his performances managed to survive when the production moved onstage at the Beaumont. But I also saw superb performances disintegrate when they had to be blown up to fill that space."[12]

Rene Auberjonois has described the dilemma of the regional theater actor.

> I am convinced that most actors in regional theater are schizophrenics in the sense that they cannot reconcile the feeling that they should be fighting the fight of commercial theater with the feeling that they are chosen members of some great and holy crusade. This dilemma gives rise to a working climate that could be compared to a monastery filled with self-consciously zealous monks suppressing the desire to ravage the

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[10]Birney, private interview, June 1974.

[11]Martin, p. 94.

[12]Private interview, June 26, 1974.

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> neighboring village. . . . I do not mean to deny that the training and exposure afforded by regional theater is the only practical way for a young actor to mold himself into a useful artist. I mean that most actors will admit that they are actors because of a driving desire to be loved. It follows that to be loved on the grandest scale by the greatest number of people is an important, if not primary, objective. As I see it, the regional theater actor's greatest problem is to pick the right moment to get out of the womb.[13]

These difficulties extend to the company environment.

> The regional theater administrator creates a company whose hours, working conditions, and personal relationships are so intensely concentrated and inbred that he has, to some extent created a monster. In the final analysis it is not so much a question of his capacity to create a company as it is his ability to maintain that company once it is created. To my knowledge, no administrator has found a solution for the necessity of creating a company which is flexible enough to allow the actor freedom to satisfy his commercial ambitions and his artistic needs.[14]

Peter Zeisler, director of the Theater Communications Group, questioned the feasibility of permanent companies in the United States.

> Virtually none of our resident theaters have permanent companies, but rely instead on stable artistic direction for continuity. We are not a country but a nation, and it is difficult here to commute between the media centers of television and film and the theater when an actor is tied to a permanent company. In Europe, the media and theater centers are closely allied. Actors want the money, exposure, and personal recognition of work in the media, or long-term contracts which resident theaters can't offer because they don't know where the money will be coming from in six months."[15]

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[13]Schechner, ed., "The Regional Theatre: Four Views," TDR, XIII, 1 [T 41] (Fall 1968), p. 24.

[14]Ibid.

[15]Private interview, November 28, 1972.

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Irving felt that his acting pool idea had the necessary flexibility, and during the 1970-71 season it began to pay off: gradually, there were more performers appearing in several productions within a season, and other actors returned for particular plays that could utilize their talents. As David Birney put it, "The Repertory Theater is the only theater I have ever been connected with where I felt I did have a place there. I could do work elsewhere, knowing that there was an open door and a sense of place for me as an actor that was mutually beneficial. I could take in a new play, which would be considered even if it was not done, or suggest certain parts."[16]

Irving felt that the theater had hit its stride with The Time of Your Life production the previous season, but he did admit that the critical response to The Playboy of the Western World, including a favorable notice from Walter Kerr, "marked a 'turning point' in the affairs of his embattled acting company."[17] John Hirsch directed Playboy and Sophocles' Antigone, with Martha Henry and David Birney in the 1970-71 season, which opened with Robert Symonds' staging of Brecht's The Good Woman of Setzuan, with Colleen Dewhurst.

Irving himself directed his first main stage production since 1966, the Arthur Miller adaptation of Ibsen's

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[16]Private interview, June 1974.

[17]Kupferberg, Theatre 4, p. 132.

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An Enemy of the People, with Stephen Elliott, Philip Bosco, and Sydney Walker. In the Forum, he staged Pinter's The Birthday Party, which played in rotation with Irving's restaging of Pinter's Landscape and Silence, presented the previous season. Irving is considered a competent director, and he served the plays well. As an actor directed by Irving commented, "I've had other directors who are considered brilliant and with whom I enjoyed working, but their work has none of the virtues that Jules' had--strength, simplicity, and clarity. His work may have lacked the sophistication which other actors recognize, but it was a clean, clear job."[18]

Ellis Rabb was invited to direct Twelfth Night the following season, and he directed three main stage productions in 1972-73. For these, he augmented the Repertory Theater company with former members of the A.P.A. company which had disbanded in New York at the close of the 1968-69 season. Philip Bosco spoke warmly of working with Rabb, "the last of the actor-managers with a contagious enthusiasm for the theater," as did the resident designers. Irving was also pleased with "the good artistic partnership" which developed.[19]

The company ideal was realized most fully at the

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[18]Birney, private interview, June 1974.

[19]Private interview, April 3, 1975.

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Repertory Theater in the technical and production areas. The relationship of Douglas Schmidt and John Gleason was complemented by a stable production staff and crew. Both designers felt they had the benefit of superb crews in the execution of their production plans in addition to Irving's full support.[20] Gleason noted, "Jules had immense faith in his staff, always insisting that they be used as the designers. That kind of faith is very rare in the theater. . . . I would go anywhere for Jules. I feel that strongly about it. That theater really was my home, and Susan Bloch in the press office and I were the longest running staff people."[21]

Backstage and in the administrative offices, there was an ensemble spirit which was all the more remarkable because it was sorely taxed by inadequate staffing and summer layoffs. As early as August 1968, a report to the Repertory Theater Board on fund-raising noted,

> It's a matter of prime importance that the Board be fully aware of the staff situation . . . [As with] many another struggling voluntary institution, the Repertory Theater stays in business, at least in part,

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[20]Both designers expressed their gratitude in private interviews as well as acknowledging it at the presentation of the Joseph A. Maharam Foundation Awards in scene design which they received for their work at the Repertory Theater in the 1972-73 season. Schmidt's crew included: Dick Millahn, carpenter; Edward Hauch, flyman; Henry Dancyger, properties. Gleason's crew included: Kevin Strohmeyer, master electrician; Richard Fitzgerald and Joe Dungan, assistants.

[21]Private interview, June 24, 1974.

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> through merciless exploitation of the loyalty and devotion of its paid employees. . . . [The Board should] consider seriously making a commitment soon to devote a significant segment of [increased] gift income to more adequate staffing . . . Such a commitment would boost morale with the prospect of relief in sight.[22]

II

Such relief, however, never came; and the theater trudged on with a minimal staff that was over-worked and under-paid, while the operating and maintenance costs of the Beaumont building required one-quarter of the annual budget--a situation reflected in Walter Kerr's suggested prayer for theater people:

> Oh, Lord, give me successes that are not simply successes but contain just enough quality to let me feel I haven't wasted my life. Give me long enough runs to pay my bills, and then, when I am rich, get me into repertory. . . . Let me be praised, let me be paid, let me be proud. . . . [Give] me the fortitude to survive my collaborators. Humbly, I ask all this, and Sardi's, too. But dear Lord, . . . whatever else you give me out of your unbounded generosity, never, never, never give me a building.[23]

The Beaumont defies every sensible criteria for a performing arts facility that will not be an economic burden to its resident company.[24] "Somebody has to pay

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[22]Edgar M. Gemmel. Letter to Carroll L. Wainwright, Jr., August 29, 1968.

[23]Thirty Plays, p. 258.

[24]Mayer, pp. 3, 5.

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maintenance and operating costs every year. If [a new building does not bring in] additional customers or contributors, the symbiotic relationship of theater and performer can become parasitic."[25]

In part, the high maintenance costs were related to the building's design, which provides storage space for as many as five productions in rotating repertory. Although the company had never had sufficient funds to adopt a rotating schedule that would have utilized this space, it was still required to bear the high overhead costs for the facility. There is considerable irony in the fact that the designers were asked to create a fine facility for repertory, but, once it had been created, no one was willing to provide the substantial support to operate it in accordance with its designed purpose. As a result, the Beaumont quickly became a burden to the theater company rather than a blessing.

Irving found himself dealing with real estate far more than he wished to. One consequence of the building design is that its heating and air conditioning system serves not only the theater portion of the building but the library portion as well. Thus, in 1969 while he fired his staff for the summer because he couldn't pay them, he was faced with "the overwhelming injustice" of having to pay

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[25]Ibid, p. 14.

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engineers to keep the fans going in the basement, "so that the library could stay open when the Beaumont was dark."[26]

He also discovered that the Beaumont was not competitive for outside booking, even when compared with its Lincoln Center neighbors. "[Rentals] per seat per night . . . work out to just over $1 a seat at Alice Tully Hall, about $1.50 a seat at the Metropolitan Opera, and more than $2 a seat at the repertory theater."[27]

> The expenses of operating at the Beaumont are truly prodigious. Jules Irving . . . reports that his annual cost "to open the doors" is $560,000. By contrast the out-of-pocket costs of running a commercial Broadway house of the same seating capacity for a forty week season appear to be about $180,000--including house manager, box office help, cleaners, porters, matron, three heads of stage departments, a curtain man, $600 a week in real estate taxes, and about $400 of the $1,500 weekly advertising expense the trade considers a minimum. Irving himself estimates that the services that cost him almost $600,000 in Lincoln Center cost the comparable A.P.A.-Phoenix repertory company only $200,000 on Broadway.[28]

The acute need for funding to support each season and pay the operating expenses forced Irving into the position of many of his colleagues, "the artistic director who hustled the big-time subsidy circuit."[29] As Walter Kerr wrote later concerning the Circle in the Square's financial crisis,

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[26]Jules Irving, Drama Desk meeting, September 17, 1971.

[27]Mayer, p. 21.

[28]Ibid., p. 28.

[29]Gottfried, A Theater Divided, p. 93.

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> . . . the manager [of an instituional] theater is not so much the manager of a theater as he is, if he is skilled and lucky, a manager of the public purse. First energies must go into funding; what is left over may go into artistic direction. . . . If you have at hand as muscular an arm-twister as Joseph Papp . . . then you're probably going to be all right. But a great many once-funded repertory and municipal companies have long since vanished from the land, victims of the crunch between audiences that weren't expected to offer full support and foundations that finally wouldn't. . . . Most managers, including many of genuine esthetic sensibility, have tired of the weight of a hat held always in hand. The suspense alone must be killing.[30]

Securing funds from corporations required not only creating enthusiasm for the venture, but also "perspicacity, persistence, and patience. Wishing will not make it so, but continuous person-to-person salesmanship can."[31] However, there were also foundations to woo and governmental bodies to persuade that the Repertory Theater was a worthy applicant for grant monies. In 1968, Irving received a Rockefeller Foundation grant of $300,000 to support work in the Forum and a National Endowment grant of $100,000 for the same purpose. In December 1969, however, he pointed out that he feared the theater's money problems would be "especially stringent next year. Right now we're into the second year of our three year grant from the Rockefeller Foundation and the second and last year of the National Foundation grant, and I don't see anything to replace them. It worries me sick."[32]

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[30]"What Does It Take to Succeed? Money," New York Times, May 12, 1974, Section 2, p. 1.

[31]George Alan Smith, Theatre Today, III, 1, p. 13.

[32]New York Times, December 9, 1969, p. 66.

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In the same article, Lewis Funke observed that Irving's hair "is considerably grayer than it was when he first took over his assignment. But the energy remains, and his eyes still glisten as he discusses grosses, management problems, and artistic aspirations."[33] The order of these "considerations reflected the core problems of the Repertory Theater," according to Zeigler.

> As the youngest and poorest member of the Lincoln Center family, [it] lacked power and prestige within its home context. This weakness was intensified by the basic ineffectuality of the Repertory Theater board of directors, which, while composed of rich and influential people, never rallied fully to the financial needs of the company. . . . Contributions to erase the [theater's] deficit were less and less each year--and Irving himself raised most of the money in government and foundation grants [while holding the line on the theater's budget] . . . to approximately $2,000,000 [per year]. The board was standing back, not pulling its weight to secure the theater.[34]

Amyas Ames was also unimpressed by the theater board's effectiveness. "[He] dug a sheet of figures out of his file folder . . . It contained the sixteen year record of giving of the [theater board]. 'It's dismal,' he said. 'If you want to read the record of a failure, that's it.'"[35] Ames later stated, "I do know that only a very few of the Board [members] made gifts of any size. [The Board was also not very successful in securing funds from other sources.]

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[33]Ibid.

[34]Zeigler, pp. 165-166.

[35]Little, Enter Joseph Papp, p. 237.

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. . . [The] fund raising record of the Repertory Theater was really a basic contributing factor to everything that happened [there]."[36]

Clarke Coggeshall, vice-president of the First National City Bank of New York, was elected Repertory Theater Board president on January 21, 1971. He defended the members as "very dedicated," and, while conceding that the membership should have been larger, stated it was difficult to find people willing to serve. On the other hand, he felt that criticism of Lincoln Center for not exerting itself in the theater's behalf was unwarranted. "Adequate funding for the theater is not the responsibility of Lincoln Center. They got the place built, provide the central services, and are very active in the educational programs. The Repertory Theater is an independent constituent of Lincoln Center and responsible for its own fate."[37] As much as he genuinely regretted the sacrifices exacted by the financial squeeze, he saw the cutbacks in banker's terms. "My own view is that Jules has done an extraordinary job under the economic restrictions . . . Anybody who can hold an operating deficit [at the same level] for five years with [rising costs and] inflation--it's unbelievable. . . ."[38]

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[36]Letter to the author, September 18, 1974.

[37]Private interview, New York City, November 21, 1972.

[38]Ibid.

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> As the chief executive I have to be a realist. I don't want the theater to go broke. It's a major company, and it must be able to continue. No one expects it to break even, but you have to pay your bills. . . . Those who criticize and say we got away from the original concept of a permanent company and rotating repertory, why, it begs the question. There's been barely enough to keep it going much less pay for a full company and rotating repertory. It's not practical to take an artistic viewpoint, and then say that others can worry about the funding.[39]

Economic considerations directly affected play choice. The ideal play was a classic utilizing a single set and a small cast; with such a play there were no playwright's royalties to be paid, and the degree of risk at the box office was reduced.

Coggeshall also maintained, "Our 'elaborate productions' are an artistic illusion."[40] This is borne out by a comparison of the necessary capitalization for a straight drama on Broadway with Repertory Theater productions. The Broadway average was $150,000 to $175,000,[41] while the Repertory Theater's average was $121,000 despite the latter's production requirements of period costumes and larger casts.[42] Irving shortened the season from thirty-four weeks to thirty-two, and the design staff mounted productions on minimal budgets. Douglas Schmidt commented, "Jules could have produced an entire season for what Joe

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[39]Ibid.

[40]Ibid.

[41]New York Times, October 29, 1970, p. 1.

[42]The average production costs per season are: $124,000 (1966-67), $128,000 (1967-68), $111,000 (1968-69), $147,000 (1969-70), $97,000 (1970-71).

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Papp spent on In the Boom Boom Room. Jules is a lot of things, and I love him, but what he is best is a penny-pincher. . . ."[43]

As an example Schmidt cited Narrow Road to the Deep North, which Walter Kerr used as a prime instance of Irving's irresponsible handling of money.[44] "He described a procession of twenty-five people and said the costumes for it couldn't have cost less than $500 a piece. The next day, Carrie Robbins, who had designed those costumes, came to the theater dumbfounded, because those extravagant costumes which Jules had been damned for had cost about $7.50 each. They were karate pajamas with plastic halloween masks painted silver."[45] Schmidt later reflected, "Perhaps we were partially responsible for some of the bad press that the theater got because we had productions that looked like a million bucks, and, believe me, it didn't cost that."[46]

John Gleason, when asked about his lighting budget, replied, "What budget? I only had one for rare shows with very complicated lighting."[47] There were three of these in the 1969-70 season. The theater owned most of its own instruments and theoretically only needed funds for lighting

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[43]Private interview, June 26, 1974.

[44]New York Times, January 16, 1972, Section 2, p. 3.

[45]Private interview, June 26, 1974.

[46]Ibid.

[47]Private interview, June 24, 1974.

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to replace lamps and color medium, but these three plays required special lighting effects and Gleason was given a budget of $1,000 for Camino, $2,000 for Sidewinder, and $1,500 for Beggar on Horseback. As he pointed out, however, "those amounts don't go very far when you are purchasing equipment."[48]

During this period, the theater averaged 84.6 percent of capacity and 80 percent of dollar capacity, the latter figure reflecting the reduced price ticket programs available to students.[49] Subscriptions had stabilized at approximately 30,000 per season. Peter Zeisler commented, "That is a very high average capacity. Any theater playing with 84 percent of capacity has proven its validity and justified its existence by achieving that level of acceptance in the community."[50]

Of course, Irving and the Repertory Theater were not alone in their financial struggles and need for active board support. Although Gordon Davidson, artistic director of the Mark Taper in Los Angeles, feels his board is a good one, intelligent and cooperative, money remains the fundamental problem.

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[48]Ibid.

[49]Average capacity by season: 1966-67 78% (75% dollar capacity); 1967-68 92% (90%); 1968-69 89% (86%); 1969-70 82% (76%); 1970-71 82% (75%).

[50]Private interview, November 28, 1972.

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> I have spent more time talking about money in the institutional theater than I ever did in the commercial theater. If I could devote half that energy to creating a new work, or just thinking one original thought, it would be worth all the dollars in the world. But it is survival, and that is the goddamned problem. If you took all the major deficit of ACT and APA and the Mark Taper and the Vivian Beaumont and the Guthrie, and added them all together, what would it be--seven and a half million, maybe? That is nothing. But it is a lot if you have to go out and raise it yourself. Now if that [situation] could be relieved for five years . . . something better might begin to happen.[51]

One regional theater stratagem to attract funding was to increase its commitment to community service.[52] At the Repertory Theater this took the form of an active high school touring program and the innovative student rush program, which allowed students to purchase unsold seats for less than the price of a movie ticket. However, the board's failure in attracting substantial amounts from the local community had an adverse effect on foundation and governmental support. Irving stated, "Funds are not raised by massive community drives but by a handful of dynamic fund-raisers, and I never had those on my board. As a result, I feel we did not fare as well in either foundation or National Endowment support as we might have. Other regional theaters were more successful in attracting funds from their communities, and the inevitable comparison hurt us."[53]

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[51]Bernard Barrow, "Davidson of Los Angeles," Theatre Today, II, 3, p. 16.

[52]Zeigler, p. 172.

[53]Private interview, October 30, 1974.

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Some, including Walter Kerr, suggested that the theater's difficulty in obtaining funds was a result of the theater's own inability to create excitement. In a television interview, Irving replied that excitement had been created by such productions as The Little Foxes and In the Matter of J. Robert Oppenheimer, but that even in those periods the proper funding had not been available.[54] The 1968 funding effectiveness report to the board had stressed the need for strong leadership on the board's part.

> In thirty-five years of observing [fund raising] I've seen strong leadership carry to success a number [of weak causes.] I've also seen strong [causes] falter and fail for lack of strong leadership [from its board]. The justification for a Repertory Theater at Lincoln Center is totally based on the degree of critical and artistic acclaim it can muster on the basis of performance. . . . [Because the impact of success or failure is immediate for such an organization,] this given condition imposes a graver responsibility . . . and carries a heavier obligation [for the volunteer leadership] to generate financial support when things are going badly than when things are going well.[55]

The report concluded that the theater's efforts could be strengthened by augmenting the development office and recruiting new board members. Robert Hoguet commented indirectly on these recruitment efforts when asked about the possibility of an operating endowment for the theater: "I haven't been able to find enough wealthy individuals to keep the theater going, let alone endow it."[56]

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[54]WNBC, July 22, 1973.

[55]Edgar M. Gemmel letter, August 29, 1968.

[56]Private interview, November 24, 1972.

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Those who had advocated a large operating endowment to avoid just this situation were vindicated. Coggeshall noted, "When Lincoln Center was conceived in what I call the 'golden Eisenhower years,' people clearly didn't give sufficient thought to what funding would be necessary to operate this plant. The money all went into bricks and mortar; nothing went into endowment."[57] Hoguet added, "Had they foreseen the expenses and the difficulties, it would have been apparent that the only way to make the theater go was with an endowment."[58] As one writer observed,

> If the bulk of funds raised prior to the theatre's inception were for endowment rather than a building and the board's function were to make it grow, their contribution would be far more significant. Coincidentally, they would derive more pleasure from their Board position because they would be fulfilling their function in a way that is in keeping with American values, i.e., making capital grow rather than asking for "annual charity."[59]

In such a situation, it is hardly surprising that Irving was acutely aware of the relationship between critical acceptance and the theater's prospects for survival. "I pay attention to reviews. You have to here. [In the 1970-71] season attendance was up, and we got the best set of notices we ever had. . . . I had known it would take a long time to assemble a company and get communal critical

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[57]Private interview, November 21, 1972.

[58]Private interview, November 24, 1972.

[59]Harlan Kleiman, "Is There an Audience in the House?," Theatre 1, p. 25.

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approval; when it finally came it gave us all a good feeling."[60] The theater's audience survey in 1971 reflected the impact of reviews on the theater: 85.6 percent of the audience read the New York Times reviews and 12.4 percent read those in the New York Post.[61] Among those purchasing single tickets for a production rather than subscribing for the season, 37.5 percent had come to the theater based on the production's reviews and 26 percent based on a friend's recommendation.

For Martin Gottfried, however, the season was a continuation of listless work. "Once again, the plays were chosen for the familiarity of their titles (Playboy of the Western World, An Enemy of the People, and so on). Once again, they were produced with a vague, uninspired professionalism. Once again, Mr. Irving got through a season as if the only point was to get through it without antagonizing anybody."[62]

The 1970-71 season was one in which Irving could least afford antagonisms. The Lincoln Center Board and the Repertory Theater Board had long been concerned about the company's precarious financial status; according to the minutes of a theater board meeting held on May 4, 1971,

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[60]Kupferberg, Theatre 4, p. 132.

[61]Other reviews read by the audience: New York 22.2%; Time 19%; The New Yorker 18.1%; Cue 18.1%; Saturday Review 10.5%; Newsweek 9%. Those who did not read reviews: 7.7%

[62]Theatre 4, p. 19.

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Lincoln Center had tried unsuccessfully to sell the theater building to the City of New York in 1968. Irving noted at that meeting that "it has consistently been Lincoln Center's objective to sell the building to the City, and [I] did not think anything could have stopped it from happening when the opportunity arose. The choice for us was to function well artistically or go out of business."[63]

The relationship of Lincoln Center and the Repertory Theater was complex. Lincoln Center had created the theater organization, recruited its original board members, participated in the selection of its artistic leadership, and provided its physical plant. In so doing, Lincoln Center felt that it had discharged its obligation to the Repertory Theater, which was to be an independent constituent of the center and not a favored, subsidized child. Others felt, however, that independence within the center actually reduced the theater's status to that of neglected orphan, and put it at a competitive disadvantage with its older, established, and respected neighbors in attracting funds. While members of the Repertory board would defend the Lincoln Center position, Arthur Miller was most critical of the center's less than benign neglect.

> I think it is time the Lincoln Center Board is called to account. . . . What is their policy? Surely they have a defense; what is it? They must no longer be allowed to fob off their failure on the artists working for them. . . .

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[63]Minutes of the Repertory Theater Board, May 4, 1971, p. 5.

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> Remarkably enough, in this age of anti-establishment feeling, this is one establishment that has never been attacked, and they are at the root of the entire Lincoln Center disaster. Look at them up there, you've got the heads of some of the biggest banks and other institutions in this country--nobody takes a critical shot at them. The critics will beat up the actors, the author, the director, that's easy. But it never occurs to any critic to go after those board fellows. . . .[64]

Miller felt that the Lincoln Center Board wanted a repertory theater in theory but was unwilling or unable to provide the practical financial support for a company that could create such a theater. Instead, a name was retained while the principle was lost in a maze of stringent economies. "The only explanation I've ever come up with that made any sense was that [the Lincoln Center Board] sees credit to themselves in building monuments but not in paying actors."[65] The operation of Lincoln Center was rightly a matter of public concern, according to Miller, because the center is not a private cultural preserve. Public funds had been used, "and it's New York City's land, our property, that they're sitting on. It doesn't belong to them."[66]

Robert Hoguet defended the center's position, stating, "Lincoln Center is really a real estate enterprise with a bunch of buildings."[67] However, it appears that the degree of independence is related directly to constituent

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[64]"Arthur Miller vs. Lincoln Center," New York Times, April 16, 1972, Section 2, p. 5.

[65]Ibid. [66]Ibid.

[67]Private interview, November 24, 1972.

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prestige. Herman Krawitz suggested that the theater may have had less independence within the complex because it asked for special consideration from the Center. Others, however, including Joseph Papp, felt that Lincoln Center's responsibility in the creation of the theater necessarily entailed such special consideration. "In fact, this baby must be coddled and given ample room to grow, which means that the overall Lincoln Center Board, headed by Amyas Ames, must make special efforts to fund its under-developed child. It is the responsibility of this board to guarantee a major part of its sustenance."[68]

This funding responsibility was denied consistently by Ames and the Lincoln Center Board, while the theater labored under the burdens of high operating costs which prevented its development. In view of this dilemma, it is not surprising that real estate considerations and physical renovation were central to the solution proposed for the company.

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[68]Joseph Papp, Statement, Meeting of the Finance Committee of the City Council, October 7, 1971, p. 3.

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III

The City Center plan, as it was called, was announced by Amyas Ames and Richard M. Clurman, chairman of City Center, on January 18, 1971. City Center would assume responsibility for the Vivian Beaumont building, which would be converted to a multipurpose facility, housing the Repertory Theater company and the American branch of the Cinematheque Francais. The renovation would create three movie theaters, a screening room, cutting rooms, a cinema museum, and storage space on the lower level of the building, including the area occupied by the company's small experimental theater, the Forum.[69] A new experimental theater would be built in the Beaumont's backstage area which was originally planned as live storage space for rotating repertory productions.

The theater company would have the use of both theaters on a rental basis for a twenty-eight week season, and City Center would arrange outside bookings for the spaces during the period in which the company was not in production. The theater's disadvantageous bargaining position in this arrangement is revealed by the other alternatives which Amyas Ames and the Lincoln Center Board had considered as solutions to this economic difficulty.

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[69]"Tale of Two Centers," Newsweek, February 1, 1971, p. 45.

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> [Ames] found [when he became the chairman of the Lincoln Center Board] that the operating deficit of the Repertory Theater was about $750,000 a year, of which $250,000 was attributable to a high operating overhead. He saw no way to recover that overhead with the building as it stands. . . . [and that the company] could not survive in the building. . . . Among the ideas explored was one to convert . . . an empty space [behind the stage] 80 feet wide, 70 feet deep and 101 feet high into six stories of rentable offices. This proved impractical . . . [For] a time Mr. Ames and his associates considered abandoning repertory theater and turning the 1,100 seat main auditorium into a movie house.[70]

The idea of a multi-purpose facility in conjunction with City Center first occurred to Robert Hoguet, who stated, "City Center seemed to have a lot of momentum, and I thought we should see if we could work something out. Independently, Jules and I came to feel that this might be a way out of our troubles."[71] Irving's idea was that the space twenty-two feet from the back wall of the stage could be converted for the City Center's film program, leaving the main stage turntable unobstructed and using the space above the stage for the cinematheque.[72] It seemed probably then that if Irving encouraged multiple use of the theater building that he might be able to negotiate on a quid pro quo basis with Lincoln Center. One indication of this is that the staff began making definite proposals at that time for improving the main stage theater.[73]

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[70]"City Center to Remodel the Beaumont," New York Times, January 19, 1971, pp. 1, 28.

[71]Private interview, November 24, 1972.

[72]Private interview, December 6, 1972.

[73]Douglas Schmidt, private interview, June 26, 1974.

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However, as Martin Gottfried notes, Irving's suggestion "that the unused backstage space at the Beaumont be offered for three City Center cinematheques in exchange for about one-half of the theater's rent . . . made use of the building negotiable. Ames promptly began discussions with Norman Singer, the City Center executive director, and Richard Clurman, its board chairman, and when they were through, Ames had lost Irving's shirt."[74] Irving's proposal that City Center utilize the unoccupied backstage space within the building had been rejected, and City Center would support only a plan which involved extensive renovation of the building's lower level and the relocation of the Forum behind the main stage. "For Ames and his board, the outcome was ideal. . . . The real-estate interests so dear to their hearts would be protected. In short, it would be more or less the same arrangement that held [at] the New York State Theater . . ."[75]

According to Clurman, City Center was invited by the Executive Committee of the Lincoln Center Board to examine the possibility of operating the Beaumont building, but in City Center's judgment no arts institution could operate the building successfully. "Although it is an architectural beauty, inside it is an economic monstrosity."[76]

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[74]"Breaking up the Beaumont," New York Times, September 5, 1971, Section 2, p. 1.

[75]Ibid., p. 4.

[76]Private interview, December 5, 1972.

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The only way to make the building economically viable was to utilize the space behind the stage and change the building's economy by having more activity within it.

Clurman felt,

> Even if the Repertory Theater were the most radiant theatrical company in the world, it would have been unsupportable in that building which was built in a period of affluence and unplanning. I don't have much sympathy with statements that the money must be found to support that theater as is. It would require subsidy which no one was willing to provide. Maybe the Lincoln Center crowd should put up all the money, but they aren't doing so. The only people willing to go in to that building were at City Center. So the situation wasn't complicated.[77]

The plan was endorsed by the Executive Committee, and a meeting of representatives of the Lincoln Center constituents was held in the Beaumont lobby at which Clurman described the concept and emphasized two points. The City Center price scale would be enforced throughout the building, and drama and film could co-exist in a complementary fashion within this building.[78]

Within the Repertory Theater itself, concern about the plan centered on four issues: 1) "City Center's insistence that its price scale be observed by any company performing in a building operated by it, 2) whether a new Forum Theater can actually be created in the space available . . . ,3) how we can protect ourselves against sharing in the inevitable increased costs that will occur from greater activity within the building, and, 4) how we can

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[77]Ibid. [78]Ibid.

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retain the right to negotiate our own labor contracts in a building operated by City Center."[79] The theater's bargaining position was weakened by its deficit from the previous season of $252,000 and its economic dependence on Lincoln Center, which guaranteed the company's bank loan of $200,000 and to which the company owed $200,000 for services.[80]

The ticket-price scale was, in the board's view, linked closely with the idea of artistic and economic autonomy for the company. The theater was not opposed to the idea of less expensive tickets in principle; rather, it regarded the imposition of a top ticket price as an initial encroachment on the company's independence. There were financial considerations as well. According to Irving, City Center had more seats to sell at its top price of $7.95 than the Beaumont did. The current average ticket price at the theater was $5.50, a figure which would necessarily drop if the top price of $9.90 was reduced. The theater was offered a subsidy of $140,000 against its loss in ticket revenue, but there was no guarantee as to how long that subsidy would last.[81] City Center did not feel that this issue was negotiable, however, because this top ticket price inhered in its agreements with any organization that used its facilities.

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[79]Minutes of the Repertory Theater Board, March 1, 1971, pp. 6-7.

[80]Ibid., p. 6.

[81]Irving, private interview, December 6, 1972.

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Irving recognized that a lower ticket price might be advantageous, both as a popular gesture and as an additional justification for increased foundation and governmental support. However, the level of support needed could be increased considerably if the theater accepted the price scale and did not substantially reduce the company's operating costs. This reduction, the desire "to get the building off the company's back," had been the primary reason for initiating the multi-purpose proposal. If the reduction was not forthcoming, the company would have given up the present Forum Theater, which was well-suited to its purposes, for another experimental theater whose effectiveness could not be guaranteed, and gained nothing toward improving its financial situation. According to Irving, the theater wished to pay 60 percent of the building's maintenance costs instead of 100 percent. However, the increased activity within the building would undoubtably raise those costs to a new, undetermined figure. "Neither Lincoln Center nor City Center would place a ceiling on our costs, and neither would guarantee that these costs would indeed go down."[82] Clurman maintained, on the other hand, "There was a contracted price to the Repertory Theater in the lease. We were on the line for it with no guarantee that we wouldn't go broke trying to program the place. Their rent was

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[82]Irving, private interview, December 6, 1972.

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either one-half or one-third of what they are paying now."[83] However, the only figure that seems to have been mentioned is an estimated $228,000 savings to the theater, which appears in a memorandum from Amyas Ames to the Repertory Board dated September 15, 1971.

In addition, the minutes of the Repertory Board meetings indicate some hesitancy in casting their lot with City Center. "In particular, all the Directors felt that our lease and any contracts must be with Lincoln Center, not City Center. On the other hand, we must recognize our financial obligations to cover our operating deficits."[84] At that time, the Board's efforts toward deficit coverage had brought in $475,000 in monies already received, $69,000 in pledges, and $47,000 in anticipated funds. $400,000 remained to be raised privately for a total of $991,000. The actual amount raised that season was $608,000; fortunately Irving had managed to keep the deficit actually incurred to $513,000.[85]

Both Irving and the Board felt that the funding efforts fell short of their goal because the company was adversely affected by the publicity for the City Center plan which emphasized the theater's financial difficulties

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[83]Clurman, private interview, December 5, 1972.

[84]Minutes of the Repertory Theater Board, March 1, 1971.

[85]Ibid.

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and which was occasionally misinterpreted as the assumption of the theater's deficit by City Center. Clarke Coggeshall said at a meeting of the Lincoln Center Board that there was great concern about the

> . . . continued emphasis in the press on statements made by City Center and Lincoln Center to the effect that this plan is the only means of survival of the Repertory Theater. [It has given the impression] that the Repertory Theater could not go on this season without this plan. This impression is damaging both to our subscription drive now in progress and our fund raising efforts. . . . The multi-purpose plan is important to us because it would lift a substantial financial burden from the Repertory Theater in future years and enable it to put a greater proportion of its operating revenue and contributions into its artistic work . . . rather than into real estate. . . . Therefore, we continue to take a fully positive view of the concept of the plan, but only if it can be satisfactorily executed architecturally with regard to the theater facilities.[86]

Clurman's position, however, was that, in order to obtain the necessary funds for the renovation from the City, "City Center needed to demonstrate that the City should put up six million dollars. We were saying, in truth, that the Repertory Theater couldn't support itself. I couldn't say we needed six million dollars and that the Repertory Theater was financially sound. There had to be a reason [for the appropriation], and the reason was that the building couldn't be operated [as it had been]."[87]

Members of the board were demoralized, however, by the regular reports of their ineffectiveness in supporting

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[86]Statement, Lincoln Center Board Meeting, September 30, 1971.

[87]Private interview, December 5, 1972.

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the theater and the apparent abandonment of the theater by Lincoln Center. There were four or five members who were quite generous in their support of the theater, but there was also strong sentiment that, in accepting the original Beaumont gift to create a repertory theater, Lincoln Center had assumed a responsibility to have such a theater in the building, "whether it loses money or not."[88]

During the spring of 1971, the attempt to reach some agreement between the Repertory Theater and City Center went on without arousing much attention. The initial response to the plans in the press had been favorable,[89] and the internal struggles were kept within the Lincoln Center organization, probably because the theater's position in this struggle was so unfavorable that neither Irving nor his board saw any remedy in exposing the strong-arm tactics of Amyas Ames and the Lincoln Center Board to enforce the theater's compliance with the plan.

Lincoln Center formed a special committee to resolve the differences between the two organizations, and while the theater accepted the committee's proposals, City Center rejected them as unworkable. Following this, Hoguet, Coggeshall, and Irving met with Clurman. The principal

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[88]Minutes of the Repertory Theater Board, March 1, 1971, p. 8.

[89]Two examples are: John Beaufort, "Arts Center Rescue?," Christian Science Monitor, January 22, 1971 [clipping file]; "Tale of Two Centers," Newsweek, February 1, 1971, p. 45.

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issues continued to be the ticket price scale and the theater's insistence on a commitment from City Center that the Forum Theater would be duplicated unless City Center presented another design which the theater considered superior. Clurman took the position that "City Center would have an obligation to help make up the loss of revenue [suffered from this limitation on price] . . . through some sort of further reduction below cost in . . . rental. He also confirmed that the existing Forum Theater must be replaced, with a theater of a different design."[90] With these issues still unresolved, "Mr. Clurman informed Lincoln Center that further negotiations would be fruitless, and that City Center was withdrawing its proposal to convert the Beaumont unless Lincoln Center decided within a short time that it would accept the proposal on City Center's terms."[91] Ames and the members of the special committee then informed Hoguet and Coggeshall that Lincoln Center "had no choice but to recommend to the Executive Committee of Lincoln Center that the City Center proposal be accepted because of the present uneconomical basis of the Beaumont, even if the Repertory Theater should decide it would have to cease operations at the end of this season."[92]

Hoguet later commented, "I think I understand why everyone acted as they did. Lincoln Center had pumped money

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[90]Minutes of the Repertory Theater Board, May 4, 1971, pp. 1-2.

[91]Ibid.

[92]Ibid., p. 2.

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into the theater and didn't want to pump in more. They saw the City Center plan as a way out, and Ames was using strong-arm tactics to get it through."[93] At this point, Hoguet, Coggeshall, and Irving "concluded that the Repertory Theater would clearly lose in this vote, in view of Lincoln Center's overriding concern with the economic aspects rather than the issue of constituent independence." The choice was clear: accept the plan or go out of business at the end of the 1970-71 season.[94]

The financial aspects of the plan were these: Lincoln Center would take over the responsibility for the theater's twenty dark weeks with an estimated annual savings to the theater of $86,000. The saving on overhead costs was estimated to be $142,000 after the building was converted, and the theater would receive a below cost rent as subsidy for lost ticket income from the price scale limitation. Lincoln Center forgave the theater's $200,000 central services debt, which eliminated its carry-over deficit. Lincoln Center would no longer guarantee the theater's $200,000 bank loan, but would instead guarantee the use of unearned subscription funds up to that figure, which in effect gave the theater an interest free credit line, or a savings of $15,000 per year in interest costs. Lincoln

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[93]Private interview, June 21, 1974.

[94]Minutes of the Repertory Theater Board, May 4, 1971, p. 2.

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Center also agreed to reallocate certain central services costs at a savings of $22,000 to $26,000 per year.[95]

Although the plan contained disappointments, Irving was encouraged by its possibilities.

> I'm delighted the building is off my back. I don't care who my landlord is at this point . . . Lincoln Center [or City Center], if Norman Singer and City Center are foolish enough at this point to take over management of the building. But, as Norman said, I am hoping that [this arrangement] is enough of a partnership where we can help them make the building work. . . .
>
> I tried desperately to book the Beaumont Theater. Commercial producers loved the idea of being [there], and I welcome them during the period we are not producing, but the minute they looked at the figures they said "Thank you very much" and walked away. . . . Therefore, for six and a half years, except for the summer when I had an audience for the Oppenheimer play, I have not been able to maintain the theater during the summer. Yet I have been saddled with paying all the bills for fifty-two weeks of the year. I think there's a tremendous incongruity that the performing arts institution must also be a real estate operation.[96]

The prime disappointment, of course, was the loss of the Forum, but Irving felt "we must go on faith that a new Forum will be as good as or better than the one Forum." Irving's contract as artistic director was due to expire in a year, but was extended for three additional years to June 1975 in recognition of his artistic work that season and as a vote of confidence in the implementation of the City Center plan.[97]

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[95]Ibid., pp. 3-4.

[96]Irving, Drama Desk meeting, September 17, 1971.

[97]Minutes of The Repertory Theater Board, May 4, 1971. 1971, pp. 5, 8.

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IV

Six months after the plan had been announced, and two months after the Repertory Theater capitulated, there were stirrings of public protest which focused on the plan's effect on the Forum. In the New York Times alone, there were letters from Joseph Papp (July 25), Jo Mielziner (August 29), responses from Ames (August 15) and Clurman (August 15, September 26), and articles by Martin Gottfried (September 5) and Walter Kerr (September 12). These debated the merits of the plan, offered alternatives, and raised other issues, including the artistic achievements or lack thereof of the Repertory Theater, the merits of rotating repertory now or as a future possibility, and the compatibility of the arts of film and theater in the same facility. Kerr suggested that the Forum should be moved intact and that the addition of a film program could have positive results.[98] Gottfried attacked Lincoln Center's high-handed treatment of the Repertory Theater despite its artistic inadequacies and proposed that City Center assume responsibility for the building while maintaining it as a facility for theater only.[99] Mielziner opposed the mutilation of the main stage, stating that there was not enough space to

[98]"Who's At Fault: Films or the Beaumont?," September 12, 1971, Section 2, p. 1.

[99]"Breaking Up the Beaumont," September 5, 1971, Section 2, p. 1.

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rebuild the Forum in the area designed for live storage and that any reduction of this area would destroy the potential of rotating repertory in the building.[100]

In the meantime, Clurman had called on all the members of the City Council and the Board of Estimate, and on September 2, 1971, the Board of Estimate approved by a vote of twenty to two the purchase of the building by the city for one dollar and the appropriation of $5.2 million to remodel it.[101] The only opponent at the meeting was Jo Mielziner, who later raised the issue with Henry Hewes, theater critic for Saturday Review and president of the Drama Desk, an association of theater editors, reporters, and critics. Hewes agreed to devote the next Drama Desk meeting on September 17 to the City Center plan and invited Ames, Clurman, Norman Singer, Coggeshall, Hoguet, and Irving to attend. All but Ames accepted the invitation; however, only Norman Singer and Jules Irving appeared.

Mielziner's opposition was based on the loss of the backstage storage area, the impossibility of placing the Forum in that area without blocking the main stage turntable, and the probability that the fortuitous aspects of the small theater would prove difficult to recreate should adequate space be available. Clive Barnes supported Mielziner's position on rotating repertory, later stating,

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[100]August 29, 1971, Section 2, p. 10.

[101]Clurman, private interview, December 5, 1972; New York Times, September 3, 1971, p. 13.

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> This theater building as it stands, with nothing added and nothing taken away, represents New York's hope for a great and noble institutional theater. . . . There is not--throughout the entire world--a great, a truly great theater company that does not have a revolving, nightly repertory. . . . We are unlikely to have a building such as the Vivian Beaumont again--don't destroy its possibilities, or pervert its original fine intent.[102]

However, the loss of this potential for repertory did not generate much opposition, and Walter Kerr questioned whether it would be a loss at all. "We are, in fact, in serious doubt whether--in New York at this moment in time--we want repertory of any kind."[103]

Richard Clurman pointed out that the theater had never been used for full rotating repertory, "and even with . . . all of the things we wanted to put in that space, it would still have had more storage space than any theater around. It is an enormous luxury to have a warehouse on Lincoln Center terrain designed by Eero Saarinen, and if anyone would support it, I was all for it. But no one would. We don't have storage in the State Theater; we use a warehouse in New Jersey and truck our productions in."[104] Even the Repertory Theater's audience did not want a rotating schedule: 64.5 percent of the subscribers and 55 percent of the single ticket buyers preferred productions in sequence

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[102]Statement, Meeting of the Finance Committee of the City Council, October 7, 1971.

[103]New York Times, September 12, 1971, Section 2, p. 12.

[104]Private interview, December 5, 1972.

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rather than in rotation; only the students preferred rotation (48.6 percent to 38.2 percent).[105]

Mielziner's concern for the Forum, however, united an unlikely assortment of journalists, producers, and theater people in vigorous opposition to the City Center plan, opposition which City Center was ill-prepared to refute. Clurman noted,

> I made a mistake about the Forum. We knew we weren't going to desecrate the Forum of which we had a high opinion as a theatrical facility. However, it stood in the middle of all that space we were trying to acquire to change the economy of the building, so we wanted to move it and recreate it. It is undoubtedly true that in recreating it, we might have changed it a little bit. My mistake was that the opposition and uproar about the Forum was so wild, I fell into the liberal fallacy. I knew our intentions were as high-minded as anyone else's, and I didn't take the opposition seriously.[106]

This error resulted partially from Clurman's ignorance about the Repertory Theater's activity in the Forum. "I underestimated the opposition because [the Forum] was almost never used, it had only 299 seats, and we were going to recreate it. It seemed incredible to me that this whole plan could be shot down because we were going to change a light bulb in [that theater]. My mistake. I shouldn't have underestimated that."[107] The opposition saw the proposed recreation of the theater as involving changes much more

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[105]Repertory Theater Audience Survey, January 18, 1972.

[106]Private interview, December 5, 1972.

[107]Ibid.

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considerable than changing a light bulb and questioned if City Center had actually drawn up sufficient plans to assert that the theater could indeed be recreated within the facility.

There also seems to have been some question as to where the recreated theater would be located. August Heckscher, at that time the Commissioner of Arts and Recreation for the City, stated,

> The Forum was to be moved to the northwest corner of the basement, and other things were to be put in the backstage area. . . . I felt that the Forum could have been moved more felicitously than most theaters. To be truthful, when the plan was proposed, the question of the Forum was never terribly important. It was an anonymous theater in the best sense, filled with light and life, which could be recreated elsewhere. The plan was based on a desire to create artistic unity within the building, and the Forum was the only thing that could be moved. It was probably a mistake to underestimate the sentimental attachment of some people to that theater.[108]

Actually, that attachment was most visible in the theatrical community and in the press. Only 70 percent of the Repertory Theater's main stage audience was aware of the activity in the Forum, an awareness that had not increased since an earlier survey in 1968, and only 24 percent of that audience had attended productions in the smaller theater.[109] However, Walter Kerr described it as "an extraordinary happy conjunction of open, ample playing

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[108]Private interview, December 1, 1972.

[109]Repertory Theater Audience Survey, January 18, 1972.

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space and overhanging tiers of seats in which spectators can feel intimately related to the intensely-present actors."[110] Martin Gottfried, while critical of the work done in the theater, which in his view was "vacillating between laboratory work and full-scale productions, some of them with a gingerly toe in the water of the last generation's avant-garde," had high praise for the theater itself. "It is probably the neatest little theater in the country and is wonderfully comfortable for directors, actors, and audiences."[111] Actually, with only two feet of backstage space, it was most comfortable for audiences.

Contrary to Clurman's contention that the theater was seldom used, the company produced at least four plays there each season. However, the theater's potential as an experimental house was hampered by the company's inability to have a rapid turnover of productions or to augment the regular productions with other activities. As John Lahr noted, the institutional framework subverted Irving at Lincoln Center, much as it benefited Joseph Papp downtown at the Public Theater. Papp could and did cancel productions or never open them. Lahr said, "A great deal of what Papp did was horrible--the worst of which was taken off before a public [or the critics] could see it. Jules'

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[110] New York Times, September 12, 1971, Section 2, p. 1.

[111] New York Times, September 5, 1971, Section 2, p. 4.

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taste was no better or worse than Papp's, and the plays Jules presented downstairs were generally as well cast and usually heavier stuff. . . . [However,] unions prevented--or made prohibitive--the workshops, the play readings, the general activity which would have made Lincoln Center healthier."[112] Actors Equity rejected the theater's proposal for Monday night productions in the Forum under the Showcase code, which would have included dramatic readings, works-in-progress by new American authors for invitational audiences, and experimental presentations by professional and community groups[113] Irving did not give up on these projects, but sought to finance some of this work through support from the Rockefeller Foundation and grants from the National Endowment for the Arts.

In 1971, the Repertory Theater summarized its work in the Forum in a grant request to the Rockefeller Foundation. In its program for students, the theater had provided student subscriptions and rush tickets for both mainstage and Forum productions. Ten percent of the seats for each performance in the Forum were distributed free through more than seventy community agencies to provide theater to young people from low socio-economic areas, with a total of 20,820 free admissions over four seasons.

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[112]Letter to author, August 30, 1974.

[113]"Irving and Equity at Odds on Forum," New York Times, October 14, 1968, p. 61.

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However, during the 1970-71 season, the run of each fully staged production had been curtailed to three-and-a-half weeks with the possibility of extension when ticket demand warranted. This measure had improved the economic situation in the Forum somewhat, but much of the saving incurred was offset by the Monday night series and the presentation of invited groups for which the theater was understaffed and inadequately funded, in addition to the difficulties resulting from union militancy about the rate of pay for such events. Despite this, the Repertory Theater proposed to add a "Third Stage" program, presented in the Forum under John Beary, who would serve as coordinator. Four plays with simple unit sets would be given six performances during the two-week dark period between fully staged productions. Rehearsals were limited to three weeks, and casting would be open to the New York theatrical community. The estimated increased costs for this program, eventually named "Explorations," was $9,000. During the second week of the dark period, the theater would present concert readings, lectures, poetry readings, and symposiums. For invited productions and resident groups, the theater would provide rehearsal space and technical, clerical, and promotional assistance. Included in this proposal were the Anna Sokolow Dance-Acting Group, which would have a six month rehearsal period leading to a week of public performances; the Keach-Rosenberg Folk Rock Group, which was developing American stories and myths in new dramatic forms;

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and Lee Breuer's Theater Arts Training and Performance Project, which was aimed at junior high school students from predominantly ghetto areas.[114]

Although substantial support for additional activity was never available, the Repertory Theater managed to maintain several projects. Touring productions for high schools were mounted each season, and members of the company participated in a Theater-in-Residence project at the Commack, New York, public schools in 1968-69. The Forum production of The Birthday Party also toured to seven colleges of the State University of New York in 1970-71. The theater presented a number of staged readings, and two plays, originally presented for the Monday Night series, were given full stage productions during the regular Forum season: John White's Bananas in 1968-69 and Jeff Wanschel's The Disintegration of James Cherry in 1969-70. Invitational performances were presented by the National Theater of the Deaf, the Paper Bag Players, and the Little Theater of the Deaf, which played for a week in the Forum during the 1970-71 season.

The Repertory Theater also presented world premieres of Charles Dizenzo's An Evening With Merlin Finch and A Great Career, which played in rotation with Bananas; Mayo Simon's Walking to Waldheim and Happiness; Ron Cowen's

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[114]The theater received $100,000 from the Rockefeller Foundation for the 1971-72 season, $20,000 of which was allotted for the Sokolow company.

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Summertree; and John Ford Noonan's The Year Boston Won the Pennant. American premieres were given to James Hanley's The Inner Journey, Vaclav Havel's The Increased Difficulty of Concentration, Harold Pinter's Landscape and Silence, Peter Hack's Amphitryon, and Friedrich Duerrenmatt's Play Strindberg. A. R. Gurney, Jr.'s Scenes from American Life received its New York premiere there. New productions of Pinter's The Birthday Party and Paul Shyre's adaptation of O'Casey's Pictures in a Hallway were also presented. All of these had been produced before those opposed to the City Center plan began to protest the destruction of a theater that City Center thought was seldom used.

Martin Gottfried, among others, was critical of the programming for the Forum, which, in his view, reflected uncertainty of purpose or direction.[115] While the smaller theater was the sole place within the Repertory Theater scheme where it was possible to take any sort of risk without threatening absolutely the company's continued existence, the company's costs were so high that the potential success of a venture with subscribers, the general public, and the critics had to be considered. According to John Lahr, "Just to open the doors to the little theater cost about $60,000."[116] The theater's basement location was not enough to generate much tolerance for experimentation that

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[115]See note 111.

[116]Letter to author, August 30, 1974.

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was not wholly successful. Consequently, the Forum was used often as an environment for productions which were not radically experimental but which were better served by the smaller theater's requirements. The main stage virtually required plays with large casts and considerable technical support; the Forum more readily accommodated modern plays with few actors and simplified settings. However, this alone could never be sufficient to create an off-off-Broadway atmosphere within the Lincoln Center complex.

While sharing some of the critical reservations about the work done in the Forum, Lahr wrote,

> When I think back on Lincoln Center, it's the things we did here which I feel were good or promising and where the theater did honorable work. Compared to the other institutional theaters, [the Repertory Theater] did a great deal of high-powered and provocative programming. In some cases, the plays were not done as well as others but generally the caliber was high.
>
> In the years I was there, the small theater was where I could make the greatest contribution. I knew the playwrights, many of the new plays, and I could make connections. Jules had a big play-reading set-up but almost none of the work done came out of this operation.[117]

Lahr's criticisms were that "the diet of plays should have been [more substantial] and more translations should have been done. [As usual, the theater lacked the money] to back Jeremy Brooks and Kitty Hunt Blair for their Gorki translations . . . Jules only commissioned Jon Swan's very good reworking of Kleist's The Broken Jug, which was never

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[117]Ibid.

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performed."[118] This production was cancelled owing to casting difficulties.

Despite the number of new American works done,[119] Lahr felt,

> Established playwrights had an easier time of it than new American ones. Noonan was a real find and it's to [the theater's] credit that they did him; ditto Dizenzo. Where I feel Jules did not live up to his stated intentions was in following up these playwrights and doing further work. Part of the problem was funds and space. But I honestly feel that Jules didn't really understand or trust the new work. And again the mythic Subscriber had always to be considered.[120]
>
> Under the banner of [Jules'] respect for Language, some of the finest contemporary writing was passed over because it might offend Subscribers.[121] The plays which we optioned but never did included Bond's Saved and Robert Coover's The Kid. We could have had Heathcote Williams' AC/DC, Joe Orton's Funeral Games and A Good and Faithful Servant, Allen Ginsberg's Kaddish, Genet's The Screens. Almost all of the projects that in time would win great critical acclaim and bring [other] institutions prestige were offered to [the theater] and either pushed aside or turned down. That includes Peter Handke's Kaspar (our audience couldn't take it!), although The Ride Across Lake Constance was an innovation and a risk for which Jules was punched, but which was well worth doing.[122]

While public debate continued, the City Center plan moved on to the Finance Committee of the City Council.

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[118] Ibid.

[119] The Repertory Theater received the 1972 Margo Jones Award for the "most significant contribution to theater through a continuing policy of producing new plays." It presented more than fifteen new American plays (although not all were fully staged), eight American premieres, and the world premiere of Samuel Beckett's Not I.

[120] Lahr, letter to author, August 30, 1974.

[121] Lahr, Plays and Players, p. 12.

[122] Lahr, letter to author, August 30, 1974.

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Although members questioned "why anyone would want to sell to the city for $1 property currently valued at $20-million . . . the proposal to buy [the Beaumont] was adopted anyway" on September 16, 1971. No one opposing the plan appeared at the meeting, and questions concerning the proposal were answered by Richard Clurman, Norman Singer, and August Heckscher.[123] Such approval was tantamount to passage, according to Clurman, who said that not since La Guardia's day has a recommendation by the Finance Committee been rejected by the City Council.[124] At the Drama Desk meeting on September 17, however, the opposition was provided with arguments against the plan by City Center itself. John Simon summarized the City Center position on the Forum: "1) We will move it intact, 2) We may have to change its design. 3) We don't know exactly what we'll do."[125]

Norman Singer pointed out "that a definite design for a theater cost too much to be drawn up at this stage,"[126] a position that Richard Clurman took also.

> I could not clarify the Forum issue further without the appropriation. We had already invested over $90,000 in the planning, and it was a major investment to go forward with serious working drawings. I would not do that with our money, [while] giving fifteen different

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[123]"Sale of the Beaumont Gains in Council," New York Times, September 17, 1971, p. 39.

[124]Private interview, December 5, 1972.

[125]"Forum Forensics, Part II," New York, October 11, 1971, p. 68.

[126]Drama Desk meeting, September 17, 1971.

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> factions in the city a veto right over how we were going to do it. . . . I offered to collaborate with Mielziner . . . and consult on the best place to put the Forum and what changes, if any, needed to be made. The location was open, although in our first drawing we put it in that backstage area.[127]

Besides the evident absence of a carefully worked out plan that would protect the small theater, Norman Singer's reasons for moving the Forum--"in order to provide adequate space for the film museum, and to develop the theaters around the film museum, we need the amount of space that's on that floor"[128]--did nothing to reassure those at the meeting. Martin Gottfried stated, "There is a new way [for] people [to own] a theater. You don't have to be rich to own [one], you have to be in a position of power; [and] these people are in [that] position."[129] With suitable irony, John Simon noted later that the lack of definite plans had not prevented "the various City bodies, egged on by the oratory of Messrs. Clurman, Singer, and August Heckscher, from approving this nebulous, inchoate scheme."[130]

Irving, who also attended the meeting, stated his continued support for any plan that would get him out of the real estate business. However, he was not convinced

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[127]Private interview, December 5, 1972.

[128]Drama Desk meeting, September 17, 1971.

[129]Ibid.

[130]John Simon, New York, October 11, 1971, p. 68.

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that it was necessary to move the Forum and protested this requirement in what was otherwise "a good, a positive, an imaginative plan to use that building . . . [You] play Russian roulette every time you build a theater, and this is evident [at Lincoln Center in Philharmonic Hall with its acoustical problems]." Irving added that he had not received a satisfactory answer to the Forum question either in the press or from City Center.

> I have been part of these long, complicated, protracted negotiations for eight months, and the positive aspects are based on real estate. . . . If I'm given no other choice but to keep the company alive in this framework, then I must endorse it. But I must protest that somebody must come up with an intelligent answer as to why this marvelous plan can't be accomplished without violating the artistic integrity of the building. . . . [However,] with all due respect to principle, I am committed to only one fact--to keep the theater alive.[131]

Others were not so willing to accept the City Center terms, and the opposition mobilized. The result, Martin Gottfried wrote later, was "a public spirited campaign by uniformed culturists [who,] . . . in a kind of black comedy, . . . saved Lincoln Center's physical theater at the probable expense of its artistic future."[132] The first step was to refuse to see the plan as a fait accompli. The playwright Dore Schary stated, "We can change what has been done if we choose to; if we fight hard enough, if we coordinate our forces, and if we demand to be heard. We

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[131]Drama Desk meeting, September 17, 1971.

[132]Theatre 4, p. 19.

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can go to the City Council, and we can defeat this plan, which is to me absolutely incongruous, ill-planned, and injudicious."[133] At the conclusion of the meeting, an ad hoc Citizen's Committee to Save the Theater at Lincoln Center was formed and headed by Schary, Mielziner, Papp, and Henry Hewes.

They gained time when, at the City Council meeting convened on September 23 to approve the plan, a councilman raised the issue of possible conflict of interest. The over-all City Center plan included the construction of an office skyscraper with a 3,000-seat auditorium on West 55th Street to replace City Center's present auditorium. It was contended that this new construction, requiring the purchase of adjacent property, would enhance the value of Rockefeller-owned land on which a four-story garage holding family cars was situated. The property belonged to John D., Laurance, and David Rockefeller, and the conflict of interested centered on the fact that the plan had been proposed by Lincoln Center, of which John D. Rockefeller was a board member, and City Center, of which Laurance was a board member. Although the charge "has never been proved . . . the City Council referred the matter back to the Finance Committee, giving opponents what one councilman called their '13th-hour' opportunity."[134]

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[133]Drama Desk meeting, September 17, 1971

[134]John Beaufort, Christian Science Monitor, November 3, 1971, magazine section, p. 9. [clipping file]

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By October 7, the date of the next Finance Committee meeting, the opposition had developed substantial support through the efforts of the ad hoc citizens' committee and subsequent Drama Desk meetings. The most interesting suggested alternatives which came out of these sessions were those which sought to provide the Repertory Theater with a substantial long-term subsidy. One put forward by Joseph Papp was that the building be sold to City Center for $5 million which would be used to underwrite the theater for a period of ten years.[135] Some time later, Bernard Relin, a recently elected director of the Repertory Theater Board, announced a "Repertory 500" plan, designed to provide a financial base for the theater, which would seek 500 patrons to contribute $1000 annually.[136]

In the wake of the public controversy, the Repertory board continued to support the plan but with increasing reservations about the City Center commitment to protect the Forum. Clarke Coggeshall stated, at a Lincoln Center Board meeting on September 20,

> The decision of City Center not to prepare detailed plans regarding the Forum Theater and the impact of its proposed move into the backstage area before commencing the public hearings for the capital grant has made the controversy over the whole plan inevitable. The plan has been based on the firm understanding that if it proved absolutely necessary to move the existing . . . Forum Theater, City Center would construct

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[135] New York Times, October 5, 1971, p. 46.

[136] "New Fund Drive for Beaumont Seeking to Enlist 500 Patrons," New York Times, October 23, 1971, p. 42.

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> a new Forum . . . None of us can tell whether this is possible until detailed plans are drawn. . . . The comment made by an official of City Center last Friday that the plans submitted to the City of New York . . . are based on a 200 seat Forum Theater does not reassure either the Repertory Theater or the public about the plans that will finally emanate from City Center.[137]

Robert Hoguet noted later, "Mr. Clurman didn't prove to be a terribly easy person to sit down and talk things out with. [His position on two or three items did not] give us a feeling of confidence that we needed to go ahead with the plan."[138]

At the October 7 meeting, Joseph Papp, Dore Schary, Henry Hewes, and Clive Barnes spoke in opposition to the plan, but it was Jules Irving's statement that caused an uproar. He challenged Amyas Ames and Lincoln Center for refusing to support "the one organization born directly of the Lincoln Center idea and ideal." He challenged Richard Clurman and City Center for their lack of reasons behind the decision to destroy the Forum and for the absence of architectural plans for the new Forum and the conversion of the Beaumont building. Although Mr. Clurman was insisting that the company would go out of business without the plan, Irving maintained it was not the sole hope for the Repertory Theater. He continued,

> We overlook that, simply by adequate financing, the Repertory Theater could keep this magnificent plant

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[137]Statement, Lincoln Center Board Meeting, September 20, 1971.

[138]Private interview, December 5, 1972.

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> operative and [open] fifty-two weeks a year on its own. We've been strangled by constant penny-pinching since our inception, and I and my staff are sick and tired of it. . . .
>
> Lincoln Center's original authorization to City Center to prepare a plan contained the specific words that the plan must not "violate the spirit of the Repertory Theater." I have not spoken out before this because I have been doing my speaking behind closed doors trying to reach a satisfactory plan. . . . [When the Repertory Theater rejected the City Center plan, we were] told by Lincoln Center that the plan would be accepted by Lincoln Center regardless of Repertory Theater's stand. Indeed, we were told point blank to agree to the plan or get out of the Beaumont. . . .
>
> And now there seems to be an overwhelming and gratifying groundswell. There are alternatives. Maybe for once there may now be support for the arts as well as lipservice. . . . Where is--I ask--our civic pride? . . . What a terrifying world we have created that a cultural center supported by the city it serves feels a rationale and a justification in eating the child it gave birth to. . . . There must be a better way to make theater flourish at Lincoln Center. There has to be another way.[139]

The anger occasioned by Irving's statement is indicated by the recollections of August Heckscher and Richard Clurman of that meeting. Heckscher stated,

> The reason I supported very strongly the plan last year for the alteration of the Vivian Beaumont Theater and the joining of the resources of City Center with those of the Repertory Theater is that it was a way of getting city money in to it; unfortunately, it was turned down.[140] ["Withdrawn?"] Withdrawn or turned down, the story is very simple. The Board of the Repertory Theater was in favor of the plan, and as long as they [supported it] the city was ready to go ahead with it. But when the Board allowed Jules Irving to oppose the plan, and they

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[139]Statement, Meeting of the Finance Committee of the City Council, October 7, 1971.

[140]The city money would have come from capital funds, restricted to construction, building purchase, and real estate. Little is available from the expense funds, "where each dollar given to the arts must be balanced against the dollar needed for essential services such as police protection." (August Heckscher)

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did allow it because I had the chairman of the board [Robert Hoguet] sitting at my left hand during that hearing. I said to Hoguet, "Do you support or do you not support this plan?" He absolutely refused to say, absolutely buttoned up his lip and refused to say. [Then,] obviously with the Board's permission, Jules Irving got up and made this very vitriolic speech accusing people of being liars and all the rest. If the Board had stood fast and backed the plan as they did in the beginning, it would never have been withdrawn or defeated.[141]

Clurman recalled,

An extraordinary thing happened [at the hearing]. Without telling me or anyone at Lincoln Center or City Center, Jules stood up . . . and said, "Dick Clurman is a liar; Amyas Ames is a liar; we are solvent, we are not going bankrupt. . . . The whole thing is a lying plan on the part of Lincoln Center and City Center to stamp us out." When he said that, to the total bewilderment of the City Council Finance Committee, I stood up and said, "Gentlemen, if they don't need it, I would be inclined to withdraw the plan."[142]

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[141]August Heckscher, private interview, December 1, 1972.

[142]Richard Clurman, private interview, December 5, 1972. The portion of Irving's statement that seems to have been the source for these remarks is as follows: "For several months now, I have been witness--along with everyone else in this room--to a big lie, a deplorable lie, but above all a tragically ironic lie. I must today--in this final moment of truth--speak out in an attempt to, at last, clarify this lie for everyone. I was forced to believe in it for a while but today I hope I speak for all of us." [opening of statement] Two pages later, on page three, Irving cites Ames for supporting a "real estate deal which serves to benefit Lincoln Center, Inc. and City Center." His statement continues, "I cite Richard Clurman, Chairman of City Center. . . . It is highly understandable that City Center would want to get another foot into the desirable Lincoln Center door. However, let us all not forget that City Center's own drama contingent was killed off years ago. But Mr. Clurman has been telling the press and anyone else who will listen that City Center is the savior of the Repertory Theater company--and that it will go out of business without the so-called "take-over." And this is the lie. The Repertory Theater is--and has been, through 40

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Actually, there was another issue raised at the hearing which Mr. Clurman did not mention. In exchange for $5.2 million in city funds for the Beaumont conversion, City Center,

> . . . as part of its obligation, . . . would undertake to attract a private developer [for the office skyscraper to be built on its West 55th St. site.] . . . Tax revenues on the skyscraper would be counted on to repay the $5.2 million. . . . [However, at the October 7 meeting] Mr. Clurman was asked by the City Council finance committee to make good his pledge to identify the West 55th Street developer. He declined. A taut silence ensued, after which committee chairman Mario Merola adjourned the four-hour, sometimes noisy session. He gave opponents 60 days to come up with a status report on an alternative plan.[143]

On December 2, 1971, City Center formally withdrew the plan. Clurman noted, in his request that the City Council remove the plan from his legislative calendar, that as a result of the "public attention . . . focused on the Beaumont . . . the Repertory Theater said it had generated new financial support and thus did not require or want City Center's plan."[144] Much was expected of the "Repertory 500" plan, but the number of patrons attracted to the theater fell far short of the goal. Irving recalled, "I hoped as a result of the Forum controversy that my board would become

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productions--alive and well." He goes on to cite the activity of the current season and to plead for adequate support for the company. The statement is five and a half pages long, but the portion that was remembered is approximately three-quarters of a page.

[143]John Beaufort, Christian Science Monitor, November 3, 1971, magazine section, p. 9. [clipping file]

[144]"City Center Formally Withdraws its Beaumont Plan," New York Times, December 3, 1971, p. 32.

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more active or, at a minimum, would be expanded to include more people. A lot of people would have liked to help us then, but Bernie Relin [who proposed the "Repertory 500" plan] said he'd do it all and then he didn't."[145] Coggeshall said that while the controversy made the Forum probably the most talked-about theater in New York, "it did not translate into any major new sources of funds, which was very disappointing. [At the end of the 1971-72] season we were not able to cover our operating deficit, which meant we began the next season with a money problem."[146]

Zeigler observed, "Even in triumph over the City Center take-over attempt, the economic crisis continued unsolved; the victory was Pyrrhic. . . . Herbert Blau sympathetically suggested that the Repertory Theater, in the midst of opulence, was still 'up against the marble wall.'"[147] Thus, while the physical plant was preserved intact, the defeat of the City Center plan also laid the foundation for the demise of the company. Richard Clurman stated,

> If the plan had passed, we would have had to deal with the issues of the Forum and of film in a theater building. . . . You'll notice that during this entire conversation, I never mentioned what I thought of the Repertory Theater company, of its artistic quality, or of Jules' ability as artistic director. Everyone

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[145]Private interview, October 30, 1974.

[146]Private interview, November 21, 1972.

[147]Zeigler, p. 167.

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> wanted us to make it an issue, but it was never an issue with us. If the Repertory Theater could survive, fine; we had other things we wanted to do with the theater [building], but it did not involve pushing the Repertory Theater company out.
>
> Despite the fact that half the city wanted us to push Jules out and was both wanting us to and deploring the fact, we had no intention of doing that. . . . Norman Singer and I went to Jules and said, "City Center is an atmosphere for creative people, which you know, and you must know that in terms of non-interference you are better off with us than with all the other people who are offering to help you but who won't.[148]

The defeat of plan put severe strains on the theater's relationship with Lincoln Center. Herman Krawitz felt, "After the poor handling of the City Center controversy, it was only a matter of time as a result of the bitterness caused by allegations made then. You can dissipate support, and when support withers away, the jig is up."[149] Robert Hoguet agreed that Jules' remarks before the Finance Committee had hurt him at Lincoln Center even though Irving had been clearly "fighting for his life."[150] And Irving himself suggested, "Many people believe I was punished as a result of the stand I took before the City Council."[151] It was suggested by Hoguet that the defeat might have been a financial blessing ultimately, because City Center was soon faced with deficit coverage problems of its own,[152] but retrospective evaluations of the defeated plan soon became irrelevant to the Repertory Theater dilemma.

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[148]Private interview, December 5, 1972.

[149]Krawitz, private interview, December 4, 1972.

[150]Hoguet, private interview, June 21, 1972.

[151]Irving, private interview, October 30, 1974.

[152]A possible cutback in the financial support given to the Cinematheque by City Center was discussed in "City Center's Financial Ills Worsen," New York Times, March 6, 1973, p. 48.

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Despite the political battles that season, the Repertory Theater presented its regular seasons on the main stage and in the Beaumont as well as inaugurating its new "Explorations" project for works-in-progress. Under this program, the theater produced Merle Molofsky's Three Street Koans and Grail Green, directed by Jack Gelber, under the collective title, "Kool Aid"; Stephen Varble's Delicate Champions; and Anna Sokolow's Players Project, whose dance-theater program included the premiere of Sokolow's Magritte, Magritte.

The main stage season opened with Irving's staging of Friedrich Schiller's Mary Stuart, with Salome Jens and Nancy Marchand, and was followed by the New York City premiere of Edward Bond's Narrow Road to the Deep North, directed by Dan Sullivan, and Shakespeare's Twelfth Night, directed by Ellis Rabb. John Berry directed Arthur Miller's The Crucible, with Martha Henry, Pamela Payton-Wright, and Robert Foxworth on the main stage, as well as the American premiere of Athol Fugard's People Are Living There, with Estelle Parsons and Leonard Frye in the Forum. Carl Weber staged the American premiere of Peter Handke's The Ride Across Lake Constance, and Dan Sullivan directed David Wiltse's Suggs, which won Drama Desk awards for direction, for the playwright, and for the actor William Atherton, who also received Outer Critics Circle and Theater World awards.

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Gilbert Moses' staging of Ed Bullins' The Duplex proved even more controversial than the Handke play, after which a preview audience demanded a symposium with Irving and the company. A week before The Duplex was to open, Bullins requested that his name and the title of his play not be used, charging that "'the original black intentions' of his work 'have been thwarted and its artistic integrity stomped upon.'" Irving refused, saying that Bullins had not attended any of the rehearsals of the play and that he had also refused to attend a meeting called by the Dramatists Guild to discuss the issue.[153] Bullins then organized a group of playwrights called New York Theatre Strategy which disrupted a performance only to be challenged by an angry audience which insisted he allow the play to continue.[154] The play was extended for a week due to the demand for tickets.

Although Irving brought the season in $20,000 under the agreed upon deficit, the Board's fund-raising efforts fell $164,000 short of the actual deficit. With the $100,000 surplus from the 1970-71 season and the $20,000 savings in 1971-72, Irving should have had $120,000 toward the 1972-73

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[153]"Bullins Play to be Staged by Irving Despite Protest," New York Times, March 2, 1972, p. 32.

[154]Other articles dealing with The Duplex included an interview with the director (New York Times, March 5, 1972, Section 2, p. 3), an interview with Bullins (March 19, 1972, Section 2, p. 1), and letters from Irving and Moses (March 26, 1972, Section 2, p. 1).

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season. Instead he faced an elaborate production schedule $64,000 in debt. The deficit problem did not, however, appear critical in early September 1972; then the failure of a key grant left the company's financial prospects in ruins.

As explained by Robert Hoguet, a grant from the Ford Foundation was crucial to the theater's plans. "Every part of Lincoln Center got substantial Ford money except the theater." The foundation gave considerable support to the Center's capital fund and was also generous with support funds in the early 1960's. The theater, however, was being created and had only two board members and Robert Whitehead as its drama consultant. "The theater really wasn't in any shape to sit down and whack out a program, so it didn't get any money. These grants were made by the head of the foundation over the head of McNeil Lowry, who was in charge of the humanities. I think he very much resented the way the boss grabbed the ball and was very generous to the Lincoln Center organizations."[155]

When the theater's leadership changed, Hoguet reports that Irving called Lowry who was "furious at the thought of the Workshop moving to New York," but Irving and Blau decided to come anyway. Since the foundation is "the largest reservoir of foundation money," when Irving arrived

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[155]Hoguet, private interview, June 21, 1974.

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in New York, he and Hoguet went to see the Ford people. "We thought we had a case because we didn't get an operating grant and everybody else [at Lincoln Center] did. Lowry took a very defensible position that the deal was that none of the constituents could get any operating money for three or four years, but I think he probably took it for the wrong reasons." The theater kept in touch with Lowry, however. According to Hoguet, "he was rather offensive in the sense that he wanted to call all the shots. 'You should do this kind of play; you should have this kind of actor; you should do this,' but never a penny. I always felt that the fact that Jules walked away from Lowry in San Francisco very substantially militated against us."[156]

In 1972, however, Lowry was in the background; now the Ford Foundation felt, according to Hoguet, that

> . . . because we'd been around that long, they should give us a substantial grant. We had our whole financial program put together for the year, which included the Ford money. The basic premise of the grant was exciting. They extended you a line of credit, which you had to repay before you could use it the following year, but it got you through the season. If you repaid your credit line for three or four years, they gave you a grant of a million dollars.
>
> I went to Japan for the month of September, never feeling better about the theater. We had all our problems solved, we knew where every dollar was coming from. Some of those dollars were coming from the Rockefeller Foundation, and at that point the new head of that foundation walked in and tabled every grant of every kind until he had had a chance to examine the philosophy of the grants, and that included the grant to the theater.

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[156]Ibid.

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> That one log pulled out of the center of the log pile collapsed the whole thing. The Rockefeller Foundation tabled our grant, and we needed that money right away [for the Forum season]. Then we got word that the Ford people were taking another look not only at us but at one or two other places where the Rockefeller Foundation had tabled grants.[157]

Irving had an ambitious season planned. In the Forum Alan Schneider was directing a Beckett Festival with Hume Cronyn and Jessica Tandy. In two programs of two one-acts each, performed in repertory, the theater would present the world premiere of Beckett's Not I and Krapp's Last Tape, alternating with Act Without Words and Happy Days. On the main stage, Ellis Rabb was directing the American premiere of Gorki's Enemies, to be followed by O'Casey's The Plough and the Stars, directed by Dan Sullivan. Rabb would also direct Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice, which replaced the announced production of The Bacchae, and the twenty-fifth anniversary production of Tennessee Williams' A Streetcar Named Desire, with Rosemary Harris and James Farentino.

The tabling of the Rockefeller grant required a cutback in activity, and it was determined, with some irony, that it would be necessary to curtail the Forum season following the completion of the Beckett Festival. Irving submitted his resignation as artistic director on October 26, 1972.

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[157]Ibid.

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According to Coggeshall,

> We had to make an estimate of the fund-raising potential; we could not embark on the next Forum production without knowing it could be paid for. [The theater] has to be run like a business. The Forum should lose $200,000 but . . . the day we finally can't pay our bills is the day the theater fails. . . . The people who argued most forcefully for the Forum vanished as soon as the battle over the design was won. A structure had been preserved but not the ability to fund it. We thought that debate would make people more cognisant about what it takes to operate this theater. Now the curtailment of the Forum season dramatizes the financial plight of this organization.[158]

Irving's resignation was directly related to the cancellation of the remaining three productions of the Forum season. His only comment on his decision at that time was "If the Forum has to be curtailed, I don't wish to stay here."[159] However, one of his associates, while declining to be identified, spoke forcefully about Irving's action.

> After seven years of pulling in this theater under budget and having the smallest deficit of any similar organization, Jules Irving just can't continue compromising the quality by having no funds. This is the most courageous thing he could do in the attempt to save the repertory concept at the center. Not enough funding is available under this board of directors, and so he cannot function with this board. What the company has to have is a new board.[160]

The board was fully aware of Irving's concessions even though they had not been able to provide him with the funding which would have made such concessions unnecessary.

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[158]Private interview, November 21, 1972.

[159]"Lincoln Center Forum Curtailing Season and Jules Irving Resigns," New York Times, October 27, 1972, p. 1.

[160]Ibid., p. 34.

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Hoguet said, "Jules would have had a greater critical success if he had had a few more dollars to work with"; and Coggeshall noted, "Jules is an extraordinary manager, a remarkable manager, but he has basically had to operate with the same deficit year after year while his costs have gone up."[161] The board realized that the cuts had been in the artistic budget. Coggeshall added, "Jules' point, because he is a realist, is that the artistic budget can't be squeezed any more. His resignation is a keynote that without funding there is no future for this theater."[162]

Robert Hoguet later commented,

> Actually I think we could have lucked out if Jules had not resigned. We'd have gotten the Rockefeller grant eventually. But with that grant tabled and the Ford Foundation wobbling, Jules just couldn't take any more. He resigned before we had definite word from the Ford Foundation, but he had good reason to believe that grant wasn't coming through. After he resigned, I went to them, and then they said, "Well you haven't got a man . . .," and hung their refusal on that. Norma Hess[163] feels very strongly that if Jules could have held on, we would have come out of this crisis just as we'd survived about five others. But it was ironic that the Rockefellers who helped create this theater were really instrumental in the final collapse.[164]

There were other ironies as well. Although frequently criticized for the failure to form a company and

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[161]Private interviews: Hoguet, November 24, 1972; Coggeshall, November 21, 1972.

[162]Private interview, November 21, 1972.

[163]Mrs. Leon Hess, vice-president of the Repertory Theater Board.

[164]Private interview, June 21, 1974.

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play productions in rotation, during the 1972-73 season Irving had found in Ellis Rabb a director with whom he could work and who was able to use Irving's idea of a pool of actors successfully. Actors such as Joseph Wiseman returned often, and actors from the former A.P.A. company were increasingly used in productions. The productions of Mary Stuart and The Crucible had proved so successful that Irving had proposed to the board what he called "leap-frog repertory." These two productions would be held over while the company rehearsed Enemies. Enemies would be presented for its subscription run, and if it proved successful it would then join the rotation as the next production was prepared. Subsequent productions would be added to the rotation if ticket demand had not been exhausted by the subscription performances. Irving estimated that the cost of this rotation would be an additional $150,000. The proposal was rejected because funds were not available to complete the regular Forum season much less pay for the expenses of rotation.[165]

The precariousness of the theater's finances is indicated by the decision not to replace burned-out light bulbs in the lobby, not to run the air-conditioning system in the offices after business hours, and not to purchase office supplies.[166] The missing "L" on the door of the

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[165]Jules Irving, private interview, December 6, 1972.

[166]Glenn Loney, "A Phoenix All Too Frequent," After Dark, May, 1973, p. 41.

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women's lounge was one more reminder that maintaining the illusion of magnificence had been superseded by the stubborn desire to complete the season even without enough money.

The main stage facilities had been improved by the purchase of a new light board and the installation of a new sound system, paid for when the theater still had hopes of major grants. John Gleason reported that the new board was an important and successful addition.[167] The sound system was designed and installed by Richard Fitzgerald's company.[168] Douglas Schmidt felt that this contributed to the season's success because the system allowed the audience to hear subtlety and nuance in actors' voices without any sense of amplification. In fact, the effect was so subtle that most people were not aware of the change.[169] Even the much-lamented permanent turntable was put to use for Enemies to rotate a complete exterior and reveal an equally realistic interior setting. The surface of the turntable was extended to nearly seventy feet across and carried such weight that stage hands were always standing behind the house, ready to push if the turntable could not complete the revolve.

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[167]Private interview, June 24, 1974. The only problems with the new board occurred when the current supplied by Consolidated Edison was not giving a perfect 60 cycle curve. Virtually every computer system in New York was affected until the current input was corrected.

[168]Mr. Fitzgerald was the theater's assistant electrician.

[169]Private interview, June 26, 1974.

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According to Schmidt, there were many times the turntable didn't.[170] The set was one of the theater's most expensive, but Gleason noted that a similar one on Broadway would have cost at least three times as much as the Repertory Theater paid.[171]

About this production, Jack Kroll wrote,

> Enemies is one of the best events of Irving's regime. This splendid play . . . is a rich, sweeping yet intimate tapestry of the tragic and ironic tensions between the decaying landed class, the peasants, the new managerial bourgeoisie and the workers--all at the flash point . . . between repression and revolution. The cast, led by Joseph Wiseman, Nancy Marchand, and Philip Bosco, does well enough, but Douglas W. Schmidt's huge set of a provincial estate is superb, and Irving with fine irony has decided to make rare use of the Beaumont's expensive stage machinery. Rabb's use of the giant turntable is powerfully effective, even exciting.[172]

At the close of the season, Schmidt and Gleason received the Joseph Maharam Foundation awards in stage design for their work at the Repertory Theater.[173]

However, the most poignant irony was that the Repertory Theater closed its doors with a $200,000 surplus. According to Irving, "as a result of an overwhelming success at the box office . . . the theater is totally solvent. It's wiped out all of its deficit, paid off all of its indebtedness." Irving insisted, however, that no classical

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[170]Ibid.

[171]Private interview, June 24, 1974.

[172]"Curtain at Lincoln Center," Newsweek, November 20, 1972, p. 89.

[173]New York Times, June 13, 1973, p. 56.

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repertory theater can depend "on the hit-or-miss economics of the single production." The emphasis had to be on the creation of a body of work.[174] Reminded of his poker-playing image, Irving remarked that when the Repertory Theater closed he had produced fifty-two productions upstairs and down; "then I left."[175]

When asked about his future plans, Irving said, "The only thing I have no intention of doing is becoming involved in any more non-profit theatrical projects. Including both my work in San Francisco and then here, I've had about twenty years of hat-in-hand begging for subsidies for institutional theater. No more of it for me. I intend to do something that makes a living."[176] Concerning theater at Lincoln Center he issued the following statement:

> It seems essential to me that a resident theater must continue at Lincoln Center. The Repertory Theater of Lincoln Center was created in full awareness that there had been a void [in New York theater] and that there was an important place for such a theater and company . . . I can say with conviction and with pride in my company and staff that we have done our part, against impossible odds. The attendance records prove it. I can only hope that by having made the true economic situation clear through my action that proper and permanent funding will be found. Never has there been a time of such high-blown talk about preserving the arts and never have there been so many influences at work strangling our artistic institutions. To waste our cultural resources (which are considerable) and our

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[174]Television interview, WNBC, July 22, 1973.

[175]Private interview, April 3, 1975.

[176]Variety, December 27, 1972, p. 51. After the theater closed, Irving moved the production of Streetcar to Broadway in the fall of 1973. He is now a producer for Universal Studios in Los Angeles.

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> artists instead of using them widely and well can only result in undermining a very vital heritage which we are fighting so hard to hand down to future generations as well as [preserve for] our own.[177]

While enduring harsh criticism from the press for the theater's financial straits, the Repertory Theater Board continued to seek funds that would guarantee the completion of the main stage season and, initially, with hopes of reinstating the final two plays in the Forum. Irving's resignation required a thorough re-evaluation of the philosophy of a theater at Lincoln Center as well as a search for a successor. The Board realized that the philosophical question and that of fund-raising potential were closely linked. Thus, all of the artistic ideals espoused previously--a permanent company in repertory, a great classical theater--had to be re-examined. If such a theater were desirable, then where were the funds to support it? Would another sort of theater better answer the needs of New York City and better complement the theater's sister institutions at Lincoln Center?

Typically, the organization of a special committee seemed the best method for seeking solutions. Thus, Coggeshall, Hoguet, and Mrs. Leon Hess met with Amyas Ames on November 1, 1972, to work out a proposal that would insure the completion of the season and an orderly succession. Lincoln Center would provide a challenge grant

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[177]Statement, November 13, 1972.

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to the theater of $200,000, $150,000 from the Center and $50,000 from an outside source, to support the completion of the season if the Repertory Board would commit itself immediately to $100,000 for the same purpose. The Repertory Theater Board would appoint a special committee composed of several board members and three or four outside members to "conduct a thorough study of the future viability of The Repertory Theater and carry out a total organizational and artistic reorganization." The plan was approved by both boards, and seven members of the theater board pledged amounts totalling $100,000.[178] At the theater board meeting, Irving was asked to reconsider his decision in view of the new plan, but he refused and his resignation was accepted with deep regret.

The announcement of the creation of a committee to study the situation was met with some cynicism, with Variety commenting that the Board was adopting "the time-honored stratagem of management-wise politicians in the public hot seat."[179] Amyas Ames' statement in this connection--"We're going to search the country for an idea. What is it that can make Lincoln Center the most exciting place for theater?"--echoed statements made in 1964-65 as the theater searched for a successor to Robert Whitehead, but it also recalled the ringing pronouncements in 1958 which accompanied

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[178]Minutes of the Repertory Theater Board, November 1, 1972.

[179]November 22, 1972, p. 73.

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the formation of the advisory committee out of which the Repertory Theater had grown. Ames added, "I shy away from placing blame, but the Repertory Board did not produce enough money. You can make all the goats you want but what we need is a whole fresh approach."[180]

Initially, the committee was composed of three members of the Repertory Theater Board, Mrs. Melvin A. Block, Mrs. Frank Y. Larkin, and George D. Woods; and Amyas Ames; Michael Burke, president of the New York Yankees and former theater board member; and David M. Keiser, chairman of the Board of the Juilliard School.[181] The other members added later were Mrs. Russel Crouse, vice-president of the Theatre Development Fund; Mrs. Leon Hess, Repertory Theater representative on the Lincoln Center Board; Tom Prideaux, theater critic; and Grant G. Simmons, Jr., vice-president of the Metropolitan Opera Association.

Because the committee felt that it lacked sufficient time to complete its study, make policy recommendations, and select a successor, plans were formulated for an "interim" season in 1973-74 of invitational productions from other companies throughout the country for a full subscription season administered by the Lincoln Center staff.[182] Within

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[180]"Repertory Theater Battles Deficit Woes," New York Times, November 22, 1972, p. 26.

[181]"Panel at Lincoln Center to Revitalize Repertory," New York Times, December 4, 1972, p. 56.

[182]New York Times, January 11, 1973, p. 34.

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the Repertory Theater board there was concern about the feasibility of this plan due to the past experiences of other regional companies in New York which had not attracted substantial audiences.[183] However, as it turned out, the "interim" season was not necessary.

Regrettably, far more attention was focused on speculation about the probable successor at the Beaumont than on tne financial realities of operating within the Lincoln Center complex which had occasioned Irving's resignation in the first place. Placing the blame on the Repertory Theater Board allowed the public to assume that the board was composed of inefficient fund-raisers. Whatever degree of truth there is in that assumption, it ignored the increasingly pressing issue of funding for all the arts and the declining level of foundation support available to them. However, personalities and conjecture were more news-worthy than statistics, especially as more and more people questioned what artistic director would want the position at Lincoln Center.

The special committee presented its report on March 1, 1973. Here the committee summarized support and opposition to the concept of rotating repertory and concluded that the concept was "not appropriate nor financially practicable at this time." In place of a philosophy of

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[183]Minutes of the Repertory Theater Board, January 16, 1973.

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rotation, the committee proposed that of the institutional theater, which when "strongly supported . . . [is] able to go beyond the very real limitations of commercial theater [and embodies] the values of continuity and intimate team work."[184] Great emphasis was placed on the role of artistic leadership in the institutional theater setting. "Artistic leadership comes first. . . . The magnetic personality of this managing director can draw the plays, actors and directors of distinction--and the money."[185] The report recommended "that the financing of the institutional theater at Lincoln Center should be for a five year period and fully supportive of the new program." Estimates of the annual funding required varied from $1 million to $1.5 million per season depending on the nature of the program.[186]

In a press conference held on March 6, Amyas Ames announced that Lincoln Center had found in Joseph Papp the managing director for a strong institutional theater at the Beaumont. The Repertory Theater of Lincoln Center gave its final performance of A Streetcar Named Desire on July 29, 1973, and when it was over the constituent for drama created by Lincoln Center ceased to exist.

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[184]Report of the Committee for Theater at Lincoln Center, March 1, 1973. [mimeographed]

[185]Ibid., p. 4. [186]Ibid., p. 6.

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CHAPTER ELEVEN

> The night it was announced that Papp would replace Jules, we were with him. He smiled at the news, and added, "Joe hasn't done his homework."--John Lahr

When Irving's resignation was announced, Jack Kroll wrote, "Maybe what Lincoln Center needs is . . . [a] 'new manager'-- . . . someone who can take a good shot at bringing together men, money and machinery in what so far has been an impossible dream . . ."[1] Joseph Papp, president and producer of the New York Shakespeare Festival, had been considered by the Repertory Theater Board in 1965 as the successor to Robert Whitehead.[2] At that time, his terms for accepting the position included a five-year agreement to occupy the Beaumont until he had a downtown theater of his own and the requirement that Lincoln Center assume the maintenance costs of the building as well as the responsibility for part of the Festival's operating deficit.[3] Eight years later, Papp was asked to appear before the Committee on Theater at Lincoln Center as it searched for a viable plan

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[1]"Curtain at Lincoln Center," Newsweek, November 20, 1972, p. 89.

[2]See chapter seven.

[3]"Papp Approached for Kazan's Post," New York Times, January 12, 1965, p. 32.

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and the leadership to carry it out. Papp said, "When the committee asked me in a few weeks ago as a consultant, I had no desire to get into Lincoln Center at all. But as I began telling them about solutions to their problems, I realized I was talking about my own theater. I said, 'Give me twenty-four hours to think about a solution' and when I came back, I offered myself."[4]

Papp first met with the committee on February 14, 1973, when he was "highest in reputation and perhaps lowest in financial resources . . ." His interest in joining Lincoln Center was closely related to his work downtown. "[He] saw it as the best way to save his Public Theater from bankruptcy. Lincoln Center would give him [an establishment position] from which he could raise large sums of money."[5] In announcing the move to Lincoln Center, Papp said, "Lincoln Center is inheriting a theater with an idea, which has proved viable in various places, and which has fund-raising potential. . . . Moving into a prestige area makes it possible to raise more money."[6]

Because of Lincoln Center's reluctance to be responsible for an empty theater building, Papp had an advantageous bargaining position. Lincoln Center agreed that the

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[4]"Papp Takes Over," Newsweek, March 19, 1973, p. 85.

[5]Mel Gussow, "A Playwright's Invention Named Papp," New York Times, November 19, 1975, Section 6, p. 94.

[6]"Papp's Troupe to Replace Lincoln Repertory," New York Times, March 7, 1973, p. 38.

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New York Shakespeare Festival Board would replace the Repertory Theater Board and that the allowable annual deficit would be raised from $750,000 to $1.5 million. However, Amyas Ames refused to agree to Papp's third stipulation that "the center break its established policy toward its constituents by assuming a major responsibility for raising funds to meet the increased budget."[7]

Stuart Little notes,

> To Ames, this was the one non-negotiable issue. The principle of constituent independence--each constituent raising its own money--was inviolable. But Papp perceived, as Robert Whitehead understood in an earlier day, that the Repertory Theater was unique and suffered from a distinctive handicap in relation to all the other constituents. . . . The theater was grafted onto the concept, first the building, then the board, then the people to run it. No special money. Rockefeller's original plan had been left unfinished. Papp felt he had a money claim on the Lincoln Center Board to make matters whole.[8]

Ames listened to Papp's arguments, but he had one of his own.

> "Well, let me give you my little spiel."
> "I know your little spiel."
> "Well, let me run through it anyway. It's not always the same."
> It sounded very much the same as Ames once again sorted out the responsibilities of the board from those of the autonomous constituents. One couldn't do for one constituent what one was unwilling to do for the others. "They all have great needs," he said.
> "Well, we're not like the other constituents," Papp said going into his own now familiar spiel. "When they came in, they all got exactly what they wanted. I'm coming and inheriting the mistakes a

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[7] "Papp Takes Over," Newsweek, March 19, 1973, p. 85.

[8] Stuart Little, Enter Joseph Papp, p. 226.

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> previous board made and I'm being asked to remedy those mistakes. Well, I won't pay for those mistakes."[9]

"Finally they reached what Mr. Papp called 'a Vietnamese solution'--each party claiming victory."[10] The fund raising effort would be a joint one although it remained unclear where the initiative would lie.

At the press conference to announce the move, Papp deftly disarmed his audience by stating that he was going to Lincoln Center "for personal aggrandizement and to establish a cultural power base here in New York so as to take over the rest of the repertory theaters in the country, and to create a liaison with China and Russia." He then added, "It is a real challenge at this point--to me, to my people, and to Lincoln Center."[11] In a later interview, Papp explained,

> I've always wanted a large theater to put on new plays that can benefit from vastness. At the Public Theater [which houses five diverse auditoriums], my largest house is under 300 seats. The Beaumont has 1,100 seats. And I can break even there at 75 per cent capacity, which I can't do even with a full house at the Public. Also, I find the challenge of doing my thing at Lincoln Center, with its national importance, its different audience, exciting.[12]

It was evident, however, that the financial aspects of this merger remained unsettled.

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[9]Ibid., pp. 299-300.

[10]New York Times, March 7, 1973, p. 38.

[11]Ibid.

[12]Newsweek, March 19, 1973, p. 86.

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> Papp, never one for urbanity where plain-speaking would have more effect, firmly insisted that either the [Lincoln Center] board as an entity or its members as individuals were going to have to help him and the New York Shakespeare Festival find the money--or pledges of it--and fast. If the financial guarantees were not forthcoming by the end of April 1973, Papp said, then the wedding would be off.
>
> He had brought along a wedding cigar, which he proceeded to smoke vigorously, blowing the fragrant smoke in Ames' face. It was a scene to remember, especially because the Ames good manners and smile never wavered. And it was a study in contrasts, in styles. One could never imagine a considerate, quiet-mannered man like Jules Irving puffing harmful fumes in anyone's face, let alone that of Amyas Ames. With Papp, however, it seemed quite in character. It was the kind of chutzpah that has brought him through many crises and near-disasters successfully.[13]

Susan Bloch, the Repertory Theater's press representative, once remarked that the fundamental difference between Irving and Papp was that Irving was a gentleman and Papp a street-fighter, and the contrast between the two men is revealed in the following exchange as reported by Stuart Little. Irving "said to his successor, 'I hope you're coming in with a sensible financial base.' Papp's response was characteristically blunt: 'That word "sensible" is going to kill you. Between your sensibilities and Amyas Ames' sensibilities you've raised $25.'"[14]

In 1973, Papp was being hailed as the virutal savior of the American theater, and he was the subject of a Newsweek cover story and of a Time article the week of July 3, 1972.

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[13]Loney, "A Phoenix All Too Frequent," After Dark, May 1973, p. 42.

[14]Little, Enter Joseph Papp, p. 21.

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> At 51, Papp is at the peak of his powers. In his fifth season at his Public Theater in Greenwich Village, he has triumphed in unprecedented fashion. First, the League of New York Theaters gave its Tonys for best play and musical to the first two shows Papp ever dared move uptown to Broadway--David Rabe's "Sticks and Bones" and the multiracial, rock version of "Two Gentlemen of Verona." Then, the New York Drama Critics Circle named "Two Gentlemen" as best musical and Jason Miller's "That Championship Season" as best play. . . . "Now that I'm a success in their terms," says Papp with undisguised irony, "all the commercial big guys are after me."[15]

As Robert Brustein noted,

> In little more than a year, Papp was tintyped, cover-storied and interviewed by every organ of the news and, because he possessed a forceful, colorful personality, the public remained fastened on his burgeoning activities. . . . It was not enough to say that the young people associated with the Public Theater were bright and gifted; they had to be installed . . . in an instant hall of fame, thus invested with expectations far beyond their capacity to fulfill. . . . Papp's experiments at the Public Theater, like those of any theater, were of varying quality; the importance of the place was based not on the number of its hits, but rather on the freewheeling openness, set in motion by the galvanic energy of Papp himself. . . . [However, because] the establishment theater was in a virtual collapse and theater commentators were surveying a barren landscape, . . . Papp was inducted, willy-nilly, into the legions of news theater personalities.[16]

Such media exposure encouraged Papp "to look well beyond the horizons of his existing holdings."[17] He began to explore the idea of an American national theater and wrote in December 1971,

> I don't mean the idea of a national theater: I am working on the reality. By 1973 the Public Theater will be producing plays regularly not only in New York

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[15]Charles Michener, "Papp's Universal Theater," Newsweek, July 3, 1972, p. 52.

[16]Brustein, "News Theater," New York Times, June 16, 1974, Section 6, p. 45.

[17]Ibid.

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> but (with everything working on schedule) also at the John F. Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. The main purpose of this dual operation will be to create a platform for new works by serious playwrights, most of them young Americans . . . From this will grow a nationwide umbrella organization with the kind of prestige and financial support needed to create energy and awareness of theater throughout the country. But the factor which will make success possible where other such plans have failed is that our theater is firmly committed to a mass audience.[18]

By July 1972 he was proposing the creation of a National Theater Service Agency to be supported by an annual $10 million grant from the federal government and an additional $5 million each year contributed by private sources. In Papp's view, "There are maybe twelve or fourteen theaters now which are truly professional, and I want to induce them first of all to do new plays by American authors, instead of revivals of hoary classics and rehashes of Broadway, and then to tour those plays in their own areas. . . . Eventually this would run to lots of money, but you'd be producing new playwrights and conserving the ones you have. Writers are an important national resource."[19]

Charles Michener noted, "Papp's vision isn't new; in various guises, the idea of a 'national theater' has been kicking around for years. But, in his eyes, it is no mirage; already he has $80,000 under his belt from the Rockefeller Foundation to 'explore' the concept. Papp's aim is 'to break

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[18] Performance, I, 1, p. 16.

[19] "Joe Papp: Populist and Imperialist," Time, July 3, 1972, p. 70.

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into all that barrenness out there, to restore theater to its rightful place as a creative, social force in this country.'"[20]

However, Papp's pronouncements were coolly received by many regional theater leaders working in the midst of all that barrenness Papp described. Gordon Davidson of the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles replied, "I just don't want any one person to take the credit for the idea of spreading theater around the country."[21] And Michael Langham of the Guthrie in Minneapolis suggested that the plan "is a pipe dream. It may happen, but it's not advisable. Its standards would be so low that you would not make great theater by romping around the country with a national theater. You can only make theater flourish by developing local companies . . ., and then a network of companies in different areas."[22] At the Arena Stage in Washington, Zelda Fichandler stated, "I think Joe is in a very bumptious phase. He just wants to spread that which he creates around. He wants to cover more of God's green earth, and he needs green money to do it."[23]

That fall Papp put the project aside saying, "the program of the New York Shakespeare Festival has become so totally demanding that I am for the present time deferring

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[20] Newsweek, July 3, 1972, pp. 52-53.

[21] Ibid., p. 56. [22] Ibid.

[23] Time, July 3, 1972, p. 70.

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plans for further discussion or movement towards a National Theater."[24] In Brustein's view, however, Papp's national theater idea signified "how easy it is for news theater to shape an image for an individual which he is then obliged to sustain. Certainly, Papp has continued to make a lot of good theater, but he has also been encouraged to make news as well."[25] The accuracy of Brustein's observation is indicated by the opening of Newsweek's article on Papp's move to Lincoln Center: "As a producer of high drama for the stage, Joseph Papp has few peers. As a producer of high drama offstage, he's in a class by himself."[26] This flair for creating media events may have led Stanley Kauffmann, after citing Brustein's remark that Lincoln Center is what America produced instead of culture, to observe in The American Scholar, "Papp is what America has produced, in the same period, instead of a great creator. What Lincoln Center theater needs, at almost any figurative price, is success; and that is what Papp has the most of, in the theater."[27] However, Brustein's view of the move was rather pessimistic. "When the Lincoln Center management was inevitably offered

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[24]Performance, I, 4, p. 8.

[25]"News Theater," p. 45.

[26]Newsweek, March 19, 1973, p. 85.

[27]Cited by Mel Gussow, New York Times, November 9, 1975, Section 6, p. 96.

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to Papp, it was perhaps inevitable that he would accept it, in magnificent hubristic defiance of that cursed inheritance which, like some merciless phantom, grips the throats of all who would embrace it."[28]

Along with the move to the Beaumont, Papp announced a new artistic policy. He would present new American plays there instead of the revivals, which had been the staple of the Repertory Theater's program, and use the Forum as a year-round home for Shakespeare. This policy was "exactly the same in every respect" to his program at the Public Theater, but the reverse of the Repertory Theater's which had used the Forum as its base for new works. "We are coming in as a contemporary force in what is basically a classical constituency."[29] His second programming choice would be new foreign plays, but he would do "occasional revivals of classics determined by a new concept in style and casting to justify the revival."[30] Possibilities mentioned by Papp were Electra, with Barbra Streisand and Melina Mercouri, and Arturo Ui, with Al Pacino. In the Forum he planned to construct a permanent Shakespearean stage for the four or five Shakespearean plays to be presented each season with small casts doubling in roles.[31]

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[28]"News Theater," p. 45.

[29]New York Times, March 7, 1973, pp. 1, 38.

[30]Papp in New York Times, March 7, 1973, p. 38.

[31]Ibid.

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Shortly after Irving's resignation, Papp briefly discussed his own artistic policy. "'Respect' should be out; everything should have to challenge. The whole attitude of 'culture' is artistic death." He felt that there was "something too pure about culture lovers" and cited Chekhov's statement, "Trust radicals or conservatives; the rest are opportunists." Then he added, "On Broadway people take chances, take gambler's risks in order to be great; with its risks and big liberal mix," Broadway is preferable to places like the Beaumont.[32] Now Papp would try to bring that level of risk to Lincoln Center. He would emphasize new works because Broadway was not producing them. Papp said, "Many [of the plays on my desk] are very good plays that are not going to be successes, but they deserve to be produced."[33] These were the plays he would later describe as "hunchbacked" plays, flawed works, "that address themselves to the major psychological problems of our time."[34] In his fervor Papp reminded one of Martin Gottfried's criteria for a "true theater."

> The only way a true theater can exist is when it is working on the basis of honesty. Plays must be produced only because they are believed in and because a believer wants to do them. . . . The decision as to what plays to do must be completely free: "what I want

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[32]Telephone interview, October 31, 1972.

[33]New York Times, March 7, 1973, p. 38.

[34]"The Classics, Lincoln Center and Papp," New York Times, March 17, 1975, p. 36.

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> to do" and not "what they want to see." Once the decision making process is affected by "will they like it?" it is contaminated. There can be no theater greatness unless the theater is committed to it.[35]

When asked in November 1972, "what he would do if offered the [Lincoln Center] post, Mr. Papp said, 'I would tell the board to resign.'"[36] Of course, Papp could afford to do that because he had a board of his own in New York City, a board of which he was president. As his associate Bernard Gersten put it, "Joe preceded the institution. The board didn't hire Joe, he hired them."[37] Papp was also critical of the Repertory Theater Board's fund-raising. "Any man who can't raise or give $100,000 shouldn't be on [that] board. To say that people aren't giving money to theater is . . . a cop-out."[38] However, at the same time Papp's board was not doing very well either, and when Papp met with the board to discuss the move to Lincoln Center, Gersten stated,

> "This has not been a money-raising board." . . . From his seat, Papp broke in, "You would be amazed to know how little this board has given. . . . Excluding Lu Esther T. Mertz, . . . this board last year gave less than $100,000." "A lot less," Gersten added. "If you want the actual figures I have them." . . .[39]

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[35]A Theater Divided, p. 114.

[36]"Repertory Theater Battles Deficit Woes," New York Times, November 22, 1972, p. 26.

[37]Charles Michener, "Papp's Universal Theater," p. 55.

[38]New York Times, November 22, 1972, p. 26.

[39]Little, Enter Joseph Papp, p. 264.

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> [Papp proposed] "that each member of this board in the future . . . will have to be responsible for raising or giving $25,000 a year. Secondly, there will be an Advisory Board, and each member of it shall be expected to give or raise $10,000 a year." . . .[40]

Finally, Papp agreed that the board as a whole would be responsible for raising sufficient funds for existing programs and the new Lincoln Center project. The required minimum level of support for individual members "would apply to any new members we take on. They will have to be money directors. Before they come on, they will have to agree to give $25,000 a year."[41] According to Robert Hoguet, Papp "sent telegrams to the four largest contributors to the Repertory asking them to join his board. So I called him and said, 'I understand you want $50,000 a year. That's out of my ball park, but let's sit down and talk about it.'"[42] At his meeting with Papp, Hoguet was impressed by "his drive, energy, and enthusiasm for the theater," but considerably less taken with his attitude that "you shouldn't have $300 in a savings account as long as there is a hungry black in Ethiopia." He asked Papp for his description of the perfect board member, and Papp replied, "without any humor at all, 'a rich elderly widow.'" Mrs. Leon Hess had been invited to meet with Papp as well, and Hoguet told her and her husband of Papp's ideal board member. "Mr. Hess looked at

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[40]Ibid., p. 261

[41]Ibid., p. 265.

[42]Private interview, June 21, 1974.

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me and said, 'My God, I'm going to change my will tonight.'"[43]

Papp's meeting with Mrs. Hess went badly. As Mr. Hoguet noted, Papp's level of giving for former Repertory board members was to be $50,000 annually, and Norma Hess was "reputed to be the biggest single giver to the Metropolitan Opera. When her opening remark . . . was that she had nothing to give, Papp got angry and lectured her. She went away thoroughly disenchanted, and the word of her visit spread to Papp's disadvantage."[44] Hoguet remarked, "Papp was very dumb with her. She's very generous and civic-minded, but nobody likes to have a gun held against their head. She came back and said he could have had the money, but it was like being mugged. You don't want to give it under duress."[45]

Papp fared considerably better in his wooing of Mitzi E. Newhouse who presented him with $1 million and for whom the small Forum Theater was renamed. Also, with his new position at Lincoln Center, the Ford Foundation finally recognized his existence, "swallowed whatever bitterness it felt toward him, and made the Beaumont a grant of $1.5 million spread out over three years."[46] Grants were also

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[43]Ibid.

[44]Little, Enter Joseph Papp, p. 292.

[45]Private interview, June 21, 1974.

[46]Brustein, "The Coming Crisis in the Arts," p. 12.

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forthcoming from the Rockefeller Foundation for $350,000, the Mellon Foundation for $100,000, the Shubert Foundation for $100,000, the Kaplan Fund for $100,000 over four years, and IBM for $50,000 over two years. The Albert A. List Foundation donated $42,000 for benches and landscaping around the Beaumont reflecting pool.[47] Papp also managed to get substantial public support. The National Endowment for the Arts gave him a grant of $140,000, and the New York State Council on the Arts contributed $225,000. New York City provided $350,000 which in effect reimbursed the Festival for its capital expenses at the Public Theater. However, Papp's most significant victory was receiving a budget line in the City's expense budget for $200,000 toward the support of its Lincoln Center operation. At the time there was "some expectation that the line would reappear automatically in subsequent years.[48] That was what Papp and Gersten really wanted to establish for Lincoln Center, as they had for the parks programs, the principle of municipal responsibility."[49]

Before he opened his first Beaumont season, Papp made some changes in the theater: he removed the first three or four rows closest to the thrust and placed a

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[47]Little, Enter Joseph Papp, p. 291.

[48]New York City's financial crisis makes such continued support unlikely.

[49]Little, Enter Joseph Papp, p. 291.

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hanging light grid over it.[50] He also limited himself to a permanent thrust as a staging area, which in most people's minds is the arrangement that works best in that theater. However, for Papp the 1973-74 season at Lincoln Center "was disappointing. The most satisfying thing I did was 'Wedding Band' for television."[51] The season had opened with David Rabe's Boom Boom Room, with Madeline Kahn and Charles Durning, and was followed by A. J. Antoon's adaptation of Strindberg's The Dance of Death, Hugh Leonard's The Au Pair Man, with Durning and Julie Harris, Ron Milner's What the Wine Sellers Buy, and Miguel Pinero's Short Eyes. Only the last achieved any significant critical success. In the Newhouse there were three Shakespearean productions: The Tempest which received some good notices, Troilus and Cressida which received terrible reviews, and Macbeth to which Papp did not invite the critics.

At the end of the first season, Papp was keeping "all options open" for his work at Lincoln Center, saying

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[50]Douglas Schmidt met with Papp and discussed the various changes which had been contemplated during Irving's regime. The original design for Mary Stuart had a permanently hung grid work which "was very similar in intent to what Papp has done. Ours was not as elaborate, but it was meant to be there for a season to see if it worked. Then the famous budget stepped in, and we never got a chance to do it. We built some beams, hung them up there, and that was it." In order to remove the front rows near the thrust it was necessary to phase those seats out of the subscription program; this was being done during the Repertory Theater's final season. [Interview, June 26, 1974]

[51]New York Times, July 9, 1974, p. 32.

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"We entered into the Beaumont very rapidly without any real preparation. I wanted to do what we do best, to make it a house of new plays--good plays at the Public Theater and at Lincoln Center. But there's a difference in the theaters. The Beaumont is a showcase. It should have stars. There's no possibility of creating a growing situation. The 'growing' is for downtown." Thus, Papp would have more workshop productions of new works, which allowed him more time for preparation at lower cost, before mounting full productions at Lincoln Center.[52]

Robert Brustein commented at the time,

> Whom the media would destroy, they first make famous. In short, Papp's days as a culture hero . . . are probably numbered; and if he seems to be acting somewhat more defensive and irascible these days, this may be because he senses he is an animal being prepared for sacrifice. Unquestionably, journalistic fickleness . . . can create paranoia in the soundest man. But I see no conscious conspiracy here--merely confirmation of the fact that the only thing as newsworthy of success is . . . failure. . . .
>
> Papp is too irrepressible to be destroyed by the media, but there is more than a hint of animus evident in the recent treatment of him. In the very first months of his tenure at Lincoln Center, he was savagely attacked by some members of the press for doing much the same kind of work he had just been praised for, while . . . [the young artists associated with him] are now being dismissed by reviewers as if they had never been enthroned.[53]

Papp had been aware from the beginning that his programming

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[52]"Papp, After Dull Year, Is Optimistic," New York Times, July 9, 1974, p. 32.

[53]Brustein, "News Theater," p. 45.

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> . . . might cause problems with the 25,000 subscribers at the Vivian Beaumont, but said he would confront that not by changing the plays but by changing the audience. For one thing, he said he hoped to attract young people and blacks to the Beaumont, as he has to the Public Theater. "Right now," he said, "the audience at the Beaumont is lily white."[54] [In another interview he added,] "God knows I don't want to alienate the [current] subscribers. . . But I want to add 10,000 to 15,000 of my own supporters . . . to the mix. I'm asked how I'm going to work in all that marble up there. When my people start going to Lincoln Center, they'll contradict the marble."[55]

However, midway through his first season, he admitted, "I'm going through a learning process. The Lincoln Center audience is made up of many things. You can't ignore the audience, but it is impossible to service it totally--except with great classics with great actors. That's the safest area to be in." Because of his emphasis on new works, "the result is, he said, 'split opinions' from the critics and the audience."[56]

A year later, Papp reversed his original policy. The audience at Lincoln Center "was conditioned by the traditions of the Metropolitan Opera and the Philharmonic to expect artistic works that had been established by time. . . . 'We engendered a great deal of anger and frustration on the part of the audience; outright hostility,' Mr. Papp said. 'We began losing audiences. They couldn't bear the endless obscenities. I did not want to

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[54] New York Times, March 7, 1973, p. 38.

[55] Newsweek, March 19, 1973, p. 86.

[56] "Productive Papp," New York Times, March 4, 1974, p. 38.

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alienate the audiences. But I couldn't help but [do that.]'"[57] Mel Gussow observed, "He has always been flexible enough to contradict himself. But two weeks ago he had what for him appears to be not so much a change of mind as a change of heart."[58] Subscriptions had dropped from 27,000 for the first season to 22,000 the second, and Papp saw the possibility that for the third season the figure might go as low as 10,000.[59] He remarked, "We disrupted the audience of this stately mansion. . . . [The choice was to adopt a new policy], or walk away." In the future the Beaumont program would "emphasize classical dramas with international stars and traditionally styled contemporary plays with established American performers and directors. Mr. Papp also plans to develop a permanent repertory company and to redesign almost the entire interior of the Vivian Beaumont Theater to give it a proscenium stage instead of a thrust stage."[60] In the Newhouse Theater he might do contemporary plays for short runs or lesser-known classics.[61]

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[57]"Papp Will Go Traditional," New York Times, March 8, 1975, p. 12.

[58]"The Classics, Lincoln Center and Papp," New York Times, March 17, 1975, p. 36.

[59]Stuart Little, "Can Shakespeare, Ibsen, Shaw and Pinero Save Joe Papp," New York Times, July 13, 1975, Section 2, p. 1.

[60]New York Times, March 8, 1975, p. 12. Papp estimated the cost of the renovation at $3 to $4 million which he had not raised at that time. His reasoning for it was "The thrust stage is boring [and for the classics you] need a beautiful proscenium stage."

[61]New York Times, March 8, 1975, p. 12; March 17, 1975, p. 36.

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> "There's nothing wrong with what I'm doing," [Papp said.] "It's just that I feel [it's] like wrenching my head all the way around. . . . I've come to the same conclusion four times in the last seven or eight months. I'd sit and explain the whole rationale of doing classics. And five minutes later I'd say 'I can't do it.' . . . . [A few days ago, three people came to me after seeing A Doll's House.] They said, 'Don't change to doing classics.' I said, 'Let me ask you a question. How many of my new plays have you seen here or at the Public Theater.' Zero. There are people who want to see me the symbol [of innovation] but they don't even support the events. I don't want to be a symbol in that sense. We're trying to find a way to survive up here and do it well and with honor. I have to get myself to where I can accept it."[62]

Papp indignantly rejected the idea that the policy change was based on financial considerations. "Money is not the reason. That's the last reason. I'm staying in this place because I want to create a company. Money is not the determining factor. I want to operate theater in an honorable fashion--great works with great performers."[63] The change was enthusiastically welcomed by the subscribers.

> Several letters shout "Hurrah!" Others say they are glad that he has seen the errors of his ways. Still others dream nostalgically of the good old days when Jules Irving presented such conventional classics as "St. Joan," "Playboy of the Western World," and "Cyrano de Bergerac." [Papp responded,] with unconcealed scorn . . . "That's the lunatic fringe. I feel angry at their resistance to new work. If I only did classics, I would feel backward. I'm terribly disappointed by the fact that Lincoln Center cannot be the major platform for American writers. I consider that a loss." [He did concede, however,] "We have two jobs here--putting

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[62]William Glover, "Lincoln Center: Back to the Classics," Los Angeles Times, April 2, 1975, Section 4, p. 13.

[63]New York Times, March 8, 1975, p. 12. Papp planned to use the same company for all four plays in a season with guest stars in the leads of each.

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> on plays and filling the house. There's no question that I would rather play to a full house than to a half house."[64]

Julius Novick summarized Papp's policy change as follows:

> So Joe Papp has finally been forced to recognize reality. In a way this is rather sad, since Mr. Papp has built his career on forcing reality to recognize him. . . . Yet now he is abandoning a bold attempt that evidently meant a great deal to him, and embracing exactly the policy that he deliberately rejected when he took over the Beaumont two years ago.
>
> But there is one crucial difference between his position in the old days, and his position now. When he fought Robert Moses, he had his audience with him; they wanted Shakespeare in Central Park, and they wanted it free. At the Beaumont, it was his audience that he was fighting; they rejected the "hunchbacked" plays . . . that he tried to force down their throats.[65]

Novick rejected Papp's argument that the Lincoln Center audiences were simply offended by the "endless obscenities" in the new works.

> Of course, the Beaumont audience is not just any New York audience, and is obviously more shockable than certain others. But it is significant that the most "shocking" play presented at the Beaumont last season was also the most popular. "Short Eyes" . . . featured a man's head jammed in a toilet bowl (Act I) and attempted homosexual rape (Act II), [but it] was also a taut, well-constructed melodrama--which suggests to me that "Boom Boom Room" and "Mert and Phil" [by Anne Burr] were rejected not only because they were abrasive and shocking, but also because they were lousy plays.
>
> And if the Beaumont audience is more shockable than other audiences, perhaps it's got the right to be whatever it likes. Mr. Papp's approach to these people was basically hostile: he would force them to accept his kind of theater (or what was his kind of theater at

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[64] New York Times, March 17, 1975, p. 36.

[65] "Mr Papp Sees the Light," Village Voice, June 2, 1975, p. 82.

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> the time--he has had several kinds), or replace them with other audiences. . . . Mr. Papp . . . came into the Beaumont as the only man big enough to fill that echoing vacuum. He still has that chance, and now at last he seems to be embracing it with both hands. The Beaumont was built as a classical theater, and we need a major classical theater in New York. . . .
>
> Mr. Papp's change of policy is a healthy recognition that when he inherited the Beaumont, he inherited the Beaumont audience, which is an audience for the classics. . . . Mr. Papp clearly has the resources to create a major classical theater, and if in the past his taste in using his resources has been erratic, it has sometimes been erratic for better as well as for worse.[66]

Many people, including Novick, noted that Papp's new policy was remarkably similar to Irving's, a policy which he had finally discovered the methods to implement "when his board of directors goaded him into resigning. Mr. Papp will have more money and more prestige at his disposal than Mr. Irving had--there is hardly an actor or director in the western world who can afford to say 'Who the hell is Joseph Papp?'--and that should help."[67] Papp admitted that there was "nothing new about my ideas, [but] I have the elements to do it. This is not theoretical."[68]

Papp's invocation of a national theater, however, as a rationale for his new policy was a disturbing reminder of the statements made by Whitehead and Kazan and then by Blau and Irving. In 1972, Bernard Gersten had proudly compared the Public Theater "to those great European organizations, the Moscow Art Theater and the Comedie Francaise,

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[66]Ibid. [67]Ibid.

[68]New York Times, March 8, 1975, p. 12.

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where 'the theater is not a shell where plays are put on but a producing organic entity.'"[69] Now, in 1975, Papp said, "We are building a national theater. Standards and quality will be the key words for next season. I have a body of experience that has included everything from classical to the most modern, and from Shakespeare to Broadway. We will have the best of the old and the best of the new."[70] He conceded that such a theater would have to accommodate the nation's ethnic diversity and the competition for actors with television and film, and that "just getting the best actors doesn't make a company. You need a burning artistic idea and a methodology."[71]

A year before Papp joined Lincoln Center, he described the difference between his organization and that of the center's constituents. "In a lot of places, the institution is stronger than the things done. When you go to Lincoln Center, for example, you have the feeling that the buildings will outlive what's going on there. Here, what we do is the institution."[72] Now Papp is running the Beaumont Theater in the midst of all the marble. He once remarked, "Either you make your own situation or your situation makes you."[73] His policy of new American plays for

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[69] Newsweek, July 3, 1972, p. 53.

[70] New York Times, March 8, 1975, p. 12.

[71] New York Times, March 17, 1975, p. 36.

[72] Newsweek, July 3, 1972, p. 55.

[73] New York Times, November 22, 1972, p. 26.

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the Beaumont was an attempt to make theater at Lincoln Center into his situation, and his return to the classics is an indication that he underestimated his power to effect radical change in that unyielding environment.

Papp has considerable advantages at Lincoln Center which his predecessors did not have. The allegiance of the Festival Board is to him and not to Lincoln Center, he has other facilities in New York for experimentation that are not subject to the rigors of producing at Lincoln Center, and he arrived there with financial assurances through his 1976-77 season. However, he shares with those who came before the glare of the media's spotlight on Lincoln Center in which others have had their artistic reputations dissected.

Robert Brustein suggests that in this way "the media are effectively determining that little in the way of serious culture will ever develop in New York. A process that requires calm, solitude, patience and growth is being turned into a form of gladiatorial combat in which victims, after a moment of triumph, are mangled to bits before our eyes."[74] The only solution he posits is that our artists "abandon celebrity . . . [and] make a conscious sacrifice of both the appeals and degradations of the public life."[75] However, as Papp seems to recognize, media exposure has the power to create as well as destroy in its continual monologue

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[74]"News Theater," pp. 45, 48. [75]Ibid., p. 48.

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to those sectors of American society which provide the funds which support the artist and the art. "I am taking the hard line for art," Papp has said, "which does not preclude humor and laughter, but must in any event match the intensity and commitment of today's realities. Anything less will not be heard. And you must be heard, be visible, be meaningful above the cacophony of life in our society."[76] It remains to be seen if Papp can wield the double-edged sword of the media as effectively at Lincoln Center as he has in the past.[77]

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[76]Newsweek, July 3, 1972, p. 56.

[77]Brustein's essay, "News Theater," and Papp's response to it are included in Brustein's The Culture Watch (New York: Knopf, 1975).

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CHAPTER TWELVE

CONCLUSION

The Vivian Beaumont Theater, like Lincoln Center itself, is a manifestation of the confident nationalism, well-meant generosity, and lack of planning of the 1950's. The center was to be a symbol of American cultural maturity, created through private initiative and philanthropy, and sustained through managerial acumen. This vision took for granted ever-increasing support for the arts, and it was given physical expression through the considerable efforts of the influential and the affluent.

Thus, there is some measure of truth in the center's image as the bastion of establishment culture supported and attended by the privileged and wealthy, a marble monument to their efforts to create Lincoln Center and their power to do so. Clive Barnes noted,

> Lincoln Center was intended as a citadel of the old and established. Naturally not exclusively . . . [for] even the establishment needs the pure stimulation of the new and fresh. . . . The arts live on their new works--at least most of the arts do. . . . Yet in the arts the past also has its purpose. . . . The ritual celebration of the new as opposed to the old is not always a good idea. Although it may sound effective as rhetoric, the rhetoric is empty. In the arts, just as in the affairs of men, we build on history. . . .
>
> As a complex, Lincoln Center is among the most vital forces in the performing arts. Now, obviously,

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> it is going to perform better at some times than at others. . . . [However,] the particular strength of Lincoln Center [is that it] has diversity, but it also has a certain grandeur. It is a kind of establishment theater very suited to the needs of New York and, indeed, to the needs of the United States. . . . This is meant to be a love letter. But I am convinced Lincoln Center has got to be responsive to [young people] now, or else it is going to be a parking lot in twenty years' time. The problem is one of public understanding. My N.Y.U. student enjoyed the concert [he attended there] very much, and wrote perceptively about it. But the guy felt unwanted at Lincoln Center. . . . I love you, Lincoln Center, but you have a very bad . . . image.[1]

Within this context, it seemed that money and prestige made all things possible, and the Repertory Theater was established with the gift of Vivian Beaumont Allen and the recruitment of Robert Whitehead and Elia Kazan. Charged with establishing the American national theater, they proceeded to plan a theater facility, engage an acting company, and begin a training program. Their administration was aborted by a managerial coup, occasioned by board power politics.

The board then invited Jules Irving and Herbert Blau to come to Lincoln Center, where Blau succeeded primarily in alienating supporters and outraging opponents, while Irving demonstrated his ability to function without adequate funding and with minimal public controversy. During Irving's administration, however, Lincoln Center developed financial difficulties of its own and sought to ease its

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[1]"Some Love Lincoln Center, Some Feel Unwelcome," New York Times, December 30, 1973, Section 2, p. 12.

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burden with a real estate arrangement giving City Center control of the Beaumont building. Despite the Repertory Theater's opposition to aspects of the plan, it was accepted by Lincoln Center, and was only defeated when united around the issue of saving the small Forum Theater. The theater's victory was short-lived, however, as its financial ability to support itself within the building was not enhanced. Following Irving's resignation, Lincoln Center searched again for a successor and settled on Joseph Papp, who would bring his own organization and board into the complex. However, he too would be burdened with the Beaumont's physical plant, which he described as "this disaster of a theater," and added, "The more I've had a chance to study it, the more of a disaster I think it is. It makes me angry not just because I have to go into it, but as a theater citizen of this town. You know, that's a public building there. That's all public property. . . . They're not just nice buildings for a special group of people. They're for everyone."[2] Despite the renovations made for his first season, Papp remained dissatisfied with the Beaumont and during his second season proposed that the interior be gutted so that a proscenium stage could be created in the building.

Walter Kerr commented on the plan, continuing his advocacy of a pure thrust if the theater was to be remodeled at all while maintaing, "All things considered, this is

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[2]Little, Enter Joseph Papp, p. 299.

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probably a time to work with what we have." The only production which he could cite that "used both halves of the compromise [between a thrust and proscenium stage] effectively" was Ellis Rabb's mounting of Gorki's Enemies; The Little Foxes and A Doll's House had been staged on the thrust. Still, he felt that "with perceptive directors . . . effective productions can be mounted there." At the same time he neatly summarized the theater's deficiencies.

> The Beaumont isn't an ideal house, not an easy or comfortable one to work in. Everyone has known that from the time it opened. . . . Directors find it difficult to get a full thrust effect because there's a giant frame behind the actors, psychologically sucking them back in and under it. Directors find it equally difficult to do straightforward proscenium stagings because the compromise curve of the auditorium kills sight-lines inside the frame.[3]

Earlier, Hugh Hardy had written,

> The Repertory Theater of Lincoln Center is constantly being filed in long columns of print for not being a bold creative force in American Theatre. But this is clearly not its stated purpose, nor is such an idea relevant to the tyrannical perfection of its architecture. Like the finishing school, the Cultural Center provides insight into accepted norms of behavior. It cannot innovate. It can only perpetuate.[4]

The theater was built, however, not as a home for an established and respected institution, but as an environment in which hopefully the American national theater might be created. Ironically, it seems that the probability of such a venture succeeding is reduced by the building's existence,

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[3]"A Kung Fu Version of Ibsen," New York Times, April 13, 1975, Section 2, p. 3.

[4]Theatre 1, p. 21.

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for, as Hardy points out, cultural centers are more effective as preservers of culture than as creators. Yet, every administration including Mr. Papp's has been taken to task for not being able to create a great classical theater in the tradition of European companies at Lincoln Center. More disturbing still is that every administration has seen that goal as part of its legacy in occupying the Beaumont.

While the idea of a national theater is seldom questioned, there is as little agreement about what such a theater should be as there was when Whitehead and Kazan took on the task. If the theater emphasizes new works, it is criticized for its neglect of the classics; if it emphasizes the classics, it is criticized for its lack of innovation as well as for its lack of success in achieving the standards of the great European theaters.

It is worth noting that each of the three theater administrations at Lincoln Center had achieved a considerable level of critical acclaim in its own domain--Broadway, regional theater, Off-Broadway. Each received a drubbing in the press during its first season for doing the work that had been praised previously and so changed its artistic policy in the second season. Each has been criticized for its programming and casting policies, based on its responsibility to the public because its operation is subsidized. Each has been dogged by the issues of star casting, a permanent company, and rotating repertory. Each has been

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praised for individual productions but damned for its artistic policy.

Much of this criticism has taken as its premise that a theater which receives funds from foundations and governmental sources and which has a subscription audience is less affected by the vagaries of critical success than the commercial theater. This is only partially true. A subscription production must complete its schedule whether the production is well received or not, and thus incurs running costs in addition to its pre-production expenses without necessarily increasing its income. In addition, subscriptions are seldom enough to protect a theater from critical disapproval. If the theater has a deficit even when it sells every seat, it cancollapse if it does not attract the single ticket buyers to supplement its subscription audience.

Nor does it seem likely that the financial position of the theater at Lincoln Center (or that of any other arts organization) will improve in the future. According to the Ford study, when the factors of organizational growth and inflation are considered, the estimated earnings gap in 1980-81 will be five times greater than the 1970-71 level.[5] Without a conscious commitment to provide greatly increased

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[5] The Finances of the Performing Arts, Part I, p. 4a.

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and continuing support to the arts on the part of American society, our cultural institutions will gradually collapse. Arthur Miller described the consequences, saying, "Our cultural life seems to be drying up. We're becoming a utilitarian society in the crudest sense, namely, that which is not bought cannot be art. . . . We are becoming a second-class cultural power and in theater we are neck in neck [sic] with the Congo."[6]

The seriousness of the situation is reflected by Robert Hoguet, who, in commenting on the collapse of the Repertory Theater, remarked, "There's a big question in my mind whether the Metropolitan Opera, after lasting nearly a century, is going to survive at Lincoln Center. We blew first; the weakest member of the family was the first to break. But now they all have problems there."[7]

However, while the constituents of Lincoln Center have the usual problems of arts organizations, they also experience some which are direct consequences of an elaborate cultural center. The problem of greatly increased costs in those spectacular marble buildings has been discussed. However, that of attracting funds for a long-established institution must be mentioned. Support for the arts has tended to fall into two categories: initial aid to fledgling organizations and aid for the construction of physical

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[6]New York Times, April 16, 1972, Section 2, p. 5.

[7]Private interview, June 21, 1974.

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plants. The burden of operating deficits is assumed to be the responsibility of the wealthy patron. The patron, however, has also been adversely affected by the current economy, and few possess the private fortune to guarantee annual deficits which are steadily increasing. A human factor also enters into private contributions. Continuing, even never-ending, donations to an organization which is magnificently housed and whose survival is all too readily assumed does not have either the thrill of rescue or the public recognition of giving generously to a less established institution. Thus, the Metropolitan Opera is faced with maintenance costs of $3.8 million each year and with an estimated 1974-75 deficit of $9 million. To contribute to the bills for electricity, heating and air conditioning is a worthy act for a patron, but the act is also a private one.

Another premise is that the question of adequate and continued funding need not be considered in evaluating a theater's level of artistic success. Thus, Martin Gottfried can write, "Irving's timidity may be understandable in the light of constant crisis and the reality of running a theater in a place like Lincoln Center, but understanding it does not justify it."[8] To recognize the difficulties on one hand and to condemn on the other because those

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[8]New York Times, September 5, 1972, Section 2, p. 4.

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difficulties were not surmounted is a facile refusal to consider practical economic matters and their considerable impact. It is true that Joseph Papp has a financial base through the 1976-77 season that his predecessors might well envy. However, four seasons cannot provide sufficient time to develop a prestigious theater at Lincoln Center, and it seems probable that if Papp has not managed to do so by 1977, his ability to attract funding will suffer, placing him in the same economic dilemma his predecessors faced.

It is clear that if we do not adequately support those institutions we now have and allow them to develop, we will destroy their promise and potential to become organizations worthy of national pride. We must begin to support the artists who work within the building, or the architectural facade is all that will remain.

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APPENDIX I

The following is excerpted from Walt Whitman's "Song of the Exposition."[1] Lincoln Center cited the last three lines of this excerpt.

Come Muse migrate from Greece and Ionia,
Cross out please those immensely overpaid accounts . . .
For know a better, fresher, busier sphere, a
wide, untried domain awaits, demands you.
Responsive to our summons,
Or rather to her long-nurs'd inclination,
Joined with an irresistible, natural gravitation,
She comes! . . .
I say I see, my friends, if you do not, the illustrious
emigre, (Having it is true in her day,
although the same, chang'd, journey'd
considerable.)
Making directly for this rendezvous, vigorously
clearing a path for herself, striding through
the confusion.
By thud of machinery and shrill steam-whistle undismay'd,
Bluff'd not a bit by drain-pipe, gas-meters, artificial
fertilizers,
Smiling and pleas'd with palpable intent to stay,
She's here, install'd amid the kitchen ware!

. . . . . .

We plan even now to raise, beyond them all,
Thy great cathedral sacred industry, no tomb,
A keep for life for practical invention.

. . . . . .

Somewhere, within their walls shall all that forwards
perfect human life be started,
Tried, taught, advanced, visibly exhibited.
Not only all the world of works here to be represented.

. . . . . .

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[1]Walt Whitman, Complete Poetry and Selected Prose. Riverside Editions. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1959), pp. 143-150.

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You shall see hands at work at all the old processes and
all the new ones,
You shall see the various grains and how flour is made and
then bread baked by the bakers,
You shall see the crude ores of California and Nevada
passing on and on till they become bullion.
You shall watch how the printer sets type, and learn
what a composing stick is,

. . . . . .

In large calm halls, a stately museum shall teach you
the infinite lessons of minerals,
In another, woods, plants, vegetation shall be
illustrated--in another animals, animal life and
development.
One stately house shall be the music house,[2]
Others for the other arts--learning, the sciences, shall
all be here,
None shall be slighted, none but shall here
be honor'd, help'd, exampled.

. . . . . .

---

[2]The Lincoln Center citation begins with this line.

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APPENDIX II

The following is the Repertory Theater's official release on the Vivian Beaumont Theater building. It describes the design concept, rationale, special features, and details about the backstage facilities.

Also included in this appendix are:

1) the section of the theatre building
2) a diagram of the relationship of performing space to storage space.
3) plan of the main stage in its open stage position
4) photograph of the open stage position
5) plan of the main stage in its proscenium position
6) photograph of the proscenium position
7) photograph of the designer's rendering by Mr. Mielziner showing the stage used as a combination open stage and proscenium stage.

The plans are included by permission of Kevin Roche of Roche and Dinkeloo. Mr. Roche was Mr. Saarinen's associate. The photograph of Mr. Mielziner's rendering is used by permission of Mr. Mielziner and is in the Peter A. Juley collection at the Smithsonian Institute. Mr. Juley took the photograph. This material is also available in Theatre Check List: A Guide to the Planning and Construction of Proscenium and Open Stage Theatres, by the American Theatre Planning Board, Inc.[1]

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[1]The American Theatre Planning Board, Inc., Theatre Check List (Middletown, Ct.: Wesleyan University Press, 1969), pp. 14-17.

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VIVIAN BEAUMONT THEATER

Architectural Description

The Vivian Beaumont Theater and the Library and Museum of the Performing Arts share the same building. Eero Saarinen & Associates and Skidmore, Owings & Merrill jointly designed the combined Theater and Library Building. Eero Saarinen & Associates designed the interior of the Theater, with Jo Mielziner as collaborating designer.

Four major convictions guided Eero Saarinen & Associates and Mr. Mielziner, in the design:

One, that the special character of repertory theater required the simplicity, flexibility and variety of stage arrangements, without compromise to any system, lest an all-purpose theater become a no-purpose theater.

Two, that the Theater should provide comfort and convenience, and should concentrate every element of design and mechanics on creating a unique and undisturbed intimacy between each member of the audience and the actors;

Three, that in addition to offering flexibility, the Theater must mount and re-mount entire productions once or even twice a day;

And four, that the architecture of the building should express the character of a theater and dramatize the sequence of excitements of theater-going.

Looking across Lincoln Center Plaza North with its reflecting pool and Henry Moore sculpture therein, the

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Vivian Beamont Theater is seen at its west facade. The building is a simple, forceful structure which proclaims its dual function as a theater and as a library-museum. Each has its own entrance and its own interior architectural identity.

The Theater faces the Plaza. A structural box, housing a portion of the library, forms a deep, solid roof over the Theater. It is supported by giant, square concrete columns, with a 150-foot span, which make a bold peristyle around the core of the Theater building itself. The large-scale concrete coffered ceiling, expressing the structure, continues, with similar lighting, under the powerful overhang into the lobby interior.

The Theater can be entered from both the Plaza and the Concourse vehicular access below, with the box-office intermediate between the two. Similarly, rest-rooms, telephones and other facilities and entrance into the "house" are on a transitional, split-level arrangement from the lobby.

The spacious yet intimate lobby had been designed to facilitate functional transitions in and out; to provide pleasant intermission space; and, with its handsome ceiling, walls and carpeting, to make a background for the pageant of incoming, outgoing, and gathering audience.

From the lobby, one will go up to the loges or down to the orchestra, the top of which is ringed by a spacious

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promenade. Both areas contain self-operating lockers for coats and packages--an innovation as a substitute for time-consuming checking.

In contrast to the light and sparkle of the lobby, everything within the auditorium is conceived as a subdued environment, a place which prepares the audience for the world of illusion, makes it feel enclosed within this world, and forces it to focus upon the stage.

This environment has been achieved architecturally by bringing everything into one unified scheme. All the mechanical elements--acoustical, lighting, air conditioning--have been incorporated into a ribbed ceiling, which not only gives unity and scale to the whole auditorium, but also emphasizes directional lines toward the stage. The edge of the loges and all the walls are coordinated into this theme. The consistent use of dark color in the house reinforces the desired psychological environment and has the added advantage, once the stage is lit, of removing the usual distraction of reflected light within the house. All this, of course, increases the desired sense of intimacy between audience and actors.

Freed from the conventional facilities and use of the ordinary Broadway production, the architect and collaborating designer were also able to create a theater which allows a new approach to stage-craft.

The main theater can have either a proscenium stage

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or an open stage of extreme thrust. It may also be used as a combination of the two, or in a number of further variations.

The two notable results have emerged from these arrangements: One, the flexibility has been worked out with a carefully designed framework of limitations, so that neither proscenium nor extreme thrust stage is compromised by the possibility of the other; and two, the possible arrangements have a look of architectural permanence. Unlike other "all-purpose" theaters, no mechanisms, no cables, no bleachers, no gadgets will be visible: nothing gives an improvised or temporary look. When set up, each arrangement is inevitable, purposeful and permanent.

The mechanism which transforms the proscenium stage to a thrust stage is essentially a large lift which is integrated with a turntable system below stage.

Intimacy between audience and actor was a prime goal. "Each member of the audience must be able to see the expression in the eyes of a face as small as Julie Harris" [sic] was the challenge.

To meet the challenge, architect and collaborating designer undertook a series of detailed studies (which included analysis of where the main action took place on the stage in over 300 productions and charts of the heights of human beings and the variations in their eye-levels when seated) and built full-size mock-ups in an abandoned movie theater in Pontiac, Michigan.

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A closer audience-actor relationship is met in two major ways. One, the stage has been pushed out into the auditorium to a possible depth of 28 feet in the extreme thrust and out to a curving apron 12 feet deep in the proscenium arrangement, thus allowing the audience to be wrapped around the stage; and two, the seats have been carefully spaced and set at a rake so that the furthest seat is no more than 64 feet from the stage.

Within this requirement of intimacy also, came the economical factor that the house had to seat at least 1100 persons and as many more as possible. The final solution is a house which seats 1140, 779 in the orchestra, with the proscenium stage and 1083, 722 in the orchestra, with the extreme thrust stage. There is seating for 361 in the five rows of the loge section. Only two rows of the loges overhang the orchestra so that there is no disturbing projecting balcony at its rear.

The audience portion of the Theater--lobbies, facilities, auditorium--occupies only about 25 percent of the Theater. In planning the other areas, thought was given to making each part realistically workable in terms of practical stage-craft and of allowing directors, actors and playwrights wide freedom within the controlled framework.

For the first time in the history of theater construction in New York, traditional and desirable techniques of stage-craft can, by automation, be used with a new freedom. For example, the possible techniques of scenery

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including hanging scenery, traditional back to the fifteenth century, and a turntable, traditional to the sixteenth, but now motorized and large enough for an entire production. It is 46 feet in diameter with an independently rotating outer ring, five feet wide.

Similarly, the lighting arrangements were conceived in terms of operational needs. "Saturation lighting" has been provided--that is, lights have been pre-angled to cover every square yard of either of the basic stage arrangements. This allows ease of operation, flexibility in production and a minimum need for special lights.

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THE FORUM

The Forum, a second and smaller auditorium in the building was born of the idea of creating an ideal rehearsal room. As it developed, the planners realized that it could be made into a place of public performance and so it was made large enough to seat 299 people.

In contrast to the main theater, with its flexibility and conveniences, The Forum is a simple, very economical, deliberately unelaborated chamber with all its structural "guts" exposed. It has a permanent thrust platform, which can be used with lighting and props, but without any formal scenery. The room is shaped essentially like a Greek amphitheater.

The Forum will be devoted to pilot projects, experimentation with new talents and forms and the interplay of the other arts with drama, and will function parallel to the larger theater. By engaging the imagination of painter, sculptors, musicians and poets, the Vivian Beaumont and The Forum will provide springboards to each other's platforms.

Design and construction of the building were the joint responsibility of the following firms and individuals: Vivian Beaumont Theater: Eero Saarinen & Associates, architects, Joe Mielziner, collaborating designer; Library and Museum: Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, architect; Structural Engineers: Amman & Whitney; Mechanical Engineers: Syska & Hennessy, Inc.; General Contractor: Turner Construction

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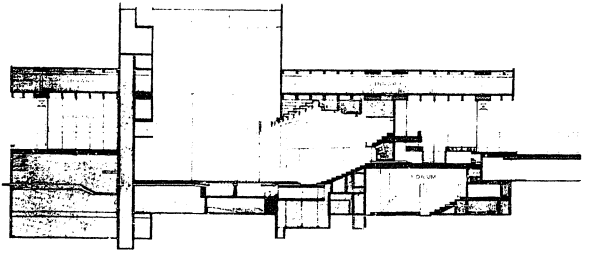
Company; For Lincoln Center: Carl A. Morse, construction consultant; Col. William F. Powers, vice-president, engineering.

BACKSTAGE FACILITIES - Vivian Beaumont Theater

Stage:	138' wall-to-wall, 10,000 sq. ft., as compared with the Martin Beck Theater with 2,914 sq. ft., the largest stage for legitimate plays in New York. 75'6" deep 89'8" high Surfaced with tempered masonite over wood; several traps; 46' diameter turntable with annular ring; 49 counterweight fly sets. Proscenium: Opening adjustable by means of close-in panels; width variable from 26' to 58'; height variable from 20' to 36' Thrust: 25' x 15'6" maximum, plus main stage apron. Platforms vary in size with production.
Seating:	Flexible seating arrangement with elevator and rotation equipment in basement to change either proscenium or thrust staging; possible to employ orchestra pit 11' x 28' wide and 8'6" deep.
Act Curtain:	61'6" wide 43' high Travels up and down only and is constructed of alternating strips of reversible satin.
Sound:	4 channel stereo installation located in a booth at the back of the house above the balcony.
Lighting:	180 dimmer-controlled circuits with unlimited pre-sets through the use of punch card control. The control booth is at the rear of the house on orchestra level. 565 spot lights 1 cyclorama 1 rear projection screen
Dressing Rooms:	20 rooms, 2 performers each 4 chorus rooms, 12 performers each
Rehearsal Rooms:	2 rooms: 42' x 26'6" and 12'6" x 19'
Storage:	Costumes 2,500 sq. ft.; Scenery 6,400 sq. ft. 27' x 59' storage and loading area on stage left.

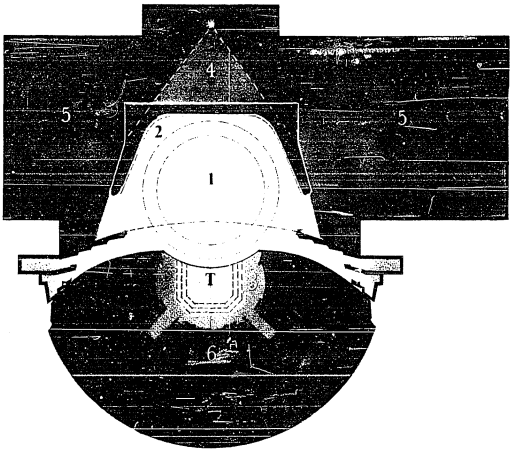
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Section of building housing the Vivian Beaumont Theater, the Forum, and the Library and Museum of the Performing Arts.



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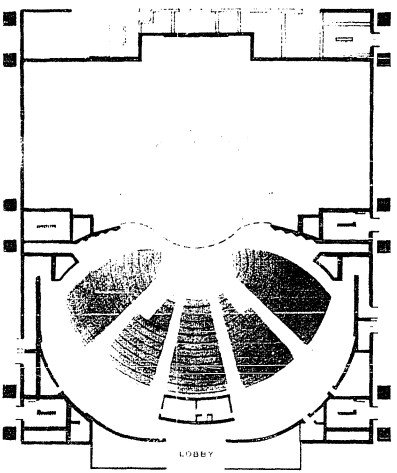
Diagram showing ratio of performing space to live storage in the Vivian Beaumont Theater.



	T	Thrust element when used.
	1	Acting area fully visible from all seats.
	2	Acting area visible from more than 90 per cent of the seats.
	3	Area for approaches to tunnels and for variation of shape of thrust element.
	4	Clear area permitting rear scenic projection when cyclorama has been raised into fly loft and rear projection drop has been lowered to mid-stage position.
	5	Live storage and working area for four or five productions other than the one being played.
	6	Audience area.

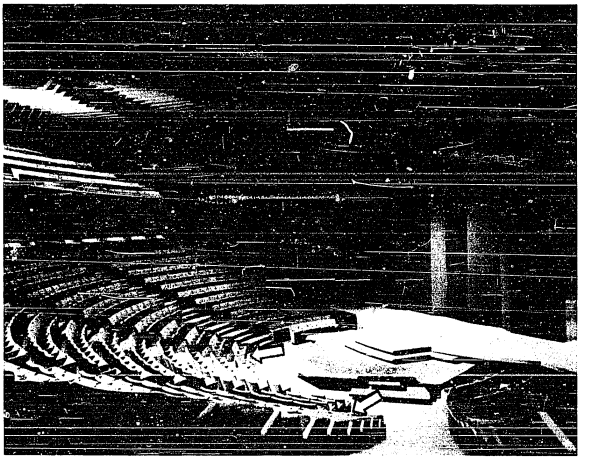
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Plan of the Vivian Beaumont Theater
main stage in open stage position.



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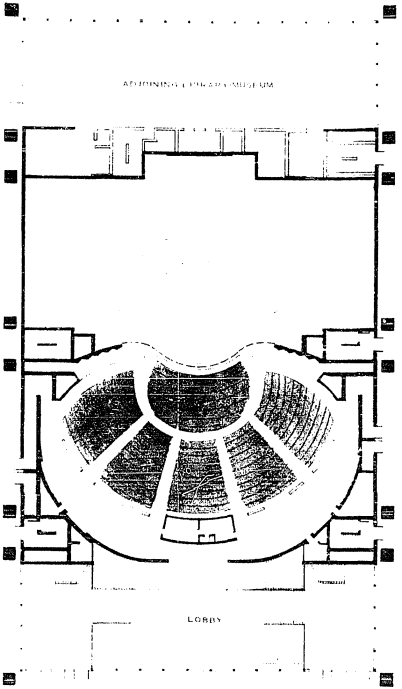
Photograph of Vivian Beaumont Theater arranged in open stage position.



Panels can be mechanically raised and thrust element lowered and replaced with seats to turn the theatre into a proscenium stage. The opening is variable from a maximum of 56 feet wide and 35 feet high to a minimum of 9 feet wide and 6 feet high. The thrust element can extend to a maximum of 29 feet from the front of the proscenium stage and can have a maximum width of 22 feet. The auditorium depth from front of stage is 41 feet when in open stage position and 56 feet when arranged as a proscenium stage. Arrows point to tunnels permitting performers to exit from front of stage.

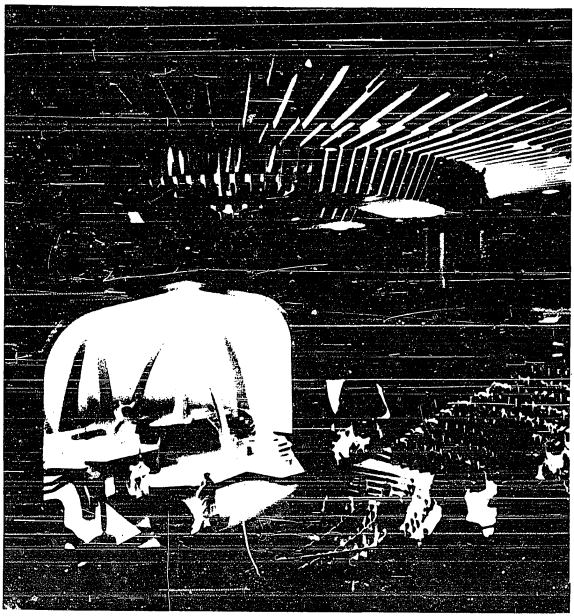
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Plan of the Vivian Beaumont Theater main stage in proscenium arch stage position.



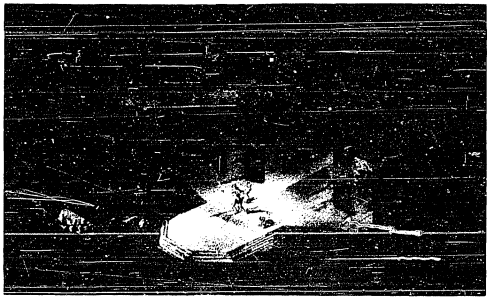
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Photograph of designer's model showing theatre in proscenium stage position. Thrust element has been lowered and replaced with rows of seats. Note performers entering from one of the two forestage entranceways.



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Designer's rendering of theatre as it might be used as a combination open stage and proscenium stage.



It should be noted that the unusual stage depth of 83 feet 6 inches from the front edge of the proscenium stage was designed for storage of scenery of a repertoire of productions, and not as a vast performing area. Sight lines form a triangle whose apex is 48 feet from the front of the proscenium stage, and performers are not intended to perform beyond the perimeter of this triangle.

Photograph--Peter A. Juley.

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APPENDIX III

Plays Produced by Blau and Irving at the Actor's Workshop

1952-53

Hotel Universe (Philip Barry), I Am A Camera (John Van Druten), Hedda Gabler (Henrik Ibsen), Blood Wedding (Garcia Lorca), Playboy of the Western World (John Millington Synge), Summer and Smoke (Tennessee Williams), The Miser (Moliere).

1953-54

Lysistrata (Aristophanes), Venus Observed (Christopher Fry), Death of a Salesman (Arthur Miller), The Cherry Orchard (Anton Chekhov), Tonight at 8:30 (Noel Coward).

1954-55

Oedipus Rex (Sophocles), Pierre Patelin (Anon.), The Crucible (Arthur Miller), Camino Real (Tennessee Williams), The Girl on the Via Flaminia (Alfred Hayes), Captive at Large* (David Mark).

1955-56

The Importance of Being Earnest (Oscar Wilde), Deirdre of the Sorrows (John Millington Synge), Mother Courage+ (Bertolt Brecht).

1956-57

Miss Julie, The Stronger (August Strindberg), The Plough and the Stars (Sean O'Casey), The Flowering Peach (Clifford Odets), Waiting for Godot (Samuel Beckett), The Country Wife (William Wycherly), The Ticklish Acrobat (Robert Hivnor).

1957-58

The Potting Shed (Graham Greene), Tiger at the Gates (Jean Giraudoux), A Gift of Fury* (Herbert Blau), The Iceman Cometh (Eugene O'Neill), Prometheus Found* (George Hitchcock).

1958-59

Waltz of the Toreadors (Jean Anouilh), Garden District (Tennessee Williams), The Entertainer (John Osborne), The Infernal Machine (Jean Cocteau), Endgame (Samuel Beckett), Three Japanese Noh Plays+ (Yukio Mishima), Cock-A-Doodle Dandy (Sean O'Casey).

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1959-60

The Busy Martyr* (George Hitchcock), The Plaster Bambino* (Sidney Michaels), Epitaph for George Dillon (John Osborne), Jack, The Chairs (Eugene Ionesco), The Devil's Disciple (George Bernard Shaw), The Marriage of Mr. Mississippi (Friedrich Duerrenmatt), The Birthday Party+ (Harold Pinter), Saint's Day+ (John Whiting).

1960-61

The Birthday Party (continued from previous season), The Rocks Cried Out* (Miriam Stovall), The Alchemist (Ben Jonson), A Touch of the Poet (Eugene O'Neill), Twinkling of an Eye* (Hamilton Wright, Guy Andros), Krapp's Last Tape (Samuel Beckett), The Zoo Story (Edward Albee), The Maids (Jean Genet), King Lear (William Shakespeare), Misalliance (George Bernard Shaw).

1961-62

From previous season: The Birthday Party, Krapp's Last Tape, The Zoo Story. Revival: Waiting for Godot. Sergeant Musgrave's Dance+ (John Arden), The Three Sisters (Anton Chekhov), Becket (Jean Anouilh), Friedman & Son* (Mark Harris), Dance of Death (August Strindberg), Henry IV, Part I (William Shakespeare).

1962-63

From previous season: The Birthday Party, Waiting for Godot, Happy Days (Samuel Beckett), Twelfth Night (William Shakespeare), The Glass Menagerie (Tennessee Williams), Galileo (Bertolt Brecht), A Slight Ache+, The Dumbwaiter (Harold Pinter), Telegraph Hill* (Herbert Blau), Volpone (Ben Jonson), The Balcony (Jean Genet), Major Barbara (George Bernard Shaw), The Underpants+ (Carl Sternheim).

1963-64

Taming of the Shrew (William Shakespeare), The Caretaker (Harold Pinter), The Caucasian Chalk Circle (Bertolt Brecht), The Defense of Taipei* (Conrad Bromberg), The Firebugs (Max Frisch), Night of the Iguana (Tennessee Williams), The Birds (Aristophanes), House of Bernardo Alba (Garcia Lorca), There! You Died (Maria Irene Fornes), The Master* (James Schevill), The Ginger Man (J. P. Donleavy), The Chalk Garden (Enid Bagnold).

1964-65

The Wall (Millard Lampell), The Country Wife (William Wycherly), Uncle Vanya (Anton Chekhov), The Collection (Harold Pinter), The Rooming House (Conrad Bromberg).

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