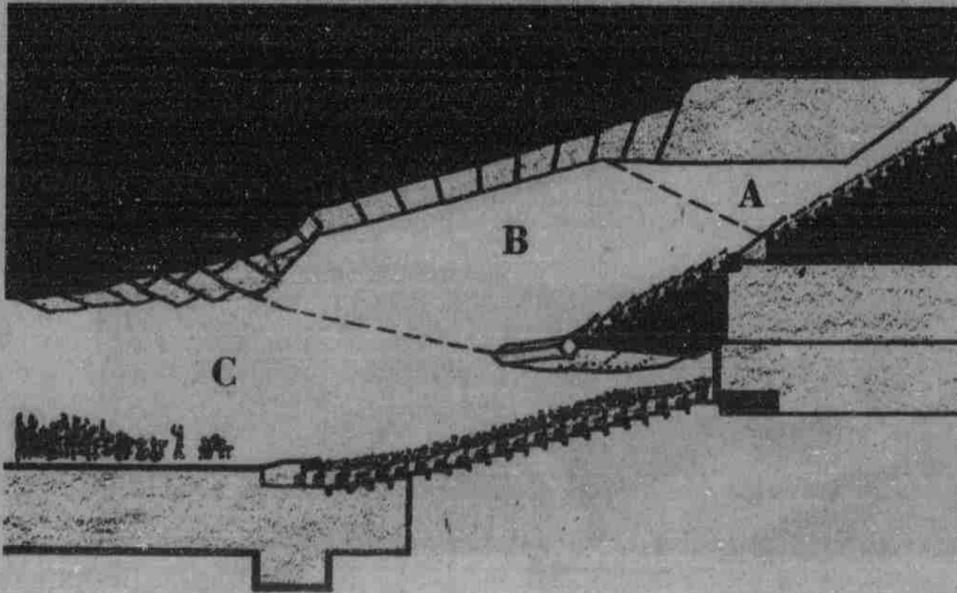


Performing staff upset by plan for hall



Sketch by Jodi Kopf

Izenour's plan for the performing arts center calls for a moveable ceiling that can be pulled forward to change the size of the theater. When the top ceiling section is lowered, area A will disappear — leaving only 2 sections of audience space. Likewise, when the middle ceiling section is lowered only audience section C will be used.

By Lucy Lien

Last year a Yale theater consultant, George Izenour, was hired to make recommendations on a performing arts center. This center was to be designed for use by the University of Nebraska and the community. Now theatre and music staff are worried that the Izenour plan will be used.

If his plan is accepted, said Jerry Lewis, technical director at Howell Theater, as badly as a new theater is needed, theatre people would get so little use out of Izenour's complex that it would almost be better not to build a new complex at all.

Izenour's plan for the performing arts center, said Lewis, involves the use of a moveable ceiling which is used to change the seating capacity of the center. There would be only one main performing area, to be shared by University and community theatre groups, traveling actors and musicians, and by personnel in the NU music, opera and dance disciplines.

Lewis pointed out that because so many areas would be sharing the center, the performers would not have access to the stage for rehearsals, but only for actual performances.

Because of this, he said, the quality of the NU performances would probably go down. This concept of a shared center, he said, "makes all users essentially renters."

NU music director David Fowler noted that Izenour "did a thorough job of evaluating the coliseum. He showed the impracticality of spending that much money to renovate it for use by the performing arts. That phase of his job was done well."

"Then he proceeded to try to sell us on a multi-level facility."

Fowler and Lewis both noted that Izenour's designs have worked well for community theater and for traveling shows. However, his plan is too restrictive for use by educational purposes, they said.

If Izenour's plans were accepted, Lewis said, Howell theatre would be torn down and in its place a "black box studio theater" would be built. This smaller theater would be used for the educational and experimental plays now produced in Howell.

This type of theater, he said, "implies that a particular type of production would be produced there. We couldn't produce anything that involved elaborate drops like the ones used in this summer's production of 'Mary Sunshine'."

Large productions would be performed at the complex under this plan, but rehearsals and set design would have to be done elsewhere.

"In the theatre," he said, "there is a great deal of value in being able to rehearse and set up sets on the same stage. At the University of Wisconsin they have to do all the preliminaries elsewhere and the quality of their performances has suffered."

Fowler agreed that "when you mount a number of productions you need more stages, you need space to rehearse and set up the stage."

"In order to mount the opera we need to be on stage at least three weeks to set up the lighting and other essentials, even before on-stage rehearsals begin."

Lewis explained that the idea behind Izenour's design is that it is wasteful to have a theater that is not in use every night of the year. However, he said, although there are performances in Howell only about 90 nights in a year, it is in use almost every day for rehearsals and student activities.

Another problem with Izenour's plan, Lewis said, is that the smallest area that could be formed in the theater would have a 900-seat capacity.

"A 900-seat capacity is hardly what we consider intimate theatre," he said. Because on a weeknight performance there are often 200 persons in the audience, it could be expected that a like

number would attend performances in the new complex. "It would be a psychological disaster to the performers to come on stage and see 700 empty seats," he said.

Howell presently seats about 300.

With such a large theater, he said, it would probably be half-empty all the time. Consequently, performances would suffer, especially if a play which needs audible audience response to be successful, such as a comedy, were performed there.

He noted that the flexible theatre design is "unfortunately the way it's done in professional theatre, but this may not be the best way."

He asserted that the need for a new performing arts center is great. "I'm very happy that President Varner is pursuing this concept," he said, "but I

don't like the specific plan presented. Izenour is a reputable consultant but he only does this type of thing. He doesn't like facilities with different areas for different areas of performance."

He noted that he would like to see the hiring of at least one more consultant before proceeding on the building of the center.

Fowler said that he is "highly enthusiastic about getting the kind of performing hall the campus and community need, and we need a place for major productions like the St. Louis symphony."

If we don't build one of these performing areas in the next couple of years," he said, "we'll be one of the few areas in the country without one. It's not an unusual suggestion."

He said he hoped that more consultants would be brought in to make recommendations before the architect proceeds with the building. He urged that among the consultants brought in would be an experienced manager of a facility that is already being used by the community and the university. This manager could point out items that make the center economical to operate, he said.

NU President Durwood Varner said he agreed with the theatre and music personnel.

"I'm in complete agreement with them," he said. "Their position is very logical and I would defend that position."

"I think they're right. The quality of performances would go down in the theatre if they were moved to a complex designed according to Izenour's concept."

He said he hoped to hire an architect who would then call in a number of consultants before drawing up the final plans.

Before the architect can be hired, he said, "We need to get over the financial hurdles of building the center."

Izenour's recommendations were very useful, he said, "but I do not see having a place where the theatre people don't even have their own stage."

He said he hopes the plans for the complex will be finalized within a year.

Fowler said that in order to convince potential financial backers of the center's feasibility, the Lincoln campus needed to "get on the bandwagon and actively support it."

"I would hope that the Lincoln campus will be moving forward on its responsibility to get this plan moving."

He also recommended that the new center would have adequate parking.

"Another factor which is more important than is thought, he said, "is having a gracious and beautiful atmosphere for a concert. The modern audience would not be satisfied with a facility that was not attractive."

He also urged that building be started on the hall as soon as possible, because with current increases in inflation building costs are soaring.

Recruiter seeks teachers

A recruiter from New South Wales, Australia will be in the University of Nebraska Teacher Placement Office on July 18, July 19, and the morning of

July 20 from 9:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Anyone interested in interviewing with him should contact the Teacher Placement Office at 472-2212, 2214 or 2215.

Summer spent campaigning

By Lynn Silhasak

While many students spend their free summer time relaxing or vacationing, UN-L senior, Tom Mullen, spends his walking nearly ten miles a day, distributing doorhangers to Lincoln homes that urge occupants to elect Hies Dyas to Congress.

He works six hours a day at the Dyas campaign headquarters, helping plan a schedule of neighborhood coffees throughout the city for the First District candidate. Or he phone-canvasses voters for their opinions on Nebraska's congressional representation.

Mullen and others like him working on political campaigns number a handful of people. But by licking envelopes, arranging meetings, running errands and canvassing voters, they are helping establish groundwork for one fall gubernatorial and for both First Congressional District campaigns.

Nearly 60 percent of the work done so far in the Dyas Democratic bid for Congress

has been done by students, said campaign manager, Dick Kurt-enbach. Students, along with UN-L instructors, form 60 percent of the campaign's 250-man volunteer force, according to Lancaster County campaign organizer, Jack Cassidy.

The work students have

accomplished includes phone canvassing to determine what issues will persuade people to vote, arranging neighborhood coffees where Dyas meets informally with voters and distributing doorhangers, Kurt-enbach said.

In addition to office work, (Continued on Page 3)



Tom Mullen, a senior at NU, works over material at the Hies Dyas campaign headquarters.