

2001R
Lincoln CenterMr. E. B. Young

INTERVIEWS: JM

JPH	AUG 26 57	JPH
CBF	AUG 28 57	CBF
DEC 10 1957		
ERM		ERM

67003

August 21, 1957

Luncheon with Young served to bring JM more or less up to date on the status of the Lincoln Center project.

The design of the Center happily is still not frozen. In fact, a new architectural procedure is being worked out initially at a conference that Wallace Harrison as architect in chief was to hold the day after this talk, with Philip Johnson, Marcel Breuer, and a third architect, older and highly respected, whose name JM did not catch. WKH's present inclination is to try to get agreement in such a group of architects as to a plan for the over-all external design of the Center and then to assign the actual design of different units to other architects participating in this agreement. Confidentially, it is now virtually certain that Philip Johnson will be responsible for the design of the ballet theater. Apparently, the internal design of the opera house and concert hall has been pretty much determined by the requirements of the prime tenants. The Metropolitan Opera, for example, is convinced that it wants a house in the shape of a slightly opened horseshoe with a single tier of boxes just above the orchestra and two balconies, but WKH has already succeeded in working out such a modified horseshow design with clear sight lines from all parts of the house and no seat in the house farther from the stage than good vision and good acoustics dictate. The one element in the present plan of the opera house that EBY questions is the Metropolitan's insistence on an open orchestra pit in front of the stage which in effect will put the seats nearest to the stage 35 feet from the singers. A shrewd guess is that insistence on this point originates with conductors who in effect insist on being in the limelight - all the theatrical arguments in favor of an open stage notwithstanding. Again the Philharmonic and particularly its conductors insist on a rectangular hall which will, however, be relieved by tongue shaped balconies. Likewise still insisted upon is a single-purpose hall, although the hall will have more ample stage facilities than was at first expected. Here again the present plan includes a curious feature, i.e., a certain number of seats on the stage in back of the orchestra. This was suggested in the first instance in order to increase the capacity of the house and in the second instance was urged by conductors who felt that a certain proportion of the Symphony's audience wished to be in a position to observe closely the work of the conductor and of the instrumentalists. JM predicts - and predicted to EBY - that there will be a howl about this and suggested to EBY now to take a poll of critics on this suggestion. Unless JM is much mistaken, they will protest against this feature with some effect.

A small subcommittee made up of EBY, George Stoddard, and Charles Spofford has agreed to recommend constituent membership for the New York

INTERVIEWS:JM

Mr. Edgar B. Young

August 21, 1957

-2-

City Ballet, although precisely the Ballet Society, when it is properly re-constituted with a Board of Directors of comparable standing to the Boards of the Metropolitan and the Philharmonic. In discussing this recommendation this subcommittee came to see the need for standard criteria for the admission of constituent groups, and EBY has drafted a set of criteria^{attached} which seemed to JM in general admirable involving the character of an organization's Board, its standing in the public eye with respect to performance, its financial stability and prospects, etc. There has been no definite progress as yet with respect to a theater group for the Center. EBY is evidently drawn toward the Actors' Studio particularly because of a memorandum which has been submitted by Elia Kazan which he is shortly to send JM for reading. Apparently, the contention of this group is that the Center in its theater should place particular emphasis on American drama. JM told EBY that he was frankly dubious about these possibilities. In confidential conversations with people closely involved with ANTA, it has been tentatively agreed that ANTA is not competent enough to take charge, and JM honestly doubted if any group identified with Broadway was qualified. Furthermore, he pointed out to EBY that Broadway people are consistently inclined to overvalue the American repertory and doubted whether any theater which places prime emphasis on American drama would function as a drama unit in the Center should. In JM's view any repertory theater in the English speaking world must depend very largely for its fare on the classic English drama - Shaw, the restoration plays, the Elizabethan plays, and even classical drama in translation, with some reliance on the European playwrights, e.g., Ibsen, Chekhov, and Pirandello, etc. JM asked if EBY had thought of another possibility, namely, of some working relation with the American Shakespeare Festival, which now of all the dramatic groups active in the United States, seems the likeliest to produce a really competent company. EBY replied that he certainly expected that the Festival company would produce Shakespeare and Shakespearean plays but that he had not thought of it in connection with any wider repertory. On the other hand, JM pointed out that just such a relationship had developed in Canada. The Stratford, Ontario company produces Shakespeare and classical drama during the Festival season after which leading members of the group become the Canadian Players and during the winter perform in English repertory.

As for the timing of the project, the formal proposal for the creation of the Center is to be submitted by Robert Moses to the New York Board of Estimates on August 22 with approval by the Board hoped for on September 19 and actual transfer of the land expected sometime between October 1 and October 15. If a further appeal is to be made to the RF, then there is at least a possibility that consideration will not be urged before the December meeting of the Board. EBY however cannot yet be sure of this because he and his associates are acutely aware of the timing of RF action or what they believe to be its influence on other donors. JM pointed out that it would be in many ways preferable for the future request to be considered at a regular meeting of the RF Board in full context of other RF actions.

JM:ae

Jm

DEC 10 1957

DRAFT - EBY
August 13, 1957

LINCOLN CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS, INC.

Standards for Constituents

Definition of Constituent

As the concept and planning for Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts has evolved, the term "constituent" has come to mean an independent, autonomous, non-profit institution, chosen by Lincoln Center as the responsible agency for service to the public in one artistic phase of the total Lincoln Center program in the performing arts.

Background of Concept

On the joint initiative of the Metropolitan Opera Association and the Philharmonic Symphony Society of New York, the possibility of a musical arts center was explored. This led to the expanded concept of a center for all the performing arts -- the basis on which Lincoln Center is being developed. These two major institutions -- the Met and the Philharmonic -- naturally became the "constituents" in the artistic fields of opera and symphonic music. The Board of Lincoln Center reached an early decision that if the enterprise was to become in a true sense a center for the performing arts, it must seek to find or to bring into existence other institutions which would fulfill similar responsibilities in the fields of the dance, the spoken drama, the training of talented young people in the performing arts and in the provision of library and museum services in these fields.

After extended discussions and intensive planning, the Juilliard School of Music accepted an invitation to become the "constituent" in the training or educational field. Contacts and explorations with potential institutional sponsors in the other fields have been in process for many months.

In the course of these explorations, several principles have emerged to guide the Center in the selection of other constituents and its relationships with chosen institutions.

1. It is clear that Lincoln Center as a corporate entity does not wish or intend to operate or be directly responsible for any performing company or any training or research institution. Its role is to provide and maintain the physical setting for the Center, to serve as a stimulus to artistic achievement and public service on the part of its constituents and to become a catalyst in the evolving relationships among constituents and their respective arts or functions.

2. The preservation of the independent, autonomous responsibility of each constituent is essentially not only for the benefit of the constituents, but also for the Center itself and for the success of their collective services to the public. By preserving their independence, the risks of a huge artistic monopoly are greatly reduced. The interests of their respective publics (even though overlapping to some extent) are served and the potential support from those interested in each art is encouraged.

3. A constituent has certain definite advantages in Lincoln Center which cannot be fully available to any of its artistic competitors even though such other companies may be booked into the Center for time in one of its halls. These advantages include:

A. Prestige. Identification with other pre-eminent institutions in related fields and with the Center itself which consistently adheres to its criteria of quality and undertakes to offer the public only "the best" in the performing arts.

B. A home. For each of the performing companies, Lincoln Center gives its constituents assurances of their respective halls for such seasons as they wish, together with permanent, year-round office space, storage, rehearsal halls, workshops, etc.

C. Economic advantages. Constituents will be able to rent their halls and other space on a basis of minimum maintenance charges. ^{Under} These arrangements Lincoln Center will pass on to its constituents full advantage of tax exemption, freedom from charges for debt service and economies on large-scale and year-round maintenance and operation.

D. Management participation. Under the By-Laws of Lincoln Center, each constituent is entitled to at least one representative on the Board of Directors of Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, Inc.

4. The Center has a vital interest in the quality of each of its constituents as institutions and as artistic conservators and creators. It is therefore necessary and proper for the Center to establish standards for constituents and to insist upon their observance as a condition for initial invitation and for continued participation as a constituent in the Center.

Standards

For this purpose, it is suggested that the Board of Lincoln Center give consideration to the following as standards which it expects each of its constituents to meet.

1. It must set and maintain for itself and for its services to the public artistic standards of the highest quality.

2. Its professional leadership must meet standards of competence and integrity consistent with the institutional dedication to quality and its leadership must be respected by its peers and by the public.

3. A constituent must have an institutional framework designed to assure its continuity, its commitment to public service, its dedication to artistic advancement and its financial stability. Such institutional framework requires as a minimum: (a) incorporation as a non-profit membership corporation and a favorable ruling (preliminary in the case of a new organization) from the Treasury Department on tax exemption and deductability of contributions; (b) top policy management by a Board of Trustees or Directors who are elected and hold office in a manner designed to provide continuity, such Trustees to include citizens of prestige and stature with known reputations related to integrity of public service enterprises and with recognized interests in the art concerned; (c) a demonstrated

capacity (or in the case of a new organization a will) to secure from public and philanthropic sources adequate financial support to supplement to the extent needed the income of the institution.