THE PERFORMING ARTS: PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

Rockefeller Brothers' Panel Report on the Future of Theatre, Dance, Music in America

PREFACE BY THE PANEL

In this report, we hope to engage the attention of the American people and to waken their concern about the performing arts in the United States. For in spite of tremendous growth and exciting promise, the performing arts as we see them today are in trouble. If we succeed in illuminating some of the problems facing the arts, stimulating public discussion, and stirring action by those concerned, we believe this study will be a valuable successor to the six earlier Rockefeller Panel Reports. These, issued between 1958 and 1961, had acknowledged impact on national thought and focused fresh attention on the opportunities confronting American democracy in foreign policy, in military preparedness, in education, and in social and economic affairs.

This is the first time that a comprehensive report on the state of the performing arts has been attempted. Although not every member of the panel subscribes to every detail, the report reflects our substantial agreement. It is breaking new ground and providing factual material that has not previously been assembled. Agreement with our findings would be gratifying, but continuing consideration that leads to effective results would be more rewarding.

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I. THE ARTS IN AMERICA

Observers of American society, since the establishment of the Republic, have proclaimed the incompatibility of democracy with the attainment of high standards of excellence in the arts. A significant minority, however, has never accepted this judgment. This minority has sought to prove two things: that democracy is as capable of fostering works of artistic excellence as any aristocracy and, more important, that it is capable of creating a far broader audience for them than any other form of society. Indeed, there have long been thoughtful people among us who believe that the ultimate test of democracy lies in the quality of the artistic and intellectual life it creates and supports.

It has, however, taken a long time for this view to receive wide currency. "In the eighteenth century," as Eric Larabee has noted, "the question that occupied thoughtful people in the United States was the achieving of political democracy—and in the main we answered it. In the nineteenth century, the question was one of achieving economic democracy—and we answered that, too, at least in theory and potentiality. In the twentieth century, the main challenge to the United States is the achieving of cultural democracy—but that still remains very far indeed from being answered."

This is true. But what is significant is that the question of achieving cultural democracy—and the ways and means of doing it—has become a question that many are asking and many are actively working to answer.

When President John F. Kennedy dedicated a new library at Amherst College in 1963, he was, in effect, summarizing a developing consensus, not making a ritual obeisance to the arts, when he said, "I see little of more importance to the future of our country and our civilization than full recognition of the place of the artist. If art is to nourish the roots of our culture, society must set the artist free to follow his vision wherever it takes him,... art is not a form of propaganda, it is a form of truth,... art establishes the basic human truths which must serve as the touchstones of our judgment."

But setting the artist free is no easy matter. Our democratic political institutions guarantee his legal right to speak freely, and our tradition of concern for civil liberties insures him of defenders when that freedom is challenged—as it still too often is. But freedom for the artist involves a great deal more than this, for the speech of great art is neither casual nor hurried. More than most people, the artist needs time to measure his words and select his images if he is to speak in his truest voice. That he should have time is of the essence, and thus far we have not, generally speaking, been overly generous in helping our artists find it. Nor have we been particularly generous in providing the means by which completed works can be presented. Some artists, notably the composer and the choreographer and the playwright, require the existence of theatres or concert halls before their work can be seen or heard. Beyond that, all of these artists need highly skilled performers, who are creative in their own terms, to present their work most effectively. These performing artists require expensive and extensive training to bring their talents to that pitch where they can fully realize and communicate all the meaning and nuance of the primary creator's work. They also need time to prepare works for performance. They, too, require a reasonable measure of economic security in order to concentrate fully on the work at hand. And they, like all artists, require periods when they need not work at all—for simple relaxation, for contemplation, for study, for that recharging of the spirit without which they cannot bring their best to their professions.

Perhaps most important of all, both the creative artist and the performing artist need an intelligent and understanding audience. If an audience cannot appreciate the magnificent and continuing dialogue that makes the artist relate to the present as well as the past, then there is little hope that a work of art will arouse the sense of drama and conflict, without which art ceases to be a living, vital matter and deteriorates to something merely "appreciated." When this occurs, art becomes the creature of empty fashion, blown by the artificial winds of publicity.

Effective development of the arts is, then, a complex matter. It becomes, in our time and country, a matter of creating new organizational arrangements—for teaching, for performing, for supporting the artist. It becomes a matter of developing an audience as much as it does of training the artist. It becomes a matter of money, of energy, of time. It is also, of course, an unprecedented challenge for democracy. For we are seeking...
to create cultural institutions that will serve huge numbers of people—more than any cultural establishment of any other time or place has tried to serve. We are seeking to demonstrate that there is no incompatibility between democracy and high artistic standards. And we are seeking to do so on a grand scale.

Many social and political forces have combined, at this moment of history, both to compel interest in the arts and to justify that interest in practical terms. The intersection of these forces provides an unparalleled opportunity for the arts and the nation, particularly since it occurs at a moment when a surge of vitality in the arts themselves has brought their needs and their delights to the attention of the national consciousness as never before. Wisely applied, all these factors can lead to an environment more conducive to distinguished performance, to a larger and more appreciative audience, and to a higher level of artistic accomplishment.

This report is primarily intended to deal with the hard realities and the most practical solutions to the problems confronting only one area of artistic endeavor. Our study is limited to the live performing arts, and we concentrate on the professional organizations that sponsor and present opera, drama, instrumental and choral music, and dance. We do so because this is where the need is greatest and because the problems presented in the performing arts are uniquely susceptible to solution by public interest and action. These are, in effect, the public arts, those that can best be aided by the kind of broad discussion and institutional interest it is our hope to stimulate by this report.

Our choice of focus on the live performing arts is not due to any lack of appreciation of the importance of the performing arts presented electronically. On the contrary, we fully recognize that electronic devices—movies, television, radio, and recording—have a tremendous role to play in the development of the performing arts. But it is a role of such magnitude and complexity, so different in form, that it can be treated adequately only by a separate study, differently conceived and executed.

Our concentration on the professional performing arts bespeaks no disdain of the amateur and quasi-professional performing arts. We recognize that they can attain the highest level of artistic excellence, can provide fine entertainment, and can play a vital role in developing a larger and better audience for the arts. We do, however, feel it is on the professionals that we must primarily depend for the development and maintenance of high standards of artistic performance, which is a paramount concern.

We recognize that in the early stage of development many of our theatre groups, opera companies, symphony orchestras, and dance ensembles cannot attain the highest level of excellence. But if they are to thrive, aesthetically and economically, they should be aiming for the highest possible quality and be making perceptible progress in this direction. This is also a process that involves the standards of artistic taste of our audiences, which are first nurtured by the family, then developed by the educational system. It is a process that involves sharp disagreement over what constitutes distinguished artistic performance, even among those with imposing credentials as critics. This disagreement, however, is neither so broad nor so mysterious as to prevent rising standards of artistic quality within the terms each organization sets for itself.

This study's focus on organizations engaged in sponsoring and presenting the performing arts limits our attention primarily to nonprofit arts organizations because most of the sponsoring and presenting organizations are of this type. Here again, this does not reflect any disregard of the importance of the performing arts presented commercially. They obviously play a key role in the field as a whole and particularly in the theatre. Nor does our concentration on arts organizations involve any lack of concern for the financial plight of the great body of our performing artists as individuals. It merely reflects our basic conviction that if arts organizations can be strengthened, the increased strength will flow to the artists as well.

The organizations with which this study deals are as lively as the most lively artists. Any study dealing with them in static terms would be out of date before leaving the printer. So this study is one of motion and of trends. If it looks to the past, it is for clues to the future. It deals with possibilities and alternatives, and here and there with prophecy.

But one thing is immediately clear: the potential for successful development of the performing arts is tremendous. There are millions of Americans who have never seen a live professional performance or participated in a live perfor-
mance of any kind. There are untold numbers who might, with opportunity and training, become first-rate performing artists. There are electronic devices, still in a relatively early stage of development, to bring performances to vast audiences at modest expense. And the material resources to do all these things are available if we choose to apply them.

Along with the possibilities, there is a risk that growth will be haphazard and shoddy, that the nation will drift along instead of meeting the challenge to make the performing arts the adventure they can be. Thus, despite the manifest opportunities that the arts today enjoy, much of the discussion will necessarily be critical.

The panel is motivated by the conviction that the arts are not for a privileged few but for the many, that their place is not on the periphery of society but at its center, that they are not just a form of recreation but are of central importance to our well-being and happiness. In the panel’s view, this status will not be widely achieved unless artistic excellence is the constant goal of every artist and every arts organization, and mediocrity is recognized as the ever-present enemy of true progress in the development of the arts.

II. THE PERFORMING ARTS—TODAY AND TOMORROW

A tremendous expansion has taken place in the arts in this country in the past two decades. In the performing arts alone, observers note that:

The recent total of 1,401 symphony orchestras is more than double the number existing in 1939.

The 754 groups now presenting opera are almost twice the number so engaged a decade ago.

Theatrical enterprises now number about 40,000 and have increased by about 15 percent in the last ten years.

The number of dance companies has grown to a total approaching 200.

The amount of money paid for admissions to the performing arts, now running well above $400 million a year, has approximately doubled during the past decade and a half.

Next to this glowing picture must be placed another, more sobering one: Almost all this expansion is amateur. The American people may have experienced an extraordinary awakening to the performing arts, but comparatively few are ever exposed to any live professional presentations. By way of rough illustration:

Broadway, historically the creative center of the American theatre, has reduced its output from an average of 142 productions per year during the Thirties to 63 in 1963-1964, and its playhouses have diminished in number from 54 to 36 in the same span of years.

The number of commercial theatres in the country has dropped from 590 in 1927 to barely 200.

Of 1,401 symphony orchestras, only 54 are composed predominantly of professional musicians.

In the entire country there are only five or six dance companies that meet high professional standards and possess any real degree of institutional stability; only one approaches giving year-round performances.

Of the 754 opera-producing groups, only 35 to 40 are fully professional, and not more than ten of these provide performances more than fifteen days in the year.

There is certainly nothing wrong with a strong amateur movement. To the contrary, amateur performing artists are a vital element in the audience for the professional arts, and their proselytizing devotion to the cause of culture is probably the principal reason that the audience for the performing arts has continued its steady growth in this country. The amateur movement also provides an opportunity for young people who will ultimately become professionals to gain their first experience, though its role in this regard is perhaps overstressed. Most important, many communities away from the great urban cultural centers would have no live performing arts at all were it not for the efforts of amateurs.

But vital to our cultural health as the amateurs are, the fact remains that it is on the professional performing artists and arts organizations that ultimate responsibility for the highest levels of creative output and quality rests. Some of these organizations, particularly the orchestras, are expanding rapidly, some are actually in declining health, others are just barely holding their own, and others are growing at a rate much slower than might be. In general, there has been no significant improvement in the basic health of the professional arts organizations. There is much to be done.
Problems in Common

In the broadest possible terms, the task before the professional performing arts organizations is the consolidation of the growth that has already taken place and the continued extension of that growth, perhaps at a still faster pace. This, in turn, means there is need for the creation of new organizations of two types. A wide variety of service and information organizations is necessary to collect statistics, to provide guidance on the general direction of growth and change, and to bring together those responsible for the direction of arts organizations to exchange ideas about the solutions for common problems.

More organizations devoted to the presentation of the arts are also required. Here there is need for experiment. There are today large population centers that lack adequate facilities for the presentation of the arts or—much worse—lack the dance or opera or theatre company that would add a significant dimension to their cultural lives. In the long run, it is essential to encourage formation of resident organizations. In the meantime, there is perhaps more pressing need for regional organizations designed specifically to serve large geographic areas. There are many population centers that are incapable of sponsoring full-time arts organizations alone, but together they could support a first-class organization, making limited tours and playing short seasons throughout the area.

Touring organizations, specially created to bring stimulating artistic presentations to every area of the country, could have a profound effect on our standards of excellence. These organizations would be quite different from the commercial theatrical ventures which are our usual models when we discuss "the road." They should be permanent companies with continuity of management and, as far as possible, performers; they must take full advantage of modern transportation and new production techniques that, properly utilized, can lower the cost of touring; and they must have a stable financial base, unlike the dance companies for instance, which now take rather desperately and haphazardly to the road in search of audiences. There is no need to gloss over the difficulties inherent in suggesting an intermediate push toward regional companies. One of the greatest roadblocks will be the difficulty of developing individual community enthusiasm and support for nonresident organizations.

However, as will be stressed time and again in this report, the extension of cooperative efforts to solve the common problems of the arts and the creation of new, carefully planned and well-financed arts organizations, some of which will attempt a new type of touring, are both basic to improving the condition of the performing arts in this country. Indeed, many of the specific problems, to which we now turn, would be well on their way to solution if this kind of basic expansion were undertaken.

Poverty for the Professional. Most performing artists are poorly paid, a fact dramatically documented in the congressional hearings in 1961 and 1962 on economic conditions in the performing arts. The miserable income of the majority reflects both a shortage of jobs and the brief duration of employment that is available. In all except the small handful of our major and metropolitan orchestras, the musicians earn an average of only a few hundred dollars a year from their professional labors. During an average week in the winter season, only about one-fifth of the active members of Actors’ Equity Association, the theatrical performers' union, are employed in the profession. Of the actors who do find jobs, well over half are employed for only ten weeks—less than one-fifth of the year. For most opera companies the season lasts only a few weeks. The livelihood of the dancer is perhaps the most meager of all.

In addition to low income, short seasons, and the general scarcity of employment opportunities, the performing artist—and the musician in particular—must often meet out of his salary heavy costs for travel, equipment and instruments, agent's fees, lessons, and other professional expenses. He often finds himself ineligible for social security and unemployment insurance benefits. Far too many artists must still rely for the major portion of their income on employment not connected with the arts. Quality of performance is inevitably subjected to severe strains as a result of this vicious circle of inadequate pay and limited opportunity.

Second-Class Training. If the performing arts are to fulfill their cultural mission in the United States, marked improvement in the quality of the training of professional artists will be required. It has been authoritatively asserted that much of the dance instruction available in this country is harmful
aesthetically and, frequently, harmful physically as well. In the theatre there is widespread complaint of ill-trained craftsmanship on the part of those seeking professional status.

The symphony orchestra field affords a striking illustration of the need to relate training to needs. At present there is an acute shortage of well-trained stringed instrument players for orchestras. A part of the explanation seems to lie in the attention paid by high schools, colleges, and universities to marching and concert bands. More and better training of string players is essential to the development of high orchestral proficiency.

A Place to Perform. Despite the pioneering development of Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts in New York and the number of fine modern theatres that have been built by universities and civic groups for resident companies, physical facilities for the performing arts as a whole remain woefully inadequate. No new theatre has been built on Broadway since 1928—significantly, the year when talking movies were introduced—and those surviving from that era are almost uniformly antiquated. For halls in which to practice and perform, most opera, dance, and choral groups are regularly compelled to rely on poorly adapted school and civic auditoriums or similarly ill-suited structures.

Testifying to the previous lack of facilities as well as to the present widespread public interest in the arts is the fact that more than one hundred "cultural centers" are being built or planned in communities throughout the country. Only about thirty of these are true arts centers, specifically designed to accommodate more than one performing art; many are merely sports arenas and convention halls that can house a cultural presentation only inadequately. Nevertheless, even thirty arts centers represent welcome progress, provided both the buildings and the programs of cultural presentations are carefully planned in advance.

Sponsoring Organizations. It is characteristic of the performing arts that outstanding success can almost always be traced to some gifted, inspired, and driving individual. Organizations can provide no substitute for this individual effort. But they can give it an underpinning.

Indeed, the lack of development and stability of the performing arts is frequently due to the absence of strong sponsoring organizations. For example, there has been expansion of both performance and audience for the dance. But with very few exceptions, the expansion has not been attended by the development of sustaining organizations to provide the essential stability, continuity, and financial support. Much the same is true of operatic and choral groups, and until very recently of theatre.

Cure of "Crisis Financing." There are relatively few performing arts organizations that do not leap from deficit to deficit in Eliza-like fashion as they struggle to continue their activities. Although nonprofit corporations do not aspire to make a profit but simply to balance income and expenditure, they have not found this easy to do in spite of the expanding "market." Even the most permanent and venerable organizations have, almost without exception, increasing fiscal problems. Their continuing financial trials and tribulations forcibly raise the question of the extent to which the box office can and should be relied upon to pay the way of the performing arts.

Planning and Research—Neglected Resources. Because of their preoccupation with immediate problems of solvency, most arts organizations have had little chance to study their long-range goals in the community and the means for achieving them. In addition, pertinent information about such matters as audience composition and tastes is rarely available. Even fewer organizations have undertaken to explore systematically what the continuing scientific revolution—reflected in changes in such things as lighting, color projection, and the transmission of sound—can mean for the technological improvement of their artistic endeavors and for the strengthening of their economic sinews. Imaginative and well-directed research would not only make it possible to present the performing arts in their traditional forms more effectively and possibly more inexpensively than at present but could also lead to new and aesthetically exciting forms. The performing arts have perforce been laggard in sharing in the research revolution.

In order to understand how these common problems and opportunities are being faced today and what trends are discernible toward a more productive future it is necessary to examine each art separately.
Symphony Orchestras

Of all existing professional organized activity in the performing arts, the longest established, most widely dispersed, and most stable is the symphony orchestra. Partly because of the prestige that accompanies experience and age (the New York Philharmonic was founded in 1842, the Boston Symphony Orchestra in 1881), partly because of the increased exposure given to music by radio, recordings, and television, American orchestras today occupy an eminent position in our cultural life.

Of the 1,401 symphony orchestras in the United States, 288 are college and university orchestras, adjuncts to music departments; 1,059 are community orchestras operating on budgets of less than $100,000 a year, most of whose members are musicians by avocation. Of the 60,000 persons playing regularly, only about 7,200 are professional. The concert seasons of the community orchestras range from one or two performances a year to as many as forty. Although they are often under professional leadership and sometimes achieve a high level of quality, they are roughly equivalent to community theatres where amateurs predominate.

Of the remaining 54 orchestras, 29 are usually referred to as metropolitan orchestras. At present the metropolitan orchestras' annual budgets range from $100,000 to $386,000. Some are made up entirely of professional musicians; in others the membership is a mixture of professional and amateur performers. Of some 2,200 players in the metropolitan orchestras, 80 percent are professionals.

The 25 remaining orchestras are the so-called major orchestras, all of whose musicians are professional. Their annual budgets all exceed $278,000, and rise, in the case of the three largest—the Philadelphia, New York, and Boston orchestras—to between $2 million and $2.75 million. Each major and metropolitan orchestra presents a regularly scheduled series of public concerts; each is an established civic institution with a board of directors, a supporting public, a professional conductor—and an operating deficit. The distinction between the categories of orchestras is based entirely on the size of annual budgets—reflecting length of season and scope of operation—not on a judgment of artistic merit.

Despite their place in the community and the support they receive, most major and metropolitan symphony orchestras have serious problems and face a far-from-secure future. For the vast majority of the approximately 4,000 musicians who play in them, full-time symphonic employment is unknown. It is true that year-round contracts are or will soon be in effect for the Philadelphia, Boston, New York, and Cleveland orchestras. But the seasons of the 21 other major organizations range from 22 to 40 weeks. The average salary per orchestra ranges from $2,000 to $9,000. Their musicians generally must find outside employment in music or another field. The plight of members of metropolitan orchestras is even less happy. Their seasons of employment are still shorter—from 16 to 31 weeks—and their need for other employment even greater than for members of the majors.

The idea of the orchestra as purveyor of musical services, a musical talent organization providing the musicians for an assortment of activities, is attracting study as one solution to some of the orchestra's basic problems. The experience of the Milwaukee Symphony (an orchestra in the metropolitan category) illustrates how an organization can expand its services to the community and effectively assist its musicians. Sixty-five of the orchestra's 77 members are retained on weekly salary (though not throughout the year), and their services used in smaller ensembles—twenty-piece, forty-piece, and sixty-piece groups, as well as in trios, quartets, and quintets of both strings and woodwinds. By aggressive promotion, new audiences and support for the services of these groups, as well as for the full orchestra, have been developed throughout Wisconsin. Four banks, for example, have sponsored appearances of the full orchestra in smaller communities. While this kind of sponsorship does not meet full costs, the concerts have stirred up a statewide sense of pride in the orchestra and increased private and business patronage. The city of Milwaukee extends support in the form of a $40,000 appropriation for the purchase of services from the orchestra, and both the University of Wisconsin and Marquette University are arranging concert series by the full orchestra. As a result of all these efforts, the 1964-1965 season increased from 28 weeks to 32 weeks.

The Honolulu Symphony Orchestra is an example of a metropolitan orchestra that travels to its audience. Faced with the unique challenge of operating in widely dispersed areas, it literally takes
to the air to provide music throughout the islands. George Barati, its conductor for the past fifteen years, believes music is important to people no matter what the conditions under which it must be played—a burning sun, a windstorm, in small or large halls. If the buildings do not exist he plays anyway, believing that if people can hear, eventually they will demand proper facilities.

Because of the superior organization and stability of symphony orchestras, they might well become the keystone in a developing arch of cooperative performing arts endeavors. Neither opera nor ballet can properly exist without an orchestra; opera generally needs dancers and a chorus as well. Using the orchestra as the basic component, these other forms might be created around it.

The symphony might be the orchestra for both opera and dance, thereby extending its own season and removing the need for a separate orchestra for the other two arts. It also can help build the season for a professional chorus and initiate chamber groups of its own members. Cooperation could make possible more chamber opera, light opera, and opera in concert form.

Herbert Graf, an authority on opera, notes that many symphonies are already presenting operas in concert form. If a community orchestra gives twelve programs a year, he suggests that perhaps two of them might consist of fully staged operas, with costumes and scenery. Included in the symphony's subscription series, these performances could be a first step toward introducing a community to the pleasures of opera and awakening interest in expanding a season to the point where it would be practical to consider forming an opera company as a department of the symphony.

It is possible to look realistically toward the day when cooperative ventures involving the orchestras and all the arts, in every conceivable combination, will supply some of the solutions to the most crucial problems facing them.

Choral Music

More Americans—the number is probably in the millions—participate in organized choral singing than in any other performing art, but there is less organized professional activity here than in any other phase of music. There are no year-round professional choruses anywhere in the country. Only a small number of singers, in a handful of cities, consider themselves professional choristers, and even these sing under a variety of sponsors; the turnover is rapid, and there is no permanence to the profession. Few choral institutions exist outside the church, the high school, the university, and the opera company.

Although choral music had its origins in the church, only the wealthier churches hire professional choirs. Elsewhere, amateur singers predominate, often supplemented by professional soloists. There are a few truly professional secular choirs; each chorister is a trained vocalist receiving union scale wages for rehearsals and performances, and the chorus is conducted by a professional musician. Among the best known are the De Pauw Chorus, the Gregg Smith Singers, the Karlslud Chorale, the Norman Luboff Choir, the Robert Shaw Chorale, the Roger Wagner Chorale, and the Schola Cantorum. None of these is in any sense a year-round organization able to provide its members with an adequate income.

In addition, there are the opera choruses of the Metropolitan Opera, the New York City Opera, the San Francisco and Chicago operas, and several smaller groups. Ordinarily all these groups use professional singers, but, except for the Metropolitan Opera Chorus, their seasons are short. Most other opera choruses in the country are ad hoc collections of singers with no real group identity. Only one symphony, the Chicago, has its own professional chorus.

At present then, amateur choral activity predominates. While in many instances it is of near-professional quality, the fact is that much of the finest choral repertory requires professional skill for its fullest realization. Thus, there is an essential artistic need for the professional chorus, but it faces a difficult struggle to gain public acceptance and support.

To improve this situation, nonprofit professional choruses might be established in several regions, under first-rate conductors, with a guaranteed season and adequate financing. The choruses could give concerts on their own and be available for radio and television appearances. They could tour their region both alone and in company with an orchestra, opera, or ballet company.

These choruses should be organized in the same way as the symphony orchestras, soliciting funds from the public. From all indications there would be enough opportunities for at least one group in each of as many as six regions.
to be occupied full time. Establishment of these choruses could go far toward putting the art of choral singing on a sound professional footing and create valuable pace setters for the best of the community, university, and conservatory choruses.

Chamber Music

The growth of interest in chamber music, both professional and amateur, in the last forty years has equaled, if not exceeded, orchestral and operatic development, but this has not as yet been translated into any kind of stable organizational structure. Few chamber ensembles are set up on a nonprofit, tax-exempt basis. For this reason, support from philanthropic or government sources is virtually excluded unless a cultural or educational institution is willing to serve as middleman or host. This is indeed happening. More than a hundred colleges and universities now maintain chamber groups in residence for part or all of the academic year, performing and teaching in the region.

The difficulties facing the development of permanent, full-season chamber groups are formidable. The character of the music generally dictates the use of a small hall, and although the fee commanded by even the best established string quartet is far less than that paid a famous soloist, it is generally high in relation to potential box office receipts. On the other hand, the moderate cost of presenting chamber music and the relative mobility of its practitioners make it comparatively simple to arrange wide tours. As a result, greater demands and better economic conditions for the performers should develop naturally. Another promising avenue of development, already mentioned, is the promotion of chamber groups by the less-than-full-season symphony orchestras. Support from that source, plus the growing sponsorship by universities, might provide the needed institutional stability and financial strength for this often-neglected form of musical activity.

Opera

Of all the performing arts, grand opera can clearly be the most spectacular, the most aristocratic, and the most expensive. With a full orchestra, chorus, and ballet, with great divas and supporting artists, with huge productions and sizable repertory, a grand opera company can stand in majestic solitude, dwarfing by sheer magnitude dramas and musical comedies, orchestras both symphonic and chamber, and even ballet.

There are few opera houses in the world that boast a greater roster of big name performers, a more sumptuous setting, a more devoted following, a greater outpouring of money (over $9 million projected for 1964-1965), than New York's Metropolitan Opera. But with the exception of three other major companies—the New York City Opera, the Chicago Lyric Opera, and the San Francisco Opera—plus two or three young and special operatic enterprises, the United States has little or no professional opera during most of the year. Indeed, it can reasonably be questioned whether opera is given any appreciable firsthand exposure to the American people as a whole. For millions it is looked upon as the special responsibility of the rich and the socially prominent; as a scarce commodity known to most people only through Saturday afternoon radio broadcasts that reward the ear but leave the eye untouched.

There is, to be sure, another side to this picture. In the 1963-1964 season alone, there were 754 opera-producing organizations in the country, 227 of these within the music departments of our universities. A total of 3,877 performances of 321 'different works were presented. Thousands of Americans are participating in opera, either as performers or as audience. But, as in the other performing arts, most of this grassroots development is amateur, and there is little cross fertilization between these groups and professional opera. A great proportion of the young singers who have been trained have no professional outlet in this country. At the moment, indeed, some five to six hundred young Americans are trying to gain the professional experience abroad that they cannot find at home.

Of the 754 opera-producing groups, only 35 to 40 are in the fullest sense professional, and the great majority of these offer engagements for artists during seasons that run less than 25 performances annually. The only exceptions are the four major companies mentioned above, plus the Santa Fe and Central City summer operas and the Boris Golovsky touring company. But how can a stable and continuing opera program be developed, an ensemble and orchestra be maintained, individual singers be supported, permanent public interest be organized, when for 340 days of the year
no professional opera exists in such ma-
ajor cities as Boston, Cincinnati, Dallas,
Hartford, Houston, Kansas City, New Or-
leans, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, or Wash-
ington?

The answer for the cities that do un-
dertake a limited professional opera sea-
son (and all those just mentioned do) is to import talent on a transient basis. Opera singers at all levels, even includ-
ing the great stars, travel about from place to place, singing for a few nights in an ensemble framework that is large-
ly improvised. In some cities, the engage-
ment of a Tebaldi, a Sutherland, or a Callas is the only thing that insures a season at all.

Another characteristic of the opera world today is its widespread devotion to estabhshed tradition: the standard works, the known names, the accepted look. Opera managements in this country are notable for their reluctance to per-
form new works, to engage unknown singers for key roles, to experiment with fresh styles. For the opera companies offering very limited seasons, works from the standard repertory are required by economics, both of audience acceptance and production requirements. For the established companies, from the Metropol-
itan down, the rationale is twofold. First, every musically developed country must have its national custodian of the classical repertory to maintain standards of performance and give young artists a focus for their aspirations. Second, as in symphonic programing, this seems to be what the public wants, and box office figures seem to support this position. Public taste is indeed conservative. Un-
like theatregoers, for whom the new play excites more attraction than the revival, the musical public seems chary of new works and clings to the established fa-
vorites. But preoccupation with past glory contributes little to the vitality of opera as a living art form. No one be-
lieves we should turn our back on the great heritage of operatic literature, from Mozart to Wagner and Verdi; neither, however, can opera fulfill its role in America if its predominant interest continues to be in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. After all, we are already two-thirds of the way through the twentieth. It is very simply part of responsible management to encourage the public at least to sample the adven-
ture of the new.

Remedies for these problems exist and in some places may be observed in prac-
tice. The Metropolitan has presented several contemporary works in recent years. More active in this respect is the New York City Opera, which, aided by Ford Foundation grants, has produced 31 contemporary works since 1957—more than any other opera company in the world—and it received, in June 1964, a further grant of $250,000 to help make possible spring seasons of contemporary opera in 1965 and 1966, with at least six different works to be offered each season. The Santa Fe Opera, which presents a summer season of nine weeks, usually includes two or three contemporary works (Alban Berg's "Lulu" received its American premiere there in 1963). It also offers one or two older but rarely done operas, which makes a very fair balance with the standard repertory. The Kansas City Lyric Theatre in 1963 collab-
orated with the University of Kansas City in presenting a spring season of American works. The Opera Society of Washington also seeks a balance between old and new: Barber, Hindemith, and Schoenberg are offered along with Mo-
zart, Puccini, and Verdi. Opera in con-
cert form has long been a method of production that lends itself to use by community and university groups because of its relative simplicity and econo-
my. Several professional groups have been offering concert opera series an-
ually in New York in recent years and have been the vehicle for the introduction of rarely heard opera of earlier periods and contemporary works.

The twentieth century does then occasion-
ally push its way onto the stages of a few American opera houses. And the voices of young professionals are occasion-
ally heard in major roles in some places. The Metropolitan annually holds national auditions to recruit new mem-
bers of its company, a number of whom have become leading artists of interna-
tional standing (Leonard Warren, Elea-
nor Steber, Risë Stevens, Robert Merrill, Regina Resnik, and others). But it is the New York City Opera that provides greater opportunities for experience in the principal roles to which young artists aspire. Since its annual budget of approx-
imately $800,000 is less than 10 percent of the Metropolitan's, and since its top ticket price is $4.95 against the latter's $13, it obviously cannot afford the great stars. Making a virtue of its relative poverty, the New York City Opera casts its productions with the best young sing-
ers it can find. The Spring Opera of San Francisco offers a six-week season per-
formed entirely by young professionals.
The Tebaldis and Callases find no place on the stages of the Washington and Kansas City opera houses either, and the leading roles there are sung instead by artists on their way up the ladder.

The basic problem is that of making opera performances of first-class professional caliber available to more people. The amount of amateur operatic activity indicates that there is a sizable potential audience for professional presentations, and the mounting of more professional operas would not only benefit this audience but also create more opportunities for the young professional singer.

The most satisfactory method may be the touring company. The Metropolitan has an annual spring tour, which will take it to eight cities in 1965. The cost of touring on the Met’s scale is prodigious and its price scale remains beyond the means of the average man; its out-of-New York appearances have become geographically more limited as it has felt the pinch of rising costs. The New York City Opera toured fifteen cities in its home state in 1963 with support from the New York State Council on the Arts and performed in thirteen other cities in the eastern and midwestern states. The San Francisco Opera, with an extended season in Los Angeles, tours its neighboring region. All these tours are, however, peripheral to the main operations of these companies.

One professional company whose raisin d’être is to tour is already in existence; another is just being formed. The Goldovsky Opera Theatre will bring opera to 85 American cities in 1964-1965. To be sure, it is scaled-down, nonrepertory opera, with an orchestra of but twenty players, a small chorus, and uncomplicated sets whose core is a lightweight collapsible fiberglass shell. But it is judged to be opera of high quality, the result of long rehearsal in advance of the tour and of an excellent group of artists.

A permanent national company of the Metropolitan Opera will be inaugurated in the fall of 1965. Rise Stevens and Michael Manuel have been named general managers, and funds are being raised (an estimated $1.2 million will be needed for its five-year launching period). Plans for the first season include a 35-week tour of some sixty communities, playing 245 performances, with a repertory of four operas and a company of singers, dancers, and musicians numbering 125.

Neither Goldovsky’s present nor the Metropolitan’s future touring companies will solve the problem alone, but they point the way. One can envisage a day when the New York City Opera and the Chicago and San Francisco operas can expand their touring, for none provides anything like full-season employment for its artists; a day when other regionally established professional operas will be able to sustain themselves by touring throughout their areas. To accomplish this it will be necessary to set up companies realistically financed and based on the excellence of the entire company rather than merely on the drawing power of transient guest stars. This will doubtless take a long time, much of it devoted to re-education of the public. But it is the only way opera can become a meaningful experience to more than a handful of our citizens.

Theatre

In the theatre, a process of reorientation and reorganization is already underway, altering the theatrical structure as it has existed.

The theatre is the only performing art that has flourished as a commercial enterprise and been thought of as capable of self-support. But in fact the commercial theatre has been shrinking—on Broadway, on the road, and in local stock companies. Broadway has been the center for which our finest playwrights have written, in which our greatest performing talents have flourished, from which our American stage has taken its creative direction. With a yearly investment of approximately $10 million in new productions, Broadway has in effect provided the experimental laboratory for drama in the United States. As a profitmaker it has become a dubious venture. About 75 percent of the plays produced fail to make money. However, the profit motive can still be very strong because a hit can provide a substantial financial gain to its backers.

Broadway’s output has dwindled from an average of 142 productions per year during the Thirties to 63 in 1963-1964. Outside New York the shrinkage has been comparable. Theatres that thirty years ago housed prosperous local professional stock companies and touring road shows have been turned into movie houses or torn down. Because of its anarchic organization, laissez-faire individualism, and transient character, the commercial theatre has barely survived the competition of the mass media and a constant increase in production and operating costs without a comparable in-
crease of revenues. Its difficulties have also been aggravated by some questionable methods employed in the distribution of tickets and some dubious business practices in the financing of productions.

Since 1964, however, producers wishing to raise money have been required by law to reveal profits and losses on previous productions and to estimate how much money must be grossed if backers are to be returned their original investment. In addition, responding to public criticism, the League of New York Theatres and the Shubert Theatrical Enterprises are undertaking a study, to be completed in 1965. This action may lead to a major overhaul of Broadway. The appointment of a commissioner empowered to take action to improve the condition of the commercial theatre, as well as to enforce codes of ethical practices, will be considered. This study, involving an extraordinary degree of cooperation where there has been very little, could have a substantial revitalizing effect on the Broadway theatre.

In any event, no one expects Broadway to collapse. It will continue to provide entertainment of high quality. But Broadway as we knew it—the Broadway for which every major playwright from O'Neill to Miller and Williams has principally written, the Broadway that has provided stardom for hundreds of major talents from Ethel Barrymore to Ethel Merman—is being challenged, its audiences are turning elsewhere. It is, in fact, being bypassed by those who wish to offer and those who wish to accept the theatre as one of America's flourishing art forms. It is this process that has most significance today.

One need not leave New York City to find the evidence. In 1943, the New York City Center of Music and Drama came into being as a nonprofit organization to provide a stage for opera, dance, musical comedy, and, on occasion, drama. Aided through virtual remission of rent on its city-owned 3,000-seat house, each of its semi-autonomous units has cooperated in keeping ticket prices well below the Broadway level—the top is now $4.95—and it enjoys a large and devoted following.

Other nonprofit theatrical enterprises have followed the City Center. In 1953, the Phoenix Theatre was founded. Dedicated to a varied program of classical, musical, and new works—also offered at less than Broadway prices—it presented some 75 productions in its first decade. The New York Shakespeare Festival has maintained allegiance to the idea of free theatre ever since it was organized in 1954. Now occupying an outdoor playhouse built specially for it in Central Park, it was receiving by the early Sixties sizable grants from the city of New York and recurring support from foundations and individual donors. In 1962, the Actors Studio, originally created as an advanced training program for experienced actors, formed a producing company of its own members. Already a nonprofit educational organization, it looked upon this expansion of its work as leading toward an institutional theatre.

The objective of the Repertory Theatre of Lincoln Center, which opened in 1963, has been widely publicized: to form a permanent acting company that occupies a permanent home and presents in repertory both new plays and revivals. It represents the most costly undertaking yet tried in America to create an organization similar to the great theatre companies of Europe. One of the most notable aspects of its first season was the participation of two of America's best playwrights, Arthur Miller and S. N. Behrman. If more arrangements can be made for our finest dramatists to be produced outside the framework of Broadway, a major step will have been taken toward the building of a new pattern for serious theatre in this country.

The off-Broadway movement is another significant part of the bypassing of Broadway. In little more than a decade and a half it has grown until it has more playhouses than Broadway, although most of them seat less than three hundred; in 1963-1964, it presented 91 productions—outproducing Broadway by more than one-third.

Off-Broadway has made several major contributions to the New York theatrical scene. It has served as a showcase for young talent—acting and directing. It has developed some of the finest young American playwrights—Edward Albee, for example. It has provided New Yorkers with many opportunities for exposure to the European avant-gardists—Beckett, Ionesco, Genet, and Pinter. It has offered the literature of the theatre on its stages by producing the great works of the past from Euripides to O'Neill. It has kept alive recent works of merit by such American dramatists as Williams, Miller, and Wilder. Finally, it has brought ticket prices down to a level that can be afforded by an audience naturally attracted to these works.
Most off-Broadway producers—even those who are strongly noncommercial in their motivations and choice of material—have sought to operate for commercial profit. If the present pattern continues—rising costs, increasing ticket prices—they are likely to become prone to the same anarchic tendencies and uncertainties as the Broadway they sought to combat and will be as hard to help as the rest of the commercial theatre. The 1964-1965 season began ominously with far fewer new productions scheduled than in the previous year and with some theatre owners taking steps to convert their houses to other uses.

The bypassing process—the development of nonprofit organizations and commercial enterprises outside the Broadway framework—is not the only radical change in the structure of the theatre. The second alteration in the picture since midcentury is the beginning of the decentralization of high-quality professional theatre throughout the country. For years, observers concerned with the health and growth of the stage have been asking: If many of our cities could support professional symphony orchestras, could they not support professional theatres too? The obvious answer has been that they could if they wanted to, but there was not sufficient demand. Now we see the beginning of a demand, and we see steps taken to meet it.

There are some fifty permanent professional theatres operating today, more than half of them having been established since 1960—seven opening or turning professional during the 1964-1965 season alone, most of them located outside New York City. In 1964, Actors' Equity Association set up a department to respond to requests for assistance in the development of professional theatre throughout the country, appropriated $25,000 for the first year and appointed an executive director to implement the program.

More than half the professional theatre projects outside New York—and

By “permanent professional theatres” we mean those having management and policy continuity, playing extended seasons, generally of twenty weeks or more. The terms “resident theatre,” “regional theatre,” and “repertory theatre” have been used variously to describe the nonprofit permanent professional theatres outside of New York. We have chosen to avoid using these terms because they have been given such a wide variety of meanings and are not truly descriptive of all theatres that fall in the same category.

almost all the major ones—have been created as nonprofit undertakings. They share with Lincoln Center, the Phoenix, City Center, Actors Studio, and the Shakespeare Festival in New York the objective of serving their communities as cultural, not commercial, institutions.

In 1960, the Ford Foundation made grants to four of these theatres. One of them, the Phoenix, was in New York; but the others were in Washington (Arena Stage), San Francisco (Actor's Workshop), and Houston (Alley Theatre). All had been in existence for several years and had exhibited staying power; all had been trying to become stable institutions; all had need of support beyond the box office to enable them to grow, to establish permanent companies, and to develop community support.

Satisfied with its 1960 program, the Foundation in 1962 announced grants totaling $6 million to eight existing theatre projects and one about to be created: to the Actors Studio in New York, the Actor's Workshop in San Francisco, the Alley Theatre in Houston, the Arena Stage in Washington, the Theatre Group of UCLA, the Milwaukee Repertory Theatre (formerly the Fred Miller Theatre), the Mummers Theatre in Oklahoma City, the American Shakespeare Festival Theatre and Academy at Stratford, Connecticut, and the Tyrone Guthrie Theatre in Minneapolis.

Many other permanent professional theatres have begun to take shape, often with the assistance of public or philanthropic groups. In Cincinnati the city has made available for token rent a converted recreation building in a public park as a home for the Playhouse in the Park. The Seattle Repertory Theatre made its debut in the autumn of 1963 in a building erected for the World's Fair. Atlanta, Baltimore, Honolulu, Louisville, Philadelphia, and St. Paul all have nonprofit professional theatres recently established or shortly to open.

In contrast to the professional theatres being established in communities throughout the country, an example of decentralizing the theatre “on the road” must be noted. This is the company organized in 1961 and sent out by the nonprofit National Repertory Theatre Foundation. Headed by Eva Le Gallienne, it took three plays to fifteen cities across the country during the 1963-1964 season, ending with a limited Broadway engagement. Its reception has been warm enough to indicate that many cities lack-
ing permanent professional theatres of their own are anxious for serious drama, and those that have their own theatres are hungry for more.

There is a recent trend, too, toward strong university-theatre relationships. Many universities and colleges now accept a responsibility for cultural leadership extending to the performing arts. They often serve as impresarios in booking touring attractions, and there are three illustrations of professional theatre resident on the campus.

In 1969, the Theatre Group at UCLA was established under the sponsorship of the University's Extension Division and was given modest financial support. The project has grown and prospered and now looks forward to building a theatre of its own, enlarging its production schedule, and touring in the area.

Princeton University sponsors professional repertory at its McCarter Theatre, with the University guaranteeing the company against loss. In 1964-1965, it housed the American Theatre Company. In addition, because of Princeton's proximity to the New York metropolitan area, the McCarter Theatre has adopted a highly successful policy of engaging Broadway and off-Broadway productions during their regular run on evenings when they are not playing in New York.

The Professional Theatre Program of the University of Michigan began in 1962-1963 with the Association of Producing Artists (APA) in residence for a twenty-week annual season under a three-year contract. As part of the program, the University also provides professional internships for gifted theatre graduates from all over the country, has initiated a playwright-in-residence program under which an original play by a talented new playwright is produced, and presents a series of lectures on theatre by distinguished professionals.

Many summer projects involving professional performers have sprung up at universities since the war: at Antioch College, Brandeis University, University of Denver, Stanford University, to cite a few. These companies use the facilities of the universities, and most are protected by them against loss.

Outdoor dramas celebrating the people and events of the nation's past have gained popularity in recent years and are often important tourist attractions. Local personnel and resources are generally relied on for financing, production, and performance. Some have had very long runs. "The Lost Colony" in North Carolina, for example, was first performed in the summer of 1937; "The Common Glory" in Virginia was given annually from 1947 to 1963, when it was replaced by "The Founders." Approximately twenty of these historical pageants and epic-dramas were presented during the summer of 1964.

Another summer phenomenon is the professional stock companies set up as profitmaking enterprises. Their continuing postwar increase—from 130 in 1948 to 151 in 1964—is another sign of decentralization. So are the 35 large, commercially successful musical theatres featuring revivals of successful Broadway musical comedies. The first of these was established in 1949 in Lambertville, New Jersey.

Then too, the community and amateur theatre movement in the United States has assumed large proportions. In 1964, there were approximately 5,000 formal amateur theatre groups having some continuity of organization, while other groups, performing on varied schedules, were estimated at about 35,000. Performances vary enormously in quality, but some are good enough to compete vigorously with professional theatre.

All this activity demonstrates the broad appeal of the theatre in this country. It is a well-loved art form, and the one that may have the best possibility of quickly developing-wide, new support, cutting across all social and cultural lines. The rise of the nonprofit permanent professional theatres is one of the most promising phenomena on the performing arts scene. They seem to point the way toward a long-awaited expansion of theatre—in both artistic and geographic terms.

In effect, the growth of the nonprofit professional playhouses represents an attempt to create a new theatrical structure to co-exist with the traditional commercial one. But it must not be imagined that the path to progress will be altogether smooth. Even after a theatre is organized it may take several years to take root in its community and to develop into an artistic unit of high quality.

Of course, foremost among the benefits of this theatrical expansion will be the increase of opportunities for actors. Through a survey in 1957-1958 of nearly seven thousand of its members employed as performers, Actors' Equity Association estimated that the average actor's income approximated $2,000.
Unquestionably, there will be more jobs available in the future with a resulting increase in income. However, many of these openings will be outside the major theatrical centers, forcing the actor to make a difficult decision. Seasons are sometimes too short to insure the actor an adequate livelihood, yet long enough to prevent his securing employment on Broadway, in films, or television. Walter Kerr, drama critic of the New York Herald Tribune, has written: "Generally, a sizable sacrifice is demanded of the actor, and if it is a sacrifice he would in his idealism be willing to make, it is frequently a sacrifice he does not dare to make, having mouths to feed."

The obvious solution is not only more theatres, but theatres with longer seasons. The exciting vision of lengthening seasons by having a company play in its own community for a regular season and then exchange visits with similar companies from other communities has, however, certain drawbacks. One is the basic incompatibility between the stages to which companies are accustomed. Some still work in traditional proscenium style theatres; others have chosen the currently fashionable thrust stages, still others work in the round. It is a difficult problem to solve, although adaptable stages can be designed.

In short, promising as are the developments in the theatre at the moment, it would be a mistake to believe that the current high pitch of excitement about them will carry everything before it. Thoughtful cooperation is needed now in order to coordinate the many new theatrical enterprises beginning in this country. We cannot afford to let unplanned development jeopardize the future of these organizations almost before they get started.

Dance

From the standpoint of finance, administration, and organization, the dance world is close to chaos. There is only one theatre devoted exclusively to the dance—at Jacob's Pillow in Massachusetts, which is open only three months a year. At the moment not more than five or six dance companies can claim both a national reputation and a relatively stable institutional setup capable of surviving a crisis. There are also perhaps a dozen leading dancers, who scrape together companies, get up programs on shoe-string budgets, and hope for a modest performance or two in New York, fol-

owed by a short and usually unprofitable road season. In this process there is little but toil and trouble for the choreographer as he scrims and saves over long periods to enable himself to engage dancers, rehearse, rent a hall, and then put on a performance, the audience for which will probably consist of friends, a few admirers, a handful of aficionados of his form of the dance and, if he is lucky, one or two critics. Seldom, it might be said, has so much been done with so little for so few.

The public for dance, although growing steadily, probably does not approach a million regular attendants. It is concentrated in two or three large metropolitan areas, New York being by far the largest, with outposts at educational institutions that have strong dance departments. Indeed, these are the chief source of bookings for modern dance companies; without them, it seems safe to say, there would be no touring by American dancers. Even so, Martha Graham, the founder of modern dance in America, has not toured in her own country for fifteen years. It is just too hazardous economically.

If there is a relatively small public for the dance in America, this is in some measure due to the limited opportunities the average person has had to become acquainted with the art and to appreciate it. The mass media have been less well able to bring this art to a broad public than they have music and drama. Furthermore, the cost of touring, involving as it does not only soloists but a corps de ballet or an ensemble, plus musical accompaniment, is almost prohibitively high. Consequently, unless the potential dance enthusiast lives in one of the few centers that boasts a resident company, he has been denied anything but the most sporadic firsthand experience.

There are few fields of endeavor in the arts, however, that command the dedication that the world of dance receives from its participants and from those few who comprise its patrons and public. For the former there is negligible financial return: $3,000 to $5,500 a year is the average income for a professional dancer, and he would be fortunate if this were steady from year to year. A prima ballerina can today hope for no more than $10,000 a year from the practice of her art (by comparison, a great opera star can earn as much as $6,000 for a single performance). In 1964, the New York City Ballet became the first compa-
ny in America to offer its dancers year-round employment; San Francisco, the next closest, provides about 36 weeks. Patrons, including Lincoln Kirstein, Lucia Chase, Jean Riddell, Ruth Page, and the B. de Rothschild and Rebekah Harkness foundations, have all but carried American dance on their shoulders for the past thirty years—that is, until the Ford Foundation joined them in 1963 by announcing grants totaling $7,756,000.

The Ford Foundation grants have understandably brought the whole dance field under new scrutiny, and this in itself has been useful. They have underlined the importance of George Balanchine, his aesthetic beliefs, his New York City Ballet, and its strong right arm, the School of American Ballet, since approximately $4.4 million of the Ford grants went to strengthen both company and school over a ten-year period. A program to improve instruction and performance in local communities received $1.5 million, and the rest of the grants have gone in varying amounts to the San Francisco Ballet, the National Ballet in Washington, and to companies in Boston, Houston, Philadelphia, and Salt Lake City.

Clearly the intent of the Ford Foundation grants has been to give massive support to a few established enterprises rather than spread itself more thinly over a larger number of less stable organizations. In making its selection, it has emphasized two factors: the importance of building a solid foundation and the importance of training. The level of American dance performance can be no higher than the level of its highly specialized and intensive training. But the haunting question continues to arise: training for what? America has far too few professional companies, and most of those that exist lead ephemeral lives, to say the least.

Let us consider briefly three outstanding dance organizations. The New York City Ballet is America's largest and most important dance institution. Its position is roughly comparable to the Metropolitan's in the field of American opera. Its 1962-1963 season cost nearly $1.5 million, and it came within less than $50,000 of meeting those costs with the revenue from 223 performances given during its eleven-and-a-half-week season in New York plus seventeen weeks on tour. It is clearly a major and relatively successful operation, economically speaking.

The San Francisco Ballet is really two companies. The number one company dances thirteen weeks with the opera, gives ten performances of "The Nutcracker," has a three-week spring season and an eight-week national tour. The number two company has a short road tour of one-night stands in small cities and a summer season in which it performs new works. The Ballet also maintains a school, with an enrollment of 400 students, which gives recitals. This San Francisco pattern is one to be emulated.

Perhaps the most renowned modern dance company in the world is Martha Graham's. Due to the high cost of performing it is able to function only when presented by a government agency, a foundation, or some other interested agency or individual. At such times Miss Graham and members of her company are paid a fee by the presenting agency, which also pays the production expenses and covers the deficit a presentation inevitably entails. There is no profit or loss to the company, which exists only at these infrequent times of rehearsal and performance.

In addition to the few community-based companies, there are several dance groups, both classical and modern, that tour with varying degrees of success. The American Ballet Theatre travels for several weeks, in addition to an occasional brief New York season; the Chicago Opera Ballet performs in 80 to 115 cities yearly; Jose Greco tours practically year-round; and other dance companies, such as those led by Alvin Ailey, Merce Cunningham, Robert Joffrey, Jose Limon, and Paul Taylor, which have no permanent homes, travel to find audiences for their work.

In projecting the future pattern of dance in America, there is urgent need for encouragement of permanent companies that do exist and show potential for growth—encouragement toward stability within their own communities, and encouragement to tour more widely than they are now able to do. The vitality of this art form, as of every other, depends as much upon the creation of new forms and contemporary expressions as upon the conservation of the heritage of the past. In other words, modern dance needs as much encouragement as classical ballet. Although attempts at cooperation in the dance world have met with little success, renewed efforts should be made to provide a permanent theatre in which several dance forms might be presented. Finally, the talented individuals who draw other talented dancers around them
must appreciate the need for managerial support as well. If their creative work is to prosper, they should recognize that it must be accompanied by greater financial stability, that this can be acquired principally by organizational strength, that such organization need not be feared as a limit on artistic freedom but rather as an assurance of opportunities to create and perform.

The Way Ahead

Over the last decade, some cities have begun construction of physical facilities that, properly used, have the potential of vastly increasing cooperative efforts in the arts and, ultimately, the audience for them. Others have experimented with community arts councils that carry out united fund drives for the arts, provide central services, and coordinate the efforts of the community’s various artistic enterprises.

These developments are encouraging as manifestations of the recognition the arts have gained in many places in the United States. The new physical facilities, the arts centers, represent an attack on one of the oldest problems confronting the performing arts—the lack of suitable homes. In addition, it seems that the sharing of facilities within these new centers may lead, more or less naturally, to the sharing of talents in special performances, and perhaps, though this is much less certain, to entirely new art forms.

These arts centers, finally, could form the basis for regional and perhaps national networks of performing arts organizations. Until recently the revival—let alone the expansion—of the road was a vain dream. There simply were not enough decent stages for the arts in this country. The new arts centers could change that and perhaps would even encourage the growth of new organizations specifically designed to tour or, at least, to spend more time away from their home bases. Surely the Metropolitan Opera, long beset by problems when its company went on the road each spring, would not be planning a new national touring company unless it saw in the existing and planned cultural centers the possibility of plenty of suitable homes away from home.

As the rise of new facilities encourages hope, so does the rise of other forms of cooperation between arts organizations. If arts councils in cities and states can focus attention on common problems and bring the representatives of various art forms together to help solve them, then it is possible to hope that these efforts can be expanded to embrace regional and national cooperative efforts.

The future, of course, must be one in which the performing arts are no longer part-time occupations, in which arts organizations provide their artists, as most now do not, with twelve-month employment and the public with year-round performances. It must also be a future in which the arts are available to all who desire them, regardless of the accidents of geographic location. With the partial exception of symphony orchestras, all the performing arts are still limited geographically to a few affluent urban centers. But we can scarcely be satisfied that our four or five finest orchestras lie east of the Mississippi, our two principal opera and ballet companies are 3,000 miles apart, and fine theatre is offered in scarcely more than a dozen cities.

Performing arts of high quality are costly, but relative to the wealth of our nation a decidedly modest financial outlay is all that is required for a broad extension of the opportunities to enjoy them.

There is no intention here to suggest that the creation of the organizations and physical facilities essential to a performing arts program worthy of the United States is a slight undertaking. On the contrary, a vast amount of hard and intelligent work will be required. At the same time there is no occasion for discouragement. Attainment of the ideal of giving all Americans the opportunity to share in the pleasures and rewards of the performing arts is no idle dream. It is easily within the capabilities of the nation.

III. PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS

The panel recommends that the artistic goal of the nation be the day when the performing arts are considered a permanent year-round contribution to communities throughout the country, and our artists are considered as necessary as our educators.

This, of course, is a long-term goal. In the view of the panel, a worthy interim objective for the nation would be the development and maintenance of the following high-quality nonprofit profes-
sional organizations operating on a year-
round basis:

Fifty permanent theatre companies
—a number approximating the metropo-
itan areas with populations over
500,000, a size large enough to sup-
port a year-round resident theatre.

Fifty symphony orchestras—pre-
senting concerts by the full orchestra
as well as providing musicians for
smaller orchestral and chamber music
groups.

Six regional opera companies—of-
fering short seasons in several metropo-
itan areas not yet ready to support
year-round performances—in addition
to the four major resident companies
and two permanent national touring
companies already established.

Six regional choral groups.

Six regional dance companies, in
addition to the two major resident
dance groups now in existence.

There is obviously room for substan-
tial differences in estimating the cost of
such a nationwide performing arts estab-
lishment. Much would depend on the
quality of the management, which is an
element of decisive importance, the vigor
of the promotional effort, and the degree
of cooperation that could be attained
between parts of the establishment—
choral groups working with opera com-
panies and symphony orchestras, for
example. The best available estimates
indicate that the amount currently being
spent on running high-quality nonprofit
professional performing arts organiza-
tions—which are now, in most cases,
part-time operations—approximates $60
million. (It needs to be emphasized that
this figure does not include the commer-
cial theatre or the semiprofessional and
amateur artistic activity in the country.)
Well-informed estimates of the annual
operating cost of the establishment out-
lined for the future fall between $150
million and $200 million (in current
dollars). Therefore, somewhere between
$90 million and $140 million of additional
operating funds would be needed to put a
professional performing arts establish-
ment of the sort envisaged on a year-
round basis of operation.

Arts organizations in the formative
stages do less well at the box office than
those that have had an opportunity to
develop an audience, and some require a
longer development time than others.
Percentages of what can realistically be
expected from the box office also vary
from one performing art to another. But,

assuming that receipts will continue to
constitute the same percentage they do
now, between $50 million and $80 million
annually could ultimately be expected to
come from the sale of tickets at the box
office. It follows that the new support
required to meet the normal operating
costs of a professional performing
arts establishment of the type indicated
could be expected to be somewhere be-
 tween $40 million and $60 million
annually.2 The larger amount is not
much over one-hundredth of 1 percent of
the nation's present annual income.

Implementation

Box Office and Other Earned Income

This panel believes that as a general
principle the nonprofit performing arts
organizations should not be expected to
pay their way at the box office. Indeed,
they cannot do so and still fulfill their
true cultural mission. This does not mean
that box office income cannot be improved
or costs cut even as artistic and public
obligations are met. On the contrary,
every effort should be made to increase
operating efficiency.

Individual Giving to the Performing Arts

The panel stresses the value to arts
organizations of broadening the base of
their financial support. This can only be
accomplished if the organizations are
imaginative and effective in developing
programs to serve the artistic needs of
the community and if the public is made
fully aware of the significance of the
work being done.

Corporate Support for the Performing Arts

Corporate dollars are important dol-
lars, capable of making the difference
between life or death for an arts organi-
zation. If business corporations have not
done so, as most of them have not, the
panel urges that they look carefully at
the arts and their place in the communi-

2These estimates are based on current costs and do
not take into account capital expenditures for
more and better halls and theatres, which will
surely be necessary.

2The ensuing subheadings refer to chapters in the
full report wherein there is considerable discussion
of each of these subjects. In this abridgement we
are including only the Panel's specific recommen-
dations.
ty. Support for the arts is a part of community responsibility, and a healthy cultural environment is clearly in the self-interest of the business community.

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Foundation Support for the Performing Arts

The panel believes the role of the local foundation in providing continuing support cannot be overestimated. Indeed, it may turn out to be as important as any single factor in the development of the arts.

The panel believes the large national foundation can make its greatest contribution to the arts in planning and innovation. It has a special capacity to determine the most critical areas of national concern and to devise effective means of solving basic problems.

The panel urges foundations to increase their interest in the arts and in so doing to recognize the necessarily speculative element in the development of the performing arts and give particular encouragement to the bold and the venturesome—an encouragement they are especially equipped to provide.

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Government and the Arts

The panel believes no form of government aid to the arts should vitiate private initiative, reduce private responsibility for direction, or hamper complete artistic freedom. These must remain the prerogative of the citizens who direct performing arts institutions and of the artists.

The panel believes every local government should have as an accepted goal the strengthening of local arts organizations and the broadening of their service to the community, for example, by insuring adequate facilities for performance; providing funds for operating costs; supplying supporting services; purchasing the services of the arts for schools and the community; exempting arts organizations from taxes and license fees; helping mobilize community support for the arts.

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The panel believes that local governments have a direct responsibility for seeing that study, appreciation, and training in all the arts is an accepted part of the curriculums of their school systems. In the longer view, this panel believes that the provision for adequate education in the performing arts may prove the most effective way by which local governments can promote the well-being of the arts.

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The panel believes the principal role of state governments in regard to the performing arts is to see that presentations of high professional quality are made available to citizens throughout the state, particularly where local arts organizations cannot provide such opportunities. The range of programs that a state should consider includes assessing statewide needs and making inventories of state and regional resources; supporting professional touring programs; providing technical assistance for local organizations; encouraging regional cooperation and development; developing the cultural programs within state educational institutions; removing tax burdens and legislative restrictions.

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As a general proposition, the panel believes that a state arts council, commission, or similar body, permanently constituted and strongly staffed, can provide elements of stability and continuity in support of the arts that may well be lost where the support depends primarily on continuity of individual leadership and legislative appropriations for specific projects.

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The panel supports the development of a National Council on the Arts and urges that sufficient funds be provided to carry out the responsibilities assigned to it by Congress.

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The panel believes that existing federal arts programs, limited though they are, can be strengthened and that federal programs indirectly affecting the arts should be administered with a greater awareness of their cultural implications.

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The panel believes that for the present federal aid for arts organizations, apart from the minuscule amount now available, can be most effectively provided through matching grants to meet the capital needs of arts organizations.

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The panel concludes that while private support should remain dominant, the federal government—together with state
and local governments—should give strong support to the arts, including the performing arts, by appropriate recognition of their importance, by direct and indirect encouragement, and by financial cooperation.

Organization and Management of the Arts

As talent is needed to create and perform a work of art, so equal talent, though of a different sort, is needed to create and govern the institutions that provide the settings for these arts. It is for this reason the panel believes it essential for an arts organization to have an effective board of trustees and competent management in addition to talented artistic direction.

The panel believes there is urgent need for an independent national information center that can assume an important and continuing role in the development of the performing arts and urges that every encouragement be given to its establishment.

The University and the Professional Performing Arts

The panel believes schools and conservatories of recognized standards must not be allowed to weaken or disappear, as some have in recent decades. They must, instead, be strengthened, for they continue to produce the majority of solo artists and the ensemble musicians who man our finest musical institutions; from them come some of our best trained actors and virtually all our professional dancers.

The panel believes that the universities will play an increasingly important role in the training of professional performing artists. Those universities that decide to assume a responsibility for professional training must be prepared to adjust their admissions policies and curricular requirements as necessary to meet the special needs of students of the performing arts, and they must attract the most highly qualified performing artists as teachers to their faculties.

The panel believes there is urgent need to redress the existing imbalance in the financial support of the physical sciences and that of the arts and humanities in universities.

Building Greater Appreciation

The effective exposure of young people to the arts is as much a civic responsibility as programs in health and welfare. Although the panel recognizes that the initiative for an expanded educational effort in the arts will generally come from individuals, success in the measure necessary will require the combined backing of the family and the school system. Also important are the encouragement of private organizations, local and state arts councils, and the cooperation of local governments and the federal Office of Education.

Many more resident professional performing arts organizations are needed in communities throughout the country, but if the arts are to be made as widely available as is desirable, the panel emphasizes the necessity of increasing the mobility of the performing arts by new means and on a new scale.

This panel believes the importance of the electronic media cannot be overstressed in increasing the availability of the performing arts of high quality and in creating new audiences and even new works for them. In the view of this panel, the commercial television industry has a definite responsibility to improve its methods of presentation and programming in the performing arts.

The panel believes educational television has a great opportunity to make a significant contribution to the arts. The panel urges the community to provide the support necessary to exploit this opportunity vigorously.

So long as neither professional nor amateur confuses the two areas of expression and both retain a perspective toward excellence, the relationship between them can be lively and constructive. The panel believes that thriving amateurism can play a major role in creating audiences for high-quality professional performance and that amateur interest in the arts should be encouraged in every possible way.
IV. THE CHALLENGE OF THE PERFORMING ARTS

This study of the performing arts is made with the conviction that the arts are one of the central elements of a good society, an essential of a full life for the many, not a luxury for the few. This conviction is shared by growing numbers of Americans, with the result that the arts are being given a far larger mission than they have been commonly accorded in the past.

Few can take issue with the objective of making the arts available to everyone who wishes to enjoy them. But an important cautionary note must be added if the actions discussed in this report are to be meaningful. We must never allow the central focus on quality to weaken or shift. Popularization in any realm often leads to a reduction of standards. In our effort to broaden the audience base, we must not be led to accept imitation as a substitute for creation, mediocrity as a stand-in for excellence. Democratization carries with it a peril for the arts, even as it does for education. There are no guarantees against the dilution of standards that often accompanies an expanding public, but a constant critical awareness of the danger can do much to prevent its consequences.

We can never expect to fill our concert halls, our theatres, our opera houses—the ones we now have and the ones we shall build—unless men and women and young people experience within their walls some new perception of man and the meaning of his life. We cannot hope to hold the audiences we now possess or gain new audiences without drama that is moving and exciting, music that stirs and grips the listener, and dance that creates true enjoyment. We may talk ad infinitum of box office prices and subscription campaigns, press agentry and public relations, classes and seminars and critics; the only thing that will draw and hold audiences, present and future, is a world of the performing arts that is vital, beautiful, and relevant—in classical as well as contemporary forms.

Organizations sponsoring and presenting the live professional performing arts have a special custodianship of high quality. Those that provide inspiring examples of excellence must be maintained, those that have yet to attain highest quality must strive continuously to improve their performance.

It is a bold venture to envisage a great enlargement of the mission of the performing arts—opera, instrumental and choral music, the dance, and theatre—when all of them are in deep economic difficulties in carrying out their present programs. However, the basic resources, human and material, for the full development of the arts do exist in the United States. The problem is to mobilize them and to use them effectively for the pleasure of the many. The panel is under no illusion that this can be accomplished easily or speedily; this report bristles with difficult problems to which there are no easy answers. But these problems can be solved by a nation that has already accomplished so much in the political, social, and economic realms. In the middle of the twentieth century the full development of our potential in the arts in general and in the performing arts in particular presents a challenge to the restless American spirit that will call upon its reserves of strength, imagination, and capacity to innovate. We believe the challenge is worthy of the nation and that the nation is equal to the challenge.