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## **PROFESSIONAL RESIDENT THEATRE IN BOSTON: A FEASIBILITY STUDY (1981)**

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CHAPTER FOUR:

Primary Political Considerations for Theatre and  
the Performing Arts in Boston

Chapters Two and Three examined the social and economic factors relating to the development of theatre and the other performing arts in Boston. It became clear in these chapters that nonprofit arts organizations will never become financially self-sustaining and that their survival would depend a great deal upon the generosity of a small but varied group of contributors. The largest single contributor, it was learned, was the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency. The Endowment has been the only government agency able to make truly significant contributions to the budgets of the larger non-profit arts organizations in Boston. The arts agencies of the city and state have also had a hand in the development of these organizations, but the aid has not always been financial. Sometimes the "aid" has actually been detrimental. Because nonprofit groups have become reliant on others to perpetuate their very existence, the groups have relinquished certain amounts of power to these government agencies. Exactly what these agencies are able to control depends on the shape their offer takes and how important this offering is to the arts organization. This chapter is concerned with the political reasons behind the recent government involvement in the arts. It also examines how this involvement has affected arts organizations, particularly theatre, in Boston.

The National Endowment for the Arts and the Humanities was created to fill a growing need. In the early 1960's, arts organizations were increasing in number across the country and most were in difficult financial straits and in need of outside funding. The United States government had theretofore regarded the

arts with relative indifference. Unlike European nations, America lacked a tradition of sustained government support to the arts and held instead to its own strong tradition of "rugged individualism" -- which translated into the belief that if an art form was worth having, it would either receive contributions from concerned private citizens or it would be capable of its own self-support. The best and most worthy arts organizations, it was felt, were those most fit for survival -- weak organizations (i.e., those with deficits) should be cut off and left to wither and die.

America became somewhat more enlightened in the 1960's under the Kennedy Administration. The President appeared to enjoy the arts, perhaps not with the same level of intellectual appreciation and understanding that his wife possessed, but he did give the arts a certain level of public respectability and exposure when he commissioned a number of "command performances" at the White House. In 1961, Kennedy unsuccessfully introduced legislation calling for the establishment of a Federal Advisory Council on the Arts. In 1962, August Heckscher, director of the Twentieth Century Fund, was appointed by Kennedy as his special consultant on the arts. When Heckscher recommended that a National Arts Foundation be established to award grants-in-aid to arts organizations, Kennedy responded:

Government can never take the role of patronage and support filled by private individuals and groups in our society. But government surely has a significant part in helping establish the conditions under which art can flourish -- in encouraging the arts as it encourages science and learning.<sup>1</sup>

The President wisely realized that the arts could be in danger of relinquishing their vital artistic freedom should the federal government play too important a role in their finances. He knew that no matter how freely the money would be given, money is power and ought to be given with caution.

Kennedy did not live to see a federal arts council take shape and President Johnson, his successor, had no strong personal feelings for the arts. The factors that eventually proved instrumental in bringing the National Endowment into existence late in 1965 were substantial support from prominent Senate members including Senators Claiborne Pell and Jacob Javits and the inclusion of the National Endowment as

a minor part of a major effort, involving vast federal spending, to reconstruct the United States as a Great Society. President Johnson also sought to prove himself an appropriately cultivated successor to President Kennedy and at least as much a public patron of the arts as Nelson Rockefeller who in 1960 had launched the New York State Council on the Arts.<sup>2</sup>

There is nothing new in the fact that legislators will often approve or initiate a project for reasons other than pure altruism. What is relatively new is that the arts have become important enough in our day-to-day society to merit inclusion in trading deals between legislators and federal and state agencies or simply between fellow legislators.

It used to be that a Congressman traded his vote on a military base in someone else's district for a shipyard in his own. Today he is just as likely to trade a shipyard for a philharmonic.<sup>3</sup>

The steady and significant increase in the budget of the National Endowment for the Arts has already been noted. Should a professional resident theatre of substantial proportion seek

establishment in Boston, this writer had predicted good availability of federal funds. The consistent increases in federal funding to the arts may be explained by the fact that there remains today less of the old sense that major arts organizations are "private" institutions, meant to serve and be supported by a limited group of wealthy private interest groups.<sup>4</sup> In Boston, some of the public may resent the appeal that the Boston Symphony and the Opera Company still have for the upper classes. However, while these two groups do receive a fair share of their private contributions from a handful of the well-to-do, the number of smaller contributions coming from the less wealthy has increased considerably overall. There has been a general trend towards making the arts more accessible to the community. Boston's larger performing arts organizations manifest this trend through the Boston Pops and the Boston Ballet's summer appearances at the Hatch Shell and through the Opera Company's touring group, Opera New England. This greater community accessibility to the arts has transformed arts organizations from "private" to "public" institutions and has led to significant increases in the Endowment's yearly allocations.

The possibility of heavy government interference in the arts that Kennedy and opponents of the Endowment feared might occur, happily, has not. Although the Endowment may indeed hold all the cards when it comes to deciding which groups are eligible and to what degree, the Endowment has not abused its power. Robert Brustein, presently in his last year as artistic director of the Yale Repertory Theatre, served on the theatre advisory panel for the Endowment for several years and was able to view the Endow-

ment's actions as both donor and recipient. He noted in The New York Times in 1974 that the Endowment,

whatever its limitations, has by far the most progressive and objective standards for determining assistance to the performing arts. It provides, with the help of expert panels, relief to all qualified institutions, including the most experimental, regardless of their size or popularity.<sup>5</sup>

Proponents of the National Endowment had hoped that state and local governments would take over the responsibility for funding their own area's cultural organizations at the point where the Endowment had left off. To this end, the bill establishing the Endowment specified that 20% of the total Endowment appropriation should be evenly distributed among the individual states for administration through their respective arts councils. Very few states, however, have picked up on the Endowment's lead since the federal-state partnership began in 1967 and many states have preferred instead to let the Endowment do their job for them, rather than substantially increasing their own levels of funding to the arts. Massachusetts is one of these states. Using 1976 as an example, Massachusetts appropriated only \$1 million to its arts organizations when these same organizations received \$4 million from the National Endowment. At the other end of the scale, the New York Legislature appropriated \$31 million to its arts organizations that same year while they received \$9 million from the National Endowment.<sup>6</sup> If Massachusetts had matched New York's ratio of federal to state funding for the arts, its appropriations for 1976 would have been \$13.7 million.

After 12 years of existence and a peak appropriation of

\$217 million, it is clear that the Massachusetts Council on the Performing Arts will not receive any truly substantial increase in its appropriation in the near future. Max Friedli, Chairman of the Special Commission on the Performing Arts, has pointed out that a young government agency such as the Massachusetts Council must grow steadily each year as it continues to prove itself to opponents and proponents alike.<sup>7</sup> Contrarily, while the appropriations to the Massachusetts Council may have indeed increased in absolute figures in the past twelve years, there have also been a number of cutbacks in recent years sufficient enough to slow down any momentum the Council may have gained. A cut in next year's (1980) appropriation is under consideration as of this writing. The National Endowment has been able to accomplish as much as it has because its appropriations have risen measurably every year. Since Massachusetts' legislators will not help create a similar success story for its own Council on the Arts, several legislators have sought an alternative means to fund the arts. This alternative method would not use money from the State Treasury, but would rather dip anew into the public's purses. Their plan would establish a special state lottery for the arts under the auspices of the State Lottery Commission.

The development of the proposed Arts Lottery would be the first such venture of its kind in this country. Its structure has been closely modeled after the Australian Arts Lottery which was able to finance the erection of the \$150 million Sydney Opera House. Tickets for this lottery are to be relatively high priced -- at least \$5 each -- in order to attract buyers in the upper

income range of \$12,000 to \$30,000 and to discourage the buyers of the more traditional lower-priced lotteries who most often come from the lower income brackets. The proponents of the Arts Lottery Bill expect to see net revenues of between \$10 - 12 million for the arts annually. These revenues are to be split equally between the cities and towns, and the Massachusetts Council. Local arts councils would have distribution power over the city and town funds. Each local arts council would be required to join a statewide arts council network before receiving funds, very similar to the manner in which state grants from the National Endowment for the Arts are distributed. The funds the Massachusetts Council would receive would be in addition to their regular funding from the Legislature. As of this writing, the Arts Lottery is being given strong consideration in the Legislature.

Approval of the Arts Lottery Bill would almost certainly result in a reduction or at least a very definite leveling off in the appropriations to the Massachusetts Council. Funding the arts in this manner would take the state "off the hook." If the Lottery is as successful as it is hoped, a \$5 - 6 million addition to the budgets of local arts councils and a \$5 - 6 million addition to the Massachusetts Council would enable the individual legislator to return to his/her constituents and report on the great strides the state has made in support of the arts. In actuality, the state will simply become a croupier for the arts: the public will place its bets, and while some will win (and be paid off by the croupier-state), most will certainly lose and their bets will revert to the house (the arts in Massachusetts).

Such an abundance of additional funding could, of course, help to accomplish a great deal for the arts: organizations in financial peril might be able to receive emergency loans or grants designed to pull them through a crisis; a new project, such as the founding of a professional resident theatre in Boston, might obtain the extra dollars necessary to attract top-notch actors and designers and to arrange for a well-publicized subscription drive; and on the community level, those segments of the population with low levels of income might obtain free or reduced admission to a variety of performing arts events. A strong public response to the Arts Lottery could make a favorable impression on private foundations, the National Endowment, and corporations. Indeed, since each grant coming from the Lottery must be equally matched with dollars from other sources, a favorable impression is absolutely necessary. \$12 million in Arts Lottery funds will demand another \$12 million from sources already heavily tapped or unwilling at this point to be tapped further. The more established arts organizations in the state should not have too great a problem in matching the new Lottery appropriations since they already receive a fair level of funding from varied public and private sources. However, the increasing number of small, semi-professional arts organizations may find rough going in their search to obtain matching funds because of their lack of credibility, their inexperience in fund-raising, and the high level of competition they will encounter from the more established groups. Should the Arts Lottery Bill become law, it may be wise for legislators to lower the matching requirements to perhaps an 80 - 20 ratio for

the first few years to encourage new funding sources gently rather than trying, unrealistically at that, to will them into existence with a jolt.

Robert Fitzgerald, Deputy Director of the Massachusetts Council on the Arts and Humanities, believes, as does this writer, that the focus of the Arts Lottery should be entirely different from the one stated in the bill before the legislature. There should be a single focus, a single goal to the Lottery just as the Australian Arts Lottery was directed toward building the Sydney Opera House.<sup>8</sup> In this arrangement, once enough money has been raised to complete a specific project, a new project can be announced. By making the Arts Lottery a funding source for every arts organization in the State, the Lottery becomes something of a United Way for the arts. The proponents of the bill themselves point to examples of such specialized lotteries as the one in Canada for the 1976 Olympics, and the special lottery in New York for the 1980 Winter Olympics, yet the lottery they propose is vague in nature: Support for the arts? Which arts? Whose arts? Why?

Obviously, any lottery with a more specialized intent would need to choose its pet project with care to avoid resentment or conflicts of interest. A lottery founded to establish and support a professional theatre based in Boston would not gain many supporters in Western Massachusetts. However, a lottery designed to fund what might be seen as the embodiment of a true state theatre, a theatre of national and international proportions which would be based in Boston but would extensively tour Massa-

chusetts, the United States and possibly the world, might elicit quite a different response and achieve much greater success. The Legislators have a choice: they can choose to perpetuate a system that encourages the continued presence of a large number of undistinguished arts organization, or they can seize the opportunity and create an Arts Lottery that would help bring artistic excellence to the State.

Support for small local arts organizations should not come from a special lottery. Such funding is the responsibility of the Massachusetts Council and the individual cities and towns in which these organizations are located. An Arts Lottery for general funding purposes will only take the burden of responsibility off their shoulders when this is a burden they must accept. The arts are an important social, economic and cultural presence in Massachusetts and the fact that they are in financial trouble cannot and should not be ignored.

Boston's Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs is an agency designed to act as the liaison between the city and its individual neighborhoods, and the city's cultural groups and institutions. As mentioned in Chapter Three, the Mayor's Office is not a funding agency. Traditionally, Boston has always contributed very little to the budgets of its cultural institutions and there is no indication that it plans to change the established precedent in the near future. However, the Mayor's Office is in the position of being able to bring local groups in direct contact with whatever city agency the group needs to deal with, without all the usual time-consuming red tape. This can be especially

helpful when, for example, a theatre group wishes to relocate into a structure that needs extensive renovation. The Mayor's Office can introduce and/or represent the group to the Zoning Board, the Boston Redevelopment Authority, or any other agency that would apply.

At the present time, the Mayor's Office is heavily involved in the plans for the revitalization of Boston's Theatre District. In some of the critical areas of the overall revitalization plan (such as the sale of the Wilbur Theatre by the Tufts-New England Medical Center, and the leasing and renovation of the Music Hall by the Metropolitan Center Inc.) the Mayor's Office has acted as an overseer to insure that whatever action is taken, that action will be in the best interests of the city, its people, and the cultural environment. There are, however, many local theatre leaders who would disagree with the steps the Mayor's Office has taken in the Theatre District. These individuals believe that the city is paying too much attention to the commercial theatres and next to none to its indigenous theatres. Steve Warnick, General Manager of the Next Move Theatre, remarked in December, 1978: "The thing that disturbs me -- and others -- is the extent of over-concentration by the city on the Theatre District and not enough on the many fine resident theatre companies." Jim Kitendaugh, Managing Director of the Boston Shakespeare Company noted the city's general lack of interest toward local performing arts: "We do feel that Boston has been a little slower in showing concrete support for indigenous arts than have other cities. For local groups, it has been a very rough row to hoe." Gary Weitz,

local area director, writer and actor, observed the consequences of the city's emphasis on the theatre district:

The creation of a theatre district means in effect that the rest of the city is a 'non-theatre' district. And those resident theatre companies struggling for survival outside the district are put at a disadvantage -- they're looked at differently by City Hall and the public as a result.<sup>9</sup>

Part of the difficulty that the Mayor's Office has in dealing with local groups stems from the Office's admitted lack of policy on just what they are able to do for these groups beyond easing bureaucratic red tape. The Office conducted an audience survey in the spring of 1979 and officials there say, as of this writing, that they are awaiting the results from this survey before a more detailed plan of action for the Office can be determined. In the meantime, the theatre managers quoted in the paragraph above have volunteered a few ideas. Local theatres, they say, could use some public endorsements from important city figures to help lend some vital credibility and legitimacy to their work. Jim Kitendaugh revealed that while he is grateful to Helen Rees (Director of the Mayor's Office) for speaking at the press conference which announced the opening of his company's new home, an elected city or state official has never seen a performance by the group.<sup>10</sup> Steve Warnick wants to see the mayor get involved:

I would like to see Kevin White come to a press conference in our lobby on an opening night and bring the television cameras.

The White Administration, Warnick believes, "is good at using the media to get the kind of publicity they want."<sup>11</sup>

The Mayor's Office will often ask local groups to perform without remuneration at special events or, in the case of its

Summerthing program, the Office will pay the groups a minimal fee for a full-length performance presented free to the public. These events are great opportunities for the city to better its own public relations, but the events do little to promote the local groups (if the public can see a local group free, why should they want to pay to see a performance in a theatre?) and since little, if any, money changes hands, the events do even less to help the groups' poor financial situations.

Boston city government is very conscious of the images its varied sections of the city present. Mayor Kevin White and his aides at both the Mayor's Office and at the Boston Redevelopment Authority want the public to have an image of the Theatre District as a place that is vibrant and safe to visit, but most of all, they want the public to feel that it is a place worth spending their time and money. Like any other urban renewal project in the city from Quincy Market to the Prudential Center, the Theatre District means money and prestige for Boston. Local theatre groups in Boston possess neither the "prestige" of a Broadway show nor the ability to attract large numbers of patrons in the upper income brackets as do the commercial theatres. Therefore, there is no place for local theatre groups in the present scheme of things at City Hall. Business must be attended to first.

Boston has given little real support to its own theatre groups. Since the closing of the Boston Museum, Boston theatre history relates a story of one short-lived theatre company after another. No matter how well-intended the rhetoric may sound at a press conference, most government officials have little interest

in supporting the arts, and understand very little of the problems of arts organizations. Because politicians want to see something tangible for the support they choose to give, a theatre, or any performing art, cannot go to a politician with its hands empty. The reason Janice Cashell and her Massachusetts Center Repertory Company were able to attract \$20,000 from the state in 1977, all totally outside the budget of the Massachusetts Council, was because Cashell went directly to certain state Legislators and told them that the money she was asking for would go toward bringing inner city kids to the theatre for special matinee performances. Cashell and her company, in effect, earned their money for their services rendered.<sup>12</sup> Although the Massachusetts Center Rep has not performed beyond their 1977 season (for reasons to be discussed in Chapter Six), the approach they used with the government was sound.

Any future attempt at establishing a professional resident theatre in Boston must deal with a political climate for theatre that will be unresponsive and uninterested, if not outright hostile. To succeed, the theatre must make itself known very quickly, or better still, it should bring its reputation along with its leaders. It must be perceived as something very special -- special enough for politicians to need the theatre more than the theatre needs the politicians. While no theatre fitting this description has been based in Boston since the days of the old Boston Museum, such a theatre will be coming to Cambridge in 1980 under the leadership of Robert Brustein who will begin to create a situation at Harvard similar to the one he created and operated

at Yale for thirteen years. This is not meant to say that Brustein and Harvard University will be the saviors of Boston's non-commercial theatre -- they do, however, possess a good many of the proper ingredients for a first-rate professional resident theatre.

CHAPTER FIVE:

Indigenous Theatre and Service Organizations

Amidst all the glamour and glitz of Broadway tryouts and road shows, Boston's local theatre groups are often either forgotten or ignored. The Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs isn't sure how it can help the groups, the press often sends its second-stringers out to review the productions, and the public more often than not prefers to spend the extra dollars to see Broadway's latest hit rather than paying less to view (what is in their eyes) a fairly unknown commodity. Those few groups which are better managed and which produce a finer or more appealing artistic product have had a difficult time making their relative superiority known. Their individual achievements had become almost totally homogenized with the majority of theatres that, at best, produce mediocre, undistinguished work. In the last two seasons, the cream has slowly begun to separate and rise to the top. Two groups, the Next Move Theatre and the Boston Shakespeare Company, have made great strides in public visibility and recognition. Although they are quite different in production style and organizational make-up, both groups have developed into well-managed companies that create attractively packaged entertainment appealing to a wide range of audience tastes. The Cambridge Ensemble and the Reality Theatre are two other local groups whose product quality has distinguished them from the rest of the field. However, because both groups emphasize innovative work with new scripts, their appeal to the general public is limited, consequently their physical size is much smaller than the two groups first mentioned.

The impotence of Boston's indigenous theatre has been

blamed on many factors. The Broadway influence has already been mentioned, as has the lack of support from city and state agencies. Another factor, agreed upon by the groups and their critics alike, is that these companies have no common ideology, no sense of working together. Even though their individual problems bear many similarities, most groups go about their business as if no other groups existed in Boston. Helen Rees of the Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs has stated, "One of the main problems is that they don't connect with each other, they don't create a force which has to be dealt with by the city."<sup>1</sup> Steve Warnick of the Next Move agrees that local theatres are scattered and weak in their individual autonomy, but he disagrees with the method that the Mayor's Office is using in its attempt to correct the problem. Under Rees' leadership, the Mayor's Office initiated the formation of the Boston League of Resident Theatres. The League is designed to bring unity to local theatre groups by acting as a forum for open discussion between company leaders and the city and by posing as a banner under which the groups can rally for their common causes. Warnick is strongly opposed to the League because it is run by the city and not by the local theatres which should, he believes, come together on their own initiative. When local groups let the city hold the umbrella for all of them to stand under, criticism becomes diffused and difficult to articulate.<sup>2</sup> Because of this, Warnick did not allow the Next Move to join the League until just recently and for a time it remained the only major local theatre not to have done so. The Next Move, however, has continued to maintain a rebellious attitude towards the Mayor's

Office, and has refused to attend their meetings. This rebellious attitude is, no doubt, facilitated by the fact that the Next Move is the company best-received by both the public and the media, and can, therefore, afford to remain fairly independent.

None of the local theatres operating in Boston at this time harbors immediate plans to develop into professional resident theatres operating under Equity contracts. Some groups, such as the Boston Shakespeare Company and the Next Move Theatre, do possess ambitious managements which see full Equity status as a possibility that is strongly contingent on their continued success in attracting large audiences and generous funding sources. Other groups, such as the Lyric Stage, the Reality Theatre and the Cambridge Ensemble, have their sights aimed much lower and are content to remain small in size since that best suits their particular styles of production. The overwhelming majority of local theatres, however, are forced to be most concerned with simply trying to raise enough money to produce their next show and/or pay the rent rather than pondering expansion.

In its four year history, the Boston Shakespeare Company's budget has grown from \$11,000 to \$250,000 and its number of full-time salaried company members has gone from one to sixteen. In its most recent season, 1978-79, the company produced five new productions and added two revivals, playing as many as four productions in continuous repertory. Their subscriptions have risen steadily to a present high of 1,200. Only 15% of their budgets during the last four years has not been covered by earned income. Through their own determination, craftsmanship, time and money,

they moved their performance space from a quaint but inadequate church at the corner of Berkeley and Marlborough Streets to a newly developed renovated 320 seat home in Horticulture Hall. They have also developed a successful educational touring program that has played in more than one hundred Boston area schools. The program consists of two flexible one hour presentations which introduce students to the world of the theatre and to Shakespeare's world in particular.

What is the method responsible for the Boston Shakespeare Company's rapid growth? Managing director James Kitendaugh revealed that the company was able to achieve its success as a result of a

salable program that you market tremendously aggressively, and everyone works their ass off ... We feel we have been most successful when we have been dependent on our own efforts (both in marketing and fund raising), and our own productions and our own promotion. The only dollars we can depend on are dollars that we earn through good programs and aggressive marketing of those good programs.<sup>3</sup>

It would seem that a continuation of the present policy will assure the Boston Shakespeare Company of continued growth -- but this writer is not convinced that the company will be able to grow more than it already has.

The reason for this skepticism lies in the artistic approach they have to their product and in the type of audience they have cultivated. The Boston Shakespeare Company approaches Shakespeare's works in a skimmed, one-dimensional fashion. In an effort to make the plays understood by the masses, the productions are often merely reenactments of the plot. Physical business

is emphasized because the young, relatively inexperienced performers cannot handle the verse. In Arthur Friedman's (theatre critic for The Real Paper) words, they do "the lowest denomination Shakespeare."<sup>4</sup> This is not to say that they are unskilled at what they do, but rather that what they do has little substance.

Perhaps the last point might be better illustrated through a personal observation. Recently, this writer was witness to a portion of one of the company's touring shows that was performed, in this case, not for children but for the general public in a free outdoor demonstration. Two young, animated actors were in the process of summarizing the plot of All's Well That Ends Well in story theatre fashion. None of Shakespeare's words was used as the actors developed the tale of the lovers Bertram and Helena with a bit of slapstick here and an anachronism there. The audience responded warmly and the crowd grew in size around them. Only when the pair finally reached the very end of the story did they actually use Shakespeare's own verse. But, instead of presenting those few lines as naturally as they had developed their story, their deliveries were ponderous and stilted, lifeless and without meaning. It was as if they were saying to the audience, "Shakespeare tells one hell of a story if you don't let all those strange words get in your way." Their mainstage productions, of course, do use the standard Shakespearean text, but this lack of emphasis on the play's language persists, while simple plot development reigns supreme. It is arguable how successful the company might have been, especially in regards to the large number of school group bookings, had it not chosen to shelter its lack of profes-

sionalism under the cloak of Shakespeare's rubberstamp respectability.

A promotional brochure quotes Carolyn Clay of The Boston Phoenix: "At the Boston Shakespeare Company, every offering is as you like it." The "you" Clay speaks of is unspecified, but it is almost certainly the general public, the masses, those individuals who have neither the background nor, more importantly, the willingness to try to understand Shakespeare on his own terms. The company does not attempt to challenge its audience but rather panders to their tastes or lack thereof. The fault of such a policy rests primarily with Bill Cain, the company's artistic director. Unfortunately, the company will never have an artistic vision more profound than that of a television sit-com as long as Cain remains in control. It will never exhibit true artistic significance; it will never grow to national prominence. At best, the company will remain as it is today -- a popular semi-professional local theatre that is successful in its own limited approach to the Shakespeare canon.

While the Boston Shakespeare Company prospers through its popular approach to Shakespeare, the Next Move Theatre has thrived on the reputation and achievements of its individual company performers. The founders of the Next Move were originally part of the Proposition Theatre in Cambridge (now based in New York) which emphasized improvisational comedy. Financial and artistic disagreements caused a split in the company in 1974. The resulting offshoot company performed their own improvisational show called the Next Move Revue at the Charles Playhouse from the fall of 1974 to April of 1975. During their residence at the Charles, the company

members recognized their common desire to possess a theatre of their own, and to that end they formed a collaboration in which a portion of their weekly salaries at the Charles were placed in a common fund for future company expenses. Their search for a potential theatre space led them to a small unused building that once served as the stable for the Boston Mounted Police and was situated next to the Institute of Contemporary Art on Boylston Street near Massachusetts Avenue. The need to raise money for the extensive renovation of the space forced them to make a difficult choice. Should the company be founded as a nonprofit institution or should it continue as a commercial operation? Because the company had been in existence for only a short period of time, they felt they did not yet possess a significant track record and it would be extremely difficult to raise funds from the usual nonprofit sources. They also felt fund raising would be especially difficult because of similar fund raising activity conducted at that time by the Boston Repertory Theatre. The decision was made, therefore, to remain a commercial venture and financial backing would be sought through the traditional limited-partner arrangement. Within a year and a half there was enough money to begin the renovation and the intimate 182 seat theatre finally opened in January 1977 with a revised version of their improvisational revue.

The internal arrangement of the company remained the same in the new theatre. Since there was no artistic director, important decisions such as choice of plays and of guest directors were made by the entire company which consisted of a small core of actors who also held administrative positions in the organization. While the productions consistently received good reviews from all

sections of the media, the number of productions per season was limited by the company's inherent financial make-up. The 1977-78 season contained only three productions. As a commercial venture, they were forced to depend almost entirely upon box office receipts to meet all their financial commitments. Much like their distant Broadway counterparts, each production was forced to sustain a long run in order to recoup the investment. The company soon discovered that their artistic freedom was harshly limited by economic realities and in October 1978 they legally reorganized the company as a nonprofit institution. However, because of the lag time involved when applying to large funding sources, any differences in their programming will not be felt until the 1979-80 season.

Although the company has successfully produced a few serious works such as Howard Zinn's Emma and David Rudkin's Ashes, the backbone of the company lies in its strength to produce at least one new improvisational revue each season. The other three productions in next year's four play production season will include a new musical based on a fifteenth century commedia scenario, a new play by New Englander James Carroll and a classic. Also in the next season, the company will place itself in the hands of an artistic director (as yet unnamed) for the first time in an attempt to develop a consistent artistic point of view. Steve Warnick explained that the group is looking towards building a substantial permanent resident company -- one that would have the ability and the desire to tackle new projects. He is confident that the reputation the company has built for itself will add weight to their grant applications.

The outlook for the Next Move is a relatively bright one. The company possesses some substantial acting talent (although heavily imbalanced on the comic side), its management is clear-sighted, and the public has responded well to their work. Continued growth can be expected but is contingent on how well the public will react to the subscription drive scheduled to begin late in the spring of 1979. Steve Warnick feels that in perhaps a year or two the company can join Equity and thus become a professional resident company in the fuller sense of the phrase. Equity status would increase costs tremendously, especially in the area of salaries, but it would enable the company, on occasion, to use older, more experienced actors (usually from New York), and it would permit the company to tour other Equity regional theatres that are, at this point, closed to them. The Next Move may find the competition a bit stiffer than it has been in the past two years should they decide to pursue Equity status. Several new regional-type theatres will be seeking establishment in Boston in the next few years and the Next Move may find itself vying for the same funding dollars and the same audience members as the theatre company in another part of town.

The success stories of the Boston Shakespeare Company and the Next Move Theatre are illustrative of the attitude which the average person holds towards the theatre today. Most people do not attend the theatre to be stimulated intellectually, nor do they go to seek a deeper understanding of themselves and of the human condition. People go to the theatre to have a "good time" and to avoid their own problems. Of course, the entertainment

factor has always been a vital part of the theatre experience, but it seems to have achieved greater emphasis in the last decade. Serious drama has become more and more difficult to produce with any degree of economic certainty because the public would rather see the spectacle of a large musical or the whimsy of a comedy. Yes, the public came to see The Gin Game at the Wilbur Theatre this past fall, but primarily because it starred Hume Cronyn and Jessica Tandy; and yes, the public flocked to see The Shadow Box which played this spring at the Charles Playhouse, but primarily because it starred Betsy Palmer and was directed by Richard Chamberlain. How can a local theatre company in Boston hope to survive when it chooses to produce serious stimulating drama exclusively? How can it compete with more popular entertainment when it has no "name" actor or director in its company? The answers to these questions have been given for six years by the Cambridge Ensemble. In their philosophy, a group must remain small and keep expenses to a minimum in order to offset the relative lack of demand for their product. They must make capital investments only in their own artistry, for that is their most abundant and dependable resource and it is the one that will bring the best return.

The Cambridge Ensemble was founded by artistic director Joann Green and business manager Barbara Bregstein in 1973 when they broke away from the Caravan Theatre and brought several of that company's actors along with them. Since that time, the company's chief interests have been to introduce new playwrights, to create original works and to perform adaptations of literature. Their home is in a church on Massachusetts Avenue in Harvard Square.

Their sets and costumes are minimal and multifunctional. Unlike the more prominent groups in Boston, the Cambridge Ensemble has chosen not to expand its operations. Joann Green explained that the demands that growth brings are too costly. Artistic freedom is compromised when a group's financial obligations increase and when a group makes commitments that it is forced to keep.<sup>5</sup>

Therefore, the yearly budget at the Ensemble is rather small for a successful six year old operation -- only \$80,000 -- and only occasionally will they utilize a subscription series during a season. Green believes that it takes too much money to initiate a subscription drive and that subscriptions commit a group to perform those shows that were originally planned. While the group plans its budget in advance, it usually does not have a clear idea of what its following season will be. Still, even with this haphazard approach to management (promotion is usually limited to small newspaper ads, flyers, and the hope that "good theatre will bring in audiences"), their theatrical achievements have merited significant grants from the National Endowment ofr the Arts and the Massachusetts Council on the Arts and Humanities. For the 1978-79 season, grants from these sources totaled nearly \$20,000 or 25% of the company's entire budget. This is the highest ratio of government aid to total budget of any theatre company in Boston. The equivalent for the Boston Shakespeare Company would be \$62,500, but then the Boston Shakespeare Company meets 85% of its budget through earned income whereas the Cambridge Ensemble, with its more narrow audience, meets only 50% of its budget through earned income, and has, therefore, a much greater need for grants.<sup>6</sup>

The Reality Theatre, like the Cambridge Ensemble, is a young off-off-Broadway type company which creates interesting, high quality, and often critically acclaimed productions. It has, however, retained a low profile in the public eye and is not well-known to the average theatregoer. The company describes itself as a collective of ten actors, directors, teachers and writers who collaborate to develop a more intimate relationship with their co-workers, their material and their audience. The bulk of their work has been in the production of original plays including two new works (Beginner's Luck and Master of Ecstasy) by their resident playwright Jon Lipsky. Their yearly budget is small and most of the company members support themselves through their teaching positions in Boston area colleges. Growth has come to the company slowly and without strain, but, again, in similarity to the Cambridge Ensemble, the Reality Theatre will never grow so large in external trappings that it will be unable to continue developing innovative and unrestricted productions: the members of the company are not interested in such growth and the Boston public would probably not support such growth if it was attempted.

In addition to the already-mentioned Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs, there are two other organizations which are in operation to assist Boston's cultural institutions and organizations. These so-called "service organizations" are ARTS/Boston and the Metropolitan Cultural Alliance. They have been of varying benefit to the public and to smaller organizations not quite firmly on their own feet.

ARTS/Boston (or more fully, Arts Ticket Service/Boston) was

formed in 1974 to develop new audiences for Boston's performing arts organizations. It is modeled after New York's Theatre Development Fund (TDF) which also assisted the Massachusetts Council in planning this new service. Basically, ARTS/Boston develops audiences through ticket subsidy. Clerical/technical workers, professional performing artists, retired persons, high school students and union members are all eligible to purchase up to two packets of vouchers a month at \$7.50 per packet. Each packet contains five vouchers (\$1.50 each). These vouchers may then be presented, within a six month period, to any one of approximately 65 participating nonprofit performing arts organizations for a full adult admission. The performing arts group later returns the voucher back to ARTS/Boston and receives the original \$1.50 plus an additional \$1.00 for a total of \$2.50. ARTS/Boston is able to give that added dollar to the performing arts groups plus pay its own administration expenses because it too is subsidized through the National Endowment, the Massachusetts Council, and private corporations.

ARTS/Boston has grown rapidly in the first three seasons it has been in operation. In the 1978-79 season, 40,000 vouchers were redeemed by participating performing arts groups, representing \$100,000 in additional ticket sales to these groups -- a nearly ten-fold increase since 1975-76.<sup>7</sup> This system has been described as the most equitable method of supporting performing arts groups since the public actually decides which group is funded when it chooses the performance it wishes to attend. The service also assists the commercial theatres in Boston by means of

the six free ARTS/Extra coupons that are received once a year by each voucher holder. These coupons may be used to receive a 50% discount on balcony seats at preview performances.

On the surface, the ARTS/Boston voucher system seems to benefit the smaller performing arts groups the most. The \$2.50 the groups receive per voucher often represents most of the regular ticket price at the smaller theatre groups and since these less established groups do not usually play to full houses, each voucher might be seen as a seat that would have otherwise gone unsold. The system, however, has a basic flaw in that the majority of voucher holders will be inclined most often to attend performances by the popular, more established groups for whom \$2.50 will actually represent a significant loss. For example: a voucher holder consults Boston on Stage (the schedule of theatre events distributed each month to every voucher holder) and tries to decide whether to see the Next Move's This End Up, a comedy revue, or the Reality Theatre's The Master of Ecstasy. The voucher holder has heard very little of the Reality Theatre, but he has seen several stories on the Next Move in the papers, and has also heard mention of This End Up on the radio. Obviously, human nature being what it is, the voucher holder will be most likely to attend This End Up -- but that means the Next Move may stand to lose \$5.00 on a \$7.50 ticket to a voucher holder because most of the play's run has been near sell-out. The Reality Theatre, of course, receives nothing. It seems, then, that there can be occasions when theatre companies do not benefit from the vouchers, and only the voucher holder comes out ahead.

Since voucher holders can and often do continue to purchase voucher packets from ARTS/Boston on a regular basis, it is questionable how much audience development is actually being shaped. The system is intended to eventually help create regular ticket buyers out of subsidized ticket buyers (except for those buyers on a fixed income) once the habit for attending live performances has been developed. No mechanism exists for achieving this aim, however, and although one has been proposed by a former director of the program a year and a half ago (prices would be gradually increased for repeat voucher purchasers until regular ticket prices were reached), it has still not gone into effect at this time.<sup>8</sup>

The managing director of a local theatre company (who asked to remain anonymous) recently related his skepticism surrounding ARTS/Boston's effectiveness:

ARTS/Boston's program is either doing one of two things. They are either developing an audience or they are selling discount tickets, and I don't think anybody has the answer as to which of those two things they are doing ... but if we hadn't participated in the voucher program in the last four years, I don't know whether we'd have more money or less money than we have now -- I suspect more. And I don't know whether we'd have a greater audience or a lesser audience ... The rap is they're turning discount ticket buyers into full price ticket buyers, and I say some of these people are full price ticket buyers who, because they can get a voucher, are becoming discount ticket buyers.

ARTS/Boston has the potential to be an outstanding service to performing arts organizations if it can eliminate some of the flaws in its make-up. Some possible ways to achieve this aim would be to restrict severely the dates when vouchers could be used at very popular productions; to place an additional charge

on the more popular productions; to give an additional dollar to organizations which have higher income gaps; and to implement the already proposed increase in voucher costs to frequent purchasers.

Beginning in August 1979, ARTS/Boston will initiate a new service called BOSTIX. This service will be similar to the cut-rate ticket booth operated by TCF in New York's Times Square. Boston's version will stand in Faneuil Hall Marketplace and will sell half-price tickets to nonprofit and commercial theatre productions on the day of the performance. Unlike New York's version, however, it will also sell cut-rate tickets to various tourist attractions and full-price tickets to future theatre dates, museums, sporting events and other area activities. The BOSTIX operation will pay for itself through a surcharge added to each ticket that it sells. In 1977, TDF examined the feasibility for a cut-rate facility based strictly on the Times Square model. Such a facility was determined not to be feasible in Boston because of the insufficient number and variety of productions that were estimated to be available at any given time. The study did feel, however, that a facility which was multifunctional could stand a fair chance for success.<sup>9</sup> That, consequently, was the alternative taken by ARTS/Boston. BOSTIX is certainly an idea that is worth fleshing out. What is perhaps most attractive is the fact that it will be located at Faneuil Hall, the largest tourist center in Boston. Unlike most Boston theatregoers, a tourist will be unfamiliar with the theatre companies performing in the area and no bias will therefore be involved in his/her choice -- a small company will stand on fairly equal ground with

the larger operations. Should a professional resident theatre company of national importance and renown take root in Boston, such a ticket outlet could be a great convenience to those tourists who had perhaps heard of the company but did not know how or where to obtain tickets.

The Metropolitan Cultural Alliance is a ten-year old service organization still in the process of defining its basic tenets. Burton Woolf, executive director fo the Alliance for less than a year, has been making some headway in clarifying the organization's goals and in devising more effective ways to aid its members. There are, at the moment, nearly 120 members in the Alliance, ranging from the Boston Symphony Orchestra to individual artists. Each member pays a yearly fee to the Alliance of from \$25 to \$500 depending on the size of the member's budget.

Woolf has noted the Alliance's three main objectives: the first is to provide an array of services to its members including computerized accounting for payroll and taxes, group health insurance, discounted office supplies, a telephone answering service and copying facilities; the second is to help link the member groups to each other for effective communication; the third is then to link the cultural community to the rest of the public sector.<sup>10</sup> The services described in the first objective are useful only to the very small organizations and individual artists since any modestly sized group will be performing these services for themselves. The Alliance does, however, also sponsor a series of intensive technical workshops utilizing prominent guest lecturers. These workshops deal with ongoing management policies

and problems and would prove useful to any organization. The second objective is well-meaning but the Alliance's role is not yet clearly defined, and with strong leadership, the groups could accomplish this objective on their own. The Alliance has taken significant steps in fulfilling the third objective through its Matching Membership program. This program involves twelve member corporations (including Polaroid and Digital Equipment) who have agreed to match their employee's contributions to any Alliance member organization. In the two years the program has operated, \$110,000 has been raised to benefit sixty-two institutions.<sup>11</sup>

Several prominent members of Boston's theatre community either have mixed or decidedly negative feelings toward the Alliance. Steve Warnick sees no real reason for the Alliance's existence; the Next Move gives technical assistance to other groups, it lets other groups (such as the Playwrights' Platform) use its space, and it has even lent some organizations money on occasion. Theatre groups, he believes, can join together to be their own service organization.<sup>12</sup> Barbara Bregstein, business manager of the Cambridge Ensemble, said her company never needed to make use of the Alliance.<sup>13</sup> A third business manager, who asked to be unnamed, said with some bitterness, "There are times when the Alliance does absolutely nothing for indigenous cultural institutions."

A large scale professional resident theatre company would have little if any use of the Alliance, just as it would have little use for any other service organization which seeks to perform functions that are well within the theatre's own boundaries.

Service organizations often do provide much needed assistance to fledgling groups which do not yet have the means to support their own full-time administrative staff and which are trying to develop an identity within their community. However, most better-established groups today can serve their own purposes better if they simply serve themselves or deal with other groups on their own terms.

Strong management, wise programming and significant artistic achievement have enabled several local theatres in Boston to grow in size and/or in public recognition despite the constraints on nonprofit organizations in this country and in Boston in particular. Local theatres are important in Boston because they are active training grounds for young performers and they present the opportunity to develop new playwrights and collaborative theatre pieces. They are also a less expensive and more personally engaging alternative to the commercial theatres. The chance for a substantial professional resident company to develop from a local group is very small, although possible. The reasons for this statement will be outlined in Chapter Six as well as an evaluation of the conditions necessary for the establishment of a permanent professional resident theatre company in Boston.

CHAPTER SIX:

A Model and Four Contemporary Proposals

Thus far, this study has examined the social, economic and political considerations that would affect the establishment of a large scale, artistically significant, professional resident theatre company in Boston. In each area of consideration the overall prospects for creating such a theatre were not promising. Even those few factors which seemed to offer rays of hope and encouragement had need for qualification and were found to be quite limited in actual application. When, for example, the factor of corporate funding was considered, the heartening yearly increases in corporate dollars contributed to performing arts organizations were qualified with the information that the actual dollar amounts donated, while indeed increasing, were still quite low. Corporate funding to the arts could not, as yet, be depended on to become a truly significant source of unearned income.

This writer remains cautiously optimistic that a professional resident company can indeed be realized in Boston, despite the great number of obstacles blocking most of the usual paths to success. Any new attempt must be plotted and executed with care. The remainder of this study will propose the means by which a successful professional resident theatre of superior artistry may be established in Boston at this time.<sup>1</sup> Since social, political, artistic and economic climates can and often do change unpredictably, this model will not remain valid indefinitely. It will, however, serve as an effective model with which to compare the four major proposals for a professional resident company that are now in various states of preparation.

A new major performing arts organization does not simply

appear out of the air in any city. It must be planned down to the smallest detail to avoid situations that could jeopardize its existence. Therefore, before a company of actors can be assembled, before a theatre space can be renovated, even before a Board of Directors meets for the first time, the proposed theatre must have a solid artistic vision and that vision must dwell in the person whose ideas the theatre will most directly reflect -- the artistic director. This individual should be a well-known figure in the contemporary theatre scene who possesses qualities of leadership and (nearly, if not quite) theatrical genius. He should be able to express the basic tenets of the theatre equally well in public forums, before corporate executives, before legislative leaders, to the media, to potential private donors and before the panels of major foundations. Most of all, the successful artistic director should possess a personal magnetism which will enable the fervor of his beliefs and ideas to be transmitted to those who will join him in his work. Only in this way can a central artistic point of view unite the company and eventually take shape on the living stage.

The original planners of the theatre should be prominent men and women from a variety of professions including the arts, education, politics, journalism and business, who have joined together because they firmly believe in the individual and social benefits of great theatre and because they want Boston to harbor a theatre company as great as its symphony orchestra. If the artistic director is not among those who originally conceived of the idea for the theatre, the first step the planners should take

is one which would secure an individual who possesses the qualities described earlier and commits himself to the establishment of this theatre. He and the original planners of the project can then begin to investigate where the theatre or theatres might be situated, what size budget will be needed, how large a deficit can be expected and how funds can be secured to make up that deficit. Inquiries should be sent out into the theatre world in search of highly skilled and accomplished actors, designers, management personnel and technicians. Most of the company should be employed with a full year contract. In the past, actors have generally not cared to remain in Boston for a long period of time, preferring instead to relocate in search of the better pay which is usually found in film or television work in New York or Los Angeles. The opportunity for significant artistic involvement and the promise of a decent full-year salary, should hopefully change that precedent. Talented, well-known film actors, eager for the opportunity to work on the stage again, or perhaps for the first time, should also be sought. Special considerations should be taken to accommodate their personal schedule into that of the company's. Their appearance with the company will not only encourage a base of popular support but it will also enable some very fine actors to work in an art form which has missed their presence for too long a time.

The next step towards the realization of the theatre will be the creation of a Board of Directors. The Board should be composed of many of the same kind of individuals who were the initial founders -- in fact some of them may perhaps become

Board members. It would be wise to attract high-level corporate officials to the Board -- particularly those officials from corporations which use Boston's cultural attractions as a lure in their employee recruiting. In addition, the Board should include the artistic director, the managing director, and several other important company members so that there will be an opportunity for input coming directly from those most closely involved with the productions and the public.

It is the responsibility of the Board to support publicly the policies of the artistic director. The Board can best demonstrate this support when they use whatever means are available to them to raise money for the company. They will need to make use of all their accumulated influence and personal connections. It is not enough, however, simply to "put in a good word" for the theatre. Rather, the Board must support the theatre as actively and as vigorously as others might support a candidate for public office. Direct involvement in the theatre's artistic policy is definitely not one of their duties, although should an artistic director resign or clearly fail in his responsibilities, the Board must decide who the successor will be.

Once the Board of Directors has been appointed, the theatre can begin to search simultaneously for theatre space and for funding to prepare for the first season. Until the company begins to produce regularly, large sums of money will be needed to front the project. This includes money for the rental or purchase of theatre space, for lighting and other technical equipment, for salaries, for sets and costumes, and for publicity and subscrip-

tion promotion. Historically, it has been very difficult to raise money for a performing arts organization in Boston (particularly a theatre company) at this early pre-production stage of development. Therefore, it is imperative that the theatre always be projected as an organization of the highest professional standards in every area of its operations. To do less would be to court identification with the failed attempts of the past and with the large number of struggling theatre companies of the present day. Each step the theatre takes in the design of its image is built directly upon another so that if every step is executed skillfully and rationally, the theatre will create an image of strength, confidence and professionalism.

A vital consideration for the theatre company at this pre-production stage would be the level of community involvement desired. Community involvement can take many forms, among them: special matinees for students and senior citizens, reduced subscription rates for senior citizens, a rush ticket policy, a program that would bring company actors into local schools for special workshops and demonstrations, and special yearly holiday attractions. Such involvement not only brings the company to those who would not ordinarily have access to live professional theatre, but it is also necessary because it is an area of which funding sources are very fond and examine closely when funding is determined. In Chapter Three it became clear that the overall funding picture is not encouraging, particularly for theatre and most particularly for theatre in Boston. It is definitely in the best interests of the company, therefore, to pursue as full a

range of community related activities and programs as is reasonably within the range of their budget and their resources. There is a danger, of course, in a company becoming so involved with matters outside of their regular program that proper artistic and economic attention cannot be given to individual productions. This is a danger of which the artistic director and his Board should always be aware.

Because a company is often identified with the space in which it performs, the selection of a space is of prime consideration. Funding sources will find a company much more credible if it is attached to its own piece of real estate. It is not necessary, nor is it even desirable, for the company to have a new theatre built expressly for its own use. Such an investment may be a great focal point for community interest and involvement in other cities (as it was in Minneapolis when the Guthrie Theatre was built in 1963) but Boston has neither the vast sums of money needed to build a new theatre, nor does it have the actual need for one. There are a good number of older legitimate theatres, now either abandoned or used as cinemas, that could be renovated at significant savings. Many of these theatres are on lower Washington Street in what is known as the Combat Zone or the adult entertainment district. While not a desirable area at the present, it does border the Theatre District which is scheduled for revitalization in the near future and such revitalization may have a positive effect on the Zone. Certainly the presence of a full-scale professional resident theatre company would strengthen any area in which it would reside. However, should the company decide

to purchase a theatre in the Zone, it would be to its best interests to secure special assurances from the city that would declare, in writing, that the city is committed to making the Zone a safe and attractive area to visit and work.

One theatre space may be all that a new theatre company feels it can afford at first, but it may be to its benefit to secure at least one and perhaps even two or three additional theatres of different sizes and configurations. The first theatre should be a traditional 1,000 to 1,500 seat proscenium house with full staging facilities and capabilities. The second space may be a more intimate thrust or arena space seating 300 to 600, and the third space an even smaller black box arrangement seating anywhere from 50 to 150 patrons depending on how the space was arranged for a particular production. Precedents for such an arrangement do exist: many nonprofit theatres today operate two theatres and several, including the Arena Stage and the New York Shakespeare Festival, operate more (three and four respectively). The benefits which can be gained by utilizing such an array of spaces are linked to the theatre's choice of repertory, to economic considerations, and to the desired level of public access.

The choice of repertory is an area almost entirely in the hands of the artistic director for it is he who best knows the company's strengths and weaknesses and can decide what the company can or cannot perform successfully. However, there should certainly be little that a great theatre company would not be able to perform well. The actors and directors who are chosen to work with the company ought to possess the skills required to

perform anything from the classics to the avant-garde and all that falls between. The artistic director will also have to consider what the Boston public wants to see and how much it might be willing to progress beyond those initial interests. If the theatre caters only to popular tastes (those tastes usually satisfied by the commercial houses), it will not be in the best interests of the company or the public themselves. A production of any play, old or new, foreign or American, can have great meaning for the public if it is given an interpretation that will be relevant to their lives. Therefore, it is not the entertainment tastes of the public that should be discerned and played to, but rather those beliefs, concerns and emotions that belong to all men in general, and to Bostonians in particular. The public may balk at tragedy initially, but that is a challenge for the public and the company to overcome together.

With three or more different theatres from which to choose, the artistic director would be able to stage, adequately and appropriately, nearly every play in the world's dramatic canon. Such an arrangement can be economically feasible because it would be possible to capitalize on income-producing plays by presenting them in the larger capacity theatres, while less popular productions could take place in the smaller theatres. Because the theatre company will have stronger interests in artistic product than in economics, it is assumed that some plays will require costly technical back up. High-cost, high-risk productions can have the opportunity to receive artistically appropriate staging when they are balanced with substantial outside funding,

a high level of subscription, and a popular show or two per season that can play extended runs. A theatre company which has only one stage to perform on severely limits its repertory, is very rigid economically, and does not permit a truly active involvement with the public. It would not be necessary or even desirable for all of the company's theatre spaces to be located in the same structure. The company will command greater public attention if its theatres are spread throughout the area and they will be more physically accessible to greater numbers of the public. Therefore, while the largest theatres may be near the Theatre District, another house might be situated near the Waterfront and another in the Fenway or Back Bay area. Certainly there exists the possibility of locating one of the theatres in another city, perhaps Cambridge, to permit even wider visibility and availability.

A large and diverse subscription roll is perhaps the company's best form of economic insurance. Subscription dollars are received before the season begins and therefore can help guarantee the presence of sufficient income to maintain all of the company's activities. Two companies in the last ten years, the Charles Playhouse and the Boston Repertory Theatre, could partially attribute their demise to either a lack of subscriptions (Boston Rep) or a falling off from the level these subscriptions once maintained (Charles Playhouse). There should, however, be a limit to the total number of subscriptions that are available to the public. If the level of subscription is too high, few tickets would be available to the occasional theatregoer or the tourist.

The result would be an insular, elitist theatre which catered to a select audience. On the contrary, the theatre should rather be an open, accessible institution which, in its pursuit of artistic excellence, caters to no specific public taste, and therefore might actually be seen to appeal to all tastes simultaneously.

Subscribers are not easily attracted in Boston. A great deal of promotion must be undertaken to make the public aware of the fine theatre that can be available to them. Since the first subscription drive will not have the laurels of the past season to rest on, the emphasis in the promotion will of necessity focus on the skills and previous achievements of the artistic director and his company. The promotion campaign should also emphasize the extensive preparation that has already gone into the formation of the company, including: the theatre or theatres in which the company will play, the renovations that have already occurred or will soon take place in these theatres, the list of plays planned for next season and the performers who will be cast in important roles, and the range of community involvement to which the company will be committed. Again, it must be emphasized that the company should always and everywhere be depicted as a highly professional operation -- which, of course, it would be if it were properly planned and managed. Potential donors and subscribers must be made aware of the company's excellence before a single play is produced -- otherwise the company might never become a reality.

The large sums of money needed to prepare the company for the first season cannot come entirely from subscription sales:

indeed, money will be needed to promote the subscription drive itself. If the company is well prepared when it approaches funding sources, there is a good chance substantial grants and donations could be forthcoming. It is not secret that "everybody loves a winner," and possessing and maintaining a "winning" image should make the theatre company a financial success. That image should do a great deal to improve the level of private gifts given to Boston theatre. The appearance of well-known actors and directors in the company will no doubt impress many Bostonians, particularly those who equate glamor and popularity with artistic excellence.

Corporations are especially interested in joining forces with "winners" and might single out the theatre company for special funding. Such funding could be realized through the assumption of a portion or all of a single play's production costs or perhaps a corporation could underwrite the income gap that the theatre might incur during a specified period of time. Another funding alternative would be corporate sponsored television, radio or print advertising which could feature both the theatre company and its corporate sponsor. In every instance where corporate funding is involved, the corporation will need to receive the proper credit that would make the funding a "worthwhile" effort for them also.

Funding from both state and local agencies has already been noted as seriously inadequate. Less traditional methods will need to be applied to these sources to achieve larger than usual funding. On the state level, the theatre might successfully

receive funds to support its education programs, especially since a precedent for such funding was already set in 1977 when the Massachusetts Center Repertory Company received \$20,000 for special student matinees. If the Arts Lottery Bill is passed in the near future, the theatre company might petition to receive a special portion of those funds to purchase or renovate one of its theatres. Here too, a "winning" image will definitely be in the theatre's benefit. Legislators do not care to identify with losing causes.

Funding from the city of Boston will perhaps be the most difficult of all to receive. Considering the city's record, any actual direct dollar funding may simply be impossible to achieve. The city can prove helpful in smoothing out the legal problems encountered in the acquisition of theatre space and any verbal or written support from city officials can give added weight to the company's other funding applications. The company should not, however, actually depend upon the city to accomplish anything on their behalf because the emphasis of the White Administration will probably remain on the commercial theatres. Perhaps the new theatre company will be the force capable of influencing a shift in that emphasis.

Grants from the federal government and from large private foundations have been traditionally difficult to receive in the first few years of a theatre's existence. In most cases, the company is expected to prove itself first before any large levels of funding will be issued. Therefore, it again behooves the new theatre to look, act and be a top-notch professional operation

from the very beginning. Such advance professional distinction might suffice to "prove" the company even before its first season opens. Education programs have a sound chance of receiving good funding from both sources. Ten years ago the Ford Foundation might have been able to supply funding to help cover first year expenses, especially in the acquisition of theatre space, but today its allocations are not sufficient to go much beyond the Cash Reserve and New American Plays programs. In the last few years, the National Endowment seems to have picked up and gone beyond where the Ford Foundation had left off, and the new theatre's "winning" image could definitely encourage significant first year funding from the Endowment.

Before becoming fully operational, the new theatre should also consider other ways to approach some of the other factors affecting the environment for nonprofit theatre in Boston. These factors have already received mention in previous chapters of this study. They include: the possible competition and/or conflict with Boston's commercial theatres, the competition with Boston's well-established sporting attractions, and the chronic after working hours flight of commuters from downtown Boston to their suburban homes.

It would benefit neither the commercial theatres nor the new nonprofit theatre to try to compete with each other for an audience. Each organization will bear its own unique features that will make it more attractive to particular segments of the public. Some people are attracted to the Broadway try-out or road show because of the commercial theatre's emphasis on

"entertainment" and "name" performers and playwrights. Others are not at all impressed with flashy productions and prefer to frequent a theatre which can consistently demonstrate artistic integrity and achievement. Rather than competing, it would be far wiser for the two groups to work together to mutually attract the theatregoer from the vast middle ground -- those individuals who have not developed a bias for one type of theatrical presentation over another.

Most of the ways the two different theatres could join forces would be in the marketing area. The theatres could begin with something as basic as exchanging program stuffers and/or lobby displays which promote current or upcoming productions. Beyond that, the theatres might want to try offering its patrons a discount coupon to the other theatre's current production, or they could go so far as to combine portions of one another's seasons in a subscription package. While the latter could cause some accounting problems and might raise an eyebrow or two at several funding agencies, it would encourage the average Boston theatregoer to be a bit more adventurous than usual.

The two theatres might also be able to help each other in a different way. If the nonprofit theatre discovers that one of its productions has become a "hit" and they don't own another theatre to transfer the production and can't extend the run of the "hit" because of schedule conflicts, the nonprofit theatre could transfer its production to one of the commercial houses while the commercial house is between bookings. Such an arrangement could serve to increase the credibility the public has for

the nonprofit theatre and it could give a boost to both theatres' finances. Even if the nonprofit theatre elects not to make business deals with the commercial houses, it would certainly be prudent for the two theatres to join forces for political reasons, especially if the new nonprofit theatre is located in or near the Theatre District. Their combined efforts could bear enough pressure on the city to set up its planned clean-up and renovation of the District.

The importance of professional sports to a large segment of the Boston population is evident from the earlier mentioned figures from the 1972 Survey of Selected Services and from the large amounts of print and air time that Boston's media devote to local teams. The new nonprofit theatre could not, realistically, hope to compete for an audience with the professional sports teams. In terms of tradition and popular appeal, the theatre company would simply be "out of its league." However, in the quest for greater media attention, the theatre could use professional sports as an example. The theatre should hire a top-notch publicist to exploit every possible angle for a story. If the theatre is doing its job artistically as well as magerially, the publicist should have plenty of material to work with. Here again, the key to success will depend upon how professional and "winning" an image the theatre has been able to project to the public. Ultimately, the theatre's first show of the season should get as much attention in the entertainment section of The Boston Globe as the Red Sox season opener currently gets in that paper's sports section.

As noted in Chapter Two, a 1974 study estimates that 80% of

the people who are in downtown Boston at 1:00 p.m. leave by 6:00 p.m., and 90% leave the area by 8:00 p.m. -- curtain time at most theatres. This commuter flight certainly should be of concern to a new nonprofit theatre located in downtown Boston. The theatre will not only want to grab its share of the 10% who has remained downtown, but it will also want to attract some of those in the 90% majority. Some approaches the theatre might pursue to attack the problem would include earlier curtain times, group sales through corporate employee relations offices, and combined dinner and show evenings with cooperative area restaurants.

While there may indeed be other methods of founding a large scale professional resident theatre company in Boston, the method described in the previous pages is one that has an excellent chance for realization, survival and success. The most important qualities and characteristics the theatre company can possess are: a talented, inspired and well-noted artistic director; skilled and accomplished company members (actors, technicians, management personnel) who will be employed on a full season basis; a well-selected, dedicated, and *enlightened* Board of Directors; an innovative marketing and promotion department; a challenging and diversified repertory of world drama; a suitable theatre space or spaces conveniently located; an active commitment to community involvement; and most important of all, a "winning" and professional image. The combination of these qualities and characteristics should present the new company in a special and unique light that will open most funding doors, encourage good media relations, and bring subscription rolls and overall audience

attendance to consistently high levels.

At the present, there exist four major proposals for the establishment of a professional resident company in Boston. Each proposal has its own distinct aims and its own particular method for achieving realization. Their chances for success are as varied as the individuals who have made the proposals. The four proposals are: The Charles Playhouse of Frank Sgrue and Jeanne Muller; the Boston Repertory Theatre under Karl Gevecker; the Massachusetts Center Repertory Company under Janice Cashell; and the American Repertory Theatre under Robert Brustein.

The Charles Playhouse has been used by various producers in a manner similar to an off-Broadway house since 1970 when the Charles Playhouse ceased to exist as a nonprofit regional theatre. Frank Sgrue, a true survivor, has remained at the Charles all through those years as managing director although he had little real participation with the productions that came in and out of the theatre. Recently, Sgrue and a group of stockholders purchased the debt-ridden theatre on Warrenton Street from Edward Jones for the purpose of re-establishing a regional theatre there.

The details for the new company are incomplete at this time, but still give a good indication of the direction that will be taken. A big-name artistic director, the likes of John Wood, Michael Langham or Hal Prince, will be sought but a resident company of actors will not. The first season will begin in spring 1980 with three productions and perhaps expand the next season to five or six. The periods in between the regular company productions will be filled by the same kind of outside productions

that have played the Charles for nearly a decade. An extensive renovation of the 141 year old building is planned including a redesign of the 250 seat Cabaret. Frank Sugrue recently described the company's goals: "We're vitally interested in getting back to doing great theatre in Boston on a regular basis ..."<sup>2</sup> Jeanne Muller defines that goal further: "We want to build up the Charles Playhouse as an institution, a cultural entity -- although that is a long way off yet -- like the Boston Symphony or the Opera Group. That's what we're aiming at."<sup>3</sup>

Apart from the planned parity in quality with the Boston Symphony, this is a mildly ambitious plan that has some good points but is inadequate and unrealistic in several important areas. For example: the management has made a wise decision in deciding to choose a well-known theatre artist as its artistic director -- but why hasn't this person been appointed yet so work can begin on the company? If people at the Charles are truly sincere in their plans, it would be to their advantage to finalize an agreement with the eventual artistic director as soon as possible because neither Frank Sugrue nor Jeanne Muller have the background to make the kinds of artistic decisions that should be made at this moment.

The management is also uncertain about its policy on the use of "stars" in its theatre. In an interview with this writer on January 11, 1979 Sugrue felt that the use of star actors was definitely not in the plans for the company and the emphasis should rather be on the dramatic literature:

If the public is looking to come here for a star, then I think that as a regional professional theatre doing the kinds of things that we envision, we would be in serious trouble ... we don't want to build an audience promising them one star after another. I don't think that that's what this is all about.<sup>4</sup>

Yet, in an interview with Kevin Kelly of The Boston Globe only three months later, Sugrue's thoughts on the subject had turned 180 degrees:

... we plan to begin on the highest professional level we can by bringing in stars, star actors as well as star directors. It used to be in regional theatre that the play -- alone -- was the thing. But now there's a definite shift toward the personnel doing the play, and the bigger the names the better.<sup>5</sup>

Apparently the "definite shift" took place in just three months.

The Charles' greatest deficiency is its lack of a "winning" image. The original Charles Playhouse failed under Frank Sugrue's leadership and, whether it is fair or not, that failure will mark Sugrue for the rest of his career. There is nothing exciting or different about the new plan at the Charles. Except for the inclusion of an artistic director and a realignment of the corporate make-up from commercial to nonprofit status, the Charles of the 1980's is a carbon-copy of the Charles of the 1970's. It is almost embarrassing to see in print that the Charles believes a Michael Langham or a John Wood might consider becoming the theatre's artistic director: if that statement was not intended solely for its "hype" value, it was made with considerable naivete. The Charles offers no promise of success, it has little chance of attracting funds from any funding source (particularly considering its past record and the upcoming competition), and will most likely never open the season promised for spring 1980.

The Boston Repertory Theatre is another failed attempt at a regional theatre that is seeking a rebirth. Its executive director, Karl Gevecker, was not part of the original group, and in effect is attempting to pick up the pieces scattered by Esquire Jauchem and company who have all left to pursue their own projects. Gevecker is certainly qualified to manage a resident theatre company since he has already run similar theatres in Syracuse and Pittsburgh. However, getting the Rep on its feet again is a large order for anyone.

The first season is scheduled to open September 21, 1979 but neither the plays nor the artistic director has been chosen. Gevecker has already stated: "We will produce and control the artistic quality of our own plays"<sup>6</sup> so it can be safely assumed that the "we" is Gevecker himself. Why the plays have not been chosen yet is unknown, but it is not an encouraging sign for the future of the theatre. Subscription forms are in the mail as of this writing and they contain nary a mention of who will be involved in the season or what specific productions are planned. It is ludicrous to believe the public will agree to spend anywhere from \$12 to \$30 for a totally unknown product. In a cover letter that takes up an entire legal-size sheet of paper, the only statement that makes any attempt to describe what is actually being planned is woefully inadequate and vague:

Our three play season will bring a fully professional acting company to our audiences. Outstanding actors, directors, and designers, whose talent and imagination have contributed to quality theatre nationwide will combine to bring you productions of excellence.

Gevecker may possess some clear ideas about where he wants to

take the company, but he is keeping them to himself.

The Rep will undoubtedly encounter financial difficulties in bringing next season on the boards. For the short three play season next fall, Gevecker has estimated that the theatre will need to operate on a budget of \$400,000, but only 30% to 40% of that total can be met through earned income at the box office. This means that the Rep will have to raise anywhere from \$240,000 to \$280,000 for just a half season of activity.<sup>7</sup> If this figure were not difficult enough to reach in Boston, even under ideal conditions, Gevecker is also burdened by the poor track record established under the previous Rep management of Esquire Jauchem. The theatre space is yet another albatross around Gevecker's neck. It is almost inconceivable that a 225 seat space can adequately house a professional theatre company. The theatre would make an excellent second stage but as a main stage it is too small to make financial stability a reality all on its own, even with good outside funding.

The Boston Repertory Theatre, this writer predicts, will fail in its attempt to rise again. Gevecker's plan has no direction or strength behind it, the economic problems are nearly insurmountable and the level of public support for the project is indiscernable.

In a promotional brochure, Janice Cashell's Massachusetts Center Repertory Company is described as:

dedicated to the establishment in Boston of a full-time resident professional theatre company and educational center of regional and national stature. This company, classical in stature, modern in outlook, aspires to the level of quality of the Stratford Theatre in Ontario or the Royal Shakespeare Company of London.

Obviously, Massachusetts Center Rep is ambitious in outlook. Unfortunately, its success has not been able to match the level of that ambition. The company was founded by Ms. Cashell in 1974 and since that time she has made attempt after attempt to have her theatre recognized as an effort that possesses both great worth and great need. All her efforts have accomplished little, however, in actually developing a live and producing company.

The theatre company was able to mount its first and only season in the summer of 1977. That season, just six weeks in length, included three plays: Strindberg's Dance of Death, O'Neill's Long Day's Journey Into Night and Shaw's Candida. In order to project the company's dedication to the highest professional standards, such famous actors as Jose Ferrer, Len Cariou, Ben Gazzara, Colleen Dewhurst and Eva Marie Saint were cast and Howard Bay was chosen to design the sets. However, even with what might be considered a highly attractive cast and season, the company lost a great deal of money. The problem stemmed from the fact that the company had little choice but to use the Shubert Theatre, a large commercial house, as its home for those six weeks since the Shubert was the only suitable union theatre available at the time. The high cost of rental and the relatively poor turnout in the audience combined to create such a great financial loss that a similar effort was never again attempted. Cashell realized in advance that using the Shubert Theatre would undoubtedly court disaster, but she strongly believed that the company needed the exposure no matter what the cost.<sup>8</sup>

The Massachusetts Center Rep has either maintained or tried

to meet every one of the criteria mentioned earlier in this chapter as necessary to establish a professional resident theatre company. However, it has not been able to meet one very important criterion and that may be the primary reason for its lack of success.

Janice Cashell is a talented and inspired artistic director and the main driving force behind the Massachusetts Center Rep, but she is not, despite her excellent qualifications, a well-noted figure in the eyes of the public and in Boston that marks a serious flaw in her credentials. Therefore, despite her continued efforts to make the theatre company a credible entity, she has attracted few believers: large funding sources reject her pleas, the media consistently fails to take her seriously and private donors see no need to contribute to a project they have heard little or nothing about. Cashell did have brief success with certain state legislators in 1977 when, as already described in Chapter Four, the theatre company received a \$20,000 grant to hold special matinees for school children. Unfortunately, this kind of success has not reoccurred.

Despite six years of frustration, Cashell has not give up and at the present time she is making what she might very well consider to be her last concentrated effort. The details are not yet publicly available, but it seems that there might be a union between a major Boston university (perhaps Boston University) and the Massachusetts Center Rep. Apparently, Cashell is willing to concede total independence to the reality of possible full-time operation and affiliation with a university theatre department. If the plans do go through, Boston will be fortunate

finally to have given Cashell the opportunity to begin her company. With the proper financial support, Massachusetts Center Rep has all the potential necessary for a successful professional resident theatre company.

Robert Brustein's American Repertory Theatre, scheduled to open at Harvard's Loeb Drama Center in January 1980, will essentially transplant the concept and a fair number of personnel of the Yale Repertory Theatre from New Haven to Cambridge and change the theatre's name in the process. The question, then, to be considered here is not, can Brustein's proposal for a theatre come to fruition? -- for the theatre has already been in existence for thirteen years. The question should be instead, how successful will this theatre be in Cambridge? To answer that question, it will prove useful to compare the positive and negative aspects inherent in the company's change of location. On the positive side, the company will enjoy a wider audience base than it had in New Haven. Not only is the Boston/Cambridge area much greater in size and population than the New Haven area, but, except for the Massachusetts Center Rep, ~~there exists~~ no real competition for the American Repertory Theatre since its repertory and method of production will be unique in the area. Also on the positive side for the American Repertory Theatre is the greater level of media attention that will be available to the company in Boston. On the negative side, the company will receive a smaller amount of direct subsidy from Harvard than it did from Yale. Also negative is the fact that the company will no longer be tied to a professional school of drama and, therefore, all the duties

usually performed by students without cost will not need to be performed by salaried personnel.

When they are compared, the positive and negative aspects surrounding the move to Harvard balance each other out. The larger base of audience support in Boston/Cambridge is neutralized by the fact that Harvard is presenting the company with less direct subsidy than it had received before. The loss of cheap labor from students of the Yale School of Drama is minimized by the prospect of valuable free publicity from the media. Another important consideration is whether or not the move would affect the level of the company's total unearned income. Except for the cut in aid from its university affiliation, the move should have little effect on the level of funding the company has been accustomed to since the theatre's primary funding sources were nationally based. In fact, a theatre of this caliber and reputation may find access to areas of support from private individuals that have never been open to a theatre in Boston before.

There is, essentially, no reason why the American Repertory Theatre should not succeed at Harvard and its presence will most likely enrich the cultural life of the entire Boston area. While it is encouraging to note that the Boston area will at last definitely shelter a theatre of very high artistic and professional standards, the fact that the company did not develop originally in the Boston area again illuminates Boston's inability to support and develop its own theatre. It is arguable how successful this company would be, had it no prior history at Yale.

The overall prospect for the complete development of a high

quality professional resident theatre company in Boston is very poor at this time and there is no indication that the situation will improve appreciably in the near future. The number of factors that mitigate against such a development far outweigh the number that are favorable. Nevertheless, the possibility does exist, slight as it may be.

Most Boston theatregoers have no strong desire to shelter indigenous theatre because their taste for theatre is heavily oriented toward Broadway. In their eyes, Boston does not "produce" theatre as much as it "presents" theatre, somewhat in the way that movie theatres across the nation present films that are the products of Hollywood. Bostonians see little need to produce their own theatre when New York is able to do it for them. An unfortunate consequence of this line of reasoning is that the public has acquired a "hit mentality" towards theatre. Only those productions which either have been given the stamp of approval from the New York or Boston critics, or contain well-known stars in leading roles, possess a fair chance for strong attendance and financial success. A new theatre company in Boston, therefore, should expect little initial commitment from the public for a full season of activity, and it may be several years before a substantial subscription roll can be assembled. Until that time, the company will be forced to finance itself on a show-by-show basis -- certainly a precarious situation for any theatre company that seeks to stage plays that fall outside the canon of Broadway musical and comedy hits. The public's hesitancy, most likely, will also extend to the area of private contributions.

Those few private dollars that are not already committed to other arts organizations will go to the older, more established groups. Corporate sources are hesitant to fund performing arts groups in general, and even when contributions are given, the actual amounts are relatively small compared to an organization's total budget. A new theatre company must present itself as an exciting, "worth-while," professional operation or corporations will not wish to associate their name with the theatre's.

Because of the public's attitudes toward the theatre in Boston, a new theatre company will find it extremely difficult to raise sufficient funding to begin a season. A company is expected to prove itself before it is funded, but how can it prove itself when it has no money to stage a production? Janice Cashell and her Massachusetts Center Repertory Company have been subjected to this vicious and endless circle for the last six years. Unless her plan to join forces with a major Boston University succeeds, Boston will probably have rejected Cashell's offer for the last time and Cashell will form her company in another, more receptive city.

Financial support from the city of Boston for local theatre activity is non-existent. Like the average Boston theatregoer, officials at City Hall are interested primarily in commercial theatre activity. Most of the city's non-financial efforts to aid indigenous theatre have been inadequate. The city has a great opportunity to show its concern for the development of a high-quality professional resident theatre company by including one in its plans for the revitalization of the Theatre District. It

seems likely, however, that the city will not take advantage of this opportunity.

While Massachusetts' cultural resources are often highly touted in the public statements of elected officials and in the state's promotional literature, the state government has shown great reluctance to accept a significant level of financial responsibility toward its arts organizations. The Massachusetts Council on the Arts and Humanities is funded so minimally by the Commonwealth that its grants will be of only minor importance to a new theatre company. The proposed Arts Lottery could be a source of significant funding for a new company but the direction in which the funds will be granted is unclear at the present. It does appear, however, that the funds might be distributed in the traditional conservative manner of the Massachusetts Council in which many smaller, and often less worthy, organizations are funded to the detriment of the handful of larger, higher-quality organizations. Therefore, while the level of state funding may indeed increase by means of Lottery receipts, the individual grants will still be only minor contributions to the budgets of the larger organizations. It is up to the Massachusetts Council to avoid the encouragement of mediocrity in its funding and encourage, instead, the continuance or the emergence of artistic excellence.

Both the National Endowment and the Ford Foundation have committed large portions of their funding dollars to organizations possessing artistic excellence. This commitment is very important to a new theatre company in Boston because of the lack of such a

commitment from city, state, corporate, and private sources. The Endowment and the Ford Foundation must recognize that these deficiencies do exist in Boston and they must be willing to compensate for them until the theatre company is more generally accepted in the community. Without solid support from one of these two funding sources, a new theatre company will probably go under shortly after beginning its operations.

In Boston, only the most promising, most professional, most skillfully managed new theatre company will have the opportunity to live past what will certainly be a difficult birth and grow, in time, to full maturity. Half-baked, ill-planned efforts such as the recent revivals of the Charles Playhouse and the Boston Repertory Theatre will not succeed. Perhaps the American Repertory Theatre will encourage the development of a truly Boston based professional resident theatre company. On the other hand, the Boston public may simply see Brustein's presence at the Loeb as just another in a long series of reasons why Boston does not need a professional theatre of its own. The qualifications and prerequisites which this writer has determined to be necessary for the development of a successful professional resident theatre in Boston may be said to be extraordinarily stringent, but considering the failed attempts of Boston theatre past, only the most talented and best prepared will succeed.

ENDNOTES

CHAPTER ONE

<sup>1</sup>F.H. Newhall, "The theatre; a discourse preached at the Bromfield St. M.E. Church, March 13, 1863" (Boston: Magee, 1863).

<sup>2</sup>William Warland Clapp, A Record of the Boston Stage (Boston: J. Munroe and Company, 1853), p. 392.

<sup>3</sup>Clapp, p. 378.

<sup>4</sup>Glenn Hughes, A History of the American Theatre: 1700-1950 (New York: Samuel French, 1951), p. 158.

<sup>5</sup>Kate Ryan, Old Boston Museum Days (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1915), p. 242.

<sup>6</sup>Elliot Norton, Broadway Down East (Boston: Trustees of the Public Library of the City of Boston, 1978), p. 4.

<sup>7</sup>Donald King, "From Museum to Multi-Cinema: An Outline History of the Theatre in Boston," Marquee (Journal of the Theatre Historical Society), 6, No. 3 (1974), pp. 6-22.

<sup>8</sup>Howard M. Tichnor, "Passing of the Boston Museum," New England Magazine, 27: No. 4 (June 1903).

<sup>9</sup>Ryan, p. 235.

<sup>10</sup>Ryan, p. 249-50.

<sup>11</sup>Norton cites Chickering Hall as the location, but it was not built until 1901.

<sup>12</sup>P.M. Stone, An Outline History of the Castle Square Theatre (Unpublished: prepared by P.M. Stone for Mary Young, 1960), p. 5.

<sup>13</sup>Stone, p. 24.

<sup>14</sup>Jack Poggi, Theatre in America: The Impact of Economic Forces 1870-1967 (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1968), p. 32.

<sup>15</sup>Poggi, p. 34.

- <sup>16</sup>Poggi, p. 96.
- <sup>17</sup>Thomas H. Dickinson, The Insurgent Theatre (1917; rpt. New York: Benjamin Blom, 1972), p. 132.
- <sup>18</sup>William Halliburton, Effects of the Stage on the Manners of a People; and the Propriety of Encouraging and Establishing a Virtuous Theatre; by a Bostonian (Boston: Young and Etheridge, 1792).
- <sup>19</sup>Jewett Repertory Theatre: The Repertory Spectator, May 1925.
- <sup>20</sup>Norton, p. 98.
- <sup>21</sup>Poggi, p. 55.
- <sup>22</sup>Elinor Hughes, Passing Through to Broadway (Boston: Waverly House, 1948), p. 181.
- <sup>23</sup>Norton, p. 102.
- <sup>24</sup>Elliot Norton, "Theatre U.S.A. -- Boston," Theatre Arts, 44, No. 5 (May 1960), p. 55.
- <sup>25</sup>Interview with Frank Sugrue, January 19, 1979.
- <sup>26</sup>Sugrue interview.
- <sup>27</sup>Bernard Taper, The Arts in Boston (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970), pp. 52 and 59.
- <sup>28</sup>Sugrue interview.
- <sup>29</sup>Quoted in Richard Schechner, "The Regional Theatre: Four Views," The Drama Review, 13, No. 1 (Fall 1968), pp. 25-27.
- <sup>30</sup>Joseph Wesley Zeigler, Regional Theatre: The Revolutionary Stage (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1973), p. 51.
- <sup>31</sup>Sugrue interview.
- <sup>32</sup>Interview with David Wheeler, March 1, 1979.

- 33 Wheeler interview.
- 34 Wheeler interview.
- 35 Wheeler interview.
- 36 Wheeler interview.
- 37 Interview with Peggy Forbes, producer with the Theatre Company of Boston, April 4, 1978.
- 38 Interview with Esquire Jauchem, December 12, 1978.
- 39 Interview with David Zucker, January 4, 1979.
- 40 Zucker interview.
- 41 William Henry, III, "Repertory Group is Quick Success" The Boston Globe, December 22, 1978.
- 42 Ollie McManus, Review of Boston Repertory's When You Comin' Back, Red Ryder?, The Boston Globe, November 8, 1975.
- 43 Jauchem interview.
- 44 Kevin Kelly, Review of Boston Repertory's The Misanthrope, The Boston Globe, October 26, 1976.
- 45 Kevin Kelly, Review of Boston Repertory's P.S. Your Cat is Dead!, The Boston Globe, October 26, 1976.
- 46 Zucker interview.
- 47 Zucker interview.

CHAPTER TWO

<sup>1</sup>The effect inflation has on production costs is examined in the discussion of "Baumol's Disease" in Chapter Three.

<sup>2</sup>All figures on population are taken from Sam Warner's interpretation of the 1970 Census, and reported in: Sam Bass Warner, Jr. The Way We Really Live (Boston: Trustees of the Public Library of the City of Boston, 1977).

<sup>3</sup>Reported in: Park Plaza Civic Advisory Board, Downtown as an Arts Center (Boston Redevelopment Authority, March 1976).

<sup>4</sup>All figures on income reported in: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1972 Census of Selected Services (July 1976).

<sup>5</sup>The Finances of the Performing Arts: Vol. II (Prepared for the Ford Foundation by Eric Marder Associates, Inc. (New York: The Ford Foundation, 1974).

CHAPTER THREE

<sup>1</sup>Interview with Donald Tirabassi, Manager of the Colonial Theatre. March 27, 1979.

<sup>2</sup>Tirabassi interview.

<sup>3</sup>See Variety, June 2, 1976 and May 31, 1978.

<sup>4</sup>Elliot Norton, Broadway Down East (Boston: Trustees of the Public Library of the City of Boston, 1978).

<sup>5</sup>Tirabassi interview.

<sup>6</sup>First described as "Baumol's Disease" in: A.T. Peacock, "Welfare Economics and the Public Subsidies to the Arts." Manchester School of Economics and Social Sciences, December 1969, pp. 323-35.

<sup>7</sup>Mark Blaug, The Economics of the Arts (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1976), pp. 17-18.

<sup>8</sup>National Endowment for the Arts, Annual Report 1977, p. 2.

<sup>9</sup>National Endowment, p.3.

<sup>10</sup>Ford Foundation, Annual Report 1977, Cover page.

<sup>11</sup>Ford Foundation, p. 26.

<sup>12</sup>The Boston Ballet is an excellent example of the results of sound fiscal management that can partially come as a result of the Ford cash reserve grant. In 1971, the year before a major Ford grant, the Ballet's revenues covered only 47% of total expenditures. By 1978, revenues were raised to 79.5%, even with a two and one half fold increase in expenditures. This means that the Ballet now depends less and less on outside funding sources.

<sup>13</sup>Massachusetts Council on the Arts and Humanities, Press Release, July 25, 1978.

<sup>14</sup>Massachusetts Council on the Arts and Humanities, Annual Report 1977-78.

<sup>15</sup> Figures given by Michael Judson, managing director of the Boston Ballet, in an interview, March 29, 1979.

<sup>16</sup> Dick Netzer, The Subsidized Muse (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), p. 44.

<sup>17</sup> Netzer, p. 181.

CHAPTER FOUR

<sup>1</sup>In a letter from Kennedy to Herkscher dated June 10, 1963 and quoted in: Dick Netzer, The Subsidized Muse (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), p. 58.

<sup>2</sup>Netzer, pp. 61-2.

<sup>3</sup>Quoted in: David Dempsey, "Uncle Sam the Angel," The New York Times Magazine, March 29, 1974.

<sup>4</sup>See: William J. Baumol, and William G. Bowen, Performing Arts -- The Economic Dilemma (New York: The Twentieth Century Fund, 1966), Chapter XVI; "On the Rationale of Public Support," pp. 369-86.

<sup>5</sup>Robert Brustein "The Coming Crisis for the Arts: Who's Going to Foot the Bill," The New York Times, September 15, 1974.

<sup>6</sup>Recorded testimony of Mrs. Louise Tate, former Executive Director of the Massachusetts Council on the Arts and Humanities before the Special Commission on the Performing Arts, December 7, 1976.

<sup>7</sup>Interview with Max Friedli, Chairman of the Special Commission on the Performing Arts, April 12, 1979.

<sup>8</sup>Interview with Robert Fitzgerald, Deputy Director of the Massachusetts Council on the Arts and Humanities, April 13, 1979.

<sup>9</sup>All quoted in: Jak Miner, "Boston's Broadway Too Select?" Christian Science Monitor, December 8, 1978.

<sup>10</sup>Interview with James Kitendaugh, Managing Director, Boston Shakespeare Company, January 18, 1979.

<sup>11</sup>Jak Miner, "Boston's Broadway Too Select?"

<sup>12</sup>Interview with Janice Cashell, Artistic Director, Massachusetts Center Repertory Company, April 18, 1979.

CHAPTER FIVE

- <sup>1</sup> Jak Miner, "Boston's Broadway Too Select?", Christian Science Monitor, December 8, 1978.
- <sup>2</sup> Interview with Steve Warnick, Managing Director, Next Move Theatre, March 27, 1979.
- <sup>3</sup> Interview with James Kitendaugh, Managing Director, Boston Shakespeare Company, January 18, 1979.
- <sup>4</sup> Interview with Arthur Friedman, Theatre Critic, The Real Paper, March 29, 1979.
- <sup>5</sup> Interview with Joann Green, Artistic Director, Cambridge Ensemble, March 28, 1979.
- <sup>6</sup> The Cambridge Ensemble has recently been notified that it will not be able to use the church as a theatre space next season, 1979-80. The company has not as yet found a new home.
- <sup>7</sup> William Sonzski, "ARTS/Boston: It's the Ticket to Saving Money for Theatre, Music and Dance Performances," The Boston Globe Calendar, March 8, 1979.
- <sup>8</sup> Arts Boston. A Progress Report 1975-77.
- <sup>9</sup> Theatre Development Fund, The Feasibility of a Half-Price or Other Central Ticket Marketing Outlet for the Performing Arts in Boston. Prepared for the Massachusetts Council on the Arts and Humanities by the Theatre Development Fund, (New York: September 1977).
- <sup>10</sup> Christine Temin, "Culture is Burton Woolf's Business," The Boston Globe, December 3, 1978.
- <sup>11</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>12</sup> Interview with Steve Warnick.
- <sup>13</sup> Telephone interview with Barbara Bregstein, Business Manager, Cambridge Ensemble, April 11, 1979.

CHAPTER SIX

<sup>1</sup>For some of the concepts behind his own particular model, and for general inspiration throughout this study, the writer is especially indebted to Herman Krawitz and his proposal for the ultimate in subsidized American theatre. This proposal is contained in his: Royal American Symphonic Theatre (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co. Inc., 1975).

<sup>2</sup>Kevin Kelly, "Charles Playhouse Changes Planned," The Boston Globe, April 8, 1979.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Interview with Frank Sugrue, Managing Director, Charles Playhouse. January 11, 1979.

<sup>5</sup>Kevin Kelly, "Charles Playhouse Changes Planned."

<sup>6</sup>Nora E. Taylor, "Boston Rep:" Enter a New Broom," Christian Science Monitor, July 21, 1979.

<sup>7</sup>Interview with Karl Gevecker, Executive Director, Boston Repertory Theatre. April 5, 1979.

<sup>8</sup>In May 1979, the mortgage on the Boston Repertory Theatre was foreclosed. Gevecker is determined to produce a season there or wherever a space can be found, but the prospect for success is now almost non-existent.

<sup>9</sup>Interview with Janice Cashell, Artistic Director, Massachusetts Center Repertory Company. April 18, 1979.

<sup>10</sup>In early June 1979 it was revealed that Cashell's plan did indeed involve a relationship with Boston University. However, the University Trustees voted to reject the plan, as predicted, and Cashell will no longer pursue the founding of a repertory theatre company in Boston.

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LIST OF INTERVIEWS:

Held With Members of  
Boston's Performing Arts Community

David Archer: Managing Director, Modern Theatre. March 31, 1978.

Joanna Berkman: Theatre District Coordinator, Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs. March 36, 1979.

Janice Cashell: Producing Director, Massachusetts Center Repertory Theatre. April 18, 1979.

Mr. Eisenberg: Boston Symphony Orchestra. March 28, 1979.

Robert Fitzgerald: Deputy Director, Massachusetts Council on the Arts and Humanities. April 13, 1979.

Peggy Forbes: Producer, Theatre Company of Boston & Director, Harbor Arts Foundation. April 4, 1978.

Max Friedli: Chairman, Massachusetts Special Committee on the Performing Arts. April 12, 1979.

Arthur Friedman: Theatre Critic, The Real Paper. March 29, 1979.

Karl Gevecker: Executive Director, Boston Repertory Theatre. April 5, 1979.

Joann Green: Artistic Director, Cambridge Ensemble. March 28, 1979.

Esquire Jauchem: Artistic Director, Boston Repertory Theatre. December 12, 1978.

Michael Judson: Managing Director, Boston Ballet. March 29, 1979.

James Kitendaugh: Managing Director, Boston Shakespearre Company. January 18, 1979.

Mark Solomon: Opera Company of Boston. April 9, 1979.

Frank Sugrue: Founder and Managing Director, Charles Playhouse. January 11, 1979.

Donald Tirabassi: Manager, Colonial Theatre. March 27, 1979.

Steve Warnick: Managing Director, Next Move Theatre. March 26, 1979.

Sara Wermiel: Researcher, Boston Redevelopment Authority. March 27, 1979.

David Wheeler: Artistic Director, Theatre Company of Boston. March 1, 1979.

David Zucker: Actor and Member of the Board of Directors, Boston Repertory Theatre. January 10, 1979.