

Press Information

*
* FINE ARTS BUILDING AND AUDITORIUM *
* Texas Christian University *
* Fort Worth *
*

To Be Occupied

September 9, 1949

Dedications

Auditorium - Fall Convocation Sept. 19
Concert Pipe Organ - Series of Concerts in October
The Building - Fine Arts Festival, Early in December

T.C.U. NEWS SERVICE
Paul O. Ridings - Gordon C. Lund
Fort Worth 9, Texas
Phone: 4-4241, Ext. 341

I - THE BUILDING, BASIC DATA

The TCU Fine Arts Building and Auditorium.....

....Cost \$1,500,000 to build.

....Houses \$200,000 worth of equipment.

....Is the largest and costliest single unit in TCU's \$10,000,000 "Total Building Program," scheduled to be completed by 1953. It is the first classroom building completed in the program and also the first classroom building to be added to the TCU campus since Brite College of the Bible was built in 1914.

....Is the largest structure of its kind in Texas and probably in the South.

....Is unique in the entire nation, providing in one plant complete facilities for all of the various arts.

....Provides 66,450 square feet of usable floor space. It is 58 feet in height (plus basement), 145 feet across the front, and 239 feet in length.

....Has 82 separate rooms, including an auditorium, theater, art gallery, 23 offices, 6 classrooms, 14 music studios, 3 art studios, and miscellaneous workshops, laboratories, etc.

* * *

The structure is actually three buildings in one. The University Auditorium occupies the center portion. Offices, studios and classrooms of the School of Fine Arts surround the Auditorium, three stories high, on three sides. The Little Theater runs along the west end of the building, with separate entrance on the north.

A one-inch layer of "dead air space" separates each of these three "buildings," augmenting sound-proof construction of the walls.

* * *

The building was designed by Architect Wyatt C. Hedrick and Associate Architects Joseph R. Pelich and Preston Geren.

General design and arrangement of the building were worked out personally by Dr. T. Smith McCorkle, dean of the School of Fine Arts, in co-operation with Earl G. Koeppe of the Hedrick staff.

Construction was by Thomas S. Byrne Construction Company.

II - ILLUSTRATIVE DETAILS

Imposing in over-all size and cost, the building is equally impressive in detail---carefully planned and complete to the "Nth" degree. For example:

....Radio equipment is so complete that radio listeners throughout the country will be able to hear programs direct from any part of the building (See Part VII).

....Theater facilities include even a "social headquarters"---the Green Room, a parlor-lounge equipped with an all-electric kitchen (See Part VI).

....Among the myriad studios and practice rooms is a special room with mirrored walls for instruction and practice in ballet.

....The Horned Frog Band has its own rehearsal room, an acoustically designed chamber below the Auditorium.

....There are 54 pianos in the building's 82 rooms---an average of two pianos for every three rooms.

....Every corridor is an "art gallery," equipped with indirect lighting and concealed molding.

....Soundproofing and air conditioning extend to every part of the building.

III - SIGNIFICANCE TO FORT WORTH AND TO TEXAS

So exceptional in this section of the country are the design and facilities of the building that they will make it a "headquarters" of music, art and drama not only of TCU but of Fort Worth and the Southwest in general:

Opera - The Auditorium stage is the only one in the Southwest adequately designed and equipped for the staging of opera.

Theater - Probably the best-equipped legitimate theater in Texas (as distinguished from movie theaters), the Little Theater is one of the nation's outstanding college drama plants. Its design and equipment rank along with those of the famed Pomona, Calif., College, from which Hollywood has drawn numerous stars.

Music - Lovers of organ music, particularly, will make the building their cultural Mecca. The Moeller concert pipe organ will rank among the few "major" concert pipe organs of the country. The orchestra pit, patterned after that in the Metropolitan Opera House in New York, is one of the few in the nation that will accommodate a full 75-piece symphony orchestra.

Radio - Radio listeners throughout the country can be in "direct contact" with every room in the Fine Arts Building. The radio control room is equipped to pick up broadcasts from any point in the building, and direct loops will carry programs to five different Fort Worth radio stations and their network hook-ups.

Lectures - Acoustical design and air conditioning make the Auditorium and the Little Theater---depending upon the size of the audience---ideal for lectures. The University plans to inaugurate a public lecture series later in the fall.

High School Clinics - The building and its facilities will permit larger enrollment at TCU's various summer clinics for high school pupils and teachers, and space is adequate to hold all sessions in air-conditioned comfort.

IV - THE AUDITORIUM

Seating 1258 persons, the University Auditorium occupies the center portion of the building and is entered through a foyer just inside the building's main entrance.

The stage is acoustically designed for radio broadcasting and transcription. Specially-designed equipment enables one suspended microphone to pick up an entire chorus or symphony without distortion or even the soloists, chorus and orchestra of an operatic production.

The Auditorium houses the concert pipe organ and will be the "concert hall" of the University Symphony Orchestra. An orchestra shell is suspended from an overhead track, and the entire shell or any portion thereof can be removed from the stage as the occasion demands.

Programs from other parts of the building---the radio studio and the Little Theater, for example---can be heard in the Auditorium by means of a speaker connected to the intercommunication system.

The stage is 44 feet wide and has a proscenium 30 feet high. Stage depth is 45 feet, and wings are 14 feet wide, each.

The Auditorium will be used for general University functions as well as for productions of the School of Fine Arts.

V - THE CONCERT ORGAN

The concert pipe organ is a four-manual, 70-rank instrument, containing a total of 3970 pipes, plus chimes.

Its facilities were designed according to specifications of the TCU music staff, in conjunction with engineers of the Moeller company.

It ranks as one of America's major pipe organs, according to Moeller engineers, who have designed the bulk of all the concert-size organs in the country. In number of pipes, it is one of the three or four largest organs in the South.

It is a "three-in-one" organ, equipped with complete Baroque, French Romantic, and Modern American facilities. No organ without all three "families" of pipes can play the entire range of classic, romantic and modern repertoires.

The organ has made it possible for TCU to plan a major curriculum in church music, beginning with the 1949-50 school year.

The four-manual console is "portable"---it rolls onto the stage for concert, onto the wings when the stage is in use for other purposes.

VI - THE LITTLE THEATER

Every theater-goer at TCU plays will have a "seat down front" ---the Little Theater is built to seat just 224 persons, none more than 75 feet from the center of the stage. Plays will be repeated before successive small audiences, guaranteeing every patron a good view of the play and giving the student actors and technicians increased practice before actual audiences.

Delay between acts for scenery changes will be reduced to a matter of seconds. Entire sets can be built on special "wagons" and moved on or off the stage in one motion.

Overture and intermission music will be provided by an electric organ with console housed in a glass-enclosed room at the rear of the theater. Lighting controls are in another glass-enclosed room, from which students will study lighting techniques during plays.

Stage lights total over 75,000 watts, including more than 40 special spot and flood lights. Lights are interchangeable between the Little Theater and Auditorium stages, mounted on a motorized overhead bridge.

Brilliance and flexibility of the lighting enable direct television from either stage.

* * *

The east wing of the Theater stage and the rear of the Auditorium stage are separated by soundproof doors, which can be closed to permit simultaneous use of both stages or opened for movement of sets or equipment.

Direct telephone lines connect all production departments of both Theater and Auditorium. A play or opera director can sit in the fourth room of either auditorium and talk with lighting technicians, stage director, dressing rooms, costume room, etc.

All scenery and costumes for plays and operas will be made in the workshop and the wardrobe room, in the basement below the stages. Over \$2500 worth of power equipment will handle woodworking, scenery painting, costume sewing and pressing, and even furniture designing. Even special fabrics can be woven, on the art department's looms.

Dressing rooms with showers are also in the basement, with stairs leading direct to the wings.

The Green Room, to be used for social functions or "entre-act" refreshments, is directly accessible from wings, auditoriums, dressing rooms, and all other parts of the theater plant.

VII - RADIO

A "scale model" of a national network headquarters, the radio studio and control room has a complete set-up of RCA equipment of the most recent designs.

Direct loops lead to each of five Fort Worth broadcast stations, and the control room facilities can handle two broadcasts simultaneously.

Programs can be "picked up" from the studio itself, the Auditorium, Little Theater, or any of the various studios throughout the building.

An announcer in the studio, a symphony or chorus in the Auditorium, a lecturer in the Little Theater, and a soloist in a music studio, for example, could all participate in a single broadcast, with programming directed from the control room.

Such a program, or any other, can also be transcribed. Transcribing equipment is identical to that used in making premium-quality professional records or electrical transcriptions. Like direct broadcasts, recordings can be picked up from any part of the building and can be put on 33 1/3 or 78 r. p. m. discs. Wire and tape recording equipment is also available.

Both stages (Auditorium and Little Theater) are acoustically designed for broadcast or transcription pickup.

One program can be broadcast over KTCU, campus radio station, while another is being aired by one of the five regular Fort Worth stations. Transcriptions can be made by themselves or simultaneously with broadcasts.

An echo chamber is provided by the room adjacent to the studio. It also serves as a projection room for visual education equipment.

A radio laboratory, equipped with facilities duplicating those in the studio and control room and located in the basement, is used for experimental purposes.

VIII - OTHER EQUIPMENT

More than \$200,000 worth of equipment, not including the concert organ and in addition to the \$1,500,000 cost of the building, provides for instruction and practice in every phase of fine arts.

Music - Approximately \$100,000 worth of equipment, including 54 pianos; two electronic organs and one two-manual Moeller practice pipe organ; about \$20,000 worth of band and orchestra instruments; a celesta and a two-manual harpsichord, both rarely available in college facilities; harps, marimba, and vibraharp; 11 record players, equipped for 33 1/3, 45 and 78 rpm. records; and a stroboscope, which measures correct musical pitch to within 1/1000 of a half-tone.

Theater - About \$37,000 worth of rigging and stage equipment; \$20,000 worth of lights; and \$2500 worth of workshop equipment for building sets, props and furniture, and making costumes.

Radio - Equipment (described in previous section) totals about \$20,000, including studio and control room facilities, transcribing set-up, campus radio station KTCU, and experimental laboratory.

Art - About \$10,000 worth of equipment, exclusive of paintings, including specially equipped work tables and easels for painting and commercial art; complete layout of tools for sculpture; electric ovens for pottery work; 24 looms for weaving; and workshop equipment for wood, leather and metal crafts.

IX - INTERIOR FEATURES

Air-conditioning provides constant temperature and humidity in every square inch of the building, important not only for comfort but also for maintenance of radio and musical equipment and for accurate pitch of musical instruments.

Sound is completely "boxed in" in every room used for musical performance or practice. Soundproofing is so effective that even an organ crescendo in a practice room cannot be heard in adjoining classrooms or halls.

All ceilings and walls are of suspended, double-tile construction, preventing transmission or conduction of sound.

Floors in all music rooms are of wood over sound-proof filler. Other floors are of tile.

All halls and art exhibition rooms are equipped with indirect lighting and concealed molding. Every hall is in effect an "art gallery."

The foyer and the lower part of the Auditorium walls and the proscenium are panelled in finished natural mahogany. Other walls are tinted plaster.

All major exits have stainless steel doors, and all windows are of aluminum.

X - MISCELLANEOUS

Integration of All Arts - There are no "departments" in the new TCU Fine Arts Building. Quarters and facilities of the many phases of work are interspersed throughout the building. Regardless of their major fields, all students are at least indirectly "exposed" to every art form. Each division will also have access to the facilities of the rest---i.e., drama students may use art equipment for making sets or costumes, music majors may use the radio studio's transcriptions, etc.

The Library - Equipped for research through the master's degree level in all art forms, the Fine Arts Library is a "branch" of TCU's Mary Couts Burnett Library, with an assistant librarian in charge of a student staff. Occupying two large rooms---one just off the main entrance foyer and the other just below, in the basement, with connecting stairs---the library contains more than 5000 art slides, 5500 electrical transcriptions, 10,000 phonograph records with scores to match; and complete libraries of art prints, voice and instrumental music, and volumes on music, art, drama, speech and radio.

Band Room - The University Symphonic Band (and its "subsidiaries," the marching band and the stage band) has its own practice room, just below the auditorium. It is equipped with built-in risers, and it is acoustically constructed to enable the director to hear the individual instruments as well as the blended ensemble.

Visual Education - Besides sound movie projectors and slide and microfilm facilities, the visual education equipment includes a Meissner phonoscope---a device which enables music students to "see" musical sounds at the same time they hear them.

Speech Correction - Stammering, stuttering and similar speech difficulties will be analyzed and treated by the speech correction clinic, which has its own laboratory. The clinic will be available only to the TCU student body for the present, but as additional personnel are trained it may be opened to the public.

XI - EFFECT ON CURRICULUM

Facilities of the building make it possible for the School of Fine Arts to conduct training in almost every conceivable phase of the arts---including many for which there is at present no demand.

Numerous new programs, however, have already been planned for the 1949 fall semester:

Opera - Possessing the only stage in the Southwest adequate for opera staging, the School of Fine Arts will open an Opera Workshop this fall. Instruction will be given in chorus and aria singing, staging, and direction.

Mr. Karl Kritz, conductor of the Metropolitan Opera in New York and of the San Francisco and Pittsburgh operas, has been engaged jointly with the Fort Worth Opera Association as a member of the TCU faculty. The TCU workshop under his direction will be the official workshop of the Fort Worth Association.

Church Music - Made possible primarily by the concert pipe organ, a full four-year major curriculum in church music will be offered beginning this fall.

Mr. Gordon Young, eminent young American organist, has been appointed to the TCU faculty as instructor in organ and in church music. He formerly studied with Alexander McCurdy, on a two-year fellowship at the Curtis Institute of Music, and with the late Joseph Bonnet, world-famed French concert organist.

Ballet - The mirrored studio is an essential for ballet instruction and practice, an art form rarely included in college or university curricula.

Sculpture - Similarly new in the TCU schedule, a complete program in sculpture will begin this fall.

Other New Courses - Expanding the curricula in existing programs, the School will offer new courses in television production and writing; radio control room techniques; radio transcribing; interior design and decoration; stage lighting; and technical problems of stagecraft.

XII - THE SCHOOL OF FINE ARTS

The TCU School of Fine Arts is composed of three departments:

Art - The divisions of painting, interior design, crafts in leather, metal and wood, ceramics, sculpture, commercial art, and public school art.

Music - The divisions of applied music, theory, literature, and music education. It is represented in public by the symphony orchestra, the bands, the choral club, the a cappella choir, madrigal groups, string quartets, and woodwind and brass ensembles.

Speech-Drama-Radio - The divisions of practical speaking, interpretation, speech correction, forensics, theater directing and acting, costume design, scenic design, theater lighting, radio program production, and television.

Dr. T. Smith McCorkle is dean of the School. Prof. Samuel F. Zeigler is head of the art department, Dean McCorkle is chairman of the music department, and Dr. E. L. Pross is administrator of the speech-drama-radio department.

The School of Fine Arts is one of eight schools and colleges composing Texas Christian University, which is headed by Dr. M. E. Sadler, president.