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Special Performing Arts Edition

Bryn Mawr and Haverford Colleges

Brynn Mawr and Haverford share responsibilities for bi-College performing arts, with Bryn Mawr handling theater and dance, while Haverford concentrates on music.

At Bryn Mawr a faculty, administrative and student committee issued a report on the performing arts in 1988, which advised, among other things, to decrease the number of music faculty members and add arts coordinators. (See article by Sally Carlson, page 2.) Bryn Mawr has followed these suggestions to various degrees, bringing the College's first full-time professional theater director two years ago and adding an arts coordinator and the first theater class for credit to Bryn Mawr this year. Bryn Mawr is currently conducting searches for performing arts faculty members. (See article by Sabrina Seidner, page 1.)

Haverford has made changes and additions in its music personnel and curriculum since a visiting committee review of its music department in 1989. (See article by Laura Phillips, page 1.)

A decision about the performing arts that involved both Bryn Mawr and Haverford, as well as Swarthmore, was the three Colleges' administrations' cancellations last semester of a student-run bi-College theater program. (See article by John Lovett, page 2.)

These articles contain the reactions to these changes, by students, faculty and staff members who have been involved in the performing arts. For the most part, they reflect varying degrees of hope and frustration, acknowledging the changes and attempts at improvement, but not always agreeing with the methods used.

Orchestra, chorale conductor position seems to be musical chair

by Laura Phillips

In the past few years, Haverford's expanding music department has begun to try to strengthen both its curriculum and performance areas to attract more students to the department and make the bi-College community more aware of what the performing groups can offer.

Despite impressive gains, however, community apathy, faculty turnover and what some music faculty members say privately is a lack of administrative support have all created barriers to this goal.

Steven Lipsett, current orchestra and chorale conductor, has been the first person to hold the post for more than one year since Tamara Brooks. Brooks held the position from 1974 until spring of 1980 when she took a leave of absence, said chairman John Davison. She is now head of the New School of Music.

She was replaced by two separate temporary conductors, who were followed in turn by Marietta Chang from Colgate in 1981-82. Lipsett took the position the following year. Since Lipsett has taken office, he has increased the number of orchestra concerts from two to three per semester. In addition to the weekly rehearsals, Lipsett has scheduled sectional rehearsals every Wednesday, he said.

Moreover, the additions to the faculty of music history prof. Kofi Agawu in Fall 1982 and music prof. Curt Cacioppo in Fall 1983 have greatly increased the amount and type of course open to students interested in music. "Curt is trying to work with some new changes to get good students to come here," said sophomore Stephen Symbych, concert master of the Bryn Mawr-Haverford Orchestra. "I'm very excited about that."

Finally, at the visiting committee's recommendation, more music classes will be instituted next year, said Davison. The courses will cover areas such as keyboard score reading, ear training and music literature.

Through the recommendations of a visiting committee in Fall of 1981 and "over the objections of the music department itself," the Educational Policy Committee (EPC) implemented the decision to phase out the job of director of the Bi-College Theater Program. (See article by Sabrina Seidner, page 1.)

Dancers practice in the new studio in Bryn Mawr's Barn Schwartz Gymnasium, quite a change from the old studio above Pembroke Arch. Bryn Mawr will be hiring a full-time dance instructor for next year.

Photo courtesy of Bryn Mawr Public Information Office

Theater: growing art here

by Sabrina Seidner

No matter how seriously students and administrators of either college take theater in the community, no one can forget that Haverford expelled Cherry Chase or that Katherine Hepburn got through Bryn Mawr "by the skin of her teeth."

For years, students here have been able to give free reign to their theatrical imaginations. They have conceived and directed original plays, sung in the chorus of musicals and hit the lights on the sets they designed. But good theater demands training, organized resources and full-time effort. Director of bi-College Theater Andrew Lichtenberg said he feels the next step in developing a serious theater program is a course for credit studying acting, which would include both "practical and historical" aspects of theater.

"I'm very concerned that students must have an 'intellectual base' for their work in theater as well as exposure to professional, more experienced actors and directors. The administrations of both colleges seem to be heeding this advice. An ad hoc appointments committee is now recruiting applicants for a director of theater as a faculty position, not a member of the staff."

"The college is not renew Lichtenberg's contract, he said, because his current position will no longer exist and "by law I have to apply again." He did say he was "told that they'd like me to reapply."

This year for the first time bi-College students received academic credit for studying acting. (Continued on page 3)
Theater quality, involvement, greater

by Amy Rosenbaum

Student theater in the bi-College community is on its way to improving, hopefully. Increased student involvement and quality of production because of the merger of the departments of theater and dance is one way for credit is in the future, probably.

This mixed note of both optimism and uncertainty marred the opinions of Bryn Mawr students Margaret Hoag and Carolyn McKnight. These students, both active in acting and directing, are representatives of the two "eras" of bi-College theater student, namely as possible student and director-assisted productions.

McKnight recalled that initially Bryn Mawr prof. Robert Bauman had been the theater director for 15 years, "final that ground to a halt at the end of the '70s for various reasons." At that point, students were entirely on their own, until the hiring of Andy Lichtenberg two years ago.

"People did some very ambitious things (when they were on their own)," McKnight was hired, he was given "first priority" to all theater spaces, and had about six or seven student productions. People were a lot more active.

McKnight stated that when Lichtenberg was hired, he was given "first priority" to all theater spaces, and had about six or seven student productions. He has since mellowed a good deal," she added. McKnight said she feels that "it's a pity that more people don't make use of [Lichtenberg's] training and talent." He stated that he felt the bi-College administration had hired a theater director to "restrict" and improve student productions, which they had since mellowed a good deal," she added. McKnight said she feels that "it's a pity that more people don't make use of [Lichtenberg's] training and talent."

"Of course," McKnight continued, "this did not happen. They were still having more advanced productions coming out of the plays." McKnight believes that without the establishment of proper training, student productions would take the form of courses for credit and proper performance spaces, there would be little opportunity for performance and production to improve.

Even with the potential of theater courses for credit pending on the horizon, McKnight still feels that "the administration wants to do it as cheaply as possible then." We still have some fairly excruciating theater spaces. People will tell you that Roberts is wonderful. Roberts is not wonderful. The middle of the stage in Roberts cannot be lit. They will tell you that Goodhart has been improved. Goodhart is still a barn. And that's it."

McKnight stated that when the plans for the open-campus center were being formulated, "there were proposals for a black-box theater (a small theater space with risers that can be assembled and reassembled to form both a proscenium and theater-in-the-round)." However, McKnight noted that "those plans were dropped quickly."

The feeling of future hope couched with present frustration is shared by sophomore Margaret Hoag, a representative of the post-Lichtenberg independent student theater era, who plans to go into theater administration after graduation. Hoag described the present bi-College production situation as two different and independent groups working side by side, namely the Bryn Mawr-Haverford Theater Company and the official bi-College theater program under Lichtenberg.

Hoag explained that students wishing to present a certain play simply submit a bid to the theater company for approval, independent of Lichtenberg and the plays he selects to open to the community for auditions.

Hoag called this system "very not efficient."

"To improve coordination between the two groups, the idea of a theater council was proposed at an open meeting with Bryn Mawr Dean Marples Dunn last year, Hoag said. "This council would be comprised of selected students and administrators," she explained, "and they would decide such factors as how much money would be spent, where the production would be held, and possibly even choose the plays themselves."

Hoag stated that if the Council "basically regulate theater," an idea that she finds to be "so much more sensible."

Hoag agrees with McKnight that students do not take advantage of Lichtenberg's training and talent. "We're the first (student) group who asked Andy for any help. He's not utilized as much as he could be, and students would really benefit."

Despite this seemingly promising Theater Council suggestion, Hoag stated wistfully that there has been no progress toward the Council's formation to date. "Dean Dunn and Provost Gavir are both so busy," she sighed.

Susan Scarrow and Ellie Knickman, both sophomores at the time, act out a scene from The Memorandum, a Theater Director Andy Lichtenberg's first bi-College production, in October, 1982. Lichtenberg has directed 11 productions since then, the latest being the musical Cinderella two weeks ago. In this scene, "Ms. Lear" (Scarrow) teaches "Miss Thumb" (Knickman) an artificial corporate language.

Discontinuation of Festival raises ire

by John Lovett

This fall the presidents of Bryn Mawr, Haverford and Swarthmore, in conjunction with the advisory board of Summer Festival, quietly made a decision that surprised many members of the tri-College theater community. Festival would not be brought back this year.

Festival is a ten-year-old, student-run, summer theater program for tri-College students. The three colleges provide some support for the program, including living arrangements, use of a theater and, this past year, funding for a professional artistic director. On the whole, Festival has been successful, selling tickets, building their own sets, and even directing. This past year students also had green thumb and set designers. The Marples Dunn told The News, however, that they thought Festival shows had been improving in quality for the last three years.

Andy Lichtenberg, Summer Festival's artistic director, himself admits that there had been some inconsistency in production quality in past years, and that these problems "were well on the road to being solved."

He said that complaints about Festival being too much of a play school instead of an educational experience were being eliminated by the addition of daily classes and an extra week of preparatory instruction.

A more objective yet still laudatory opinion was delivered by local critics during the summer. Michael Caruso, entertainment editor for the Main Line Times, heralded Festival's production of Fifth of July as a "minor miracle." About Festival's season opener, Hay Fever, which Lichtenberg directed himself, Caruso wrote, "the production was basically successful."

He went on to add, "Despite just three weeks of rehearsal time, and with a cast comprised of not a single theater major since none Bryn Mawr, Haverford, nor Swarthmore College have full theater majors, the presentation sported very little mugging and a good deal of realistic characterization." The season finale, The Road Into Waik, was found to be "a pleasant surprise." More specifically, he wrote, "...director Lucy Collier invested the production with all the brilliant banter and sinister terror the play requires."

Pat Jordan, another critic, wrote in The Suburban and Wayne Times that the "Summer Theater at Bryn Mawr is doing some exciting things... performances overall are quite good."

Many students have opinions, but three of the most concerned voices are those of Dan Kramer, '85's manager, Ellie Knickman, Fenn's assistant manager, and Sue Petrone, a member of the three-year-old company and the manager of the non-Festival summer theater. While assertions included a $25
Dance program grows

to include full-time post

by Sally Carlson

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The history of dance at Bryn Mawr has been marked by frustration from participants, say students. The dance program, they say, has always been
delegated to the physical education department and has had a seeming lack of support, financial and otherwise, from the administration.

Advanced dancers who have come to Bryn Mawr with the hope of continuing excellent academics and the opportuni-
ty to continue dancing have been bitterly disappointed in the limited of-
terest the administration showed in dance. Some of these dancers have chosen to take classes off-campus, but many have quit entirely, feeling angry and resent-
ful about the future of dance at Mawr and the integration of dance into other forms of art and education.

The history of the dance program at Bryn Mawr began relatively recently. Dance was introduced into the physical education department in 1959 when the administration decided to offer dance and ballet as part of the academic department, while the Curriculum Committee, according to Linda Caruso, one of the dance instructors in Mawr, the dance department is "transitional period." She is optimistic about the future of dance at Mawr and the integration of dance in the arts.

In his advanced workshops, students learn about the repertoire of the Mawr dance and ballet program. They are interested in theater as a whole, but appreciate the opportunity to dance. Does one take classes as only 50-minute gym classes or study dance? Well, most choose to take classes twice a week. "For dance, an hour and a half a week is not enough to keep in shape, let alone improve," he says. "You don't injure yourself more". Another dancer related the situation to a vicious cycle. "If there are more classes and people danced more, they would improve, which would make them feel excited and want to dance even more," said the dancer. "But because there are so few, they work hard for a short time, which means they may not get results, which makes them lose interest in dance and become more pessimistic about attending classes at all."

But the situation is not all bleak. "We have a great credit union, but the administration is still not committed," another dancer said. "Our program is growing, but we're still not sure what the future holds."

Festival

(Continued from page S1)

Kramer calls the administration's comments about the quality of Festival's productions "inconsistent at best." In his memory, he says, "There were few administrators who attended a produc-
tion they said they enjoyed the plays." All of the students interviewed seemed to be able to remember only one in which one of the tri-College presidents was in the audience.

Knickman, who attended Festival for three years before she participated herself, claims that 1983 was a "high point in quality." She added that she sees a lot of talent in the tri-College community that the administration does not recognize. In her opinion, that talent was guided and focused very successfully by Lichtenberg.

Petrone simply thinks that the reviews Festival received and the let-
ters of praise and requests from people outside the Colleges to be a part of Festival speak for themselves. She believes that "everyone who is familiar with Festival, has a good reputation."

All persons interviewed, however, admitted that attendance at Festival shows was not as high as they would have liked. They attribute that short-
coming to the lack of preparation and publicity time Festival had last year because of the Colleges' tardiness in granting their official approval.

The administration's assumption that Festival should be an appendage or extension of the year round drama program drew an emotional response from students and artistic director. All the students and even Lichtenberg himself agree that Festival was the strongest and most permanent element of the entire bi-College drama pro-
gram. Knickman said, "The quality of productions as well as theater educa-
tion is higher at Festival than any time during the year." She claimed, "The complete Festival experience in every aspect of theater is not comparable to anything in the school year."

Similarly, Kramer believes that "cut-
ning Festival out eliminates the best available experience for students in-
terested in theater." Petrone adds that she even suggested proposals to ex-
 pand Festival into a more year-round project.

Another aspect of the administrators' rationale was that they want to give the new, yet-to-be-hired head of the drama program the chance to start from scratch and mold a new summer pro-
gram in connection with his or her year-round program.

Students interviewed wondered why then had the administrators not long to begin the search for someone to fill the position, especially since the ad-
ministration had decided not to renew Lichtenberg's contract for 1984-85 before the 1983 Festival even began? Almost an entire year passed until a search committee was created this Spring, so late then to hire someone in time for Festival.

Knickman has several problems with the "time-off theory" in conjunc-
tion with the new drama director. She said this director will have trouble starting over again. She has no doubts that even a one-year break will cause Festival to lose its hard-earned reputation as well as some of its dedicated patrons.

Put it this way as an example a letter he received from a disappointed local resident who had only missed one Festival production in the last eight years.

The last questions that arise in students' minds are first, why honestly did the Administrations cancel Festival? Secondly, what does this say about the Colleges' commitment to drama in the bi-College community?

Knickman said she thinks part of the problem lies in an administrative con-
flict between a lack of financial support and a desire to see the quality of the program improve. The Colleges would like to be able to boast a strong theater program in order to improve their image in the community, she said, but at the same time, they do not want to contribute the necessary money.

"The last two years have put my con-
fidence in the administration in doubt," Knickman said. "There's no focus, no solid support, nothing for students to look to for direction and only taken gestures. Students are fighting for their artistic lives."

Petrone feels "let down." She says that the theater program here is not what the College promised her. She said she fears that the Colleges thought that students were asking for too much and thus frustrated, in their opinion, "a hassle." In her opinion, a college drama program's purpose is "to teach drama, not give a good name to the college." She doubts Bryn Mawr and Haver-
ford's commitment to that ideal. Because of this doubt, she will be "very surprised if they give us full support next year."

Kramer admits that he is "really at a loss to explain what happened," but also says that the cancellation "makes him wonder about the advice the administration is getting." "The [administrations] may be committed to building a strong pro-
gram," he concludes, "but I don't know if they're going about it in the right way."

Tamara Brooks, currently president of the New School of Music in Philadelphia, served as bi-College orchestra and choral conductor from 1974 to 1980. Since then, the conductor position has changed three times.
Dance

(Continued from page SJ)

Dancers to be appointed a coordinator for the arts.

As Browne freshman music major class dean Karen Tidmarsh, one of the members of this committee, an essential and important tract the arts in this community is to have a single person who is an academic, or faculty member for all of the arts and their activities.

Linda Caruso-Haviland agrees that "One of the main things I was told was that a committee be established which provided a report in April 1980 on the role of the fine arts in the curriculum and in bringing in an outside committee last spring to review the dance department.

The 1980 report reveals that the administration is aware of the problematic state of the arts in the curriculum and is committed to improving the situation. The report calls the state of the arts "fragmented and "precarious." According to the report, the fine arts department in particular is not in line with the courses offered. In addition to the dance department, the other courses in the department that are not aligned with the courses offered in the arts.

The report also acknowledges that there is a "need for a new, inclusive category among the divisions of the curriculum for all of the creative and performing arts disciplines." It is the responsibility of the arts, the report states, to make "education can only be enriched by integrating the fine arts into it." Thus, the report sees the need to change the institution's view of the arts as "an area where theory has been richly and well represented." The report concludes that therts and fine arts program has been only recently and grudgingly administered.

The committee made five major recommendations for strengthening the arts. One is to establish a new, inclusive category among the divisions of the curriculum for all of the creative and performing arts disciplines. A second recommendation is to give faculty status and tenure-track positions to "the best artists who wish to bring in the classroom and to work with students." A third recommendation is to establish a new, inclusive category among the "divisions of the curriculum." A fourth recognizes that there is a necessity to have an "essential and important tract the arts in this community is to have a single person who is an academic, or faculty member for all of the arts and their activities." A fifth recommendation is for the arts to be "given more significant and prominent roles in the campus life."