I, Scott N. Miller,
hereby submit this work as part of the requirements for the degree of:

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in:
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of the College of Design, Architecture, Art, and Planning (DAAP)

It is entitled:

A Theater For Interaction

This work and its defense approved by:

Chair: Professor David Niland
Professor Gordon Simmons
Professor Michael Burnham
A THEATER FOR INTERACTION
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In the School of Architecture and Interior Design of the College of Design,
Architecture, Art, and Planning (DAAP)

2004

by

Scott N. Miller

Bachelor of Science in Architecture, University of Cincinnati, 2002

Committee Chair: Professor David Niland
Professor Gordon Simmons
Professor Michael Burnham
Abstract

a. The traditional theater, as used in almost all Broadway shows and in the majority of stage shows throughout the country, has existed in its current state for several centuries. Shows of this sort include The Phantom of the Opera, Guys n’ Dolls, Cats, and many other popular productions. This type of theater always includes distinct areas for the audience, performers, and administrators. In traditional theaters, as dictated by ritual, the cast is constantly segregated from the audience in their own spaces. This spatial situation is ideal for Broadway-style theater shows and musical stage shows where the audience and the cast are two separate entities, but what happens to this relationship when the audience and the cast become intertwined during the course of the show?

At this year’s People’s Choice Awards, actor Charlie Sheen stated that, “every year, the line between
Abstract

reality and entertainment blurs”\(^1\). This is not only true of television but also true in stage-theater. Over the past twenty years, a new type of stage-theater that involves and responds to the audience has developed in the entertainment world. This type

\(^1\) Sheen, Charlie, January 2004.
Abstract

of theater is often referred to as interactive theater. Interactive theater is a participatory type of theater that “invites the audience to share in the drama”\textsuperscript{2}. Such theaters' "emphasis is on bringing out the creativity of each audience member and creating a collective fantasy which we all can play within, discovering new ways of behavior"\textsuperscript{3}. As the show unravels, these interactive theaters gradually allow for audience interaction, creating a dialogue between the audience and the performers, who improvise the show together. Interactive theater breaks down the classical relationship between the audience and the players, simultaneously altering the conventional theater ritual. Here exists the following architectural problem:

The majority of contemporary theaters are designed to service the ritual needs of the traditional theater, but with the advent of new performance styles such as interactive theater, this ritual has evolved and


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along with it the architecture that cultivates this ritual

should also change.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Special Thanks to:

My professors, David Niland, Gordon Simmons, and Michael Burnham; my family, Mom, Dad, Shannon, and Eric; and all of my friends and fellow students including Heather, Mark, Sara, Tim, Jason, Brian, Brad, Lisa, Dan, Matt, Adam, Osam, Tiffany and many others.
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1. Lee, Ming Cho Theatre Check List, 7.
2. Lee, Ming Cho Theatre Check List, 7.
7. Schroder, Maria. Bayreuth Auditorium, 27.
24. Terraserver, 1300 Old River Road, Cleveland, Ohio, 2003.
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</tbody>
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My interests in human and social behavior in design or “EBS” spurs from a childhood interest in certain amusement parks and their ability to alter the experience of their guests. My continued interest in the entertainment industry, having worked at Disney and an architecture firm dedicated to entertainment and leisure design, as well as my involvement with local community theater groups, pushes me towards earning an understanding of how people (audience) react to their environs. Successfully entertaining people requires a successful communication of emotions and ideas. I believe that architecture, much like acting, can at least subtly infer certain reactions and connect to the emotions of its occupants in various ways.

In my documentation, I first devote my attention to the central ideas behind the thesis. This opening section illustrates how the traditional theater functions, showing that the theater has been designed around the ritual of traditional stage shows and how this design supports the ritual. This first section continues by tracing the evolution of traditional theaters, identifying what interactive performance entails and
INTRODUCTION

What alterations have arisen in the traditional stage-show. This includes the structuring of the interactive show and reveals the specifics of certain theater troops, such as Galumph Interactive Theater. This section concludes with several historical precedents for theater design and an interpretation of the reasoning behind these designs.

The second portion of the documentation is devoted to reinterpreting the central ideas as three-dimensional forms. It offers an interpretation of what is meant by interaction and what is understood to be interaction. The idea of interaction is then used to develop basic images and forms.

Finally, after establishing a complete and multidimensional definition of interaction, I introduce the physical product. This section identifies the interactive theater project in its entirety. Here, I provide a fully detailed program, a site history, and an analysis of the project’s site.
CHAPTER I: The Contemporary Theater
The Traditional Theater Space

In 1969, Joe Mielziner, Chairman of the American Theater Planning Board, identified two primary spatial configurations of the stage theater in the book *Theatre Check List*. All theaters can be defined as an open stage theater, a proscenium stage theater, or a combination of the two.

Open stage theaters or arenas, which have been evolved from the Greek and Elizabethan traditions, are devoid of any type of proscenium and are comprised of a flat, empty region which is surrounded by an audience on at least one side. This type of theater comes in a variety of forms. One such form is known as the center stage or two-sided arena “in which the audience faces the performing area from two opposing sides”⁴. The most common form of the open stage, however, is the three-sided arena, or Elizabethan stage, where “the audience faces the performing area from three adjacent sides”⁵. The last major form of the truly open stage is the arena stage, which is also known as the theater-in-the-round. In this type of theater “the audience completely surrounds the

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Central Ideas

performing area,\(^6\) leaving no sides available for a proscenium to exist.

The true proscenium stage theater, or picture-frame stage, only allows the audience to face the performing area from one side. The proscenium arch spans in front of the performing area, separating the audience from the performance space\(^7\). However, variations on the proscenium stage theater exist when it is combined with some of the primary ideas behind the open stage theater.

The hybrid stage, as defined by Mielziner, is "a combination of two or more different types of stage"\(^8\). An example of this type of stage theater occurs when the stage is extended out from the proscenium allowing the audience to wrap around more than one side of the stage. This configuration is commonly known as a thrust stage, especially when this extension into the audience space is done to a

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\(^5\) Mielziner, *Theatre Check List*, 7.
\(^6\) Mielziner, *Theatre Check List*, 7.
\(^7\) Mielziner, *Theatre Check List*, 7.
\(^8\) Mielziner, *Theater Check List*, 7.
Central Ideas

The open stage theater, used in some form of almost all theaters today, was introduced along with the first Western theaters. These theaters originated in Ancient Greece as early as 550 BC. Former University of Cincinnati Architecture student Maria Schroeder wrote that, “the sacred location for the [Greek] theater was outside the city, and a procession to the theater would occur before a performance”¹⁰. At center stage was situated a chorus. The audience surrounded this

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¹⁰ Schroeder, Maria, Urban Theater, 22.
stage on all sides with the exception of the small logia, which was used as a backdrop for the performers. The logia acted as a highly simplified proscenium, which was later developed more fully by the Romans.

The idea of a proscenium (a Latin word originating from the Greek term for “buildings at the back of the stage”\textsuperscript{11}) came into fruition in Roman culture. Schroeder comments that:

The theater experience became more focused on the stage area as the chorus portion became smaller. This led to a more defined line between the audience and the performers and was supported by a curtain, which separated scene changes.\textsuperscript{12}

Here it is noted that the contemporary separation between audience and performer is deeply rooted in both Greek and Roman theater traditions and in the introduction of the proscenium as a device that facilitates this separation. Over the following century and a half this separation would be magnified further by the improvement of a realistic theatrical illusion.

http://dictionary.reference.com/search?q=proscenium
The Medieval and Elizabethan eras brought about more elaborate costumes and sets, but the illusion of a separate reality was most greatly strengthened with the Renaissance discovery of constructed perspective. Perspective illusion, as demonstrated in Palladio's Teatro Olimpico, built in 1585, and the elaboration of stage designs aided in creating a spectacle so life-like that it soon became nearly unnecessary for performers to establish an intimate relationship with their audience. Simultaneously:

The stage was expanded in all directions: the wings were enlarged to accommodate sliding scenery panels, the under-stage area held the mechanical equipment necessary to move the panels, and fly space was enlarged to accommodate backdrops and more lighting. The line between the stage and the audience became distinct through the frame of the stage. This expansion shows that as the proscenium area grew, so did the notion of segregating the audience space from the performance space.

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12 Schroeder, Maria, *Urban Theater*, 23.

Central Ideas

The Renaissance developments in the theater, or opera house, did not exclude the expansion of the public theater spaces in addition to the expansion of the performance spaces. “Intermission, lobby, and other support spaces became larger and more elaborate,”\(^\text{14}\) as, “going to the opera became an elaborate social outing where people came to be seen”\(^\text{15}\). This demonstrates the emergence of two separate but elaborate rituals. Both the rituals of audience and performer became an increased spectacle during the Renaissance era of theater design. The segregation of audience and performer had reached its pinnacle.

Richard Wagner and Otto Bruckwald planted the first seeds of interaction with their radical design for the Bayreuth Auditorium in 1876. While this design did not directly breakdown the separation between audience and performer it did remove one of the major barriers between the two: the orchestra. Schroeder stated:

> The continuity between the stage and audience became more fluid. The orchestra pit was


\(^\text{15}\) Schroeder, Maria, *Urban Theater*, 26.
Central Ideas

moved completely under the stage, making the audience closer to the performers. The frame of the stage became less definitive as it dissolved into the rhythm of the auditorium walls.¹⁶

These changes came at a time when the success of the French Revolution was being used to promote social equality and aided in breaking down the social stratification of the preceding Renaissance theater.

Adaptations to the theater tradition have continued into Modern times. Many of the changes in modern-day theater came as a result of the invention of film and cinema. “Theater could not be as realistic as film,”¹⁷ so:

Theater became centered on the actors’ performance and much less on illusionary sets. Along with cubism and abstract art, set design, costume design, and lighting became more abstract. Performing spaces continued the trend started by the Bayreuth Auditorium, as the intimacy and connection between the audience and performer became more intense and the theatrical illusion was diminished.¹⁸

¹⁶ Schroeder, Maria, Urban Theater, 27.
¹⁷ Schroeder, Maria, Urban Theater, 28.
¹⁸ Schroeder, Maria, Urban Theater, 28.
Central Ideas

While the majority of modern theaters have perpetuated the traditions that have proceeded them, theaters also took on new forms. Schroeder demonstrates this by saying:

Performance spaces occur almost anywhere. Producers can choose from large convertible proscenium theaters, Elizabethan-like theaters where the stage and audience occur in the same space, convertible auditoriums/black boxes, and places not designed for theater.¹⁹

It is clear that the evolution of the modern-day theater has allowed for the introduction of the fully “interactive” theater, where the designation between audience and performer has been blurred to the point of negligibility.

Identifying the Rituals of Theater

The traditional theater design, which is used in almost all modern-day stage theaters, caters to the traditional rituals that have been established in this setting. This design accommodates two major contemporary theater rituals. The first is the ritual of the guest, or audience member, which is illustrated in the following story:

¹⁹ Schroeder, Maria, Urban Theater, 28.
Out front, the affluent arrive by limousine; others have parked at a nearby parking deck; some have come by cab. Together they pass through the big glass doors, converging at the seven-story grand entry, flooding the will-call ticket booth. The guests, having nabbed their tickets, open into conversation. Some grab drinks and snacks from the bar. All obtain their personal copies of the program from the ushers who stand attentively while occupying their posts. The guests then cluster together, casually discussing the nuances of their lives and their anticipation of the coming show. With the curtains drawn shut, the theater doors open wide to the people, who are immediately drawn into the theater. They cascade down the aisles, piling into the available velvet seat marked on their tickets and as informed by the ushers. Everyone is pointed towards the stage with a clear view. The lobby lights flash a final warning to the theatergoers. The doors close. The lights go down. The orchestra begins their overture. The curtains draw open and the audience sits back and
relaxes, to witness another enjoyable performance from the seats.

The second ritual accommodated by traditional theaters is that of the cast and crew and is depicted here:

The ritual begins long before the scheduled show time. The players and the crew arrive at the theater, sign in at the alley-side stage door, and scamper back into the dressing halls. Two rooms beyond, the theater’s lights and microphones are tested one by one. Backstage the actors discard street clothes for costumes and cake makeup onto their shining faces. Props are checked and rechecked. In the barren backstage, under sputtering florescence, are situated a couch and a makeshift kitchen. Here in the so-dubbed “break room” the cast filters in having completed costuming and makeup, to grab a few pre-show sodas and snacks. Now all stuffed into the bare minimum green room, the cast and crew gather in a pre-show huddle and prayer in hopes to calm nerves and muster favorable luck.
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The players begin their day of work and another successful night at the theater unfolds on stage. This model demonstrates these two similar yet segregated rituals that are both tied to the space we commonly call the theater. This situation still keeps the audience and the performance separate from one another at all costs. Unlike a Japanese Kabuki theater where the crew resides on stage, the guests of the contemporary American stage theater are typically restricted from seeing the crew during any portion of the show. The guests only witness the cast while they are actually performing. The backstage area is entirely off-limits to anyone who is not in the show. Simultaneously, the cast and crew go out of their way to avoid interacting in guest-designated spaces. When they are in costume, the cast is not permitted to delve into these spaces. The only interaction allowed is the audience's visual recognition of the performers that are on stage. The interaction between the two is as limited as possible.
The Evolution of Traditional Rituals

The nature of performances and the nature of the theaters where these performances take place are constantly evolving. The more malleable performances, however, adapt at a faster rate than the spaces that house them and while the performances have become more intimate, the theater has remained predominately the same. The evidence of this truth can be found in a wide variety of entertainment venues.

This includes some of Broadway’s newest shows. Rent, for instance, dresses their crew like various New York City pedestrians in order to change sets during songs or while the actors are continuously reciting their lines. The band, as opposed to the traditional orchestra, is also placed on stage in plain sight of the audience for the entire length of the show.

Other shows have taken on some unusual habits as well.

The Disney-produced musical theater adaptation of the animated feature, The Lion King, opens with a flood of actors and dancers, singing their way down the theater aisles and past the guests before arriving onstage. Also during the show, some characters, such as the bird-informant Zazu, will occupy
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the lobby and refreshment areas of the theater, awaiting their cue to come “flying” down the theater aisles, much to the audience’s surprise.

_The Lion King_ is also one of the first Broadway musicals to present the audience with a complicated hydraulic stage, which was produced by set designer Richard Hudson. The adaptable stage is much like the electro-hydraulic stages produced and dreamed up by theater consultant George C. Izenour in the 1970’s and 80’s. Before the audience’s eyes, _The Lion King_’s stage changes from the setting of a flat African plain into the craggy Pride Rock that is featured both at the beginning and the conclusion of the animated film. Although this stage does not provide the same level of interaction as placing the performers into the audience, it is important to note.

The movable stage was pioneered by Izenour and is best demonstrated in Dietrich Kunckel and Tomas Lugo’s _Teatro Teresa Carrena_ built in 1983 in Caracas, Venezuela and in Christos Athanasopulous’s design for the _National Theater of Greece_ in Athens. The hydraulic stage design
breaks from common theater traditions and it potentially allows for a situation where the stage can move around the audience or can even push itself into the audience. A similar dissolution of audience-performer separation is arising in some of the tourism world’s newest entertainment venues.

Tourist spots have altered their own shows to comply with this more inclusive take on entertainment. Shows such as Cirque du Soliel’s *O* in Las Vegas, as well as the Pleasure Island nightclub, *The Adventurers’ Club*, have incorporated some unusual methods for entertaining their guests.

*O* utilizes stage trickery similar to that which *The Lion King* musical offers. At times, performers will dangle from the ceiling. The stage performance comes not only from the ground and the air, but also from out of the water. Synchronized swimmers and divers appear and disappear on a stage that is for one moment entirely watered and in the next moment completely dry.

*The Adventurers’ Club* is another unconventional tourist site located at Walt Disney World in Florida. The club serves not only as a bar with a series of lounges, but as a
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Theater with a series of stages. Despite truly having only one conventional stage, performers at *The Adventurers’ Club* roam about the complex, speaking to the guests while remaining in character. The show can then move from room to room dispersing amongst the guests and strewn all about the club. As many as seven and as few as one actor can be involved with the guests at a time. The entertainment, the jokes, and the stories incorporated in the show are drawn from the information the actors gain from having conversations with *The Adventurers’ Club* visitors. Further surprising these people and going against normal theater conventions, the walls are filled with speakers, microphones, and the occasional audio-animatronic character. Actors who remain behind the scenes use this system to learn about the audience members and make periodic jokes about the guests and the characters that move about the club. *The Adventurer’s Club* is essentially a bar and theater that is dependent on audience participation to increase its own entertainment value. Recently, television has employed similar techniques to further involve its audience in the show.
“Reality television,” where real people (those who would normally be the viewers of television) rather than actors are the spectacle, has engulfed the programming schedule of every major television network across the United States. Television favorite *American Idol* relies on the talents of untrained participants for their show and further involves the television viewer by asking them to vote on which participant displays the most talent each week. Other programs such as ABC’s *Big Brother*, MTV’s *The Real World*, and CBS’s *Survivor* film the exploits of real people’s everyday lives as they are forced to adjust to new people and a new way of living. The advent of popular “reality” shows follows fast on the footsteps of shows such as ABC’s *Whose Line Is It Anyway*, where the players improvise the entertainment based on audience-suggested themes. Additionally, the audience members are frequently asked to participate in the show, adding movements, sounds, or ideas to the cast. This situation brings the audience on to the stage, which would normally be considered a *faux pas* in traditional theater.
A New Genre of Performance

The evolution has reached its height with alternative forms of theater. Galumph Interactive Theater of Minneapolis, Minnesota was founded in 1992. “Artists Erik Esse and Christopher Griffith co-founded Galumph Interactive Theater with a unique vision: to create a new genre of theater that includes and responds to its audience”\(^{20}\). Interactive theater is a participatory type of theater that “invites the audience to share in the drama”\(^{21}\). Such theaters' “emphasis is on bringing out the creativity of each audience member and creating a collective fantasy which we all can play within, discovering new ways of behavior”\(^{22}\). These interactive theaters gradually allow for audience interaction creating a dialogue between the audience and the performers who both improvise the show. “Galumph artists have spent the last decade studying, testing,


and experimenting with the potential of audience involvement\textsuperscript{23}.

**The Theater Remains**

Despite the cutting-edge rituals of these new entertainment forms, nearly all take place in the traditional-style theater setting. The Broadway shows use the standard Broadway theaters they have always used. O incorporates a standard theater setup in Las Vegas. The performances of *American Idol* and *Whose Line Is It Anyway* both take place in standard indoor theaters and television studios. A slight traditional theater deviation can be found at *The Adventurers’ Club*, which takes place in a Disneyfied recreation of a 1937 home, complete with several rooms used for various performances as well as a bar. However, even this setting incorporates both a standard dinner theater and uses the same backstage and onstage practices as the traditional theater.

Central Ideas

The evidence can also be seen in the design programs for contemporary theaters. For instance, the following is a typical theater program, designed for approximately 100-200 guests and approximately 10-20 performers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I. Public Spaces</th>
<th>II. Performance Spaces</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Entry/Lobby</td>
<td>Main Stage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3400-4000 SF</td>
<td>3000 SF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box Office</td>
<td>Stage Basement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>150-200 SF</td>
<td>700-1600 SF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coatroom</td>
<td>Orchestra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100-200 SF</td>
<td>500 SF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refreshments</td>
<td>Control Room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>700-1000 SF</td>
<td>250 SF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail/Gifts</td>
<td>Large Dressing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300-450 SF</td>
<td>500 SF</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### Central Ideas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Square Feet</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(2) Medium Dressing Rooms</td>
<td>400 SF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green Room</td>
<td>250 SF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage Door</td>
<td>250-300 SF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Cast and Crew Restroom</td>
<td>300 SF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wardrobe Repair and Laundry</td>
<td>250 SF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
<td><strong>6700 SF</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. Management/Administration Spaces</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reception</td>
<td>250 SF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>IV. Production Spaces</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) Offices</td>
<td>800 SF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conference Room</td>
<td>400 SF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretarial Space</td>
<td>200 SF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Administration Restroom</td>
<td>100 SF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
<td><strong>1650 SF</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Crew Changing Room</td>
<td>500 SF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scene Shop and Storage</td>
<td>1000-3000 SF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paint Shop</td>
<td>1000-3000 SF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scene/Loading Dock</td>
<td>1000-1500 SF</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The spaces in this program have been divided into the user groups that require the specific spaces. This further exemplifies the division of the rituals of performer and audience and shows how the two are still segregated today.

It is clear that the theater ritual has begun to evolve in many shows and in many ways. A majority of productions
Central Ideas

have made the move towards interaction and the traditional A-B relationship between audience and performer has been broken down. What remains unresolved however, is the fact that these interactive performances still take place in a world that is designed for an outdated and traditional ritual, rather than being designed for the rituals that take place and should be developed in these new age productions. Therefore, it becomes a necessity that a theater for the ritual of interaction be designed.
Precedents

Werner Recital Hall

The 300 seat, Werner Recital Hall at the University of Cincinnati’s College-Conservatory of Music was completed in 1999. This is a beautiful example of a traditional style performance hall. Henry N. Cobb of Pei Cobb Freed & Partners and NBBJ-Roth of Columbus, Ohio came up with a simple design for the recital hall, which is only a small part of a large expansion project for the college. The expansion project connected several buildings that were previously used by CCM.

Shakespeare's Globe Theater

and the recreated Globe that currently stands on the Thames west bank in London, serve as an excellent precedent for this project. The Elizabethan open stage theater uses many tools that are accepted as common trade in many contemporary theaters. Conversely, the theater is also different enough from common theaters that it can inspire some unusual and unconventional methods that may be helpful in designing a theater for interaction.
The Globe is a circle in plan. The standing room area lies at the center of the Globe. This spatial situation is opposite from the ancient Greek and Roman stages where the orator or performer was located at the center and the audience was located solely in the surrounding space. This standing room is and always has been “the cheap seats” or the location where the peasants and servants would be located. This area is frequently used for certain parts of the show that do involve the audience members. The cast members come into the audience and coax the guests to cheer and boo as is fit for the story. At times the characters push from the entrances of the Globe into this area and make a beeline to the stage. At other times they dwell within the audience, but for the most part they keep themselves confined to the stage, which is anchored into one of the cardinal points of the circular theater. During the pre-show, the doors between on-stage and backstage remain open. The audience then witnesses the costuming and making up of the players, which enhances the connection between the two. Around the circumference of the theater are 3-story high sections of covered seating for the middle and upper classes attending the show. Directly above the backstage and makeup area sit the musicians box and a box
Precedents

for the aristocrats. Only lords and ladies of Shakespeare’s day were allowed to sit in this area, and in our day, these seats are the most expensive seats in the house.

The Adventurers’ Club at Disney’s Pleasure Island

The Adventurers’ Club at Walt Disney World’s Pleasure Island in Lake Buena Vista, Florida is the nearest possible example to interactive theater design that can be found. Upon entering the club, guests find themselves at the top of a large foyer from which they can look down into and witness all the action that is going on below them. Once they have made their way into the bar area they find that performers, or different members of the Adventurers’ Club are intermingling with the guests.
Precedents

Connected with this main hall are three other rooms in which shows take place. In two of these rooms guests sit along the wall on benches while different performers come in and out of the room. These characters tell stories and interact with both the guests and the creatures and characters that are designated by specific wall elements, such as masks in *The Mask Room* and puppets in the main hall. The third room acts as a classical dinner theater, with tables and chairs for the guests in one part of the room and a main stage. This stage is highlighted by a piano that rests at center stage and appears as though it has fallen through the ceiling and belongs to the floor above.

Barring the dinner theater, guests are permitted to come and go as they please and enjoy the “show” at their leisure as a variety of performers bob in and out of the main hall and the three adjoining rooms. Instead of just sitting in one place and watching the show the guests become involved in the show as the characters of the hall speak directly to the guests and use them as the basis for the entertainment.
CHAPTER II: Defining Interaction
Introduction to Semantics

The previous documentation has identified the primary issue facing the contemporary theater. The architecture of today’s theaters has yet to embrace the idea that today’s performances have grown in a way that increases interaction between audience and performer. It is therefore a necessity that theater architecture supports an environment in which the relationship between audience and performer is enhanced for increased interaction. Applying the concept of a theater for interaction into a built form and a three dimensional entity requires a full understanding of what is meant by the term “interaction.” It is here that this term must be discussed.

An Etymology for Interaction

Interaction is a variation of the term interact. The root word for interact is act. Act was first combined with the prefix inter- sometime between 1832 and 1839\(^\text{24}\).

The foundation for the noun act can be attributed to the Proto-Indo-European tribes that existed around 5,500 years ago. These peoples introduced the word ag, which literally

Semantics

meant “to drive, draw, or move”, but can be understood in contemporary times as meaning “to do”. Around 1384 the French developed the word *acte* from the Latin words *actus* and *actum*. *Actus* means “a doing” and *actum* is interpreted as “a thing done”\(^{25}\). The Romans refined two Latin terms from the ancestral languages of the Proto-Indo-European people. Several Greek terms, also derived from the Proto-Indo-European, harbor some related meanings to the aforementioned Latin words that are worthy of noting. The Greek terms *agein*, *agon*, and *agogos* are respectively translated as “to lead”, “assemble”, and “leader”\(^{26}\). The verb form of *act* can be first attested in 1475, almost a century after its French development as a noun.

The prefix *inter-* also finds its primary roots in Latin. *Inter-* is a combination of two Latin words: *in-*, which has held the same meaning for two millennia, and the word *terra*, which means, “earth”\(^{27}\). These two terms were first combined


in Medieval Latin (sometime between 700-1500 CE) to form the word *interrare*, meaning to “put in the earth” or “bury”\(^{28}\). Developed from the Old French term *enterer*, *inter-* achieved its more contemporary understanding (to exist between or among) in the early 14\(^{th}\) Century. “Most words borrowed into English [from French] in that form were re-spelled [in the] 16\(^{th}\) Century to conform to Latin except entertain [and] enterprise”\(^{29}\). It is also important to point out that *enter*, the Proto-Indo-European root word for *inter-*, was used to develop the Greek word for “intestines”, *intera*, as well as the Gothic word *undar*, which was later developed into the English term *under*\(^{30}\).

According to The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language (2000) *to interact* means “to act on one another”\(^{31}\). This definition implies that in order to interact two


or more entities must coexist. Each entity must then be able to execute an act that directly effects the other.

To exemplify this definition one might envision the double acting steam engine first developed in 1705 by Thomas Newcomen. This example provides two moving entities that are at the basis of the engine’s operation: the slide valve and the piston. The slide valve allows steam into one end of the cylinder pushing the piston forward. The motion of the piston then causes the slide valve to move backwards by way of the piston rod, cross head, and control rod. This movement channels high-pressure steam into the front side of the cylinder in front of the piston, which in turn pushes the piston back towards the opposing side of the cylinder. Therefore, the relationship between the slide valve and the piston is one of interaction.

This example is altered when based directly off of the previously discussed etymology of the term *interact*. *Inter-*, literally meaning, “to put into the earth” and *act* being interpreted as “a doing” or “a thing done”. When these two meanings are combined to *interact* translates “to put a doing
Semantics

into the earth”, or “to put a thing done into the earth”. This definition works well with the study of Architecture and the industry of construction, since the product of these professions is a structure, or “a doing” that is “put into the earth”.

Intermediate Action

The least complicated definition of interaction can be found in Webster’s Revised Unabridged Dictionary (1998). This source defines the term as an “intermediate action”\textsuperscript{32}. Interaction is therefore an action that occurs between two or more other actions. In this model three entities must exist for interaction to occur: an acting agent, a reacting agent, and an agent that causes the two previous agents to act upon each other.

An example of this relationship can be found in the automobile. The parts of an engine combine their efforts and individual functions in order to make a vehicle move. The four-stroke combustion cycle of a reciprocating internal combustion engine, for instance, uses the interaction between these parts in order to convert gasoline into kinetic energy. Gasoline is let

into a cylinder by the intake valve. A piston then acts upon the combustible gasoline. The piston moves up and down within the cylinder forcing the fuel to compress. This compression enhances the power of the explosion, which is initiated by a spark fired from the spark plug. The energy provided by the explosion is used to propel the piston downward creating the motion necessary for the vehicle to operate. The waste left from the explosion is then removed by the opening of the exhaust valve. Although this is a simplified description of the complex functions that occur within a motor vehicle, these are the primary principles that cause a vehicle to move. The piston, the fuel, and the cylinder where the two interact are at the core of the engine’s ability to function. This model illustrates an element which acts, an element which is acted upon, and the volume which allows for the necessary interaction between these two elements to occur. However, not all definitions for interaction necessarily agree with this simply stated designation.
Mutual and Reciprocal Interaction

Both Princeton University’s WordNet 1.6 (1997) and the Eleventh Edition of Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary (2003) define the same term as a “mutual or reciprocal action [or influence]”\(^{33}\). The word “mutual” implies the existence of two or more entities that share an action or take part in one action while the word “reciprocal” means an action that is exchanged or shared between two entities. This definition provides new insight on the term. The idea of interaction as a mutual action allows our understanding of the term to exist as a singular action that is produced by the work of multiple elements, or as a series of elements work together to achieve a single goal.

Examples of this type of interaction can be found throughout our own bodies. In the body, several cells interact to form tissue. A variety of tissues combine to form organs and these differing organs work together to form a bodily system. Although each organ completes its own specific task, each of these tasks is completed in order to achieve one
overlying goal. Think, for example, of the digestive system. Dwelling within this system is a variety of organs including the esophagus, stomach, liver, pancreas, gallbladder, and small and large intestines, amongst others. Some of these organs are devoted to the movement of food through the system. Others are devoted to producing digestive fluids. The remainders are devoted to the absorption and transportation of nutrients. Despite their individual commitments, however, all interact with each other in order to achieve the primary goal of the digestive system: the breakdown of food and drink into particles that can be used by the body for energy and the production and nourishment of cells\textsuperscript{34}.

The term “reciprocal” can be exemplified in three dimensions as well. Imagining how two differing entities can share the same task can be witnessed every time music is performed. A drummer is equipped with two wooden sticks that are struck against a skin or other object in order to emit the desired sound. In certain instances the drum part in a certain piece may call for a beat that would otherwise be

\textsuperscript{34} Spiegel, Dr. Allen. *Your Digestive System and How it Works*. http://digestive.niddk.nih.gov/ddiseases/pubs/yrdd/
Semantics

impossible without the aid of both drumsticks. Consider the mechanics involved in the drummer producing a drumroll. The drumroll is essentially an extremely rapid succession of short strikes against the drum\textsuperscript{35}. The strikes are in fact in such close and rapid succession that the human ear has trouble discerning one strike from another. The drumroll actually sounds as if one long and continuous note is being played. This effect would not be possible if the strikes between the drumstick held in the drummer’s left hand was even minimally different from that of the strikes being made by the drumstick held in the musician’s right hand. This ability of the drummer is not only a testament to the musician’s talent, but also exemplifies how two different interacting elements can be used to share a single task or achieve a single goal.

Interaction Made Interactive

Using The American Heritage Dictionary’s definition for the term *interact*, it is easy to determine that interaction requires two or more entities acting directly upon each other,

but what constitutes a relationship that can be dubbed as truly interactive?

The most popular use of the adjective *interactive* is typically in reference to computer science, particularly computers and computer programs. In reference to computer science, The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language defines interactive as, “of or relating to a program that responds to user activity”\(^{36}\). This demonstrates the idea of this two-part relationship where both entities are reacting and responding. Computers are a superior example of this relationship since the computer responds directly to the actions of its user. The computer also processes information and can cause a user to respond directly to its functions. The definition continues to define interactive, as it applies to the relationship between people and their televisions. The definition states that interactive is:

> Of, relating to, or being a form of television entertainment in which the signal activates electronic apparatus in the viewer's home or the

viewer uses the apparatus to affect events on the screen, or both.37

This definition clearly illustrates the notion identified in the previous chapter that so-called “reality television” is a primary example of how performances (but not necessarily performance spaces) have become increasingly interactive. In “reality television” shows such as American Idol, for instance, television viewers watch the performances by the contestants and then determine who continues on in the competition by telephone voting. Here we see the viewers effecting the show in addition to the common situation where the show effects the viewers. The definition also supports the idea that an interactive relationship requires two or more entities that act directly upon each other. This demonstrates that the primary difference between a standard relationship and an interactive relationship is the ability of both entities to effect how the opposing entity operates. The same idea is applied when defining interactive theater.

Symbolic Interactionism

The idea of interaction extends beyond the realm of dictionaries, computers, and entertainment. Interaction is also at the heart of several philosophical debates and concepts. These concepts can be used to explain the difference between the majority of contemporary theater spaces and a space that might be called interactive. The most obvious philosophy relating to interaction is known as Symbolic Interactionism.

The concept of Symbolic Interactionism originated from George Herbert Mead. Mead was a philosopher and social psychologist who studied at Harvard and professed at the University of Chicago from 1894 until his death in 1931. Although Mead was not much of a writer, several of his lectures have been recorded and several writers including Hans Joas and Erving Goffman have vindicated him.

Mead spoke largely about the perception of self, saying that our "selves" only exist in relation to other people. He divided the idea of "self" into two pieces: "I" and "Me". Mead defined "I" as an impulsive, disorganized and animalistic character of the "self". The "I" acts as one's own contribution
Philosophy

to society. He referred to the “me” as a vision of the “self” reflected in the reactions of other people or “the group of organized attitudes to which the individual responds”\(^\text{38}\). In this view, the “self” becomes reflexive and views its own actions as a spectator to the gestures and actions of others. Mead might have said that we view ourselves as actors in the drama of our own existence. Mead draws from this analogy in his lecture Mind, Self, and Society, saying that:

> The social process with its various implications is actually taken up into the experience of the individual so that that which is going on takes place more effectively, because in a certain sense it has been rehearsed in the individual. He not only plays his part better under those conditions but he also reacts back on the organization of which he is a part.\(^\text{39}\)

This analogy makes it possible to draw a line from this philosophy into the world of interactive theater. Where interactive theater strives to push the audience to become part of the performance, Mead notes that people already exist as actors that perform within their own lives.


One of Mead’s successors, Erving Goffman added to this analogy when explaining his idea of the “self” saying, “presumably life presents things that are real and sometimes not well rehearsed”\textsuperscript{40} and “the part one individual plays is tailored to the parts played by the others present”\textsuperscript{41}. This further exemplifies the connection between this philosophy and the philosophies behind interactive theater.

Goffman also built on Mead’s ideas for interaction, dividing it into two particular kinds: focused and unfocused interaction. Goffman defined the difference between the two in the literary work \textit{Encounters: Two Studies in the Sociology of Interaction}, stating that:

Unfocused interaction consists of those interpersonal communications that result solely by virtue of persons being in one another’s presence, as when two strangers across the room from each other check up on each other’s clothing, posture, and general manner, while each modifies his own demeanor because he himself is under observation.\textsuperscript{42}

This describes a situation that is similar to the audience performer relationship that exists in traditional theater.

\textsuperscript{40}Goffman, \textit{The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life}, xi.
\textsuperscript{41}Goffman, \textit{The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life}, xi.
performances. “Unfocused interaction” is the minimalist type of interaction that occurs when people are faced with the existence of others, as well as the recognition of existence by others. Here, it becomes clear that the traditional and contemporary theater is not devoid of all interactions. In these theaters “unfocused interaction”, as defined by Goffman, is certainly present, both in the architecture and in the performance. Therefore, it is not the mission of this project to introduce something that is entirely different from what already exists in today’s theater. Instead, it would seem that the goal is to use the vehicle of architecture to enhance the interaction and intimacy that already exists in contemporary theaters, as well as introducing an additional form of interaction:

Focused interaction occurs when people effectively agree to sustain for a time a single focus of cognitive and visual attention, as in a conversation, a board game, or a joint task sustained by a close face-to-face circle of contributors. Those sustaining together a single focus of attention will, of course, engage one another in unfocused interaction too.  

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Goffman’s definition of “focused interaction” seems to closely resemble the spirit of interactive theater performances as defined by its creators Erik Esse and Christopher Griffith of Galumph Interactive Theater. As stated in a previous chapter such performances’ “emphasis is on bringing out the creativity of each audience member and creating a collective fantasy which we all can play within, discovering new ways of behavior”\(^44\). In conclusion, this exploration seems to show that there is room for additional types of interaction in the contemporary theater space. This addition not only includes the introduction of “focused interaction” within the performance, but also the introduction of interaction to the environment in which both the audience and performer co-exist.

Introduction

The following sections discuss the few precedents and methods that exist for infusing interaction into the built environment. It is important to point out that the majority of these examples primarily display “unfocused” forms of interaction. The following examples merely scratch the surface of what might be called interactive architectural design. It is unlikely that the creators of the designs and ideas strongly intended on creating spaces that enhanced interaction. The following must therefore be utilized as merely a catalyst or starting point for interactive designs.

Interaction with people can be achieved through a variety of methods. Interaction directly effects the five human senses. Outside influences can interact with people’s taste, by auricle methods, through their olfactory senses, tactiley, visually, and physically. However, it is unlikely that the built environment would directly effect a person’s sense of taste. This sensory condition has thus been eliminated in the following documentation. The following sections are however
Types of Interaction

dedicated to the understanding of how the built environment can manipulate its inhabitants and begin to cause increased interaction between the user and their environment.

Auricle Interaction

Auricle interaction can be considered interaction in its simplest form. When one person wishes to engage in interaction with another, it is perhaps easiest to establish a dialogue with that person through speech. Auricle means are also employed in order to effect human mood and emotion.

Examples of this run rampant in modern cinema. Music is used to manipulate audience reactions. Consider the Imperial Death March played in Star Wars, which enhances and accompanies the strength and power of Darth Vader and his control. The sound of a certain instrument may even be used to represent specific characters or characteristics, such as the innocent yet inquisitive sound of a clarinet, or the sensual vibrations of a saxophone. Sound may even be removed from a picture so that viewers focus on the visual occurrences or seriousness of a situation.
In the physical world, architects can also have an effect on auricle interaction. Cleverly placed speakers can achieve this. An architect may also create a space that generates a great echo. A space may be designed to enhance the presence of exterior noise within a building or could bring the sounds of the interior space to the exterior of the building. Sound can even be dampened by cloth panels or perhaps even be taken away completely.

Olfactory Interaction

It is exceptionally infrequent that the human sense of smell has been measured and considered in the design of space. In fact, outside of the greenhouse or flower garden, olfactory considerations are typically only implemented in educational and entertainment venues. This includes museums, multiple-sensory experimental theaters and amusement and theme parks. The primary examples both come from the entertainment mogul, The Walt Disney Company, and exist within their massive amusement resorts in
Types of Interaction

Lake Buena Vista, Florida, and Anaheim, California. When Walt Disney first envisioned his Disneyland in Anaheim, he continually considered ways of improving the standard amusement park, by addressing every aspect of human interaction with their environment.

In 1955, the park opened, completed with all five lands. The experience of the idealized, Victorian style Main Street, USA was enhanced by the purposefully circulated smell of vanilla in the summer and peppermint in the winter. Though the smells are very subtle, Walt Disney made sure vents were placed near candy stores and other food vendors both enhancing the experience and enticing the park guests to imbibe in some of the amusement park fare.

The Walt Disney Company has continued this dedication to detail in some of their more recent projects. This includes *It's Tough to be a Bug*, a multiple-sensory theater experience located within Walt Disney’s Animal Kingdom amusement park in Florida. The theater experience is enhanced by the timely released foul odor of a stinkbug. Olfactory senses aren’t the only stimulated senses at the *Tree
Types of Interaction

of Life (the venue for It's Tough to be a Bug). Before guests leave the theater they are subjected to being stung by bees and feel insects crawling from the theater beneath them. Therefore, the Disney-operated theater is also highlighted by its attention to the effects of the tactile environment.

Tactile Interaction

Tactile interaction, unlike olfactory, is not solely dependent on amusement park style gags though. Architects have for centuries considered the experiences of building occupants through their sense of touch. Tactile interaction is primarily dependent upon materiality and secondarily dependent upon an object’s size, shape, location, and orientation. It is hardness, texture, and ability to transmit heat that truly defines a specific surface’s materiality and tactile purpose.

Stone, for instance, is a considerably hard material that can remain quite rough and have great variation in texture. It can also be polished down, or cut as smooth and even as a piece of glass. An architect can also master control over the temperature of a stone piece or surface. Stones may take
Types of Interaction

some time to change temperature and can hold heat for an extended period of time. Interior stone surfaces are typically cold, but can become quite warm when heated by the sun or by mechanical means. When measured on the scale of materiality, concrete is a fairly similar material to that of stone. If it were intended as a walking surface for bare skin, it would be quite necessary for concrete or stone surfaces to be smoothed and refined. Fortunately, modern technology allows constructors to do so with both concrete and stone.

Despite this ability, it is more common that surfaces to be touched with bare skin are fabricated from cloths, carpets, or even grass. These surfaces are typically the softest surfaces available and therefore have the tendency to bring greater comfort to the human body. These surfaces come in a variety of textures, from exceptionally smooth silks to deeply textured carpets. Cloths, carpets, fabrics, and textiles typically do not transmit or lose heat very quickly. When they are used in interior spaces they are commonly quite warm and can be used to hold heat inside a room when applied to wall surfaces.
Types of Interaction

Metals, on the other hand, transmit heat very quickly and can be extremely hot or frigid cold depending upon the environment in which they are placed. Metals, which are constantly a hard material, are also commonly very smooth due to their nature of construction. However, the texture of metals can be manipulated by shape or through welding techniques.

One other material that should be discussed is wood. Woods can be left in their natural ruddy and rougher state or can be sanded smooth and treated to protect users from splinters. Woods are commonly harder than textiles and fabrics, but softer than stone, concrete, and metal. They do not transmit much heat.

Characteristics other than hardness, texture, and heat transmission can also effect tactile interaction. The size, shape, location, and orientation of objects that dwell within the space, or act as a part of the space, typically aid in the determination of the object’s use and purpose. What an object looks like might inform occupants that an object is to be touched. The tactile experience achieved from touching the
Types of Interaction

object or element of the space might then inform occupants on how that object is to be used or treated. It is here that visual influence meets with an object’s tactility.

Visual Interaction

A person does not need to touch or even come in direct contact with another entity in order to interact with the entity. A cause and effect relationship can be established solely from an appearance. Here, the size, shape, location, orientation, and treatment of an object may determine its use before the user comes in direct contact with the object. The shape of certain structures can inform people to sit, stand, move through, or congregate. Image can even infer attitude or mood.

Entrepreneur Walt Disney can once again demonstrate these concepts. Disney can be attributed to birthing the term “weenie”. When conjuring up his plan for Disneyland’s Main Street, USA, Disney spoke on this idea saying:

What you need is a weenie, which says to people, “come this way.” People won’t go down a long corridor unless there is something promising at the end. You have to have
Types of Interaction

something that beckons to them, “walk this way”.  

Disney uses Sleeping Beauty’s Castle as the primary “weenie” for all of Disneyland. As well as, coaxing people to move up Main Street, the castle acts as an orientation point and meeting location for the park guests, while simultaneously instilling them with a sense of magic.

Appearance is key to the determination of an object’s intent. Appearance can act as an invitation or a deterrent. One can apply this concept to some of the simplest architectural forms. A closed iron gate and barbed wire fence tells viewers not to enter. The dual roofed arcades at St. Peter’s in the Vatican City, on the other hand, may persuade people to approach. The shape of a simple corridor infers users that it is a space for movement. It’s width, commonly five or six feet can only accommodate the passing of two or three people at a time. It’s length determines that people can really only circulate in two primary directions.

Another obvious example is the theater or lecture hall. Often, the stage area is semi-circular or even circular, flat, and open. The seating area is formed so that each of the seats focuses and aligns on the stage. Each seat is also turned towards the center of the stage. Every row elevates above the previous in order to provide the best view possible. It is obvious that this space is crafted for many occupants that all focus on another entity that is separated from those in the audience. Here, not only are the visual cues important, but also the programmatic placement of the objects is paramount.

Physical Interaction

The architect typically organizes the programmatic placement of spaces so that those that are dubbed private are separated from those that are established as public. This is commonly the case in the contemporary theater, especially when considering the segregation between production, administration, performer, and crew from that of the theater guest. This situation restricts the interaction of the two entities to the visual and auditory responses of the audience during the actual show.
Types of Interaction

The interactive performance requires the audience and the performer to physically interact with one another and the line between entertainment and reality is becoming increasingly blurred. This change in ritual has made it appropriate for the public and private programmatic and architectural relationship to be intermingled. The compromising of the segregation between private and public program might allow for some drastic results. That which was once considered backstage can now come to the foreground and can be highlighted and witnessed by the public. There may no longer be a necessity to distinguish between a stage door and a main entry. Performers no longer require a private space for dressing and makeup. The contemporary theater should no longer require a separate space for seating and a separate space for acting. Audience members of the interactive theater could sit on the stage and actors could dwell amongst the audience.
CHAPTER III: Program and Site
Introduction to the Revised Program

The following program is a modification of the theater program presented in the first chapter. This program does not designate the individual spaces into user groups because many of the spaces that are used by different groups have been combined in order to enhance the level of interaction between groups such as audience and performer. The combining of these different programmatic spaces provides a deeper connection between traditionally segregated entities.

The program has thus been divided into levels representing the number of levels that each space has been separated from the street and showing how the individual spaces are related to each other. The size and necessity of the provided site, which will be examined and discussed later in this chapter, determined the amount of space allotted to each level.
## Program

### I. Level A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Room</th>
<th>Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parking – 22 Spaces</td>
<td>9000 SF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scene/Loading Dock</td>
<td>500 SF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entry/Lobby</td>
<td>4000 SF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Large Dressing Rooms</td>
<td>1000 SF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) Individual Dressing</td>
<td>300 SF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
<td><strong>14,800 SF</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### II. Level B

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Room</th>
<th>Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Box Office/Reception</td>
<td>500 SF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shop/Shop Storage</td>
<td>1500 SF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
<td><strong>16,700 SF</strong></td>
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</table>

### III. Level C

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<th>Room</th>
<th>Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(2) Public Restroom</td>
<td>1000 SF</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Notes
- Costuming/Coatroom: 500 SF
- Wardrobe Repair/Laundry/Shop: 1500 SF
- Stage/Auditorium/Shop: 10,800 SF
- (3) Offices: 600 SF
- (2) Production Offices: 600 SF
- Scene Shop/Storage: 700 SF
Program

Green Room/Refreshments 1500 SF
Retail/Gifts/Prop Shop 1500 SF
Office 200 SF
Conference Room 450 SF
Control Room 600 SF
Subtotal 5250 SF

Initial Total 31,650 SF
Circulation @ 10% 3165 SF
Mechanical, etc. @ 15% 4750 SF
Program Total 39,565 SF

IV. Level D
Exterior Performance Space 3000 SF
Subtotal 3000 SF
Site

Location

A parking lot at:

1290-1300 Old River Road
The East Bank of the Flats
Adjacent to the Cuyahoga River

Cleveland, Ohio
Site

Introduction

The site chosen for the interactive theater is a strip of land lying between Old River Road and the Cuyahoga River in Cleveland, Ohio. This area of prime real estate is currently being used as a public parking lot for the East Bank of the Flats, Entertainment District and measures approximately 120 feet by 240 feet. The site is sandwiched between The Watermark Restaurant and Samsel Supply Company, three and four story buildings, respectively.

Across Old River Road lies a large warehouse and office building for the Samsel Supply Company, a three story office also dedicated to the supply company, as well as The Odeon, a relatively small venue dedicated to live musical performances. Located across the Cuyahoga is the musical performance venue, Scene One Pavilion. Also, situated across the river are the popular restaurant and leisure site known as the Powerhouse, the docking site for the Nautica Queen, and a popular local bar named Shooters.
Access

The site is blessed with a variety of access points, both visual and physical. A vehicular and pedestrian thoroughfare, Old River Road, borders the Northeast side of the site. Bordering the Southwest side of the site is the Cuyahoga River, providing physical access to small leisure boats, and visual access to the industrial ships, barges, and cargo vessels that sometimes populate this portion of the river.

The site is also visible from a variety of typically densely populated areas. This includes the West Bank of the Flats where festivals, leisurely boat tours, musical shows, and other parties frequently attract a plethora of visitors to its recreational open spaces, especially during the warmer months of the year. The site is also visible from the Harold H. Burton - Main Avenue Bridge (1938), as well as the Detroit-Superior Viaduct (1918, renovated 1968), which both act as main arteries that serve downtown Cleveland.
Not to be left out of the picture is the access of mass transit, particularly through light rail. Running along West Tenth Street, a single block from the Old River Road site, is RTA’s Waterfront Line. This system runs from Tower City, a major public gathering site, hotel, restaurant, and shopping center, as well as the mass transit hub for Cleveland. The Waterfront Line is directed through the Flats and continues on to two other major tourist spots: The Great Lakes Science Center and The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. The line terminates at a large municipal parking lot at East 18th Street.

A train station for this system is located at the corner of West Tenth and West Lakeside, only a few hundred feet from the site.

The Flats being a major recreational gathering site, is surrounded by ample parking. The lots available not only include that which currently inhabits the site for this project, but also include a site across West Lakeside from the Waterfront Line train depot. A massive parking area runs along the industrial Conrail railway just Northwest of Front Avenue, three blocks from the site.
The Flats: A Site History

In 1796, General Moses Cleaveland, at the request of the Connecticut Land Company, landed a survey party on the East Bank of the Flats. It is here that the history of both Cleveland and the project site begins. “The Flats” is the name given to the flat geographical lowland running along both sides of the Cuyahoga including the land where the river meets Lake Erie. At this point of the Flats the first Europeans settled along the East Bank, driving out the Massasagoes tribe. The Seneca Indians that inhabited the West Bank of the Flats were bought off early in the 19th Century. The West Bank soon became known as Ohio City. This division brought rise to what was known as the Bridge War in 1837, fought between the two communities. Cleveland eventually absorbed Ohio City, but despite the political changes, the Flats continued to act as a barrier between the eastern and western plateaus of the city. This issue prompted the construction of the many “high level” bridges that have become so essential to the culture of the city.
Many diseases infected the initial European inhabitants, due to the swampy nature of the lowland. To abate this problem, the residents of the Flats moved into the surrounding plateau and the Flats were abandoned by industry and commerce because of their unhealthy conditions, until the mid 1800's.\textsuperscript{46}

The attitude and the absence in the Flats would quickly change when the Ohio & Erie Canal opened up in 1832. The Flats provided prime and ample real estate for docks and warehouses along the waterway. Within two decades railroads had established a strong presence throughout the United States and in Cleveland. The Case Western Reserve University’s Encyclopedia of Cleveland History establishes that:

shipyards, flour mills, oil refineries, paint and chemical factories, and other industries.\textsuperscript{47}

The Flats had become the epicenter of all industry in Cleveland, as illustrated by Mark S. Kuhar in the Flats Guide at Cleveland.com:

The Flats was once the sweat-soaked hub of industrial Cleveland --equal parts waterfront shipping depot, railroad station, factory hell, and warehousing stop on the wide road of commerce. Back then, Flats entertainment meant throwing back shots of Cutty Sark and chasing them with Pilsner of Cleveland beer in some tiny punch-palace of a bar that was woefully short on decor, but long on colorful, or even dangerous, characters.\textsuperscript{48}

The days of this gritty industrial world could not last forever though.

The coming of the Twentieth Century hailed the invention of the automobile. This invention lessened the necessity of industrial access to both river and rail, and the Flats gradually began to lose its industrial concentration as the

In the 1970s and 1980s, the Flats enjoyed a new vitality as, "the industrial presence in the Flats decreased, the presence of nightclubs and restaurants increased, particularly along Old River Road, amongst other area streets. "Today the Flats are an amalgamation of commerce, industry, nightlife, and (since the construction of a series of condominiums in 1983-84) residences."

Above from left to right: From site to the Northwest, From site to the North, From site to the Northeast. Below from left to right: From site to the Northeast, From site to the East, From site to the Southeast.
Above from left to right: From site to the South, From site to the Southwest, From site to the West.
Below from left to right: 1250 Old River Road-Building Northwest of site, 1313 Old River Road-Building Southeast of site.
Site

Zoning
**Schedule**

**Fall:**
- September 29th – Thesis proposal discussions
- October 1st – Proposal Approval
- October 8th – Image Boards
- October 13th – Site and program studies
- October 22nd – Idea generation studies
- October 31st – Disney Studies
- November 4th – Leave for Disney
- November 9th – Return from Disney
- November 17th – Site and Program Final
- December 1st – First draft of thesis document provided to all chairs
- December 3rd – Schematic Design Review
- December 8th – Schedule meetings on thesis progress

**Winter:**
- 5th Week – Thesis project demonstration
- 9th Week – Final Draft of thesis provided to all chairs
- 10th Week – Meeting with First Chair to determine viable defense.
- Final document provided five days prior to defense.
- Schematic Design Review

**Spring:**
- 2nd Week – Formal defense of thesis
- 3rd Week – Electronic submission of completed document to University
- 7th Week – Project review with First Chair to determine viable defense
- 9th Week – Final Submission and defense of project
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Theater


BIBLIOGRAPHY


BIBLIOGRAPHY

**Interaction**


BIBLIOGRAPHY


Site
