

NOTES REGARDING NEWLY CONSTRUCTED THEATER SPACE
as part of the proposed programming of the new Dobbs University renovation
and/or construction project
Submitted by Randy Fullerton
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**COMMENTS on the 3 SCENARIOS as developed on the
ACCOMPANYING EXCEL SPREADSHEET...**

The scenarios were developed by Randy Fullerton in collaboration with his colleagues in the Department of Theater and Dance in Emory College on the premise that all 3 scenarios involve new construction. At the bottom of the spreadsheet, Randy has indicated the total NSF, GSF and approximate Total Project Cost of each scenario. These amounts are to serve as initial guidelines in assessing the needs of the theater within the scope of the entire project. Once the initial phase has been completed, continuing discussion between the Project Team and individuals in Theater Studies should ensue. Please note that these projected totals are pure conjecture on Randy's part (& subject to endless debate) but they do serve to give each of the 3 scenarios a sense of scale. Also, these scenarios have been developed on the premise that the renovation and reconstruction of the current AMUC/MGM structure will be addressed in other forms of documentation, discussion and distributed information.

INTRODUCTORY EXPLANATION OF EACH SCENARIO:

“TALL” Version – this scenario was developed on the notion that Randy has identified all of the rooms and spaces currently in use in the MGM spaces. *This approach does not provide for the advancement of the theater program nor future growth* but identifies those rooms, spaces and individuals who are vital to the existence of the current programming of the space and who are currently in the MGM spaces in the DUC.

“GRANDE” Version – this scenario replicates (in spirit) the current MGM environment and *provides for minimal additional growth of the theater program and level of activity*. It will provide for modest future growth and will provide the students with a sufficient yet appropriate environment in which to work and learn the craft of theater.

“VENTI” Version – this scenario provides a more appropriate approach to provide the correct experience for Emory as a leading research institution. The proposed future rooms as well as allocations of existing spaces do not imply “cutting-edge” technology or advancements and does not imply exorbitant funding. *It does however provide the necessary environment for the study of theater in the 21st century and enables the faculty and staff to more adequately and professionally meet the needs of the students and provides for more theatrical experiences for theater and non-theater undergraduates in Emory College.*

The following text comes from members of the faculty and staff in Theater Emory and in the Theater and Dance Department in Emory College. It is not intended as a prioritized list and represents a variety of ongoing concerns that exist in the Mary Gray Munroe Theater in the Dobbs University Center. Some items have been repeated or stated in a variety of ways, but we hope that this will give a sense of values associated with this endeavor.

CAMPUS ENHANCEMENT

- The arts draw people/students
- The arts “break the ice” and make spaces inviting and full of life
- A theater facility that is better functioning and aesthetically pleasing will help students, their parents and the community **WANT to hang around the student center!**

STRONG STUDENT IDENTIFICATION

The theater is a public gathering place for creativity, excellence in performance, design and innovation. Students should be aware that Emory has a strong arts component and that the presence of a theater in the student center area is *organic* to life on campus. This would mean:

- Clear signage
- A public gathering place where students can see “what is happening in the theater space this week”
- Opportunities for environmental brief presentations by student arts groups
- A facility that we can take prospective students and parents to without making any apologies for the age/capabilities of the MGM (Many of these students come from state-of-the-art high school theaters)
- A deeper connection for the students who overflow our theater courses (most of these are non-theater students) and the place where theater comes to fruition (Many of the students in the acting/theater courses have never set foot in the MGM theater and are genuinely surprised that it sits in the middle of the DUC)
- A central and visible performance space that encourages interdisciplinary collaboration: Atlanta Science Festival (originated out of the Emory’s Chemistry Department), the Dance Program, the Center for Ethics, etc. so that we draw students from all areas of study to the DUC and to the primary programming facility

THE PUBLIC

Parking: Valet, shuttle service that is EASY and CONVENIENT. If there is to be no new parking added, then the process for getting patrons to the theater needs to be streamlined, reliable and EFFICIENT (older patrons struggle in the rain trying to walk from Fishburne to the MGM)

- Disabled friendly
- The hub of devised/original and experimental work for the Atlanta community
- An open laboratory (the theater) for Atlanta and national artists, artist residencies, guest designers/directors, etc.
- Town to gown: If you live in the Atlanta/Emory community, going to the MGM should be part of your routine – REALLY using the local university campus as a resource for high quality arts experiences.

Explanation of Parking needs - **PARKING SPACE AND INVITING ACCESS FOR THE PUBLIC!!!** The more the college/university constructs towering structures around the DUC, the more irrational it is to breezily invite the Atlanta public to the DUC for performances, as if they can just waltz in. (Right now, they have to park across campus and find their way through a plethora of buildings without clear path-markers—they practically need a Sherpa to find the place. It's really quite unreasonable.) This is crucial to the University's presence in Atlanta, its outreach to the public, its public-intellectual mission.

What is needed is site planning that would allow for a clearly-marked and agreeable pathway to the DUC from the public parking spaces, and a portal to the building that would welcome the public who were new to the building and needed to find the theater easily.

LOBBY!!! Emory has not addressed the festive nature of attending arts events. Patrons should be able to eat/buy a snack or a drink at intermission or before performances. We should have a display area for dramaturgical material and related exhibits. We should be able to offer what all other theaters can offer. Our patrons include community, faculty and parents. This “reception” area could be used in other ways in addition to support for our performance dates?

Audience Accessibility and Safety

- Provide more than one ADA accessible entrance/exit & Handrails at steps
- Improve Egress/Ingress
- Improve visibility and physical access of venue to students/patrons
- Improve parking for theater patrons, and their journey from the parking lot to venue

MAIN THEATER PERFORMANCE SPACE

PROGRAMMING

Sharing the space would need to be very carefully considered.

- We need to fully produce at least 4 projects a year to be even mildly competitive with other theater programs.
- In addition to these 4, we would want to invite guest artists, have residencies, conduct workshops, etc.
- **FLEXIBILITY!** - The space should continue to allow for flexible seating and staging.

More sophisticated programming and the inclusion of guest artists and troupes

- **The ceiling height, grid, etc. can open up the possibilities for our programming in numerous ways.** We currently DO NOT invite exciting groups to Emory because their technical riders are too complicated for our space. It is remarkable that a high school outside of Sacramento, CA can bring in the Joffrey Ballet and other arts groups because their theater can load in scenery and equipment appropriate to that level of performance and Theater Emory, the professional theater on our campus, cannot even dream of this possibility. This should change or at least be part of a future development plan.
- The Schwartz Theater Lab has served us well as a teaching/low-tech production space. It is “low-tech” because there is no shop attached so we cannot build sets in the space and we cannot control acoustics (the wall facing Emerson Green is a row of French doors) so any Business School events/receptions that take place outdoors bleed into the Schwartz Lab. We appreciate that the Lab is invaluable to our teaching but it cannot serve as a true theater space with its limitations.

HEIGHT

A higher ceiling should allow for better lighting angles and a catwalk.

The option of flying in scenic pieces would greatly add to production possibilities, both for TE and for guest companies. A fly loft and fly system in one part of the space would allow for proscenium staging when that is desired.

FLY SPACE

Wing-and-drop scenery, which requires fly space, is key to one of the four basic scenic configurations in Western theater production (to wit: (1) outdoor and improvised-space performance; (2) permanent playhouses with a neutral platform; (3) wing-and-drop painted perspective scenery; and (3) three-dimensional realism and alternative

performance layouts of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries). A good deal of classic theater (and opera and ballet) was created to be realized on a wing-and-drop perspective stage: Moliere, the English Restoration, the sentimental comedy of the eighteenth century (like *She Stoops to Conquer*), and the whole Romantic theater of Schiller and Goethe and Victor Hugo and the whole of early American drama were all imagined for this kind of theater. To give us the capability to reproduce that kind of theatricality and explore it would educate our students as designers, as actors, as playwrights, and as general theater students (audiences) to understand the dynamics of that kind of spectacle and magic. The only way to really comprehend that kind of theater is to live in it and work in it. A teaching theater (analogous to a teaching hospital) needs these facilities.

- **SEATING** for 150 - 200+ audience members

- **ENTRANCES** all about for performers

The space needs to provide for actor entrances and exits in multiple directions.

SHOP

Most important: A shop in which we can continue our builds and not have to build in the theater space itself. This current need hampers the programming possibilities and limits severely innovative ways to think about using the space.

- An up-to-date shop that provides space for building sets and for storage of equipment is essential to the operation of a theater that produces at least four productions a year.
- This space must also make it possible for stagecraft students to learn skills and to do laboratory assignments in conjunction with Theater Emory and student theater projects.

Paint Shop Needs:

- Areas for Sink, eye wash station, flammables cabinets, Paint cabinets, Storage for materials and supplies, work tables,
- SINK specifics: As large as a bathtub.
- Ventilation system! Large Fan to suck particulates and fumes to the outside
- Pneumatic spray system
- AREA FOR CLASS work: This should be included in the layout of the shop's space. A large dry erase board and place for the students to sit at a desk and draw.
- ATTACHED to the paint shop should be a PAINT DECK. The Paint Deck is dependent on how large the actual theater space ends up being. It should be large enough to accommodate several pieces of scenery as well as a large backdrop;

approximately 40' x 30' open deck space. The paint deck would have its own observation deck from above to see the entire view of the painted pieces.

- A clean space for all soft goods storage and scenic fabrics.

Prop Shop Needs:

- The prop shop would have its own set of tools separate from the scene shop. Large enough for the building of furniture and special set pieces.
- Pneumatic air tools, fabric staplers, etc. Air compressor area
- Lots of electrical outlets with enough power for all tools
- This should include its own ventilation system and wood /dust collection
- A spray booth that shared by the Paint shop & Scene Shop
- Foot print large enough for 3 large work tables (at least 4' x 8' on casters)
- Prop storage attached to the shop. This would need to be a very large space.
- The clean space for soft good storage and scenic fabrics (listed above) could be shared with Props so that there was a work table away from saw dust and paint to cut and upholster chairs, sofas, etc.

Woodworking Shop

- Larger shop that would accommodate more students, more tools AND space for layout and construction of scenic construction projects
- Storage areas for Dimensional Lumber, Specialty Lumber, and Sheet Goods (racks)
- Additional 220v power for larger tools
- Larger tool room with storage considerations for hardware
- Expanded Dust Collection and Ventilation system

Metal Work Separate from Wood Shop

For 'Hot Work' such as Grinding, Metal Cutting and Welding

- Storage for Metal working equipment
- Storage for Metal construction materials
- Ventilation
- Ample power for 110v tools
- Separate 220v power for welder and fume extractor

DIMMERS AND ELECTRICS

Our lighting capacities and wiring are out of date and much less than is needed for our theater.

COSTUME SHOP

- Costume shop manager's office twice as large as presently, big enough for a "designer's corner" (to include work-table, chair, electricity, phone, and internet access), and room for valuables/jewelry storage, plus the present costume library, catalogues, equipment, etc. Also a window to daylight and a window to look into the costume shop.
- Dedicated dressing rooms, properly equipped with built-in make-up counters, mirrors (make-up size and full-length), lighting, stage monitors, shelving, seating, and closet poles. Two dedicated for women, two dedicated for men, each able to hold 6 people comfortably, and all dressing rooms with very near access to appropriate bathrooms and showers. Also proper heating and cooling systems, and finished proper ceiling heights.
- Costume shop twice as large as presently, with direct access to windows and daylight. Room for 3rd cutting/work-table and several more sewing machines, both industrial and domestic machines. Storage area/corner for dressmaker's forms. Stage monitor in the costume shop & possible video feed access when a show is running.
- Dedicated laundry/craft room, with proper ventilation systems for fabric dyeing, a finished ceiling, good lighting, and windows. To include a big worktable, two washers, two dryers, two deep stainless steel sinks with hot and cold running water, and an industrial-sized hot-plate or industrial soup-kettle for dyeing. Shelving and cabinets for craft supplies, dyeing goods and equipment, safety equipment, a flammable-goods safety cabinet, cleaning & laundry supplies.
- Several dedicated storage rooms, on the same floor and within a few yards of the costume shop: for fabrics, linings & interfacings; shoes & shoe supplies; wigs& make-up and appropriate supplies; belts, ties & neckwear, hats, underwear, hosiery, handbags.

LOADING DOCK

- Ability to accept deliveries from large trucks (26' box trucks-53' tractor trailers)
- Theater would have its own delivery address (separate from DUC)
- Covered Loading Dock (would provide auxiliary storage or work areas)

GENERAL CONCERNS

- Dust Controlled Storage
- Electrics/Audio/Video Equipment
- Soft Goods/ Scenic Fabrics