Towards An Environment of Expression

Eric Inglert

Ball State University
College of Architecture and Planning
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Thesis Committee Chair- Dr. Bruce Meyer
Thesis Committee Member- Dr. Gil Smith

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I give a very special thanks to Lisa Kolber. She has been my most challenging critic, motivator, best friend and partner in crime. Thesis year has been great to share with Lisa, my roommate Andy Hine and the rest of my class whom I feel have grown very close to each other. Thank-you all.

This book is dedicated to the 4th and 5th grade classes at New Palestine Elementary School and to the community of New Palestine.
Our ability to express our feelings creatively is what makes us most human, and the architect's primary goal in design must be an environment which stimulates our creative potential. This study is primarily concerned with expression and how the environments we live in affect and are in turn affected by what we feel and express creatively. I propose that the architect's greatest aspiration is to achieve a symbiosis of the human creative expression and the built environment.

Initially, I conceived of this synergistic relationship as one of an architecture of emotion. I have come to understand that emotion is only part of the goal. There are also the intellectualizing aspects of creation which I consider in this study that transcend emotion. A more descriptive phrase is aesthetic stimulation -- one of the highest manifestations of mental performance.

There are three major categories of exploration upon which I have concentrated. My intention is to design an environment through a studied interpretation of a form of creative expression, drama, and through an understanding of the behavior patterns of the community for whom the environment, a theater, is intended.

*Community expectations:* A poster competition for 160 fourth and fifth grade students at New Palestine Elementary School asking them to express the most important aspects of their small town. This study gave me an understanding of the character of the people of the small town, and how their culture was reflected in their environment. The students identified symbols of the more significant features of their sensory milieu, from which I gained valuable insight into those elements which characterize the small town experience.

*Stage set design:* Consists of a script from a play and a set design which explores how the emotional and intellectual states of the actors can be translated into the architec tonic forms of the stage. That is, can the designer maximize the intended affect of the playwright through an environment that is sympathetic and expressive of those who use the environment? Can the illusionistic, microcosmic world of the stage give valuable insights into the broader spectrum of reality?

*Theoretical bases of the theater building:* Diagrammatic analyses of theater design issues, volumetric descriptions of the existing building in which the community theater is to be located, and the design proposal of a small town theater and its possible cultural implications.
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Since beginning my architectural studies four years ago I've been intrigued by the extent to which the creative arts such as painting, sculpture, music, literature, etc. are related to one another. The creative process in one's life gives him meaning; it gives him identity. It gives him verve! Art is the most important quality of mankind, and the environment should nurture the seeds of creativity. The question has been, for me, how to express the drama of life; why don't our environments incite in us emotion -- that state of feeling which affects and stimulates our thoughts? Why do we continue to sing lullabies in our buildings instead of creating fugues of endless creative potential?

In his book Architecturally Speaking, Eugene Raskin tracks the abstraction architecture down to its referents and defines it as a trio of emotions -- emotion intended, emotion inherent, and emotion evoked. He develops his argument saying that architecture is emotion. If the emotion is mild, so is the architecture. If the emotion is great the architecture is great. If there is no emotion, there is no architecture, there is only building. Architecture is above all, as are the other forms of art, a creative process. How do we tap into the emotional well of mankind? This question I wish to explore through architecture and theater.

My client is the small town, and my objective is to give it a place which demonstrates that it is not simply the bedroom of the city. It has a culture and creative potential as valid and as necessary as the most famous cultural centers of the world. It is about folk art and identity.

Preface
The Theater Experience
To experience drama fully we must experience it communally. It is this fact which distinguishes drama from the other genres of art and which lends itself well to this architectural thesis construct. As members of the audience, we respond to language, spectacle, motion and gesture as a community, and each of us is affected by the responses -- laughter, tears, coughs, intaken breaths -- of people around us. The responsibility of the architecture is to not only allow this to occur but to perpetuate the feeling of ritual that surrounds going to the theater.

The essence of a theater is a space within which actors perform a dialogue written by a playwright to an audience. The broader theater experience however has come to mean to us a ritual of life of the highest order. The theater is the anticipation which begins with the purchase of tickets. It is a place where we, the audience, come to be actors, critics, and directors. Preparing in our dressing rooms at home, our own wardrobes can be as extensive as those of the actual actors. Approaching the theater either in our cars or walking, the anticipation of spectacle builds, and by the time we enter the lobby we are already on stage; it previews both the show to come and the auditorium itself.

Entering the auditorium, if the director allows, we can see the set design, and our imaginations set to work creating the mental image of the world of the playwright's creation. The house lights go down, stage lights go up and the dialogue begins. From this point on, we are in another world. A successful play acts as a sketch:

*imagination supplies all the features which are missing
or which have been finished, and each person who sees
the sketch fills them in according to his own taste.*

Roger de Piles

We project ourselves into the characters on stage, tuning out the reality with which we came and tuning in the illusion which becomes our new reality. When the house lights go up, we may still be projecting ourselves for the next hour, day, week, month, etc. into the illusion of the play.

Most of us are familiar with the theater experience only from this viewpoint of the audience. Ironically enough, however, too many theater designs ignore this experience of the audience and get lost in the details of theater as a machine for
4. theatrical production. The programmatic requirements can be specialized and demanding, yet the temptation to give them importance over the audience experience is self-defeating. The approach to design must be comprehensive, carefully considering the experiences of the audience, actors, directors, playwrights, scene designers, those people of the community where the theater is located, etc.

In making a bowling pin lamp by drilling holes in both ends, one hopes that the holes meet in the middle. By beginning a number of very different aspects of the theater and layering them, I, as well, hoped that they would, at some point, come to an unified theater. It is a system much like a garden in which I one day planted the seeds and then throughout the season nurtured them until they ripened. To think of each item separately, that is concentrate fully on one aspect and take it to its conclusion, would not have served me as well.

I would not haphazardly plant zucchini next to my onions nor let my tomato plants lay flat on the ground next to the carrots. I plant them in rows and allocate sections for each type. As well, there is a system within a seemingly wandering design process which serves as the map. That system involves an hierarchical approach which reflects the way the audience experiences the theater.

The height of the experience is the climax of the dialogue and spectacle. At this level, the audience is focused on the dialogue. Their peripheral perception is that of the set design which supports the dialogue. It is the generator of the experience.

When the house lights go up, the larger set becomes the theater auditorium, and adjusting to this context awareness slowly shifts back to the reality at hand. The auditorium is the functioning receptacle which breathes both the sight and sound of the spectacle being generated on stage to the hundreds of worlds located within the minds of the audience. It is the hall of interpretations. Does it support an approximation at least of the intentions of the playwright?

The lobby is both the space which brings us back to our own reality and a space for the creation of our own illusions. We can be actors acting out dialogues with our fellow actors. We come to see and to be seen.

Equally significant, the process reflects the way in which the community experiences the theater. I elaborate more explicitly on this experience in the
chapter titled Cultural Context, therefore it will suffice here as introduction to state that a community attaches a sense of cultural importance to a theater and it in turn helps to establish a sense of identity in the community. It has an elevating effect.

And finally, the process reflects the way in which the generators -- playwright, set designer, director and actors -- experience the theater. With the script, the playwright provides the means for a production that will show characters in action, and in this showing the theater discovers its power. With the movements of bodies, occupying space, surrounded by objects, the playwright's words engage the playwright's audience. It is a process which takes into consideration not only Aristotle's classic components of drama but also the common features of the theater like direction, acting, costuming, set design, and lighting.

At what level do all these exercises become unified into the theater experience? This question I asked myself countless times during this year. It was a process that, once begun, gained an inertial energy that became very difficult to stop at a point and say, "Okay, here is the comprehensive theater experience." It is more a statement of, here is a more comprehensive theater experience than I would have been capable of if I only approached this problem from the standpoint of a theater designer.
Precedents
Three Basic Forms

The Arena is the oldest form and can be traced back to primitive tribes who gathered around their dancers during a performance. It has developed into the contemporary theater-in-the-round, which provides the most intimacy between actors and audience.

The first truly architectural theater form, the Greek theater evolved as the spoken word became more important. With the audience arranged in semicircular tiers on three sides of the performing area, audibility was enhanced and the performer was seen against an architectural background. Contemporary versions combine the Greek seating plan with an Elizabethan open stage or some type of thrust stage which extends into the auditorium.

The proscenium or picture-frame stage developed gradually from the medieval-Elizabethan theater and from the Greco-Roman theater plan, stimulated by the creation of opera and the increasing emphasis on illusionistic stage settings. In a proscenium theater, the audience sits in a usually darkened room facing the performing area, a contiguous room viewed through a framed opening or arch.

-- after Silverman --
10.

Contemporary Examples
Alley Theater In The Round: Arena

Alley Theater in the Round, in Houston, Texas, is a nonarchitectural black-box theater stripped to the bare structural bones, where the actor, on practically a one-to-one basis with each member of the auditoria, is of maximum importance. The room is very small and has good vertical sight lines which provide every row vision of virtually the entire stage area for an erect actor. The quiet ambient of the room and small volume yield a low reverberation making this an ideal room for speech in the round.

The seating capacity is 296 and the maximum sight line distance is 33 feet. The strong point of this theater is definitely the feeling of intimacy and the superb acoustics and vision.

--after Theater Design by George Izenour--
Stratford Shakespearean Theatre: Open-Stage

The Stratford Shakespearean Theater in Ontario, Canada combines the Greek seating arrangement with an Elizabethan stage, an exact replica of the Globe Theater. The auditorium is a segment of a circle similar to that of the theaters of Dionysus and Epidaurus, the difference here being the absence of the classic Greek *parodi* for the actor’s entrances.
The circular arrangement of the tiers and the use of the gallery made it possible to install 2258 seats, a comparatively large number in view of the scale appropriate to modern drama. Although its facilities for productions in the other performing arts are limited, it is totally successful as a theater devoted exclusively to the performance of Shakespeare's plays.

--after Contemporary Theater, by Athanasopulos--
Bagley-Wright: Proscenium

The Bagley-Wright Theater, within the Seattle Center complex, is a full production house for one of the nation's leading theater production companies. It exemplifies a contemporary example of a proscenium theater while gaining some advantage of an open-stage -- a more surrounding seating plan which allows that no seat is more than 54 feet from the stage.
The interior of maroons and reds seats 566 on the main floor and 296 on the mezzanine level. The large hall provides a flexible space for rehearsals, readings, lectures, and new plays.

--after Architecture and Urbanism, 1985. May. no. 5. (176).--
Teattro-Fossatti: Experimental

The Teattro Fossatti is a restoration of a Baroque Italian auditorium theater. Functioning now as an experimental theater, its basic essence still remains the Baroque
auditorium, and serves well to describe its characteristics. The architect's stated intention was to offer the users of this theater an instrument which allows maximum creative experimentation and study in an autonomous space possessed of "theatrical ritualty". Performances can take place either on the stage proper and/or in the auditorium, and the audience can be seated in either part of the theater.

The theater has 560 seats making it comparable in size to the Bagley-Wright main level. In the Baroque theaters, at first the auditoria were U-shaped, but to improve visibility this shape was abandoned in favor of the horseshoe, and that is what we see here at the Teatro Fossatti. The challenge inherent in this theater restoration was finding a balance between this very traditional, specific form as architectonic expression and the manifest presence of technological apparatus of the experimental theater. What I gain most from analyzing the Teatro Fossatti is a sense of unified purpose lacking in many experimental theaters.

--after Domus, no. 675. 1986. Sept.--
**Proscenium Theater Form:** an analysis of the most generally accepted and widely built theater shape.

- Of the multiple choices in theater shapes, the three basic ones are proscenium, arena, and open-thrust. While multiform shapes have certain appeals, it is not worth the loss of unified purpose that characterizes the theater with a single stage shape.

- A proscenium theater is a shape in which the audience faces the performing area on one side only and sees the performing area through an opening that often has an elaborated architectural frame.

- The proscenium is one of the most flexible theater shapes because any and all styles of production can be effectively realized.

- The limitation of this theater shape is that it tends to be less intimate than either the theater-in-the-round or the open-thrust stage, yet many playwrights want the kind of separation between actor and audience that the proscenium shape gives.

- Offstage rooms, right and left, up and down, traps and fly loft all have to be provided. All these elements lend great flexibility to the proscenium stage, but also make it more complex and more expensive to build.

- The most desirable form is a flexible proscenium with an ample forestage.

--- after Time-Saver Standards ---
Primary Section

A perfectly good seat is one in which, without uneasy elevation of the head or eye, without straining or stretching, we can calmly and quietly take any easy position, or variety of positions, which we may be disposed to assume, and yet may in all of them see and hear the speaker with equal clearness and repose, so as to give him patient and undisturbed attention.

John Scott Russell
1838

"Give me the best available seats." This is the request I make almost automatically when ordering tickets for a performance. It's based on the experience of being either so far back that I couldn't see the performers or too far forward so that my neck hurt by the end of the performance. It is a question of horizontal distance and sight line elevations. Knowing this I like being somewhat forward, in the middle, where I can easily see the performance with the least movement of my head. I also hope, as I am short, that no one with big hair will sit in front of me.
While as a designer I cannot control what kind of hair the audience has or how tall they are, I can assure that the average height person has an uncompromisingly clear view not only over the head of the viewer who would be in front of him if the audience sat in straight radiating lines from the stage to the back of the auditorium, but also I can stagger that seating so that the viewer looks between the heads of two viewers in front of him. This kind of double security enables me as a small viewer in the audience a lessened chance of visual obstruction by a much taller viewer in the row in front of me. Too many auditorium sections and plan layouts compromise this basic principle much to the chagrin of their audiences.

The best available seats will still be somewhere near the front and in the middle. However, the other seats will retain their value if (A.) the theater is not too long from stage to back seats, (B.) the front row seats are not too close or depressed that the head of the spectator is unduly inclined, and (C.) the sidemost seats are not at too great an angle for comfortable, unobstructed vision to the stage. "A room so constructed that every man in it should feel in this manner, that he had got one of the best places and that no one else was in his way -- such a room would be perfect."

(Russell, 1836) This is a very simple look at what are the A B C's of auditorium design, yet how many auditoria have you sat in that ignored these issues? It is a foundation upon which the more demanding issues of acoustic control and lighting are based. While a well designed seating geometry can ease the pain of acoustic and lighting design, very rarely will one be able to compensate for the former with the latter.
Cultural Context
A pleasant little village is located on the west bank of Sugar Creek. It was laid out by J. Evans on the first of October 1838 and consisted of 15 blocks and 36 lots.

It has 3 churches, a two story frame schoolhouse, a steam flouring mill, and one saw mill: Merchants, druggists, physicians and mechanics suitable to a town of its size; a post office, daily mail and about six hundred inhabitants.

The cemetery at New Palestine was laid out by Elizabeth Cones on the 20th day of December 1870. It consists of 41 lots with alleys.

Among the 1st merchants of New Palestine in her primitive days were Amos Dickerson, Andrew Magahey, John Delaney, Robert Ging, W. & S. S. Johnson, Joseph Cones, and Jonathon Evans.

History of Hancock County, by Binford 1882

What is the character of the people of New Palestine and how does a theater fit into the context of this small town? These are the basic underlying questions of this thesis. In asking these questions, I was interested in an even broader understanding, however, than the literal one. It became a question of, why do I think as I do? Growing up in New Palestine played a significant role in defining who I am. If I can come to an understanding of this relationship, then I am better able to know the nature of my creative expression. It is for me, an attempt to understand my individual context, as part of a self-actualizing desire, by means of a description of the socio-context.

New Palestine means to me many things. It is Main Street lined with trees on a hot July afternoon riding my bicycle to get a milkshake at the Frosty Foods drive-in. It is balancing myself on the thin rail of the tracks of the train trussel with Sugar Creek 30 ft. below, rushing between the wooden sleepers of the tracks. It is Friday night at the football game, not really watching, but socializing. It is a very specialized understanding of a larger phenomenon. How can I design a theater for this community based only on my own interpretation? The whole thesis experience seemed to raise more questions than it answered.
The answer to this one was, "Well, I can't." My first goal then was to gain a number of different interpretations in order to develop a broader, more comprehensive understanding of New Palestine. That research is reproduced here as part of Community Expections.
I was born in a small town. And, I lived in that small town. You say so what. And that is precisely what question I ask. So what affect does that simple fact have upon my thinking? How has this environment conditioned my perception, my process? As an environmental designer, I am interested in this question of a conditioned creative response. But we all have our different backgrounds and contexts. So maybe the question is insignificant because of its specificity. Okay, I'll generalize.

What does it mean to live in a small town? I have chosen to propose a design for a playhouse for New Palestine, Indiana. It is the small town in which I have lived for the majority of my life. If you had a great deal of time, I could relate to you many stories that would begin to approximate our question. You don't have the time, nor I the memory, and this is a rather tedious method, and suspect because of its total subjectivity, for getting at the character of the small town. After all, my intention is to try and develop some criteria of design for the playhouse; I'm not writing the portrait of the artist as a young man. A more objective, if possible in matters of such subjective content, method is required to gain a generalized and consistent and meaningful response.

Here is, in 50 words or less and italics, the real question: *This study is primarily concerned with expression and how the environments we live in affect and are in turn affected by what we feel and express creatively. What is the character of the people of a small town, and how is their culture reflected in their environment and how does their environment define their culture?*

It would be useful to get a cross-section of subgroups representative of the community to answer these questions. There are different categorizations of subculture groups I could propose; I treat the most fundamental -- age groups. I chose to work with 9 and 10 year-olds for this first phase for a number of reasons which I need not outline. However, I will state three hypotheses with which I began the study:

*Children are not as creatively inhibited as adults and will provide a very informative and expressive response to the question, "What is the most important quality of your town?"*
Children's views are more objective insofar as they are not as conditioned to respond in a socially-accepted manner as are adults, and hence the children's response is more open and honest.

If organized into predominant patterns, the images made by the children will yield a great deal of information concerning the motivations and desires of this cultural subgroup. It is information of great significance to the environmental designer.

As a result of the process, I discovered that I was gaining important feedback from a second group which crossed some age boundaries. The jury's comments and evaluations were as insightful as the drawings made by the students. And it is here that I come upon an objective way of looking at these subjective responses. Organizing the images into similar responses, I can begin to develop some patterns which are prevalent. And, from these patterns I can begin to approximate some criteria. Before I give you my interpretations, however, something needs to be said of the procedure.

On October 9, 1987 I introduced to the students a chance to design a travel poster for New Palestine. I asked them: If you wanted to have people come visit you in New Palestine, how would you design a travel poster so that they would like to come? If you were writing a book called A Day in the Life of New Palestine, what would its cover look like? They took one week to design their images on an 11" x 17" piece of poster board.

On October 21, approximately 130 entries went through a pilot jury made up of a research team from Ball State University (professor Stan Mendelsohn, Jackie Bieghler, and Lisa Kolber). As well, Doe Creek Middle School art teacher Mark Uhl was on this pilot jury which brought the number of finalists down to 30. The final jury, which consisted of professor Stan Mendelsohn, local artist Rita Roesener, New Palestine High School teacher and artist Debbie Snyder and community leader Max Hendryx, gave careful consideration to the entries before determining the five finalists and the two winners. The criteria of evaluation are included as an addendum to this paper.
The poster entries were then analyzed. I enjoyed valuable input at this stage from Stan Mendelsohn, Bruce Meyer, Lisa Kolber and Jackie Bieghler. I organized the entries into prevalent patterns and recorded the image types and symbols. From this I began to evaluate the messages contained therein and formulated ideas about the culture. My synthesis and conclusions follow.
What is the special quality of existence that the small town offers? I was given many answers to this question, and the patterns in general terms were: farmland, this side of the tracks, suburbia, Walden, the market, mainstreet or the strip, democracy, and montage.
I'll look at *farmland* first, for it is the stereotype; also it is the tradition of New Palestine. The question however, *Is this theme still relevant?* The image is of a mass expanse of plowed land. In the distance a lone John Deere makes its way toward stalks of corn waiting in anticipation -- they lean towards the oncoming green machine. The message is: *New Palestine is farmland.* In yet another,
a John Deere ship pulls behind it a plow and sails its way across an endless sea of dirt -- very brown. Two others have animals that speak as if they were the mayor. A hog stares at the camera just as Arnold of Green Acres and invites us to come and "do some farming". A cow peering through a metal fence tells us to "Moo on
over to New Palestine". Unless we're farmers do we really want to come if this is
the extent of culture it has to offer? No, we want something more. New Palestine
is surrounded by farmland, but the community is not a farm.

*This side of the tracks* is interesting to me, for it holds a good deal of
nostalgia and romanticism. I'm disappointed that it wasn't picked up on; it is a
definite influence on the town, yet again we see little of the town. In "New Palestine Scenic and Old" we're shown the important overhead bridge and the railroad tracks, but they seem to be out in the country; we're left wondering why someone would go to so much trouble in the middle of nowhere to build such a bridge. The monumental bridge is exciting for its brute strength and size; a bit
much for a small town, but then again it works here for we don't know anything about the town. Message -- the overhead bridge and the railroad are important peripheral elements, with a similar influence that farmland has, but what's on this side of the tracks?
I expected *suburbia* to be important. Approximately 80% of the students live in a suburban house. "Come to New Palestine and Enjoy the Quiet" shows daddy coming home up the drive after work into a detached garage. One juror said "Cows, cars, kids and quiet It must be New Palestine." Perhaps, but it is not simply the bedroom of the city. At least, it doesn't have to be. Again this is a peripheral
aspect of New Palestine, albeit an important one, but what of identification? What of a sense of place that is indicative of a town rather than rural Indiana?

But wait. I must slow down; I'm beginning to sound like one of those elitist architects. I want the students to respond in a particular way -- a socially responsive way. Yet, they must feel there's something important to farmland, the
tracks and suburbia, for their depiction of these is very Utopian. My feeling is that these examples have set the stage for New Palestine.

There is one more backdrop to the scene. *Walden*, the transcendental New Palestine, begins to explain to me more clearly what the previous three
were hinting at. A great many of the images show New Palestine as a gently flowing, tree-lined Sugar Creek "as a day in New Palestine as quiet and so dear". The calm, slowly changing Mother Nature becomes a metaphor of the town, and it is represented as a place where one can live in harmony with each other and themselves. In one, we even get a glimpse of a town in the corner.
A beginning, historically, of a town center is the *market*. It is the place to get the real news. It talks about social interaction and a sense of place. The store, or market, is a popular image which makes a comment on popular society and consumerism at one level, but it's deeper implications go further back to the very beginnings of society.
Main street is an integral part of a small town. This was perhaps the most prevalent theme, and I fully expected it to be. Highway 52 plays such an important role that it defined the linear characteristic of the town. It takes on different interpretations, and each has completely contrasting implications. Main Street suggests an here and now. It suggests continuity and connection of one place to
another. It is the heart or perhaps spine of a small town. At the corner we see Bonnie's restaurant, Sutherland's Market and a bookstore and a road which stretches off into the distance. The scale is human and gives us a view of main street as we would see it while walking. The strip implies a different feeling. The highway is emphasized more and signs of the automobile begin to appear. "Frosty
Boy" is a wonderfully imaginative view which shows an aerial of the drive-in and some gasoline pumps in the background. The picnic tables suggest human scale and the emphasis on what is off the street is given prominence over the street, whose presence is structural to the painting rather than thematic. This is still a place and still carries the feeling of main street, although it is a fast-food image.
But as the highway begins to dominate the theme, suddenly our sense of place has lost its existence -- we are looking at maps. In one composition the road takes over and the "places" cower from its presence as a dragster charges down another car. My ultimate example of this comes full circle back to where we began. Here we are in rural Indiana again, there is no town, but there is the highway. Not to be
totally unfair, there is a message here, and it is of friendly people waving. But, are they from the town? Are we close to the town? The billboard seems to suggest that we have just crossed the town limits, but I don’t feel very welcome save for the two ambassadors and their pets. The choice here is main street architecture or strip? The answer seems obvious.
Come and Visit Our Town

"New Palestine"
A small town with a big heart.
Democracy I will treat lightly, because it was not as prevalent as some of the other patterns. In the image shown the road winds to the doorway of the town hall. On the side of the town hall a painting with the constitution framed by the world says democracy for all. It is an ideal and symbol prevalent in the small town patriot.
The most successful responses, in my eyes, were those that treated New Palestine as a *montage* of experiences. In "New Palestine Should Be The World" the man on the moon is looking down on the small town surrounded by farmland and interspersed with homes and a main street. The moon man is definitely impressed, evidenced by "Wow, I Think New Palestine Should Be
The World". The simple flowing creek motif that was evident in Walden has now gained complexity with four vignettes of New Palestine -- the message is still the calm, but we gain a sense of place. "New Palestine past and present is a collage of farm experience along with main street New Palestine. In the second prize winner, "Historic New Palestine, Get Away From the Big City", the message is
superbe. The emphasis is on the relationship with nature and in the distance we see the architecture of the town connected to the street. The importance of human experiences like fishing, home cooking, swimming, etc. are outlined; this says a great deal about why this small town is appealing. The first prize winner, "New Palestine . . . A Place To Grow" uses the same theme of a montage of human
experiences, this time as evidenced more in recognizable building types suggestive of these experiences rather than using icons and words. The message "A Place to Grow" is important to me.

The drawings have provided a wealth of information about what it means to grow up in a small town, specifically New Palestine, in the eyes of a 9 or 10 year
old observer. The main question now, based on my evaluation, is "What are the implications to community design based on this cultural subgroup?". A starting point is to think of the community as a montage of experiences.
Translation and Tradition
In designing the New Palestine Playhouse, I tried to act as an interpreter between the small town context of New Palestine and the more urbane context of theater. I am not interested in making New Palestine more metropolitan. I am, instead, providing an environment which is a place to express creativity and the human spirit. It is our expressions which serve to give us our identity, and a theater provides many opportunities to play out this role.

The tradition of rural Indiana and New Palestine is deeply ingrained in my thinking process. My desire to express this tradition and to understand its implications is the motivating force behind the process. I attempt to bring *folksy* vernacular and high culture together on a common ground, for they are both valid forms of expression.

A translator's first responsibility is research, and that is how I started as well. As I suggested in *Community Expectations* my understanding of the context of New Palestine is specialized, and through the poster competition I came to a broader interpretation. My understanding of theater before this study was limited to a few plays that I had experienced. Basically, I enjoyed what I saw and wanted to see more. To gain more knowledge of theater, I started a number of different studies which I describe:

The initial study was by far the most enjoyable. I reviewed plays as they were performed live, on videotape, tape recorder, or written. Trying to understand the nature of the interpretation of a work from the viewpoint of a member of the audience was my primary objective. I would then make my interpretation as a reviewer for a journal; analyzing the performance of the acting, directing, costuming, etc. My next interest at this point was to understand the set designer's response to the dialogue. How are words translated into experiential form and space? I had set a goal to both write and design a set for a dialogue of my creation, and this analysis of existing interpretations became my departure point.

The challenge of script writing was from the beginning an overwhelming task. Making a believable dialogue that goes beyond conversation into the realm of art takes a special awareness on the part of the playwright -- I gained much respect for painters of words. While the script remains unfinished, it did prompt a set design which in turn gave me a feeling for the nature of the stage itself.
The set design was a question of how to sympathetically express emotions, relationships, symbols, etc., of the dialogue in architectonic form. I was interested in the aesthetic implications, creation of mood, material use, point of view, how well the set supported the actions of players and dynamic quality of setting. Does the set allow the audience to project themselves into the illusion of the play? Does it support and enhance the dialogue?

While asking myself these questions, I was involved throughout the year in analyzing theater as building. Much of that information is related in the Precedents chapter except for some of the generating sketches shown here. From a planning viewpoint, many choices had to be made early as to the nature of a playhouse that was appropriate for New Palestine. How is the auditorium and stage positioned within the context of the existing grain elevator? How can I express this relationship in exterior form? What is the appropriate size and corresponding facilities required to make the New Palestine Playhouse a viable theater?

Once some of these choices were made and my information from the set design experience along with the cultural context of New Palestine was synthesized into an overall attitude, I was prepared to try my hand at a translation of the grain elevator into a community playhouse. By layering these different studies, I come to a unified process, for each element has a bearing on the other; to think of them separately would have proved miopic, biasing and imbalancing the outcome.
Expression in Form
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stage</td>
<td>2000 sq. ft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auditorium</td>
<td>4950 sq. ft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lobby</td>
<td>1350 sq. ft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage Workshop</td>
<td>1000 sq. ft.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Costume Workshop</td>
<td>300 sq. ft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costume Storage</td>
<td>70 sq. ft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costume Dyeing</td>
<td>60 sq. ft.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 Dressing Rooms</td>
<td>380 sq. ft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>370 sq. ft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green Room</td>
<td>200 sq. ft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women's Toilets</td>
<td>175 sq. ft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men's Toilets</td>
<td>175 sq. ft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ticket Office</td>
<td>50 sq. ft.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Restaurant</td>
<td>1250 sq. ft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchen</td>
<td>450 sq. ft.</td>
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</table>
Conclusion
In a way, I begin to see this process can be approximated by a very simple model. The generating forces of the cultural context of New Palestine, the set design and dialogue of creative expression, and a building which functions as a theater can be through manipulation brought to interact within the same realm of space. The resultant environment can be said to have enhanced momentum and direction based on these beginnings. As this model moves through the dimension of time then, it is apparent that the character will existence will change but its initial unity and direction will remain intact.

Moving away from the abstract language of the model and stated again, the grain elevator is a main element of New Palestine and plays a strong role in defining its past tradition. I believe it can play a role in defining its future as well, but in so doing not compromise its past. The adaptation into a theater maintains both unity and augmentation of the original feel; New Palestine gains a sense of cultural importance and identification without loss of the small town atmosphere.

By looking at the project from the major characters involved in the drama of theater; audience, actor, playwright, director, set designer, etc., and by having an heightened awareness of the context of New Palestine, the New Palestine Playhouse design experience proved to be thorough and enlightening both to my understanding of theater and of New Palestine. It is as awareness of and sensitivity to the experience of environment which has provoked this solution.
List of Illustrations


Bibliography


