

Educational Outreach

Beyond the exceptional work that the Juilliard School has done to educate aspiring artists, and the performing arts branch of the New York Public Library has done to facilitate research and learning, Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, Inc. has been highly instrumental in initiating ground-breaking educational outreach programs for individuals of all ages. In fact, having adhered to its mission to foster arts education in addition to building its campus, the board of Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, Inc. formed a committee to facilitate and oversee these types of activities under the chairmanship of Dr. George Stoddard.¹ Using the Fund for Education and Creative Artistic Advancement in order to finance its goals, the committee appealed expressly to the center's constituents to implement these aims, encouraging innovative educational programs beyond the organizations' regular missions.

Even prior to these appeals, the committee had already awarded funds to the Metropolitan Opera Studio, the Juilliard School of Music, and later, to the New York Philharmonic, for the purpose of giving mini-performances to schoolchildren. On June 20, 1960, Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, Inc. initiated the Lincoln Center Youth Program, also known as the Lincoln Center Student Program, in cooperation with the city's Board of Education.² Developed to make the performing arts accessible to schoolchildren, the program was facilitated by bringing both constituent performers to the schools and bringing students to the performance venues. Six years after it was established, the professional singers and musicians in the program were performing at 250 schools in cities in and around New York.³ In addition, teaching guides were prepared and distributed to teachers to educate students about the performances. As a result of the Student Program, the Lincoln Center Council on Educational Programs was created in October 1964 in order to devise policy and content for the Student Program. Eventually, New York City Ballet and Opera, Chamber Music Society, Film Society and the Repertory Theater (later, Lincoln

Center Theater) were added to the list of participating constituents, along with its original participants.

Perhaps the least conventional yet the most pioneering effort of these educational programs was the establishment of the Lincoln Center Student Program (renamed the Lincoln Center Institute, May 20, 1974).⁴ Expanding upon an idea to use performance to educate children about the arts, this program has used “aesthetic experience as a basic component of education” for other non-arts-related subjects as well.⁵ Through its promotion of this innovative teaching technique, the Lincoln Center Institute has not only exerted an enormous influence on the way New York City schoolchildren learn, but also on the way other schoolchildren have learned through its nationwide emulation and application.

Communications

Another goal that had been originally discussed and later realized was the dissemination of performing arts to a mass audience on an ongoing basis. Consistent with the center’s goals of arts education and accessibility, Rockefeller’s exploratory committee encouraged the expansion of broadcast capabilities into the realm of televised performances, ensuring that several of the performance halls were technically suited to these goals. Beginning in 1922, the New York Philharmonic, under the principle direction of Willem Mengelberg, had been giving locally-broadcast concerts via radio, which were expanded to include a nationwide audience in 1930 under the direction of Arturo Toscanini.⁶ Today, the New York Philharmonic is the country’s only symphony orchestra that is nationally broadcast live on a regular basis.⁷ The Metropolitan Opera, on the other hand, began a regular schedule of radio broadcasts in 1931, which culminated in the Texaco-sponsored radio programs which were initiated nine years later.⁸ Since 1940, the Metropolitan Opera offered live matinee concerts to listeners throughout the United States and Canada.⁹ In 1990, over twenty-five European countries had been added to the radio network, followed by Australia and New Zealand in 1997.¹⁰

With regard to previously televised performances, Philharmonic conductor, Leonard Bernstein, had been highly influential in introducing classical music to young and old audiences with “Omnibus” (broadcast 1953-1957), a show devoted to the presentation of classical music, opera and dance, and his “Young People’s Concerts” (broadcast 1958).¹¹ The latter production featured talks by Bernstein and musical highlights from the New York Philharmonic, and was televised out of Carnegie Hall. After Philharmonic Hall opened in 1962, Bernstein’s “Young People’s Concerts” resumed production and was broadcast from the new auditorium.¹² In the succeeding years, complete concert performances were televised from the hall with the encumbrance of additional production equipment.

Then, on January 30, 1976, with an estimated five million viewers tuning in, “Live from Lincoln Center” debuted from Avery Fisher Hall, featuring Andre Previn conducting the New York Philharmonic and soloist Van Cliburn.¹³ In contrast to previous telecasts of performances which required extra lighting and equipment in order to facilitate the production, this presentation used innovative cameras that were able to rely exclusively on the lighting within the auditorium, and thereby retain the live authenticity of the performance. Today, “Live from Lincoln Center” is television’s only live performing arts series, not only offering performances of classical music, but also opera, drama and dance.¹⁴ During its auspicious history, the show has garnered nine Emmy Awards, forty-six Emmy nominations, two Grammy Awards, two George Foster Peabody Awards, three Monitor Awards and a Television Critics’ Circle Award.¹⁵

In contrast to the New York Philharmonic, the Metropolitan Opera had a more extensive history of televised performances. On March 10, 1940, the Metropolitan offered its first televised performance. However, it was not until the mid-1970s that the opera company began broadcasting on a consistent basis through regular programming. One year after the debut of “Live from Lincoln Center,” the first production of “Live from the Met,” featuring a performance of *La Bohème*, was broadcast on March 15th, 1977, to an estimated four million

viewers.¹⁶ In addition to full-length operas, the program also features gala performances by world-renowned artists and has been critically acclaimed as well.

New Constituents

Several constituents were added to Lincoln Center after its performing arts campus was completed in 1969. Lincoln Kirstein and George Balanchine's School of American Ballet, founded in 1933 and among one of the best dance schools in the United States, joined Lincoln Center on May 4, 1987.¹⁷ Initially, faculty and students of the School of American Ballet used facilities housed within the Juilliard School, but then relocated most of their operations into the Samuel B. and David Rose Building upon its opening in 1990. On July 1, 1996, Jazz at Lincoln Center became a constituent, after having had success with its own programming at Avery Fisher and Alice Tully Halls. At present, construction is underway for a new performance hall for this constituent within the proposed mixed-use building by Skidmore, Owings and Merrill at 1 Central Park.

¹ For background on the Committee on Education, see Young, "Evolution of the Organization," pp.113-114.

² For background on the Lincoln Center Student Program, see Young, "Programs Begin: 1962-1966," pp.232-235.

³ *ibid.*, p.233.

⁴ www.lincolncenter.org/aboutLC/archive_history, p.1.

⁵ For a background on the Lincoln Center Institute, see Young, "Epilogue: 1970-1980," pp.305-314.

⁶ Haws, "New York Philharmonic," in Jackson, ed., p.838.

⁷ www.newyorkphilharmonic.org/whatsnew/history.htm.

⁸ Freeman, "Metropolitan Opera," in Jackson, ed., p.758.

⁹ www.metopera.org/broadcast/radio.html.

¹⁰ *ibid.*

¹¹ Tim Brooks and Earle Marsh, *The Complete Directory to Prime Time Network TV Shows: 1946-Present*, (New York: Ballantine Books, 1988) pp.581-582; Ed Weiner & the Editors of *TV Guide, The TV Guide TV Book*, (New York: HarperPerennial, 1992) p.221.

¹² Haws, "New York Philharmonic," in Jackson, ed., p.838.

¹³ Young, "Epilogue: 1970-1980," pp.311-312.

¹⁴ www.lincolncenter.org/programs/lflc_about.asp.

¹⁵ *ibid.*

¹⁶ www.metopera.org/broadcast/radio.html.

¹⁷ www.lincolncenter.org/aboutLC/archive_history.