

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Although less than fifty years old, Lincoln Center is an exceptionally important ensemble of buildings and plazas that satisfies multiple criteria of significance pertaining to important events, association with noteworthy individuals, the embodiment of a distinctive period of design and the work of acknowledged masters. In addition, Lincoln Center satisfies Sub-Category C criteria of architecture, art, cultural history, performing arts, communications, education, landscape architecture and commerce. Created by mid-20<sup>th</sup>-century leaders in modern architecture and planning, and the prototype for over sixty cultural centers across America, the Lincoln Center campus has not only been influential within the cultural history of New York City, but moreover, the United States and the world. Initiated by the legendary public entrepreneur, Robert Moses, in 1955, and guided to completion by John D. Rockefeller, III, Lincoln Center was instrumental for not only initiating a new type of building complex in America devoted to arts performance and education, but also for being the first urban renewal project of its kind to be used as a catalyst for economic revitalization. Moreover, the constituents for the center were some of the most renowned organizations and educational institutions in the world related to the performing arts. Comprised of existing organizations such as the Metropolitan Opera Association, the Philharmonic-Symphony Society, the New York City Ballet, the New York City Opera, the New York City Library for the Performing Arts and the Juilliard School of Music; and brand new organizations such as the Music Theater Association, the Repertory Theater Association, the Chamber Music Society and the Film Society, Lincoln Center was and continues to be an unparalleled cultural conglomeration of arts performance and study. Architecturally, the collection of buildings and plazas comprising Lincoln Center represent a distinct transition in the history of the Modern movement in which pure forms, solely expressive of structure, gave way to a formalist aesthetic. Embodied by such monumental buildings as Avery Fisher Hall, the New York State Theater and the Metropolitan Opera House,

this formalism manifested itself in the superimposition of historicizing elements onto glass curtain wall structures, and can now be understood as a link in the evolution between Modern and Post-Modern building design. In addition, other buildings of the campus, such as the Library-Museum for the Performing Arts and the award-winning Vivian Beaumont Theater, embody purer ideals of Modernism, while the critically-acclaimed Juilliard School exemplifies the divergent and dynamic Brutalist style. Both the planners of Lincoln Center, Wallace K. Harrison, Philip C. Johnson, Sven Markelius, Marcel Breuer, Pietro Belluschi, Henry R. Shepley and Alvar Aalto; and the architects, Harrison, Johnson, Belluschi, Max Abramovitz, Eero Saarinen, Gordon Bunshaft, Eduardo Catalano and Helge Westermann; were among the most important designers creating corporate, institutional and residential architecture during the postwar era. As an ensemble working together on Lincoln Center, they represent the largest collaboration of American postwar planners and architects on one undertaking. Complementing their distinctive works, Daniel Urban Kiley, considered a leader in modern landscape design, in conjunction with Wallace K. Harrison, Max Abramovitz, Philip C. Johnson and Richard Miller, configured the plaza areas to provide an appropriate counterpoint of minimalism, abstraction and geometry to the center's surrounding buildings. A novelty within the realm of public-private enterprises, the art at Lincoln Center consisted of works that were either commissioned for specific spaces, acquired or donated. Its artists, consisting of Richard Lippold, Dimitri Hadzi, Seymour Lipton, Elie Nadelman, Francesco Somaini, Lee Bontecou, Edward Higgins, Jasper Johns, Reuben Nakian, Jacques Lipchitz, Henry Moore, Alexander Calder, Marc Chagall, Aristide Maillol, Wilhelm Lehmbruck, Mary Callery, Raoul Dufy, Yaacov Agam and Masayuki Nagare, together represent an entire anthology of mid- and late- 20<sup>th</sup>-century modern art, originating in America and Europe. Thus, architecturally and artistically, Lincoln Center stands as a testament to New York and America's ambitions to compete in the international cultural arena, thereby occupying a distinct place within the nation's cultural history. By literally elevating buildings dedicated to music, opera, dance, theater, film, research and instruction on its

centralized campus and housing some of the world's most renowned constituents, it attempted to and succeeded in raising the consciousness of the arts on local, national and global levels.

Presenting the greatest number of American and world premieres of opera, dance and music in the United States, and showcasing performances of both established and emerging classical artists, Lincoln Center has been an acknowledged leader in the classical performing arts, making it equally noteworthy for the events transpiring within its halls and on its plazas, as for the individuals performing on its stages and guiding its vocal and musical ensembles. It has also been an innovator in the field of communications, having been the first to customize several of its auditoriums with state-of-the-art broadcast technology in order to transmit live performances via radio and television simulcasts to unprecedented numbers of listeners and viewers.

Furthermore, in the realm of education, the center's branch of the New York Public Library features the most comprehensive research and lending facility in the United States devoted to the performing arts; its Juilliard School offers one of the most reputable conservatories in the world for music, voice, dance and drama; and its Lincoln Center Institute has pioneered teaching methods through its use of art as an educational tool. Other educational programs, such as the Lincoln Center Youth Program and the Lincoln Center Council on Educational Programs, have been instrumental in making the arts accessible to multitudes of schoolchildren in the Metropolitan region. Beyond its campus, Lincoln Center's role as a catalyst for commerce has transformed the blighted Lincoln Square area of Manhattan's Upper West Side into an economically vital and attractive destination for retail and housing, thus fulfilling its intent as a catalyst of urban renewal, and serving as the premiere prototype for other cities seeking to use the performing arts as a means of spurring economic redevelopment.