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National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities (1965-1967): Correspondence 02

Bradley G. Morison

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The Honorable Claiborne Pell
418 Federal Building
Providence, Rhode Island

Dear Senator Pell:

This is either a thank you letter, or a letter asking a favor.
We're not sure which it is!

A few weeks ago we sent a questionnaire to the Board of Trustees of Trinity Square Company, seeking their cooperation in helping us to analyze the board's opinions and ideas of the theatre. This questionnaire is an important part of the study of long-range problems and opportunities in the development of funds, facilities and audiences for Trinity Square Repertory Company.

We didn't ask you to sign your name, and consequently we don't know if you've returned the questionnaire to us, or not. If you have, we thank you for your cooperation. If you have not, we're enclosing another copy of the questionnaire for your convenience and hope you will take a few minutes to jot down your opinions and ideas. The response from the board has been excellent, but we'd like to have 100% return to help us with this study, which is being done under a grant from the Rhode Island State Council of the Arts.

Will you please return your completed questionnaire by December 14 to:

Bradley G. Morison
C/o Trinity Square Repertory Company
80 The Arcade
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

Your candid, honest opinions will be of immeasurable help. And if you wish to sign your name, it may be of help to us in arranging for further in-depth interviews with the trustees. Thank you for your promptness and cooperation.

Cordially,

[Signature]

Bradley G. Morison
enc.
bm/vp
IF YOUR OPINION does not fall into the alternatives suggested on the questionnaire, please feel free to write in your own opinion.

THE PAST

1. From what you have observed, check at right how artistically successful you think Trinity Square has been as a theatre.

   Please explain your answer.

2. How valuable do you think Trinity Square has been to the Rhode Island community area?

   Please explain your answer.

THE FUTURE

Setting aside money problems for the moment, we would like you to look five to ten years ahead and rate programs in which Trinity Square Repertory Company might engage.

3. A -- Check how desirable you think it would be for Trinity Square to tour major New England Cities with a repertory of plays during several months of the season.

   (Please continue in the same way for these ideas:)

   B -- Operating a major professional school for actors in conjunction with the theatre company.

   C -- Touring other Rhode Island communities with a repertory of plays during part of each season.

   D -- Continuing a program of performances for all Rhode Island high school students.
E -- Operating a children's theatre with professional productions produced for young audiences.

F -- Producing a season of six or seven contemporary plays for general, adult audiences only.

G -- Operating an exchange program with several other resident professional theatres in the USA whereby Trinity Square might spend four months of each year in Milwaukee, Cincinnati and Seattle, for instance, while those companies played a few weeks in Rhode Island.

H -- Operating two separate theatres: one for a repertory of established, classical and contemporary plays, the other for experimental production of new plays.

I -- Performing several weeks of each year in New York offering both new plays and new productions of established plays.

J -- Operating a theatre school for children.

4. Having rated the above ideas individually, please check which THREE programs you would consider most important to the future of Trinity Square.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Choice</th>
<th>Second Choice</th>
<th>Third Choice</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. New England Tour</td>
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<tr>
<td>B. Adult actors school</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>B</td>
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<td>C. Rhode Island tour</td>
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<td>D. Continuing high school performances</td>
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<td>E. Children's theatre</td>
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<td>F. Contemporary plays for adults</td>
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<td>G. USA exchange program</td>
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<tr>
<td>H. Operating, two separate theatres</td>
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<td>I. New York performances</td>
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<td>J. Theatre school for children</td>
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PROJECT DISCOVERY

Trinity Square is now in its second season of Project Discovery, in which every high school student in Rhode Island sees three plays each year through grants from the National Foundation for the Arts and the U.S. Office of Education.

5. Disregarding the economics of the program and the source of funds, and considering only the educational aspects of it, from what you know of the program and the comments you have heard, do you think the concept of Project Discovery is (check one):

   Excellent ____  Good ____  Valuable with changes ____  Not valuable ____

   Please give reasons for your opinion.

6. How do you think Project Discovery might be changed to make it more valuable, either for the students or for the theatre, if at all?

7. A --- The federal subsidy for Project Discovery will probably be reduced or eliminated in a year or less. However, suppose it were possible for federal grants to continue indefinitely for Project Discovery. Do you think such a subsidy would be desirable or not desirable?

   Desirable _______  Not desirable _______  Not sure _______

   Please explain.
B -- Check at right how you feel about Federal support of the arts in general.

C -- How do you feel about state government support of the arts?

8. A -- Suppose the only way to continue Project Discovery would be through the appropriation of Rhode Island State funds. Which of the three alternatives listed at the right do you think would be most desirable?

B -- Do you believe that there is a practical possibility that the State legislature might appropriate some funds for Project Discovery in the next few years?

C -- What do you think might be other possible sources of funds beside state support for the continuance of Project Discovery if federal funds were withdrawn or substantially reduced?

9. If Trinity Square were to operate on box office income alone without federal or state support, what do you think would be the most likely prospect?

10. If it were necessary to raise money to cover an annual deficit, what do you feel is the maximum amount that could be raised each year in Rhode Island for Trinity Square?
11. A -- In the past few years, have you been actively associated with any other cultural or artistic institutions in Rhode Island?

Yes _________ No _________

B -- Please check which of the following organizations you have worked with in the past five years:

____ Rhode Island Fine Arts Council
____ Rhode Island Philharmonic
____ The Rhode Island School of Design Museum
____ The Rhode Island Arts Festival
____ The Rhode Island Civic Chorale and Orchestra
____ The Providence Art Club
____ The American Festival Ballet
____ The State Ballet of Rhode Island
____ Others (please list)

C -- Have you read "The Performing Arts: The Economic Dilemma", a Twentieth Century Fund report by Baumol and Bowen?

Yes _________ No _________

12. Is there anything about Rhode Island or its population which would lead you to think that Trinity Square could NOT double or triple its audience of last season in the next few years?

13. In your opinion, what are the major problems to be faced in developing a bigger audience for the Trinity Square Company?
14. A -- For two seasons, Trinity Square has used the Rhode Island School of Design auditorium, the Trinity Square Playhouse, and other dispersed space. If Project Discovery is continued, how adequate do you think these facilities would be?

B -- How adequate do you think the above facilities would be in terms of developing substantially larger adult audiences?

C -- How necessary do you think it is to build a brand new theatre for Trinity Square?

D -- If a new, modern theatre were constructed, how much do you think it would contribute toward helping Trinity Square attract new and larger audiences?

E -- If an adequate theatre for Rhode Island cost $2,000,000, how difficult do you believe it would be to raise that amount of money in Rhode Island over the next three years, for building purposes?

Fairly easy to raise
Very difficult to do
Could be done with work
Can't be done

Please explain your answer.

We would very much appreciate your completing this questionnaire and returning it in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope prior to November 20, 1967. It will help us enormously in planning and carrying out our study for Trinity Square Repertory Company. Thank you.

IF YOU WISH:

Name __________________________

Address __________________________

City __________________________ State _______ Zip _______