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*Journal 6/15/66*

# RISD Dramatics Director Criticizes Repertory Plan

Albert Cohn, director of dramatics at the Rhode Island School of Design, said yesterday that the repertory theater proposed for the school's auditorium would seriously limit use of the auditorium by RISD students.

Mr. Cohn also criticized what he called the "deplorable secrecy" surrounding the school's decision to rent the auditorium to the planned repertory company. Editors of the RISD student paper, "Blockprint," were "dissuaded from commenting on this matter or printing student letters concerning it," he said.

Further, he said, no one in the liberal arts division of the school was consulted on the advisability of renting the auditorium.

Mr. Cohn made his comments after Dr. Albert Bush-Brown, the RISD president, said last week that there was little conflict expected between the repertory company and the students over use of the auditorium.

Although he said he was raising the point "with the utmost reluctance," Mr. Cohn nonetheless said he "respectfully disagreed" with Dr. Bush-Brown's statement that most student groups prefer to use the smaller Memorial Hall for productions, instead of the 1,000-seat auditorium.

"As all who have been there know," Mr. Cohn said, "Memorial Hall is a large lecture hall with movable one-arm student chairs and an infinitesimal open platform." The hall, he said, has no stage equipment and no dressing rooms. In the past it has been used chiefly for showing of films, lectures, exhibi-

tions and dances, and was ill-suited for dramatic productions, he said.

Mr. Cohn, who has headed the dramatics department of the school for 11 years, said that a drama workshop he teaches would be among the events curtailed by the repertory's arrival. Workshop students use the auditorium for constructing scenery, but could not do so if the repertory company were there, he said.

Additional concern over the effect of the repertory company has been raised by RISD students who fear that special programs of cultural interest, usually held in the auditorium, will no longer be brought to the school, Mr. Cohn said.