

The Formation of a Department: Theatre at William and Mary 1926-1963

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Abstract

From the foundation of the dramatic club in 1926 to the establishment of an independent academic Department of Theatre and Speech in 1963, the William and Mary Theatre experienced many changes as it grew from an extracurricular pursuit into a degree-granting program. Developments in facilities, curriculum, and local theatrical activity all contributed to shaping the organization of the department. This investigation uses information from faculty memoirs, course catalogs, departmental reports to presidents, and news publications to argue that many external factors influenced the particular way in which this department manifested. This work is intended to contribute to a broader literature of histories chronicling the ways in which new disciplines and departments can become integrated into higher education institutions. Conclusions propose that forthcoming changes to William and Mary's curriculum and physical campus could again change the face of theatrical education at the college.

Keywords: academic theatre, Althea Hunt, College of William and Mary, curriculum, educational theatre, theatre history, theatre production

The 2013-2014 academic year marked the 50th anniversary of the formal foundation of the Department of Theatre and Speech at The College of William and Mary. Theatre has been a subject of philosophical and practical study since Aristotle's *Poetics* in antiquity, though it did not become integrated into the curriculum of many American colleges and universities in a significant way until the early-mid 20th Century (Berkeley, 2009). Though we know little about theatrical training in the Western tradition between the fall of the Roman Empire and the Renaissance (Benedetti, 2005), pedagogical models for training theatre artists between the 16th-19th centuries generally involved joining a professional troupe as a novice and learning the craft through an apprenticeship model. "Handbooks of rhetorical gesture" (Benedetti, 2005, p.33) were also available during this time as early versions of acting textbooks.

The foundation of the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art in 1861 provided the modern model for a "drama school," but schools of this nature generally focus on skill development and lack the connections to a broader liberal education that we associate with the 20th century academic theatre model. The beginnings of an academic theatre at the College predate the vast majority of

academic theatres at other institutions by decades; the evolution of the theatre program at William and Mary provides insight into possible ways that new disciplines can become academized and how a range of external elements influence the development and initial architecture of a department.

This paper explores the history of theatrical performance and education at the College of William and Mary between 1926 and 1963 under the leadership of Althea Hunt, tracking the development of the campus dramatic club into a full academic department of Theatre and Speech over the course of the period. A brief history of theatrical activity around Williamsburg frames the foundation of the dramatic club, followed by an investigation of how historical developments concerning campus facilities, the college's curriculum, national dialogue regarding training in the arts, and professional theatrical activity associated with the college all influenced the formation of the Department of Theatre and Speech.

Theatre in Williamsburg

Though the dramatic club that became the William and Mary Theatre and its associated academic department was not founded until 1926, there is a noteworthy history of theatrical

performance in Williamsburg that precedes it. Students from William and Mary performed a Latin “pastoral colloquy” for the Royal Governor in 1702, constituting the first documented theatrical performance in America (“Theatre, Speech, and Dance – History,” 2013). The first dedicated theatre building in America was built between 1716-1718 on Williamsburg’s Palace Green, used by community members and men from the College to present plays periodically (Fischer, 2011). The original owners sold the building to the city of Williamsburg, which repurposed it as a courthouse in 1745. Another theatre was built six years later, which hosted the first professional performance of a Shakespeare play on the continent (Fischer, 2011). Unfortunately, the revolutionary spirit of the late 18th century in Williamsburg would paint theatre as a decidedly British pursuit, and there is no evidence that a play was ever performed in that theatre after 1772 (Fischer, 2011). In 1780, Richmond supplanted Williamsburg as the capital of Virginia, and the tours of performing artists that once travelled through Williamsburg would instead spend much of the 19th century visiting the more prosperous cities of Richmond and Norfolk. Williamsburg would be without a dedicated theatre until the 1920s.

Beginnings of the Dramatic Club

Julian A.C. Chandler’s ascendancy to the presidency of William and Mary in 1919 represented a critical moment in the history of the College and for the presence of theatre on campus. Chandler is largely credited with transforming William and Mary into a modern institution of higher learning. He aggressively pursued institutional fundraising and began campus expansion westward of the Christopher Wren Building to facilitate the needs of a growing student body (Perry, 2009). Before the start of his first semester as president, he hired six new professors and proposed plans for a large new building in honor of Phi Beta Kappa, a national honors fraternity founded at William and Mary, to be used as an auditorium and as a home for visiting Phi Beta Kappa guests (Perry, 2009). Construction began in June 1925, and the building was completed in November 1926 (Perry, 2009).

Prior to the completion of Phi Beta Kappa Hall, the 1924 student handbook promised that the face of dramatics would be changing on campus:

With the beginning of this year, dramatics at this college will assume a position of greater

prominence than heretofore. The presentation of dramas and other plays will be under the supervision and direction of a dramatic committee. With the existence of this committee it is believed that the production of plays will be greatly enhanced. (Wells, Kent, & Ambler, 1926, p. 33-34)

The handbook references English professors Gwathmey and Montgomery as faculty sponsors of the dramatic committee, who were “play producers inferior to none” (Wells et al., 1924, p. 34), though they would not oversee the club that would come out of the new committee. For the fall semester of 1926, Chandler hired Althea Hunt as assistant professor of English and “director-teacher” for the dramatic club (Hunt, 1968, p. xiii).

The local chapter of Alpha Theta Phi, a national dramatic fraternity, co-sponsored the dramatic club and outlined its plans for the year as “to study plays intensively, to make trips to see special plays at Richmond and other cities [...], and to present during the year several popular plays” (“Theta Alpha Phi Runs Dramatics,” 1926). As part of her first semester of teaching, Hunt offered a play production class; as she would later recall, this academic approach to teaching theatre came unusually early in the history of the profession – only Harvard (1905), Cornell (1912), the University of Iowa (1920), and Yale (1924) had dramatic instruction courses prior to 1926, and Harvard’s was still primarily focused on playwriting and not production (Hunt, 1949). The 1926 Dramatic Club featured 25 members, drawn primarily from the production class and those involved in previous dramatics committee activities (“Theta Alpha Phi Runs Dramatics,” 1926).

Hunt and members of the Dramatic Club spent the semester rehearsing a production of the recent Broadway hit “The Goose Hangs High” to be performed in the in the newly completed Phi Beta Kappa Hall just before the semester break. Various departments of the college also cooperated with Hunt to help put on this first production. Professors Carey and Sellevold from the Art Department were in charge of set decoration, and Professor Cummings from the Home Economics Department was credited with costuming (“Goose Hangs High Given Tomorrow,” 1926). This early collaboration would contextualize the coming

decades of theatre training classes being offered under Fine Arts rather than the English Department.

On December 18, 1926, "Goose" played to much success and a full house containing a majority of the student body ("Dramatic Club Makes Success of First Play," 1927); a Flat Hat editorial piece recorded the experience of this seminal piece as:

undoubtedly the best that has ever been staged on the campus and its quality promises better productions in the future. It was very well supported by the college and town and is deserving of the highest praise. [...] The excellence of the first production leaves little to be desired except that future plays will not be far off and that they maintain the standard set by the cast of the initial drama. ("Dramatics at the College," 1927)

The 1927-1928 and 1928-1929 academic years saw another one production each – "Outward Bound" and "The Enemy" (Scammon, 1978, p. 4-7) – and the additions of both an advanced play production class and a playwriting class due to popularity and demand (Hunt, 1968, p.16).

Phi Beta Kappa Hall

Erected primarily to suit the needs of convocations, commencements and other large gatherings, Phi Beta Kappa Hall was not particularly outfitted for theatrical production. Hunt described the building as:

unsuited for theatre – a level floor, a gallery along both sides from front to back (from which no one could see the stage) and a small balcony at the back. The shallow vestibule, opening into the auditorium by means of three swinging doors, included two small areas for a box office and a cloak room. Steep steps led from the ground level through three noisy double doors. Another source of noise was the two unpadded stairs at either side of the vestibule leading to the seats above. (Hunt, 1968, p. xiv)

Articles in the Flat Hat corroborated its defects, complaining that the level floor made it difficult to see the stage for a large portion of the audience and that the lack of bathroom facilities for a building intended to host more than 1,000 people was an embarrassment for the campus overall ("The New

Auditorium," 1926). Shortcomings aside, the building hosted the majority of theatrical productions until late 1953 and provided a home for a burgeoning campus pursuit that had not seen dedicated local facilities in almost 150 years. Performing in Phi Beta Kappa Hall was certainly preferable to under-documented earlier campus dramatic work, which took place in the cramped chapel of the Christopher Wren Building, furnished only with church pews and a small platform with chairs for speakers. (Hunt, 1968, p. 3)

Early Development of the Theatre

A 1934 Richmond News Leader report detailed that the "William and Mary players have built up rather an enviable reputation among amateur dramatists in the state" (Hunt, 1968, p. 57). In the ten years between the 1926-1927 and 1935-1936 seasons, Hunt was responsible for directing, managing, and marketing an astounding 33 full productions in addition to maintaining her regular teaching load (Scammon, 1978), and the fruits of her labors were evident. Alpha Theta Phi's presence on campus waned by 1929, and the organization would operate under the name of the William and Mary Players for the next seven years ("Theatre, Speech, and Dance – History," 2013). A few years later in 1933, Williamsburg celebrated the opening of the new Kimball Theatre in the reconstructed Merchant's Square area by hosting a student revival of "The Recruiting Officer," the first script to be staged on the Palace Green theatre just blocks away in the early 18th Century ("Kimball Theatre," 2013). Though the Kimball was not formally associated with the William and Mary Players, it is notable that the town would now have a second performance venue; when the Players christened this building with their performance, the reputation of the group and for dramatics overall would certainly have been elevated in the community. In 1935, the William and Mary Theatre was brought under the jurisdiction of the newly formed Department of Fine Arts; the appointed chair Leslie Cheek became the official technical director and designer (Scammon, 1978) and all course listings related to theatrical performance and production were transferred from the English Department to Fine Arts ("Theatre, Speech, and Dance – History," 2013). Over the next ten years, the roster of faculty members specifically associated with the William and Mary Players would continue

to grow and the scale of production would increase.

The first full-length outdoor drama was produced in 1936, establishing a tradition that would be greatly expanded in the late 1940s and beyond. The next year, 1937, was the first time in which a production saw multiple performances; until then, each show played only one night (Scammon, 1978). This was also the year in which the organization adopted the name The William and Mary Theatre, which stands to this day ("Theatre, Speech, and Dance – History," 2013). An annual tradition of performing widely popular light opera pieces by Gilbert and Sullivan also began in 1937 and lasted through the early 1940s. Though Gilbert and Sullivan would not again be presented consistently until the student foundation of the Sinfonicon Light Opera Company in 1964, it is notable that one of the earliest collaborations of the different subdivisions of the Department of Fine Arts was Gilbert and Sullivan's "The Gondoliers" (Scammon, 1978). "The Comedy of Errors" was produced in the spring of 1947, which was the first Shakespeare play in almost a decade. Following this performance, Shakespeare would become an integral part of the theatre's academic production cycle (Scammon, 1978). An additional 46 shows would be produced between 1936-1947, still primarily helmed by Hunt.

Awareness of campus theatrical activity at the national level was established in 1949 when the Bibliography of Theatre and Drama in American Colleges and Universities published both an article by Hunt entitled "The Philosophy Motivating the Teaching of Dramatic Arts in College and University" and a feature on the William and Mary Theatre, including ten production photos and set plans from performances that took place between 1944-1948 (McDowell, 1949). Even though all theatrical activity during this time was taking place under the Department of Fine Arts, the William and Mary Theatre was establishing its own identity through a continually growing portfolio of local performances and inclusion in academic publications. The Institute of Theatre and performances of "The Common Glory" would continue to elevate the theatre's profile in the late 1940s, setting the organization on a track that would lead to its eventual institutionalization as an academic department.

"The Common Glory" and The Institute of Theatre

A tradition of summer theatre at William and Mary was established as early as 1927. These productions usually played only one night, were not chosen in advance of the summer session, and were not all directed by Hunt (Scammon, 1978). There are only records of eleven summer productions occurring between 1927-1946 (Scammon, 1978). This informal approach to summertime performance changed in the spring of 1947 when auditions for a production of Pulitzer prize-winner Paul Green's outdoor symphonic drama "The Common Glory" were announced. The Jamestown Corporation, formed to produce an annual spectacular about the American Revolution for purposes of tourism, intended to present the drama at the planned site of the new Matoaka Amphitheater. Green's work was solicited because of his previous success with "The Lost Colony," another historic drama that had been playing for large audiences at Roanoke Island (Hunt, 1968, p. 103).

The Corporation selected Hunt as production director, and many college students and faculty members participated in the production during that summer. Similar to the production of "Goose" in 1926 in Phi Beta Kappa Hall, the new venue was barely finished before the premiere, with some reporting construction and touch-ups until moments before curtain on opening night (Hunt, 1968, p. 103). The show was received favorably, and even drew the New York Times theatrical cartoonist Don Freeman, who featured the production on the front page of the drama section of the Sunday Times (Hunt, 1968, p. 104). This seasonal success inspired Hunt, with the sponsorship of the Fine Arts department, to form both the Institute of the Theatre and the William and Mary Summer Players in the summer of 1948.

"The Common Glory" would continue playing each summer for almost 30 years, with average attendance during its first ten seasons around 80,000 patrons (Schindler, 2010). With a grant from the General Education Board, Hunt developed the Institute as an academic pursuit parallel to summer production activity; "arranged to accommodate all categories of people interested in the theatre" (Hunt, 1948, p. 1). Courses were offered in theatre, speech, acting, directing,

playwriting, design, and stagecraft. Six theatre experts were brought to the campus over a six-week period, giving lectures in their particular fields followed by two days of informal seminars (Hunt, 1949).

Notable attendees included Robert Edmond Jones, who was the self-professed greatest living set designer of the time (Hunt, 1948); that Hunt was able to attract Jones to attend the 1948 institute for the comparatively modest fee of \$400 speaks volumes about the increasing attention theatre at the college was receiving. As the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* put it:

It is possible that the presence of the *Common Glory* at the Matoaka Theater last year was instrumental in crystallizing plans, [for] the big outdoor pageant has turned the eyes of many a would-be thespian toward Williamsburg for the summer and stimulated interest in the theater. ("College Theater Institute to Draw Broadway Experts," 1948)

Hunt renewed the institute for the 1949 and 1950 summer sessions. Its popularity grew over these few years – a note penned by Hunt on the back of a season program for 1950 recorded that "people from out of town who have come to the institute for individual speakers have represented Norfolk, Newport News, Hampton, VA Beach, Richmond, Charlottesville, Washington DC, Vermont, Massachusetts, Ohio, [and] Delaware" (Hunt, 1950). In attracting attendees from all over the eastern US, it is certain that the Institute's programming was raising the profile of theatrical work in Williamsburg regionally and contributing to the strength and reputation of the William and Mary Theatre overall.

The Institute Discontinued

The 1951 annual report from the Department of Fine Arts to William and Mary President Pomfret pointed out that "inquiries about an institute for this summer justify a recommendation [that it] be continued" (Thorne, 1951), but the initial three years of funding Hunt secured from the General Education Board were not renewed by the college. Similar pleas were issued in the following two annual reports, but the institute was never revived. The institute did not continue, but summer productions alongside "*The Common Glory*" continued annually until 1955. Hunt's memos remained optimistic about the potential for a future incarnation of the institute and summer

theatre. Howard Scammon, a student of Hunt's in the 1920s who was later hired to the faculty in 1948, was perhaps more realistic when he cited "loss of money, poor attendance, difficulty in scheduling a place for rehearsals and performances, lack of interest on the part of the regular summer school student, [and] poor attendance in the summer session theatre courses" as a "few reasons" for the discontinuation (Scammon, 1978). However, the series of courses offered over those three summers would inform the type of curriculum changes Fine Arts would see in the early 1950s, and the variety of theatre-specific courses introduced into the educational landscape of the college would inform a greater need for departmental independence in the future.

Growth and Curriculum Shift

In 1949, the Department of Fine Arts conducted a complete survey of the teaching program at the request of the administration, so that the department could "best serve the needs of the liberal arts college" (Thorne, 1949). A new fine arts curriculum was introduced the following year, and the annual report for 1950 claimed that curricular changes:

reaffirmed the original intention of the department to supply a broad liberal background in the fine arts without the emphasis on professional training. [...] The offerings have been condensed from approximately 70 courses to 53 and many of these courses will be given in alternate years so that the actual offerings for the year have been greatly reduced and condensed. It is hoped that the general course requirements on the 200, 300, and 400 level will interest students majoring in other departments. (Thorne, 1950)

This broadening of scope and downscaling of depth in specific skills appealed to a greater number of students, leading to a noticeable increase in the enrollment and participation of students in speech and theatre at the college (Thorne, 1950). As a result, the department called for a study of the three internal sections of fine arts (architecture, painting, and sculpture; theatre and speech; music) in 1952, finding that successes in the educational use of "*The Common Glory*" could potentially lead to a master's degree in theatre, which would be "administratively more successful if a separate

department of drama and speech could be set up” (Thorne, 1952). Though the master’s degree would never come to fruition, progress toward an independent department for theatre was being made.

The Fine Arts department commissioned a report on dramatics in 1953, which examined the objectives of extra-curricular dramatic activity at William and Mary, policies regarding the theatre, and ways to preserve and improve upon current programming (Hunt, 1953). The committee, led by Hunt, recommended that the theatre seek to entertain, contribute to the culture of the audience, strengthen relations between the community and college, and to increase the influence of William and Mary through performances on and off campus (Hunt, 1953). The committee also recommended that student recruitment should involve mentioning the William and Mary Theatre, and that additional consideration should be given to applicants with special promise for theatrical achievement (Hunt, 1953). It concluded with a diatribe against the current state of Phi Beta Kappa Hall, painting it as a “constant source of embarrassment” and a “fire trap” (Hunt, 1953, p. 6).

This same year also saw the annual report include rhetoric focused on educational and performance facilities. As fine arts and theatre grew in tandem, working space became increasingly tight. The annual report for this year detailed that “the department is very well equipped as to personnel and facilities with the exception of space” (Thorne, 1953). Thomas Thorne, the chair of fine arts, proposed a new building housing the ceramics kiln and the theatrical scene shop. This building would serve as a workshop and community hub for learning artistic craft modeled after a system in place at the University of New Hampshire (Thorne, 1953). This construction would never come to pass, however, as fate intervened and disaster struck campus.

Phi Beta Kappa Memorial Hall

The summer institute of 1948 featured a somewhat prescient speech by Edward Cole, an authority on theatre planning who was also a professor at Yale. In his lecture “Theatre Planning: Technical Production” at the underequipped Phi Beta Kappa Hall, Cole declared that a lack of proper facilities was a significant handicap to the advancement of the craft nationally despite

“widespread healthy interest” (“Theatre Expert Gives Speech,” 1948). The facilities at Phi Beta Kappa Hall would show their weakness when a ceiling under the north balcony of the main auditorium collapsed in February of 1950, and again when a fire in December 1953 – as predicted just months earlier by the committee on dramatics – completely destroyed the auditorium (Schindler, 2009). The next few years of the William and Mary Theatre saw performances in alternate locations, such as the local Matthew Whaley Elementary School and the gymnasium at Blow Hall (Scammon, 1978).

After the original Phi Beta Kappa building burned down, Hunt and the remainder of the William and Mary Theatre staff began an initiative to identify features of an ideal theatre building suited for the dual purposes of instruction and production. The result was Phi Beta Kappa Memorial Hall, which was completed in 1957 and touted by the campus as “the best equipped non-professional playhouse in America,” and for professor Scammon as “the realization of the dreams of all of us as to what a theatre and a theatre school should be” (“New Theatre at William and Mary College,” 1957). The new building featured a proscenium main stage with trap doors, a counter-weight system to fly set pieces into the air and out of sight, a large cyclorama backdrop, dressing rooms and a green room equipped with intercom technology, a full scene shop and storage for properties, costumes, and sets (“New Theatre at William and Mary College,” 1957).

The first production to be performed in the new building was “Romeo and Juliet,” and, characteristic of William and Mary’s history, the building was barely completed before the opening (Scammon, 1978). Hunt took ill during the rehearsal period, and Scammon took over the directing duties. The opening was a dressy gala affair with guests invited from all over the country. The performance was well received, with Scammon remembering the only criticism being the cold conditions of the auditorium (Scammon, 1978). Later that year, the building also hosted another important event – the 350th anniversary of the Jamestown settlement, celebrated with a commissioned performance depicting William and Mary’s history entitled “Hark Upon the Gale”

(Scammon, 1978).

The original Phi Beta Kappa Hall was rebuilt with different plans in 1955 and rechristened as Ewell Hall in 1957, allowing the Department of Music to move its offices and instructional rooms from their previous home at the Williamsburg Methodist Church (Schindler, 2009). This move would further separate the three sections of the Department of Fine Arts, as each was now housed in a unique building on campus. With state-of-the-art facilities for its new home, the William and Mary Theatre continued to truly come into its own. It would not again share space with the rest of Fine Arts until the construction of Andrews Hall on the backside of Phi Beta Kappa Memorial Hall in 1967, four years after Theatre and Speech would have its own autonomous academic department ("William & Mary – Andrews Hall," 2013).

The Griswold Report

In 1959, President Whitney Griswold of Yale authored a paper titled "The Fine Arts and the Universities." Although unpublished by an academic press until 1965, a manuscript version dated Spring 1959 located in the office files of the Department of Fine Arts suggests that at least Thorne had read it upon preliminary circulation. The report argued that creative art and higher education constituted an "integral process," advocating that universities find a mutually profitable relationship between creative art and liberal learning (Griswold, 1959, p. 3). The report concluded that powerful learning in the arts does not stem from "stimulation by an artist in residence, [but from] intellectual discipline in the context of humanistic learning that is the province of liberal education" (Griswold, 1959, p. 8).

This report indicates a new sector emphasis on "intellectualizing" academic theatre in the mid-late 1950s, very much aligned with the William and Mary administration's earlier request to deemphasize artistic skill in favor of a broad liberal arts approach. The Yale School of Drama was founded in 1955 in response to the growing regional theatre movement in America, which served to professionalize academic theatre nationwide. William and Mary's theatre faculty in the 1950s and 1960s included Yale graduates, and it is reasonable to assume that the curricular philosophies of Yale's president travelled south with them to Williamsburg. The Griswold report represents a pedagogical shift from a skills-based education (akin to the British drama school model) to one that blends the development of both talent and intellect. This

pedagogical change is important to the development of an academic theatre department because it empowered faculty with a rhetorical and curricular toolkit with which they could claim academic merit. Scammon referred to the William and Mary Theatre in the epilogue of his 1978 memoir as a "bastard organization whose [two-fold function was to] fulfill the academic need [and] to fulfill the individual's need for creative and/or technical extra-curricular activity" (Scammon, 1978). This "bastardized" ideal constitutes the heart of the department's philosophy to this day.

Twilight of Association with Fine Arts

The 1962-1963 course catalog offers the final view of theatrical activity under the Department of Fine Arts. A three-paragraph description of the William and Mary Theatre offered information about faculty, performances, production crews, and current facilities with only a passing mention of its formal association with Fine Arts ("Bulletin of the College of William and Mary," 1963). Hunt retired in 1962, leaving a legacy of work that would later be administratively honored by naming a campus dormitory after her. The official transition to an independent department in 1963 failed to leave a significant archival paper trail or many poignant reflections in the archived papers of Hunt, Scammon, or Thorne; the change was perhaps so logical or in process for so long that extraneous documentation was unwarranted.

Conclusion

From the construction of the original Phi Beta Kappa Hall to the formal establishment of an academic department hosted in Phi Beta Kappa Memorial Hall, it is clear that the historical happenings of 1926-1963 deeply influenced the development of the William and Mary Theatre. Performance facilities critically impacted the theatre's ability to produce and teach. The original Phi Beta Kappa provided the theatre with a license to exist, while the construction of Phi Beta Kappa Memorial Hall allowed the theatre to establish its own identity, diversify its course offerings, and improve the quality of its productions. The college's curriculum informed what kinds of courses were being taught and created associations with other disciplines to various effects. Professional theatrical activity in Williamsburg, primarily centered around "The Common Glory,"

helped to raise the profile of the theatre and provided it with the experience and artistic muscle to function independently. National dialogue regarding training in the arts created a theoretical framework around which the Department of Theatre and Speech could organize itself into a viable academic wing.

Implications for Future Research

In this academic year, two major campus developments have occurred which suggest we may see another cycle of institutional change for the current iteration of the Department of Theatre, Speech, and Dance. In September 2013, William and Mary administration announced that the construction of a new "Arts Quarter" was a "top priority in the university's six-year plan" (Shearin, 2013). This plan would incorporate a new building for music and extensive renovations and expansions for Phi Beta Kappa Memorial Hall and Andrews Hall. As this paper illustrates, new facilities have historically heralded extensive changes in the theatrical curriculum, and new renovations could bring the possibility of new courses and design specialties reliant on current technologies, such as projection design and video integration.

A second announcement at the end of the Fall 2013 Semester revealed faculty approval of a new general educational curriculum encouraging interdisciplinary learning that connects disciplines across three broad knowledge domains of physical science, social science, and the humanities (Boyle, 2013). These courses are intended to promote a "shared educational experience" among students at the college (Boyle, 2013); implications include a new impetus for theatre, speech, and dance classes to connect with other liberal arts disciplines in an attempt to foster the development of "intellectually astute, intellectually flexible students" (Boyle, 2013) prepared for the challenges of a changing global economy and workforce.

Possible outcomes include a return to a model similar to the holistic "fine arts" approach as seen in the 1930s and 1940s, one that relied on stronger ties between departments of Art/Art History, Theatre/Speech/Dance, and Music to satisfy requirements, or a greater integration of mathematical and scientific concepts as they relate to stage technology and design. Another possibility is that the profile of students majoring in the current degree program will change, as the demands for

increased interdisciplinary learning will decrease the amount of theatre-specific professional training credits students will be able to pursue. This shift in pedagogy and content could result in students less prepared to compete for non-academic jobs in theatre, or could lay the groundwork for new graduate programs that are more skill-oriented to complement the broader undergraduate training. However the curricular alterations manifest, it is clear that as the William and Mary Theatre approaches its 100th anniversary, the organization will need to remain adaptable to change while continuing to emphasize quality theatrical training in the context of a liberal arts institution.

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