
Pro Rege

Volume 3 | Number 3

Article 11

March 1975

Spring Theatre Conference

James Koldenhoven

Dordt College

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcollections.dordt.edu/pro_rege



Part of the [Christianity Commons](#), [Higher Education Commons](#), and the [Theatre and Performance Studies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Koldenhoven, James (1975) "Spring Theatre Conference," *Pro Rege*: Vol. 3:

No. 3, 27 - 28.

Available at: https://digitalcollections.dordt.edu/pro_rege/vol3/iss3/11

This Incidentally is brought to you for free and open access by the University Publications at Digital Collections @ Dordt. It has been accepted for inclusion in Pro Rege by an authorized administrator of Digital Collections @ Dordt. For more information, please contact ingrid.mulder@dordt.edu.

identity, the live stage productions were called "dramas." But that did not satisfy those who wanted to distinguish between the various literary forms: poetry, fiction, and drama. Drama, they maintained, was the literary aspect of theatre. So, throughout the educational world, and that rather recently, drama departments changed their titles to theatre departments, to distinguish themselves from the literature departments. And they could do that because films were no longer being associated with buildings which were at one time performing (theatre) centers. The distinctions now are clearer, but still have some unfortunate connotations for some people. For some the theatre is still a place where dirty pictures are displayed on a screen by men under the influence of the devil. The Christian community, again, has a responsibility, to

undo the evil made of good, and a good way to begin is by making the following distinctions: (1) drama is both the human quality and the scripted aspect of theatre, which may provide a limited, non-enacted experience without the use of a theatre; (2) the film is not theatre, though the film may be shown in a theatre; and, (3) theatre is the live performance of a dramatically-qualified activity, which depends on the effects and techniques that a theatre can provide.

Undoing the evil made of good can not be accomplished overnight. Nor can it be done simply by renaming, though giving proper and appropriate names to things is very important in the process of proclaiming the Lord's world. The embrace, the kiss, gift-giving, the dance, and theatre—shall we only rename them, or also reclaim them?

Spring Theatre Conference

The New World Theatre Conference is the title given to a series of two meetings, the first scheduled for April, 1975. Dordt College will be the host for this conference, as well as the one planned for a year later. While Dordt will provide the format and program for these two conferences, the structure of The New World Theatre Conference will allow it to become an independent professional organization.

To get the Conference started, Dordt has invited representatives from sister colleges, including Calvin College, Trinity Christian College, Northwestern College (Orange City), Covenant College, Bethel Christian College (Minneapolis), Wheaton College, and Gordon College. Others, such as directors and teachers of theatre in high schools and professional persons from Christian theatres are also invited, though their invitations are handled differently, that is, through one of the invited colleges. Organizers of the Conference are asking college representatives to extend invitations to

those known to be interested in Christian theatre and its related problems.

Dr. John D. Hurrell, lecturer in dramatic theory at the University of Minnesota, will be the resource person. Hurrell's main presentation will deal with the rise of realism and the subsequent reaction to realism in world theatre. The opening address will be given by James Koldenhoven, director of theatre at Dordt College. A third person in the program, whose commitment is still somewhat uncertain because of pending contracts, is Mr. James Lawless, a professional actor. The conference is scheduled to coincide with a performance of Arthur Miller's "Death of a Salesman" by the Dordt College Thelians.

The purposes of The New World Theatre Conference are several. First, it will bring together those who are attempting to redirect theatre away from the grip of secularism. This difficult task requires that efforts are conjoined. Second, the conference recognizes that there is a growing number of persons (students, in particular)

who are looking for professional outlets where they may take up acting and technical theatre work in an environment which concurs with their Christian commitment. With the development of a conference, it may be possible to identify these outlets (i.e., professional Christian performing groups), to broaden their identity and recognition, and encourage other groups to form so that persons aspiring to the theatre profession may anticipate opportunities not now available. And, third, the conference should help its members to deal with problems not yet solved, resolved, or even identified.

This third purpose of the conference is perhaps a primary one, for much remains to be said and done by Christians who want to make theatre a God-glorifying and respected aspect of the arts. Certainly there are problems attending theatre which are not so much problems as "hangups"; however, there are also many legitimate questions being asked by both professionals and theatre-goers in the Christian community. Both the professionals and the theatre-goers deserve the best-reasoned and most Scripturally-directed answers. The conference intends to promote such a direction and redirection.

Radio Illumination

"Illumination" has received a variety of reactions. Some bad, some good. A good response, however, is best reported by the fact that many FM radios on the Dordt campus have been turning to 94.3 MHz at 11:00 p.m. every weekday. On and off campus, radios will be pulling in the modern sound of "Illumination" earlier, with KDCR-FM broadcasting "Illumination" a half hour earlier in 1975.

"Illumination" is a late-evening program of modern Christian sounds in music, mostly rock, folk, and country. The DJ, Alwyn Van Zee, keeps the music going without pauses. And because KDCR-FM is a Dordt-affiliated educational radio station, there are no commercials. With innuendo, broken phrases, and gentle persuasion, Van Zee manages to focus the attention of listeners on the content and direction of the music. The program style is for young listeners, but anyone can sense the contrasting spirit of "Illumination" when compared with the secular programming of most any other late-night broadcasting.

Not all of the material used is clearly and precisely Christian. But such material is edified by the corpus of the program, and

usually by the corpus of a specific writer's work. James Ward, for example, who is best as a song writer, contributes frequently to an evening's listening. Most of his work is obviously, if not heavily Christian, but he has also written "Roll the Wheel" which is not in the Jesus music tradition. Along with his "So Let the Time," which speaks of the vision of Isaiah for perfect justice, "Roll the Wheel" takes on its own significance.

Other sounds include groups such as Lazarus ("Warmth of Your Eyes"), and Second Chapter in Acts ("Easter Song"), as well as solo artists like Paul Stoochey ("Wedding Song"), once associated with Peter, Paul, and Mary.

KDCR, dedicated to a "God-centered culture," programs some traditional hymns in the morning, but almost no Southern gospel sounds. There are talk programs, as may be expected from an educational radio station, and a good deal of classical music. Local contributors provide occasional commentary on national and world events. Sunday listening is worship oriented with sermons, choirs, and longer choral works performed.