

A wide-angle photograph of a large, empty auditorium. The seats are a vibrant red, arranged in a semi-circular pattern. The ceiling is dark with numerous small, glowing lights that resemble a starry night sky. The stage area is visible in the background, with dark curtains and some structural elements. The overall atmosphere is quiet and grand.

History of McCain

*Auditorium*

at Kansas State University



McCain  
AUDITORIUM





ON APRIL 10, 1911, the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra became the first big orchestra to perform in the auditorium at Kansas State Agricultural College. During the Festival of Arts Week in 1924, they would return to Manhattan with four of the greatest vocal soloists in America, and join the Kansas State Agricultural College chorus in a production of Mendelssohn's "Elijah." On Nov. 11, 1970, they would play in Manhattan again, this time as the Minnesota Orchestra, for the dedication of the new Kansas State University Auditorium.



After the orchestra, directed by Stanislaw Skrowaczewski, played the "Academic Festival Overture, Opus 80," by Johannes Brahms, and the "Partita for Orchestra," by William Walton, and before George Trautwein took the podium to conduct the premiere of Gail Kubik's "A Record of Our Time," Dr. James A. McCain dedicated the new Kansas State University Auditorium to the "enrichment of the human mind and spirit," describing it as "a center for intellectual gratification." This was the dedication of a facility for which the faculty and students of KSU, the Manhattan community, and many in the state of Kansas had worked, planned and waited for many years.

Over the past 40 years, McCain Auditorium has become an important gathering place for the university, the city of Manhattan and the regional community. The auditorium was built as an all-purpose building. As George Izenour, the man who designed the unusual multipurpose ceiling explained: "The music people needed a nice concert hall; the drama people needed a nice

theater; the university needed an auditorium. With less than \$3 million available, it was out of the question to build three separate structures. With the funds available being scarcely half of what similar auditoriums around the country were costing, the problem of designing an acceptable structure might have seemed insurmountable. But the architects and engineers working on the project looked upon it as a challenge. We took the gamble to see if we could pull something off.” — Office of University News, Kansas State University, Sept. 24, 1969.

What they “pulled off” was an auditorium that featured a moveable ceiling, unobstructed sight lines, and an unusual sense of intimacy. McCain Auditorium has become an integral part of the university, serving as the home of student music, drama, opera and dance; Landon Lectures, convocations, graduation ceremonies, music listening lab and other classes; and touring music, dance and drama groups, all of which have enhanced the cultural environment of the university, community and region.

From the date of its founding, the university has presented lively lectures, music, drama and dance performed by students and faculty, in addition to the writers, scientists, poets, preachers, philosophers, world travelers and world leaders whose names fill the history books of the last 150 years.



Machinery Hall, also known as the “college barn,” was completed in 1873.

A brief look at the buildings and events that preceded McCain Auditorium is necessary to understand the evolution of the arts at the university and the importance of McCain Auditorium.

## 1800s

“The building given to the state by Bluemont Central College was described as of beautiful gray limestone. The third story was used as a chapel and was said to be capable of seating four or five hundred and to be supplied with excellent chairs, a superior organ and table and desk for the speaker. It was considered to be the best lecture room in the state. ‘A splendid piano and a beautiful Melodeon were presented to the college by his Excellency, Thos. Carney, the governor of Kansas and the Hon. D.R. Anthony, the Mayor of Leavenworth City.’” — Manhattan Independent, Dec. 7, 1863



Bluemont Central College opened on Jan. 9, 1860.

“The condition of the Bluemont College building is a ‘disgrace to the state of Kansas.’” — Nationalist, April 5, 1872

“The College Barn, in which mandatory chapel services will be held, is progressing rapidly, having the timbers laid for the second story, and the stonework going up at railroad speed. It is a fine looking structure, and when the whole building is completed, will be a good place for the education of those ‘State Agricultural College mules.’” — Manhattan Beacon, Dec. 7, 1872

“The Alpha Beta Society presented a drama in the chapel (College Barn) in 1875.” — Faculty Records, Kansas State University, Jan. 15, 1875

The next building to house the room used for chapel, speeches, drama and music is now known as Anderson Hall, which was called the Practical Agricultural Building when it was built. The north wing was finished in 1879. Construction of the center wing was



In 1879, the Practical Agricultural Building contained a room used for chapel, speeches, drama and music. This photo of the building now known as Anderson Hall was taken in 1885.

completed in 1882 and the south wing in 1884. Chapel services moved to the building in 1882. The College Orchestra played each morning for chapel exercises. In 1887, the center wing of this building was extended to make a larger chapel.

## 1902

---

In June, the Practical Agricultural Building was renamed Anderson Hall after former K.S.A.C. President John A. Anderson.

## 1904

---

The original KSU Auditorium was the southern-most building on campus. The Kansas Legislature appropriated \$40,000 to build it. "The old auditorium was dedicated on a cold Wednesday, December 14th, 1904. There were snow flurries. The dedication program included a couple of selections from the college orchestra, a prayer, a vocal solo (Schubert's 'Wanderer') and President E.R. Nichols spoke of 'The Aims and Needs of K.S.A.C.' There were other speakers: the president of Iowa State College at Ames; the chancellor at the University of Kansas; and the president of Kansas State Normal. The afternoon program concluded with a couple of selections from the college band. That night, the music department presented a program by the Choral Union along with a few vocal,

violin and piano solos. A member of the Board of Regents called it 'the most magnificent auditorium in the West when it was dedicated.'" — Richard D. Haines, Director of University Publications, Kansas State University, Manhattan Mercury, September 1970

## 1920s

In 1923: "The Auditorium is declared inadequate for the University's needs." — Kansas State Collegian, Sept. 28, 1962

In 1929: "The Auditorium is condemned." — Office of University News, 1970

## 1946

"President Milton S. Eisenhower has announced plans for a \$200,000 Memorial Chapel to be built north of the President's home near the pine grove, and north of what was called some fifteen years ago Lovers Lane." — Kansas State Collegian, April 25, 1946



The College Orchestra played each morning for chapel exercises in the Practical Agricultural Building. The building was renamed Anderson Hall in 1902.

## 1955–57

---

"I was attending an all-college assembly in the old auditorium. Gov. Fred Hall was there. He was sitting next to President James A. McCain. Hall leaned over and whispered something into the president's ear. Hall stood up, and with a broad smile on his face said so all jammed into the old structure could hear: 'One of the first things I'm going to see accomplished is the building of a new auditorium.' The crowd roar was thunderous." — Richard D. Haines, Director of University Publications, *Manhattan Mercury*, Sept. 1970

## 1960s

---

"The old Auditorium became an object of odium for a group whose discontent focused on the deplorable facilities provided devotees of the fine arts. Music, art and drama suffered especially from the lack of decent accommodations. Andrei (sic) Segovia, the world famous classical guitarist, emphasized the building's inadequacies when he refused to begin a concert because of the distractions of swinging doors and the cold temperature. While windows rattled and floors creaked he stood up and in halting English but in a forceful manner said, 'Shut the door!' Reflecting widespread student feeling, the Collegian launched an active campaign to replace the old Auditorium building. Student organizations and faculty commentators took up the cry for a new building. Many references were made to the 'old barn' and it became customary to use the phrase, 'burn the barn' or 'Let's burn the barn' as the clamor went up for better facilities." — "Kansas State University: The Quest for Identity," James C. Carey, *The Regents Press of Kansas*, Lawrence, 1977, pgs. 219–20

"Official daytime all-University assemblies requiring the shortening or dismissal of all classes are to be eliminated altogether effective September, 1961, because of limited facilities and the growing student body." — Minutes of the University Senate, Kansas State University, Feb. 15, 1961

"K-State President James A. McCain announced on Thursday, September 27, 1962 that the Educational Facilities Laboratory, Inc.

of the Ford Foundation has selected K-State's new auditorium for one of its special projects and will provide funds for employment of expert consultants in all aspects of auditorium design and construction. 'Traditionally auditoriums on university campuses lack flexibility of use and often stand idle. We hope, with assistance provided by the foundation, to design a building which might be used either as a large auditorium or as smaller units operating independently, thus assuring full use of the facility,' commented President McCain. The new auditorium is to be built just to the east of the present building and will provide for a modern stage and a seating capacity of 2,000 to 2,400. It is hoped that construction can begin this coming year and the structure completed by 1965. The old auditorium will be razed when the new facilities are available. A new auditorium has been on the University's priority building list since the end of World War II." — Kansas State Collegian, Sept. 28, 1962

"Construction of K-State's new multi-million dollar auditorium will begin in July, 1964, according to President James A. McCain. The edifice will stand on the southeast corner of the campus, on the site now occupied by storage barracks just east of Thompson Hall. Former plans had designated the tennis court area as the building site, but they were revised in order to save the area for possible expansion of the Union." — Kansas State Collegian, March 6, 1963

"Construction of K-State's badly-needed new auditorium has been delayed again, this time because of an administrative error in calculating costs. ...Regardless of the cost, this project MUST be next. OUR PRESENT RELIC, which should have been razed 30 years ago, has to be eliminated before someone is struck by falling plaster or goes tumbling through the floor." — Kansas State Collegian editorial, Nov. 8, 1963

"Dr. McCain, I feel a deep sense of urgency about securing all the funds necessary for a new auditorium at Kansas State University as approved by the Board of Regents. No building is more essential to the broad educational purpose of a center of higher learning than this facility and none has stronger support from our faculty, students and alumni. Because of poor lighting and acoustics, uncomfortable and crowded seating, inadequate provisions for



On Jan. 15, 1965, arson destroyed the old auditorium; in a short time, it was completely gutted and its valuable contents were lost as well.

heating and ventilation, and serious structural weaknesses, the present 65-year-old auditorium is completely inadequate for such programs as visiting lecturers, concerts, and dramatic productions, and the student-faculty convocations so indispensable to the campus esprit de corps." — Office of University News, Kansas State University, Nov. 18, 1963

"Kansas State University is authorized to pay from the Regents' Planning Fund \$16,000 for the cost of preliminary plans for the auditorium." — Kansas Board of Regents' Minutes, Feb. 11, 1964

"The rhetoric that had been circulating about the Auditorium encouraged the notion that anyone who destroyed the old 'cracker box' would be doing the University community a service. On January 15, 1965 an arsonist (or arsonists) fired the old Auditorium; in a short time, it was completely gutted and its valuable contents — musical compositions, instruments, and equipment from other fine arts departments — were lost as well. A guilty student hinted publicly at his 'achievement' and when another student who had been involved offered evidence, the two were arrested; one received a prison sentence." — "Kansas State University: The Quest for Identity," by James C. Carey, The Regents Press of Kansas, Lawrence, 1977 pgs. 219–20

"An appropriation of \$2,867,800 for an auditorium from the 1965 and 1966 sessions of the legislature was requested today by President McCain." — Kansas State Collegian, Jan.22, 1965

"Positive action for a new auditorium was initiated when representatives of three student groups met to formalize plans for a 'Cats for Curtains' campaign. The campaign was to raise money for stage curtains that would 'lend an elegant atmosphere to an auditorium for K-State.' Estimated cost of such curtains will be more than \$10,000." — Kansas State Collegian, Jan. 18, 1965

"In January 1965 Dr. McCain established a committee to plan the new auditorium to be built at KSU. Committee members were Norma Bunton, speech department head; Wallace Dace, speech department; Emil Fischer, architecture and design dean; Rudolph Gingrich, physical plant head; John Kitchens, extension; Luther Leavengood, music department head; Al Pugsley, Vice President of KSU; William Stamey, arts and science associate dean; and Henry Wright, architecture and design. Dr. Al Pugsley announced, 'The Committee will be satisfied only with an auditorium that would be a distinct asset to the University in all aspects.'" — Kansas State Collegian, May 26, 1965

"K-State's auditorium has been all but razed to the ground. In commemoration of its glory there will lie a slab of concrete. The only indication that a building may have once occupied the site will be a new concrete cover for the old transformer vault." — Kansas State Collegian, April 2, 1965

"The Kansas Legislature appropriated \$2,867,800 million for construction of a new auditorium at KSU." — Kansas State Collegian, Jan. 22, 1965

"In 1965 George Izenour, Yale University stage designer, was selected as consultant to the auditorium building committee. A.L. Pugsley, University Vice President and Chairman of the auditorium committee cited Izenour as 'One of the nation's experts on stage designing. An auditorium is a specialized kind of building, and that is why we seek the advice of someone who is a master in the field.'" — Kansas State Collegian, Sept. 20, 1965

"An aura of excitement already surrounds planning for the proposed new 1,800 seat Kansas State University auditorium, although final drawings and specifications will not be ready until after the first of the year. The auditorium, which is to be ready by the fall of 1968, will be the focus of all cultural activities." — Office of University News, Kansas State University, Oct. 14, 1966

"Plans and specifications for Kansas State University's proposed new \$3 million auditorium go in the mail to contractors this week. The new K-State auditorium is expected to attract national attention because of some of the unusual design features. Faculty, students and others interested will be able to get an idea of how the auditorium will look on the South Quadrangle through the display of a model of the proposed auditorium which will be displayed in the K-State Union." — Office of University News, Kansas State University, July 11, 1967



The exterior of the 1,800-seat auditorium would be limestone to complement much of the existing K-State architecture. Anticipated completion date: November 1969.



Many hoped the new auditorium would become a center for the cultural arts, not only for the campus, but for the city of Manhattan and the surrounding region as well.

Oct. 3, 1967: "It was a hot, temperatures in the 80s, October morning when President McCain and other dignitaries gathered for a hastily called ground breaking ceremony for the new KSU Auditorium. One Manhattan businessman came puffing up the sidewalk to the site where the participants were gathered and in a breathless whisper asked: 'Is this the new stadium?' President James A. McCain, Regent Thomas Griffith, and architect Floyd Wolfenbarger, broke ground with a gold-colored shovel amid signs of beginning construction. No building ever constructed on campus had been planned so carefully." Richard D. Haines, Director of University Publications, Kansas State University, — Manhattan Mercury, Sept. 1970

"Vincent Cool, assistant vice-president for planning at KSU announced that the new auditorium would be completed in November, 1969. No date was set for the opening of the building because according to Cool, 'A complicated building of this type



The lights in the auditorium ceiling were designed to give the effect of a starry sky.

should not be used immediately. Time must be allowed to learn how to use it.'

"The upper interior and the ceiling of the auditorium will be navy blue. The lights in the ceiling will give (the) effect of a 'starry sky.' Vertical steel elements, gold in color, spaced seven feet apart will decorate the upper walls.

"The lower walls will be finished in a teak vinyl covering, reddish brown in color. The stage curtain will be gold valor (sic) and the covers on the auditorium seats will be antique gold. 'This décor was chosen for the express purpose of focusing attention on the stage opening,' Cool said.

"The floor of the auditorium will be cement and the lobby floor will be terrazzo. The exterior of the auditorium is a simple, contemporary design. The upper part is solid face limestone with some sawed stone for ornamental purposes. The lower part is limestone of the type that has been used on the K-State campus for about ten years.

"The auditorium has an adjustable ceiling and walls. It will seat 900 people with the ceiling lowered and 1800 people with the

ceiling partially raised. The ceiling can be completely raised for acoustical effect.

"The main floor of the auditorium will use 'continental seating' without aisles and (with) many side entrances. Individual seats will slide forward or backward, similar to old theater seats to allow wider individual rows for walking. Conventional seating will be used in the balcony.

"The rising orchestral pit will provide an orchestra stage that can be raised or lowered hydraulically. For musicals the pit can be lowered below the seats and stage. For some types of dramatic performances the pit can be raised to become an extension of the stage.

"The orchestra pit can also be lowered to make room for three more rows of seats which will ordinarily be stored in an area beneath the first rows of the regular seats.

"The music wing of the auditorium will include a music library, two administrative offices, instrument storage, classrooms and two organ classrooms.

"On the same level as the auditorium will be a vocal and instrumental library, more instrumental storage, large vocal and instrumental classrooms. These classrooms will have no acoustical conflict with the auditorium and will allow practice before performances.

"A green room located offstage right and down a flight of stairs underneath the lobby, will provide a place for guest artists to meet the press or actors to remain when they are not on stage. A kitchenette will be located in the green room.

"A chimes warning system will alert people in the lobby when a performance is about to begin.

"The auditorium was designed by state architect James Canhold and F.O. Wolfenbarger, associate architect. George Izenhour was stage consultant." — *Kansas State Collegian*, July 2, 1969

"A number of people on the K-State campus were surprised last week when above-ground construction began on the new auditorium cooling tower. The tower is located in the center of the quadrangle in front of the auditorium. 'This space in front of the auditorium should be the showplace of the campus. It would be a place for people in the traditional sense of a European plaza with



The cooling tower sits near the west entrance to the auditorium.

places to sit, delightful steps for circulation, a fountain, a mural wall using the materials of the surrounding area, and stands for permanent and temporary placement of great sculpture,' said Charles Clement, muralist-designer.

"Alden Krider, professor of architecture, made the following statement in regard to the cooling tower, 'Are we so awed and desensitized by the 'three-million-dollariness' of the auditorium that we can't see the incongruity of a full-length mink worn above canvas sneakers?'" — Kansas State Collegian, July 11, 1969

"Mark Ollington, who has accepted the assignment as McCain Auditorium manager, sees in that position an opportunity to create a center for the cultural arts not only for the campus, but for the city of Manhattan and the surrounding region as well." — Office of University News, Kansas State University, Sept. 19, 1969

## 1970s

In the words of Kansas State University President James A. McCain: "Dedication exercises for our new KSU Auditorium will be a blue-ribbon cultural event in the 108-year-old history of our University. Perhaps no building has been 'moved' around the campus so

much in the planning stage. Nine sites were selected with cost estimates on four of the sites. The total cost was \$3,035,933. Federal funds amounted to \$153,833 compared with state funds of \$2,882,100. The latter figure includes \$383,000 to replace some music facilities destroyed in two fires.” — Office of University News, Kansas State University, Nov. 6, 1970

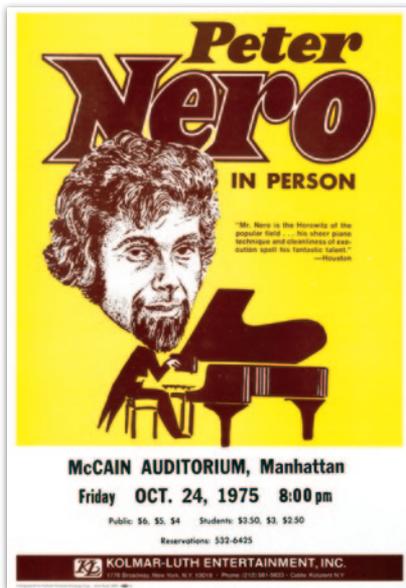
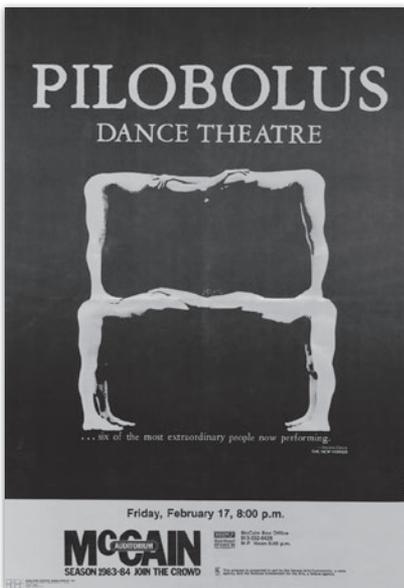
## Bringing the KSU Auditorium to life

The KSU Auditorium was ready to be occupied in the early spring of 1970.

“Mark Ollington said a special committee has been set up to coordinate the cultural activities of the campus. Not an official body, the committee is designed to secure cooperation in the use of the new facility.

“The committee is composed of faculty members from the departments of English, music, continuing education, art, and dramatic arts. Ollington is also working with the Campus Entertainment Committee to determine what type of entertainment students might enjoy.

“Use of the new facility will be available to any University-affiliated or oriented program if scheduling allows.



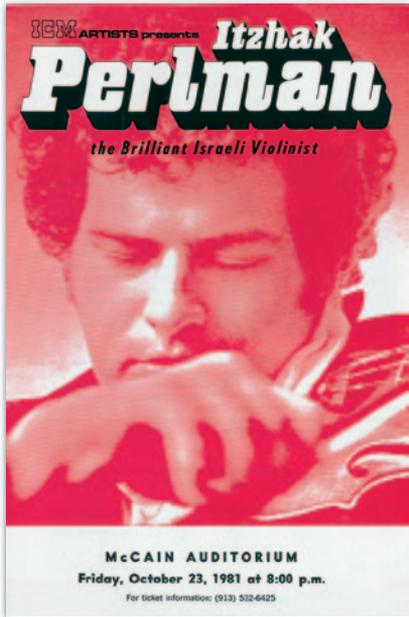
"The auditorium cannot be used by an individual promoter for personal profit. Ollington said first preferences in scheduling would go to the music and dramatic arts departments." — Kansas State Collegian, Feb. 17, 1970

"According to Mark Ollington, manager of the auditorium, the University will be inaugurating two new series of cultural programs, while continuing the two established subscription series — the Manhattan Artist Series and the KSU Chamber Music Series.

"The new series are a 'Broadway Theatre Series' which will bring outstanding stage attractions to Manhattan, and a 'Concert Series' which will feature outstanding attractions.

"In addition to these special attractions, we also will have a heavy concert schedule in the Auditorium featuring major University musical groups such as the glee clubs, bands, and symphony, plus Children's and K-State Players' theatre productions, Ollington says.

"The KSU Fine Arts Council and the K-State Student Governing Association are helping underwrite the cultural attractions and K-State students will be admitted to all programs at half price." — Office of University News, Kansas State University, July 17, 1970





K-State's new auditorium was dedicated on Nov. 11, 1970.

"Plans call for the dramatic arts department to begin using the auditorium April 19 in rehearsals for the play 'The Field God.' The K-State Singers and the University Choir have performances in the building scheduled for mid-April." — Kansas State Collegian, Feb. 17, 1970

"Ground was broken on Tuesday, October 3, 1967, and it wasn't until three years later — September 2, 1970 — that the first scheduled event took place. President McCain held a question-and-answer session there following an all-university convocation in West Stadium." — Office of University News, Kansas State University, Oct. 1970

"The first major attraction to be held in Kansas State University's new \$3 million auditorium and music complex will be the Broadway musical 'George M,' on Wednesday, October 7. The new KSU Broadway Theatre Series will be '40 Carats' on Feb. 9, 1971, 'Hadrian VII' on March 10, 1971, and '1776' on April 14." — Office of University News, Kansas State University, Oct. 2, 1970



Dedication night at the new auditorium featured 'Record of Our Time' by Gail Kubik, a composition commissioned by K-State President James A. McCain and Luther Leavengood, former chairman of the music department.

### **The dedication: Nov. 11, 1970**

Almost 66 years after the dedication of the previous auditorium, a second dedication program would take place in a new auditorium.

"A capacity crowd attended the premiere performance of 'Record of Our Time' by Gail Kubik at the auditorium dedication ceremony last night.

"A diverse crowd of students, faculty, legislators and dignitaries gave three callbacks to Kubik following the performance.

"The oratorical combined the efforts of the Minnesota Orchestra, academy award winning actor Ray Milland, and the 175-voice K-State Choral Union. The work is divided into eight parts for narrator, soloists, mixed chorus and orchestra.

"Kubik began work on the 'Record of Our Time' in 1969 while he was composer-in-residence here. The composition was

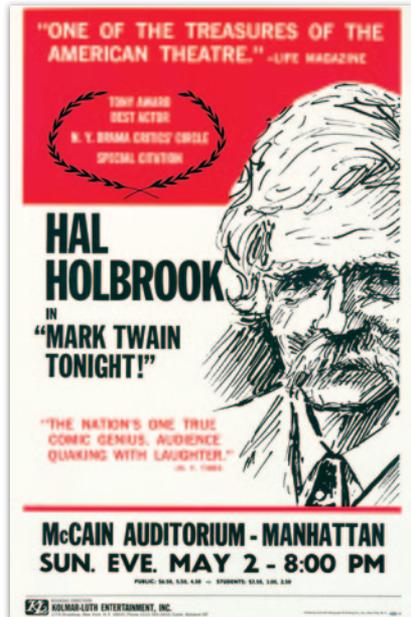
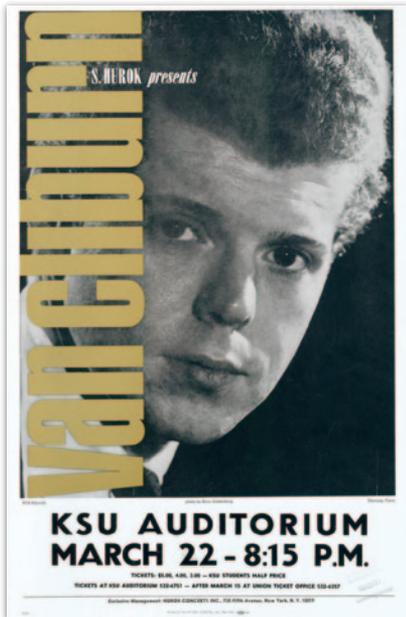
commissioned by President James A. McCain and Luther Leavengood, former chairman of the music department.

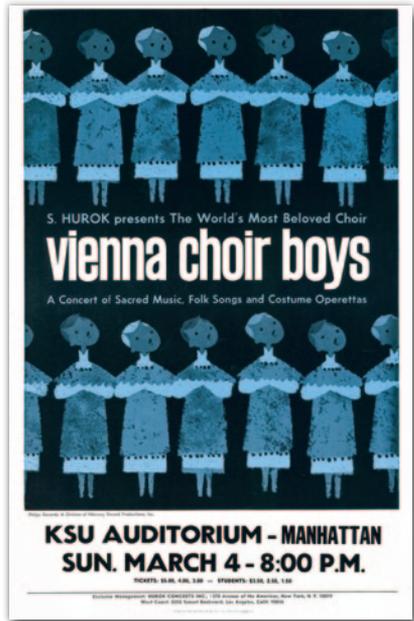
"Ray Milland narrated the text written by Harvey Swados in collaboration with Kubik. The text includes excerpts from the Bible, 'War Prayer' by Mark Twain, 'The Third Coming' by William Butler Yeats, a statement from Vanzetti, a New York Times news report and 'Coatesville,' a sermon by John Jay Chapman.

"Kubik has described 'A Record of Our Time' as a protest piece which sums up his feeling about some of the horrible aspects and injustices of contemporary western civilization.

"McCain dedicated the structure to the 'enrichment of the human mind and spirit,' describing it as a 'center for intellectual gratification.'" — Kansas State Collegian, Nov. 12, 1970

"The first sell out of a regular concert for Kansas State University's new Auditorium is assured,' Mark Ollington, Auditorium manager, announced today. The popular attraction is Van Cliburn, noted pianist, who will appear at KSU Monday evening. The Auditorium also was 'sold out' for the building's dedication last November 11, but on that occasion a large number of seats were reserved for guests." — Kansas State Collegian, March 1971





"After a year of operation, University Auditorium faces 'common' budget problems, and administrators hope the new season with its 16 productions, will bring enlivened student interest and participation, which were absent during the auditorium's inaugural year.

"During the 1970–71 term, only 36.5 per cent of the auditorium audience were students. Of the 12,207 tickets sold for the series last year, students purchased only 4,453.

"One member of the auditorium steering committee admits many students consider the building a 'sanctuary away from the mainstream of the campus' and a 'tomb for the townspeople.'

"The bulk of K-State students come from Kansas and have not grown up with concerts, theater, operas and other performances that are a tradition in Europe,' Mark Ollington, auditorium director, said.

"One of the main reasons we have this new auditorium is to expose these people to some of the cultural attractions taken for granted in the big cities.'

"Part of a well rounded liberal arts program is to experience cultural programs,' Jim Reynolds, auditorium steering committee member, said.

“We don’t want to turn the auditorium into a coffeehouse, but at the same time we want to provide some things that reflect the contemporary music culture. The Jacques Loussier Trio of Switched on Bach, scheduled for this November, is an example. It’s culture at a definite level and yet is current and contemporary,” Reynolds said.

“Last year the auditorium had \$66,000 worth of attractions. This year it is booked with \$40,000 worth. At the end of the 1970–71 season, a deficit of \$16,000 had to be covered by the University.

“The University promised to back the first year of funding and after that the auditorium is on its own,” Roberta Wirth, steering committee member, said.

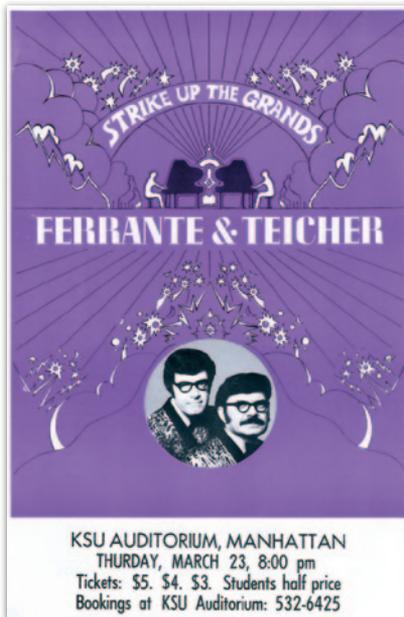
“This year, \$40,000 of student fees were allocated to the Fine Arts Council, which in turn appropriated \$11,500 to the auditorium for bookings and expenses. This averages out to 50 and 75 cents per student per semester for auditorium expenditures.

“The \$11,500 wouldn’t be enough to bring an entire series of attractions. A theater like this one must be subsidized,” Ollington said.

“Some of the attractions for this year will be funded by the Kansas Cultural Arts Commission, the Great Plains Federation for Arts and the Humanities and the Auditorium Guild, a new organization of persons giving a certain amount toward the auditorium in order to become members.

“Some private schools do not charge for individual productions but include it on the activity fees, causing it to jump from \$26 to \$80 a semester. I think the way we do it is much more efficient,” Reynolds said.

“A lot of students don’t know that all tickets for auditorium performances are sold at a reduced rate,” Phil Taylor, student board member, said.



“‘We don’t realize what a good thing we have going. A student can purchase a \$5 ticket for \$2.50 and sit in the front row for a performance like Ferrante and Teicher. A seat like that for the same attraction in New York would have a price tag out of sight,’ Judith Tyminski, student board chairman, said.” — Kansas State Collegian, Oct. 20, 1971



To honor K-State President James McCain at the time of his retirement, KSU Auditorium was renamed McCain Auditorium.

“The newest addition to the auditorium community is the student board, consisting of 40 members divided into three committees: tickets, publicity and ushering.

“‘We also felt that since there was such a little response in auditorium attendance, there was a need for more student participation. The board is designed so student voices and opinions can be heard,’ Ollington said.

“‘We hope through this program 100 students who have never been to the auditorium before will at least be exposed to the attractions and come back for more,’ Ollington explained. ‘This is an experiment; if it works well, we’ll expand the attraction.’

“‘Some of the shows students showed an interest in are ‘Jesus Christ Superstar,’ ‘Hair,’ ‘Joan Baez,’ ‘Hal Holbrook in Mark Twain Tonight,’ ‘The Royal Winnipeg Ballet’ and the ‘Boston Pops.’” — Kansas State Collegian, Oct. 20, 1971

Honoring Dr. James A. McCain at the time of his retirement: “A ten-day festival arts celebration was held April 17–26, 1975; it included performances by the Kansas City Philharmonic, the Martha Graham Dance Company, a special dinner, and a production of *Die Fledermaus* by the K-State Players and the music department. Guest stars participated in several of the performances, and the Manhattan Chorale, K-State Choir, and Collegiate Chorale assisted in the presentation of ‘A German Requiem’ by Johannes Brahms. The principal occasion of the week came with the April 19 reception and dinner followed the *Die Fledermaus* performance, during which the auditorium building

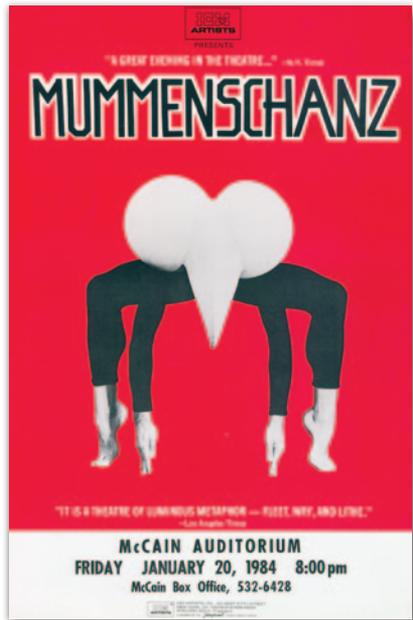
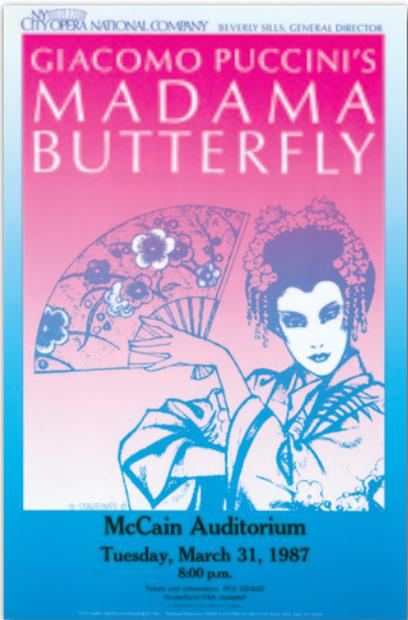
was dedicated. Elmer Jackson, chairperson of the Kansas Board of Regents, presented the presidential medallion and Gov. Robert Bennett officially renamed what has been known only as the KSU Auditorium; it was now McCain Auditorium.” — “Kansas State University: Quest for Identity,” by James C. Carey, The Regents Press of Kansas, Lawrence, 1977, pgs. 274–75.

### 1980s

1980 — Doreen J. Bauman became the new director of McCain Auditorium.

April 1981 — The McCain Development Board was established to promote, encourage and increase the knowledge and appreciation of the McCain Auditorium Performance Series and the facilities themselves in the surrounding communities through audience development, fund raising, and hospitality of guests. The McCain Development Board Hospitality Auxiliary gave time and talent to the board and staff as part of a mutual effort to support the programming goals of McCain Auditorium.

1983–1984 Season — Friends of McCain Auditorium was established in order to generate still more support.



1984 — Richard J. Diehl became the new director of McCain Auditorium.

1985 — McCain Auditorium celebrated its crystal anniversary.

“A new State of the Art speaker system, featuring the most recent technological advances, will be installed in the auditorium.” — Spotlight, Vol. 2, Issue 2. 1985

“A campus advisory committee is recommending the construction of a short road, north of McCain Auditorium, to provide ticket purchasers and handicapped individuals better access to McCain. The plan recommended will create a road extending from the northeast corner of Fairchild Hall, on Vattier Street, to the northwest corner of McCain.” — Kansas State Collegian, Jan. 16, 1985 (The road project did not develop beyond the committee recommendation until 2008.)

1986 — Stephen W. Riggs was appointed as director of McCain Auditorium for one year.

1987 — Richard Martin became the director of McCain Auditorium.

REEM ARTISTS PRESENTS

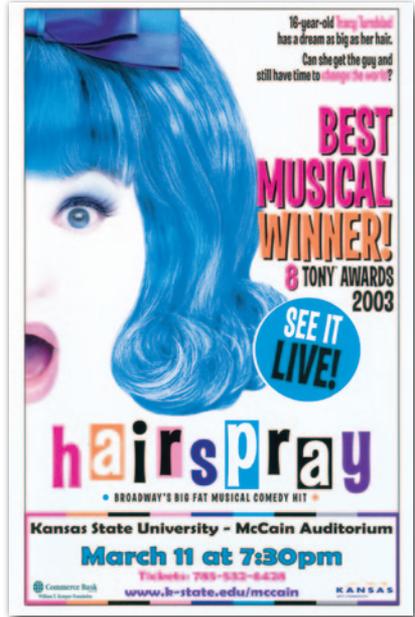
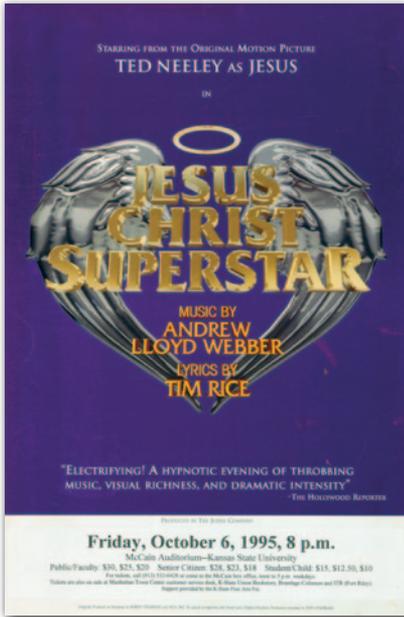
**Yo-Yo Ma**  
Cellist

*"Yo-Yo Ma has an enviable quality not often encountered among musicians. For as long as he is playing, it becomes very difficult for a listener to think that any cellist today could possibly surpass him."  
—The New York Times*

**McCain Auditorium**  
Thursday, March 29, 8 P.M.  
McCain Box Office Noon - 5 p.m. M - F 532-6428

**TWYLA THARP DANCE**

**McCain Auditorium**  
February 29 & 30, 8 P.M. - 11 P.M. (Admission Free)  
McCain Box Office Noon - 5 p.m. M - F 532-6428



1989 — Children’s performances and parties started in McCain Auditorium.

## 1990s

“To celebrate the silver anniversary of McCain Auditorium, Carolyn James, soprano, will be featured on November 10. James graduated from Manhattan High School in 1981. In addition, you are invited to an Open House before the performance from 4 till 7 p.m. Travel behind the scenes and meet the experts who make McCain Auditorium work. See first hand how the sound system works, the orchestra pit rises, the lighting changes and much more. If you are curious about how McCain operates, this is your chance to find out.” — McCain Auditorium Newsletter, Spring 1994

“An engineering consultant currently is working on designs to repair the movable ceiling located between the balcony and the stage in the auditorium. The ceiling, which hasn’t worked in years, moves up and down to modify the size of the stage,” DeBusman (project coordinator for the Crumbling Classrooms Program) said. ‘For a small performance, it’s better to have a more intimate setting.’ He said repairing the movable ceiling included structural modifications



to the roof and improving the overhead catwalks to make them safer.” — Kansas State Collegian, July 7, 1998

## 2007

---

Todd Holmberg became the new director of McCain Auditorium.

## 2008

---

“K-State is constructing a circular drive and a World War II memorial in front of McCain Auditorium this semester. Jack Carlson, project manager for the facilities and planning department, said ‘the university wanted to build a circular drive near McCain to have better handicapped accessibility for guests coming to shows there. It’s been in the works for many, many years, and it’s just now come to fruition.’” — Kansas State Collegian, Aug. 28, 2008.

The circle drive between McCain Auditorium and the World War II memorial is named Goldstein Circle in honor of K-State benefactor Jack Goldstein.

The work of hundreds of volunteers has helped spread the word about what McCain Auditorium has to offer. They have held fundraising activities, helped with audience development, hosted children’s parties to engage children with the arts, and provided hospitality for auditorium functions and for guest artists.



Todd Holmberg

## Message from the Director

“As we celebrate the past 40 years of McCain Auditorium, we honor the tireless efforts of countless people who have ensured that Manhattan and the surrounding region have a place to experience the transformative power of the live performing arts. This legacy of support will guarantee that K-State continues to embrace the arts as part of a well-rounded education for its students and to recognize that the arts are integral to the vibrancy of a growing and engaged community.”

— Todd Holmberg, Director,  
McCain Auditorium



Kirk Schulz

## Message from the President

“I congratulate McCain Auditorium for 40 years of presenting the best of live performing arts experiences. Through its multi-faceted programs that promote excellence, cultural diversity, and community engagement, McCain Auditorium is essential to Kansas State University’s mission of developing human potential, expanding knowledge, and enriching cultural expression. The success of the arts will help K-State achieve our goal of being recognized as one of the nation’s top 50 public universities. As President, I pledge continued support of McCain Auditorium as a core element of K-State’s dedication to improving the lives of those we serve.”

— Kirk H. Schulz, President,  
Kansas State University



After actress Pat Carroll performed in McCain Auditorium as Gertrude Stein she wrote, "Kansas always made me think of Dorothy and Toto going AWOL... that is until I played McCain Auditorium in the Little Apple, Manhattan, Kansas... As a performing artist, the space is happily as good as the territory; it bounces with the shared joy and enthusiasm of both town and gown. So for now, Kansas will be where Dorothy and Toto blew it by leaving."

## Credits

---

Published in observance of McCain Auditorium's 40th anniversary celebration, Sept. 17, 2010.

Research and writing: Mary Ellen Titus

Photography: K-State Photo Services, University Archives,  
David von Riesen, Todd Holmberg

The information in this booklet is only a small part of the history of McCain Auditorium. The entire history will be available at University Archives in Hale Library later this year. If you have information (photos, printed items, stories, etc.) you wish to have added to the archive materials, please contact Mary Ellen Titus at [rtitus@ksu.edu](mailto:rtitus@ksu.edu).



[www.k-state.edu/mccain](http://www.k-state.edu/mccain)