



Oedipus Rex — A Santa Fe Production

The Santa Fe Opera

*a
theater expands*

ARCHITECTS:

McHugh, Kidder, Plettenberg — Santa Fe

STRUCTURAL ENGINEERS:

Wood & DeLapp — Santa Fe

ELECTRICAL ENGINEER:

Carl S. Albach — Santa Fe

ACOUSTICAL ENGINEERS:

Bolt, Beranek, and Newman — Los Angeles

GENERAL CONTRACTOR:

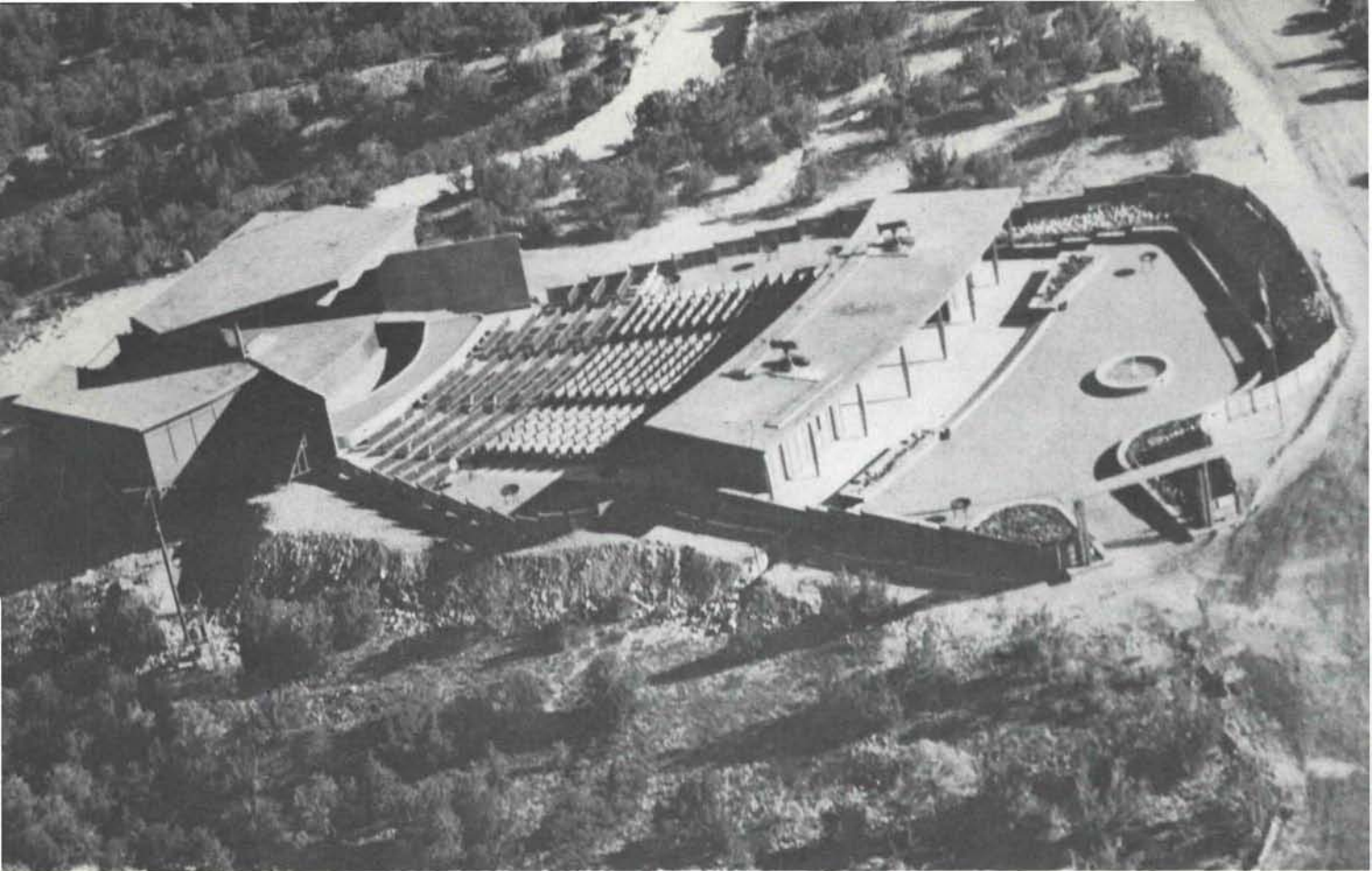
Modern Construction Co. — Santa Fe

OWNER:

The Santa Fe Opera Assn., John C. Crosby, Director

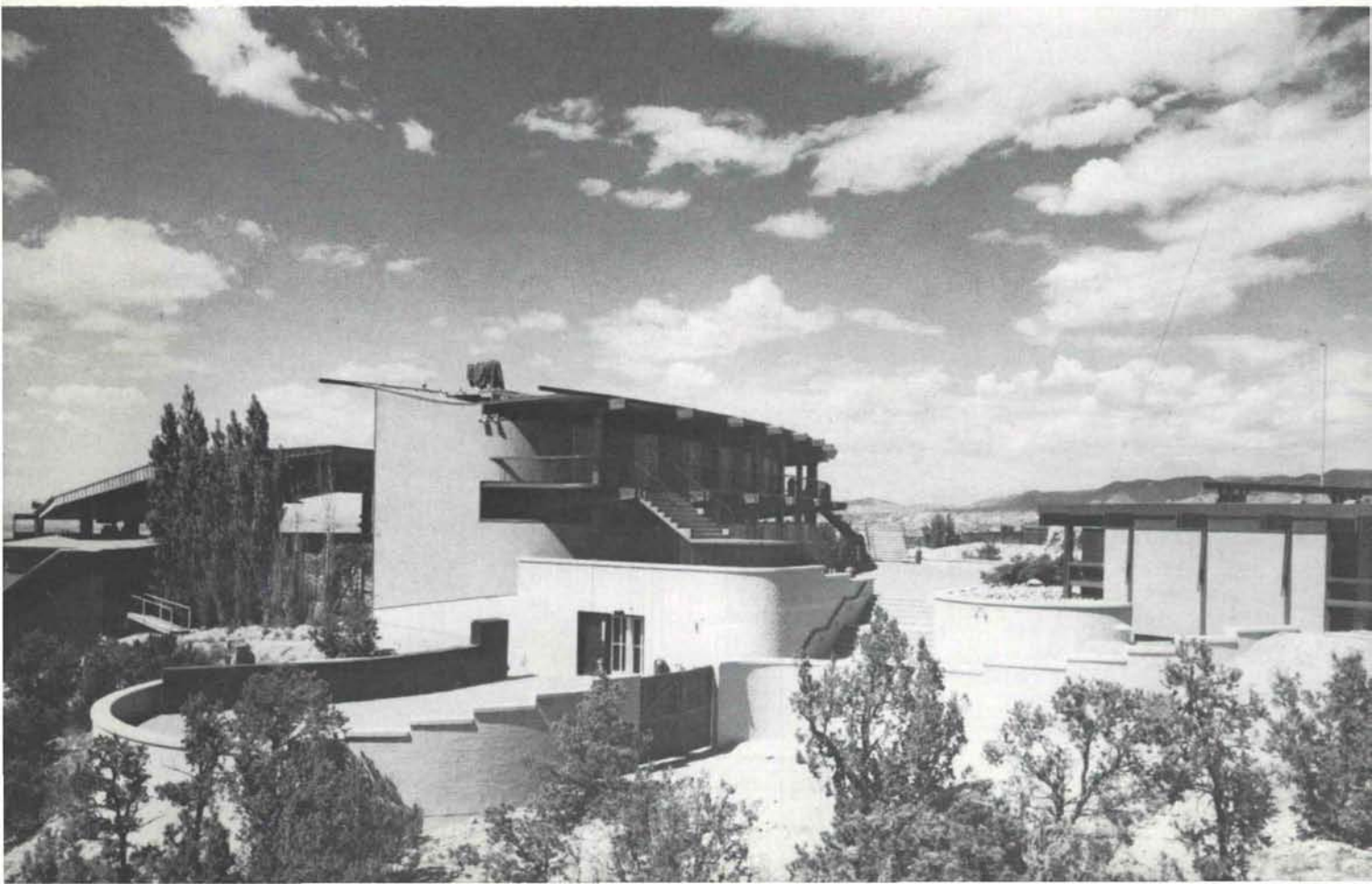
It is a rare instance when an architect is able to remodel or add to a building which he designed originally, and perhaps it is a mixed blessing when it does occur. We were a bit apprehensive when we began work on the 1965 changes to the Santa Fe Opera Pavilion both because the original was well liked by the patrons and because we were reluctant to tamper with what seemed to be excellent acoustics. Those fine acoustics were of little use, however, when the rain forced the orchestra to leave the pit and go home. The hardier members of the audience used to sit through some remarkable rains, though, as long as the show went on.

I can still recall a memorable performance of "Cinderella" when the continuous heavy rain had reduced the audience to a handful of wet and happy souls and the orchestra to one piano which had to be moved onto the stage. The tenor stepped to the front and sang: "Where did he go — o — o?"



1957

1965

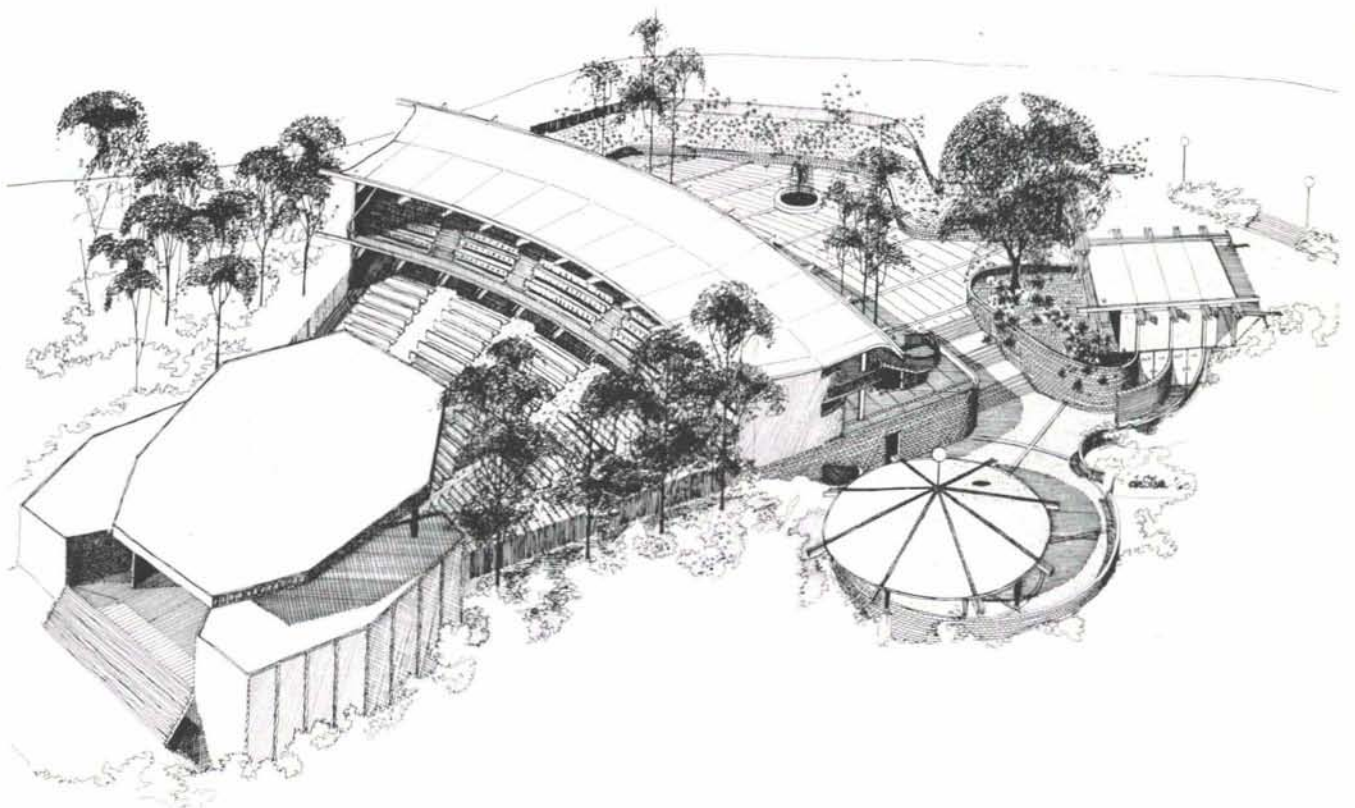


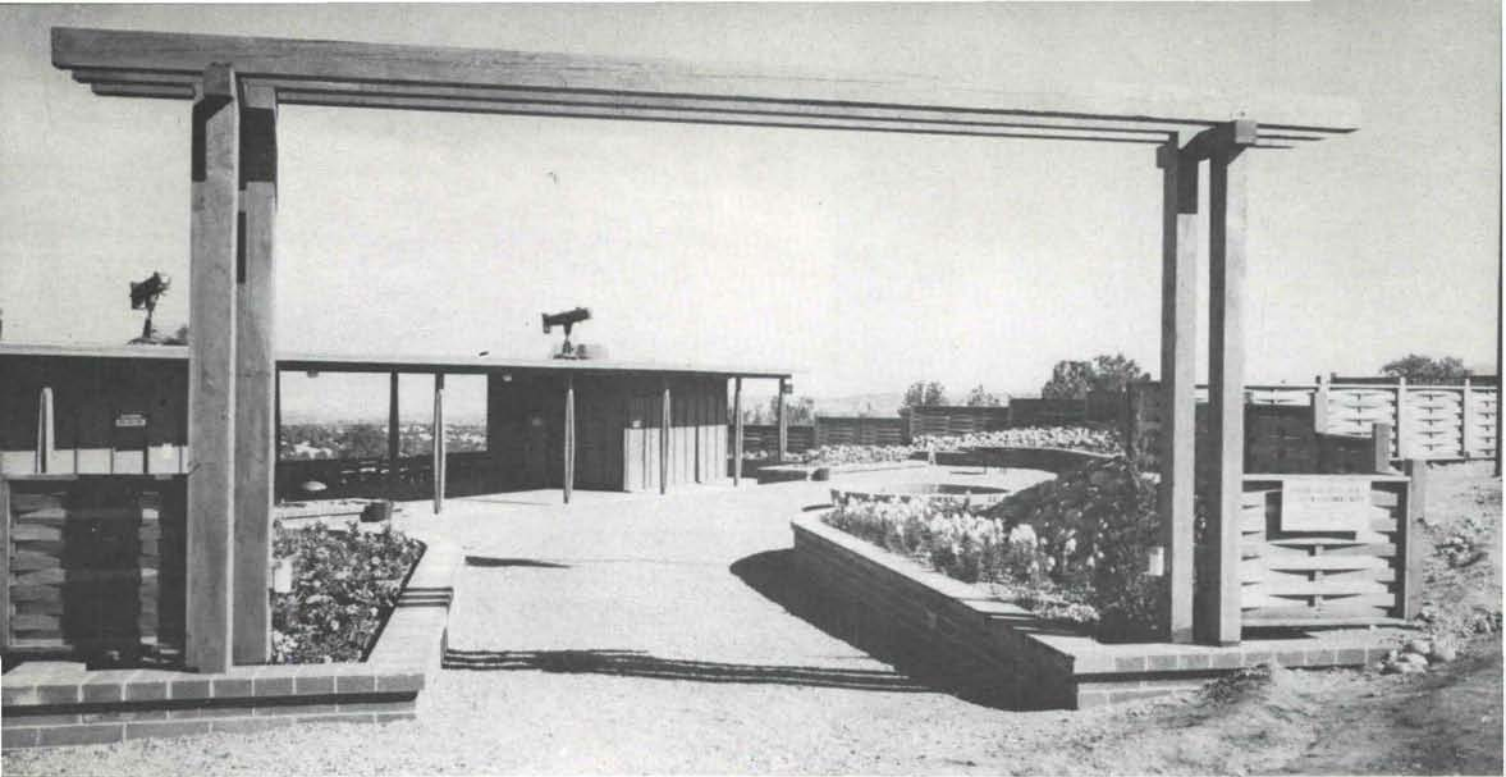
The growth of a creative and exciting musical enterprise can be seen in these illustrations. The productions presented in this theater have won the acclaim of opera critics the world over.

The original theater was selected as one of the best examples of contemporary architecture in New Mexico, and was shown in the traveling exhibition: ARCHITECTURE IN NEW MEXICO, 1959.

All photographs of the expanded theater were taken by Harvey Caplin.

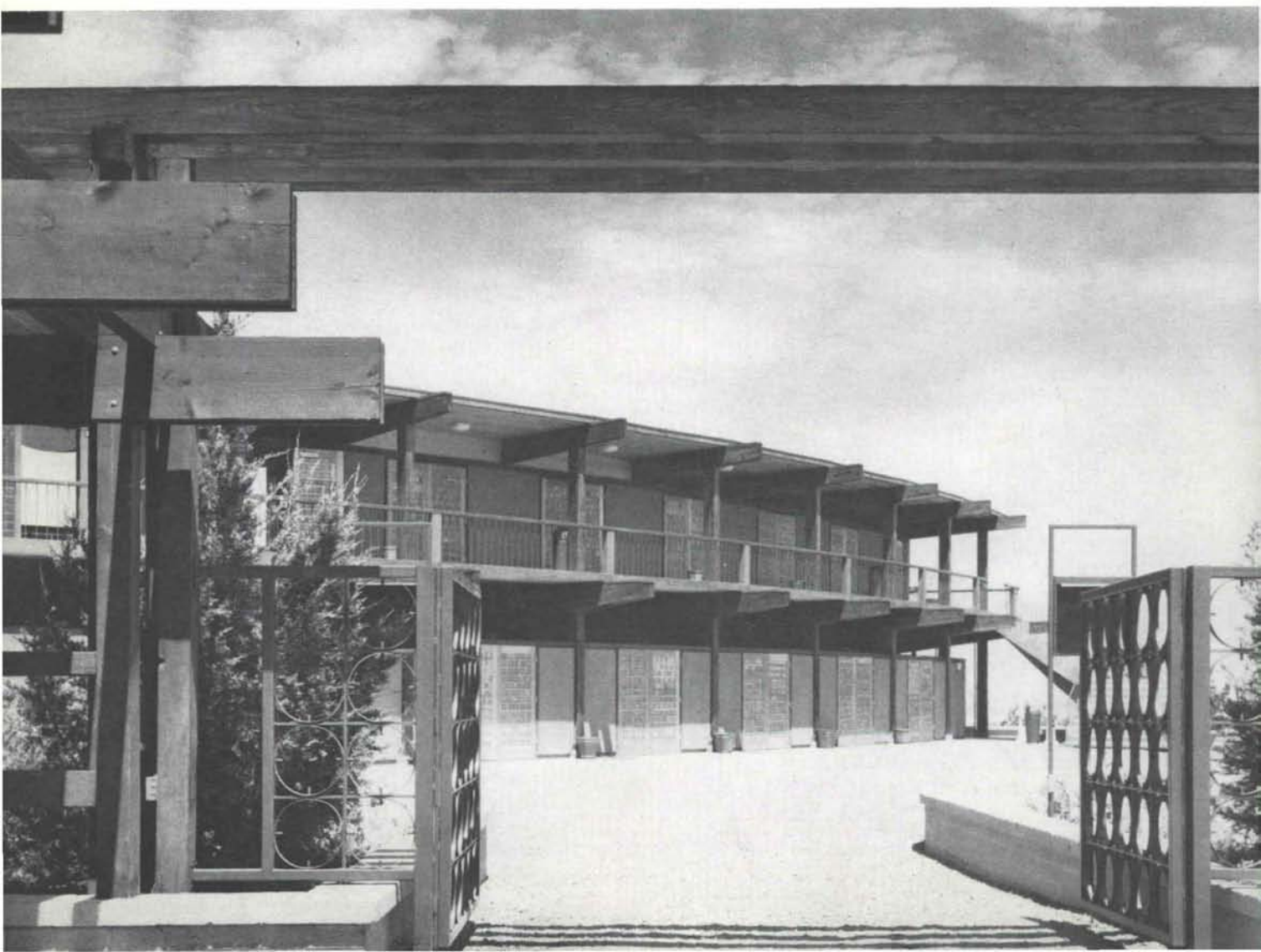
1966





1957

1965



— and someone from the audience stood and shouted "He went that-a-way!". At the end of the show, the performers applauded the audience. For those few of us who were able to stick it out, it is fun to recall such evenings when we braved the elements for music to the extent that we had no dry matches with which to light our damp cigarettes, and our shoes were squishing with water as we made for El Nido Restaurant in an attempt to restore the inner man. But there is no doubt that the bloom was somewhat off the evening if our wives' new dresses and shoes were ruined, and it was provoking to say the least when the performance was cancelled because of rain. This conclusion was particularly inconvenient for patrons from Albuquerque or from out of the state.

Mr. John Crosby, director of the Santa Fe Opera Association, instructed us to design an all-weather theatre which would still be permanently

open to the starry skies of New Mexico. We accomplished this task by extending the stage roof another twenty feet toward the audience to shelter the musicians. At the same time we moved the small reflecting pool three feet forward, increasing the pit size to permit a much larger orchestra. This change still left the audience in the wet. We then removed the old loggia structure completely and built the new two-story loggia. This new building accommodates about six hundred sheltered seats on two levels, and provides sheltered ramp standing space for those patrons whose seats are still in the open. Thus, with the stage, the orchestra, and more than one-half of the seats under roof — plus sheltered standing space for the remainder of the audience — the show can go on in spite of rain.

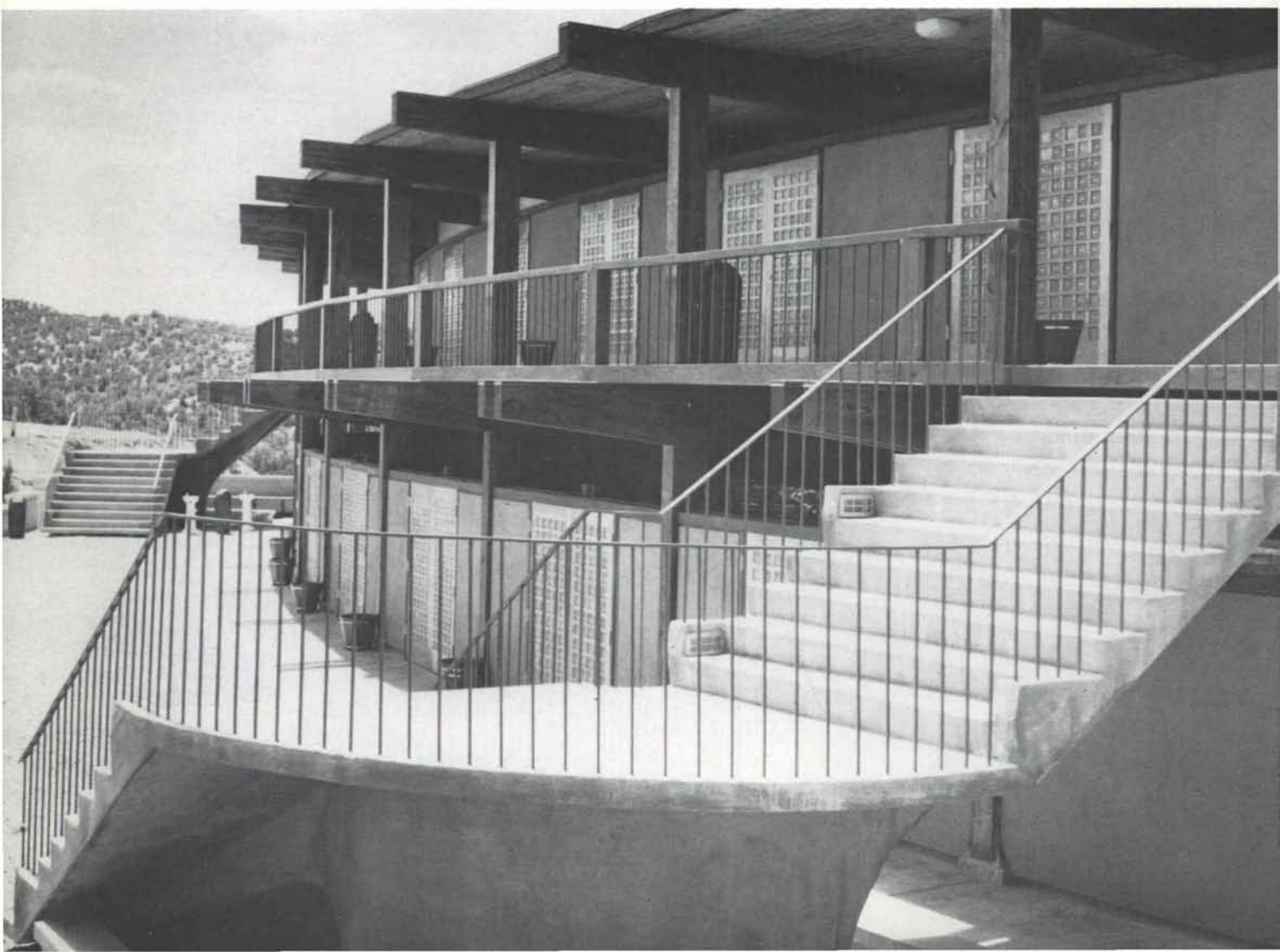
In order to gain visually and acoustically prime space for seating, while at the same time eliminating two sources of noise, the box office and toilet

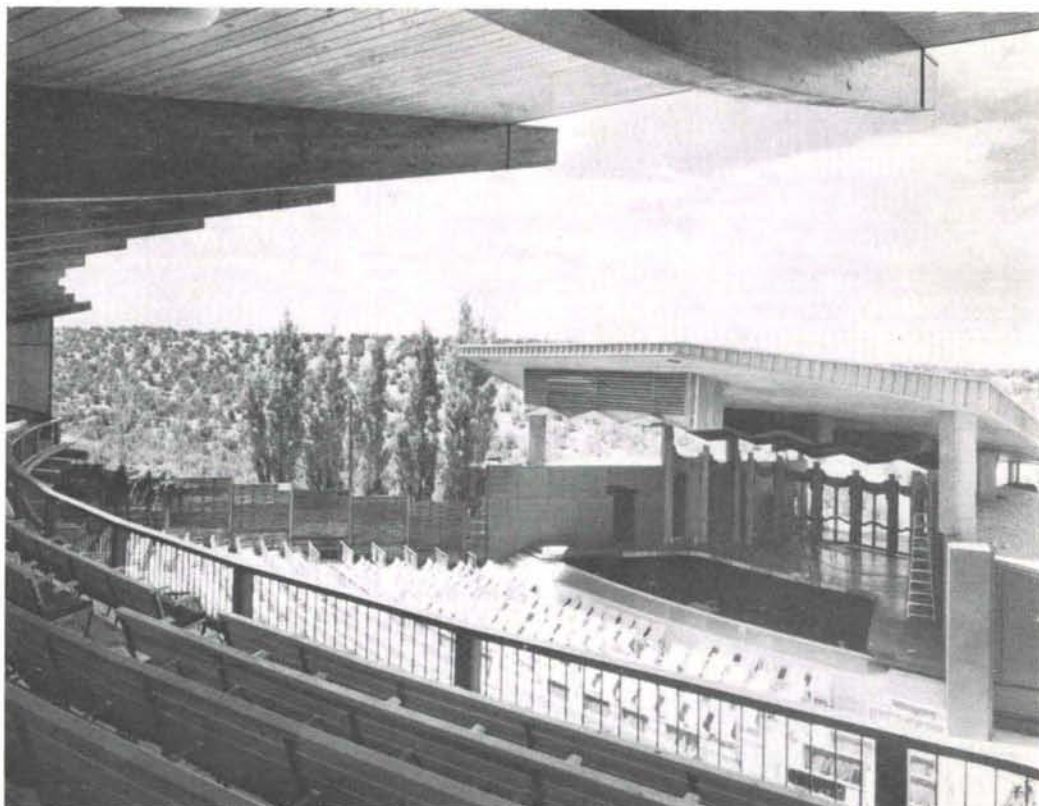
The new box office, with toilet facilities below and parking beyond.





1965





1965

facilities were relocated in a new building situated at the entrance to the main garden. The box office is at the garden level, and the rest rooms are at the level of a new lower patio which is reached from the main garden by a sort of *escalier d'honneur*. At this lower level is a temporary refreshment bar standing in a location where the new circular bar pavilion is planned hopefully to be built, in time for the 1966 season.

In addition to all these visible changes, there were many additions and remodelling in the back-stage area to increase the ease and efficiency of these operations. The parking lot has been greatly enlarged, with most of the new space near the theatre.

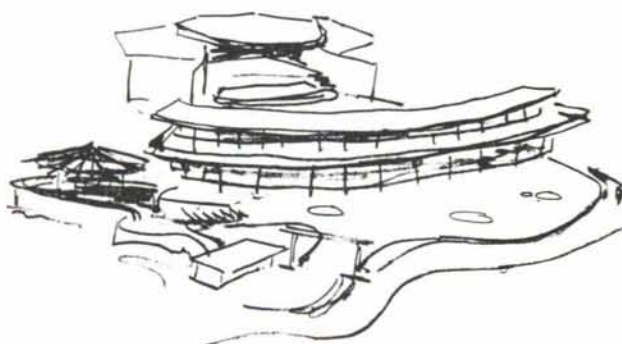
The stage roof extension with its new lighting baffle is of cantilevered steel construction encased in redwood plywood for desired resonance. The loggia is of gluelam columns and beams, braced with a small exposed steel truss; and the decking is of five-inch double T & G yellow pine. The roof deck is of similar material in three-inch thickness. For resonance this building is lined with $\frac{1}{4}$ " mahogany plywood, and it is surfaced on the outside with stucco in a warm earth colour. Aside from the curving shapes of the building itself, the only element of decoration is the rich panelling of the twelve sets of double doors made by Mr.

Ernest Knee of Santa Fe. While the curving concrete stairways are really a part of the loggia, they are separate structures connected to the balcony only by their simple handrails.

The new box office building is of stud and stucco construction over a concrete basement, and it has been kept extremely simple in design so as to complement but not compete with the theatre itself.

Throughout all stages of design and building, the overriding aesthetic consideration has been to avoid a carnival atmosphere and to keep a feeling of quiet dignity and serenity, fitting to a temple of music.

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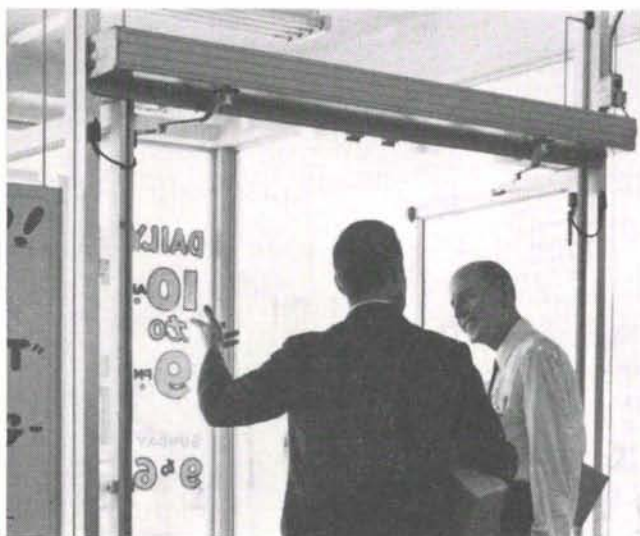
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