

An Inspired Identity
The Importance of the Performing Arts in Community Building

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Whenever a new town is established, the need to create a community identity arises. According to Sonja Kuflinec, “We generally understand community as a function of commonality, whether that commonality is one of location, class, interest, age, or ethnic background”¹. In other words, several distinct communities could be built by different individuals who have different backgrounds. In many cases, and in the case of Reston, Virginia, in particular, this was most strongly expressed through the performing arts. According to Jan Cohen-Cruz, community-based art began in the 1960s and 1970s². Thus, art being driven by the community, rather than professionals, was already becoming a popular idea by the time Reston was founded in 1964. In fact, community participation in the arts around this period seems to have been encouraged, with non-profits, such as the Metro Talent Company, frequently conducting contests allowing music recitals, dance routines and “novelty acts” for several different age ranges, with a separate part of the contest for citizens who were sixty-three or older³. One thing that is not immediately obvious, however, is why the fine arts, namely, theater, music, and television, each built community in their own way, whether it was by allowing everyone to participate, to having community members, rather than actors, advertise the town on television .

Building community through the performing arts seems to have been the main influence for the construction of the Reston Community Center at Hunters Woods, which was completed and opened in May, 1979, and included, in particular, a 275 square foot theater and rehearsal

¹ Kuflinec, Sonja. *Staging America: Cornerstone and Community-Based Theater*. (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 2003). 9.

² Cohen-Cruz, Jan. *Local Acts: Community-based Performance in the United States*. (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2005). 1. eBook Collection

³ “Performing Arts Contest Accepting Applications”. The Washington Post, February 16, 1983. Proquest Historical Newspapers. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/138091228?accountid=14541>.

rooms⁴. This suggests that the performing arts were an intentional key to building community in the still young town of Reston. According to the *Washington Post*, the Reston Community Center includes a specially designed elevator and seating areas in the theater to accommodate the handicapped⁵. Regarding Reston's first handicapped arts festival, "the festival aim is to integrate handicapped and non-handicapped persons in a celebration of the arts"⁶. This is particularly noteworthy because it suggests two things about Reston and its use of the arts to build community: first, residents thought that the arts should be accessible to everyone; and that the performing arts made people aware of the needs of others in their community. It is also important to note that the handicapped arts festival was held in April, 1983, while the Americans with Disabilities Act was not passed until 1991. This made it more likely that the inclusion of the handicapped, at least in the audience of theater and orchestra performances, if not as actual performers, was an intent to include ALL members of the community in the arts.

The first of the performing arts which played a crucial role in building community in Reston, was theater. Rather than being like traditional theater performances: which rely on casting the best actors and actresses available to fill a role; will often attract people from several miles away; will typically attract successful actors who may likely have impressive acting resumes; and have to worry about things such as profit margins. In contrast, community theater casts people from the surrounding community who best fit the descriptions of the characters

⁴ "Local Talent Helps Open First Week For Reston's New Community Center". *Washington Post*, May 24, 1979. Proquest Historical Newspapers. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/146904586?accountid=14541>.

⁵ "Local Talent Helps Open First Week For Reston's New Community Center". *The Washington Post*, May 24, 1979. Proquest Historical Newspapers (1974-Current File). <http://search.proquest.com/docview/146904586?accountid=14541>.

⁶ "Handicapped Arts Festival Needs Volunteers". *The Washington Post*, March 19, 1983. Proquest Historical Newspapers. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/138061743?accountid=14541>.

involved in the play, and may have very little acting experience under their belts. Community Theater is differentiated from traditional theater by three main factors: price of tickets; and is more laid back/family friendly than traditional theater performances. For example, it may cost you forty dollars to see a show at the Kennedy Center, but only costs about ten or 15 dollars to see a community theater production.

Before one is able to tell how successful theater was in building community in Reston, it is important to understand how it differed from traditional theater performances. According to John Anderson in 1938, community theater is simply a “silly little excursion into the drama”⁷. This suggests that community theater is comparatively less intense and involved as professional theater, seeking only to put on shows for the enjoyment of the community audience. In several cases, many who audition for a community theater production will be doing it for the first time, some may be utilizing this chance to introduce their children to theater, and some may be seasoned local actors⁸. Community-based theaters, on the other hand, are more involved than community theaters, working with the material with the help of professional guidance for more than just entertainment purposes⁹. In other words, community-based theaters take a more professional approach than community theaters, attempting to train people into semi-professional actors. This would suggest that the job of community-based theater is not just to entertain the public by producing plays, but to, in a sense, actually hone certain acting skills.

⁷ Kuftinec, Sonja. *Staging America: Cornerstone and Community-Based Theater*. (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 2003). 23.

⁸ “Somewhere over the Rainbow”. *The Reston Times*, October 18, 2000: Page weekender 6-7, columns 1-3. Fairfax Regional Library, Virginia Room.

⁹ Cohen-Cruz, Jan. *Local Acts: Community-based Performance in the United States*. (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2005). 7. eBook Collection

The Reston Community Players, which evolved out of the Reston Players in 1972, is a non-profit organization, whereas its predecessor was a for-profit organization that had been founded in 1966.¹⁰ This would place The Reston Community Players as more of a community theater than a community-based theater, as they seem more interested in producing low-cost (compared to professional productions), community friendly plays rather than partially instructing their actors in acting techniques.

The first difference between professional and community theaters is the involvement of the community, the large majority of whom are probably not professional actors. That, being said, however, community theaters and community-based theaters still strive to produce professional quality plays. The main goal of community-based theater is to produce realistic, quality plays which try to involve as many participants as possible from the surrounding community¹¹. This means that anybody, regardless of social standing, family income, or any other factors which may be considered important in other ventures, is allowed to participate. This was particularly enticing to low income families, who may have needed social activities, such as the performing arts, to occupy their time and attention. Community theater, on the other hand, is completely made up of volunteers, where-as community-based theaters may be for-profit, meaning that some of the members are trying to make money.¹² In other words, money made from community theater productions would often have been used to recoup expenses, or otherwise help the community.

¹⁰ “Reston Community Players”. Reston Community Players. Accessed March 31, 2014. <http://restonplayers.org/>.

¹¹ “American Theater History: Brief Background Notes”. Dirks, Arthur. Accessed February 23, 2014. http://webhost.bridgew.edu/adirks/ald/courses/hist/hist_amer.htm.

¹² “Reston Community Players”. Reston Community Players. Accessed March 31, 2014. <http://restonplayers.org/>.

The second thing differentiating community based theater from professional theater was the price of tickets. Central in this was the intended audience of professional theater productions. According to Kuflinec, professional theater assumes that the average audience member is white, upper-middle-class, meaning that they have money to afford seeing professional shows regularly¹³. While Kuflinec is wrong, in some respects, as race does not play as big a role in determining who goes to the theater as it used to, she is right in stating that most people who go to see professional shows are upper-middle-class. Seeing as how Reston included several areas of low-income housing, this would probably not have been the case. Additionally, the growing African American population did not fit the stereotypical mold of the traditional theater viewer. Additionally,



Folder 8.6. “Reston Community Players 2005-2006 Season”. Marcia E. McDevitt Papers, Box 8. Special Collections and Archives at George Mason University, Fairfax, VA. Viewed February 24, 2014.

The Reston Players started in the 1960s, not long after Reston was founded. Initially, at least, the Reston Players produced shows of varying intellectual stimulation such as “Stop the

¹³ Kuflinec, Sonja. *Staging America: Cornerstone and Community-Based Theater*. (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 2003). 61.

World; I want to get off” and “Sleep of Prisoners”¹⁴. However, upon their reformation into the Reston Community Players in 1972, they expanded their offerings to include: four major productions per year; theater workshops; a crew that provides lighting for banquets and special events; a stage combat crew that also provides training in stage combat; and other community purposes¹⁵. Thus, the Reston Community Players do not just produce shows for the community and provide classes to help those auditioning or performing in their shows, but also assist the larger community by providing technicians for community events outside of theater.

If anything, theater is effective in building community because, in addition to involving members of the community and being cheaper than professional theater, it got people working together on a semi-professional level. This meant that, while different people from the community are working together, they were not doing so in a place where their jobs depended on their performance, which allowed them to relax and get to know each other in a way that they never could in a professional environment.

The second of the art forms which was important in establishing a community identity was music. This Art form was mainly handled and advertised in Reston by the Reston Music Center, “a non-profit, tax exempt Virginia membership organization which has as its sole purpose the sponsorship of music education and music performance”¹⁶. This meant that the same people who were instructing aspiring artists were working professionals, and were expected to help their students prepare for performances. Prior to early 1968, music had been offered mainly through the Reston Music Center, Incorporated, which decided in May, 1968 to stop any further

¹⁴ “Getting Involved Out in Reston”. The Washington Post, Times Herald, June 8, 1969. Proquest Historical Newspapers. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/147646805?accountid=14541>.

¹⁵ “Reston Community Players”. Reston Community Players. Accessed March 31, 2014. <http://restonplayers.org/>.

¹⁶ Folder 1.3. “Mission Statement, 1960s”. Northern Virginia Music Center at Reston, Box 1. Special Collections and Archives at George Mason University, Fairfax, VA. Viewed March 11, 2014.

operations and wind up its affairs because of financial reasons, which resulted in the founding of the Northern Virginia Music Center at Reston due to popular demand¹⁷. This could have left Reston without one of its most important means of building community, which may well have been why so many Reston citizens called for a new organization to organize and teach music. The Northern Virginia Music Center is a “non-profit, tax exempt Virginia membership organization which has as its sole purpose the sponsorship of music education and music performance”¹⁸. The fact that the Northern Virginia Music Center was non-profit may have encouraged people to participate through this organization because they would have known that their money was benefitting their child’s enrichment. Music was able to help build and advertise community because the Music Center offered summer camps for middle and high school-aged children, concerts were either free or relatively inexpensive, concerts and music ensembles involved amateurs and professionals, and music ads were used as a draw for other community activities.

During the late-1960s, the Music Center at Reston had a membership of around 600 families from Fairfax County, Arlington, Alexandria and Washington D.C who each contributed “a minimum of \$10 annually to the music center and thereby acquires a full voting membership”¹⁹. This small fee allowed any families who joined to literally determine how the Music Center went about their stated mission of preserving and promoting music education. Additionally, the Music Center’s Mission Statement states that it was funded by admissions from

¹⁷ Folder 1.1. Membership letter. September 5, 1968. Northern Virginia Music Center at Reston, Box 1. Special Collections and Archives at George Mason University, Fairfax, VA. Viewed March 11, 2014.

¹⁸ Folder 1.3. “Mission Statement, 1960s”. Northern Virginia Music Center at Reston, Box 1. Special Collections and Archives at George Mason University, Fairfax, VA. Viewed March 11, 2014.

¹⁹ Folder 1.3. “Mission Statement, 1960s”. Northern Virginia Music Center at Reston, Box 1. Special Collections and Archives at George Mason University, Fairfax, VA. Viewed March 11, 2014.

chorale performances and winter concerts, covering those activities, as well as tuition from summer camps²⁰. This additional information on how the Music Center was funded demonstrates that the Music Center did not just handle middle and high-school orchestra concerts, but also chorale concerts.

First, the Music Center at Reston offered summer camps for middle and high school-aged children. This summer camp opened in 1967 and included a 6-week orchestra camp for high school students, a music school for beginning and intermediate music students²¹. In addition to theater, this provided a way for middle and high school students to become involved in the community through the arts as not only would they improve their skills through practice, but then they could participate in concerts for the rest of the community. Dr. Henry Pfohl's original plan for a "youth orchestra" called for these camps to involve fifty students over a course of five weeks from 9 a.m to 12 noon Tuesday through Saturday, costing \$10 a week plus \$10 music fee, and would have resulted in an expenditure of \$500 to be able to supply music and \$1000 for camp counselors²². It is easy to see how this plan should have worked, considering how parents could send their kids to receive rather intensive musical training for a comparatively minimal cost for most middle-class families. Additionally, Dr. Pfohl's plans provided for an intensive, five-week long, strings camp involving twelve boys and twelve girls, but often failed to take into

²⁰ Folder 1.3. "Mission Statement, 1960s". Northern Virginia Music Center at Reston, Box 1. Special Collections and Archives at George Mason University, Fairfax, VA. Viewed March 11, 2014.

²¹ Folder 1.3. "Mission Statement, 1960s". Northern Virginia Music Center at Reston, Box 1. Special Collections and Archives at George Mason University, Fairfax, VA. Viewed March 11, 2014.

²² Pfohl, Dr. Henry. Dr. Pfohl's Proposals. Northern Virginia Music Center at Reston, Budgets and Fundraising, 1968-1978. Special Collections and Archives at George Mason University, Fairfax, VA. Viewed March 11, 2014.

account how students were going to be fed, how they were going to be housed, or whether or not there were going to be any concerts²³.

According to the Music Center's Mission statement, one of the key features during these camps was to have "in each section of the orchestra, teacher and student sitting side by side, learning and performing together"²⁴. This philosophy was one of the things that set Reston's summer camp apart from other music education programs, where instructors, prestigious as they may have been, may simply have been available to critique the students after performances, but not to help them rehearse. Additionally, these same faculty members listened to their students rehearse from a "mid-orchestra vantage point", or the middle of the concert hall²⁵. This meant that, compared to other summer music education programs, faculty members at Reston's summer camp would have been paying more attention to the progress of their students whenever they were performing, whether it was in rehearsal or during concerts.

The idea of running a summer camp for musically inclined teens met with some trouble early on, however. In 1968, the Reston Music Center was forced to petition Gulf Reston, who had acquired the growing town from its founder, for nine acres of land and 50,000 dollars to help defray the costs of running a summer camp for over 290 youth from across the country, however, getting a response took over two months²⁶. While Gulf Reston may not have wanted to support

²³ Pfohl, Dr. Henry. Dr. Pfohl's Proposals. Northern Virginia Music Center at Reston, Budgets and Fundraising, 1968-1978. Special Collections and Archives at George Mason University, Fairfax, VA. Viewed March 11, 2014.

²⁴ Folder 1.3. "Mission Statement, 1960s". Northern Virginia Music Center at Reston, Box 1. Special Collections and Archives at George Mason University, Fairfax, VA. Viewed March 11, 2014.

²⁵ Folder 1.3. "Mission Statement, 1960s". Northern Virginia Music Center at Reston, Box 1. Special Collections and Archives at George Mason University, Fairfax, VA. Viewed March 11, 2014.

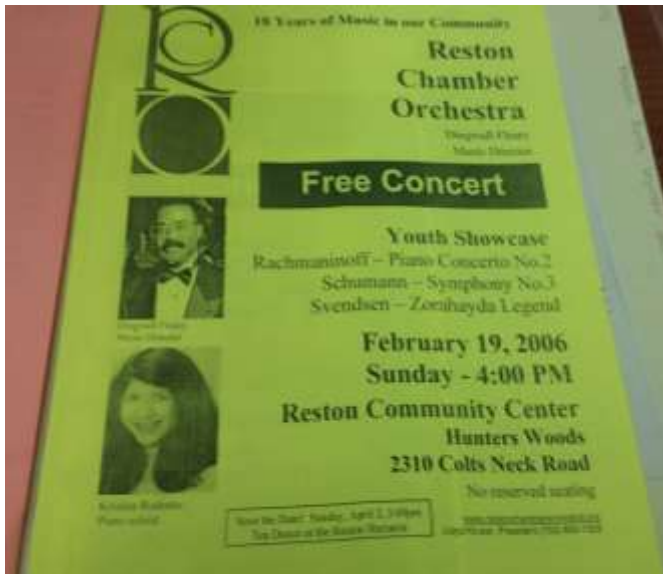
²⁶ "Reston Music Center Asks Gulf for Help". The Washington Post, December 16, 1967. Proquest Historical Newspapers. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/143015702?accountid=14541>.

the camp, at least initially, the prospect of drawing in hundreds of kids, as well as, possibly, their families, seems to have been the primary reason that they supported the Music Center. The following year, Gulf Reston again supported the summer camp by donating a 500-seat concert tent as well as dormitory, clinic, dining hall and recreation tents²⁷. While Reston alone may have had trouble attracting students who could have gone to New York or Chicago to receive music training instead, the Music Camp's location not far from Washington D.C meant that students could also go see concerts at the Kennedy Center or elsewhere in the Metropolitan Area for additional help practicing. This additional help seems to have paid off after the students returned home, as "hometown music teachers of Reston Music Festival alumni have reported greater advancement on the part of these students during the 6-week concentrated summer course than from a full year of standard high school orchestra rehearsals"²⁸.

Second, concerts were either free, or relatively inexpensive. This suggests that, music, like theater, assumed that the average audience member for concerts in an urban location, such as the Kennedy Center, would have been a white, upper-middle-class male.

²⁷ "Reston Plans Music Camp In Summer". The Washington Post, March 28, 1968. Proquest Historical Newspapers. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/143579703?accountid=14541>.

²⁸ Folder 1.3. "Mission Statement, 1960s". Northern Virginia Music Center at Reston, Box 1. Special Collections and Archives at George Mason University, Fairfax, VA. Viewed March 11, 2014.



Folder 8.6. “18 Years of Music in Our Community: Reston Chamber Orchestra” Marcia E. McDevitt Papers, Box 8. Special Collections and Archives at George Mason University, Fairfax, VA. Viewed February 24, 2014.

As can be seen in the flyer about a free concert on Sunday, February 19, 2006, the concert seems to have been centered around what kids, in similar fashion to middle and high school students who went to the summer music camp the previous year, had been rehearsing. In addition to being relatively inexpensive in comparison to those held at higher end venues, music concerts held in Reston were not limited in what genres of music were played at concerts, and included other styles such as rock²⁹. These free or relatively inexpensive concerts were not limited to camps, but also included pyramid concerts involving the choruses of local elementary, middle, and high schools, in which each individual chorus would perform a song, and the concert would culminate in a grand finale involving all of the choruses³⁰. In this regard, Reston seems to have been the birth-place of the “pyramid concert”, in which elementary, middle and high school choruses for the local school pyramid perform a similar program.

²⁹ “Where It’s At”. The Reston Times, June 17, 1971: page 1, column 1. Fairfax Regional Library, Virginia Room.

³⁰ “Free Concert”. The Reston Times, February 7, 1985: A09. Fairfax Regional Library, Virginia Room.

Third, concerts and music ensembles involved both amateur and professional musicians. This primarily applies to the Reston Chorale, which provides choral music for Western Fairfax County and the Washington D.C Metropolitan Area involving both amateur and professional singers³¹. As with Theater, making music open to amateurs, as well as professionals, allowed everyone from the community, even if they were relatively new to singing, to participate. Additionally, the Reston Chorale sings classical (ie: Bach and Beethoven) music as well as American classics, such as “America, the Beautiful” and “Battle Hymn of the Republic”³². This was particularly important for people who interpreted chorale as supposed to sing classical music, but could be reassured that the choir also sang slightly more contemporary, patriotic music.

Fourth, music ads could be used to attract community members to other activities. For example, ads for music camps could be paired with things that they had nothing to do with in the hope that someone else in that particular family might see it and express an interest in that activity.



³¹ “The Reston Chorale”. The Reston Chorale. Accessed February 25, 2014. <http://www.restonchorale.org/>.

³² “The Reston Chorale”. The Reston Chorale. Accessed February 25, 2014. <http://www.restonchorale.org/>.

Folder 8.5. "Page 13 of the Greater Reston Chamber of Commerce, 2004-2005". Marcia E. McDevitt Papers, Box 8. Special Collections and Archives at George Mason University, Fairfax, VA. Viewed February 24, 2014.

As is the case with this ad, the notification of the music lab's hours and cost has been placed next to passages notifying readers of the lab hours and cost of the open ceramics lab and the open computer lab. In the case of the music concert flyer from Sunday, February 19, 2006, the flyer seems to have been used to also advertise a dance that took place an hour before the start of the concert at the Reston Sheraton hotel.

Considering how The Reston Players and the Reston Chorale were some of the more influential performing arts groups, having had a significant area of the Reston Community Center at Hunters Woods built with them in mind, it is reasonable to say that the performing arts, particularly these two disciplines of it, were very successful in forming community in Reston.

The final art form which may or may not have helped to build community in Reston was television. Unlike theater and music, which allow the audience to be present in the same room or concert hall as the performers themselves, television allows individual families, or even multiple families, to be in the same room, but they are separated from the performers by hundreds, if not thousands of miles. This effectively removes the audience member from what is going on in the scene, thereby removing a level of interaction within the community which may exist in the other fine arts. For example, the amount of energy which would have been felt while watching a character on stage may not be as palpable when viewing a television program. Cable Television may or may not have helped build community in Reston mainly because of a lack of FCC broadcasting guidelines, a struggle for the major broadcasting station in the area to survive, cable television could be used to advertise the town and other activities.

Up until the 1970s, any cable television broadcasts would most likely have been handled by out-of-state transmission companies. That all changed in June, 1970, when the Reston Transmission Company began transmitting cable signals for the Washington metropolitan area over 27 miles of co-axial cable³³. This would have allowed the Reston Transmission Company to provide cable coverage to a large portion of Northern Virginia, and possible even parts of southern Maryland. According to the Washington Post, the aim of the Reston Transmission Company was to broadcast programs about Reston, Fairfax County, and Virginia as a whole, as well as well as retransmit television and over fourteen radio frequencies from Washington D.C and Baltimore³⁴. According to the Washington Post, "Its cable can carry 24 channels, and be expanded to 40"³⁵. To this end, it seems as if the goal of Reston Transmission Company, as well as television as an art form, may have had more to do with education than entertainment, as the other three art forms tried to do.

Initially, Reston television was only really operated by a few paid people, specifically cable workmen and the station's manager, Kenneth Chamberlain³⁶. This meant that the majority of broadcasts from Reston Cable would have had to be handled by unpaid volunteers, ideally coming from the immediate community. According to the Washington Post, there were initially around thirty-five volunteers, who were supposed to handle Reston Transmission Company's three main channels covering "weather and time", "news and stock tickers", and locally

³³ "Reston To Begin Cable TV". The Washington Post, June 18, 1970. Proquest Historical Newspapers. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/147853441?accountid=14541>.

³⁴ "Reston To Begin Cable TV". The Washington Post, June 18, 1970. Proquest Historical Newspapers. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/147853441?accountid=14541>.

³⁵ "Reston To Begin Cable TV". The Washington Post, June 18, 1970. Proquest Historical Newspapers. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/147853441?accountid=14541>.

³⁶ "Reston To Begin Cable TV". The Washington Post, June 18, 1970. Proquest Historical Newspapers. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/147853441?accountid=14541>.

produced programming”³⁷. One of the goals of the Reston Transmission Company was to “make people in Reston Aware of their responsibilities and role in the state”³⁸. In this regard, television, at least as a potential organizing tool, could have come close to failing because one of the reasons, at least initially, would have been to get away from the demands of the more urbanized areas.

The first problem for cable television in Reston was a lack of FCC broadcasting guidelines. According to Leigh Wilson and Martin Topper, the Federal Communications Commission did not develop any viewing or broadcasting guidelines until 1972, a full two years after the Reston Transmission Company was founded³⁹. This lack of viewing and broadcasting guidelines may well have negatively impacted the Reston Transmission Company, at least early on, because families would have been discouraged from watching stations due to programming which would otherwise be considered as inappropriate for younger audiences. This presents a unique challenge in comparison to other performing arts because they often involve face-to-face interaction, are able to more directly base their shows and activities on the age range of the audience.

Second, the major cable television broadcaster in the area, the Reston Transmission Company, was struggling to stay alive not long after it was established. This comes as a significant surprise considering that Reston TV reached over half of the city’s 9,500 residents in

³⁷ “Reston To Begin Cable TV”. The Washington Post, June 18, 1970. Proquest Historical Newspapers. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/147853441?accountid=14541>.

³⁸ “Reston To Begin Cable TV”. The Washington Post, June 18, 1970. Proquest Historical Newspapers. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/147853441?accountid=14541>.

³⁹ Wilson, W. Leigh and Martin D. Topper. “Cable Television: Applied Anthropology in a New Town”. Human Organization 35, no. 2 (1972): 135. America: History and Life. <http://mutex.gmu.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ahl&AN=5193606&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

1977⁴⁰. Therefore, Reston Television's problem could not have had anything to do with finances, as they seem to have been reaching at least 4,700 Reston residents. According to The Washington Post, the main problem for Reston TV during this time was that it was "still struggling to find its own identity as a hometown medium"⁴¹. Another reason why Reston Transmission Company's problem of needing to find an identity was because they did have enough finances is indicated through the delivery of a \$45,000 telecasting van, which was delivered to Reston Transmission Company in mid-September, 1970⁴². While it may have taken the Reston Transmission, and particularly its station manager, Kenneth Chamberlain, a while to save up to afford a mobile station, it shows additional evidence that finances were not the source of the problem. This suggests that, like the other performing arts, television broadcasters needed to decide who they were trying to broadcast to, and what they were trying to achieve by airing different types of programs.

For example, "A Place Called Reston" is described as "A Reston Community Television Production"⁴³. This means that the program has been produced by the community, and largely, for the community. This serves two purposes: one, local community members are able to see their friends or relatives on television, making a positive impact on the community; and two, anybody from other towns or cities who might see it may help grow the community by convincing others to move to Reston. Given that "A Place Called Reston" was produced in the

⁴⁰ "Reston Cable TV Still Struggling To Exist". The Washington Post, March 21, 1977. Proquest Historical Newspapers. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/146878650?accountid=14541>.

⁴¹ "Reston Cable TV Still Struggling To Exist". The Washington Post, March 21, 1977. Proquest Historical Newspapers. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/146878650?accountid=14541>.

⁴² "Reston To Begin Cable TV". The Washington Post, June 18, 1970. Proquest Historical Newspapers. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/147853441?accountid=14541>.

⁴³ A Place Called Reston. 1979. "A Place Called Reston". Directed by Bob Greenspan. Warner Cable Collection. Box 6. Special Collections and Archives at George Mason University, Fairfax, VA. Viewed March 21, 2014.

late-1970s, where-as Reston Transmission Company's problem of identity had been only a few years earlier, it is likely that the television broadcasting company was able to quickly figure out who they were broadcasting to.

Third, cable television programs could be used to advertise the town and other activities. For example, a detective drama, "A Place Called Reston", featured a villain hiding in or near Reston, while a police supervisor warned his detectives about getting too attached to the town⁴⁴. In this way, producers who sought to advertise Reston would have been able to lure people away from the cities by subtly promising a new place to live and work where there would not be as much noise and hustle as there was in more urban environments. The Warner Cable Company also seems to have routinely worked in conjunction with the Reston Repertory Company to co-produce televised plays, such as "In a Land That is Not Yours", and other arts performances⁴⁵. This performance may have been chosen because it reflected how many "Restonians" may have felt. In the play, a Jewish college student travels to Berlin in 1955 to study, but ultimately feels unwelcome and discontented with the big city, deciding to move on and go somewhere else⁴⁶. Televising a play like this throughout the Washington Metropolitan area may have helped to expand the community by helping other people realize their discontent with city life and indirectly advertising Reston as a haven away from the bustle of the city. By doing this, cable television was able to inform the Reston community of performing art opportunities that were coming up, perhaps more easily than signs posted to billboards.

⁴⁴ A Place Called Reston. 1979. "A Place Called Reston". Directed by Bod Greenspan. Warner Cable Collection. Box 6. Special Collections and Archives at George Mason University, Fairfax, VA. Viewed March 21, 2014.

⁴⁵ In a Land That's Not Yours. 1980. "In a Land That's Not Yours pt. 3". By Bruce Zortman. Warner Cable Collection. Box 6. Special Collections and Archives at George Mason University, Fairfax, VA. Viewed March 21, 2014.

⁴⁶ In a Land That's Not Yours. 1980. "In a Land That's Not Yours pt. 3". By Bruce Zortman. Warner Cable Collection. Box 6. Special Collections and Archives at George Mason University, Fairfax, VA. Viewed March 21, 2014.

As with all performing arts, and just about any community activity at all, arts or otherwise, the issue of how to involve handicapped people, particularly the blind and deaf eventually arose. This, however, did not become a serious issue in Reston, at least for television, until 1980, when a panel, known as The Northern Virginia Consortium for the Severely Handicapped, met in an open telecast on the evening of September 9 from 8-9:30 p.m to discuss how to establish or enhance handicapped peoples' enjoyment of televised programs⁴⁷. This had already been taken care of, in terms of allowing the handicapped to enjoy theater and music, primarily through the inclusion of handicapped entrances and seating in the music hall and theater in the Community Center at Lake Anne, which had opened in 1979, and had been constructed with this in mind. The addition of services for the handicapped to television allowed people with serious disabilities, primarily the deaf, who were included through the use of subtitles, to enjoy all kinds of performing arts programs, but also served to reassure that part of the community that they were not being left out. Thus, television was the last of the performing arts to incorporate the handicapped, and by extension, the entire community, into their audience pool.

In conclusion, community in a new town such as Reston can be built through the performing arts if they are open to all members of the community, regardless of age, race, economic standing, expertise or physical ability. Reston opened a community center at Hunters Woods in 1978 which had enough room to accommodate over sixty groups, including the Reston Chorale and Reston Players, as well as a kitchen⁴⁸. This may have encouraged people to come out to events, even if it was just to check out the facility. In the case of theater, productions were more easy-going than professional productions, community members could be attracted because it was

⁴⁷ "Television Forum Scheduled on Needs of Area Handicapped". The Reston Time, September 4, 1980: page A3, columns 1-4. Fairfax Regional Library: Virginia Room.

⁴⁸ "78 Opening Set For Reston Citizens' Center". The Washington Post, July 14, 1977. Proquest Historical Newspapers. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/146695182?accountid=14541>.

not nearly as expensive as going to see a professional production, community-based theater productions were more suited to all members of the family, and shows allowed for varying levels of expertise. Music, like the other performing arts in Reston, allowed amateurs as well as professionals to become involved in the community, and concerts were either free, or relatively inexpensive. Additionally, under the direction of Dr. Henry Pfohl, the music summer camps attracted several youth to Reston from other cities and states. Television, despite its difficulties locally, was able to build community between families and friends through drive-in theaters as well as other common interest shows, and tried to address the need of the handicapped so that they could also enjoy television as an entertainment medium, but needed to have tighter regulation and guidelines from the Federal Communications Commission regarding what stations should air. In addition to the need for the decision of what is aired on television, the manager of the television station in Reston, Kenneth Chamberlain only had a relatively small budget to work with, forcing him to appeal to local community members to help produce programs. Considering this, the performing arts could be used to strengthen community, but what each of the disciplines chooses to perform needs careful consideration.

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A Place Called Reston. 1979. “A Place Called Reston”. Directed by Bob Greenspan. Warner Cable Collection. Box 6. Special Collections and Archives at George Mason University, Fairfax, VA. Viewed March 21, 2014. A 45-minute long detective drama/comedy in which the detectives must catch an infamous criminal who had chosen to hide in “a place called Reston”. The description of the detectives’ assignment soon gets lost in talking about why people are attracted to Reston.

Cohen-Cruz, Jan. *Local Acts: Community-based Performance in the United States*. (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press. 2005). eBook Collection (EBSCOhost). Talks about why race, gender or religion, things that individuals have almost no control over should not bar someone from participating in community theater, and, by extension, any other community activity.

Folder 1.1. Membership letter. September 5, 1968. Warner Cable Collection. Northern Virginia Music Center at Reston, Box 1. Special Collections and Archives at George Mason University, Fairfax, VA. Viewed March 11, 2014. Membership letter from the Northern Virginia Music Center dated September 1968 explaining what has happened over the

past year. Notes that there was a music group in Reston before the Music Center, which closed because of financial difficulties and was replaced by the Music Center because of the support and popular demand from several Reston families.

Folder 1.3. "Mission Statement, 1960s". Northern Virginia Music Center at Reston, Box 1. Special Collections and Archives at George Mason University, Fairfax, VA. Viewed March 11, 2014.

Folder 8.5. "Page 13 of the Greater Reston Chamber of Commerce, 2004-2005". Marcia E. McDevitt Papers, Box 8. Special Collections and Archives at George Mason University, Fairfax, VA. Viewed February 24, 2014

Folder 8.6. "18 Years of Music in Our Community: Reston Chamber Orchestra" Marcia E. McDevitt Papers, Box 8. Special Collections and Archives at George Mason University, Fairfax, VA. Viewed February 24, 2014.

Folder 8.6. "Reston Community Players 2005-2006 Season". Marcia E. McDevitt Papers, Box 8. Special Collections and Archives at George Mason University, Fairfax, VA. Viewed February 24, 2014. A picture of the cover of the Reston Community Players' 2004-2005 season playbill. Of particular note is the inclusion of *Beauty and the Beast* (a more kid-friendly play) next to more adult-oriented shows.

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“’78 Opening Set For Reston Citizens’ Center”. The Washington Post, July 14, 1977. Proquest Historical Newspapers. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/146695182?accountid=14541>. While the article may be difficult to read at the top of the page because of passages being typed over each other, the new article clearly states that the “Citizen’s Center” (probably the one at Lake Anne) has enough room for over sixty community groups, specifically mentioning the Reston Chorale and Reston Players.

“Performing Arts Contest Accepting Applications”. The Washington Post, February 16, 1983. Proquest Historical Newspapers. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/138091228?accountid=14541>. An article which appeared in the Washington Post advertising a talent contest which was open to anyone in Virginia, Washington D.C, and Maryland. People who entered could do music selections, dance routines and “novelty acts”. A separate part of the competition was open to citizens sixty-three and older.

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how television can aid communities, particularly focusing on the Reston Transmission Company.