
Mayor's Council on the Arts

Susan Green, Director

The Mayor's Council on the Arts was established in June, 1981 as a result of recommendations by the Mayor's Task Force that the arts be made more accessible to all segments of the population. As a result, the Council's statement of purpose is:

"To contribute to the cultural enrichment of the citizens of Burlington and the State of Vermont by making the arts available to all, especially those whose social or economic restraints limit their access to the arts."

This purpose is carried out by: (a) directly involving all sectors of the community in the arts process (creation, production, organization publicity, etc.) as well as in its finished product (plays, exhibits, concerts, etc.); (b) creating a complete spectrum of arts programming of the highest artistic quality at the lowest possible price to our audience; (c) providing community access to the arts by offering technical assistance as well as performance, gallery and rehearsal space, and (d) creating direct links between the business, educational, artistic and governmental communities by forming partnerships in the production of cultural events.

Since July 1983, the Arts Council has received partial funding from the City which constitutes approximately 20 percent of its annual operating budget. Both the financial and philosophical support provided by the administration reflects the desire of Burlingtonians to express their vitality and spirit through the arts. The impact of the City's commitment to the arts has spread to many other cities in Vermont and throughout the country, and has provided a model for other cities to follow.

Some Accomplishments

Here is an overview of some of the Council's recent accomplishments from July 1, 1986 to June 30, 1987:



230 arts events were produced, either wholly or inco-sponsorship, by the Mayor's Arts Council, serving approximately 75,000 people.

More than 500 volunteers from the greater Burlington area offered their time and energy to Arts Council projects.

106 free arts events were produced or co-produced by the Council.

The Council continues to offer Memorial Auditorium Loft to local dancers and theatre performers for rehearsals, classes and presentations at very little cost to the artists.

The Council, in partnership with the Burlington Parks and Recreation Department, instituted an Arts Day Camp, called Summerfun, at the Barnes Elementary School in the Old North End. The program, which began in June, 1987 and ran through the summer, signed up more than 80 children, ages 4-16.

Twenty-four businesses, six educational organizations, seven city departments, six community groups, and 21 arts organizations worked in partnership with the Council in the actual presentation, production and/or promotion during the course of the fiscal year.

Contois Auditorium Events (City Hall)

74 events, serving approximately 7,000 people, were held. The Council offered a wide variety of performances, such as:

Silly Wizard. With a lilting melody or a rousing chorus, this Celtic folk ensemble charmed a full house and kept the crowd in stitches between songs. The four Scottish musicians, with a wealth of successful albums to their credit, such as the recent "A Glimpse of Silver," provided the perfect Halloween night's entertainment. Co-sponsored by the Champlain Folklore Cooperative, the Celtic Cottage, and the St. Andrew's Society.

Still Life. City Hall was the first stop for the Vermont tour of this gripping play by Emily Mann, produced by Lost Nation Theater. "Still Life" featured only three characters—a desolate Vietnam veteran and the two women who love him—in the depiction of the bitter legacy of that war. Directed by Ann Scofield and starring Kim Bent, Margaret Cristan, and Jennifer Howard, the piece was

based on a true story and was staged with a "documentary" realism.

An Equinox Evening of Poetry. In association with Mountain Cable Company, this event offered readings by 13 Vermont poets, including three senior citizens and five Burlington schoolchildren. There were appearances, as well, by two of the state's most noted and published poets, David Budbill and Verandah Porche. In addition, Ms. Porche conducted a poetry workshop earlier in the day. This was the second annual poetry presentation by the Council, in the continuing belief that there's poetry in us all.

6th Annual Battery Park Summer Concert Series

We held nine events, serving approximately 10,000 people. The series, every Thursday evening June through August, is free.

The 1987 summer series featured acclaimed folk singer Jesse Winchester, Kei Takei's Moving Earth dance company, folk troubador Tom Paxton, and a number of



Discover Jazz Festival '87 opening ceremonies in front of City Hall with Kilimanjaro.



Kei Takei's Moving Earth at Battery Park Series, 1986 season

Vermont's finest musical talents such as The Throbulators, The Boyz, Miss Bliss, and Coco and the Lonesome Road Band.

Memorial Auditorium

We held 12 events, serving more than 8,000 people. The Arts Council regularly presents several special events, either sponsored or co-sponsored:

"A Reggae Dance Party," to benefit the summer's Reggae Festival; "No Holds Barred," an improvisational dance performance; and "Interfolk '86," a sprawling series of folk dance performances by troupes from all over the world with six shows at Memorial.

Burlington Film Society

This weekly film series in Contois Auditorium features classic foreign and American cinema at consistently low box office prices. With membership of 115, the society actually serves about 1,900 people during the year. In addition to the Sunday night screenings, there were a few special events, such as the Vermont premiere of the Hollywood production, "Peggy Sue Got Married," with producer (and former Vermonter) Paul Gurian attending.

Discover Jazz Festival

Now a tradition, the annual Jazz Fest draws more than 20,000 people to Burlington, to hear music in the parks, on the buses and ferries, in the concert halls, on street corners and this summer even under a "gospel tent" on North Beach. There's dancing under the stars, a festive parade, and jazz, jazz, jazz.

Featured performers this year were Gary Burton and Ralph Towner, the Count Basie Alumni all-Stars, with Grover Mitchell, Buddy Tate, and Buddy de Franco; also Kili-manjaro, the Pullen-Adams Quartet, Mark Lamphier's Muskrat Jazz Band, and many, many others.

The Festival was co-sponsored with the Flynn Theatre for the Performing Arts.

Metropolitan Art Gallery

Twelve exhibits were shown, serving approximately 5,000 people.

Our gallery is located in the lobby of City Hall and is a showplace for artists of local, regional and national significance, all able to exhibit at no cost.

Neighborhood Festivals

Every summer the Arts Council helps organize day-long festivities in neighborhoods throughout the city, providing com-



"Marianne and Juliane," a film by German director, Margareth von Trotta, seen in the Burlington Film Society's 1986-87 series.

munity togetherness fueled by music, dance, food, and childrens' activities.

This year, the country rock band "Excalibur" performed at the Franklin Square and Riverside Festivals; and singer Alice Kinzie delighted the crowd at Northgate.

Community Arts Grants

The Arts Council awarded 11 grants to low-income or under-employed artists whose projects include community involvement. A few examples this past year include:

Leslie Tucker, for dance performances in Burlington by and for children, using dance, poetry, voice and video.

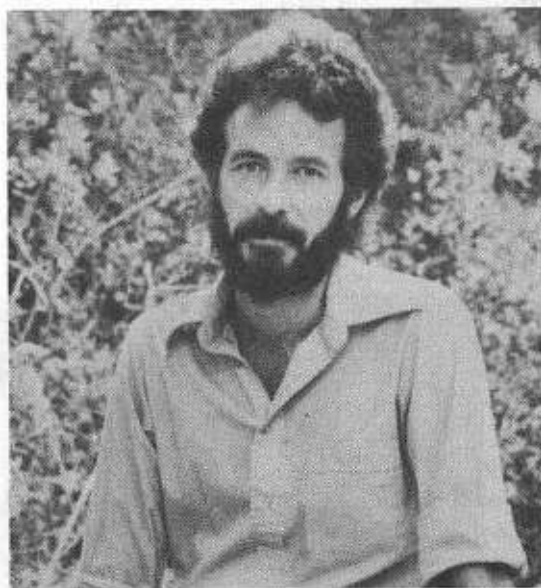
Rom Bin and Phath Khun, two Burlington High School students to study drum and piano in order to play the traditional music of their native land in a celebration of the Cambodian New Year.

Rachel Bissex, a madrigal ensemble to travel throughout the city, giving free concerts to herald springtime.

And the Future...

In April, Mayor Sanders called a Community Meeting on the Arts to provide a forum for feedback, questions and suggestions from people. One consistent directive that emerged from this productive session was that the Council get involved in sponsoring arts workshops for Burlington schoolchildren. This came in light of the fact that the city's elementary schools had not at that point had any art teachers for more than a decade. This vital project has now become an Arts Council priority.

Another new direction is video. The season's Battery Park concerts were each pre-viewed by a half-hour show on Cable Access Channel 15, produced by the Council and Mountain Cable. These shows featured interviews and performances by the artists scheduled to play at the park that particular week. We'll continue to explore and utilize this terrific resource.



Jesse Winchester from Battery Park series, 1986