

Nobody Came The Hard Way

By John Molleson
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No one came by subway. Philharmonic Hall at Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts opened last night with a full house of about 2,600—including Mrs. John F. Kennedy, UN Secretary-General U Thant, Secretary of State Dean Rusk, and at least three Rockefellers—and all of them arrived in limousines.

Well, one patron of the arts drove up in a surrey. There were a few cabs, and one or two private cars, but in the main it was just one limousine after another—as befits an audience which paid from \$250 to \$100 for its seats.

The customers came early, as if they were eager to contribute by their presence to the opening of a new era in the musical life of the city.

They emerged from their limousines into the glare of klieg lights, which made their top hats and their diamonds shine.

They ran a gauntlet of newsmen, cameramen, policemen and several hundred spectators who were permitted to gather behind barricades on the still unpolished terrazzo pavement of Lincoln Center Plaza.

They trod upon a tomato red carpet which reached from the curb of Columbus Ave. to the gleaming precincts of the hall. Overhead, Old Glory waved in duplicate from two immense flagpoles erected only the day before.

A canopy protected them from the weather, but also hid the best view of the new building—the splendid row of columns on the southern facade of Philharmonic Hall.

It was too bad, in a way, that no one came by subway, for the city had just opened a new exit to the 66th St. IRT station—as glittering, almost, and as astonishingly new as the hall itself. Its steps will lead the subway traveler to foot of the hall, and presumably will become as familiar to music lovers as the exits from the underground to Carnegie Hall and the Met.

Predictions of monumental traffic jams proved to be exaggerated, for the arrivals, and uncomfortably close to the truth for the going home.

hope to glimpse the flow of beauty, fashion and fame that passed in an apparently never-ending stream over the red carpet.

There was an occasional spattering of applause as some notable—usually a man in political life—made his way into the hall.

But the real curbside excitement was reserved for the moment, shortly before 9 p. m., when Mrs. Kennedy's limousine approached, preceded by the flashing lights of a police car.

First to emerge was the tall and angular figure of John D. Rockefeller III, chairman of Lincoln Center. Then the First Lady appeared, radiant and beautiful, smiling, with diamond pendants in her ears.

"Jacqueline!" one woman shouted, with the proper Gallic accent, and this set off a burst of cheers that lasted for the length of the red carpet.

Inside the hall, the previously nonchalant throng which had accumulated in the lobby suddenly sprang to life, and there was a rustle of satin and whiff of rising perfume as the ladies sprinted to the glass windows to see the First Lady.

Mrs. Kennedy stayed for half the concert and left at intermission after chatting with Mr. Bernstein, Aaron Copland, the composer, and Max Abramovitz, architect of the hall. Mrs. Kennedy told her host, Mr. Rockefeller, that she had "never seen anything like" the palatial Philharmonic Hall.

Diplomatic Answer

As for the hall's acoustics, she gave a diplomatic answer to Mr. Bernstein: "I can't tell, you know."

The First Lady flew back to Newport, leaving from La Guardia Field. It was said that reports of worsening weather in the Newport area had forced her early departure. But the sponsors of Lincoln Center were obviously delighted that she had come at all, particularly after her initial rejection of the invitation two weeks ago.

Philharmonic Hall was a blaze of golden light for its inauguration. But on all sides

There will be other opening nights at Lincoln Center, as the other halls come to completion, but this one was first and, as such, deserved a special celebration. As a surprise ending to the festive evening, guests were handed glasses of champagne in the lobby as they left. After that, there was a mad rush for the limousines. To ease the burden, Lincoln Center provided walkie-talkie service, summoning chauffeurs parked along the neighboring curbs.

audience proved to be thoughtful, spreading the time of arrival from 7 p. m., when a few pink clouds hovered in the west, until 9 p. m., when Leonard Bernstein brought the audience to its feet with the Star Spangled Banner.

For those two hours, crowds of spectators gathered on the Plaza, and across Columbus Ave., and even on distant Broadway.

Only the relatively few who were close at hand could