Montana State University celebrates 10th anniversary of music building

University of Montana--Missoula. Office of University Relations

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FOR RELEASE SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8

Montana State University will deck the halls of its Music building for an open house Sunday, Dec. 15, from 3 to 5 p.m., commemorating the 10th anniversary of the celebrated structure. The afternoon festivities will be a prelude to the University's annual Christmas concert, which will be given at 8:15 p.m. in the University Theater as a benefit performance for the MSU Music Foundation scholarship program.

Scores of music teachers, administrators, contractors and architects have made a pilgrimage to Missoula to see the functional innovations incorporated in the striking edifice. The building's worldwide press notices include four full pages of pictures and blue prints in recent issues of Spanish and Italian architectural magazines.

Dr. Luther A. Richman of the music faculty, who served as dean of the School of Fine Arts from 1952 to 1962, recalls that interested citizens around the state worked with the faculty and the architects, Fox and Ballas of Missoula, in developing the design that has won the building international notice.

The planners, of course, tried to get the most space for the least money, according to Dr. Richman, but they never lost sight of the building's primary purpose: To provide students the best facilities for quality music education. Because they did not sacrifice their main goal to any extraneous considerations, the building stands as a monument to wise planning.

The building's enviable acoustical qualities were achieved by using soundproof walls, specially treated floors, slanted ceilings with few, if any, 180-degree angles, and outside stone louvers for additional sound control. The birch-paneled, 400-seat recital hall (equipped with a 2,329-pipe, custom built organ) was designed exclusively for musical performances, so no acoustical compromises were made for other types of stage performances.

(more)
The red mission brick exterior with Indiana limestone trim makes the building as satisfying aesthetically as it is acoustically.

Dr. Richman pointed out that the attractions of the Music Department's physical quarters plus the magnet of an exceptionally strong faculty have drawn students in such numbers that a wing or two must be added to the building very soon if it is to continue to serve its purpose effectively. Fortunately, the original plans provided for making needed additions at a minimum cost, he said.

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