

## COUP DE VILLE

### CONTEXT:

- 1) Briefly, from 1967-1974 the Music Department at UCSD was small, creative and housed in army barracks — ugly but beautiful.

In September, 1974 they were moved into a big, new, beautiful (but ugly) concrete Arts Building which had cost \$6 million.

There was a reluctance to make the move — a fear of losing the good vibes that had existed.

- 2) To "celebrate" the new building, a 10-day festival during March, 1975 was planned by the UCSD administration.

The Board of Regents, the President of the University of California and 100 very rich and influential La Jolla patrons were invited to the first concert, a very formal affair.

- 3) The Music Department was very courageous in that it did not compromise its experimental posture (in fact, it was unusually wild) for the well-dressed, conservative "outsiders".

Many music students were anti-big show but went along with it probably for the sake of the potentially exciting faculty stage works being presented.

The entire month was extremely busy — even frantic and it had been raining for days.

- 4) I was asked to be in charge of intermissions for the first and last concert of the festival.
- 5) (At the last moment the graduate teaching assistants decided to seize this opportunity to openly protest a drastic cut-back in their funds.)

- 6) The pieces on the first night concert included

- a piece for 30 people, ages 6-60, playing a huge elaborate routing game accompanied by tape music
- a piece for 6 falling dancers and taped poetry
- a piece for trombone, percussion and tape
- a piece involving Indian ritual, meditation, telepathy and crows

- 7) It was in this context that the following events became part of my composition -

## COMPOSITION:

The performers were given their instructions, including a disclaimer of sorts — a demand that they not be violent, destructive, or disruptive of pieces.

1. Note-in-box<sup>a</sup>. The day before the first concert (March 5) I put a note in Dr. Wilbur Ogdon's faculty mail box. It read (approximately)

"Dr. Ogdon, Would it be possible for me to make-up the Music 11 exam sometime next week. David Stock"

Dr. Ogdon, notoriously absent-minded, was head of the Faculty Search Committee and teaches a course numbered Music 11. David Stock, a friend of mine, probably living in Europe, was one of the many applicants for a faculty position at UCSD next year.

2. Mood Setter. On March 6 I needed a copy of the architect's plans for part of the Mandeville Center (to use as a score). I noticed several near some workmen. I thought maybe I could abscond with one, so I began talking to them. I was dressed as and looked like a student. I was somewhat nervous since they had hired an armed guard to watch the \$200,000 worth of drama costumes in that area and I thought I probably looked suspicious. After about 5 minutes the main power in the building went off. The guard came up to me and said, "Would you watch this stuff while I find out about the power."
3. Alertness<sup>a</sup>. On March 6 I was introduced to a guest who had apparently been told something about my piece. As we shook hands, he coyly smiled, hesitated and said, "It's already started, hasn't it."
4. Coincidence<sup>b</sup>. There was extensive advertisement all through the festival of a concert by the singer, Edwin Hawkins. Every day I received at least two comments about my concert.
5. Hand-Outs<sup>a</sup>. In addition to 3 kinds of programs being sold or given away, and in addition to the TA's protest sheet, I had a hand-out as part of my piece. It was a Xerox copy of part of Text and Music from the Harvard Dictionary of Music. It related to the proceedings very tenuously.
6. Alertness<sup>b</sup>. The person handing-out the hand-outs was approached by an unknown well-dressed man who asked him if he had seen Edith.
7. Program Notes. In the program there were 4 pieces listed. In the composer biography section there were 5 composers represented. (I was the addition; it simply said that I had "written a piece especially for the Mandeville opening," with no mention of title or performance date).
8. Coincidence<sup>c</sup>. My biography in the program stated that I had taught at Yale — wrong.
9. Alertness<sup>c</sup>. Prodded by his questioning, I think I convinced a friend I was sitting near that the ugly, round, steel heating ducts under some of the seats were part of my piece.
10. Coincidence<sup>d</sup>. The rich guests, administrative officials, etc. arrived 40 minutes late (holding up the beginning of the concert).

11. Coincidence<sup>e</sup>. The night of March 6 there was a protest by graduate students concerning TA funds (including both the aforementioned hand-out and a series of short speeches).
12. Coincidence<sup>f</sup>. The words at the climax of the last protest speech were bungled.
13. Alertness<sup>d</sup>. There were people standing in and peering from large slit-like openings on the side walls - 15 feet above ground (and no visible way of getting there).
14. Alertness<sup>e</sup>. A shabbily dressed boy with a drum strapped over his shoulder walked in before the concert and took a seat in the audience (and quietly remained there).
15. Rope Drop. About one minute into the short intermission after the first piece, a performer dropped a 25 foot rope from the catwalk (stage rearranging was going on). This was a cue for several things to happen. In addition, the performer's task was to make a piece out of pulling the rope back up, e.g. by playing with the audience's expectancies concerning speed, direction, etc. (When he had almost pulled the rope back up, 2 feet from the top, he stopped and left it there for the rest of the concert).
16. Trumpet Duo<sup>a</sup>. A trumpet duo was situated in the catwalk area. When the rope dropped they played a loud, short, interval, precisely together.
17. Stretch and Pose. About 25 people in the audience were instructed to watch for the rope drop. At that moment they stretched (with raised arms while seated) in a normal manner and then assumed a pose with either arm on the back of the seat, propping up their heads.
18. Unforeseen Development<sup>a</sup>. The rope was dropped several times.
19. Mistake<sup>a</sup>. There was an instruction to place thread on people at the main intermission. One of the performers misunderstood and performed during the first short intermission (one of the other performers noticed a well-dressed man enter the hall toward the end of the intermission with about 7 orange threads on the shoulder of his black suit).
20. Two Coats. Just before the main intermission 2 men's coats were hung on a hook inside one of the stalls in the women's room.
21. Group Sound. At the moment the applause stopped for the last piece before intermission about 25 people uttered a very loud, very short vocal sound, but without the usual accompanying facial and/or bodily energy (this was especially effective when rising from seat).
22. Unforeseen Development<sup>b</sup>, There were a few late yells by well-dressed outsiders who were apparently venting their frustrations.
23. Trumpet Duo<sup>b</sup>, Just before the main intermission the trumpet duo moved to the open walkways above the lobby. As people began to leave their seats (after the group sound) they repeated their blast.

24. Minstrel. At intermission the minstrel went to the center of the stage and got the audience to begin to clap (a steady pulse) in preparation for some folk\* music. Just as she got them going, I walked up and interrupted her (audience continued clapping for a while). She then left the stage and simply roamed the halls singing folk songs, occasionally passing out cards saying "UCSD stupidities".
25. Hawker. At intermission a person sold programs in a very raucous, ball-park-like atmosphere — "Ya can't tell the player's without a program" "Get your hot-battered programs", etc.
26. Unforeseen Development<sup>c</sup>. The hawker also had cards. A couple of minutes after she had handed a "This is not part of the piece" card to someone, she felt a tap on her shoulder. The person handed the card back to her.
27. Unforeseen Development<sup>d</sup>. Several of the well-to-do began hissing the hawker.
28. Handkerchief Shirt, One performer wore a sweatshirt with sewn-on hankies hanging all over it. He passed out cards reading "immature".
29. Hand-Shirt. One performer wore a shirt at intermission in which one of the sleeves continued past the wrist and entirely enclosed the hand.
30. Alertness<sup>e</sup>. The enclosed hand made it very difficult to button the shirt.
31. Dijeridu Shirt. One performer wore a t-shirt that said, "I'd rather be dijeriduing" (a dijeridu is an Aboriginal Australian musical instrument popular on the UCSD campus and used in the concert). He carried cards saying "No, it isn't."
32. Improvisation<sup>a</sup>. During the first half of the concert, before the above mentioned performer had changed into his shirt, he was sitting in the audience smoking. A woman sitting directly behind him was incensed and informed him that "it is against the San Diego City Ordinance to smoke in this auditorium" whereupon he spontaneously handed her one of his "No, it isn't" cards.
33. Improvisation<sup>b</sup>, After this person had put on his t-shirt he was approached by the person who made the shirt and the cards, who commented that his outfit was very nice looking, whereupon she, of course, received his card.
34. Cards. In addition to the ones already mentioned, several performers were given cards. These were to be distributed at intermission, preferably to people who were obviously "outsiders". An appropriate context for the card was preferable but not necessary. The most common cards were -
  - This is part of the piece.
  - This is not part of the piece.
  - This is all of the piece.
  - This is not anyone else's piece.
  - This is not what you think it is.
35. Energy Card. 3 cards were to be given to someone who is very small, quiet and meek looking. His cards read "Butane Energy".

36. Unforeseen Development<sup>e</sup>. The above mentioned person declined to participate the night of the concert because he was "too tired".
37. Farts. At intermission 2 men at about a 5 minute interval were instructed to enter a pooping stall in the men's room and, while seated, begin emitting fart sounds (lip buzzes, etc.). Their task was to time them, vary them, etc. so that they just enter the consciousness of their neighbor ("Could this be a put-on?"), but then recede ("No").
38. Improvisation<sup>c</sup>. In addition to the above, one of the performers added appropriate grunting noises.
39. Chalk. At intermission several performers were given pieces of tailor's chalk. They were each instructed to discretely mark (probably in a crowd) on two people's clothes such that it would be somewhat noticeable.
40. Improvisation<sup>d</sup>. One of the above mentioned performers put the chalk mark on his own coat.
41. Threads. Several performers put threads on at least 3 people's clothing. They picked contrasting colored clothing.
42. Improvisation<sup>e</sup>. One of the performers put threads on every costume in the guarded drama exhibit. They were still there the next day.
43. Body Paint. Two performers were instructed to use body-paint or make-up somewhere on their visible skin, in such a manner that it would be only marginally noticeable as being unusual.
44. Converse (same). Seven performers were instructed to use the following general outline for an "aside" to be inserted somewhere in their intermission conversation (it probably didn't happen, but their task was to be convincing) - "Did you notice the ... guy (girl) with the ... (clothing) ... (movement or position), during the ... piece. He (she) was ..." They were told who not to talk to. One example used was - "Did you see the fat Chinese woman in the back row, playing with the dried raisens?"
45. Converse (disagree). About 10 minutes into the main intermission this group repeated its blast, outside, downstairs, near the loading docks.
46. Improvisation<sup>f</sup>. The above mentioned performer also disagreed with the idea and reality of the program hawker, telling her to "shut up", etc.
47. Trumpet Duo<sup>c</sup>. About 10 minutes into the main intermission this group repeated its blast, outside, downstairs, near the loading docks.
48. Converse (stocks). A married couple of performers did a prepared put-on concerning their stocks.
49. Converse (bull-shit). One performer was instructed to speak fast, heatedly and complicatedly, partly making sense and partly not. He was to keep his audience attentive and believing he was attempting to actually say something.

50. Free<sup>a</sup>. About 25 performers were involved in the piece. They were asked to do several different things and knew what some others might be doing. From this they derived a general "spirit of the composition." As part of my piece they were invited to invent an event in the "spirit of the composition". For example, one of the performers chose to carry a cassette tape recorder in a sack during intermission. The tape consisted mainly of silence with an occasional short, loud burst of electronic sounds.
51. Improvisation<sup>g</sup>. One result of the above occurred when the performer noticed 3 of the well-dressed rich posing for a photograph. He was fortunate that as he walked behind them the startling sounds went off just as the picture was being snapped.
52. Unforeseen Development<sup>f</sup>. Another result of this "free" occurred in the following manner. The series of sounds suddenly went off. A girl standing near by jumped and said, "What was that?" The armed guard standing next to her said, excitedly, "I don't know, but by God I'm going to find out." And for the duration of the intermission the guard followed the performer and his suspicious sack.
53. Free<sup>b</sup>. One performer had a carrot sticking out of his belt, under a coat, which was periodically flashed, and which was loudly bitten immediately preceding the second half of the concert.
54. Free<sup>c</sup>. One performer had a card reading "table" sticking out of his coat pocket.
55. Improvisation<sup>h</sup>. The above performer denies that this was his "free".
56. Free<sup>d</sup>. One performer met people on their way to the lobby warning them of the 2 armed guards.
57. Unforeseen Development<sup>g</sup>. One of the well-dressed grabbed the above mentioned performer by the shirt and screamed in his face.
58. Walk-in. About 6 performers were instructed to be among the last people to enter the auditorium preceding the last half of the concert. They went down the aisle to their row and, in a slightly exaggerated manner, waddled to their seats.
59. Unforeseen Development<sup>h</sup>. Everyone went home at intermission. Apparently the rich hated the music too much and the non-rich hated the rich, at least for arriving 40 minutes late.
60. Prop<sup>a</sup>. During the 2nd half of the concert, 2 performers were to lean an old stage prop against a lobby wall near the drama exhibit. This was not to be "in the way".
61. Prop<sup>b</sup>. During the 2nd half of the concert I took a large sign outside and, along side the path to the parking lot, threw it into the mud and slightly covered it with water and old pipes. It was still readable but not obviously placed. It read "Maynard Ferguson". It was still there the next day.
62. Unforeseen Development<sup>i</sup>. The day after the concert the muddy ground around the hall was fertilized. The workmen simply threw the fertilizer on top of the sign. Parts of the sign are still visible (but no longer readable).

63. Detour<sup>a</sup>. At one point along the walk to the parking lot, I shoveled mud onto it — just enough to force people to step over it.
64. Detour<sup>b</sup>. During the 2nd half of the concert a rope was to be strung up outside so as to route pedestrian traffic in certain ways.
65. Unforeseen Development<sup>j</sup>. An old coat rack had been moved to the middle of the lobby during the 2nd half of the concert.
66. Parking Lot. Four performers were to separately mill about and interact with people after the concert in the huge parking lot. What they did might range from the mundane, e.g. "Do you know where a telephone is?", through a medium "How did you like the concert?", to something mildly offensive, e.g. "Big deal!" These examples are all linguistic. They could also be surprise vocal or instrumental sounds, visuals (e.g. hide and then pop-out), etc.
67. Stop Light. After the concert an accordion player was to be situated in the bushes at the Torrey Pines stop light, about 1 mile from the concert hall. He was instructed to randomly pick some of the exiting automobiles and serenade, scare, surprise, etc.
68. Improvisation<sup>i</sup>. Due to the early exit of most of the audience stars, a few of the above events did not occur.
69. Alertness<sup>f</sup>. At the reception after the concert there was a short, blast of taped music from no-one-knows-where.
70. Coincidence<sup>g</sup>. The morning after the concert the sun came out.
71. Coincidence<sup>h</sup>. The next morning, in my "ear-training" class a musical car horn went off at 9:40. Every day for the next week that was repeated.
72. Note-in-box<sup>b</sup>. Several days later I placed a note in another faculty member's mail box. It read -
- "Ken, The meeting-demo tomorrow at Muir has been called off. See you next week - Terry."
73. Improvisation<sup>j</sup>. Throughout this period of the piece, I lied concerning when parts of my piece would occur.
74. Alertness<sup>h</sup>. I showed a faculty member an announcement I had written pertaining to some auditions. The faculty member continually broke-up laughing while reading it, apparently thinking it was part of the piece. It was a simple, direct announcement as to time, place and necessary preparation.
75. Improvisation<sup>k</sup>. I was advised that the day before the last concert, March 14, my ear-training class was to present a demonstration of its skills for the other sections and vice-versa. I suggested that they prepare a couple of examples ahead of time but we would act as if we were sight-reading during the demonstration.
76. Unforeseen Development<sup>l</sup>. They didn't prepare and the demonstration went as usual.

77. Note-in-Box<sup>c</sup>. On March 14 I scribbled an almost illegible note concerning phoney chemicals, etc. and put it in a small box and put the box in a faculty member's mail box.
78. Note-in-Box<sup>d</sup>. The day before the last concert, March 14, I cut out an eighth-note shape from a blank sheet of paper, wadded it up, and put it in a different faculty member's mail box.
79. Sign. On March 14, I posted, in several places, a hand written announcement that - "The rehearsal for the New Age Jam Bam will be Sat., March 17 at 1:00 PM in B210."
80. Improvisation<sup>1</sup>. The general mood was such that I felt it unnecessary to perform most of the following events, thus the absence of associated developments.
81. Program Correction. Before the last concert and in addition to the regular program, someone was to hand out program corrections which contain no changes.
82. Tall Roamers. At intermission 3 men approximately 6'10" were to roam the premises - usually apart from each other, but occasionally covering (never directly associating). They were to be supplied with cards reading 5'9".
83. Exhibit. On the March 15 concert, there was to be an exhibit in the lobby at intermission of something - nice and real but totally unrelated to anything in this festival.
84. Jazz Band. Several faculty members - ex-jazz players were to form a band and play a few 1940's dance band charts at intermission.
85. 2 legs. 2 women were directed to go discretely into a women's room stall. One person should sit on the toilet, both feet facing forward. The 2nd was to face the first and prop one leg on the stool. An entering neighbor would notice 3 feet - 2 facing out and one facing in.
86. Pot. Someone was to burn a marijuana cigarette in a stairwell, restroom, etc. so that the odor became obvious.
87. Backless Dress. A woman was to wear a strapless dress. Just above the top of the back of the dress was to be painted a narrow brown line, from one side to the other.
88. Name Tags. 2 faculty members were to wear name tags with their own names on them.
89. Movement/Sound. During the March 15 intermission all conversationalist performers, in various parts of the lobby and on cue from the composer, were to abruptly raise and drop an arm while simultaneously yelling rather meekly.
90. Sabotage. In case of an anti-my-piece I had several performers prepared to chant "sabotage" and a large "sabotage" banner to unroll from the walkways above the lobby.
91. Ogdon Piece. The Ogdon piece became part of my piece by virtue of the fact that 4 of the performers in his piece agreed to play only because I asked them to (as part of my piece).



92. Unforeseen Development<sup>m</sup>. I botched up my spot-lighted solo in Ogdon's piece.
93. Homes<sup>a</sup>. Faculty members' or guests' homes were to be staked out after the concert. Whenever he desired, the performer was to make a loud, unusual, short sound. Then repeat it in about 30 minutes.
94. Homes<sup>b</sup>. Same as above except it was to be done early the next morning.
95. Alertness<sup>i</sup>. One of the performers who declined to stake out the homes later said he realized his declining was part of the piece.
96. Phone call. I contacted a bass-baritone singer and friend at the University of Illinois (Jeff Foote) to help in this section of the piece. He called the chairman of the Music Department at UCSD and, using the name Arnold Bolen and a very authoritative sounding voice, said that he (J.F.) had been contacted by American Airlines to represent them. It seems that a young, new executive at AA liked avante-garde music and wanted to find performers to do "new" music in-flight, on a trial basis. Since AA did not know how to go about this, they had contacted Mr. Bolen at Southern Illinois University (who was in the Continuing Education Department) to do the leg work. Mr. Bolen was in the process of contacting various universities to see who would be interested in such a project and of course knew of UCSD's reputation in "new" music. He then asked the chairman to check around to see if there might be any interest in the project. Mr. Bolen said he would call back in about 2 weeks, but if the chairman had positive information sooner Mr. Bolen could be reached at the following telephone number.
100. Improvisation<sup>m</sup>. Mr. Foote used a friend's telephone number at SIU who had been alerted, and.....etc.
101. Alertness<sup>l</sup>. Jeff tried approximately 10 times to reach the chairman with no success. He asked if that was part of the piece.
102. Score. This document is part of the piece.

Comments:

Coup De Ville developed over a period of about 2 weeks (it was open-ended with respect to a beginning and an end but, for the purposes of this document I arbitrarily stipulated limits). The composition consisted of events which I specifically planned and those which were planned only in the most general sense, e.g. performer and composer improvisations, performer and audience responses, and coincidents. Everyone became a performer-composer by responding and filling in details. (Some of the different kinds of responses occurred because of different degrees of knowledge about the piece).

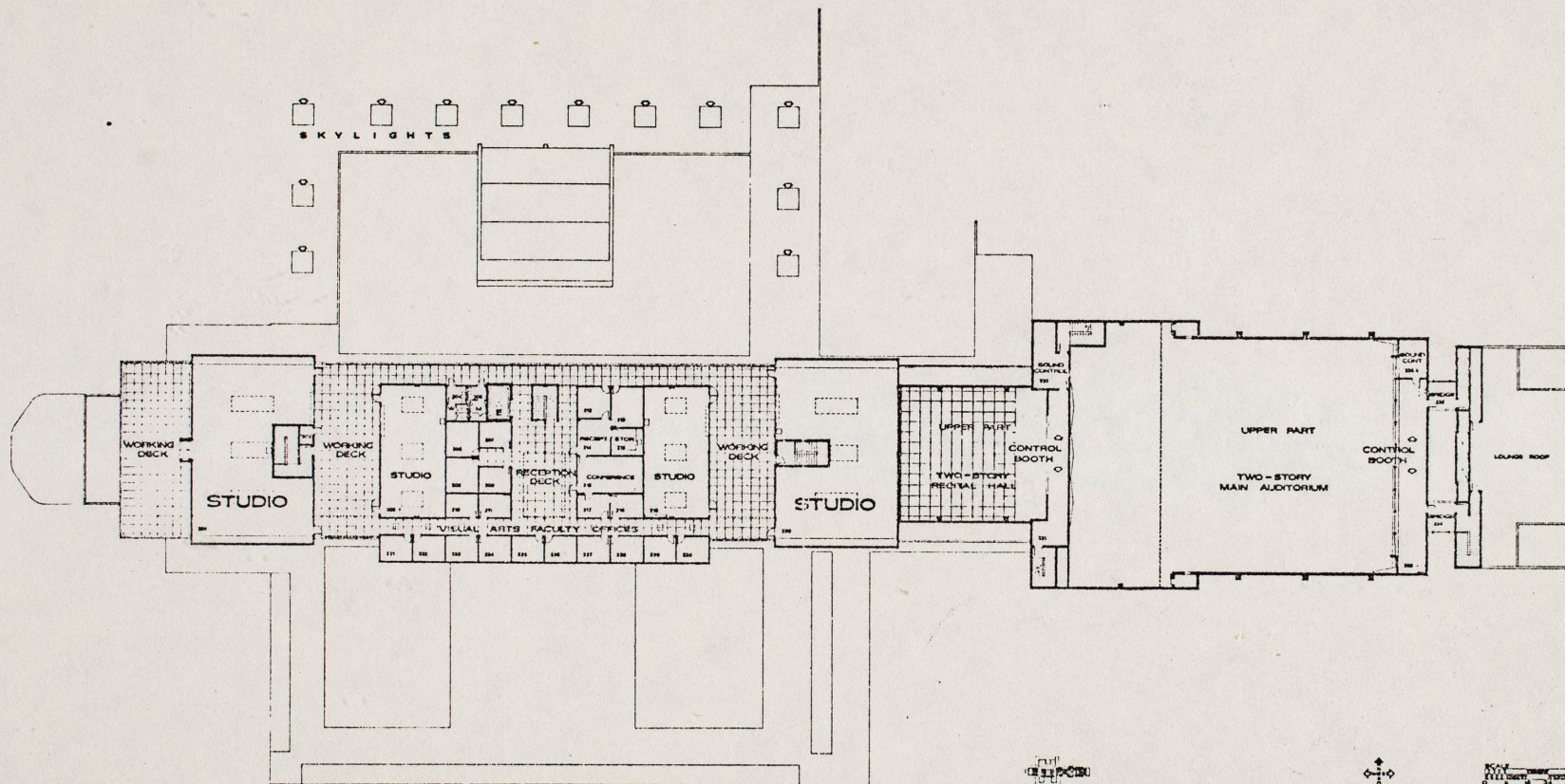
Typical types of private responses by non-knowers (audience) include – "What the hell was (is) that?; God, that's odd!; That's dumb!; That's funny!; Is this a put-on or not?"

Typical types of private responses by partial-knowers (performers) include – "Could that be part of the piece? (Indeed one of the more interesting implications of the piece is the great degree of attentiveness, of curiosity, awareness, perceptiveness, etc. that was engendered); Ha-Ha!; This is fun!; This is dumb!; This is difficult to pull off!; I'm not going to do that!"

Typical types of private responses by the composer included – "Ha-Ha!; That's dumb!; That's beautiful!; That's interesting!; I'm not going to do that!"

- Ed Harkins





SECOND FLOOR - STUDIO LEVEL  
MANDEVILLE CENTER

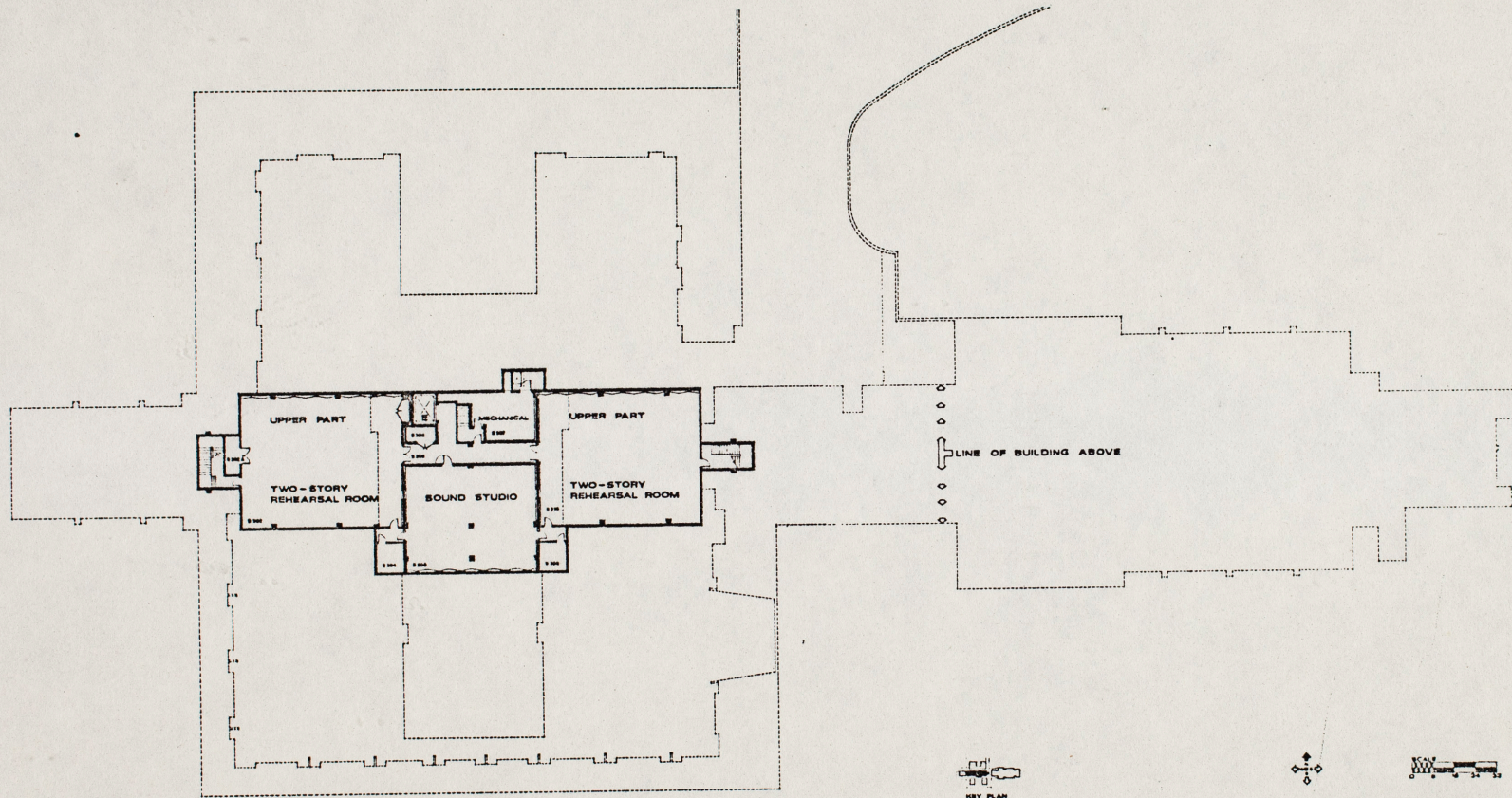
KEY PLAN



SCALE 1/8" = 1'-0"

A. QUINCY JONES, F.A.A. AND ASSOCIATES, ARCHITECTS





REHEARSAL ROOM LEVEL  
MANDEVILLE CENTER

