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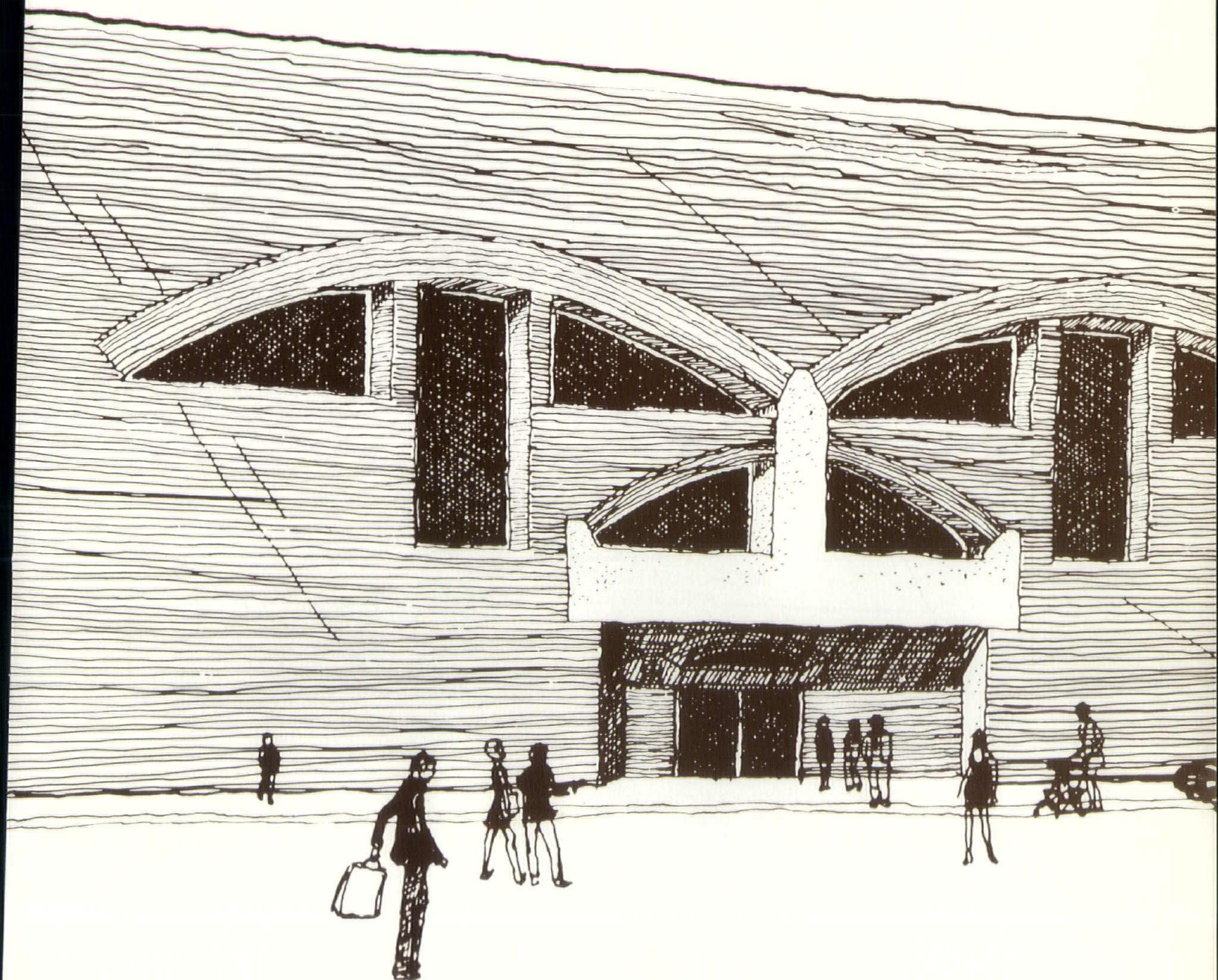
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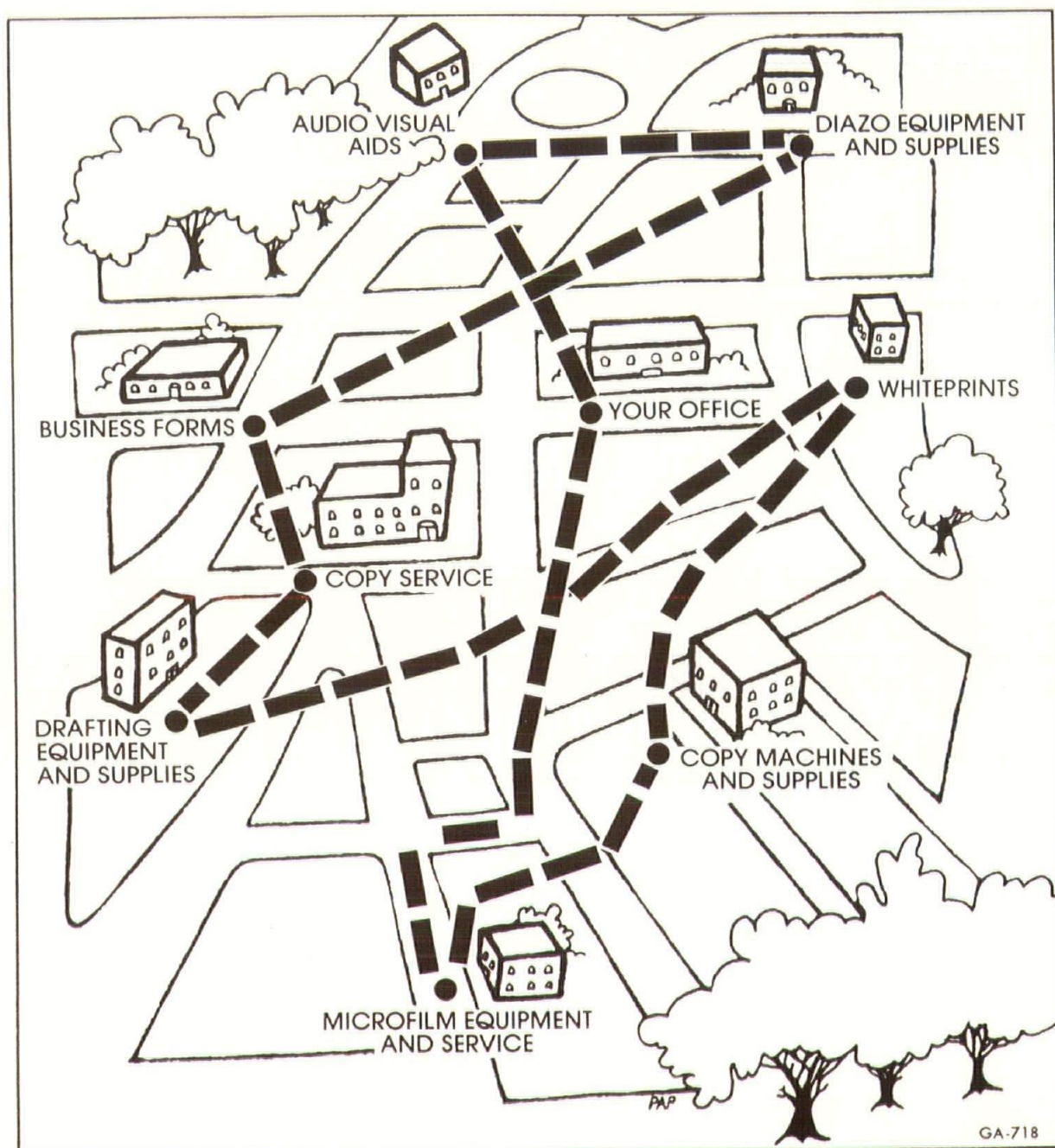
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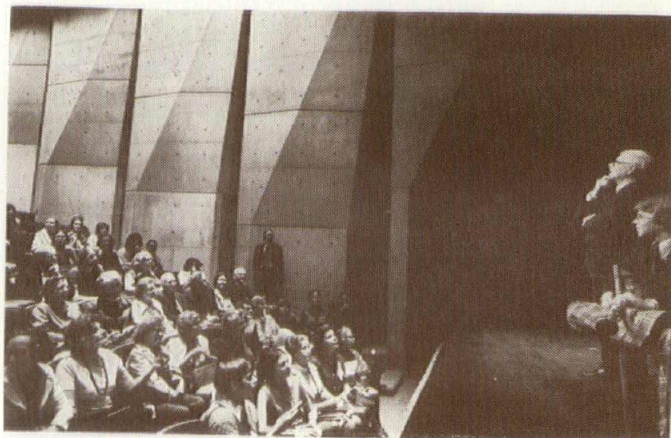
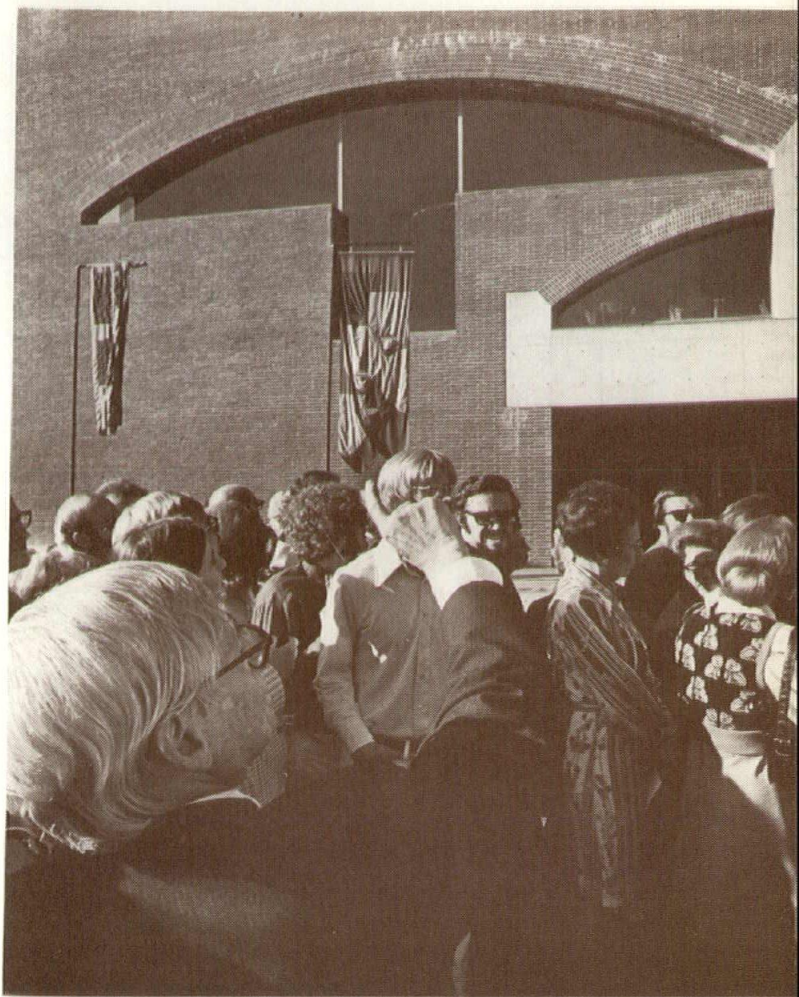
THE VIOLIN AND THE VIOLIN CASE

Louis I. Kahn's first theatre
The Community Arts Center
Fort Wayne

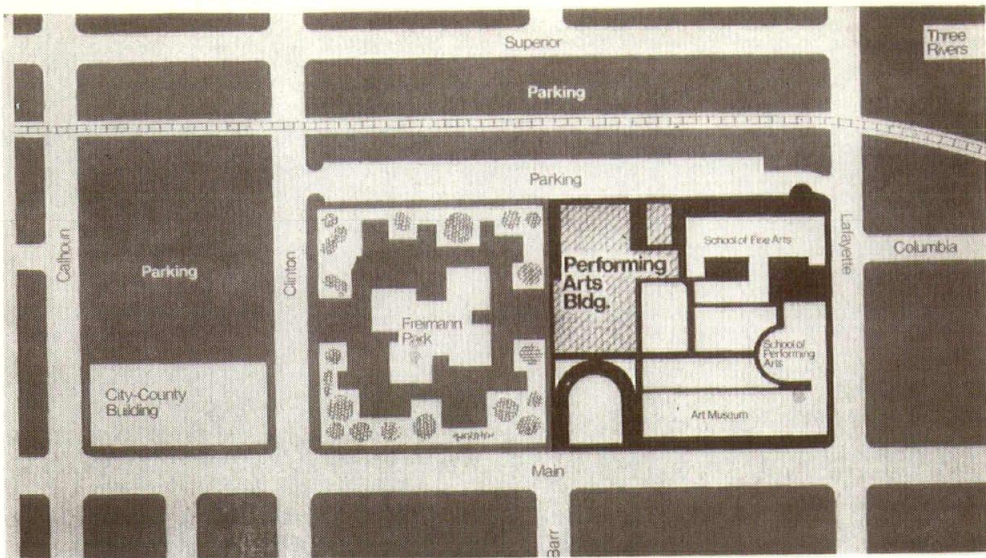
The week of October 1-6, 1973 was Dedication Week for The Community Arts Center, Fort Wayne, Indiana. The weather smiled, for the most part, on the many students, citizens, musicians, artists, architects and dignitaries who came to experience or to be part of the interesting and multifaceted Dedication Program. Drawing from Fort Wayne's Fine Arts' Community as well as from other areas, the program was designed to demonstrate the potentials of the new center as well as to honor those who had had a part of its development.

The Center is the partial realization of a dream of The Fort Wayne Fine Arts Foundation, of those in the arts, and of the citizens of Fort Wayne. At least partly forgotten in the celebration of its opening were the delays, the reduction in scope, the redesigns, the cost overruns and the criticisms of its architecture. Here, after twelve years of often frustrated effort by many persons, was a building to use, and the beginning of a possible larger arts center. Along with the City-County Building, the remodeled Allen County Court House, Freimann Square and the Central Fire Station, The Arts Center has become an element in Fort Wayne's new Civic Center which is rising on redeveloped land.

The Community Arts Center is operated by The Fort Wayne Fine Arts Foundation, a privately funded organization founded in 1955, whose members include Fort Wayne Ballet, Fort Wayne Civic Theatre, Fort Wayne Art Institute, Fort Wayne Museum of Art, Fort Wayne Philharmonic Orchestra and Fort Wayne Community Concerts. The four and one-half million dollars required for the Center's construction were raised largely by private donation and local solicitation, The Freimann Trust and other bequests representing a smaller part of the funding. Fort Wayne and Allen County have voted funds to partially defray operating costs, but no public monies were used for construction.



Louis I. Kahn at the dedication of the Community Arts Center, Fort Wayne. Above, with tour group—"A tall fountain should be here." Below, on stage, Kahn discusses the design of the theatre.



Site Plan above shows Art Center's location in Fort Wayne Civic Center. Kahn's theatre is seen thru the trees of Friemann Square, below.



That a city the size of Fort Wayne (about 200,000) has been able, through unfailing support of private citizens, to underwrite a Fine Arts Organization of nationally recognized quality is regarded everywhere as something of a miracle. The opening of the new Center, then, was the very real concern of the whole community, much more so than if the building had been the outright gift of a wealthy benefactor.

In 1961, after a series of interviews with other firms, The Fine Arts Foundation appointed architect Louis I. Kahn of Philadelphia to design what was then to be a complex of buildings housing all of the fine arts organizations on one site. This site—two city blocks in Fort Wayne's older commercial district—had been purchased by The Fort Wayne Redevelopment Commission with HUD funds and was a portion of its Downtown Redevelopment Project. The Fine Arts Foundation took option on the site which was gradually cleared of blighted 75-100 year old brick and wood party-wall structures.

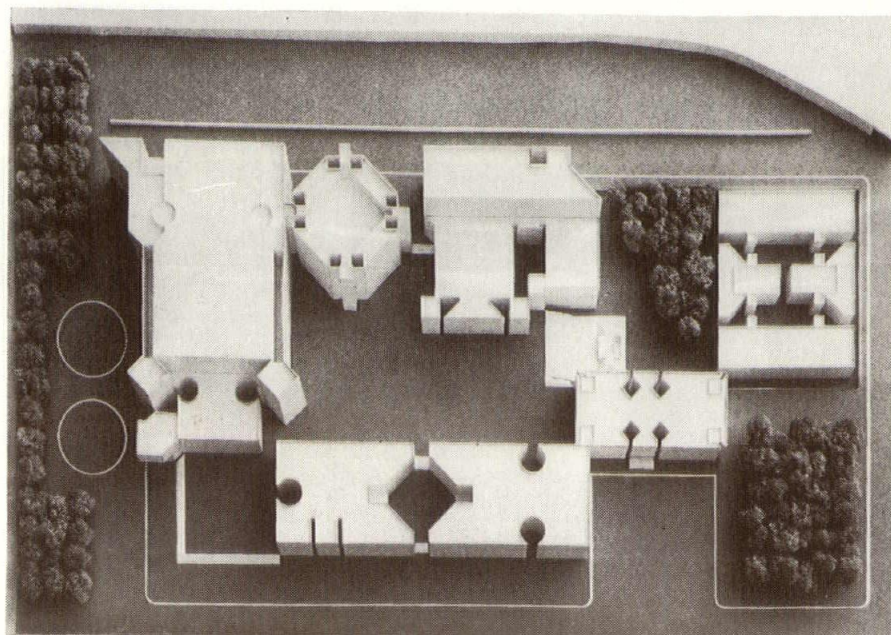
There were programs and schemes, sketches and models, brochures and fund drives and many meetings with Kahn in Fort Wayne during a period when his name was gaining world renown. There were readjustments within the Fine Arts group. The Historical Museum, at first an element, withdrew. Kahn had to begin anew many times, but finally, in June, 1966 he presented a new model of a leaner complex with great hopes that perhaps this could be accepted.

Clustered, sometimes connected, buildings were arranged around a central Court of Entrance. A Music Hall of 2,500 seats was a pivotal element. Perimeter walls were perforated by inward-growing

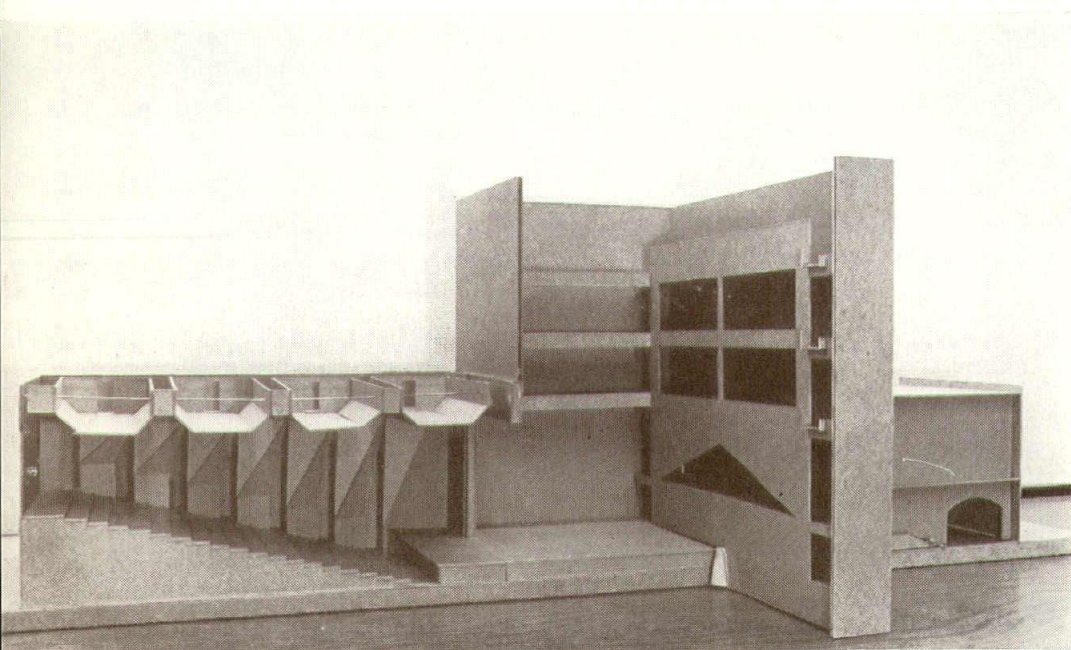
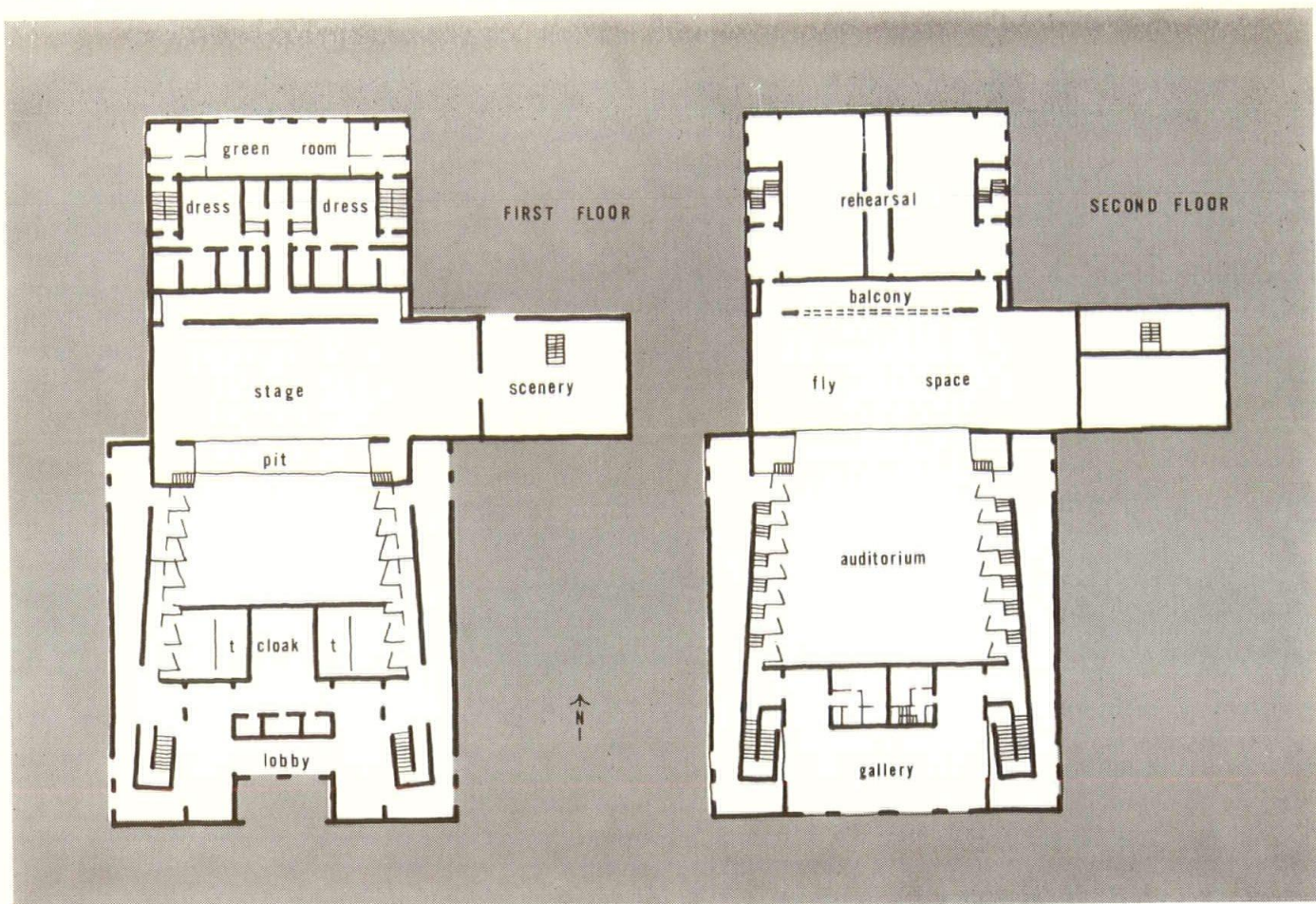
multi-story light wells. Kahn felt very strongly at this presentation that the entire complex should rise at one time and that he should be commissioned to prepare complete documents for all of the buildings.

Estimates made for the entire complex, however, indicated costs believed at the time to be completely beyond the conceivable base of private resources. After more than five years of struggle The Fine Arts Foundation now found itself in an indefensible position: the public could not accept the estimates and The Redevelopment Commission was pressing for purchase of optioned land. A difficult decision was made—the scope of the project was reduced and approximately half the site area was relinquished to the Freimann Trust as a site for a new urban park which was to become known as Freimann Square.

Architect Kahn then devised new schemes which contemplated only one theatre and a site development which could accommodate only some of the fine arts organizations. Drawings were produced for a structure housing most of the performing arts needs, but which could not serve as a Philharmonic Music Hall. The program was essentially that used for the eventual building. Again, however, preliminary costs were too high and the structure was redesigned. When high bids were received on the redesigned structure, several weeks of negotiations produced economies and an upward adjustment of the budget, largely possible through an additional bequest by The Freimann Trust. The site was purchased after many advances in option deadline by The Redevelopment Commission and construction went ahead even though complete funding was not in hand.



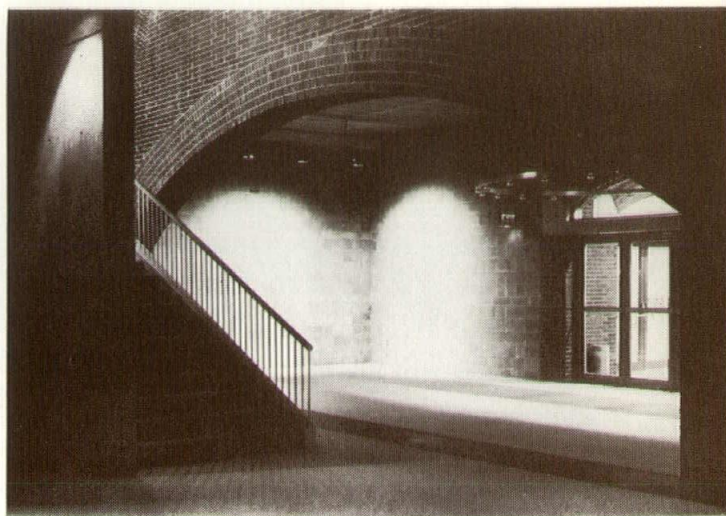
Early Kahn model of proposed Fine Arts complex. The 2500-seat Philharmonic Music Hall is in upper left corner.



Floor Plans, above, and Kahn's sectional model, left, explain final Art Center design.



Theatregoers enter the Arts Center, left, and lobby doors from the East stair loggia, right.



Fort Wayne's Community Arts Center has been described as an intimate setting designed for drama, music and dance. The 767-seat auditorium with an orchestra pit convertible to a thrust stage will accommodate any Ballet or Civic Theatre performance. It is very suitable for the chamber music performances of the Philharmonic Orchestra—indeed the acoustics of the room drew raves when the full Orchestra performed there during Dedication Week. A three-story high scenery fly and a large set workroom supplement the stage proper. George Izenour, Yale professor of Theatre Design and Engineering, Kahn's consultant in these areas, describes the theatre as "a highly articulated, artistically unique instrument created for stage speech and chamber music—one of the great public spaces of North America."

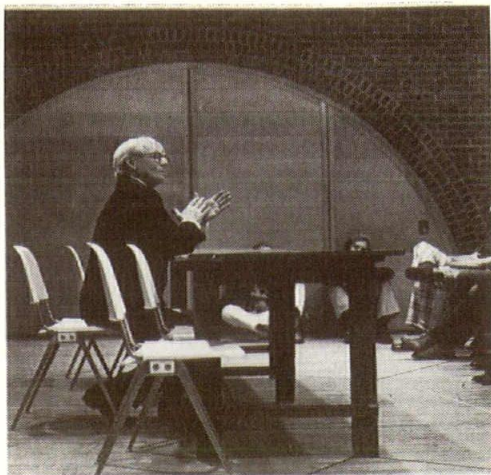
Many people have seen the street facade of the building as a theatre masque and feel that one enters through the "mouth" of the masque. Kahn has said that this was not his intention, but that the unique forms resulted from efforts to restrain the thrusts of the arches which soar over its openings. The entry vestibule gives right and left onto stair loggias which extend full height down the sides of the auditorium. There is a dramatic sense of height and openness in these tall flanking spaces—a sense of excitement and a sense of rhythm in the gaited staircases that lead to the many single doors of the auditorium. Behind the entry-boxoffice vestibule are cloak and concession areas. Above is the Gallery which opens to the stair loggias and to the cityscape thru a series of Kahn's great brick arches.

Behind the stage are two Rehearsal Halls, dressing rooms, an actor's house or "Green Room," a passage to a balcony which runs along the rear wall of the stage. An almost separate "power house" contains heating and mechanical equipment.

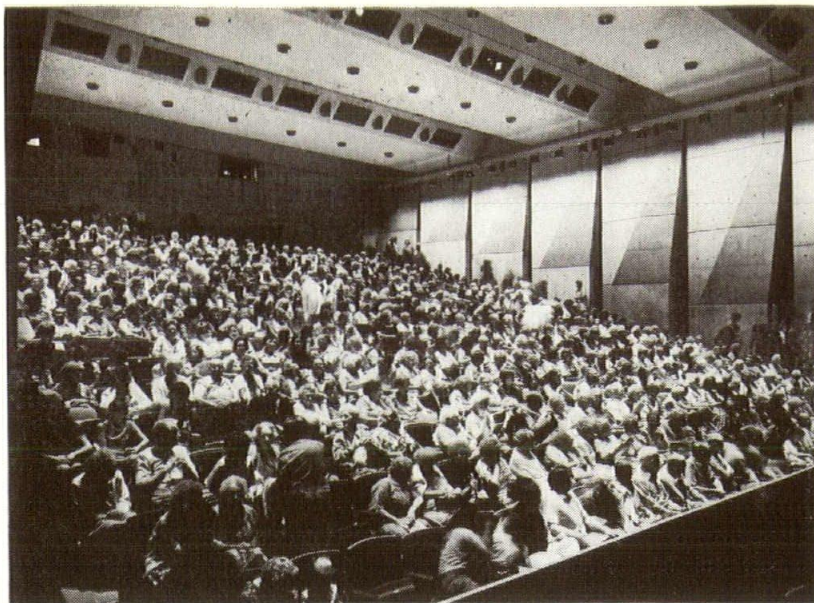
The Center is constructed of brick, site-cast and precast concrete and concrete block. All exterior walls are load-bearing brick with block infill. Brick is extended into the interior for use in the great arched openings and at jambs and spandrels of tiered windows on the east and west. Precast tees span 115' clear above the Auditorium, resting on exterior walls. This is the shell, or "Violin Case," as Kahn likens it.

Enclosed by but completely free of the case, the "Violin," or acoustically tuned auditorium, is a separate structure of site-cast concrete. Its walls are splayed and folded into intricate vertical forms. These provide acoustic correction and form light and sound traps at 14 single entrance doors (to minimize latecomer intrusions on the performance). Overhead stage-type downlights cast dramatic light-and-shadow patterns on these folded walls. Theatrical lighting access corridors form the auditorium ceiling. These corridors are concrete tubes spanning the auditorium and are independent of the roof.

Kahn feels that this "building-within-a-building" concept was necessary to guarantee that harsh exterior noise—the busy nearby elevated railway, traffic, aircraft—would not disturb even the most delicate passages of a performance. This has been completely realized.



Kahn at student seminar, above, and auditorium interior, right.



Carefully planned form tie depressions and incised form joints in the site-cast concrete create line and pattern in the great vertical masses. Concrete, concrete block and oak are as unashamed as the brick and are seen in their natural state throughout. Honesty in such large doses was very difficult for most people to swallow, however, and Kahn was frequently asked by the public when these materials would be "finished." "I think they are finished," he would reply, "Well-made concrete deserves to be exposed." The special block was not defended in this fashion, however, and the precast is too smooth and too high to offend.

Long a teacher of architecture at University of Pennsylvania, in Philadelphia, Louis I. Kahn was born on the Isle of Osel in the Baltic in 1901. He came to the United States in 1905 and became a citizen in 1915. Kahn received his bachelor of Architecture degree at the University of Pennsylvania in 1924 and has many high and honorary degrees, medals and awards from many sources including The Royal Swedish Academy of Fine Arts, The World Academy of Arts and Sciences and the National Institute of Arts and Letters. Kahn was the 1971 recipient of the Gold Medal of The American Institute of Architects. Dedication speaker John B. Hightower, President of The Associated Councils of the Arts, New York City, called Kahn "the greatest living architect in the world to-day." Famous Kahn buildings in the United States are The Salk Institute for Biological Sciences, La Jolla, California; The Yale Art Center; The Kimball Museum of Art, Fort Worth and the recent library of the Phillips Exeter Academy, Andover, New Hampshire.

Held by many to be magnificent architecture, the Fort Wayne Community Arts Center, Kahn's

first theatre, lies in the shadow of disappointment, frustration and misunderstanding. Kahn came to Fort Wayne for the dedication and was beset by many critical questions regarding his design. He conducted a seminar for architectural students (open to the public) in the West Rehearsal Room after the dedication ceremony. Following a film on his work, Kahn discussed the nature of Architecture and of its special meanings for him. In an almost mystically philosophical mood, he spoke quietly of "beginnings" and of influences and values rather than of examples of his work.

Later, at each of the Center's four corners, Kahn appeared and spoke to gathered groups about his building and about architecture in general. He attempted to answer questions, many of which were polite, but some of which were piercing and provoked strong defensive answers. Most of the answers were genuine, patient and philosophical, however, and often delivered with twinkling eyes were the familiar Kahnisms: "If you ask a brick what it wants to be it would say 'an arch,'" "The sun never knew how great it was until it shone upon a brick wall," "Concrete is molten stone, a magnificent material—it would be criminal to cover it with anything," "An artist always makes apparent how he makes things—he never disguises or veneers," and "Trees are too fragile."

Lightly veiled were Kahn's annoyances with his working situation during the project's planning, with the budget limitations he had to observe, with the concrete block he was forced to use inside instead of the brick he loves, and with the softening effect of Freimann Square's trees through which one sees his building. And through it all ran the deep and understandable regret that his first scheme was not carried out. (continued on p. 13)

A report on what is being done about the gas situation.

This is one of a series of reports about the gas situation. The Gas Utilities of Central Indiana want you to know what is being done to assure future supplies and what can be done to conserve present supplies.

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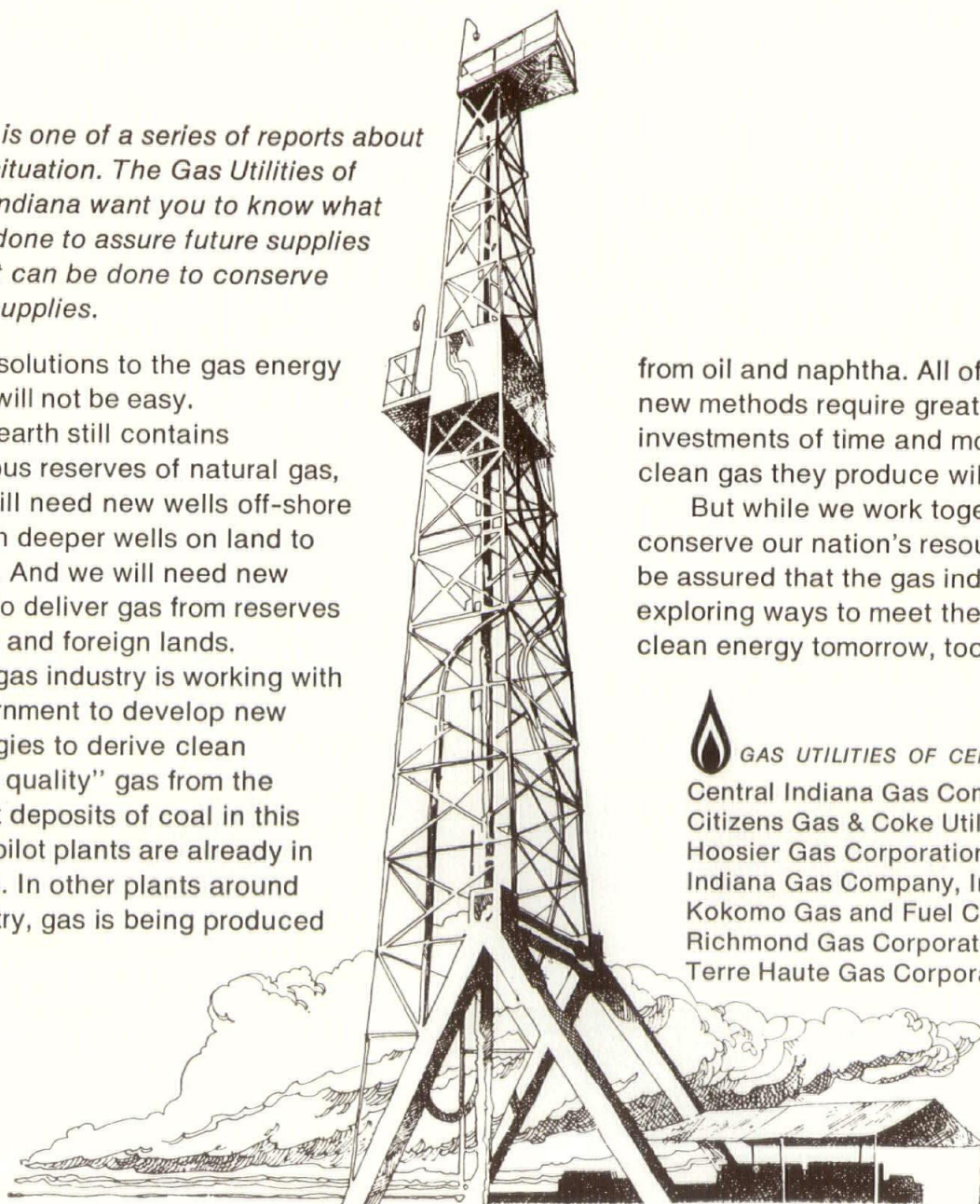
from oil and naphtha. All of these new methods require great investments of time and money, and the clean gas they produce will cost more.

But while we work together today to conserve our nation's resources of energy, be assured that the gas industry is exploring ways to meet the need for clean energy tomorrow, too.



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THE VIOLIN AND THE VIOLIN CASE

(continued from page 10)

It is there now, Kahn's building, and will be there for the generations. It is his "violin case" and the theatre within the violin—the two never touching. It is controversial for most of Fort Wayne, this strange building with the "face" and the complexion problems which will disappear after adolescence. It will age gracefully and settle into the city and be used, used, used—for it does and will continue to work well—and therein lies its real greatness.

Any new building must pass through a period during which people become used to it, but even when it is old and grimy and accepted, Kahn's theatre will be different from its neighbors — for in its great spaces will always be the philosophy and the mysticism of the "beginnings" of architecture and the presence of Louis I. Kahn who, often when many others did not, believed in his building and felt it was "a good work."—ARTHUR J. MATOTT

PHOTOGRAPHS: Fort Wayne News-Sentinel

Except p. 6, p. 9 right, p. 10 right by Gabriel De Lobbe
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Tour group during Dedication Week. Kahn replies to questions, below.



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RICHARD E. BISHOP, AIA
1892 - 1973

Mr. Bishop, 5940 Sherman Drive, Indianapolis, passed away in early November 1973. He was best known as the designer of most of the buildings in the Indiana state park system. His principal works include the Nancy Hanks Lincoln Memorial and the Children's Camp, Lincoln State Park; the Potawatomi Inn, Pokagon State Park; and the Abe Martin Lodge.

From 1934-1939 Mr. Bishop served the National Park Services as State Supervisor of Park and Recreational Planning for Indiana, Illinois, Michigan and Wisconsin. He was Planning Director for the Indiana Department of Conservation from 1942-1946 and afterwards went into private practice at which time he designed a Kentucky State Park. Mr. Bishop closed his office in 1971.

MERRITT HARRISON, FAIA
1886 - 1973

Mr. Harrison passed away 24 July 1973 in Westminster Village, Greenwood.

Mr. Harrison was a founder of the Indiana Society of Architects and was instrumental in uniting it with the old Indiana Chapter, AIA. He helped organize the Building Congress of Indiana in 1929 and served as chairman of the Building Congress of the United States from 1951-1954. He received his B.A. from Cornell University School of Architecture in 1911 and opened his own office in the Board of Trade Building in 1916. In partnership with William E. Russ from 1934 until the death of Mr. Russ in 1950, he maintained his own office until 1971.

Mr. Harrison's principal works include the Coliseum at the State Fair Grounds, Crispus Attucks High School, the Meridian Street Methodist Church and the Hillcrest and Broadmoor Country Clubs.

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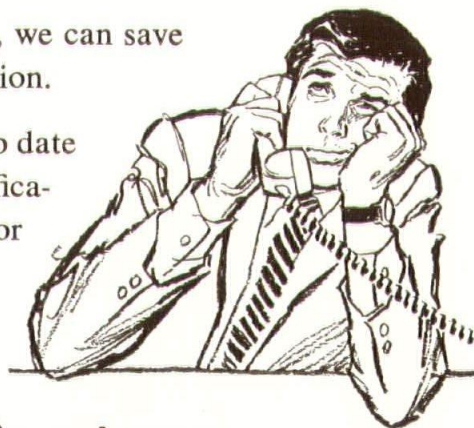
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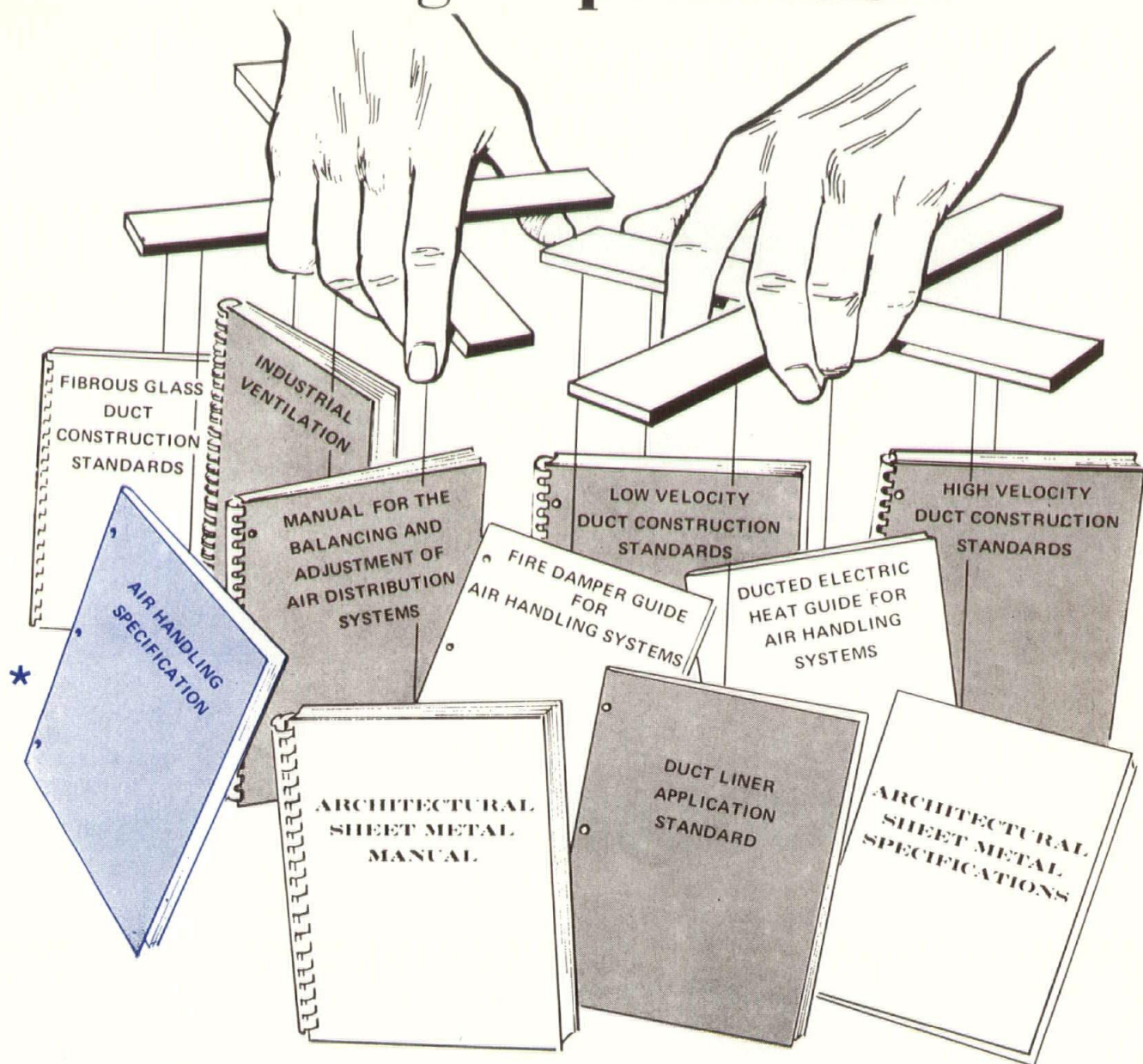
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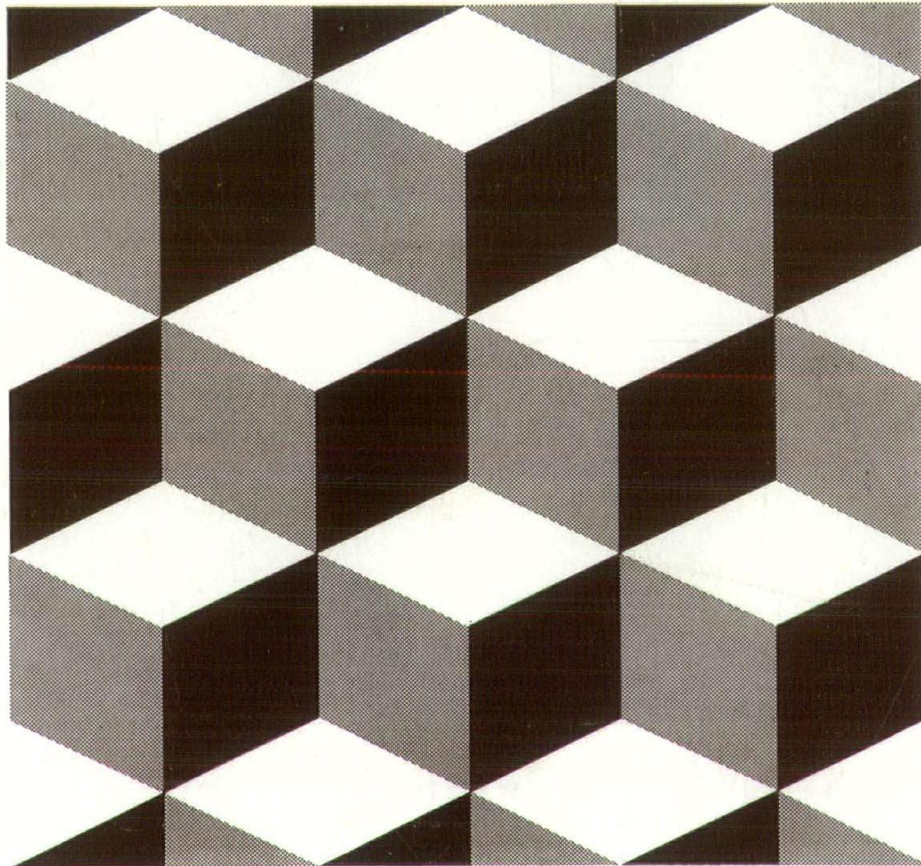
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