

For the inhabitants of one island in the Hawaiian chain, enjoying the arts has not been easy. Maui had long attracted tourists and film-makers, and as early as 1960 people had recognised the need for a theatre, but the project was dropped in the 1970's because of the expense. Brian Hartley's story begins in 1987 when over \$25 million was raised for the new...

MAUI ARTS AND CULTURAL CENTER



A little over ten years ago Honolulu based John Hara Associates, Inc. were selected out of a group numbering 45 architects, to undertake the project. Says John Hara "The design of the center is the result of a very long process. The original concept, of grouping a number of facilities around an amphitheatre surrounded by a wall has endured."

By talking to local art and community groups this concept grew into a very real one. Not just a theatre, not just a commercial venture. This Center would reflect the artistic skills of the famous, as well as the unknown amateur. In these buildings a variety of functions would be held that would not just invite community involvement but also demand it.

Such a venture required consultants that, in Hara's words "were the best in the world." He got them. Josh Dachs from Jules Fisher/Joshua Dachs and Associates Theatre Design of New York, and Larry Kirkegaard of Kirkegaard and Associates, based in Chicago.

For Josh Dachs the concept was a welcome relief. He had seen so many civic projects that never took into account the users. Subsequently the end results were often "nameless, faceless, generic". On Maui he was part of a project "where the potential residents of the house were involved in the initial discussions". It really is quite an impressive residence.

Surrounding the site is a 700 foot rock wall, a Kumupa'a, it is 6 feet tall with a 4 foot wide base that tapers to 3 feet at the top. In the wall are gates of a unique design representing Hawaiian fishnets. The Nets of Makali'i were fabricated at the University of Tasmania in the Art Foundry.

THEATRE CALLS FOR STRAND

The main theatre - the Harold K.L. Castle Theatre - with an audience capacity of 1200, could have been large. However it was essential that a sense of intimacy was maintained. Josh wanted the audience to be aware of each other. Not for him a 20th Century movie emporium more the look and feel of the theatre of Elizabethan England. Balconies wrapping back to the stage and a room "wallpapered with faces." Strand provided CD80 Advanced Electronics dimmer racks for the performance and house dimming, controlled by a Lightpalette 90.

The McCoy Theatre is an intimate studio theatre, and it is intimate in every sense of the word. A "black box" lending itself to plays that require a minimum of scenery



The 1200 seat auditorium of the Castle Theatre.



As storm clouds gather a brightly lit center beckons to the visitor.

and props, recitals, small ensembles and the like. The capacity is 300, in the style of "theatre in the round." A fixed grid accommodates the lighting rig, controlled by a 48-channel Mantrix MX console and CD80AE rack.

Outside, the 4000 capacity Amphitheatre takes full advantage of the wonderful scenery, the ocean and the tradewinds. For performers

being on stage there is a breathtaking experience. Behind the scenery a mini Lightpalette 90 and CD80 Rolling rack combo controls the lighting.

Elsewhere in the complex are galleries, meeting rooms, rehearsal areas, and administrative buildings. Further proof, if it were needed, that this center is for the benefit of all.

Only in one area has a

particular culture been highlighted. Close by the amphitheatre, in deference to Hawaiian tradition a Pa Hula has been established. This rock faced earth mound is a tradition deeply rooted in the Islands. It is a special place, for hula, for chanting, for storytelling. Hawaiian performers leave part of themselves whenever they perform. Thus their talents are transferred to future performers.

OPENING IN STYLE

On a three-day May weekend the people of Maui celebrated the opening of their Center and a total of thirty thousand people attended. It was an outstanding success. True to their ideals the organisers made certain that the bill of fare was widely diverse; theatre, dance, music of all kinds, weaving, cooking, poetry, a variety of ethnically rooted performances, flower arranging... the list was endless. The people of Maui had come to visit their cultural home for the very first time and liked it very much.

The Center's logo uses petroglyph imagery, which reflects the Center's association with Hawaii. The bird being released by a human figure symbolises free expression of the creative spirit and the practice of art.