

# Philharmonic hall opening heralds new cultural epoch

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NEW YORK — A new epoch in New York's concert life began Sunday night with the opening of Philharmonic Hall, the first unit of the Lincoln Centre for the performing arts.

The inaugural concert, in its excitement, social prestige and spirit of community welcome, matched the significance of the occasion. For the auditorium, besides being part of a vast cultural centre in a new part of town, is also the first symphonic hall with its own building to be opened in New York since the Brooklyn Academy of Music in 1908.

Abramovitz, the architect who designed the new hall, was one of those at the first concert.

## Raised \$250,000

It was a white-tie affair. Many paid \$250 a seat. The lowest price ticket was \$100. The sum raised, \$250,000, was more than double the amount taken in at the costliest of all Metropolitan Opera openings, the \$93,995 of last year. And the New York Philharmonic, entering its new home, played a program assisted by three choruses and 13 big-name soloists.

At the end of the concert there was free champagne for everyone.

The significance of the opening to all walks of life was demonstrated by the diversity of the list of attending dignitaries. Leopold Stokowski, the conductor, was there to rub shoulders with Secretary of State Dean Rusk. From the Broadway theatre there were Betty Comden and Adolph Green; from the United Nations there were acting Secretary-General U Thant and United States delegate Adlai E. Stevenson. The event was brilliant from the stand-

point of prestige, and the high fashion represented made it a treat to the eye as well.

## Also a player

Stevenson's attendance was as both a political and musical celebrity, since he will be a participant in one of the concerts later this week. He will appear as one of the soloists on Tuesday night with the Philadelphia Orchestra, narrating Aaron Copland's "A Lincoln Portrait."

Mrs. Kennedy's appearance at the event constituted one of the many on-again-off-again aspects of the hall's last few days, joining in magnitude the one other major question: would the hall itself be ready?

The hall was, at least as far as the public areas and the auditorium was concerned. Over 600 workmen worked around the clock last week to make it so.

Every one of the 2,646 seats in the hall was filled.

The problem of where to seat Mrs. Kennedy and the hundreds of other notables attending the concert was a major chore that occupied the attention of the Lincoln Centre staff for over a month. Originally both the president and his wife had indicated that they would come, and a "presidential box" area was reserved for them at the front end of the first terrace of the hall.

Then, the Kennedy's announced on Sept. 11 that they would be unable to attend, and the "box" was allotted to the next-ranking party, Secretary of State and Mrs. Dean Rusk. When Mrs. Kennedy finally changed her mind again last Wednesday, the arrangement of the area had to be replanned.