

The Architecture of Local Performance: Stages of the Taliesin Fellowship

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During the Great Depression, architect Frank Lloyd Wright founded the Taliesin Fellowship, an apprenticeship program for students of architecture and related trades that valued physical labor as an educational tool. Based at Wright's family home and the adjacent former Hillside Home School in Spring Green, Wisconsin, and later expanding to Taliesin West near Scottsdale, Arizona, the Fellowship offered tuition-paying students a hands-on alternative to a college education by conveying Wright's theory of organic architecture through practical experience. Echoing certain aspects of the British and American Arts and Crafts movements, the German Bauhaus, and the Eastern mystic Georges Gurdjieff's Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man, the Taliesin Fellowship was an experiment in communal work, living, and learning.

Like the collectives that inspired it, the Taliesin Fellowship engaged its members in a variety of artistic pursuits, and its amateur performing arts activities became cherished entertainment for local audiences. Beginning with apprentice-staged concerts, skits, and film screenings in the 1930s and presenting Gurdjieff-inspired physical movements in the 1950s, the Fellowship's performances by the 1960s culminated in original dance dramas, written and choreographed by Wright's daughter, Iovanna Lloyd Wright. Taking inspiration from Gurdjieff's philosophy and from her father's architectural concepts, Iovanna's work, though created in isolation, echoes aspects of the physical culture movement and connects with twentieth-century expressive dance.

Taken together, the performing arts activities that occurred at Taliesin and Taliesin West from the 1930s to the 1970s asserted the Fellowship's role in decentralizing the American cultural landscape. The Fellowship's performances cultivated spectators who appreciated locally developed productions, the same audiences who by the 1960s in Arizona and the 1980s in Wisconsin were receptive to the regional theatre movement. By translating spiritual ideas onto the stage through her choreography, Iovanna Lloyd Wright in particular laid the foundation for local spectators to appreciate experimental work that was created nearby, rather than imported from New York.

Frank Lloyd Wright started his apprenticeship program in the fall of 1932 with twenty-three students.^[1] An early prospectus describes the Fellowship as a structured experience: "The way of life is simple: meals in common, fixed hours for all work, recreation and sleep. Rooms for individual study and rest. Imaginative entertainment is a feature of the home life. Music, drama, literature, the cinema of our own and other countries. Evening conferences with musicians, writers, artists and scientists who visit the Fellowship or are invited to sojourn."^[2] There were no formal classes, textbooks, or exams; as former apprentice Edgar Tafel notes, students "learned by doing — the Taliesin way — and by listening."^[3] Daily tasks included assisting Wright with architectural drawings and models, carrying out construction, maintenance, and farm work, preparing meals for the Fellowship community, and, under the guidance of

Wright and his third wife Olgivanna, organizing cultural events and performances.

As one of their first construction projects, apprentices remodeled the old gymnasium of the Hillside Home School into the Taliesin Playhouse, and later built additional theatres at Taliesin West. Fulfilling Wright's plan to incorporate the performing arts into the Fellowship, the Taliesin community used its event spaces for film screenings, concerts, song recitals, lectures, and presentations of skits, plays, and dances, and also held seasonal celebrations and costume parties. Some of this arts programming was open to the public. Beginning in 1957, the Fellowship produced the annual Taliesin Festival of Music and Dance at the Pavilion Theatre at Taliesin West, which for several years remained a highlight of the Scottsdale-Phoenix area cultural scene.

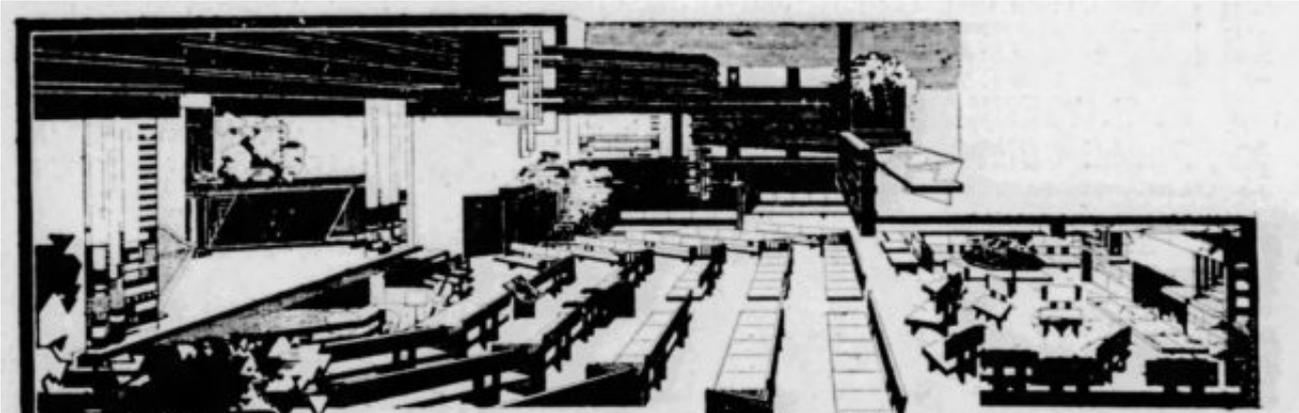
By constructing theatres and curating cultural events in Wisconsin and Arizona, far away from New York, the Taliesin Fellowship participated in a decentralization of the performing arts that had already found expression in the little theatre movement of the 1910s and 1920s. Having lived in Chicago at the turn of the twentieth century, Frank Lloyd Wright was personally acquainted with local trailblazers of the little theatre movement, including Jane Addams, the co-founder of Hull House; Maurice Browne, the director of the Chicago Little Theatre; and the actor Donald Robertson. He also knew playwright Zona Gale, who lived not far from Taliesin and was affiliated with the Wisconsin Dramatic Society, another pioneering little theatre. Stimulated by these connections, Wright expressed an appreciation for regionally-created culture and, through his Fellowship, began to participate in furthering its spread.^[4] The Fellowship's arts activities paralleled the decentralization efforts of the Federal Theatre Project of the 1930s and anticipated the post-World-War-II regional theatre movement that resulted in the emergence of not-for-profit professional theatres in cities across the country.

The Taliesin Playhouse opened on November 1, 1933. Aside from illustrating Wright's ideal of a native, organic architecture, built "from the inside out" and "in complete harmony with the landscape," the Playhouse realized key aspects of the design for a "New Theatre" that the architect had been developing over several years.^[5] The Madison *Capital Times* described the structure as "a huge artistic building made from stones of nearby hills and rough woods of nearby forests" and noted that the Playhouse "seems to be a part of the surrounding landscape."^[6] Nearly all of the construction work was completed by Wright's students: "They have felled the trees, sawed them into lumber, quarried rock, and burned lime to lay the rock in the wall. The sawed lumber has been turned into structure, trusses and furniture. Walls have been plastered and frescoed, all by Taliesin apprentices."^[7]

Echoing modernist experiments in early-twentieth-century theatre architecture, such as Adolphe Appia's Festival Theatre at Hellerau, Germany (1911), or Walter Gropius's vision for a Total Theatre (1927), the Playhouse's interior was designed as a flexible space that could accommodate a variety of events. An upper stage was intended for theatrical performances and film screenings and "a lower stage for musicians."^[8] Removable seating permitted the house to be rearranged "for dancing or other amusements."^[9] Most importantly, in contrast to large commercial theatres of the day, the intimate 200-seat Taliesin Playhouse was built without a proscenium, inviting a connection between actors and spectators, a goal Wright strove for in all of the performance spaces he designed. Writing as a mouthpiece for Wright, apprentice Nicholas Ray, who briefly served as the director of the Taliesin Playhouse and later became a well-known Hollywood movie director, emphasized the innovative nature of the design. Ray condemned "the picture frame theater of today" as a "hideous anachronism" and "essentially undemocratic." In its stead, he advocated for "a place where stage and audience architecturally melt

rhythmically into one, and the performance — the play of the senses — and the audience blend together into an entity because of the construction of the whole.”[\[10\]](#)

For local audiences, the opening of the Taliesin Playhouse was a special occasion, particularly considering that the Spring Green area did not have access to a professional performing arts venue until the 1980 founding of the American Players Theatre. The *Capital Times* reported that guests filled the theatre to capacity and were treated to four movies and a barbecue lunch. Reflecting Wright’s cosmopolitan taste as well as his sense of humor, the films screened that day included the 1931 Austrian comedy *The Merry Wives of Vienna*, shown in the original German; Ernst Lubitsch’s *Broken Lullaby* (1932) featuring Lionel Barrymore; a “Silly Symphony” by Walt Disney; and an animated cartoon of Aesop’s *Fables*. The Fellowship soon began offering public programming on Sunday afternoons. For a 50-cent admission fee, which helped supplement the group’s income during the Great Depression, visitors could watch a film, hear a musical recital by apprentices or guest artists, and partake of coffee and baked goods near the Playhouse’s fireplace. The main feature was introduced through “an interpretive talk” by a Fellowship member that offered insights into “the background, the environment, and the purpose behind the play” and was usually followed by a Disney cartoon or other short animated film.[\[11\]](#)



**TALIESIN PLAYHOUSE OFFERS
PUBLIC AUDIENCE REGULARLY
SUNDAY AFTERNOONS AT THREE
ONE OF THE WHOLE WORLD'S
FINEST PICTURE-PLAYS WITH
APPROPRIATE INTERPRETATION
MUSIC BY WAY OF INTEGRAL
SOUND - CUP OF COFFEE BY
THE FIRE ■■ U.S. HIGHWAY
II-23 NEAR SPRING GREEN WIS
ADULTS 50 CENTS STUDENTS
AND CHILDREN 25 CENTS**

Advertisement for movie screenings at Taliesin, *Capital Times* (Madison, WI), 23 March 1934.

Movies screened at Taliesin during the 1930s included a selection of recent, critically acclaimed European and American releases, such as Sergei Eisenstein's *October* (1927); G.W. Pabst's 1929 adaptation of Frank Wedekind's play *Pandora's Box* with Louise Brooks; Fritz Lang's *M* (1931) with Peter Lorre; a selection of René Clair films; Leni Riefenstahl's *The Blue Light* (1932); Dudley Murphy's 1933 version of Eugene O'Neill's play *The Emperor Jones* with Paul Robeson; Vladimir Petrov's 1934 adaptation of Aleksandr Ostrovsky's play *The Thunderstorm*; Frank Capra's *It Happened One Night* (1934) with Clark Gable and Claudette Colbert; Jacques Feyder's *Carnival in Flanders* (1935); various movies by Alfred Hitchcock; and Charlie Chaplin's *Modern Times* (1936). On occasion, the bill included experimental work, such as Man Ray's short film *The Starfish* (1928) or Jean Epstein's *The Fall of the House of Usher* (1928), as adapted by Luís Buñuel from Edgar Allan Poe.^[12] Several of the artistically

significant movies shown at Taliesin were not otherwise accessible to local Wisconsin audiences and some, such as Riefenstahl's *Blue Light*, had their regional premiere at the Playhouse. Frank Lloyd Wright screened films to entertain, but also to educate viewers. Former apprentice Curtis Besinger remembers:

Mr. Wright was a movie fan; he enjoyed good films. But he saw the great movies of the world as something more than entertainment; he saw them as a form of education in the deepest meaning of the word. They were not only a means of acquiring information about the various cultures of the world, but of nourishing and developing one's own creative resources. They were like the works of art which he acquired and with which he surrounded himself and the Fellowship. They were, as he often said, his library. Like great literature, they were sources of nourishment and inspiration. The Playhouse was a place, a setting, in which to view these works of art and to share them with the Fellowship and its guests.[\[13\]](#)

The Fellowship's cultural programming in Wisconsin and later Arizona resonated with Wright's theory of decentralization, as manifest in his utopian plan for Broadacre City, which he posited as an antidote to the overcrowding of traditional American cities. Envisioned by Wright as an expansive, democratic, technologically advanced, and environmentally friendly community that would smoothly integrate housing and workplaces with access to services and recreation, Broadacre City was never realized, but the architect continued to fine-tune, exhibit, and discuss this project until the end of his life. In 1970, Iovanna Lloyd Wright summed up her father's idea:

Frank Lloyd Wright designed a city spread out over miles of free and verdant land. Factories, theaters, stadiums, museums, restaurants, apartment buildings, hotels, office buildings, hospitals, schools, and related shopping centers are set in the midst of parks, forests, gardens, and occasional man-made lakes; or, wherever possible, incorporating features of natural beauty, streams or waterfalls. Interlaced over the countryside, with ample space among them, are broad landscaped highways and monorails, with additional traffic handled by air-rotors: noiseless, atomic powered radio-controlled airborne vehicles. Gas and smog would belong to the past.[\[14\]](#)

As Fellowship member Bruce Pfeiffer points out, "all of the principles of [Wright's] work, all of his thought about planning, building, and environment, would be connected to this concept of a decentralized, liberated society, the centerline of which would be architecture."[\[15\]](#) Created by Wright's students during the Fellowship's first sojourn in Arizona, a couple of years before construction began in 1937 on the collection of buildings that would become Taliesin West, a model of Broadacre City was first exhibited at the 1935 Industrial Arts Exposition in New York. The model incorporated Wright's recent plans for the Taliesin Playhouse as a prototype of a theatre space, and both Taliesin and Taliesin West can be viewed as attempts to realize small parts of Wright's larger vision for Broadacre City.[\[16\]](#)

In the mid-1930s, apprentice Karl E. Jensen, who, like Ray, was conveying Wright's thoughts, declared that decentralizing the American theatre by moving it "into the 'green pastures'" would result in vibrant, non-commercial local arts scenes. Claiming that "in New York during the 'season' congestion in the theater district is unbearable," and that the steep price of assembling a Broadway show, caused by "the terrible urban overhead rent, advertising, costly sets, and highly paid unionized labor," was "crippling new productions before they get a good start," Jensen argued for "breaking up the theatrical center."

Positing that “many of our finest plays are bound to be of limited appeal” and would therefore not thrive in New York’s commercial theatres anyway, he asserted that producing more plays far away from Broadway would improve the quality of the American theatre. The Fellowship’s first experiments with staging live drama, including the apprentice-written “musical farce” *Piranesi Calico* (1934), were part of a plan to “expand the activities of the Taliesin Playhouse from the showing of fine films to include a broad program of musical activities, the dance, and plays of our own making or by visiting groups.”^[17]

It was at Taliesin West where those experiments flourished. The architect’s complex near Scottsdale came to include three indoor performance spaces: the Kiva, a “stone-enclosed room,” which was often used for dinners and doubled as “a small cinema theatre”; the larger Cabaret, which, when it was completed in 1950, replaced the Kiva as a screening room and also hosted other performing arts events and dinners; and the Pavilion, which was designed specifically for the annual Taliesin Festivals of Music and Dance that began in 1957.^[18] By presenting non-commercial performances for local audiences in Wisconsin and Arizona, the Fellowship was following in the footsteps of the little theatre movement, emulating activities of the Federal Theatre Project, and anticipating the regional theatre movement.

The Taliesin community was not the first artisan collective to incorporate the performing arts, and some of its amateur theatrical activities echoed those of groups Wright was familiar with, such as Elbert Hubbard’s Roycrofters in upstate New York; Charles Ashbee’s Guild of Handicraft, which evolved into the School of Arts and Crafts in Chipping Campden, England; and the German Bauhaus, which from 1919 to 1933 and under the successive leadership of Walter Gropius, Hannes Meyer, and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe provided training in art, design, and architecture. Ultimately, however, it was a school of practical philosophy, Georges Gurdjieff’s Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man, which had the most profound influence on Taliesin.^[19] Based by 1922 at the Prieuré des Basses Loges, an estate in Fontainebleau near Paris, the Institute prized physical work, exercise, and self-discipline as a path to self-realization.

Gurdjieff was a rotund, balding man of mysterious Eastern-European origin who attracted an international group of followers to his philosophical system, among them several performing artists, such as composer Thomas de Hartmann, as well as Jeanne and Alexandre de Salzmann, who had both been associated with Émil Jacques-Dalcroze’s Institute for Rhythmic Education at Hellerau. Jeanne had been a student of Eurythmics, Dalcroze’s training program for performers that links musical rhythm with physical movement, and Alexandre had designed the lighting system for Appia’s Festival Theatre, where Dalcroze’s school was housed. Gurdjieff held a lifelong influence over Wright’s wife Olgivanna, who spent six years under his tutelage before she settled in the United States, where she ultimately built several of the mystic’s teachings into the daily routine of the Taliesin Fellowship.

As part of his self-improvement curriculum, Gurdjieff also instructed his students in a physical training program. Maud Hoffman, a guest at the Prieuré, noted that Gurdjieff’s complex workouts were inspired by “the sacred gymnastics of the esoteric schools, the religious ceremonies of the antique Orient and the ritual movements of monks and dervishes—besides the folk dances of many a remote community,” which Gurdjieff had studied during extensive travels through Central and Southern Asia.^[20] Accompanied by music often credited to Gurdjieff but perhaps at least partially composed by Thomas de Hartmann, the movements were, as Taliesin Fellowship member Cornelia Brierly later explained, “designed to coordinate mind, body, and spirit.”^[21] Gurdjieff’s followers first had to master a series of “obligatories,” exercises that formed the basis for his other movements and dances, many of which were

patterned on intricate numerical schemes derived from the enneagram, an esoteric diagram of personality traits. Iovanna Lloyd Wright illustrates the complexity of even just Gurdjieff's first obligatory as follows: "The head holds one pattern, the right arm another, the left arm another, the right leg another, and the left leg yet another. You learn them separately and then you have to put them together again, yourself."^[22]

As Lara Vetter points out, in their time, Gurdjieff's and Dalcroze's systems, between which there was some overlap, existed among "a plethora of other similar movements ... that linked bodily performance with spiritual transcendence," such as François Delsarte's System of Expression, Rudolf Steiner's eurythmy, Raymond Duncan's approach to gymnastics, and Rudolf von Laban's Mastery of Movement program.^[23] These systems appealed to European and American practitioners and filtered into modernist expressive dance. A group of Gurdjieff's disciples, Olgivanna among them, gave regular public demonstrations of the mystic's movements at the Prieuré and also staged a program in Paris in 1923.^[24] In 1924, Gurdjieff and some of his followers traveled to the United States, where their culminating performance featuring "Ritual Dancing," "Music," and "Supernormal Phenomena" took place at Carnegie Hall.^[25] Shortly after the group had arrived back in France, Gurdjieff instructed Olgivanna to return to America and begin "a new life," presumably one that would include spreading his teachings.^[26]

After she founded the Taliesin Fellowship with Frank Lloyd Wright, Olgivanna introduced Gurdjieff's ideas to her husband's apprentices, briefly offered lessons in the movements, and in 1949 sent her daughter to study with Gurdjieff in Paris.^[27] Over the course of six months, Iovanna learned the movements, including thirty-nine new exercises that the mystic had developed only recently. When she wasn't training with Gurdjieff and his other "calves," as he liked to call his female students, Iovanna continued practicing the movements by herself in a rehearsal room she rented at the Salle Pleyel.^[28] She also used any spare time she had to play harp and take lessons in harmony from Thomas de Hartmann. "My days in Paris were filled with practice and studying, starting at eight in the morning," Iovanna recalls.^[29] When, by the end of the summer, Iovanna was preparing to return stateside, Gurdjieff instructed her to propagate his ideas and teach his movements at Taliesin, a plan Olgivanna supported.^[30] As Fellowship member Kamal Amin observed, her months of rigorous training with Gurdjieff had rendered Iovanna "a focused and competent instructor of the sacred dances."^[31]

By fall 1949, Iovanna was holding regular movement classes "for the correlation of mind, feeling and body" at Taliesin West and soon began developing performances based on this work.^[32] In October, Gurdjieff died suddenly in Paris, and while Frank Lloyd Wright had always been careful not to let the mystic's ideas compete with his own, he now agreed to incorporate Gurdjieff's exercises into the Fellowship's routine. Wright later stated that he saw a "connection" between his architecture and Gurdjieff's teachings, revealing that he considered Gurdjieff "a Builder" who "believed in the building of human character as we believe in the kind of building we call Organic Architecture." According to Wright, "the training methods of [Gurdjieff] fit so well into our work here at Taliesin" because of a shared belief that "only by his own work upon himself can any man become an individual in his own right really capable of creating anything at all."^[33]

Movement practice for apprentices took place several times a week after a regular day of architectural, housekeeping, and maintenance work. While participation in the Gurdjieff exercises was voluntary, the movements were becoming an increasingly important part of Fellowship life. As Besinger mentions, "there were subtle — and not so subtle — pressures from Iovanna and indirectly from Mrs. Wright for

everyone to participate.”[34] When in the fall of 1949, alongside other prominent guests, the conductor Serge Koussevitzky witnessed Iovanna and her group of amateur dancers give their first demonstration of Gurdjieff’s movements in the living room at Taliesin West, he was impressed. Koussevitzky reportedly insisted to a hesitant Frank Lloyd Wright, “You have no right to keep this away from the world! These dances are a work which you must share with the world,” and, in the wake of this encounter, the Fellowship began planning more formal presentations.[35]

On Easter Sunday 1950, Iovanna led another movement performance at Taliesin West. While the Wrights were not regular churchgoers, they were spiritual people, and Easter with its themes of resurrection and renewal had always been a special occasion for the Fellowship. In the days leading up to the Wrights’ large annual Easter celebration, the Taliesin community would decorate hundreds of eggs, and Olgivanna would supervise apprentices in preparing traditional recipes for baba (a leavened Russian bread) and sweet, almond-infused pascha cheese, foods Olgivanna regarded as “blessed by memory and promise of life eternal.”[36] The Gurdjieff movements resonated with the spirituality of Easter, and the apprentices’ carefully rehearsed performance put on display the cohesiveness of the Fellowship. As the printed program for the demonstration explains, Iovanna believed the exercises “contain and express a certain form of knowledge and at the same time serve as a means to acquire an harmonious state of being,” promoting in the performer/apprentice “certain qualities of sensation, various degrees of concentration, and the requisite directing of the thought and the senses.”[37]

In October 1950, twenty-two Fellowship members performed a selection of “movements, dances, and exercises” for special guests at the Taliesin Playhouse to commemorate the one-year anniversary of Gurdjieff’s death, as Gurdjieff groups were also doing in Paris, London, and New York. Recreating the costumes the mystic had typically chosen for his performers, Wright’s apprentices were “dressed in white tunics and trousers, with colorful sashes.”[38] The architect, who Besinger sensed “accepted ‘movements’ as an activity that Iovanna and Mrs. Wright were interested in and supported them primarily for this reason,” showed his approval of his daughter’s work by inviting prominent clients with commissions in progress to see the Fellowship perform, including Harry Guggenheim and Florida Southern College’s president Ludd Spivey.[39]

In 1951, Iovanna again staged Gurdjieff’s movements at Taliesin West at Easter and in Wisconsin in the fall. Making an overt connection to Frank Lloyd Wright’s architecture, the Wisconsin performance was presented at the new Wright-designed Unitarian Meeting House in Madison, with the price of admission intended to help the congregation cover the construction costs.[40] Wright, who, as Joseph M. Siry writes, “conceived of the theater and the room for worship as related spatial types,” introduced the Taliesin Fellowship’s first truly public performance and used it to demonstrate “the secular side of the building whereby dances, music, plays, may be viewed by a turnabout of the auditorium seats toward an improvised stage—the social center of the society.”[41] Anticipating the intricate costumes that Fellowship members would design in future years, the female dancers now appeared in colorful Orientalist dresses and elaborate headpieces, while the male dancers were still clad in the type of “pure white” attire that had customarily been worn by Gurdjieff’s performers.[42]



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Advertisement for the Taliesin Fellowship’s November 1951 Gurdjieff movement demonstration, *Wisconsin State Journal*, 23 October 1951.

Besinger, who in 1949 had already noticed “an effort and intention to establish Taliesin as a center, of a kind, for the teaching of Gurdjieff philosophy,” suggests that the Madison performance was not only an event to raise funds for the completion of Wright’s church building, but also “an opportunity to publicize and to proselytize for Gurdjieff’s teaching.”^[43] By the early 1950s, Besinger observed that a “schism ... was developing within the Fellowship,” with “those whose primary interest was in architecture and who looked to Mr. Wright for leadership” on one side, and “those whose major interest lay elsewhere and was focused on ‘movements’ and Mrs. Wright’s interest in Gurdjieff and his teaching” on the other.^[44]

By the summer of 1953, Iovanna and a group of twenty-five dancers, including core apprentices John Amarantides, Kamal Amin, Curtis Besinger, Richard Carney, Tom Casey, Kay Davison, John Howe, Kenn Lockhart, Steve Oyakawa, Bruce Pfeiffer, Ling Po, and Heloise Schweizer, were planning their biggest movement demonstration yet, though this time the performance competed with rather than complemented one of Wright’s own projects. While Iovanna was rehearsing a program entitled “Music, Ritual Exercises, and Temple Dances by Georges Gurdjieff” for Chicago’s Goodman Theatre, which the Taliesin Fellowship had rented for the occasion, her father was assembling “Sixty Years of Living Architecture: The Work of Frank Lloyd Wright,” a major retrospective on the site of Wright’s future Guggenheim Museum in New York.^[45]

For the New York exhibit, Fellowship members helped construct a temporary pavilion that included a full-size, furnished model of a Usonian house, Wright’s prototype of a middle-class home. Apprentices were struggling to prepare for both events simultaneously, and the Chicago Gurdjieff demonstration would show the limitations of Taliesin’s amateur performers. While they were rehearsing in the emptied-out drafting room at Taliesin, trying “to master more movements than ever before,” and designing and

building “settings, costumes, and headdresses” for their ambitious Goodman program, Wright also needed them in New York to help set up the exhibition, and several Fellowship members shuttled between the two projects.^[46] “Sixty Years of Architecture” opened on October 22, 1953, less than two weeks before the Chicago performance.^[47] As Iovanna recalls, “When the time came for us to move into the theatre, our production had grown to a scale none of us could have anticipated.”^[48] The group had hired a professional conductor and a small orchestra to play Gurdjieff’s music, orchestrated by Olgivanna and Bruce Pfeiffer for harp, percussion, piano, and strings, but the dancers were afforded just one rehearsal “with full orchestra.”^[49] As Iovanna notes, “Our rental of the theatre included only one day to move in, solve our technical problems and have our dress rehearsal.”^[50]

On November 3, the Taliesin group presented a matinee and an evening show at the “sold-out” Goodman, a pioneering theatre which had first opened in 1925 but would not re-establish itself as a professional regional company until 1969.^[51] Frank Lloyd Wright, who had just returned from the opening of his New York exhibition, introduced both presentations. While Iovanna insists that her dancers “gave a very good performance, as good as it really could be with amateur performers,” and that some spectators, “were moved to tears,” the critics were not impressed with the Fellowship’s Gurdjieff presentation.^[52] Although she deemed the music “pleasant,” the reviewer for the *Chicago American* judged that the performance “doesn’t have a dance leg, nor a philosophic one to stand on.”^[53] The critic for the *Chicago Sun-Times* found the show “both exotic and monotonous.” He observed, “The dancers danced with grim, awful solemnity. Some of their sharply accented numbers stirred painful memories of hours of close order drill No one on the stage seemed to be really enjoying what he or she was doing. Maybe that’s how Gurdjieff meant it to be.”^[54] Iovanna maintains that as soon as the exhausted and dejected group returned to Taliesin, they “went right back to work” and “rebuilt in the wreckage,” but it was not until a few years later that the Fellowship planned another large-scale production, this time in familiar surroundings in Arizona.^[55]

In late April 1957, the Pavilion Theatre opened at Taliesin West for the first annual Taliesin Festival of Music and Dance. Like Wright’s other theatre buildings, the Pavilion is an intimate performance space that does not have a proscenium, allowing for a connection between performers and audience. The first Festival, which ran for three nights, attracted hundreds of local spectators. Directed by Iovanna, who also performed solo numbers, members of the Fellowship again staged a selection of Gurdjieff’s exercises and dances. However, while Gurdjieff provided the inspiration for the choreography, Iovanna had begun adapting the mystic’s movements, and the Wrights wanted the public to recognize Iovanna’s emancipation from Gurdjieff as well as Olgivanna’s influence on the performance. Explaining that Iovanna “[had] further developed her own highly individual and graceful style under the guidance of her mother,” a review of the Taliesin Festival in the *Arizona Republic* likely echoed a press release from the Fellowship.^[56] Iovanna, who saw her work as “closely related to architecture,” and who did not have any formal dance training to supplement what she had learned during her stay with Gurdjieff in Paris, later wrote, “I developed into a choreographer when, with this knowledge inside me, I could build new combinations of dances out of what before was simply an exercise.”^[57] It is also likely that, by modifying Gurdjieff’s regimented movements, Iovanna rendered them less severe than they had appeared in Chicago.

The local Phoenix press responded much more favorably to the Taliesin community’s homegrown performance than the Chicago critics had done three and a half years earlier. The reviewer for the *Arizona Republic* praised “the remarkable precision and grace of the complicated movements in unison” and “the

brehtakingly lavish and beautiful costumes for each number.” He appreciatively described the Festival experience as “a series of exotic and moving spectacles that will linger long in the memory of all who were fortunate enough to witness them.”^[58] Presented for spectators who, in contrast to Chicago audiences, had few cultural events to choose from, the Taliesin Festival was a distinctive experience. As Fellowship member Frances Nemtin argues, “Undeniably, we were amateurs, not skilled dancers; but undoubtedly our Phoenix public knew this and came to see something else not present in professional performances.”^[59] Moreover, as articulated by a local journalist, performances at Taliesin West’s Pavilion were an extension of Frank Lloyd Wright’s organic architecture: “[their] total effect must include nature’s spectacle on a spring night on the Arizona desert and Taliesin’s no less spectacular mountainside community, designed and built by Mr. Wright.”^[60]

The spring 1958 Festival opened with “Initiation of a Priestess,” a new narrative dance by Iovanna, and again presented her adaptations of Gurdjieff’s work.^[61] An article in the *Arizona Republic* stressed the Fellowship’s increasing creativity by reporting that the accompanying music, played by “woodwind, harp, and percussion instruments,” was “primarily composed and orchestrated at Taliesin.”^[62] Olgivanna illustrates the Festival’s evolution through a description of its costumes, which put the design skills of the Fellowship’s artisans on display:

We started modestly with thirty simple white costumes and now we have two hundred. They are embroidered with decorative jewels, pearls, gold trim, lamé and velvet ribbons. The beautiful head-dresses are made of metallic wires with brilliant colored stones as though suspended in the air. The men’s costumes are just as picturesque, painted with gold in bold patterns and trimmed with gold felt.^[63]

Signaling a transition from Gurdjieff’s material, the 1958 program booklet announced, “By way of the various ancient documentary dances and exercises and those which have been created at Taliesin by Iovanna Lloyd Wright, we share with you our covenant with the past and our legacy to the future.”^[64]

For the 1959 Festival, a selection of Gurdjieff dances deemed “perennial favorites” complemented “several new dances of [Iovanna Lloyd Wright’s] own composition” and a selection of medieval music “recently discovered” and orchestrated by Bruce Pfeiffer. Likely echoing another Taliesin-issued press release, the *Arizona Republic* again emphasized Iovanna’s growing independence from Gurdjieff and credited Olgivanna’s influence: “[Gurdjieff] defined the basic interpretive dance movement to [Miss Wright], and she has developed her own highly individual and evocative choreography under the guidance of her mother.”^[65] Iovanna’s new dances generally had biblical themes and were theatrical in nature. Based on Sandro Botticelli’s eponymous Renaissance painting, “Annunciation” depicts the Virgin Mary receiving her message from the archangel Gabriel that she will bear the son of God. “Masque of Duality” shows “the eternal struggle between good and evil for the possession of man. Various passions assert themselves, interweaving with the good. Finally the Archangel, emerging from the host of angels, confronts Lucifer, proud ruler of the Powers of Darkness.”^[66]

The reviewer for the *Arizona Republic* found “Annunciation” the “most delicately artistic and touching of the new numbers” and called the dance “a little masterpiece.” On the whole, he considered the Festival “an intensely moving emotional and aesthetic experience unique in the world, and on a level of professional excellence worthy of the great international festivals, or Broadway at its best.”^[67] The

comparison with Broadway demonstrates that the Taliesin Festival was a cultural highlight in Arizona, conditioning local audiences to expect original productions with expertly designed sets, costumes, and lighting. While the commercial Sombrero Playhouse, when it wasn't showing movies, had been presenting stars in touring Broadway shows since 1949, there was not a professional resident theatre in the area that staged locally created productions until 1965, when two amateur companies, the Arizona Repertory Theater and the Phoenix Little Theatre, entered into a short-lived alliance in an attempt to professionalize their operations.[\[68\]](#)

Meanwhile, the Fellowship's ambition to function as a regional performing arts center was not easy to reconcile with its architectural work, which led to internal tensions. On the one hand, several members of the Taliesin Fellowship experienced the labor-intensive Festivals as community-building events, noting that "the Festivals had all of us pulling together in a way that went beyond anything possible in most other areas of Fellowship life. We all shared exhaustion and exhilaration and the wonder of having been part of creating a beauty we could not have imagined or created alone."[\[69\]](#) On the other hand, as former apprentice David Dodge claims, while Taliesin's involvement in theatrical production "certainly built" community, "it also broke it up, in a way, because it put the concentration not on the architecture. It was definitely a major effort in a totally separate direction," with "the drafting room [shutting] down almost for three months while rehearsals went on."[\[70\]](#)

On April 9, the 1959 Taliesin Festival of Music and Dance was interrupted when Frank Lloyd Wright died just a couple of months shy of his ninety-second birthday. Later that year, the Fellowship staged a revised version of the program at the University of Wisconsin to memorialize the architect. When she announced the event, Olgivanna remarked, "I have contributed most of the music."[\[71\]](#) By the following year, the Festival no longer included any of Gurdjieff's work, and instead began to feature substantial dance theatre pieces by Iovanna, choreographed to music composed by her mother. Emphasizing the local origin of the new work, Olgivanna now called Gurdjieff's dances "rudimentary" and "fragmentary" and "simply an alphabet," maintaining that "gradually in the course of 12 years my daughter worked with the young people [of Taliesin] utilizing this alphabet, this grammar, which she has replaced by her own grammar. Now it is entirely a new story. It has become a new form of dance—her very own creation, Taliesin-born."[\[72\]](#)

While the Festival's programming moved away from Gurdjieff, the spiritual themes that had always characterized the Fellowship's performances persisted. Between 1957 and 1960, a choral presentation of the 150th Psalm was staged as a prelude to each performance, introducing the evening's program as offering praise to God. The 1960 Festival featured Iovanna's adaptation of Anatole France's short story "The Procurator of Judea," translated into dance drama as "Mary Magdalene." The piece juxtaposes "poet-philosopher" Antonius's memories of his life in Judea with those of his old acquaintance Pontius Pilate. While Antonius nostalgically relives his infatuation with Mary Magdalene, Pilate takes a detached view of the past, revealing that he does not remember Jesus or his crucifixion. In Iovanna's version, both Mary Magdalene and Jesus appear, with Jesus reciting the Sermon on the Mount and other lines "verbatim from the New Testament." To supplement her adaptation of France's story, Iovanna incorporated some of the dances she had created the previous year and several new ones.[\[73\]](#)

In May 1961, on their way from Arizona to Wisconsin following the annual Festival, which had again featured "Mary Magdalene" and had introduced "Primavera," a ballet about "the awakening of spring" inspired by another Botticelli painting, the Taliesin group performed a version of the Festival program at

a Frank-Lloyd-Wright-designed theatre in Dallas.[74] The Kalita Humphreys Theater, which in typical Wright style does not have a proscenium, opened in 1959 as part of the Dallas Theater Center, one of the many regional theatres that emerged in the decades following World War II, contributing to a decentralization of the performing arts across America. Once again, however, and although they were presented in a space that bore some resemblance to the Pavilion, Iovanna's dances were not well received outside of their local surroundings.

Observing that, to accommodate her amateur performers, Iovanna's choreography "makes no great technical demands," the critic for the *Dallas Times Herald* described the presentation thus: "She dispensed with the traditional gestures of Western ballet and replaced them with an original, pseudo-Oriental set whose language remains largely obscure." Ultimately, the reviewer determined, "Though there is an initial charm about the naiveté of the dancing, music and costuming, it begins to be monotonous over a long evening." [75] John Rosenfield, the critic for the *Dallas Morning News*, who had been an early advocate for Frank Lloyd Wright building a theatre in Dallas, was kinder to the Taliesin group, probably because of his connection to Wright.[76] While he mentioned the limitations of the non-professional dancers, Rosenfield linked Iovanna's work to the Ballets Russes and to a pioneer of modern dance, albeit a bit tongue-in-cheek. "The program was part spectacle and part devotional, sometimes in the manner of a Passion Play, sometimes as Iovanna's own 'Sacre du Printemps' as seen through high Renaissance eyes," he remarked, and critiqued "Primavera" in particular as "a sort of union of fluttering Orientalism and some hop-skipping and posturing from Isadora Duncan." [77] By evoking a passion play, Rosenfield, perhaps unintentionally, drew an apt comparison between the Fellowship's performing arts activities and those of medieval crafts guilds, which, like Taliesin's apprentices, periodically paused their day-to-day work in order to stage religious dramas at annual or longer intervals.

The yearly Taliesin Festivals remained popular in Arizona, where Iovanna and her performers usually played to "sold out" houses.[78] In the years following the 1962 Festival, which included a selection of her shorter works, Iovanna wrote several full-length dance dramas, set to Olgivanna's music. Fellowship members continued to perform the dances, now accompanied by a semi-professional orchestra that included members of the Phoenix Symphony. Iovanna's new pieces offered narratives of creation, decline, and redemption and mirrored some of her private struggles with relationships. Summing up several of Iovanna's topics, Nemtin notes,

Usually, but not always, the ideas presented in the dance-dramas were abstract. Their inspiration, however, usually drew upon realities and concepts with which we are all familiar, such as the elements of nature, the seasons of the year, man and woman, work, magic, gambling, duels, penitents, remorse and despair, loneliness, the harvest, the planets, weddings, good and evil, creation, rituals of antiquity, the art of building, politics, illusions, and even artworks.[79]

Iovanna's choreography was always connected to the two Taliesins: Nemtin reports that "Iovanna conceived the idea for the next year's festival, to be performed in Arizona, in the previous summer at Taliesin in Wisconsin. In the fall at Taliesin West, she started to work on the idea in earnest." [80]

At the 1963 Festival, Iovanna's *Urizen* premiered, based on William Blake's poetic creation myth, which pits *Urizen*, who represents oppressive reason, against *Los*, who symbolizes artistic imagination. Television and film actor William Phipps narrated Blake's text in Iovanna's stage version, which ends

with Los's creative spirit triumphing, as illustrated by his craftsman-like work on a fiery anvil in the last scene.^[81] Praising Iovanna's dexterity at reshaping Blake's material, but also hinting at her constraints as a choreographer, as critics would continue to do, the reviewer for the *Arizona Republic* wrote that the adaptation "has preserved its visionary quality and the choreography is indicative of Iovanna Wright's skill in interpreting the spoken word through the sometimes limited vocabulary of her dance patterns. She has made Blake's words come alive and the topic, written 250 years ago, has a strangely contemporary ring."^[82]



Scene from *Urizen* ("Beasts"), 1963. Photo by Don Kalec, courtesy of OAD Archives.

Urizen was restaged for the 1966 Festival, after 1964 had seen an expanded, two-act version of *Mary Magdalene*. In 1965, *The Beautiful Country* opened, with Iovanna playing the female lead. Her first full-length dance drama that was not adapted from existing work, *The Beautiful Country* dramatizes a tragic love story between two tormented individuals who bear some resemblance to Mary Magdalene and Antonius. Lila, a promiscuous performer who pretends to be religious and abstinent in order to make Matthew, "a rich, spoiled profligate," fall for her, finds herself unable to compete with his longing for a "beautiful country." After they fail to build a life together, her only hope is to join him in that idyllic state, which ultimately symbolizes death.^[83]

In 1967, *An American Montage* was shown for the first time. The piece sweepingly engages with American history from colonial to modern times, and, in tune with Frank Lloyd Wright's vision for

Broadacre City, offers a critique of urban living conditions. Juxtaposing a series of vignettes that dramatize human alienation with a celebration of architects and a wedding, *An American Montage* culminates in Wright's "Work Song," which had served as a theme for the Taliesin Fellowship since its inception. Iovanna argues that the piece "had a lot of lightness and fun in it," even as characters get trapped in "a frantic pattern of mass degeneration."^[84] A revision of *An American Montage* with added scenes was staged in 1968.



Work taking place in the Pavilion court on costumes for the "Realist" section of *An American Montage*, 1967. Photo by Don Kalec, courtesy of OAD Archives.



Scene from *An American Montage* (“The Realist”), 1967. Left to right: Susan Jacobs Lockhart, Iovanna Lloyd Wright, Heloise Crista. Photo by Don Kalec, courtesy of OAD Archives.

Time Upon Time broadens the scope of *An American Montage* and revisits themes from *Urizen* by presenting a world where humanity is increasingly threatened by dark forces but is saved through a return to creativity and spirituality. The dance drama was first presented at the 1969 Taliesin Festival and again, with slight revisions, in 1970.^[85] As the *Arizona Republic* described it, “Miss Wright takes us from the beginning, with Woman’s betrayal of Man, through a brief representation of many periods of brutal history, through penitence, a brilliant collage of man-made illusions, a vicious party, the horror of bereavement, the curative powers of work and, ultimately, Man’s religious victory over temptation and reunification with Woman.”^[86] In 1971, the Fellowship performed sections of *Time Upon Time* and *An*

American Montage at Grace Cathedral in San Francisco. Iovanna's health declined during the 1970s, and 1977 was the last year the Taliesin Festival took place, featuring *An American Montage* again.

From the 1930s to the 1970s, Frank Lloyd Wright's Fellowship provided cultural programming for appreciative local audiences at Taliesin in Wisconsin and Taliesin West in Arizona. In addition to staging performances where they lived and worked, members of the Taliesin community also performed Iovanna Lloyd Wright's unique choreography at theatres in Chicago and Dallas that had been established as part of an effort to decentralize theatrical production. Echoing the goals of twentieth-century American theatre movements that sought to bring non-commercial plays to local audiences outside of New York, the Taliesin Fellowship's performing arts offerings illustrated aspects of Wright's utopian plan for Broadacre City. While Iovanna was disconnected from New York's dance and theatre scenes and unwittingly emulated anachronistic Orientalist aesthetics of early modern dance in some of her work, her isolation offered her the opportunity to experiment. Her dance drama deserves to be rediscovered as a cultural artifact that embodied spiritual ideas and prepared audiences for the locally created work of regional theatres.

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[1] Cornelia Brierly, *Tales of Taliesin: A Memoir of Fellowship*, 2nd ed. (San Francisco: Pomegranate, 2000), 8.

[2] Frank Lloyd Wright, "The Taliesin Fellowship," in *Collected Writings*, vol. 3, 1931-1939, ed. Bruce Brooks Pfeiffer (New York: Rizzoli in association with The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation, 1993), 164.

[3] Edgar Tafel, *Years with Frank Lloyd Wright: Apprentice to Genius* (New York: Dover Publications, 1979), 39.

[4] Frank Lloyd Wright, "Chicago Culture," in *Frank Lloyd Wright: Collected Writings*, vol. 1, 1894-1930, ed. Bruce Brooks Pfeiffer (New York: Rizzoli in association with The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation, 1992), 158; Robert Edward Gard, *Grassroots Theater: A Search for Regional Arts in America* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1999), 87.

[5] Frank Lloyd Wright, quoted in Mary York, "Frank Lloyd Wright Realizes Another Dream at Unique Theater Opening at Taliesin Tonight," *Capital Times* (Madison, WI), 1 November 1933; Wendell Cole, "Theatre Projects of Frank Lloyd Wright," *Educational Theatre Journal* 12, no. 2 (1960), 90.

[6] Mary York, "Frank Lloyd Wright Realizes."

[7] Mary York, "Frank Lloyd Wright Realizes."

[8] Mary York, "Frank Lloyd Wright Realizes."

[9] F. L. Wright, quoted in York, "Frank Lloyd Wright Realizes."

[10] Nicholas Ray, "'At Taliesin,' 2 April 1934," in *"At Taliesin": Newspaper Columns by Frank Lloyd Wright and the Taliesin Fellowship, 1934-1937*, ed. Randolph C. Henning (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1992), 32-33.

[11] Eugene Masselink, "Taliesin," *Capital Times* (Madison, WI), 2 February 1934; William T. Evjue, "Good Afternoon Everybody," *Capital Times* (Madison, WI), 13 December 1933.

[12] Henning, *"At Taliesin": Newspaper Columns* (note 10).

[13] Curtis Besinger, *Working with Mr. Wright: What It Was Like* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 85.

[14] Iovanna Lloyd Wright, "Wright Predicted Urban Blight," *Arizona Republic*, 31 May 1970.

[15] Bruce Brooks Pfeiffer, ed. *Frank Lloyd Wright: Collected Writings*, vol. 4, 1939-1949 (New York: Rizzoli in association with The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation, 1994), 45-46.

[16] "Museum Exhibits Model and 4 Original Color Renderings by Frank Lloyd Wright of His Designs for a New Theatre for Hartford, 1949," The Museum of Modern Art Exhibition Records, 1929-1959, The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York.

[17] Henning, *"At Taliesin": Newspaper Columns*, 34; Karl E. Jensen, "At Taliesin," *Capital Times* (Madison, WI), 6 May 1934.

[18] Brierly, *Tales of Taliesin*, 49; Besinger, *Working with Mr. Wright*, 208.

[19] Meryle Secrest, *Frank Lloyd Wright: A Biography* (New York: HarperPerennial, 1993), 348.

[20] Iovanna Lloyd Wright, "My Life," (The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives, Taliesin West, Arizona, unpublished), 184; Bruce Brooks Pfeiffer, interview by James Auer and Claudia Looze, transcript, The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives, Taliesin West, Arizona, ca. 1992; Maud Hoffman, "Taking the Life Cure in Gurdjieff's School," *New York Times*, 10 February 1924.

[21] Brierly, *Tales of Taliesin*, 97.

[22] I. L. Wright, "My Life," 183.

[23] Paul Beekman Taylor, *Gurdjieff's America: Mediating the Miraculous* (London: Lighthouse Editions, 2004), 16; Lara Vetter, *Modernist Writings and Religio-Scientific Discourse: H.D., Loy, and Toomer*, *Modern and Contemporary Poetry and Poetics* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 69.

Regarding an overlap between Gurdjieff and Dalcroze's teachings, it is noteworthy that three of Dalcroze's students, Jeanne de Salzman, Jessmin Howarth, and Rose Mary Lillard, later taught movements in Gurdjieff's circle. A review of Gurdjieff's 1923 Parisian demonstration registered distinct similarities between Gurdjieff's movements and Asian-themed dances staged by Dalcroze. See Mel Gordon, "Gurdjieff's Movement Demonstrations: The Theatre of the Miraculous," *The Drama Review* 22, no. 2 (1978), 41. For an analysis of François Delsarte's system, see Julia A. Walker, *Expressionism and Modernism in the American Theatre: Bodies, Voices, Words, Cambridge Studies in American Theatre and Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

[24] Jessmin and Dushka Howarth, *"It's Up to Ourselves": A Mother, a Daughter, and Gurdjieff: A Shared Memoir and Family Photo Album* (New York: Gurdjieff Heritage Society, 1998), 97-98; Olgivanna Lloyd Wright, *The Life of Olgivanna Lloyd Wright: From Crna Gora to Taliesin, Black Mountain to Shining Brow*, eds. Maxine Fawcett-Yeske and Bruce Brooks Pfeiffer (Novato, CA: ORO Editions, 2017), 65.

[25] Advertisement for a demonstration by the Gurdjieff Institute, *New York Times*, 29 February 1924.

[26] O. L. Wright, *The Life of Olgivanna Lloyd Wright*, 66-67.

[27] Tafel, *Years with Frank Lloyd Wright*, 139.

[28] Howarth, *"It's Up to Ourselves,"* 214; Iovanna Lloyd Wright to Olgivanna Lloyd Wright, 25 June 1949, Olgivanna Lloyd Wright Papers, The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art), Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York; I. L. Wright to O. L. Wright, "Monday" [1949], Olgivanna Lloyd Wright Papers.

[29] I. L. Wright, "My Life," 147.

[30] I. L. Wright, "My Life," 161.

[31] Kamal Amin, *Reflections from the Shining Brow: My Years with Frank Lloyd Wright and Olgivanna Lazovich* (Santa Barbara, CA: Fithian Press, 2004), 84.

[32] This phrase appears in programs for Fellowship performances from 1953 to 1959. A slightly different version ("correlation of mind and body") was first printed in the October 1950 program. Fellowship members have also referred to Gurdjieff's movements as "correlations." All programs are held in The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art), Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York.

[33] Frank Lloyd Wright, guest column, "Bill Doudna's Spotlight," *Wisconsin State Journal*, 3 November 1951.

[34] Besinger, *Working with Mr. Wright*, 201.

[35] O. L. Wright, *The Life of Olgivanna Lloyd Wright*, 150.

[36] O. L. Wright, *The Life of Olgivanna Lloyd Wright*, 196.

[37] “‘Demonstration of the Gurdjieff Movements’ at Taliesin West, (The Taliesin Fellowship, April 1950),” Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art), Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York.

[38] Sterling Sorensen, “Taliesin Dance-Demonstration Marks 1st Anniversary of Gurdjieff’s Death,” *Capital Times* (Madison, WI), 30 October 1950; Louise C. Marston, “From the Notebook,” *Capital Times* (Madison, WI), 31 October 1950.

[39] Besinger, *Working with Mr. Wright*, 219; I. L. Wright, “My Life,” 174. Florida Southern College was constructed between 1938 and 1958, and the Guggenheim Museum in New York opened in 1959.

[40] “Taliesin Group at Unitarian Church Oct. 30,” *Capital Times* (Madison, WI), 12 October 1951.

[41] Joseph M. Siry, “Modern Architecture for Dramatic Art: Frank Lloyd Wright’s ‘New Theatre,’ 1931-2009,” *The Art Bulletin* 96, no. 2 (2014), 213; “Taliesin Group at Unitarian Church.”

[42] “First Showing of Foreign Dances Here,” *Wisconsin State Journal*, 3 November 1951.

[43] Besinger, *Working with Mr. Wright*, 212, 232.

[44] Besinger, *Working with Mr. Wright*, 245.

[45] “‘Music, Ritual Exercises and Temple Dances by George Gurdjieff’ at the Goodman Theatre, Chicago, (The Taliesin Fellowship, November 1953),” The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art), Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York.

[46] I. L. Wright, “My Life,” 179. Besinger, *Working with Mr. Wright*, 253-254; 258.

[47] “‘Throns Inspect Wright’s Exhibit,” *New York Times*, 23 October 1953.

[48] I. L. Wright, “My Life,” 180.

[49] Pfeiffer, interview; John Amarantides, “Taliesin Music and Dance Festivals: Recollections by John Amarantides” (The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives, Taliesin West, Arizona, unpublished).

[50] I. L. Wright, “My Life,” 180.

[51] Ann Barzel, “Taliesin Fails on Gurdjieff,” *Chicago American*, 4 November 1953; I. L. Wright, “My Life,” 179.

[52] I. L. Wright, “My Life,” 181.

[53] Barzel, “Taliesin Fails.”

[54] Herman Kogan, "Taliesin Dancing Grim, Stiff," *Chicago Daily Sun-Times*, 4 November 1953.

[55] I. L. Wright, "My Life," 181.

[56] Anson B. Cutts, "Taliesin Festival Is Given in New Theatre Wright Built," *Arizona Republic*, 5 May 1957.

[57] Iovanna Lloyd Wright, "Genesis of the Taliesin Festival," *Points West*, March 1961, 75; I. L. Wright, "My Life," 184.

[58] Cutts, "Taliesin Festival Is Given."

[59] Frances Nemtin, *The Festivals of Music and Dance Created by the Taliesin Fellowship* (Madison, WI: American Printing Company, 2009), 18-19.

[60] Helen H. Backer, "Beautiful Taliesin Festival Opens," *Arizona Republic*, 12 April 1962.

[61] Olgivanna Lloyd Wright, *Our House* (New York: Horizon Press, 1959), 100.

[62] "Taliesin Festival Merges Oriental in Music, Dance," *Arizona Republic*, 6 April 1958.

[63] O. L. Wright, *Our House*, 97. The Fellowship's primary costume designer was Heloise Crista, who was known by different last names throughout the years. For example, she is listed as Heloise Schweizer in the program for the Goodman Theatre performance.

[64] "'The Taliesin Festival of Music and Dance' at the Pavilion Theatre, Taliesin West, (The Taliesin Fellowship, April 1959)," The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art), Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York.

[65] Anson B. Cutts, "Taliesin Festival of Music, Dance Moving Event," *Arizona Republic*, 10 April 1959.

[66] "'The Taliesin Festival of Music and Dance' ..., April 1959."

[67] Cutts, "Taliesin Festival of Music, Dance."

[68] By the late 1960s, the Phoenix Little Theatre returned to amateur status, and the Arizona Repertory Theater dissolved. See Bina Breitner, "Those Who Care Will Keep Lights Burning at PLT," *Arizona Republic*, 1 June 1969. As a result, it was not until 1978, when the Arizona Civic Theatre (later the Arizona Theatre Company), which was founded in Tucson in the 1960s and achieved professional status in 1972, began giving performances in Phoenix, that local audiences had consistent access to a not-for-profit professional theatre.

[69] Vern Swaback, paraphrased in Nemtin, *The Taliesin Festivals*, 78.

[70] David Dodge, quoted in Myron A. Marty and Shirley L. Marty, *Frank Lloyd Wright's Taliesin*

Fellowship (Kirksville MO: Truman State University Press, 1999), 149.

[71] Olgivanna Lloyd Wright, "Rehearsals Under Way at Taliesin for Music Festival to Be Held at U," *Capital Times* (Madison, WI), 22 June 1959.

[72] Olgivanna Lloyd Wright, "Our House," *Capital Times* (Madison, WI), 18 April 1960.

[73] "'The Taliesin Festival of Music and Dance' at the Pavilion Theatre, Taliesin West, (The Taliesin Fellowship, April 1960)," The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art), Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York.

[74] "'The Taliesin Festival of Music and Dance' at the Pavilion Theatre, Taliesin West, (The Taliesin Fellowship, April 1961)," The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art), Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York.

[75] Eugene Lewis, "Taliesin Fellows Dance at the Center," *Dallas Times Herald*, 8 May 1961.

[76] Siry, "Modern Architecture," 222.

[77] John Rosenfield, "Taliesin Group Dances Concept," *Dallas Morning News*, 8 May 1961. Another reviewer later compared Iovanna's work to that of Duncan's contemporary Ruth St. Denis, who also embraced an Orientalist aesthetic. See Barbara Bladen, "The Marquee," *The Times* (San Mateo, CA), 28 May 1971.

[78] Dodge, quoted in Marty, *Frank Lloyd Wright's Taliesin*, 149.

[79] Nemtin, *The Festivals of Music and Dance*, 14-15.

[80] Nemtin, *The Festivals of Music and Dance*, 52.

[81] "'The Taliesin Festival of Music and Dance' at the Pavilion Theatre, Taliesin West, (The Taliesin Fellowship, 1963)," The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art), Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York.

[82] Helen H. Backer, "Taliesin West Dance Festival Centers on *Urizen* Narrative," *Arizona Republic*, 5 April 1963.

[83] William J. Nazarro, "*Beautiful Country* Given at Taliesin," *Arizona Republic*, 1 May 1965.

[84] I. L. Wright, "My Life," 185; Bina Breitner, "Wright Accent on Taliesin West Music, Dance Festival," *Arizona Republic*, 22 April 1967.

[85] Bina Breitner, "Taliesin Festival Vibrant Spectacle," *Arizona Republic*, 23 April 1969.

[86] Bina Breitner, "Taliesin Production 'Repeat' Still Fresh Experience," *Arizona Republic*, 22 April 1970.



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