

*Kimmel Center Public Space Project*  
*Moderator Notes*  
*January 27, 2008*  
*Submitted by Kiki Bolender*

### **USERS / USES - CURRENT**

- Fans of the performing arts.
- The grey-haired crowd that dashes out the minute the baton goes down.
- Shoppers at Intermission.

### **USERS / USES - POTENTIAL**

- The orchestra needs to find a more diverse crowd.
- Students – as performers and with artwork on display. This would bring them in, along with their families.
- More shoppers at Intermission, if there were a door to the street.
- New residents from the new condo towers nearby.
- Restaurant goers – to a new café on the first floor, and a better-publicized one at Cadence.
- The Starbucks crowd, if the upstairs unused bar was turned into a Starbucks – busy, with good furniture. (Starbucks came up over and over again as a model of an inviting space, because you can see the people from the street, and the furniture invites chat or comfortable aloneness.)
- Question should be, “Who isn’t a user?” There are people from the city, suburbs and tourists from out of town; there just should be more of them.

### **VALUES / IDEAS**

- A social hub.
- Intrinsic value of art – showcase what is going on inside on TV screens outside the building.
- The “People’s Plaza” is what the state expected when it gave money – a regional center that expresses the value the state places on the performing arts, as opposed to sports and other forms of recreation.
- Hospitality - remind people that they are welcome, with a special free or low cost event every quarter, like the solstice celebration. It’s OK if there’s a guy with a shopping bag snoozing in the corner, as there was today.
- Public participation in the arts. Bring in local high school groups and program different kinds of music. (There was general support for the breadth of the programming, along with the feeling that many people were not aware of that breadth.)
- Bring the arts into the daily fabric of life.
- Non-elitist – have a café on the ground floor.
- Inclusionary. The feeling you have at some places that “You can’t go in there.” Don’t make anyone feel excluded.

- Communication – maybe make the “evil black box” into a message board about the days events.

## **BARRIERS**

- Doors don’t pull you in. What’s behind the doors? You can’t tell. You can’t see people sitting inside.
- Per Harris’s presentation, the edges are uninteresting.
- It’s confusing and hard to find the elevators. “The interior is a disaster.”
- The building seems cold – outside and in.
- The nearby institutions seem like competitors.
- Lack of the right kind of publicity for events, especially free events, which build a base for resident groups.
- Lack of density. It is a huge space and rarely feels full enough. Fewer people means it is less safe (especially in the upper regions).
- Furniture is very important and it does not work at all – the only chairs in sight make you face away from your friends. The good chairs are hidden in the back of the building; this feels like a deliberate barrier.
- Short hours. There should be a bar open after the performance.
- There is not much happening on Broad Street south of the Kimmel, so the geographic draw is limited.
- Lack of information.
- Bars feel empty, temporary.

## **PRINCIPLES FOR THE REDESIGN OF THE PUBLIC SPACE**

### **COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION**

- Signs on the building
  - A crawler - Today! Free!
  - Neon
  - What is happening inside today and in the next few days
- Signs in the building
  - Wayfinding, especially to lead you to the upstairs spaces.
  - Event information
  - Promotional signs for the rooftop garden and the restaurants

### **THE KIMMEL CENTER AS THE LOBBY FOR THE AVENUE OF THE ARTS**

- Street light banners
- Free performances

### **A PLACE TO SIT**

- Intimate or in a group and/or see and be seen
- A “pick-up place”

- Wireless access
- A single person with a magazine feels comfortable
- People hanging out

#### COMFORT

- Intimacy
- Furniture
- Comfortable seats at the long bar
- Fix the heating and cooling
- Toilet rooms for the rooftop and more obvious ones for the first floor

#### ACTIVATE THE EXTERIOR AS PERFORMANCE AND SOCIAL SPACE

- Outdoor café, outdoor performances

#### MAKE A PLACE FOR AFTER-SHOW ACTIVITIES AND NON-SHOW ACTIVITIES

- Celebrate the height and the views
- Take the high note

#### KEEP IT OPEN ALL THE TIME

- Whatever the stated hours are, make sure that the building is accessible at all those times.
- Have a separate entrance for corporate events, so that the KC can keep their revenue and not have to close the building. There are plenty of rentable spaces upstairs.

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*Submitted by Fatima Hafiz*  
*Group "Yellow"*

### Group Members

- Teachers
- Director of 9 Civic Groups Collaborative
- High School Student
- Musicians
- Communications Professional
- Members of Center

### **Small Group Discussion**

#### **USERS**

- children
- young people – all ages
- silver age adults
- schools
- dance groups
- faith based organizations
- community centers
- city wide artist
- residents
- area employees
- young professional – networking groups
- swing dancers
- mummers

#### **OUTREACH**

- attract world renowned resident popular musician from different music genres
- partnering with groups like: flower show; book and cook; mummers; welcome Philadelphia; X-games; sports events to host appreciation nights at the Kimmel for different groups, i.e. professionals, teachers, community groups doing great things, faith based groups; etc.
- advertising and communication of events throughout the city
- broader outreach to targeted groups, marketing to change cultural perceptions
- identify musicians, performers, artist throughout the city – advertise on TV – advertise at hotels for their guest to be aware

#### **USES**

- activities
  - o educational activities with performers through discussions, bio presentation by artist, tours, performances geared to interests of all stakeholders
- music and art classes
  - o expose young people to jazz and other music forms, visual arts, performance arts, support arts for children in public schools
- lunch space
  - o set up space between 11-2 for public lunch access, more table and chairs, free performances during the lunch period in the common plaza by local troupes, artist, student performances, community center art performances, ethnic specific events, neighborhood events
- workshops
- meeting spaces
- exhibits

## **SUPPORTS**

- marquee – billboard with changing images, messages, tastefully done, perhaps on Broad and Spruce
- kiosks
- use private rooms more for schools and other groups to do free performances (Blackbox theater, Rendell room, the roof garden, and other rooms)
- colors that coincide with cultural events on exterior walls
- hanging mobiles to engage the open air space in the center
- projectors
- display more art
- flexible environment
- movable art to engage people in all parts of the center
- tactile and sound art for visually or hearing impaired
- develop ticket sales
- city centralized ticket vendor to purchase tickets outside of the center
- portable climbing wall
- gift shop with more variety-develop catalog, retail area open to the street (15<sup>th</sup> and Spruce entrance), artist crafts, more variety at eatery with affordable cost and open when public available
- better lit streets and buildings (inside and outside) light scaping
- visible security – guards, cameras, police patrol
- list of close parking garages - affordable
- better trained usher corp to respond more sensitive to patrons (disabled, etc.)

## **BARRIERS**

- Kimmel resources (money)
- Perceptions
  - o Broad St. not safe – side streets going north are dangerous, murder capital, not safe at night,
- transportation from inner city – partner with Septa, parking garages, Philly car share, free transit rides with ticket purchase, philly phlash, Fairmount trolley and shuttles from suburban/market, valet bike parking
- areas around the center poorly lit
- communications about the activities offered
- transparency of the mission and goals
- lack of advertising
- perceptions of elitisms
  - o seen as the place for affluent whites and blacks- other groups excluded
- austere environment-sterile feel
- no central visual draw in side the common plaza (like the eagle in Macy's)
- space affordability
- bathroom placement

## **VALUES**

- Greenery – live plants, flowers, outside and inside- use the proliferation of light to grow plants that the center could use
- Partnerships with different universities (Temple Tyler School of Art, University of Arts, Moore College)
- Affordability of amenities and space access (3.00 bottle of water, ridiculous)
- Esthetic concerns (no junk) during concerts and other activities – centralized area for retail exchanges of artist products, more warmth across the board but not clutter
- Maintain the muted calm colors and earth tones as the permanent backdrop consistent with the art of the building – respect the building but accommodate the culture, colors and aesthetics of the groups presenting during the calendar schedules
- People friendly – appropriate seats for seniors, softer seating, seating to accommodate face to face conversations

## **PRINCIPLES**

- The Center as a charitable and educational venture for the arts
- Develop substantive education initiatives
- More inclusive mission, transparency and communications about what is available (i.e., free tickets, private function space, and other offerings in a timely and clear manner)
- Service the Philadelphia Citizens and surrounding counties - Kimmel Center become “Philadelphia Show Place” branding the center as the hub for city cultural events –

showcase the talents and culture of Philadelphia's citizens- offer an opportunity for individuals and groups to get exposed to a larger audience

- Attract younger audiences
- Free activities to augment larger events
  - o Independent activities
  - o Main events
- Partnering with other groups or events that identify with Philadelphia – Be a part of packages that include Kimmel events at restaurants, other venues,

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*Submitted by Chris Satullo*  
*Group "Green"*

## **Users**

*Current:* Performers, donors, voters, concert goers, staff, city officials, tourists, taxpayers, students, neighbors, corporate renters, volunteers, suburbanites

*Potential:* More diverse (both ethnic and age); performers who don't a chance to perform here now; nonprofits; Free Library branch; schools

## **Uses**

*Current:* Concerts, plays, eating, shopping, meeting, lectures, relaxing (but not as much as should happen), looking at art

*Potential:* Christmas market, flower market, seasonal retail, more art exhibits (temporary); open stage for young performers – playing off what the marquee talent are doing at that time; expos; a unique music/arts library; coffee bar; remote broadcast of performances from elsewhere; much more info on coming attractions, in lobby and outside; computers in lobby where people can compose and listen to their own music (software exists); the Kimmel summer camp in the arts; musicals, with scenes done on the lobby stage; pipe music outside to sidewalk; screens on exterior of building, showing performance inside; good, cheap food in lobby, with seasonal sidewalk café; music lessons

## **Values**

In this group, we just did what the values should be: Pride, quality, welcoming, humane, balance of art and commercialism; innovation, music, fun, diversity, inclusive, education, community.

## **What works**

Glass ceiling is spectacular; view from tiers; lots of space (downsides there too); acoustics in venues; everything about the Perelman; interior design of halls, good sight lines and no bad seats; merchandise in gift shop; artwork

## **What doesn't work**



Inside is dark (drab colors and furnishings); no escalators; sterile at holidays; “There’s no choreographer to the space; it gives you a lost feeling. There’s no flow and a lot of dead spaces”; lack of signage; you can’t see in from the outside; what’s the point of that black granite thing on the corner?; nowhere to sit; the Broad Street entrance is unwelcoming; whether you’re coming from the south or the north, you see nothing that tells you it’s the Kimmel or whether there’s a performance going on; it has a poor flow for the elderly; it needs more visible bathrooms; staff seems to be more into “guarding” than “welcoming”; not enough places to sit

### **Possible fixes:**

Veil of LED lights on the black granite “thing”  
Light and sound show outside on performance nights  
More green in the plaza  
A serpentine water element in the plaza  
More places to sit – comfortable sectionals  
Food in the plaza  
Sidewalk café  
External screens to promote events, show performance clips  
External entrance to gift shop  
Better promotion of program  
Outside ticket booth where granite is

### **Principles**

- 1) Give more people more reasons to embrace Kimmel culture; innovate and diversify**
- 2) Be elegant but inviting**
- 3) Let the outside broadcast what’s inside**
- 4) Wake up: the plaza is your third entertainment space!**
- 5) Balance a profusion of uses with high-class aesthetics**

**USERS/STAKEHOLDERS:**

- all who enjoy music
- All residents in city
- Neighbors ->city ->region ->PA ->tri-state
- Tourists
- Those who can afford music, food, etc.
  - Should be affordable to all
- Kids for free events (e.g., movies)
- Region – music tourists
- Families
- Children
- Clubs
- Members of performing groups
- Staff – work here
- Patrons of all/any events
- Mothers/parents of children
- University of the Arts students
- Segments (demographic):
  - Children ... teens ... young adults ... middle age .. senior citizens....
- Transients for warmth, comfort, rest rooms
- People who attend sporting events
- Neighborhood arts/drama groups
- Coffee drinkers
- Question: Do we need to focus on performing arts?

**USES**

- coffee shop
- affordable food
- sit and read
- celebrity event
- fashion store for concert wear
- music museum/library/listening room
- music education
- wireless – good access, strong signal
- meeting space
  - book clubs
  - civic associations

- annual event
  - children’s parades
  - spring plants
  - like National Constitution Center “Red Ball”
- Free concerts
  - Curtis students
  - Open mc
  - Settlement Music House
  - Poetry readings
- Instrument room for children
  - Music playground
- Changing art exhibits –more space for them
- Movies/multi-media events
- Happy hours – “bar looks nice” but how long is it open?
- After performance eating
- Special deals (dinner and concert; concert and after performance snack; for KC performances and other venues)
- Gift packages/cards (not event specific)
- Vendors come to sell; for X days
  - Craft vendors/fairs
- Music clubs; music appreciation programs/Temple U music appreciation class site
- Chess/backgammon on the rooftop garden – tables with boards built in...
  - Also special nights
- Neighborhood drama/arts group performances
- Mural arts indoors
  - Process with neighborhoods
  - Product on large interior walls
- Retail:
  - Carts, stores
  - Issues:
    - Need predictable hours of operation
    - Current museum store is crowded

**NEEDS**

- Art work – local students (elementary school through college) to personalize the space
- Plants
- Better lighting
- Tables and chairs that are inviting, and move
- Event board
  - Inside – what’s going on where

- Outside – what’s happening inside
- Marquee –current and future events
  - Concerns and free events
- Broadcast events live outside (low volume)
- Partnerships with other institutions and share events/packages
- Avenue of the Arts coop/association to develop synergies
- Inform when private functions will close part of the public spaces
  - Also some thought public spaces ought to be kept for public use... no private use of public spaces....

## **VALUES**

- Sense of community of center city
- Diversity
  - Of ages (birth to death)
  - Of ethnicity
  - Of SES/class
- Social presence and stimulation
- Glass vault as powerful architectural image
- Appreciation, education and promotion of arts and culture
- Public access
  - Public money should give public access, and keep politics out
  - De-privatize the space
- Move from Kimmel Center, Inc. to Kimmel Community Center (at least in public spaces)
- Participate/engagement for civic life
- Apr4ciate this building
- Learning/new experiences in the arts

## **SUPPORTS**

- Space
  - Variety of sizes and shapes
    - Different members of the family can come together and use different spaces that are safe, supervised....
  - So much space to work with
  - WOW! Factor of the building
  - Like a park all year round
  - Flexible
  - Tiers
    - Sight lines all around up and down
    - Feel different
  - Portable partitions can make secluded spaces
- Central location
  - And walkable and accessible to public transportation

- Though late at night may not want to walk all the way back to Suburban Station
- Parking is near, but is expensive.
  - Need package deals

### **INHIBIT**

- Sidewalks:
  - Forbidding
  - Lack of signs, information
  - No invite to come in
  - WOW! Factor can be off-putting: do I belong?
- Front uninviting:
  - Nothing distinctive at street level (the outside WOW is the glass shed from distance)
  - No street advertising
- Outside:
  - Very cold
  - Lack of outside seating, no place to stop and rest or wait outside
  - No landscaping
  - Black “wall” at corner is interesting but cold, uninviting and purposeless
  - Too straight and barrier/wall-like on all sides
  - Nothing “pulls” you in...need a “yellow brick road”
- High cost of food
- Limited and unclear hours of operation
- Image/sense of space:
  - Be quiet and subdued ... not lively conversation
  - Materials are solemn
  - Tourists want to see space inside concert space, but not permitted to enter even if there is no event
    - Some said you can go on a tour, others didn’t know about this
- Lack of info of what’s going on –signage
- Security people are off-putting and unwelcoming
- Management/PR concerns – have a “no” attitude rather than a “yes” welcome.

### **IMPROVE/IDEAS**

- Bike racks
- Welcome alcove
- Meet the performers opportunities
- “1<sup>st</sup> Saturday” at the KC, or “on the Ave of the Arts”
- Management issues
  - Extend hours
  - Tone down security attitude

- Increase friendliness
    - Take lessons from Disney World
  - Use more volunteers to welcome folks
    - When there are no shows
    - Greeters inside outside doors when people arrive
    - Give tours
    - Have them out on the sidewalk
- Hold open houses to welcome and intro people to KC/KCC, with free concert
- We want to thank the Kimmel for asking our ideas and opinions

#### **PRINCIPLES**

- More of a sense of community
  - E.g., a café or restaurant on first floor open to public
  - Create a fountain (inside or outside) as a focal point
- Open and inviting
  - Hours of operation: 11 a.m. until 11:00 p.m.
  - Windows to street at street level
  - Marquee
  - Benches inside and out
- Make the inside apparent and easy to access to the outside
- Soften edges and more color
- Accessible to all – diversity
- PR: tell people whets happening and that they belong, even if there isn't an event, or even without a ticket..
  - ... after all, they own it.