

CHAPTER 34

Theaters and Community Arts Centers*

This chapter describes numbers of theaters, their seating capacities, methods of construction and financing, production costs, gross receipts, number of productions per year, and ticket prices in each of the following categories: Broadway, off-Broadway, national tour, regional and resident, summer and winter stock, musical, community and university theaters. It includes as much information as is available on community arts centers.

Where regional breakdowns are used, the *Northeast* includes 12 States and the District of Columbia with a total population of 51 million (Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, West Virginia); the *South* includes 13 States with a total population of 49 million (Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia); the *Midwest* includes 12 States with a total population of 43 million (Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, Wisconsin); the *West* includes 13 States with a total population of 28 million (Alaska, Arizona, Colorado, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Wyoming.) The population figures are based on the 1960 census.

THEATERS

I. BROADWAY

In the 1965-66 season there were 35 Broadway theaters housing 67 productions which grossed a record \$53.9 million, although according to *Variety* they were lit only 65.5 percent of the time. Today there are half as many theaters as there were 30 years ago. Production costs are estimated to have risen from \$25,000 to as much as \$150,000 for a dramatic play and from \$60,000 to as much as \$600,000 for a musical since 1940. The number of productions per year has steadily declined from a high of 264 in 1928 to 67 in the 1965-66 season. By 1959 average maximum ticket prices had increased 105 percent for dramatic shows and 77 percent for musicals over 1944 prices.

The following information was obtained from *Variety*; *Stubs*; the League of New York Theatres, Inc.; "The Broadway Producer," a background paper by Stuart Little prepared for the Rockefeller Brothers Fund Panel on the performing arts; "Crisis in the Free World Theater" by John F. Wharton; and material from the New York City Department of Commerce and Industrial Development:

*Prepared by the National Council on the Arts, with minor editing by committee staff.