

Some views about a Musical Hall building

There's something in a name; I would call it "The Cincinnati Musical Hall Society."

As an indispensable requisite to start it, the City Government must give the use of the Elm Street lot at a nominal rent to an Incorporated Society that must be created to manage and carry out and perpetuate the objects.

The lot and improvements must be free of taxation, at least of municipal & school taxes; and state and county, if possible.

There is great propriety in this as the ground and improvements will be owned by the city, and will be used solely in the interests of the people, and for the public good.

The charges for the use of the hall for all proper functions and public occasions and meetings, should be as low as possible, or barely enough to keep the buildings in first rate condition, and defray the necessary expenses of the Society, or an economical organization.

The Society should be formed of citizens unlimited in number, and who should pay an initiation fee and an annual sum for the privilege of membership, and to which some advantage should attach of tickets and reasonable deals, for special occasions. This would form a fund for improvements, and would also be a Guarantee Fund for any deficiencies that might occur in giving Musical Festivals, etc.

The Administration to be under a Board of Control of fifteen or twenty members, and an Executive Committee of five or more, as may be found best. There to be election by the members of the Society, voting in person. The city Council to have the privilege of naming members of control - being the owner of the property, this should be conceded as matter of right. No salary or pay of any kind to be given to members of either Board. The powers of the Board of Control and Executive Board to be defined ultimately in the By Laws.

The Musical Hall building to be located in the center of the lot, and so planned and constructed as to be capable of being used for Exposition purposes in connection with suitable buildings that may be constructed on the North and South to the limits of the lot. This may be a matter for the future, and will, I think, follow of course.

The Society should not commence the enterprise with less than \$250,000. This much secured, would assure success. The plans should be strictly made so that the estimate of cost should be

within the above sum, that the Society should stand clear of debt, bonded or floating. The building should be plain but very substantial, and care should be observed not to lavish money on mere ornamentation. The attempt to make it fire proof should not be even entertained; any advantage gained would be more than counterbalanced by enormous additional expense. Floors laid on mortar - tile flues avoiding wooden partitions – iron columns (where needed) in place of wood and tin roof, will make it safe from fire, at least with moderate insurance.

I think it of great importance that the Society should be clear of debt when the building is finished; otherwise it might be necessary to impose heavy charges for the use of the hall, and thereby, to a great extent, impair its usefulness and put in jeopardy the whole enterprise. There is no safety or satisfaction for anything if overloaded with debt. This should be kept carefully in view.

These remarks are merely suggestions and intended to elicit information and bring out the experience of those more capable of giving what may be valuable in making the enterprise successful.

Now to the main point. I will donate in money (payable as the work progresses) one-half of the above-named sum, say one hundred and twenty five thousand dollars (\$125,000) on two conditions:

First: that the lot is secured in perpetuity for the uses of the Society at a nominal rent and free of taxation as before named; and Secondly that a sum of not less than One hundred and twenty five thousand dollars (\$125,000) is secured by donations from our citizens. Failing either of these my offer is withdrawn. All other matters except these two I leave to the wisdom of those who may be chosen to manage the enterprise.

I will add that I do not wish to take any part in carrying out the enterprise, either in the Board or Committee or other office, active or honorary. My advanced age and the many calls I now have on my time, will I think be a sufficient reason for thus declining, in advance any share in the labour. I also desire that my name shall only be known as a donor, among, I hope, hundreds of others.

I have taken the liberty of addressing this communications to you, as one who has been most active and efficient in musical enterprise, and to take such action about it as you may deem best.

R.R. Springer

To John Shillito, Esq.