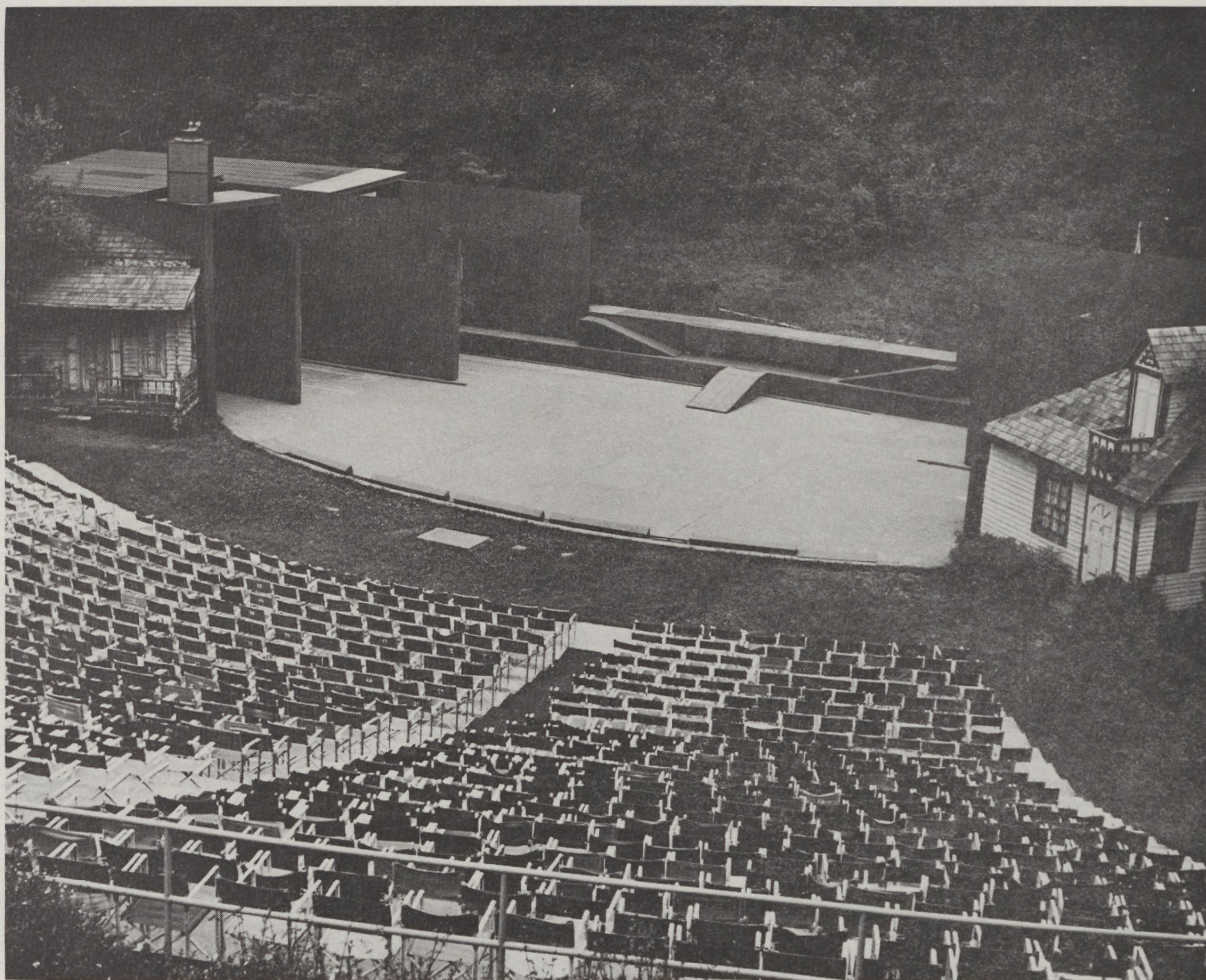


Institute of Outdoor Drama
University of North Carolina
Chapel Hill, North Carolina 27514

J. Dan Talbott Amphitheatre
Bardstown, Kentucky
THE STEPHEN FOSTER STORY



Amphitheatre: 1372 seats
Main Stage: 45'x60'
Two Side Stages: 8'x20'

Cast: 53

Author: Paul Green

Year of Opening: 1959

First Director: Samuel Selden

Usual Season: Six nights per week during the summer season plus one matinee

Maximum Possible Gross Per Week: \$28,614.

Production Organization:
Stephen Foster Drama Association

The Stephen Foster Drama Association was formed in 1957 for the purpose of producing a drama on the life of Stephen Foster.

The Association leases the J. Dan Talbott Amphitheatre from the State of Kentucky for the production of the play.

Story of the Play

THE STEPHEN FOSTER STORY tells the story of one year in the life of Stephen Foster.

The play opens on July 4, 1849, in Pittsburgh, with Stephen and his friends awakening Jane McDowell, "Jeanie," with a late night serenade. Jane's parents don't approve and chase the singers away.

The play continues with Stephen picking out a tune on his flute instead of chopping kindling as he is supposed to be doing.

When he returns to his house with the suspiciously small bundle of wood, the family has just come home from court where Stephen's father has lost a challenge for return of funds used in the War of 1812. His brother reproaches Stephen for not going with the family to court. They have little sympathy with his musical interests.

At the opera house that evening, Christy's Ethiopian minstrels perform. At the end of the show, they sing a distorted version of "Old Folks at Home," with Christy claiming credit for the piece. Stephen angrily protests and rearranges the song during the performance.



Stephen is in the process of writing music to be sung at the groundbreaking of a new factory.

At the ceremony, Jane McDowell sings one of Stephen's beautiful melodies.

But another girl, a tavern keeper's daughter, presents a rousing "Oh, Susannah." The song causes a sensation, and Jane leaves the ceremony on the arm of Stephen's courting rival, Dudley Morton.

Stephen goes to work as a clerk in a factory, but he has a hard time concentrating on the job. He is contacted by the minstrel king, E. P. Christy, who has heard of Stephen's songs. Christy buys the rights to "Old Folks at Home" for fifteen dollars and offers to buy more of Stephen's work.

Stephen is sent to Bardstown, Kentucky, to arrange a tobacco contract. However, he is so enchanted by the town's atmosphere that he forgets the business which brought him to Bardstown.

When Stephen returns to Pittsburgh, he finds Jane is being seriously courted by Dudley Morton.

One evening, he enters the McDowell home and rudely interrupts the courting. Jane and Dudley go out into the garden and leave Stephen behind. He sits at the piano and picks out the words and music for "I Dream of Jeanie with the Light Brown Hair."

Meanwhile, Dudley proposes to Jane in the garden, but she can't keep her mind on his words because of the music flowing out of the house. The two men quarrel and leave Jane sobbing in her father's arms.

Dudley and Stephen again fight when leaving the theatre. Jane's father forbids Stephen to ever see her again, and she leaves with Dudley.

Stephen is brokenhearted and wanders drunkenly through the streets. He finds himself under Jane's window and whispers to her the strains of "Beautiful Dreamer." She joins him in the song, then comes down to meet him.

The lovers are reunited and plan their wedding, confident that Stephen will become a great song writer.

In the finale, the couple faces confidently a promising future.

History of the Production

THE STEPHEN FOSTER STORY premiered June 26, 1959. By 1973, over 700,000 people had seen the drama.

The J. Dan Talbott Amphitheatre was built by the State of Kentucky in 1959 for the presentation of THE STEPHEN FOSTER STORY.

On rainy nights, and for Saturday matinees, the play is presented in an indoor theatre.

Further information on THE STEPHEN FOSTER STORY may be obtained by writing THE STEPHEN FOSTER STORY, P.O. Box D, Bardstown, Kentucky 40004, or by telephoning (502) 348-5971.