

Launching a New Chapter for Brown Arts

By Debra Bradley Ruder '80

With major new investments in arts spaces and programs, Brown aims to become a top destination for students, scholars and practitioners of the arts.

Brown celebrates a transformative milestone this fall, when the Lindemann Performing Arts Center opens as a dynamic showcase and research laboratory for artistic innovation in music, theater, dance, and literary, visual and cinematic arts.

The striking state-of-the-art center at 144 Angell Street, now the largest arts venue on campus, expands and enhances the University's legacy as a leading center for study, experimentation and performance across arts disciplines. This and other significant new investments reaffirm creative expression as central to a complete Brown education, and the University's commitment to artists, arts research and the arts as a wellspring of learning.

"At Brown, the arts are integrated into everything we do," says University President Christina H. Paxson. With The Lindemann's opening, "Brown is positioned to become a top destination for world-class arts scholars, students committed to the arts, international artists and community members who will be invited to make, present and witness work in this innovative space."

The Lindemann, together with the adjacent Perry and Marty Granoff Center for the Creative Arts and other venues across campus, provides vital infrastructure to fulfill an ambitious vision. The 101,000-square-foot facility features "radically flexible" lighting, sound, video projection and spatial options to inspire artistic ventures and collaborations. Its main hall can transform into

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artistic director of the Brown Arts Institute

a 530-seat symphony orchestra auditorium, a surround-sound cube for experimental media, a flat-floor expanse and other configurations. The Lindemann also has an array of versatile spaces to serve the abundant performance, rehearsal and teaching activities on campus.

The building was designed by REX architects, led by principal Joshua Ramus, and its name recognizes a generous gift from Brown University Trustee Frayda B. Lindemann and her late husband, George Lindemann Sr.

"We are thrilled by the possibilities for new programming, activations, installations and research the center will enable," says Avery Willis Hoffman, artistic director of the Brown Arts Institute (BAI). The institute is a University-wide arts research entity and incubator within Brown's arts ecosystem.

Rites and Reason Renewal

Possibilities are also expanding for Brown's Rites and Reason Theatre, thanks to a 15-month renovation of Churchill House, the longtime home to the theater company and Department of Africana Studies. One of the oldest continuously producing Black theater companies in the country, Rites and Reason now has new seats and curtains, high-tech production equipment and better accommodations for costumes, props and sets.

"The upgrade gives us a runway to think, dream and create, which is what the arts are all about," says department chair Noliwe Rooks, the L. Herbert Ballou University Professor of Africana Studies. "It makes us feel good about the future."

The changes offer multiple creative opportunities, including pop-up outdoor performances off the building's terrace and more collaborations among artists and scholars across academic fields, Rooks notes. She hopes the renewal will raise awareness of the theater's focus: exploring experiences and expressions of the African Diaspora.

Perelman Arts District

Rites and Reason is one of more than 15 venues situated in the Ronald O. Perelman Arts District, announced in April 2023 to spotlight "where the arts happen" at Brown. It encompasses prominent performance spaces on the College Hill campus as well as spaces dedicated to research, teaching and training in the arts, from the List Art Building to Ashamu Dance Studio, to Granoff and The Lindemann.

With new pylons and markers on building signs, the district signals where artists, scholars and students are engaged in arts discovery. It was named with a major gift from the Perelman Family Foundation; Ronald Perelman is a philanthropist, business leader and former Brown trustee.

"We are entering an exciting new era for the arts at Brown, and the Perelman Arts District is a wonderful complement to efforts to elevate the University as a national leader in arts practice and scholarship," Hoffman says.

Brown has a long tradition of cultivating artistic talent — Brunonians have earned acclaim as writers, musicians, actors and more — and of fostering art that illuminates pressing issues and has meaningful social impact.

"The arts at Brown," says Paxson, "are a catalyst for creativity, discovery and innovation that help us better understand the world around us."



RITES AND REASON THEATRE'S APRIL 2023 PERFORMANCE OF *AFROFANTASIA: THE JOURNEY OF IYANU*, WAS WRITTEN BY JASON TRISTAN BROWN '23, AND CO-DIRECTED BY ELMO TERRY-MORGAN '74 AND CONNIE CRAWFORD. THE PRODUCTION WAS MADE POSSIBLE IN PART BY THE GENEROUS SUPPORT OF DAVID L. SHRIER '95 AND THE BROWN ARTS INSTITUTE. DEPICTED IN THE PHOTO IS OLUWASIJII SOETAN '25, AS KWAKU.

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