nect students with the burgeoning world cultures of the seventeenth century.

Other members include Rothenberg professor of the humanities Homi Bhabha, director of the Humanities Center (www.fas.harvard.edu/~humcentr); Diana Sorensen, Rothenberg professor of Romance languages and literatures and of comparative literature, and dean for the humanities in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS); Graduate School of Design dean Mohsen Mostafavi, newly arrived from Cornell, where his brief as dean included the arts; Mallinckrodt professor of physics Melissa Franklin, and FAS peers included the arts; Mallinckrodt professor of physics Melissa Franklin, and FAS peers leading figures from the Graduate School in art history, the visual arts, and music; leading figures from the Graduate School of Education, the Office for the Arts (OFA), the University Art Museums, and the American Repertory Theatre (ART); undergraduates and a recent graduate student; and others. (For the news release on the task force, see www.news.harvard.edu/gazette/2007/11.08/09-arts.html.)

Beyond its explorations on campus, Faust asked the task force to examine programs at other educational institutions, and to consult the “large external network” of alumni involved in the arts. Comments may be sent to arts_taskforce@harvard.edu.

The intimate performance space, seen from the stage, is equipped with thoroughly modern theater technology.

The upper floors hold classroom space as well: first-semester offerings included Dramatic Arts 40, “Introduction to Stage Combat,” which instructed students in the art of realistic-looking yet innocuous slaps, punches, kicks, pushes, chokes, and hair grabs. In light of the emphasis President Drew Faust is placing on the arts (see page 51), Jack Megan, director of the Office for the Arts at Harvard, predicts an increase in the number of professors of the practice of dramatic arts, and more outside faculty and theater professionals visiting to hold workshops. “We’re excited about the potential” the new space offers “for students to connect with faculty,” he says. “It’s not just a theater to do yet another 12 shows.”

There is also office space for both staff members and student groups, including HPT and the Harvard Krokodiloes and Radcliffe Pitches, two a cappella groups affiliated with the Institute of 1770. HPT’s parent organization. (Harvard bought the

**Theatrical Debut**

**Hasty Pudding Theatricals** (HPT) returns to its historic home this year for its 160th production. (Since the inaugural show in 1844, the group has missed only four years, taking a hiatus during each of the two world wars.) But the theater at 10-12 Holyoke Street looks quite different than it did when students last performed there in 2005. The University has renovated the space, keeping the 1888 Georgian Revival façade but demolishing almost everything inside. The building’s modernized, and Modern, in-nards—designed by Leers Weinzapfel Associates of Boston—comprise 25,119 square feet of space on six stories, three above ground and three below.

Because the building was surrounded on three sides by other buildings and on the fourth by the old façade, all materials had to be brought in by crane. That and the high water table (the new building requires two sump pumps, one running continuously, to keep water out) pushed up construction costs: the Corporation eventually approved spending $31 million. The University has kept the building’s name nondescript, hoping the naming rights will attract a donor.

But the New College Theatre itself is anything but nondescript: it has considerably more accouterments than the old building, where actors had to duck under support beams to get to the stage. Electrical and ventilation systems occupy the sub-subbasement; the floor above houses a laundry room, set-painting space, a prop shop, and an electrical shop. The theater itself spans two levels, with the entrance at ground level and seats sloping down to the stage a floor below. Features include a counterweight fly system and a movable thrust stage that is deeper, front to back, than the old stage. The new theater is smaller: it seats 256 to 280, instead of 350, depending on whether the production includes an orchestra and whether space is reserved for audience members with disabilities. (The entire building, except for the catwalks, is accessible.) It also features state-of-the-art technology, including audiovisual plug-ins to facilitate media coverage of HPT’s annual Man and Woman of the Year awards. Soundproofing in the upstairs dance space allows performances or practice to occur even during a show downstairs.

“Harvard has always had enormous strengths in the arts—and never more so than today,” Faust said in the announcement of the initiative, “but we have had equally strong ambivalence about the role of performance and practice in the curriculum and in the life of the University.”

Despite the individual strengths of the “nearly 150 undergraduate student organizations,” plus museum collections, art studios, the Harvard Film Archive, the ART and the OFA, she said, these and