

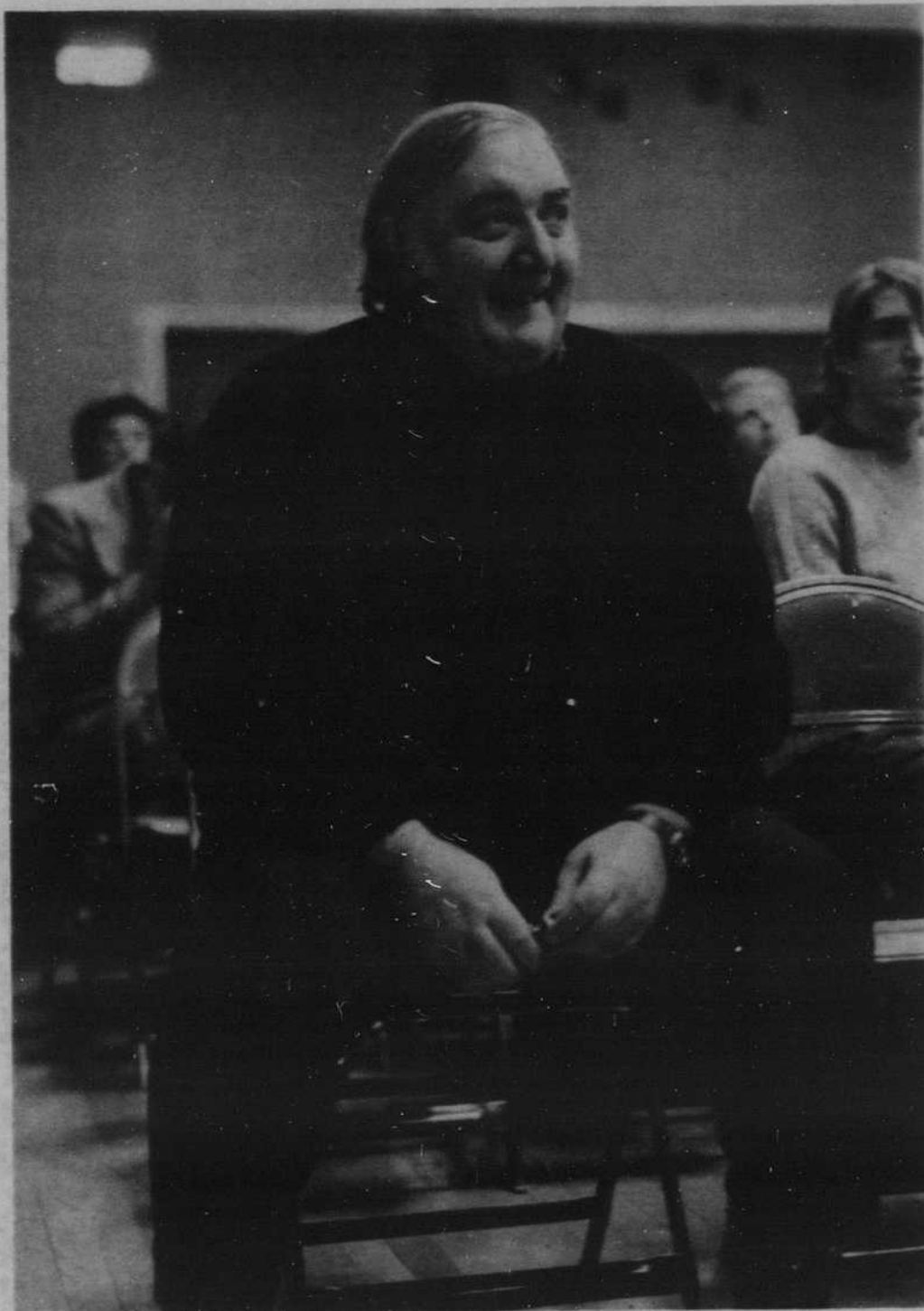


Photo by Steve Dykes

British architect "Big Jim" Stirling once called 99 percent of modern architecture "boring, banal and barren." He blends his own design work in major European cities with the nature of the existing centuries-old architecture.

Architect merges the past, present

By ROBIN SMITH
Of the Emerald

James Stirling, world-renowned British architect and Danforth Professor at Yale University, spoke to some 600 people in the EMU Ballroom Friday night.

The controversial architect made this statement in a leading architectural journal in 1975: "I consider 99 percent of modern architecture to be boring, banal and barren and usually disruptive when placed in older cities."

The architect's own influence in modern architecture has been "continuing and profound," as Charles Rusch, of the University Department of Architecture, stated in his introductory remarks.

"Stirling is so highly innovative and forward looking that his work becomes a source for new movements," said Rusch, adding that his careful use of technological materials to make a profound architectural statement is often characterized by his wit.

Stirling, a crimson-faced, burly man (nicknamed "Big Jim") displayed his wit throughout his lecture, which he described as "a showing of our (firm's) work, but in a different way."

To show samples of all the major efforts of his firm, Stirling described an exercise in which he and 11 other well-known architects divided up a 1748 map of Rome, each taking his own section.

All the projects, though some were "more graphic than architectural," were delightfully tongue-in-cheek.

Stirling's own plan, entitled the MFA (Megalomaniac Frustrated Architect) Solution, was planned partially as a rebuttal to his critics who have accused him of having a "complete disdain for the people who have to live with his architecture."

Through careful selection of the buildings Stirling attempted to show how his super-modern architecture could be carefully fit into the existing ancient Roman, Renaissance and Baroque urban spaces.

As he said in 1975, "Both (government and developers) see shoe-box style modern architecture with its stripped-down puritan aesthetic and repetitive expression as very suitable for building to the lowest costs... in this situation an architect who is concerned to produce architecture has to revert to lowdown cunning to make his buildings of any consequence."

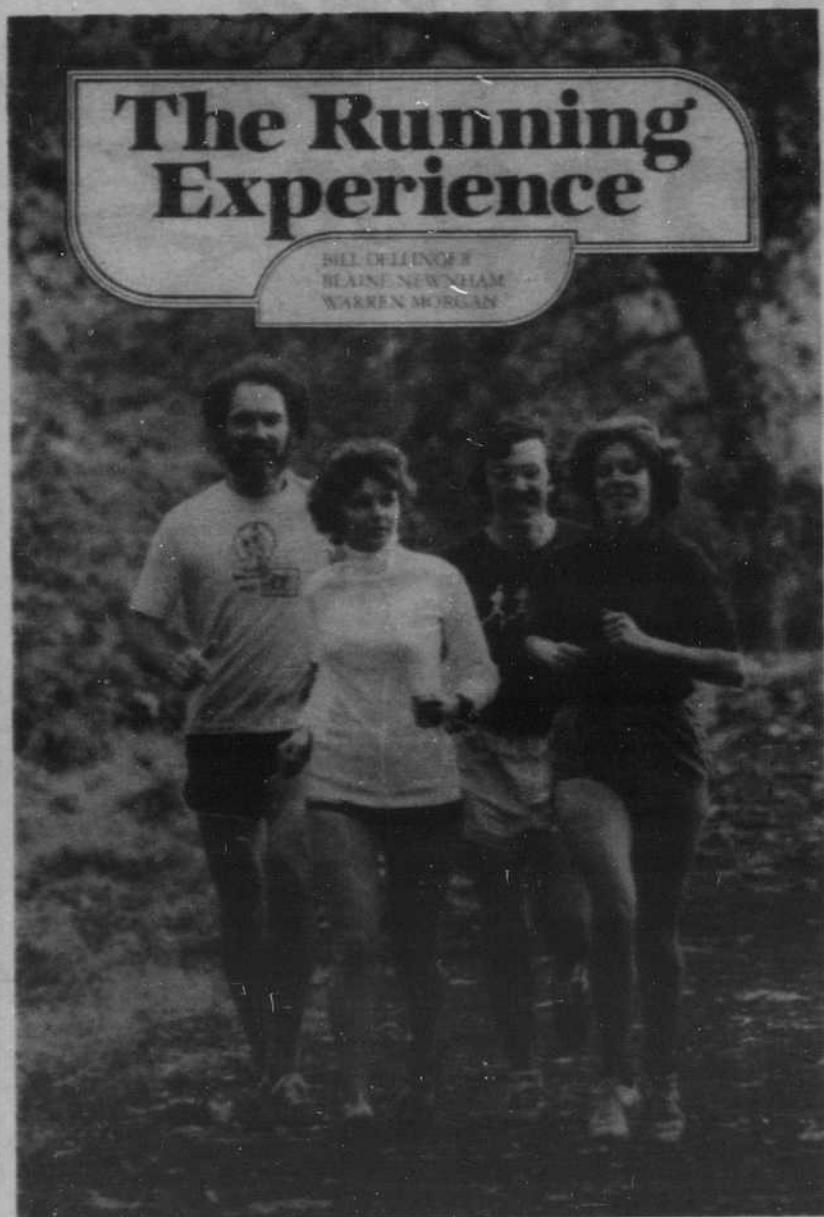
Stirling closed his remarks on the Roman exercise with a slide of "JS on a birthday cake" — a "statue" replacing the Roman equestrian monument "Garibaldi on a Horse" — with a paunchy likeness of the imaginative architect casually perched atop a birthday cake.

Stirling ended his lecture with slides of his latest project, an art gallery in Stuttgart, Germany.

"In case you don't think that what you've just seen is serious, this project employs many of the objectives which I've referred to in the treatment of my section of the Rome map."

Stuttgart, Stirling believes, "was not only damaged by World War II, but equally highly damaged by postwar reconstruction," referring again to the harm wrought by modern planners employing "total design" techniques.

Through the routing of public footpaths, Stirling attempted to stimulate people to visit the gallery. Describing the design as "intended to be small, but monumental," he had to fit his gallery in with the neoclassical buildings neighboring the site. Stirling sought to create for the public an easy flow between the old building and the new one.



Meet the Authors

Today at 12 noon, the Tradebook Department will host an autograph party for the three authors of *The Running Experience*.

Bill Dellinger has been the track coach at the University of Oregon since 1973. He competed in three Olympiads, and won a bronze medal at the 1964 Tokyo games.

Blaine Newnham, a daily jogger, is recognized as one of the top track and field writers in the country. He became sports editor of the Register-Guard in 1971.

Warren Morgan is a photographer for the Eugene Register-Guard and an accomplished marathon runner.

The Running Experience is one of the most exciting and inspiring books on physical fitness written. Come in and talk with the authors. They will be signing books during their visit, too. A perfect gift for the Oregon jogger.

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