Whitman Hall Opening Set For March—'Subject to...'

By Judy Michaelson

The formal opening and dedication of Walt Whitman Hall is tentatively set for the end of next March, subject to the completion of various works by the several contractors engaged in the building's construction.

Mr. Arthur Hillary, Business Manager of Brooklyn College, "doubts that the building will be ready for occupancy by March." College officials have met with the contractors during this past week, in an effort to pin them down as to a definite date for the opening, but at the moment, everything is in a tentative state.

The dedication program, planned by a special committee headed by Prof. Francis P. Kehoe, if not presented in March, will in all probability be presented early in the fall term of 1954.

This week, BC students participated in the preparations for the dedication by contributing money to purchase an 1877 portrait of Walt Whitman, which will be unveiled at the opening-day ceremonies.

"Help Fill the Frame" drive to raise one thousand dollars was conducted from Monday to Wednesday with cooperation of various campus organizations including Pan-Hell, IFC, HPA, APO, and Boosters. Commenting on the fact that this represents the largest inter-organization project this term, Miss Joan Herman, publicity director of the campaign declared that "It's wonderful to see so many campus organizations concentrating their efforts towards one purpose."

Although the actual contributions have not been assessed, the results, according to Miss Frances Tepper, chairman of the project, have been favorable thus far, considering that the actual campaign lasted only three days. However, it was pointed out that students organizations may still place their contributions in the Central Depository, 2208-B.

A large paper-portrait bearing the words "Help Fill This Frame" stood in the center of the quad-range to highlight the drive. The "real" portrait, which will be hung in Whitman Hall was painted by Gil Waters in 1877 and is 2½ x 2½ feet with a gold frame four inches wide.

The program for the official opening of Whitman Hall will be a series of events lasting almost a week. A noon academic convocation (tentative March 24), featuring a speech on Whitman by a leading American man of letters, will formally inaugurate the celebration. On the same evening and on three succeeding evenings, a college cast directed by Prof. Elizabeth P. Casey will present an original symphonic drama by Dr. Ralph Goodman of the English department, entitled "I, Walt Whitman".

Prof. Vance Morton will coordinate the production with sets by Prof. J. F. Foster, costumes by William Hatch, dances supervised by Prof. Theodora Wiesner, and the BC Chorus directed by Mr. Robert Hickey.

The symphonic drama will depict scenes from the life of the poet and will feature students of the drama, music and dance in the single production. The first performance will be primarily for guests invited from the Brooklyn community, men and women who have displayed an active interest in Brooklyn College. The succeeding performances, all subscription, will be patronized by undergraduates, alumni and speech and music groups from the high schools.

On the Sunday afternoon following the presentation of the symphonic drama (March 28, tentatively) the Community Symphony Orchestra and Chorus will present an all-Gershwin program, which will formally dedicate Gershwin Theatre.

Another Whitman painting by Charles Hine in 1869 will be unveiled at the initial dedication along with the student purchased portrait. The earlier portrait will be donated by the members of the English department.