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“A NOBLE AND  
SYMMETRICAL  
CONCEPTION  
OF LIFE”

THE ARTS AT CHICAGO  
ON THE EDGE OF  
A NEW CENTURY

JOHN W. BOYER

OCCASIONAL PAPERS  
ON HIGHER  
EDUCATION XIX

THE COLLEGE  
OF THE  
UNIVERSITY OF  
CHICAGO



Cap and Gown  
1915



**DRAMATICS**

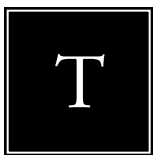
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*Cap and Gown*  
*The University of Chicago Yearbook 1915*

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“ A N O B L E A N D S Y M M E T R I C A L  
C O N C E P T I O N O F L I F E ”

*The Arts at Chicago on the Edge of a New Century*

I N T R O D U C T I O N

he College opened this academic year with a student body of just over 5,100. The College has now achieved a demographic and cultural presence on campus that is proving healthy for our students and appropriate for the academic mission and economic well-being of the University as a whole. We have a large College once again, as we did in the early history of this university until the Second World War. We can be proud of the fact that in our era the large College is home to a student body of high academic ambition and real intellectual quality, drawn from all parts of the nation and from the wider world as well. We can also be proud of strong faculty participation in teaching, of retention and graduation rates that have never been better, and of the steady increases in the number of applications which indicate that the superb education that the College offers is receiving the wide recognition that it deserves among prospective students and their families across our nation and around the world.

I now routinely expect to be stopped somewhere on campus during the Autumn Quarter by a colleague who wants to mention the excellence of the College students whom she or he is teaching in the Humanities

*This essay was originally presented as the Annual Report to the Faculty of the College on October 27, 2009. John W. Boyer is the Martin A. Ryerson Distinguished Service Professor in the Department of History and the College, and Dean of the College.*

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or Social Sciences Core. This is a gratifying experience, and I am happy to say that this year is no exception. This past year I myself taught a group of highly motivated, extremely bright students in the European Civilization Core, and the experience was deeply satisfying. In the same spirit, but in a different context, I received a report about mathematics placement test results earlier this month that noted a gratifying increase in the percentage of the incoming class placing into the Calculus 151 sequence or higher. As the College has grown, we have seen the percentage of the incoming class prepared to take calculus in the first quarter of their studies increase. This is a testimony to improvements in high school preparation, but it is also evidence that we are increasingly able to attract superbly trained students to this College, students capable of taking full advantage of what we have to offer.

But the situation in mathematics points to another issue, an issue that makes itself felt across the College and one I wish to pay particular attention to over the course of this year. The talented mathematics students among our first-years put significant pressure on our teaching resources in mathematics. This is an issue that we can certainly address, but it is only one instance of the broader need to invest in the College at a level that is appropriate to its size and, where necessary, to adapt old routines to the new demands of this large and very talented student body. The University must support the College of more than 5,100 students with the physical and intellectual resources necessary to make good on our promise of first-class education to our students. We cannot ignore these challenges, nor can we ignore the fact that the cultural and demographic renewal of College life from which we benefit today has depended upon significant human and material resources. We must continue to make those investments, and even increase them, if the College is to continue to flourish.



In this spirit I want to report briefly on some of the College's initiatives of the past year. The foundation on which all these initiatives rest is, of course, the work of education that goes on day in and day out in classrooms, laboratories, and offices around campus. That is our central mission. The many other things that we do are in the service of our educational enterprise. I will offer here a short list of the many accomplishments of our students and key examples of the many efforts all of us undertake to establish an institutional context that makes their success possible. Behind every number, every prize won, every BA paper written is a community of colleagues, including all of you here today, who constitute the educational enterprise of the College. All that we do requires careful stewardship and continuous investment. I am grateful to you, on behalf of our students and their families, for your dedication to our cause.

Last year I spoke about the crucial importance of residential housing, and I am happy to report that the new South Campus Residence Hall has opened south of Burton-Judson, featuring eight houses and providing a home for 811 students. It is a beautiful building and by all accounts already a wonderful and very Chicago-like place to live, with vibrant indoor and outdoor public spaces. The new Dining Commons linked to B-J is splendid as well. Be sure to visit if you have not already done so. But I want to remind you today that my argument of last year remains unchanged—the College needs another new residence hall a bit bigger than South Campus, and just as conveniently located, in order to achieve an on-campus residence rate of 70 percent. A major higher education consulting firm has nearly completed a comprehensive study of inquirers and applicants in the New York City region and across the nation. I will share the findings of their report with the College Council later this year, but the preliminary results make it abundantly clear that enriching the on-campus residential community is one of the most powerful things that we

can do to advance our case with the most academically talented high school students (and their parents) in the nation. We need to support a strong and vibrant culture of residential life at the College.

I am also pleased to report the opening of the new (and partially renovated) Harper Memorial Library Commons. The Harper and Stuart Reading Rooms are now serving as 24-hour study space. A coffee shop has taken the place of the old library circulation area and new carpeting and furniture have been added to the space. The exterior of the building will be spectacularly lighted this fall, and the facility (in combination with the new residence hall) has already increased traffic across the Midway and bids fair to help unite the north and south parts of our campus. It is vital to remember that as popular as the current configuration in Harper and Stuart has proven to be so far this fall, it is only an interim solution. We have a much more comprehensive redesign and modernization in waiting for the right moment financially, and we will not lose sight of that fact. Please enjoy this new facility and remember as you do that it is a work in progress.

More vital than our buildings, of course, are our students. We continue to invest in the work of our students beyond the classroom on several fronts.

Once again this year we have funded just over two dozen BA research projects for students in a variety of departments and programs, including Art History, Biochemistry, Biological Sciences, Chemistry, Classics, Comparative Human Development, Creative Writing (English), History, Mathematics, Philosophy, Physics, Psychology, and Public Policy Studies. Most of the funds for these projects came to us in the last ten years from College alumni or parents for the specific purpose of providing research support directly to our students and thereby encouraging both student creativity and closer student-faculty collaborations.

This year we will add 20 new paid research positions for College students during the academic year. These positions involve work with faculty members and will require substantive academic work in a collaborative setting. Most will go to Work-Study students. Demand from faculty and from students has been overwhelming. Here then is ample evidence that our students and our faculty have many more plans and projects than we have resources. This is very good news as a measure of the vitality of our academic community and also an important part of the case for increasing investment in the College.

On the international front we continue to concentrate on Civilization Abroad programs and on the Summer International Travel Grants. The Summer International Travel Grant (SITG) programs represent the College's commitment to crosscultural experience, research, and foreign language acquisition for undergraduates. The two types of grants are Summer Research Grants and Foreign Language Acquisition Grants (FLAGs). More than 1,000 students have travelled to 60 countries for research and the study of 40 languages since the inception of the program in 1998. Twenty-three students travelled to 16 different countries to conduct research in the summer of 2009, including projects in France, India, Senegal, Egypt, Peru, Tanzania, Syria, and Uruguay. Sixty-six students received Foreign Language Acquisition Grants for 2009, travelling to 23 countries to study 13 languages. In 2009, the top five languages studied were Chinese, Spanish, Arabic, French, and Russian.

We are now offering 13 Civilization programs in Europe, Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East. Our newest Civilization course, in Jerusalem, was launched with considerable success last spring. Civilization courses abroad enrolled 299 last year, and 281 students are enrolled for this year. In addition, over 200 Chicago undergraduates will study at the Center in Paris in 2009–10. Because they are well-managed and taught by

our own faculty or by faculty colleagues overseas who share our standards, study abroad courses enjoys strong and stable rates of participation by our students in spite of the challenging economic times.

Mention of the economy brings me to the work that our students do to prepare themselves for life after the College. It is a pleasure to report that the class of 2009 did very well last spring. We saw only a 4 percent increase in the proportion of the class that did not have definite plans at graduation. This was great news, and the Office of Career Advising and Planning Services (CAPS) continued to reach out to those students who did not have plans over the course of the summer. At graduation, 38 percent of the class had accepted full-time employment offers, and 19 percent had been admitted and planned to attend graduate or professional school. Just over a third were searching for jobs, a reasonable percentage in such a tough year. This represents a slight drop in the number of students with jobs compared to 2008, and a small increase in those going right to graduate or professional school.

In 2008–09, CAPS contacted over 400 new organizations, soliciting them to participate in the Metcalf Fellows internship program. As a result, 70 new organizations participated in the program this year. The total number of Metcalf employers increased from 176 to 200, and the number of posted positions increasing from 250 to 260. But the number of students who applied to internships within the program increased by 32 percent from 744 to 986. The Metcalf Fellows Program is a wonderful success, but it is too small, and I want to double the number of positions available by 2012.

CAPS supports our students on many other fronts, with programming for students headed to graduate school, students interested in business, law, and journalism, and much more. In each field, we have held our own this year and our students have found their talents and





ambition rewarded, but we are also challenged by the extraordinary abilities of over 5,000 undergraduates.

Under the aegis of the Office of the Dean of Students in the College, the new Chicago Careers in Health Professions (CCIHP) program is now providing over 400 pre-health students with the resources and support to develop a customized portfolio of knowledge, skills, and experiences required for advanced study in health and medicine. Beginning in their first year, pre-health students are advised on how to assess their strengths, hone interests, and identify appropriate course work, research, and clinical opportunities. CCIHP is designed to help Chicago students prepare highly competitive applications for advanced study in a variety of fields including medicine, dentistry, health services research, veterinary medicine, nursing, pharmacy, and public health. It has completed its first year of operation, and I am confident that we will see improved access to the health professions for our students as a result of the work CCIHP is doing.

College students continue to regularly win recognition for their work from national and international organizations. Their success is due to their own talent and ambition, but also to the energetic work of faculty colleagues and the advisers in the Office of the Dean of Students in the College, who work hard to coach our students in these competitions. Since 2005, College students have won two Churchill Scholarships and three Marshall Scholarships; they have earned six Rhodes Scholarships, and the College has ranked fifth in the nation in the Rhodes competition for these years, after Harvard, Yale, Stanford, and the United States Naval Academy. Eight College students have won Truman Scholarships since 2005, and we are first in the country (tied with Swarthmore) for Truman Scholars since that year. In addition, since 2005, our students have won 15 Goldwater Scholarships, four Gates Foundation Fellowships,

and one Mitchell Scholarship (the Mitchell is a new and highly competitive scholarship supporting graduate study in Ireland).

I can also report once again that the success of College students in Fulbright U.S. Student competitions continues to grow dramatically. The number of applicants (both fourth-year and alumni) has grown from six during the 2001–02 competition to seventy-three during the 2009–10 competition. Our number of recipients has also increased significantly, from two in 2001–02 to twenty-one in 2009–10. Over the past two years, our Fulbright Scholars have gone or are preparing to go to Andorra, Argentina, Austria, Barbados, Bulgaria, Cambodia, China, Columbia, Dominican Republic, France, Germany, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Macau, Macedonia, Malaysia, Mongolia, Norway, Russia, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Syria, Taiwan, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Tunisia, Turkey, Thailand, Yemen, and Zimbabwe.

What all the programs described all too briefly here have in common is that they are a part of larger, broad-based effort to construct what I have previously called *enabling structures* around and linked with our distinguished academic programs, structures that can help our students negotiate for themselves successful transitions from the world of the College to the world of academic and professional careers. But it is important for us to keep pushing forward and make more progress. We would like to double the number of special research grants and internships available to College students in the next five years, so that by 2012–13 no less than 50 percent of the students in the College will have access to one of these special opportunities.

On the academic front, I am pleased to report that our new BA/MAT program, providing certification for secondary school teaching in mathematics and biology, has opened his fall. We have several students from both fields in the inaugural class. Secondary education is one of the most

crucial and vital domains of teaching in our nation, and we should enable more of our students to bring their academic skills, their disciplined hard work, and their enthusiasm to bear in the important task of improving our high schools. I am grateful to our colleagues in Mathematics, the Biological Sciences, and the Urban Teacher Education Program who have worked tirelessly to establish this program.

The new academic year marks the tenth anniversary of the implementation of the new curriculum for the College, passed by the College Council in March 1998. With this anniversary in mind, the College plans to organize a series of discussions about the state of the Core curriculum. Our purpose is not to debate any curricular restructuring such as occurred in 1998, since the new curriculum has worked well and has served the College and our students in many positive ways. The goal is rather to encourage serious thinking about the substantive intellectual content and teaching practices of our current Core structures.

In addition, ten years is a long time in the life of any college faculty, and over the past decade many new colleagues have joined our community who were not part of the extensive conversations about the curriculum that took place between 1993 and 1998. It would be good to provide an opportunity for these colleagues (and for the veterans as well!) to discuss our current Core offerings and to find ways to engage all of our colleagues in conversations about how we might improve and strengthen the Core.

We will organize three one-day retreats this academic year and three more in the following academic year. We will discuss the Art, Music, and Drama Core (plus Cinema and Writing) next month, the Social Sciences Core in the Winter Quarter, and the Physical Sciences Core in the Spring Quarter. In 2010–11, we can take up the Humanities Core, the Biology Core, and the Civilizations Core.

These conversations about the Core, as indeed the work our colleagues did to develop the BA/MAT program in secondary mathematics and biology teaching, are part of the work that we must be continuously engaged in to understand our mission as educators, and to keep the College alive and creative through conscious engagement with our purposes, practices, and traditions. This is work that is always underway, though often on different fronts as the years go by.

When I spoke in my annual report last year about housing and the University's community, I was speaking about the physical facilities that we built or did not build in the past and also about changing conceptions of the character of the University and the ideals and aspirations that guided decisions about the use of limited resources. Our buildings are not created in a vacuum. They are conceived, designed, built, and then used in a context established by what we believe the University ought to be doing and by the structures for accomplishing our mission that we have inherited from the past. The South Campus Residence Hall stands at the end of the history that shaped it, and it will have a powerful influence on the life of this institution going forward.

We are now about to embark on a new building project of considerable magnitude. Even before ground is broken for the Reva and David Logan Center for Creative and Performing Arts, it is linked to the South Campus Residence Hall. They are both part of a host of physical changes south of the Midway, and both are signal moments in the new era of the College. But there is more to the new arts center than this context. Today I want to discuss the meaning and the promise of the Logan Arts Center. The new facility will provide us with an array of spaces for visual art, theater, music, dance, and film considerably richer than the spaces we have had up to this time. To understand how to occupy this space in a manner that is fruitful for our students and faculty, our alumni and our

neighbors, we need to think carefully about the institutional and cultural practices that we will bring to the new building.

The story of the arts at Chicago consists of several interwoven but distinct narratives. Student culture and faculty culture have different parts to play in this account, and although music, theater, and visual art have deep roots in our University, their natural combination of the practical and the theoretical gives them a history that is rather different from other academic disciplines. To these circumstances we must add the fact that music, theater, and other arts are always going on, and sometimes at a high level, elsewhere in the city and outside of the academy. The arts at the University are inevitably in competition and dialogue with their practitioners outside the academy. All these elements are part of the history of the arts at the University of Chicago — the students and the faculty, the city and the academy, the making of art and the study of art.

When the Logan Arts Center opens in 2012, the arts will flourish at the University, on the South Side, and in the city as never before, but unquestionably also in a context established by our traditions and our present. The College is a central part of that present and that future. Like the arts, the College functions as one of the most important public faces of the University. Their fates are linked. Indeed, getting used to a more capacious and deeper culture of the arts may in fact be part of a broader historical process by which the University is compelled to get used to having a large undergraduate College, and over time this process of adjustment may release powerful creative impulses and structural realignments in the various domains of the arts, as they impact faculty and students and the University and the city we all share.

## PART I

1892 TO 1945



hen the University was founded, the idea of the arts as an intellectual and scholarly component of the mission of the new University was fragile and tentative. Officially, William Rainey Harper announced the need for a building for the arts, but neither he nor the Trustees took any substantive action to achieve that goal. The fact that Harper was an amateur musician and that he liked student theatricals and even participated in the University Band did not translate into a systematic initiative for arts education or support for the practice of the arts on the campus of the early University. Concerns about the relationship between the fine arts and the applied arts, and about the role of art in modern industrial societies were taken up by a number of early faculty members in diverse disciplines, several of whom were involved in the Extension Division and in the Chicago chapter of the Arts and Crafts Society and the Industrial Art League, including Oscar Lovell Triggs, John Graham Brooks, Ira Woods Howerth, Charles Zeublin, and Charles R. Henderson.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps the most famous of these scholars was the young Thorstein Veblen, whose social evolutionist arguments in *The Theory of the Leisure Class* in 1899 offered a compelling portrait of the tensions between

1. See Anne Rorimer, "Michael Asher at the Renaissance Society," in *Michael Asher. University of Chicago. January 12–March 4, 1990* (Chicago, 1990); and Eileen Boris, *Art and Labor: Ruskin, Morris, and the Craftsman Ideal in America* (Philadelphia, 1986), pp. 46–51. I wish to thank Alison Berkovitz, Patrick Houlihan, and Daniel Koehler for the excellent research assistance that they provided to me in the preparation of this essay. I am also grateful to Bill Michel, Michael Jones, Thomas Christensen, Herman Sinaiko, Janel Mueller, Joel Snyder, Daniel Meyer, Mary Anton, David Nirenberg, Karen Reimer, Hamza Walker, Charles Cohen, Tony Hirschel, Janice Knight, and Bob Riesman for their assistance, comments, and suggestions.



preindustrial cultural ideals and the realities of capitalist society based on advanced industrial technology. Ellen Thomson has recently argued that Chicago between 1890 and 1910 was the site of a series of flourishing interventions concerned with the role of art in society: “[P]erhaps the greatest contribution that the Chicago-based scholars made to aesthetics was to show how the arts, including design, could be understood within the larger framework of culture. They explored the cultural meaning and social uses of the arts, rather than glorifying individual artists or creating canons.”<sup>2</sup>

Still, most artistic activity on the campus before and immediately after World War I was informal and based on voluntary associations of students and faculty. An isolated voice was heard advocating that the University create a professional theater program in 1919 when Charles Breasted, the son of the great Egyptologist James H. Breasted, wrote to Harold Swift, urging that the University establish a school of the theater that would encompass the professional study of drama and training in dramatic performance. Swift quickly told Breasted that President Harry Pratt Judson had no interest in such a scheme, and that “there was no chance of [its] development for many years.”<sup>3</sup> Swift’s dismissal of the idea was characteristic of the early University’s belief that, to the extent that the practice of the arts involved professional training, such training might best be undertaken at other institutions in the city. Instead, the practice of the arts focused mainly on student and amateur productions

2. Ellen M. Thomson, “Thorstein Veblen at the University of Chicago and the Socialization of Aesthetics,” *Design Issues*, 15 (1999): 15. More generally, see Patricia M. Amburgy, “Culture for the Masses,” in Donald Soucy and Mary Ann Stankiewicz, eds., *Framing the Past: Essays on Art Education* (Reston, Virginia, 1990), pp. 105–113.

3. Harold H. Swift, “Memorandum — May 6, 1920,” *Harold Swift Papers*, Box 121, folder 19. Unless otherwise noted, all of the archival materials used for this report are located in the Special Collections Research Center, The University of Chicago.

and on institutions like the University choir and band, which existed to perform at University religious and athletic events.

This was most visible in the realm of theater. An early example of a student theater group, Blackfriars was created in 1904 by fourteen students as an order of imaginary friars and offered every year until 1941 (except 1918) annual productions of cleverly written spoofs by local students and faculty, often focusing on local issues or contemporary concerns of students. The early members developed a camaraderie and folksy self-assurance that became part of alumni memories. Many of the early leaders went on to highly successful professional careers, some in the arts and others in business, law, and medicine.<sup>4</sup> Most of the Blackfriars productions were comic operas with musical numbers interposed with humorous dialogue. Titles varied from “The King’s Kalender Keeper” in 1905 to “The Lyrical Liar” in 1909 to “Pranks of Paprika” in 1913. A 1917 description of the productions reported that they had grown in complexity and performative value: “Originally the order had no higher aim than to amuse the University public. Outside of a love scene or two, the first show was not hampered by a plot, but as the University grew and the student body assumed an air of erudition a broader *raison d’être* was demanded of the Blackfriars. So now to evoke any enthusiasm a production must be not only clever, but also logical, edifying, accurate, beautiful, well-staged, expensive and histrionically above reproach.”<sup>5</sup>

Blackfriars was supported by private contributions from (mainly) senior faculty and staff, ticket sales, and advertising revenue. A list of its patrons from the 1930s included many members of the Board of

4. See Walter L. Gregory, “Twenty Years with the Blackfriars,” *Blackfriars Records*, Box 4. Gregory later became the president of the State Street Council and was the original organizer of the State Street Christmas parade in 1934.

5. Blackfriars’ Songbook, 1917, p. 4, *Blackfriars Records*, Box 3.



Trustees and prominent senior professors like Fay-Cooper Cole, James Weber Linn, Charles Merriam, and Henry Gordon Gale. At first Blackfriars was organized only by students, but after 1918 professionals were hired to direct and stage the shows, and to provide musical accompaniment, while students continued to be the primary actors.<sup>6</sup>

A few other arts-related student groups also came together. A student-dominated University Band had existed from Harper's era. Women students organized an annual dance and music revue called the Mirror Revue, run by the Mirror Board, and the Tower Players, also operating under the aegis of the University of Chicago Dramatic Association, staged one dramatic work each year beginning in the 1920s (until World War II).<sup>7</sup> But, in general, most student associations in the period before 1940 were fraternities, sororities, or clubs organized around political and social issues. The fact that so many of our undergraduate students were commuter students, living at home and in many cases preoccupied with part-time or even full-time work, probably militated against the evolution of a strong arts culture on campus.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, the University's attitude toward student life was one of benevolent hands-off. One frustrated campus publication commented on this situation in 1937:

While it is true that student activities have been granted a liberal amount of freedom by the administration, it also holds true

6. The 1939 production cost slightly over \$5,000, of which about half went to staff costs, including a professional director, a dance director, and a small orchestra.

7. The Dramatic Association was the successor organization to the Dramatic Club, a student group that was founded in the 1890s and that had both men and women members.

8. A list of on-campus student organizations from 1934 is filed in *Office of Dean of Students. Records*, Box 6.

that there has been little encouragement. Whereas other schools provide expert faculty advisers and modern equipment to their publications, the local enterprises are given the part-time counsel of a man who knows little about publishing problems and are provided with inadequate office space and equipment. Little cash is forthcoming for programs and parties, and organizations get no cut rate on services from B & G. The University budget includes sums for the Chapel, Dramatic Association, Debate Union, dormitories, Reynolds Club and Ida Noyes, but this leaves many student organizations out in the cold.

But more important than cash support is the matter of moral support behind student activities. So wary is the administration of coddling paternalism toward student activities that there has never been a positive statement (in the knowledge of at least two faculty members concerned) on just what if any value they have. President Hutchins states that "extra-curricular activities must be spontaneous if they are to succeed. The University may be asked to provide the facilities necessary for whatever groups form of themselves. Anything further might find the University supporting a paper organization." This attitude leaves student leaders with little in the way of constructive principles to apply in developing their activities, [and] leaves some student advisers on the faculty frankly baffled when it comes to deciding courses of action.<sup>9</sup>

This climate of uncertainty about the University's role in the domain of student activities would see important changes in the decades after 1945.

9. "Curricular Extras," *The Pulse*, November 1937, p. 12.

## I I   A R T   B E F O R E   1 9 4 5   I I

The major development of the years between 1918 and 1945 involving the arts was the institutionalization of the study of art and music in the curriculum and research mission of the University. The first stirrings of faculty interest in a more formal commitment to the visual arts came with the foundation of the Renaissance Society in 1915. The idea for a University-based society interested in aesthetics originated in March 1915 with Professor Ernest D. Burton of the Divinity School in his role as the Director of the University Libraries. At the urging of Trustee James S. Dickerson, who suggested that Burton constitute “an association of the University friends of literature” to enable the Library to acquire rare fine arts materials, Burton decided to create a society of friends to help the Library secure “books and works of art of the class not usually included within those which it is deemed suitable to buy from University funds.”<sup>10</sup> Burton’s project was embraced but also broadened by other faculty, particularly Professor J. Laurence Laughlin of the Economics Department and David A. Robertson of the President’s Office, who urged that the mission of such a group might be to enhance “the cultivation of interest in the arts and of good taste” across the campus of the University, and not just to purchase fine art books for the Library.<sup>11</sup> Founded in April 1915 as a (largely) on-campus group of senior faculty and their spouses interested in the appreciation of the fine arts broadly conceived (the earliest documents

10. Dickerson to Burton, February 10, 1915, *University Library. Records*, Box 44, folder 10.

11. Burton to William G. Hale, March 3, 1915; Burton to Ferdinand Schevill, March 13, 1916; Burton to Francis W. Parker, April 22, 1915; and David Robertson to Judson, April 13, 1915, *University Library. Records*, Box 44, folder 10. Robertson for one thought that such a broadened perspective might be useful to the University in “enlisting the interest and generosity of wealthy collectors.”

refer to “a group of men sympathetic with the cultivation of a love of things beautiful as well as things useful”), the Renaissance Society became a safe and conservative venue for lectures and small exhibitions of European art, one that would defend the University against accusations by New York critics of the city’s artistic backwardness and boorishness, but do so by invoking the classical past, not the unseemly present.<sup>12</sup> As a cultural association the Renaissance Society also meshed well with the tradition of literary and artistic clubs and salons that had emerged among educated elites in the city of Chicago after 1890.<sup>13</sup> Paul Shorey delivered a keynote address at the first meeting of the society in April 1916 on “The Service of Art.” The text of this talk has not survived, but we do have a similar address that Shorey presented to the Art Institute of Indianapolis, in which he argued that art’s function was to engender feelings of beauty and refinement, and that “beauty for us cannot be the atmosphere in which we live and move and have our being, it must remain an isle of refuge from engulfing ugliness, a bower of retreat, a shrine of religious visitation.”<sup>14</sup>

12. See Burton to Judson, April 28, 1915, *University Library. Records*, Box 44, folder 10; and the “Report of the Secretary of the Renaissance Society,” 1916, *Harper, Judson, and Burton Administrations*, Box 70, folder 16. *Harper, Judson, and Burton Administrations* hereafter cited as *HJB Administration*. For Chicago’s reputation as a cultural backwater, especially after the 1913 Armory Show, see Neil Harris, “The Chicago Setting,” in Sue Ann Prince, ed., *The Old Guard and the Avant-Garde. Modernism in Chicago, 1910–1940* (Chicago, 1990), pp. 15–18.

13. “Even with regional self-aggrandizement, high hopes for American literature, and nostalgia taken into consideration, turn-of-the-century Chicago appears to have been a marvelous place for European Americans to live a literary life. Membership in a series of groups, clubs, salons, and centers overlapped; for instance, participants in the Whitechapel Club, Cliff-Dwellers, or the Little Room in all likelihood also attended Chicago’s ‘little theaters’ or literary discussions at Hull House.” Lisa Woolley, *American Voices of the Chicago Renaissance* (DeKalb, 2000), p. 94.

14. *Paul Shorey Papers*, Box 8, folder 11.



The chairman of the Board of Trustees, Martin A. Ryerson, reflecting his parallel (and protective) role as a key supporter of the Art Institute of Chicago, urged President Harry Pratt Judson that “it is his decided opinion that it is not advisable to attempt to form any new organization of the kind at this time in the city,” which Judson obliquely interpreted as a warning that the society should restrict its membership base to University faculty and staff, a notation that Judson loyally passed on to Laughlin, who chaired the organizing committee.<sup>15</sup> In its early years, the society bore all the marks of a wartime foundation, created in the midst of the passions of World War I to help settle minds and ennoble souls amid the passions of war debates on our campus and to reaffirm the values of a classical view of European culture. It was not perhaps accidental that its founding was strongly supported by President Judson at the very moment that Judson was lobbying intensely to take the United States into war against Germany. The name of the group seems to have come from Judson, for whom the word “Renaissance” conveyed an artistic idealism and cultural refinement that could be read into the annals of a progressive trope of Western Civilization that began in Greece and Rome and, via Renaissance Florence, ended up in *belle époque* Paris and Edwardian London.<sup>16</sup> Ethel Hammer has observed about the state of the arts in the city of Chicago between 1910 and 1920 that “Chicago’s imaginary mental associations with the Italian Renaissance, which weave in and out of second decade art and commentary, are also more explicable in the context of art’s task as a guarantor of security, past, present, and

15. Judson to Laughlin, February 2, 1916, *HJB Administration*, Box 70, folder 16.

16. See Jean Fulton, “A Founding and a Focus: 1915–1936,” in Joseph Scanlan, ed., *A History of The Renaissance Society. The First Seventy-Five Years* (Chicago, 1993), p. 14.

future.”<sup>17</sup> The mural of the Masque of Youth that Jessie Arms Botke painted in 1918 for the third floor theater in Ida Noyes Hall exemplified such a historicist exercise in neo-classical appropriation, based as it was on models from the early Italian Renaissance and the Pre-Raphaelites. Nor was the agenda of the society ready for a serious engagement with modern aesthetics. Jean Fulton has noted that “it was inevitable that the Renaissance Society’s ‘enrichment of the community’ in the first ten years of its programming did not include educating it about modernism; the idealism that framed its founding precluded acceptance of the modernists’ agenda. The tenets to which the originators of the Society adhered incorporated a component of morality: artistic activity carried with it a moral responsibility to up-lift humanity, a prescription that honored the art of the past, particularly that of the Renaissance, as well as the rigid aesthetic dictates of academic realism.”<sup>18</sup>

After the war, the society continued to function as a local social conventicle, acquiring about 100 members, but it also initiated a modest series of illustrated lectures, recitals, and small exhibitions of prints, manuscripts, books, and paintings, the latter coming from private collectors and galleries, University collections, and institutions like the Art Institute and Field Museum. Many of the lectures were offered by University faculty, including James Henry Breasted, Ernest Hatch Wilkins, Ferdinand Schevill, Lorado Taft, and Frederic Woodward. In 1926, the society held its first exhibition of student and faculty art, much of the former coming from students of Walter Sargent, the first chair of the new Department of Art. After the construction of Wieboldt Hall in the

17. Ethel J. Hammer, “Attitudes toward Art in the Nineteen Twenties in Chicago.” Dissertation, University of Chicago, 1975, p. 48.

18. Fulton, “A Founding and a Focus: 1915–1936,” p. 16.

late 1920s, the society gained a room (205) in which to undertake more ambitious exhibitions of art. Although it was open to the campus more broadly, the leadership of the society continued to be dominated by full professors and their spouses and by wealthy alumni.

But like the landscape of music and art more generally on our campus, the early 1930s brought a dramatic change to the fortunes of the society in the person of Eva Watson-Schütze, a professional painter and photographer who was the spouse of Martin Schütze of the German Department. Watson-Schütze had strong personal connections with avant-garde movements of the day — she had studied with Thomas Eakins at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in Philadelphia, and she had close personal and professional connections with Alfred Stieglitz. With Stieglitz she was one of the founders of the American Photo-Secession in 1902 (Alfred Stieglitz's younger brother Julius was a professor of chemistry at the University from 1892 until 1933 and a fine amateur photographer).<sup>19</sup> Elected the president of the society in 1929, Watson-Schütze used her inaugural year to insist that “part of the program of the Renaissance Society is to stimulate the study of the art of the present time, the new renaissance.”<sup>20</sup> Watson-Schütze launched a series of important exhibitions of modern French art and modern American architecture that established the reputation of the Renaissance Society as a place where Chicagoans with a taste for modern idioms could engage contemporary art of the highest value. This at a time when Katherine Kuh recalled that “[in the 1930s] the term modern art was anathema in the Midwest — a label of opprobrium.”<sup>21</sup> Many of the 20th-century paintings

19. I am grateful to Daniel Meyer for bringing these linkages to my attention.

20. Fulton, “A Founding and a Focus: 1915–1936,” p. 22.

21. Katherine Kuh, *My Love Affair with Modern Art* (New York, 2006), p. 4.

that Watson-Schütze brought to campus now hang in major museums around the United States, including works by Dufy, Matisse, Léger, Picasso, Mondrian, Chagall, Calder, and Valadon. And this modernist idiom reflected larger changes in the perspectives of the arts after World War I that reimagined the hegemony of the culture of the Enlightenment and 19th-century scientific rationalism, repudiating many of the structural categories that had shaped the aesthetic propensities of Harry Pratt Judson's generation. Jean Fulton rightly notes that "once freed from the academy's corrupting prescriptions, artists felt that they could help to create a new civilization, one in which the boundaries of race and nationality could be breached. Rather than looking to their nineteenth-century European forebears for inspiration, the modernists thus turned to the work of non-European, primitive, and pre-Renaissance artists, whom they felt possessed the key qualities of sincerity and authenticity."<sup>22</sup>

The Renaissance Society demonstrated that there was substantial informal interest in the visual arts among the faculty, but it required several decades to translate such inchoate sentiments into a set of policy convictions that would lead to the creation of a successful art department. An alumna of the College, Evangeline P. Williams, Class of 1898, later insisted that William Rainey Harper had told a group of seniors at the President's House in April 1898, "I hope in the near future the University may have a Department of Music as well as a Department of Art."<sup>23</sup>

Harper indeed publicly suggested the creation of a department of art in 1897, noting that "the aesthetic side of educational work has not yet been

22. Fulton, "A Founding and a Focus: 1915–1936," p. 27.

23. Williams to Swift, April 3, 1926, and Williams to Mason, October 26, 1925, *Mason Administration*, Box 18, folder 9. Williams was a high school teacher in Oskaloosa, Iowa, who had four daughters attending Chicago, living in Green Hall, and she wanted her daughters to have access to courses on music and art.





*Eva Watson-Schütze*  
*Drawing by Frances Foy, 1931*

recognized by the University. The conditions, indeed, make it impossible for men and women, whatever may be their talent, to pursue studies along these lines. No objection could have been made to this policy fifty years ago, but in these modern days, when in every stage of educational process the aesthetic plays so important a part, to ignore it . . . is to blind ourselves and those whom we are guiding.”<sup>24</sup> Finally, the University created a Department of the History of Art in 1902 by renaming the existing Department of Archaeology that had been created in 1892. A later faculty report would comment on the “the casual and almost accidental manner in which the present department was established,” a telling observation that marked much of the early University’s wider engagement with the arts. Frank B. Tarbell, a scholar of Greek art and archaeology who was the sole faculty member in Archaeology, now became chair of the History of Art. The new department was a two-man operation, with Tarbell, who was really a classicist, and a young instructor of art of modest talents by the name of George Zug, who made a name for himself denouncing the paintings in the 1913 Armory Show (Zug described Van Gogh and Matisse as men who “had never learned to paint,” while the Cubist paintings were “freak products” generated by “bunko artists”).<sup>25</sup> Tarbell was in fact the chair of a virtual reality department with no real faculty, no building, few colleagues in related fields, few books, and few works of art, fake or otherwise, to study.<sup>26</sup> He

24. Quoted in *The Cochrane-Woods Art Center. The David and Alfred Smart Gallery. Groundbreaking October 29, 1971* (Chicago, 1971), p. 13.

25. See Sue Ann Prince, “‘Of the Which and the Why of Daub and Smear’: Chicago Critics Take on Modernism,” in Prince, ed., *The Old Guard and the Avant-Garde. Modernism in Chicago, 1910–1940*, pp. 98–100.

26. Zug offered courses in medieval and Renaissance art. Facing no long-term prospects at Chicago, Zug left for Dartmouth in 1912, where he taught art history until 1932.

proposed in 1904 that the University assemble such resources, but no action was taken on his request. Tarbell's loyalties were inevitably torn, and it is revealing that when he retired in 1917 his colleagues in the domain of Classics sought to claim his appointment line.<sup>27</sup>

Harper wanted modern art taught at the University, but he was unable to generate new money for this cause, and his constant efforts to fund the University departments that already existed made it impossible for him to imagine the staffing of a wholly independent department of art. Still, at one point he seems to have toyed with hiring Lorado Taft in 1902 as a teacher of sculpture, which encountered staunch opposition from Tarbell, who told Harper that this idea "fills me with the gravest concern." Taft might be "the ideal person to teach modeling, if that were what is wanted, but of rigorous historical training I don't believe he has a trace."<sup>28</sup> At the same time, Harper was concerned that art be integrated in the training of teachers, and in 1904 he floated the idea that the Department of the History of Art be integrated into the School of Education, where some basic art courses were offered as part of a program to train teachers in public schools.

Nor did Harper get much support from the Board of Trustees in these early impulses. The chair of the board, Martin Ryerson, was sympathetic to efforts to study the "theoretical, historical and critical sides" of art, but cautioned Harper, "I am not anxious to see established at the University a school of Art similar to that at the Art Institute because I think the technical side of the subject can be better handled there and what our students need of such training be better had through some

27. See the revealing letter of Henry Prescott to James Tufts, December 1, 1924, *HJB Administration*, Box 22, folder 5.

28. Tarbell to Harper, March 4, 1902, *HJB Administration*, Box 20, folder 3.

arrangement or alliance with it.” Ryerson was sympathetic, however, to the University devoting “more attention to art in its esthetic and social aspects.”<sup>29</sup> Ryerson’s deep connection to the Art Institute — his collection of European old masters and French impressionists was perhaps the greatest single gift of European paintings the Art Institute ever received — made him naturally protective of the dividing line between theory and practice. For Ryerson, practice clearly lay on Michigan Avenue, not on the Midway. A later faculty member would observe that “it has been difficult to bring the matters to the attention of the Trustees because Messrs. Hutchinson and Ryerson, on the board, were so actively interested in the Art Institute as to create the impression, perhaps erroneous, that they would be suspicious that we were undertaking a duplication of the Art Institute.”<sup>30</sup> Lucy Driscoll would later observe about Ryerson’s influence, “It is obvious that unless Mr. Ryerson is in Europe his friends could not be approached without their saying that they would talk the matter over with him. Their personal initiative would be gone and we would be in the same old situation.”<sup>31</sup>

The issue of the arts emerged again after World War I, and a fascinating exchange of correspondence between President Ernest D. Burton and Chair of the Board Harold H. Swift lays out some of the pragmatic and theoretical contours that restated issues first raised by Martin Ryerson in 1897. In the autumn of 1924, Burton visited Frederick D. Nichols, a wealthy fine arts printer in New York City. He then wrote to Nichols about his views on the arts. Burton felt that the University

29. Ryerson to Harper, December 3, 1897, *HJB Administration*, Box 20, folder 3.

30. Prescott to Burton, October 28, 1923, *HJB Administration*, Box 20, folder 3.

31. Driscoll to Woodward, November 5, 1927, *Mason Administration*, Box 16, folder 20.

should do more in the arts and that “only thus can we give to the young people who come to the University a well balanced and symmetrical education.” How to do this? Burton continued that “the first step at least would be to provide opportunities at the University, not simply somewhere else in the city, for students to see a few good pictures and good statuary and especially to hear good music. With this should come courses of instruction calculated to develop appreciation and understanding but, not at first at least, training courses in the practice of these arts.” In addition to the new Chapel, where organ recitals would take place, the University should sponsor more campus-based concerts, and as for facilities, “We ought also to have a building in which there should be not an extensive but an illustrative and suggestive collection of works of art, painting and sculpture, and especially for the exhibition of loan collections.” Burton had no wish to rival the Art Institute, but he did want “an Art building for exhibition of a few choice paintings and sculptures, especially of loan collections, and also containing a hall, a work of art in itself, and specially adapted to the rendering of music of the highest class.”<sup>32</sup> This was, as far as I can tell, the first call for a building devoted exclusively to the arts at the University of Chicago.

Swift responded to a draft of Burton’s letter with the candid admission, “I am puzzled as to just what our field ought to be in the Fine Arts.” Swift was certain, however, that “we never could rival the Art Institute in our exhibits and I doubt whether we should try. I think that it would be happy if we could have a building of the Fine Arts, but even then I think that we should put our emphasis on starting a fundamental appreciation of the Fine Arts among our students and developing their abilities to appreciate the fine things of the Art Institute, the Chicago

32. Burton to Nichols, November 10, 1924, *HJB Administration*, Box 43, folder 13.

Symphony Orchestra, etc. which the city has to offer, rather than any attempt to parallel these. This leads me to think that our money should be expended more for teaching, concerts, and lectures than for the collecting of art objects.”<sup>33</sup>

For all their differences, both men were certain that the arts on campus would exist primarily for the education and edification of students, and to create a more harmonious campus life. Neither man was interested in arts scholarship as such or in the training of professionals. The arts were here seen very much as a pragmatic enhancement to the University community and as a way to create a certain type of student, endowed with a capacity to understand and appreciate the fine arts as a ensemble of creative practices, historic or contemporary.

The most interesting part of Burton’s draft to Nichols was, moreover, what it conveyed in a negative sense: “I must add, of course that the urgent need of the University at the moment is the sum of \$6,000,000 for endowment of instruction, and, following this, the erection of buildings for the departments of work in which we are already actively engaged. In our active efforts to secure funds we cannot put the fine arts in the foreground, but it is not too early to begin a process of education looking to their eventual endowment.” Then, as if to retract what he had just said, Burton added, “We should, of course, not hesitate to receive gifts for them at any time.”

Discussions about the future of the visual arts had already begun among the senior faculty, for in 1920 Harry Pratt Judson had asked Henry Prescott, chair of the Department of Latin, to chair a committee to ponder the future of the existing Department of the History of Art after Frank Tarbell’s death. Prescott’s committee prepared a detailed report in 1922 that seconded Ryerson’s caution about duplicating the

33. Swift to Burton, October 23, 1924, *HJB Administration*, Box 43, folder 13.

work of the Art Institute or the School of the Art Institute and instead proposed that a new department of fine arts be created that would focus exclusively on the history of art. It also suggested that the history of art “can be intelligently conducted only if supplemented by some practical courses in drawing, modeling, color, composition, and the like, the precise character of which will later be defined.” From the very beginning, therefore, the issue of theory and practice or, in this context, history and practice was fudged, with appeals going in both directions.

Prescott further suggested that the department focus on European, American, and Asian art. To launch the department, the committee proposed that the field of Renaissance art be given highest priority because of its natural link to the ancient past and modernity, and that the next chair of the department be recruited in this field.

As for the practical courses, the committee felt they should be “non-professional in character” and not have the goal of developing professional competencies, but only offer “some direct experience in the use of typical forms of art expression.” Much like a *Hilfswissenschaft* in a 19th-century German university, these “laboratory courses” would “thus become not only an accompaniment, but an organic part of the study of the history of art.” To implement this idea, the committee retrieved Harper’s original idea of a connection with the School of Education, which was already offering art courses for teacher training, and proposed that these existing courses and others like them be adapted for the “general students” who did not seek to be art teachers. The committee hoped that these courses would have several impacts — they would “furnish a practical experience with Art which is of general importance to all students in acquainting them with the language of a historic form of human expression. At the same time for those who will later devote special attention to Art as a profession, these courses will be of direct value because, although

non-professional in character, they will give to these students the sort of experience which laboratory courses in chemistry and physics, and the courses in English composition, offer to students who will later specialize in those fields." The committee hoped to introduce all students to the practice of art under the stimulating conditions and rigorous standards of the University and also encourage those students who had a special creative aptitude in art to pursue additional study.<sup>34</sup>

The committee further urged that the University authorize a staff of four faculty, including one full professor, and that the University seek to hire Frank J. Mather, Jr., of Princeton, a distinguished historian of art who had already made a reputation for himself as a leading scholar of European and American art.

Soon after Ernest Burton assumed the presidency of the University in early 1923, Prescott sent Burton a copy of his report, emphasizing that "Chicago is deplorably behind all the universities which in other respects it equals or surpasses, and the student body is losing one of the most valuable contributions to general culture."<sup>35</sup> Burton embraced Prescott's arguments about the importance of the arts and even included a section on the fine arts in his utopian fundraising essay, *The University of Chicago in 1940*, which he wrote as the lead document in the capital campaign of 1924–25. In this document, Burton repeated many of the arguments he had made to Nichols, calling for giving students a "cultural and cultivated appreciation" and "a rounded-out and balanced interpretation of life," and also added a strong civic argument to the effect that the University should now match the city in its attention to the arts: "A

34. "Preliminary Report of the Committee on the Reorganization of the Department of the History of Art," *HJB Administration*, Box 20, folder 3.

35. Prescott to Burton, October 28, 1923, *HJB Administration*, Box 20, folder 3.



new University rarely gives first place to the fine arts. Mathematics, history, and the physical sciences come before music and painting. Chicago, despite all the impressions of many eastern friends to the contrary, has long ago outlived its first materialistic period. Idealism flourishes on the shores of Lake Michigan as in few other places in America. The Art Institute, the Field Museum, the great downtown libraries, and the University itself all bear testimony to this idealistic spirit in Chicago. The time is near to hand when that spirit ought to find fuller and richer expression in the University itself, not indeed in a School for the training of artists—which is already adequately provided in the Art Institute—but in the provision of opportunities for the cultivation of taste and appreciation.” Yet Burton’s primary goal for the arts was to inspire and refine, not to serve as a platform for modern scientific scholarship. It was telling that he placed his summons for a new initiative in the arts in the same section of the book where he articulated the importance of the new University Chapel. Both the chapel and the fine arts would “symbolize the aspirations of the soul after the highest things,” in the hopes that “the University shall give to its students and its community a noble and symmetrical conception of life.”<sup>36</sup>

Burton followed the Prescott committee’s recommendations, but only up to a point. Once the newly retitled Department of Art was officially announced in 1924, tensions of focus and resources came forth. Burton rejected the proposal to hire Mather, a distinguished art historian who had been trained at Johns Hopkins and at the University of Berlin, claiming a chronic shortage of funds, and instead appointed Walter Sargent as the first chair of the new Art Department. Sargent was already

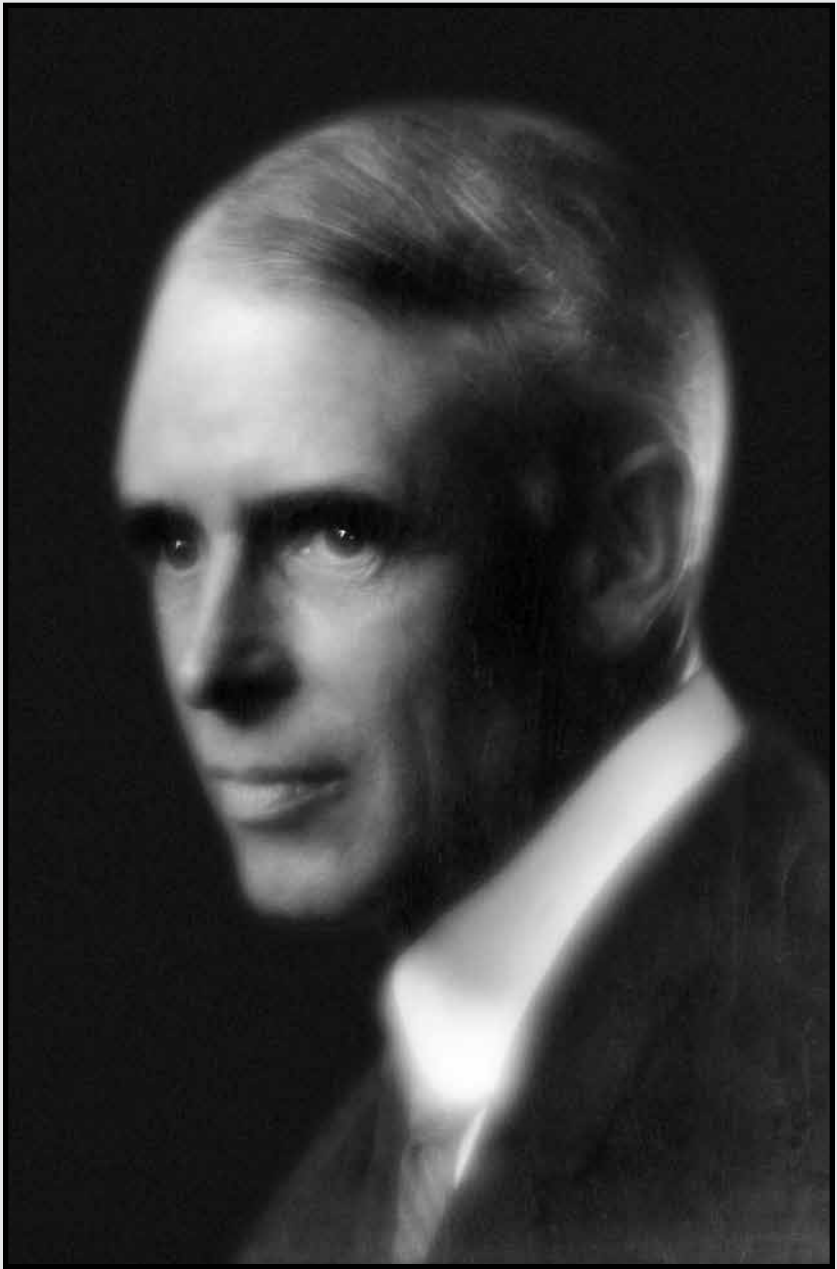
36. Ernest D. Burton, *The University of Chicago in 1940* (Chicago, 1925), pp. 36–37.

on the University faculty, having originally been hired as a professor of arts education in 1908 in the School of Education, with special responsibility for industrial drawing. Sargent had graduated from the Massachusetts Normal Art School and worked as the Director of Drawing and Manual Training in the Boston public school system before coming to Chicago. With Sargent, the resources of the Department of Art Education in the School of Education were now combined with the older Department of Art History into one capacious unit devoted both to practice and theory.

The author of *The Enjoyment and Use of Color* and *How Children Learn to Draw*, Sargent was an important figure in the emergent movement to combine training in the fine arts and industrial design, and he has recently been the subject of a study by Barbara Jaffee, who argues that “eschewing plans to develop an academic department along the lines of Princeton, Sargent instead insisted on the integration of art disciplines and stressed connections between art of the past and the present — what he described as the ways in which art ‘entered into the current of contemporary life’.”<sup>37</sup>

Sargent was thus committed to a model that prescribed close integration of theoretical and practical studies, believing that students of art should have some studio experience as well as more historical and theoretical studies. He also believed that the department should define itself by teacher training for art in the high schools as well as the colleges: “Without neglecting the historical side we feel that at present we can render a service by emphasizing intelligent enjoyment of art and by regarding it as a thing of the present as well of the past; an expression of the life and thought of

37. Barbara Jaffee, “Before the New Bauhaus: From Industrial Drawing to Art and Design Education in Chicago,” *Design Issues*, 21 (2005): 52.



*Walter Sargent, Circa 1925*  
*Photo by Ernst Roehlke*

today, which should receive consideration.”<sup>38</sup> Sargent thus presented the department as deeply interested in practical and general instruction for college students, including what Sargent called “some practical experience with the materials of art,” while also articulating a role for the department in the preparation of high school as well as college teachers. Sargent also hoped that it would encourage an appreciation of “industrial art,” arguing that “there is no dividing line between fine and industrial art” and that “art flows into different channels and incarnates itself impartially in high visions and in things of common use, and that taste consists in capacity to discern beauty in whatever embodiment it appears.”<sup>39</sup> In the spirit of general optimism that defined the University’s self-perception in the later 1920s, Sargent converted this program into an ambitious fundraising plan, arguing that the department needed a building that he estimated at \$1 million, which would include all facets of its work and include rooms for practical art instruction (“experimentation”) and adult education, as well as an art library, classrooms, and research rooms for art history, plus an additional \$1 million to endow the building’s operations.<sup>40</sup>

Sargent’s efforts to blur the murky division between fine art and industrial art made him a perfect candidate to lead the new department for the generation of University leaders who founded the Renaissance Society, men who were inclined to view art as a means to achieve both social harmony and aesthetic refinement in the face of the brutalities of the world of the industrial American *Grossstadt*. James Hayden Tufts, the vice

38. Sargent to Mason, January 12, 1926, *Mason Papers*, Box 16, folder 20.

39. Walter Sargent, “Among the Departments. The Department of Art,” *University Record*, 13 (1927): 24–26; and Sargent to Mason, January 12, 1926, *Swift Papers*, Box 113, folder 5.

40. Memo, undated but most likely 1926, *HJB Administration*, Box 20, folder 3.

president of the faculty at Chicago under Ernest Burton and a social philosopher interested in the ways different societies formulated aesthetic principles, thought that “in our university when even the subjects formerly called Humanities are now taking on more and more the character of analytic or technical sciences, it is highly important to have somewhere in education a place for appreciation.”<sup>41</sup> According to Tufts, the fact that Sargent was a painter and a practitioner interested in teaching the appreciation of art was highly desirable and made him “easily one of the most creative, outstanding men on our staff.” Among Sargent’s courses, his Art 252. Introduction to Painting was especially popular and was praised by George Downing, a graduate student at Harvard who had been an undergraduate student at Chicago, as “one of the great courses of the University,” one that “opened for students the way to a deeper and more understanding knowledge of painting and art than can be had in any course that I know offered by an American college.” Downing believed that the practical bent encouraged by Sargent was a valuable tradition, one that differentiated the Chicago department from competitors.<sup>42</sup> Nor did such praise come only from locals. Frederic Allen Whiting, the director of the Cleveland Museum of Art, thought that Sargent was a “remarkably human person” who organized the program at Chicago from an “unacademic viewpoint.”<sup>43</sup> Sargent also attracted the interest of Frederick Keppel, president of the Carnegie

41. Tufts to Mason, October 26, 1925, *Mason Administration*, Box 22, folder 4. See also James H. Tufts, “On the Genesis of the Aesthetic Categories,” in James Campbell, ed., *Selected Writings of James Hayden Tufts* (Carbondale, Ill., 1990), pp. 47–59.

42. Downing to Woodward, September 29, 1927, *Mason Administration*, Box 16, folder 20.

43. Whiting to Rowland Haynes, February 15, 1927, *Mason Administration*, Box 16, folder 20.

Corporation, who asked him to serve as an advisor to Carnegie on the teaching of art in the schools and who also urged Frederic Woodward to support Sargent's agenda, namely, that Chicago try "to give a note other than the historical to the Department," which Keppel believed would make Chicago unique.

Sargent thus became a prominent national figure in the evolution of art education in the 1920s, a time when, as Barbara Jaffee has recently argued, two powerful strains in the understanding of art education were coming together: "the pragmatic interdependence of art and industry established in the immediate aftermath of the Civil War (as business leaders advocated mass instruction in art as a way of enhancing the country's competitiveness in emerging world markets), and the utopian focus on art as an arena of social improvement (as conservatives and social reformers alike reacted to the excesses of capitalist competition.)"<sup>44</sup>

Sargent achieved significant early successes, not the least of which was the soaring level of enrollment in art courses. By 1927, the new department had almost 40 majors and 1,000 registrations across the University. Yet Sargent's teaching-oriented agenda soon confronted the realities of the academic market. Facing a department whose mandate was substantially undergraduate and that mixed the making of art with the study of the history of art, one young scholar of Byzantine and late Roman art, Emerson H. Smith, resigned his position in 1926 after only four years on the faculty to go to Columbia University where, he told Sargent, "my work will be almost exclusively of graduate level, much more advanced and specialized than I could have hoped to have done at Chicago for a considerable period of years — and only in advanced

44. Jaffee, "Before the New Bauhaus: From Industrial Drawing to Art and Design Education in Chicago," p. 41.

seminar courses with small groups of students is one able to 'grow with the subject'."<sup>45</sup> Sargent's agenda was also resisted by more research-oriented faculty in the Humanities like Carl D. Buck, Gordon Laing, and William Nitze, who would have preferred a more academic direction for the department and who urged more support for the history of classical archaeology and for the history of medieval and Renaissance art.<sup>46</sup> Still other perspectives emerged among the part-time lecturers. Lucy Driscoll, a part-time teacher of Chinese art who sought to apply Gestalt psychology to art criticism and an alumna of the University who also taught at the School of the Art Institute from 1909, felt that the general prestige of the University did not carry over to the art history position and that Chicago's halting engagement and lack of resources would make it difficult to recruit truly distinguished senior scholars: "Chicago from an art point of view is not so attractive a post that anyone, except a very young man of pioneer spirit, would think of coming to us without a definite assurance of equipment and support. Our record is against us. . . . The failure of the art department to attract money in the past has been a tragedy not only for the department but for the University as a whole. If anything would make us 'fashionable' it would be an art development. . . . I can see opportunities of a social nature with money organizations in mind that would be quite impossible for the Art Institute to tackle."

Driscoll's musings were especially relevant in the allusion to the Art Institute. Her basic argument was that a distinguished research university might be able to generate programs and initiatives in the arts that a museum could not and that the large potential donor base for the arts that

45. Swift to Sargent, January 18, 1926, *Mason Administration*, Box 22, folder 4.

46. Woodward to Keppel, October 20, 1927, *Mason Administration*, Box 16, folder 20.

existed in Chicago at the time had been completely ignored by the University, in large part out of deference to the Art Institute. She insisted that “the control of art matters at the Art Institute by a very few people left many out in the cold and there have been various strategic moments when a University art plan might easily have won several fortunes which the Art Institute, by broadening its policy, has itself finally secured.” In order to avoid competition with the Art Institute, Driscoll felt that the University needed to move in more scholarly and educational directions, not to be seen as a rival, and to become the source of future curators, editors, and teachers. Clearly, this was a very different view of the department than Sargent’s, whose former students Driscoll derisively characterized as “mostly poor art teachers.”<sup>47</sup>

Walter Sargent died in 1927, and after much internal politicking he was succeeded in 1929 by John Shapley of New York University, a scholar trained at the University of Vienna and one of the founders of the College Art Association.<sup>48</sup> Shapley viewed his mandate as more scholarly and, as the editor of the *Art Bulletin* between 1921 and 1939, he had a wide overview of the emerging field of art history in the United States after World War I. Shapley wished to give the department a much stronger scholarly research profile and to make Chicago a leading center of art historical scholarship.<sup>49</sup> After trying and failing to recruit Charles Rufus

47. Driscoll to Woodward, November 5, 1927, *Mason Administration*, Box 16, folder 20.

48. Shapley received his BA from the University of Missouri in 1912, and then studied at Princeton for an MA in 1913. He received his PhD at the University of Vienna in 1914. His first faculty appointment was at Brown University, where he taught until 1924. From 1924 until 1929 he was on the faculty of New York University as the Samuel F. B. Morse Professor. He specialized in early Christian and Byzantine art.

49. See Shapley, “Purposes,” August 1929, *Swift Papers*, Box 113, folder 5.



Morey, a distinguished medievalist who held the Marquand Professorship of Art and Archaeology at Princeton, as a second senior art historian, Shapley was more successful in securing two highly promising junior faculty appointments in the mid-1930s, Ulrich A. Middeldorf and Ludwig F. Bachhofer.<sup>50</sup> Both men were paid in the first year by a special gift of \$9,000 from Max Epstein. In both cases, the young department was punching above its weight because of the fortuitous availability of highly talented German émigrés fleeing from Hitler's Germany. Having studied with Heinrich Wölfflin at Munich and Adolph Goldschmidt at Berlin, Middeldorf served as a curator of the German *Kunsthistorisches Institut* in Florence. He taught the history of Renaissance art at Chicago until 1953, when he returned to Florence to become the director of the *Kunsthistorisches Institut*. Middeldorf trained a number of serious art historians, including Seymour Slive, Francis Dowley, Bates Lowry, and Peter Selz. Bachhofer was a distinguished scholar of Japanese and Chinese art who had also studied at the University of Munich, where he was promoted to the rank of associate professor.<sup>51</sup> Although each was hired initially on a one-year contract, their obvious talent and a series of strange events involving the funding of their appointments combined to ensure that they were quickly given permanent positions. When John

50. See Shapley to Laing, July 5, 1935, and Laing to Filbey, July 11, 1935, *Hutchins Administration*, Box 279, folder 6. On the Morey initiative, see the memoranda in *Hutchins Administration*, Box 19, folder 2. Hutchins offered Morey a salary of \$15,000, which would have made him one of most highly compensated faculty at Chicago.

51. Shapley to Laing, July 5, 1935, *Hutchins Administration*, Box 279, folder 6.

Shapley abruptly left the University in 1938, Ulrich Middeldorf succeeded him as department chair.<sup>52</sup>

A third German scholar, Edgar Wind, arrived in 1942 with a tenured full professorial appointment. Wind was a brilliant student of Erwin Panofsky and Ernst Cassirer at the University of Hamburg who had close associations with the Warburg Library. Richard McKeon gave Wind a glowing recommendation, suggesting to Hutchins, "Wind is, I think, a great teacher; he has done work which convinces me that he is an unusually able historian of art; he is a first-class historian of philosophy and philosopher downright."<sup>53</sup> McKeon entertained the hope that if the Warburg Library were eventually transferred from London to the United States, Chicago might be its new home.<sup>54</sup> Unfortunately, the honeymoon between the two men was short-lived, for Wind was asked

52. Shapley was a terrible administrator, and neglected to inform the central administration that Max Epstein would not continue to support these two appointments, even while he was recommending their continuance. The administration found itself caught between Shapley's assurance to the two that they would be renewed and Shapley's evident inability to come up with the money to fund the positions. Luckily, Richard McKeon admired the scholarly work of Bachhofer and was confident that Middeldorf was also very high quality, so Hutchins decided to carry both men on general University reserves. McKeon wrote, "Once more this seems to me an indictment of the Chairman; I should not like to see the reappointments of Professors Bachhofer and Middeldorf permanently endangered by his irresponsibility." McKeon to Woodward, August 16, 1937. The upshot was that Middeldorf and Bachhofer ended up being renewed and eventually given tenure, but that Shapley was essentially pushed out as department chair for gross incompetence in his administration of the department. Shapley resigned in July 1938. The relevant files are in *Hutchins Administration*, Box 279, folder 6.

53. McKeon to Hutchins, December 10, 1941, *Hutchins Administration*, Box 279, folder 8.

54. "It is not impossible that with him [Wind] here, we might be able to bring the Warburg Library, if it is to be moved from Europe, to the city of Chicago." *Ibid.*

to teach a section in the Humanities Core course in the Autumn Quarter of 1942 that used a fixed reading list and that also provided its instructors with specific instructional guidelines as to how to teach the course. Coming from a completely different academic culture, in which a full professor (*Ordinarius*) had sovereign control over what he taught and how he taught it, Wind immediately balked at the group-centric and, in substantive terms, antihistorical theoretical constraints imposed on him:

I find that, far from being a flexible course, Humanities 2 is run on a fixed plan of regimentation in which all the instructors are constrained to read the same chapters in a rigid, and, in my opinion, none too fortunate selection of books. They are, moreover, required to interpret these rigidly selected texts by a method prescribed in the mimeographed Instructions which, I presume, are to be accepted on faith. . . . I regard the Instructions as utterly unsuitable to the students to whom they have been issued, and in themselves as wrought with strange fallacies concerning the nature of the Humanities, as some of us understand them. . . . The Instructions are ambiguous on the subject of history. I fiercely object to the type of educational policy which on the one hand pays deference to the current dislike of history and therefore arranges the books according to a platitudinous schematism of *genres*, and on the other hand smuggles history, in its worst possible form, in through the back door by forcing the students to memorize an abstract list of dates. . . . The present course offends so strongly all of my convictions that I must ask [Dean of the College] Faust and yourself to release me from it.<sup>55</sup>

55. Wind to McKeon, October 12, 1942, *Richard McKeon Papers*, Box 68, folder 11. This folder contains a host of letters involving the multiple conflicts between the two men.

Since Richard McKeon had had a major role in designing the intellectual architecture of the course, Wind's protests quickly degenerated into a personal feud with McKeon, with Wind accusing him of exploiting his power as dean to engage in autocratic behavior and "abuse of power." In spite of an attempt at mediation by Robert Hutchins, who admired Wind and wanted to retain him, Wind left Chicago in 1944 for Smith College and eventually Oxford University, where he became the first professor of art history in 1955.<sup>56</sup> Even though he was a difficult personality, Wind's loss was a major blow to Art History, and the episode demonstrated that the acclimatization of émigré academics in American universities, especially ones with a highly structured curriculum, was often not an easy one.

Luckily, Middeldorf and Bachhofer were joined in 1945 by Otto von Simson, a historian of medieval and early modern art who studied at Freiburg and Munich, where he worked with Wilhelm Pinder and Hans Gerhard Evers. Like Wind, Simson would emerge as a major figure in art historical scholarship, but he had a more congenial experience at Chicago until his return to Germany, where he became the permanent delegate of the Federal Republic to UNESCO in 1959. Kathryn Brush has argued that the discipline of art history made great advances in the United States in the 1920s, "largely following the disciplinary and academic models developed in the German-speaking countries during the 1880s and 1890s."<sup>57</sup> The arrival of Middeldorf, Bachhofer, Wind, and

56. See William H. McNeill, *Hutchins' University. A Memoir of the University of Chicago, 1929–1950* (Chicago, 1991), pp. 119–120; and Pascal Griener, "Edgar Wind und das Problem der Schule von Athen," in Horst Bredekamp, ed., *Edgar Wind. Kunsthistoriker und Philosoph* (Berlin, 1998), pp. 99–100.

57. Kathryn Brush, "Marburg, Harvard, and Purpose-Built Architecture for Art History, 1927," in Elizabeth Mansfield, ed., *Art History and Its Institutions*.

Simson at Chicago constituted a classic example of the translation of German *Kunstgeschichte* into the American university scene, helping to professionalize a discipline that had often been dominated by gentlemanly amateurs and dilettante connoisseurs, rather than a commitment to “scientific” scholarly research. These émigrés helped, in Colin Eisler’s words, to remove “a certain aura of preciousness and ever so upper-class dilettantism which had long been assiduously maintained or cultivated in the world of art scholarship in America. The bite and acumen of instructors sharpened by exile proved art history to be more than the scholarly fringe-benefit of gracious living.”<sup>58</sup> If art history in America gained a status equal in importance to its sister humanistic disciplines between the two world wars, much of the credit for this process was owing to the dramatic impact of European émigré scholars who were transplanted into American university settings.

The transition in professional leadership of the Department of Art came at a particularly fortuitous time because of a large gift that Max Epstein announced he was making in August 1929 to create a large fine arts building at the University. During the late 1920s in his role as chairman of the Board of Trustees, Harold Swift had had conversations with a prominent local philanthropist, Florence D. Bartlett (the sister of Frederick Clay Bartlett, a major donor to the Art Institute) about the possibility

*Foundations of a Discipline* (London, 2002), p. 65; and *idem*, “German *Kunstwissenschaft* and the Practice of Art History in America after World War I: Interrelationships, Exchanges, Contexts,” *Marburger Jahrbuch für Kunstwissenschaft*, 26 (1999): 7–36; as well as the essays in Craig Hugh Smyth and Peter M. Lukehart, eds., *The Early Years of Art History in the United States. Notes and Essays on Departments, Teaching, and Scholars* (Princeton, 1993).

58. Colin Eisler, “*Kunstgeschichte* American Style. A Study in Migration,” in Donald Fleming and Bernard Bailyn, eds., *The Intellectual Migration: Europe and America 1930–1960* (Cambridge, Mass., 1969), p. 621.

of her providing for an art building. But Bartlett's original proposal was to give \$250,000, which Swift considered "woefully inadequate," and the discussions went nowhere. Bartlett eventually founded the Museum of International Folk Art in Santa Fe, New Mexico.<sup>59</sup> Swift was all the more surprised when he was contacted on Christmas Day 1928 by Max Epstein, a wealthy Chicago businessman with a passion for collecting paintings by European old masters. Epstein had been born in Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1875 and had attended the City College of New York, but in 1891 he moved to Chicago and made his fortune in Chicago as the president of the General American Transportation Corporation. Epstein already knew Swift, since he had given several generous gifts to the University's hospitals in the early and mid-1920s. Epstein telephoned Swift on Christmas to report that he had attended a meeting at the Union League Club in early November 1928 where Acting President Frederic Woodward had discussed the major needs of the University, among which was the development of the fine arts. Epstein then told Swift that he might be interested in following up on Woodward's suggestion by making a major gift for the construction of an art building. Eager to seize the moment, Swift collected Frederic Woodward and the two men journeyed to Epstein's home on South Greenwood Avenue in Kenwood the very next day, where Epstein articulated his vision for a "beautiful art building" on the University's campus, insisting that "too much of America's activity, including education, was pointing to the dollar sign; that art was the greatest antidote and the thing greatly needed, and he thought Chicago was strategically and ideally located for the West."<sup>60</sup>

59. Harold Swift's confidential memo of December 27, 1938, *Swift Papers*, Box 113, folder 5. See also Laurel Seth and Ree Mobley, eds., *Folk Art Journey. Florence D. Bartlett and the Museum of International Folk Art* (Albuquerque, 2003).

60. *Ibid.*

Since Epstein and his wife were about to leave for a winter journey to Egypt, no immediate resolution took place, but Epstein made a firm decision while sitting on the terrace of Shepheard's Hotel in Cairo that the city of Chicago needed a major scholarly site for art history scholarship and that this building should be located on the campus of the University of Chicago. Later in the spring, Epstein did due diligence by consulting with two noted scholars, August L. Mayer of Munich and Bernard Berenson of Florence, about the kind of institute that ought to be created at the University, and, spurred by a buoyant and seemingly ever expanding economy, by the late summer of 1929 he was ready to make an official proposal to the University.<sup>61</sup>

After meeting with John Shapley of the Art Department in the late summer of 1929 to finalize his plans, Epstein wrote to the newly appointed president of the University, Robert Hutchins, on August 30, 1929, offering to donate \$1 million to create an institute of the fine arts. Epstein proposed to establish a large building that would house a library, classrooms, and galleries for the display of original paintings and sculpture.<sup>62</sup> Epstein argued, "I believe that the University of Chicago should offer to the young men and women who are its students and to the public at large, the opportunity of learning the significance of Art, both as a history of the life of the past and as a living and inspiring force in the present. The creation of an art center at the University will bring together

61. David Stevens later recorded a conversation of Shapley with Epstein to the effect that "[p]erhaps the strongest feeling from the three-hour talk is [the] assurance that Epstein means to act at once, having profited greatly during business operations this year, and that it is wise to let him take every initiative for the present." Memo of David H. Stevens, August 7, 1929, *Swift Papers*, Box 113, folder 6.

62. Max Epstein, "To the Board of Trustees of the University of Chicago," August 30, 1929, *Swift Papers*, Box 113, folder 5.

a body of teachers and students of Art and will result in the spreading of a sincere and informed appreciation of Art.” The plan was thus a joint teaching facility and campus art museum, having the mandate for scholarly study, undergraduate instruction in art history and in the visual arts more generally, and adult education, but also including studio space and work rooms for practicing artists.<sup>63</sup> The University accepted the pledge in September 1929, and the board authorized the hiring of an architect, Paul Cret, a noted Beaux-Arts designer, who had been suggested by John Shapley. Cret undertook two preliminary sketches, proposing a large, capacious building that the board finally located at the corner of 60th Street and Woodlawn Avenue.<sup>64</sup>

The realization of the gift was contingent on the University developing a fundraising and management plan that Epstein would approve and also raising additional money to equip and furnish the building. In the long run, Epstein was confident that “the appeal that the Institute will have both for students and public, will bring to its doors such large numbers, that the tuition to be charged, although small, will largely take care

63. “Program for Proposed Art Building,” March 3, 1930, *Swift Papers*, Box 113, folder 5.

64. The sketches are in *Architectural Drawings*, Institute of Fine Arts (proposed), Drawer 11, folders 1 and 2. On March 10, 1931, the Committee on Buildings and Grounds decided that Paul Cret would get the commission for the arts building. Its site was officially confirmed on March 25, 1931. The building was to cost \$800,000 with an endowment of \$200,000. On the location, see “Minutes of the Committee on Buildings and Grounds,” March 10, 1931 and March 25, 1931, *Swift Papers*, Box 7, folder 1. An earlier plan called for the building to be sited on the southwest corner of 58th Street and Woodlawn Avenue, just to the east of the current Oriental Institute. The site on 60th Street won out because it was adjacent to the new undergraduate residence halls that were being planned for the South Campus.





*Proposed Institute of Fine Arts, 1929*  
*Paul Philippe Cret, Architect*

of the maintenance, and that any deficiency will readily be provided for by friends of the Institute.”<sup>65</sup>

Unfortunately, the feasibility of Epstein’s gift collapsed in the ravages of the Depression, and within two years it was clear that he would be unable to fulfill his pledge. In August 1932, Robert Hutchins informed the board that Epstein had decided that the project should be “delayed until further notice.”<sup>66</sup> The collapse of the Epstein project became one of the major “what-ifs” in the early history of the University of Chicago, for had the building designed by Paul Cret been built, it might have helped to establish Chicago as a powerhouse in art history in

65. Max Epstein, “To the Board of Trustees of the University of Chicago,” p. 2.

66. See “Re: Max Epstein Gift Proposal of August 30, 1929,” filed with Steere to Swift, October 1, 1942, *Swift Papers*, Box 113, folder 5.

the 1930s and it would have had the important collateral plus of attracting more wealthy donors to the University. Initial plans called for the formation of a board of managers of the institute of fine arts to be drawn from wealthy benefactors, a prospect that the Trustees welcomed. Certainly, Harold Swift for one believed that art was a useful way for the University to connect to wealthy “North Side” families who might otherwise have no reason to support the University.<sup>67</sup>

Epstein's initiative was particularly important because it broke with the Ryerson rule by imagining that the University of Chicago would assemble its own permanent collections of painting in the context of a substantial art museum.<sup>68</sup> In discussions with Harold Swift, Epstein had used the Fogg Museum at Harvard as a plausible precedent and model, and Swift remembered that Epstein was also not averse to creating competition with the Art Institute: “We can do something of importance there [the University], which will make even the Art Institute sit up and take notice.”<sup>69</sup> Epstein's allusion to the Art Institute was all the more fascinating, for the following year Epstein became one of the first Jews to be invited to join the board of the Art Institute. Cause and effect in such situations is always murky, but it is certainly possible that, intentionally or not, the visibility of Epstein's intervention at the University of Chicago forced the hand of the trustees of the Art Institute, given the

67. See Bell to Hutchins, December 5, 1929, *Swift Papers*, Box 113, folder 6. Swift was also hopeful that the “art development” could attract wealthy benefactors who were unhappy with the Art Institute. See Swift to Hutchins, January 24, 1931, *ibid.*

68. This is made clear in a memo by David H. Stevens, August 7, 1929, *Swift Papers*, Box 113, folder 6.

69. Harold Swift's confidential memo of December 27, 1938, *ibid.*

fact that the museum was desirous both of Epstein's money and his personal art collection.<sup>70</sup>

If the fine arts building was dead, Max Epstein eventually offered the University partial compensation by offering to fund a renovation of Goodspeed Hall in 1937, costing \$137,000, to create some more respectable facilities. Goodspeed had originally been constructed in 1892 as a dormitory for Divinity School students, and Epstein's money enabled the department to occupy a modest set of remodeled classrooms and offices, as well as providing space for an art library. In 1938 and 1939, Epstein then gave the department an excellent collection of over 200,000 reproductions and slides. Unfortunately, Chicago's book and journal resources in art history came nowhere close to matching Epstein's collection. Ralph Beals described Chicago's art library in 1944 as "still an indiscriminate collection in no way a match for the Epstein Library of reproductions."<sup>71</sup>

## II MUSIC BEFORE 1945 II

If the study of art and art history found a secure institutional niche at the University of Chicago, however tentative, by the mid 1930s, the scholarly study of music took more time and effort. In both cases the University entered realms of European humanistic scholarship and European artistic values that had already found congenial homes at several of the elite eastern universities earlier in the decade, if not before World War I.

From the first, the University was filled with music, and Harper was a strong proponent of popular and religious musical culture. Early on the

70. See Vera L. Zolberg, "The Art Institute of Chicago: The Sociology of a Cultural Organization." Dissertation, University of Chicago, 1974, pp. 56, 64, 121. The Art Institute received Epstein's collection of 26 old master paintings in 1954.

71. Beals to Epstein, April 15, 1944, *Hutchins Administration*, Box 124, folder 12.

University had a University choir, an orchestral association that staged regular music performances of the Chicago Symphony on campus, a University band, and men's and women's glee clubs, with a director of music being appointed to teach elementary music courses in the Divinity School, to lead the choir, and to supervise the music presented at University religious services. Harper worried about the quality of the choir and about the level of training of the organist. He even meddled with the selection of convocation songs. To Joseph Raycroft he insisted in 1905, "I will let you do anything else, but you must not under any circumstances change the second selection [Elgar's 'Pomp and Circumstance'] because it is a special favorite of mine."<sup>72</sup> Nor was he shy in expressing his evaluations of the quality of musical performances. To Lester B. Jones, the director of music at the time, Harper complained in 1901, "I think more care ought to be taken in reference to the soloist at the religious service. The woman who sang yesterday could not sing. . . . It will be necessary to find a new organist. We cannot endure the kind of organ playing which Miss Culton is now furnishing. Her work at the religious service yesterday was abominable [sic]. The simplest hymn was butchered."<sup>73</sup>

In 1896, Richard Waterman, the secretary of the Civic Federation, offered Harper the possibility of associating the University with a plan to build a new \$2 million home for the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, suggesting that the University might help to organize a "great school of music" to be developed in the context of such a plan.<sup>74</sup> Two years earlier,

72. Harper to Joseph Raycroft, August 22, 1905, *HJB Administration*, Box 61, folder 14.

73. Harper to Lester B. Jones, November 11, 1901, *ibid.*

74. Richard Waterman to Harper, October 23, 1896, *HJB Administration*, Box 61, folder 14.

John J. Glessner had told Harper that he would contribute \$1,000 a year for three years if Harper would create a music department under the leadership of Theodore Thomas.<sup>75</sup> Harper demurred on both possibilities, and nothing came of these plans, which were the first recorded notation of the idea of an organized structure for music at the University. Campus interest in exploiting the resources of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra was evident, however, in the work of the University Orchestral Association. Coordinated by University Extension, this association brought together faculty and faculty spouses who sponsored monthly Tuesday afternoon concerts by the Chicago Symphony in Mandel Hall for 25 years, from 1909 to 1934, when they were cancelled for financial reasons.<sup>76</sup> In the first season of the association's work (1909–10), over 350 students purchased series subscriptions to these concerts, suggesting a reasonably strong level of interest for high quality musical events among the early student body.<sup>77</sup>

In the original charter of the University, mention was made of the possibility of a department of music, and on January 26, 1900, the Congregation of the University (which was an advisory body of alumni and senior faculty) passed a resolution declaring that "it is desirable to the university to establish courses in the theory of music and give credit for

75. John J. Glessner to Harper, May 14, 1894, *HJB Administration*, Box 79, folder 6.

76. "The business management of the Orchestra, although reluctant to give up the Mandel Hall concerts, has been forced by financial considerations to increase substantially the fee for the Orchestra's performances. In view of the deficits incurred in recent seasons and of the uncertainty of stronger financial support in the immediate future, the Directors of the University Orchestral Association feel that they cannot assume the risk of engaging the Orchestra this year." Memo of Frederic Woodward to faculty, June 25, 1934, *Swift Papers*, Box 120, folder 9.

77. The records of the association are in *University Extension*, Box 40.

such courses toward a Bachelor's Degree."<sup>78</sup> Yet Harper was unwilling to move in this direction until an endowment could be raised to pay all of the incremental costs associated with such a department, including salaries and equipment.<sup>79</sup> As late as 1911, one of Harry Pratt Judson's key administrators, David A. Robertson, would declare, "There is no immediate prospect of a music school at the University. Indeed, if we ever have such a school it will be very different from the usual conservatory, because the city of Chicago is at present very well supplied with apparently satisfactory music schools of this sort. The future of music at the University, it seems to me, will be concerned chiefly with our chapel."<sup>80</sup>

As was the case with Art History, events changed after Judson's retirement and the ascension of Ernest D. Burton to the presidency in 1923. As part of a survey of the University's needs that he initiated to give coherence to the major fundraising drive that he intended to launch, Burton asked the dean of the College, Ernest Hatch Wilkins, to constitute a number of faculty committees (they were charmingly called the "Better Yet" committees) who surveyed the student body regarding possible improvements that might be made in the undergraduate curriculum and in student life more generally. One survey focused on the role of music among undergraduates and found that a reasonably large group of students wished to study either the history of music or music appreciation, and smaller numbers were interested in studying harmony, composition, and orchestration. Based on this evidence, the committee

78. *University Record*, 4 (1899–1900): 325–26. Harper, Burton, and Tufts spoke strongly in favor of the proposal.

79. Lester B. Jones to David A. Robertson, May 21, 1909, *HJB Administration*, Box 61, folder 14. Jones was the director of music from 1900 to 1910.

80. Robertson to George W. Andrews, June 24, 1911, *HJB Administration*, Box 61, folder 15.

recommended in April 1924 that a department of music be established.<sup>81</sup> Following this effort, Burton then appointed a "Committee on the Development of Music" in fall of 1924, whose charge was to recommend how and under what conditions such a department might be created. Some members on this second committee favored a department that would focus on courses in music appreciation, but others wanted a real commitment to developing music as a research field. This position was strongly held by the chair of the committee, James Field of the Economics Department, who argued that a music department was a positive idea, but that "we should be careful not to make the sort of small beginning that might stand in the way of higher standards or larger achievements later. I should myself set the same standards for a Department of Music that have been set, I think, as a matter of University tradition in the case of other departments, namely that we should not set up a department in a new subject unless we were prepared to take it quite as seriously as we take our established departments and provide in it for an advanced sort of critical and creative work."<sup>82</sup>

Field's arguments would eventually win out, although in the short run the demands of existing departments exceeded the University's reach. Burton's untimely death in May 1925 led to temporizing, and the fact that the capital campaign that he had launched in 1924 did not achieve all of its ambitious goals gave the Trustees pause in the face of making new financial commitments. Chairman of the Board Harold Swift complained in 1926, "[W]e are having difficulty continually in establishing new work. Our present Departments require increased

81. Wilkins to James Field, April 22, 1924, *HJB Administration*, Box 61, folder 15.

82. Field to Woodward, August 30, 1926, *Mason Administration*, Box 18, folder 9.

support, which makes doubly difficult the problem of adequate expansion in new fields.”<sup>83</sup>

Finally, a Department of Music was officially created in 1931. In local lore this final step was the work of the young Robert Hutchins, who was willing to “tear down the way of prejudice” and build a great department. Hutchins was initially sympathetic to the idea, and the creation of a new department in the midst of the Depression was the kind of bold act that he would have found congenial, but he too felt stymied by the lack of money. To J. Harold Powers, he wrote in December 1930, “We have had the matter of education in music in mind since President Harper’s time and are now formulating plans to add such a department. Our difficulty is one of financing.”<sup>84</sup> But Hutchins also knew that Harold Swift had a particular interest in music, and when Swift made an open-ended inquiry in early 1930 about making \$50,000 available for a new initiative, Hutchins knew exactly how to respond: “In reply to your inquiry as to what we should do with \$50,000 if we were so fortunate as to secure that sum for a new development, I beg to say that we should hope to secure the donor’s consent to the use of the money for a chair in the field of the Appreciation, History, and Criticism of Music. This is a logical and desirable expansion of our work in the Fine Arts. It has been suggested many times. The Daily Maroon has lately manifested persistent interest in it. I think it would make a very satisfactory impression on the faculty, students and alumni. A fund of these dimensions would not of course provide for the permanent full-time appointment of a

83. Swift to Evangeline Williams, April 12, 1926, *Mason Administration*, Box 18, folder 9.

84. Hutchins to J. Harold Powers, December 29, 1930, *Hutchins Administration*, Box 149, folder 3.



first-class man. It would be possible, however, to start with a part-time individual and develop the work as more funds become available.”<sup>85</sup>

Hutchins initially thought to create a subsection for Music in the newly established Art Department, and in January 1930 he approached Frederick Stock, the director of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra (CSO), to lead this project.<sup>86</sup> Stock eventually decided against joining the University’s faculty, citing his heavy commitments to the CSO in a time of financial pressure, which left Hutchins back on square one.<sup>87</sup> Hutchins then tried to recruit Stock in 1931 to give a series of lectures in the department, but Stock was unable to make up his mind, worried again about his heavy commitments to the CSO. Stock did suggest, however, that the CSO might perform in Mandel Hall for an exclusive

85. Hutchins to Swift, January 6, 1930, *Swift Papers*, Box 120, folder 14.

86. “Memorandum of Conversation with Mr. Frederick Stock,” January 24, 1930, *Hutchins Administration*, Box 149, folder 3: “I told Mr. Stock yesterday that we had recently discovered that Music was one of the Fine Arts and that we hoped at the earliest opportunity to include work in the History, Appreciation and Criticism of Music among the courses offered by the Art Department; that we should like to have him assume direction of this work at his earliest convenience and on his own terms. I suggested beginning on a part-time arrangement and gradually working over to a full-time basis as he was able to relieve himself of other obligations. I said that I was sure that we could make a financial arrangement that would be satisfactory to him. Mr. Stock said that the financial aspect of the matter was nothing in his life. That he regarded himself primarily as an educator; that he would be very glad to do the work that I had suggested; that he would work out a course and consider the amount of time that he could give us next year. He felt that the part-time arrangement was desirable at the beginning as it would enable him to see whether he could do the work in a mutually satisfactory manner. He is to let me know as soon as he is ready to discuss the content of the work and the specific arrangement as to time.”

87. Swift alludes to the terrible financial situation of the CSO in Swift to Hutchins, March 2, 1932, *Swift Papers*, Box 120, folder 14.

audience of students, with the programs designed on “educational lines.”<sup>88</sup> And as late as July 1932 he claimed that he was still hoping to find the time to assume the chairmanship of Music.<sup>89</sup>

Instead of Stock, Robert Hutchins opted to hire Carl Bricken as the founding chair of the new department. The winner of a Pulitzer Prize in 1929, Bricken was a graduate of Yale and had also studied piano and music theory in Vienna with Hans Weisse.<sup>90</sup> Bricken was a composer, a conductor, and a teacher of keyboard harmony and theory, but not a scholar of the history or the practice of music. Hutchins had first met Bricken when both were at Yale. He had a winning personality—Beardsley Ruml recommended him to Hutchins as a “grand guy”—and that must have helped matters.<sup>91</sup> Bricken was appointed as assistant professor

88. Frederic Woodward, “Memorandum of Conversation with Mr. Frederick Stock, March 7, 1930,” *Hutchins Administration*, Box 149, folder 3.

89. Stock to Hutchins, July 9, 1932, *Hutchins Administration*, Box 149, folder 3: “The appointment offered me as chairman of the Department of Music at the University of Chicago holds much that would induce me to accept without further hesitation. However, there is, on the other hand, the question of my obligations to the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, which now weigh more heavily on my shoulders than ever before, owing to the uncertainty of general conditions. It is simply a question of my finding the time it would consume to live up to the requirements of my affiliations with the musical department of your great University. However, I am hoping to meet with the members of your musical faculty, early in the Fall, and discuss with them the possibilities of a definite working plan which would form the basis of my activities as chairman of your department of music.”

90. Weisse was a leading student of Heinrich Schenker. See David C. Berry, “Hans Weisse and the Dawn of American Schenkerism,” *Journal of Musicology*, 20 (2003): 104–156.

91. “Carl Bricken,” [1931], *Hutchins Administration*, Box 292, folder 5. Bricken was born in 1898 in Shelbyville, Kentucky. He studied at Andover and then Yale, receiving his BA in 1922. After graduating from Yale, he worked at the

for three years, effective October 1, 1931, "to give instruction in the appreciation of music." Vice President Frederic Woodward told Bricken that much was riding on his leadership: "We cannot afford to set up this new project and then have it collapse at the end of a year or two. I believe you are exceptionally qualified to carry the project to success but I am by no means certain that if you were to leave us at an early stage of the development we could find a satisfactory man to take your place."<sup>92</sup>

Bricken's ambitions impressed Frederick Stock, who praised him in 1934 to Trustee James M. Stifler: "Mr. Bricken's endeavors are stimulated by vision and high ideas, as well as practical ideas. His boundless enthusiasm and unlimited capacity for work will accomplish excellent results in the building up of your Department as one of the cultural necessities of your great University."<sup>93</sup> In truth, however, Bricken was frustrated at every turn over the shortage of resources and lack of centralized space.

Bricken inherited two young music teachers who were already on the staff. Cecil Michener Smith had been hired by the Divinity School and the Chicago Theological Seminary as a music teacher and organist in 1929, and in 1931 he was given a courtesy appointment as assistant professor in

Mannes School of Music in New York City, while also studying composition with Rosario Scalero.

92. Woodward to Bricken, July 30, 1931, *Hutchins Administration*, Box 292, folder 5. Woodward also cautioned him that he should not spend all of the \$20,000 that Hutchins had put at his disposal to develop new programs in music appreciation immediately: "We want to do a thoroughly good job but in the circumstances I think we should not be in too great a hurry in the development of our program." Letter of September 1, 1931, *ibid.*

93. Stock to Stifler, February 19, 1934, *Hutchins Administration*, Box 149, folder 4.

the new Music Department.<sup>94</sup> Mack Evans was given a similar titular appointment, even though his primary salary line remained on the budget of Rockefeller Chapel as its organist and choir director. Bricken in turn hired Howard Talley as an instructor of music in 1931 and Alfred Frankenstein as an assistant in 1932. The appointments of more junior people followed with Siegmund Levarie in 1938 and Remi Gassmann in 1939. All of these men were young, and none of them were tenured, much less full professors, nor were any of them really distinguished scholars. Bricken was an able conductor and sometime composer; Smith made his reputation as a music and drama critic for the *Chicago Tribune*, while Gassmann was seen by Dean of the Humanities Richard McKeon in 1944 as “a promising young man who might well have a contribution to make to research and teaching music. . . . He has not, however, as yet demonstrated his scholarly abilities by appropriate publications. . . .”<sup>95</sup>

But what they lacked in scholarly reputation they made up with energy and social connections. Even before he took up his appointment, Bricken was looking for financial resources to sustain his fledgling department. He approached James Stifler, who coordinated the Moody Lecture committee, and Stifler told Bricken that “there are no available funds at my disposal for such a lecture as you propose. What your Department needs is an angel with a warm red heart and a gold lined pocket. Suppose we hunt for one.”<sup>96</sup>

94. Smith was the son of the distinguished theologian in the Divinity School, Gerald Birney Smith. He took his undergraduate degree from the University of Chicago (PhB'27), and received an MA from Harvard in 1928. He worked as music and drama critic for the *Chicago Tribune* from the mid-1930s until 1943. His salary was not brought onto the budget of the Music Department until 1940.

95. Music Budget, February 19, 1944, *Hutchins Administration*, Box 292, folder 5.

96. Stifler to Bricken, May 13, 1931, *Hutchins Administration*, Box 149, folder 4.

An angel or in fact angels did soon appear in the persons of Harold and Charles Swift, for the Swift family came to subsidize all the expenses of the early department, except for Bricken's salary, and it is not too much to say that without Harold and Charles Swift there would probably have been no Department of Music. Harold Swift wrote to his brother in July 1931:

[W]hen I was a student at the University, I didn't have the opportunity to study the appreciation of arts of design and of music the way I had an opportunity to study the appreciation of literature and philosophy. My own knowledge of arts of design and of music is spotty and untrained; it is a feeble recognition and an appreciation of them, but not nearly so effective as if I had studied these topics systematically in the University as I did other things. I feel strongly that it is the University's function to teach an appreciation of these things. Whether it is the function of the University to teach the technique and practice of these things is another question and, in my opinion, the answer may be yes or no, depending upon the institution.

Citing his own experiences and those of classmates, Swift insisted, "[We] would have all been a lot better off had we had something in the appreciation of music. The University fell down on this, and [he and his friends] feel it their duty to change the situation."<sup>97</sup>

Charles Swift agreed with his brother's appeal and on November 5, 1931, he wrote to the Board of Trustees asking that a fund of \$150,000

97. Harold H. Swift to Charles H. Swift, July 1, 1931, *Swift Papers*, Box 120, folder 11.

that he had given to the University in 1929 be designated as an “endowment in support of the work of music appreciation.”<sup>98</sup> In 1948, Charles Swift added another \$150,000 to the fund via his will and changed its name to the Claire Dux Swift Music Endowment Fund. In addition, Harold Swift also subsidized the balance of the annual costs of the new department in its early years.<sup>99</sup>

The initiative to create a music department was supported by the Faculty of the Humanities Division, who voted in October 1931 to urge the University to establish such a department:

Music has so long enjoyed a place in education that it needs no special plea. As one of the fine arts, it has traditionally formed a part of training in the humanities. . . . The chief aim of a university department of music should be to teach all of its students to judge music more intelligently and more sensitively. It should also aim to train some of its students to write music. But its most important function should be the development of advanced studies in the fields of musical criticism and scholarship. The university department of music should not undertake to teach students to sing or play an instrument, nor should it

98. Charles H. Swift to the Board of Trustees, November 5, 1931, *Swift Papers*, Box 120, folder 11; Harold H. Swift to Hutchins, November 9, 1931, *Hutchins Administration*, Box 292, folder 5. Charles Henry Swift was a long-time supporter of the Chicago Symphony and a member of its Board of Trustees for decades. He married the German opera soprano Claire Dux in August 1926.

99. Harold Swift to Hutchins, November 9, 1931, *Swift Papers*, Box 120, folder 11. In 1934, the annual budget of the department was about \$8,800, of which Harold Swift paid about 40 percent, with the remainder coming from the endowment established by his brother Charles. See “Underwriting for the Department of Music,” July 14, 1933, *ibid.*, folder 14.

assume official responsibility for the training of such student organizations as choirs, choruses, glee-clubs, orchestras, and the like, although members of the staff should, as individuals, be encouraged to initiate and assist student activities. No student should receive academic credit for activities of this kind. The Faculty of the Division of the Humanities requests the University Senate to recommend to the Board of Trustees the establishment of a Department of Music within the Division of the Humanities and the appointment, as funds permit, of a teaching staff to carry out such a plan of training in music as is here outlined, including work in composition, the history of music, and the appreciation of music.<sup>100</sup>

The establishment of a Department of Music at Chicago came at the moment when, like the scientific study of art, German models of *Musikwissenschaften* began to find congenial emulators in American higher education, making the academic study of music in universities, as opposed to conservatories, more plausible and compelling.<sup>101</sup> The expansion of music education in the American public school system in the early 20th century led, over time, to larger potential student constituencies for more advanced musicological studies and for more structured

100. Resolution, Division of the Humanities, October 17, 1931, *Hutchins Administration*, Box 150, folder 1.

101. "Music at the University of Chicago," *Music and Music Department Records*, Box 3. See also Alexander Rehding, *Hugo Riemann and the Birth of Modern Musical Thought* (Cambridge, 2003); *idem*, "The Quest for the Origins of Music in Germany Circa 1900," *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 53 (2000): 345–385; and Jessica C. E. Gienow-Hecht, *Sound Diplomacy: Music and Emotions in Transatlantic Relations, 1850–1920* (Chicago, 2009).

opportunities to practice music on the collegiate and university levels.<sup>102</sup> It was not accidental that three years after the department was founded at Chicago (1934), the American Musicological Society was established as a professional association that incorporated these scholarly values and pedagogical aspirations.

The early curriculum of the department was a blend of courses in the history of music, music theory, and musical analysis. In spite of the cautionary rhetoric about practice manifest in the resolution of the Humanities Faculty, both Carl Bricken and Mack Evans were early supporters of credit for courses that involved “practical work,” and used similar teaching in Art as a justification. Noting that the Art Department offered “credit for practical work,” Evans was convinced “that in the matter of intellectual discipline, this practical work will require from the student, in the variety of demand and intensity of application, more than is required in three-fourths of the undergraduate courses.”<sup>103</sup> Once the department was actually organized, Bricken blurred his appeals for giving academic credit for “practical” musicianship by rhetorically

102. “The recognition of music as an academic subject in the undergraduate college is rather recent and, we should add, a specifically American achievement. Since the First World War there has been a tremendous increase in musical activity, both in the public schools and in the colleges. The almost incredible expansion in public-school music is undoubtedly an outgrowth of the vital interest in music shown by the American public generally. This phenomenon is unique. Only in this country has the idea of a general musical education been combined with the comprehensive school system of an industrial and democratic society.” Manfred F. Bukofzer, *The Place of Musicology in American Institutions of Higher Learning* (New York, 1957), p. 5.

103. Evans to Woodward, July 20, 1931, *Hutchins Administration*, Box 149, folder 3. Bricken agreed, arguing, “I can’t tell you how strongly I feel about making this work a credit-earner.”



reaffirming the proposition that “practice” had to be subordinated to the overall intellectual program of the department. Hence, in 1932 Bricken argued that “the aims of the department are two-fold: (a) to give the lay student an intelligent and fundamentally sound appreciation of good music; (b) to give the student whose life interest is music an equipment which will enable him to grow steadily as a well-rounded and well-balanced musician. We are interested in performance only as a means of molding finer musicianship.”<sup>104</sup> The department later insisted that “while the technical and historical aspects of music are necessarily prominent, the primary concern in all the work of the department will be to develop the musical sensibility of the student, to give him technical equipment as an intellectual and emotional discipline, and not for its own sake. The basic values which will guide the department in its examination are therefore those of musical taste and discrimination. Technical competence and historical information will be acknowledged only when they are integrated with musical understanding.”<sup>105</sup>

In addition to creating the University Symphony Orchestra, the department under Bricken’s leadership took over responsibility for the University Chorus, which in January 1933 had 150 members recruited from students, faculty, and members of the community. The chorus was directed by Mack Evans, the University Chapel’s organist and choir master, who was first appointed in 1925 and who was perhaps most famous for the Christmas pageants that he staged at Rockefeller Chapel each

104. Unsigned Memorandum from 1932, *Hutchins Administration*, Box 150, folder 1.

105. “The Department of Music, 1935–36,” *Hutchins Administration*, Box 149, folder 4.

year.<sup>106</sup> Given the increasing range of activities launched by Bricken and his colleagues, the need for adequate facilities emerged early and would plague the department for a half a century. Bricken complained to James Stifler in August 1933 that it was impossible to teach music without having access to a room with a piano. Similar problems affected the University orchestra. Bricken was convinced that “the only solution to these problems is to centralize the department so that both the classroom work and the orchestra work as well as the chorus work can be concentrated in one place both for efficiency and results.”<sup>107</sup> Harold Swift in turn was annoyed at Bricken’s pleas, suggesting that Bricken and Evans be more understanding of the financial plight of the University and that Bricken “was lucky to get a job exactly along his chosen line and he should appreciate it now and in the future. To get him in the proper frame of mind, I see no objection to giving the situation to him pretty fully in detail.”<sup>108</sup>

106. Evans had a remarkable career as an organist and choir director. Educated at Knox College and Harvard, he ended up in France with the American Expeditionary Force in 1917, where he played High Mass at Christmas at the church at Camiers, Pas-de-Calais. After the war, he worked at Christ Church in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and then as director of the Little Symphony Orchestra that toured in the Canadian Rockies, while also working part-time as a theater organist in Chicago and Boston. Evans was appointed director of music at Chicago in 1925, where he worked until 1945, at which point he went to New York City, where he worked for Fred Waring’s orchestra, and then returned to Europe, where he conducted American GI choruses at various military bases in France and in Austria. He then worked at Stanford University in the late 1940s and ended up as the organist of Boy’s Town in Nebraska, which he finally left to become music director of the First Unitarian Church in Chicago. He was also a sometime editor, producing an American edition of the Requiem of Gabriel Fauré.

107. Bricken to Stifler, August 18, 1933, *Hutchins Administration*, Box 149, folder 3.

108. Swift to Woodward, July 24, 1931, *Hutchins Administration*, Box 149, folder 3.

In 1938 a young émigré from Vienna, Siegmund Levarie, joined the department as an instructor, and it was he who was responsible for organizing our first collegium musicum, a group devoted to the performance of early music.<sup>109</sup> Levarie also became the director of the University Symphony. But it was also telling that Levarie's appointment was made over the objections of the then Dean of the Humanities Richard McKeon, who wrote to Hutchins, "We have in Mr. Levarie, as you know, a Ph.D. in musicology from the University of Vienna. I am inclined to think that that is as much musicology and as much of the University of Vienna as a small department can properly absorb. I should have been less inclined to dogmatism if it had been a question of a maturer [sic] scholar whose competency might be considered; if we must add a young man to the Music Department for reasons that involve neither services needed nor accomplishments in scholarship, I should be inclined to want to gamble on one of the American students that we have trained."<sup>110</sup> McKeon's sarcasm about Austrian musicology was part of his larger unhappiness over the fact that, although the department claimed to be validating academic ideals, it devoted far too much time to "practical" musicianship, which McKeon disliked, wanting the department to cultivate scholarly values. When the Viennese composer Karl Weigl was considered as a possible new chair for Music, McKeon again registered his unhappiness by commenting, "Dr. [Karl] Weigl's experience is entirely in the field of practical

109. "Collegium Musicum Presents Bach in First Appearance," *Chicago Maroon*, November 29, 1938; "U. of C. Group Plays Rarely Heard Music," *Chicago Tribune*, April 18, 1948, p. 59. This was part of a more general movement, the most famous of which was the group organized by Paul Hindemith at Yale. See Harry Haskell, *The Early Music Revival: A History* (London, 1988), pp. 107–108.

110. McKeon to Hutchins, October 24, 1938, *Hutchins Administration*, Box 149, folder 5.

music. He has trained composers, conductors, and pianists, all three being achievements which the Department of Music at the University modestly eschews in the pursuit of academic ideals.”<sup>111</sup> But McKeon was equally unhappy with those who sought to introduce theories from the social or behavioral sciences into the study of music. When the dossier of Professor Warren Allen, a distinguished organist at Stanford who had studied with Charles Marie Widor in Paris and who was completing a PhD at Columbia in music and sociology, came across his desk as another possible successor to Bricken, McKeon shot Hutchins an acerbic comment: “You will recall that I thought I detected the intrusion of sociology and anthropology into the program of music education. The outline of the Ph.D. Dissertation of Mr. Warren Allen confirms the worst fears that that suspicion concealed. . . . If this is the ‘scientific study of music history,’ give me one of the ‘old, antiquated’ methods, the older the better. I think it will be interesting to read Mr. Allen’s book when it appears. If you get a copy, I should be pleased to comment on it, or to lose it for you.”<sup>112</sup>

Robert Hutchins himself was slightly more sympathetic than McKeon with the diverse activities of the department, but he steadfastly refused to support schemes to expand programming that were not closely related to the teaching mission of the department. This attitude came through obliquely in his uncompromising refusal to be part of an effort to bring more high-level musical performances to the Middle West in 1938:

111. McKeon to Hutchins, November 14, 1938, *Hutchins Administration*, Box 149, folder 5.

112. McKeon to Hutchins, June 16, 1938, *Hutchins Administration*, Box 149, folder 5.

It seems to me that the function of a university in supplying musical performances and entertainment is different when the university is located in a large city from what it should be in a small town. I believe that your suggestion would solve a genuine need in Urbana or Charlottesville but it seems to me that the University is close enough to the Loop to make it undesirable for the University to enter into competition with commercial organizations to the end of slaking the thirst of music lovers on the campus. Such performances as seem to me proper on the campus should either be amateur performances comparable to those means that the University is so lavish in providing on Stagg Field and in Lexington Hall, or they should be performances that would serve an intellectual — critical, analytical, historical — function which would not be provided by the post-prandial [sic] musical excitations staged in Orchestra Hall. In a word, I do not think the expenditure of funds which the plan would involve could be justified on any educational grounds.<sup>113</sup>

Both McKeon's and Hutchins's search for stronger "educational grounds" for the Music Department became something of a circular argument — with extremely limited resources the department could hardly mobilize the kind of strong scholarly profile that McKeon wanted, and in the world of the 1930s and 1940s, it seemed consigned to coordinating student music on the one hand and unusual musical events unsuitable for the "post-prandial" audiences of Orchestra Hall. Ever the

113. Hutchins to Thomas Hamilton, April 15, 1938, *Hutchins Administration*, Box 149, folder 5.

text-based Aristotelian, McKeon openly admitted in 1942, "I am prejudiced against musicologists. I am not sanguine concerning the immediate future of music departments."<sup>114</sup>

Carl Bricken left Chicago for Madison in 1938 to become the director of the School of Music at the University of Wisconsin, and he eventually became the director of the Seattle Symphony. Cecil M. Smith, an untenured assistant professor, was appointed to succeed Bricken as the "executive secretary" of the department. Smith was a careful steward, and could be tough minded when issues of quality arose. In 1940, he peremptorily reduced the budget for the University Band, financial responsibility for which had been transferred from the Athletic Department to the Music Department in 1935. Smith argued that "the Band differs from all other musical activities sponsored by the Department in two regards: (1) Its musical activity is in my mind on a less convincing educational level than that of such groups as the Orchestra, the Choir, and the Collegium Musicum; (2) its members are encouraged to be loyal and regular by such extra-musical enticements as medals and sweaters." For Smith, "unless the Department represents itself in public through performances marked by excellent taste and some quality of uniqueness there is no hope of interesting potential donors in the Department or of increasing its public prestige."<sup>115</sup> Smith did not gainsay the value of the marching band or its concert version to the general appeal of student life, nor was he a curmudgeon who wished the band musicians ill. But he was concerned with quality, and his comments are of interest in that they have been followed over the subsequent decades with similar

114. McKeon to Hutchins, September 21, 1942, *Hutchins Administration*, Box 149, folder 5.

115. Smith to Filbey, July 22, 1939, *Hutchins Administration*, Box 292, folder 4.

expressions that if music was to have a very public face and active presence throughout our campus — and our department did believe and continues to believe that this should be the case — then that face should be of high quality, within the natural limits of student musicianship. The argument was not against student music-making, but simply an insistence on student music-making at a reasonably high standard.

Cecil Smith's tenure as the putative leader of the department was short-lived, however, and in 1946 he was forced to resign for personal reasons. Lacking the personal confidence of Robert Hutchins, he was unable to accomplish any significant program building. Nor was Smith a real scholar who could meet McKeon's standards. It would not be until the 1950s and especially the 1960s that the Department of Music came into its own as a domain of important musicological scholarship.

The first fifty years of the University's history saw the slow evolution of the arts into disciplines, and two main departments were created. Both departments came late, compared with their Ivy League competitors, and both would continue to suffer in the hotly competitive race for adequate facilities, generating among their members a constant sense that they were less well supported than their earlier and larger departmental neighbors.

Student life was filled with amateur initiatives, and both departments had structural links to student life — Music via its choir, orchestra, and band; and Art via its support for student art making in the tradition of Walter Sargent. In deeply private ways the arts also played an important role in community building and sociability among the faculty, particularly among the senior faculty and their spouses. Often these patterns came together in charming ways that illustrate the highly local and personalistic nature of the cultivation of the arts on our campus before World War II. In June 1932, Eva Watson-Schütze organized the annual

meeting of the Renaissance Society. Along with reports on the work of the society and the election of officers was a formal dinner in the third floor theater of Ida Noyes Hall where, according to the *Chicago Tribune's* society reporter, ladies sitting at candle lit and flower bedecked tables were waited on by their "cavaliers" (or husbands). The cavaliers included Carl D. Buck, Frank R. Lillie, John U. Nef, Quincy Wright, Ernst Freund, William Nitze, Dallas Phemister, and Frederic C. Woodward.<sup>116</sup> The evening concluded with Carl Bricken playing piano works by Bach, Chopin, and Debussy. Given the social role that the Renaissance Society played in helping to cement social and cultural alliances among the faculty and the given pattern of gender relations on campus, it was not surprising that the governance of the society slowly shifted so that, by 1945, of the 25 members of the board of directors, 16 were women, many of them spouses of senior faculty.

What is most impressive about the period before 1940 is thus the function of the arts as a kind of social glue for the faculty. Life on our campus was more local than we can possibly imagine today, and social bonds depended on entertaining at home and in local literary and social clubs. The distinguished historian Ferdinand Schevill hosted receptions for students and faculty in which his wife, who was a professional contralto, performed musical pieces.<sup>117</sup> Robert Lovett, a senior faculty member in English and an accomplished novelist, remembered fondly sitting around a dining room table at the home of Dean George Vincent and with fellow faculty members writing a comic opera, *The Deceitful Dean*, which a team of students and faculty then presented as a way of

116. *Chicago Tribune*, June 5, 1932, pp. H1–2.

117. Minutes of the Graduate History Club, May 16, 1916, and May 12, 1922, *Department of History Records*, Box 27.



raising money for the University Settlement. George Vincent's wife, Louise Vincent, functioned as the opera's set designer and stage manager.<sup>118</sup> Elizabeth Wallace, a young faculty member in Romance Languages, found herself invited to numerous musical and artistic events in the homes of wealthy Chicago businessmen.<sup>119</sup> Art as cultivated enjoyment and amateur music-making fit naturally into this world, and the boundaries between friendliness and sociability on the one hand and aesthetic pleasure and connoisseurship on the other were fluid.

118. Robert M. Lovett, *All Our Years. The Autobiography of Robert Morss Lovett* (New York, 1948), p. 99; and *Cap and Gown*, 1899, pp. 119–120.

119. "It was an epoch of lavish hospitality. Large fortunes and ornate mansions made possible many brilliant gatherings. Gold plate and nine-course dinners were not unfamiliar to modest professors from the Midway institution. But far better and more satisfying were the smaller gatherings in charming homes and quaint clubs, where one could touch great minds in simple fashion." Elizabeth Wallace, *The Unending Journey* (Minneapolis, 1952), pp. 126–127.

## PART II

1945 TO 1980



s in so many other domains, the Second World War changed the framework in which the arts could prosper, as well as animating many new opportunities. The immediate postwar brought major challenges to the University as a whole, some of which I discussed in my essay last year on the history of student housing on campus. The collapse of undergraduate enrollments created a smaller college, but one that was more national and more residential, forcing the University to pay more attention to fundamental issues of student life after 1945 than before.

The later 1940s and the 1950s were a time of collapse and renewal, devastating demographic losses in student enrollments and in faculty retention, and yet a remarkable renewal of the College's curricular luster. It was a very strange period, one in which the University's professional identity became more factionalized and key ruling bodies of the University began to stand for divergent educational and professional ideals. Slowly the University came to face the loss of that almost natural discursive capacity for rhetorical oneness that had marked both the Harper era and the Hutchins era before World War II. The fact that President Edward Levi, who was a quiet protégé of Robert Hutchins, invoked the image of "oneness" so often in the later 1960s and early 1970s to describe the University was a sign that he was in fact troubled by the threat of its fragmentation.

## II THEATER AFTER 1945 II

Perhaps the most striking changes in campus-based arts after 1945 took place in the domains of theater and drama. Student theater came into its

own, and in a big way, after World War II, with structures and human capital merged into fascinating new opportunities and outcomes. To understand the context of these developments we must first consider the wider context of the College.

After the curricular reforms of the 1940s, the College gained a reputation for only being interested in recruiting self-consciously and excessively “intellectual” students who were allegedly (from the perspective of the outside world) uninterested in anything but intense academic work and who could thus survive the intense pressure-cooker atmosphere of the all-general-education College.<sup>120</sup> This image was both distorted and unfair, but the fact that the University provided very little support for students beyond the classroom fed into the problem and seemed to create a self-fulfilling prophecy, that is, the kinds of students who would come to Chicago neither needed nor wanted a world beyond their studies.

Many faculty who were devoted to the ideals of the College were dismayed by the lack of support provided to our students outside the classroom, and the Bradbury Report of 1951, from which I quoted extensively last year, was an excellent summation of these concerns. The lack of attention to student life — frankly acknowledged by William Bradbury and many others in the early 1950s — caused the College serious “image” problems in recruiting sufficient students, and the lack of support provided by the University to extracurricular activities was a major negative in harming admissions efforts. Charles D. O’Connell, who served as a junior admissions officer in the early 1950s, later remarked that “the University’s reputation was such that, although the College

120. This was certainly the perception of the College at top Ivy League schools. See Jerome Karabel, *The Chosen. The Hidden History of Admission and Exclusion at Harvard, Yale, and Princeton* (Boston, 2005), pp. 253–255.

attracted bright young people, it was also considered to be a place for oddballs. After all, A. J. Liebling, in his famous article in the *New Yorker*, referred to the University of Chicago as the greatest collection of neurotics since the Children's Crusade. That sort of publicity did not help." O'Connell also recalled candidly, "[W]e were running scared every year. . . . We tried to make clear as subtly and indirectly as possible that there was a social life available at the University, that there was an athletic program, that there were many opportunities to lead a fairly active, normal life at the same time that you were in the best college in the country. That, by the way, was another one of the lingering perceptions about the University that we had to fight, that no one cared what happened to you outside the classroom."<sup>121</sup>

A minor conflict in 1954 involving the Festival of the Arts (FOTA) brought these conundrums to light. FOTA was created in 1954 under the urging of Professor Gerhard Meyer in the College, who wanted to "bring together within the span of a few days student activities which are normally scattered throughout the spring."<sup>122</sup> FOTA quickly became a student-run affair with musical performances, poetry readings and lectures, a performance of Gogol's *Inspector General* in Mandel Hall by University Theater, a presentation of student art works judged by alumni, and the student organized Beaux Arts Masquerade Ball, whose success was guaranteed by the Housing Office's decision to allow girls to return late to their rooms. In addition, International House organized the Festival of Nations, which attracted nearly one thousand people. FOTA's implementation led to a hot controversy involving the chair of

121. Personal Interviews, Charles D. O'Connell, December 8, 1987, pp. 8–9, and December 17, 1987, pp. 3, 41, *Oral History Collection*.

122. See William B. Cannon to Mrs. Kimpton, March 15, 1955, *Kimpton Administration*, Box 117, folder 15.

the Music Department, Grosvenor Cooper, who angrily wrote to the University Dean of Students Robert Strozier that the Music Department had not been consulted in the vetting of student groups chosen to perform during the event, that the general level of quality was poor, and that “if enough discriminating lovers of music from outside the ‘family’ had attended this year’s concerts in the Festival, it is the considered opinion of the members of the Music Department that the result would have been disastrous. Fortunately, the students affairs turned out to be universally unsuccessful from the point of view of drawing a sizable audience.” Cooper concluded, “I believe that no important damage to the University’s reputation was done by this year’s Festival.”

Strozier responded to Cooper’s screed by insisting that “I am not quite clear how the Music Department would have been embarrassed by this year’s musical offerings. Certainly the Collegium Musicum was an extraordinarily good affair as it always is. The Glee Club, which has the blessings of our offices, makes no pretense to being a great organization but I felt that it performed creditably in its concert. The Band which played in the Court, partly under the direction of one of the members of the Music Department, could not possibly have been identified with the Music Department. It is far from a finished, polished organization, but I was extremely proud of the valiant effort the members made and feel that it was not embarrassing to the University or any of its parts.”<sup>123</sup> Strozier’s point, which he was too diplomatic to make bluntly, was that FOTA was a student-run event and that it should and could not be held to the professional standards demanded by the Music Department. Yet Cooper was also right in that, unbeknownst to Strozier, the Development

123. Cooper to Strozier, May 27, 1955, and Strozier to Cooper, June 15, 1955, *Kimpton Administration*, Box 118, folder 2.

Office had seized upon FOTA and began to use it as part of their fundraising literature as an example of the fact that the “University today is active, growing, demanding,” thus implying that FOTA was an affair of the University of Chicago per se. Moreover, University officers were overjoyed by the new festival, with Vice President William Cannon writing, “I might say that all reactions — student, faculty, friends — are extremely favorable. My judgment is that the Festival is the best thing in student activities to occur on this campus in years; that it holds the promise of being a perfect device for attaining this Administration’s objectives for student life. That is, the Festival avoided, and can avoid, what are to me twin evils: the continuation of the over emphasis on the intellectual side of student life at the University; and the fostering of a rah-rah, or joe-college type of student life. Our aim this year was to mix culture with fun. I think that we succeeded beyond our expectations.”<sup>124</sup> The whole episode offered a fascinating example of the University officials needing to present the institution as being more attractive and even “exuberant” and yet lacking the evidentiary resources to do so in a credible way.

The collisions generated by FOTA were part of a more general concern on the part of the central administration under Chancellor Lawrence Kimpton that the College’s putative image as an exclusive bastion for hyper-intellectualism drastically limited the number of possible student applications to the College. In fact, Kimpton became famous (or infamous) for his alleged quip in June 1954 before an Order of the C alumni banquet that the problem with the College was that it was admitting too many “goddamn queer kids” and “quiz kids” as opposed to “a broad cross

124. Cannon to Watkins, May 16, 1955, *Kimpton Administration*, Box 117, folder 15.

section of young, healthy Americans.”<sup>125</sup> Kimpton’s concerns not only reflected his profound worries over the collapse of College admissions in the early 1950s, but also with reports emerging from the faculty themselves over the fact that many of the undergraduate students were deeply unhappy with their surroundings. Certainly, as I mentioned in my last annual report, student admissions did take a huge public-relations hit in the 1950s, leading to a tug of war within the University administration as to what kinds of students should even be recruited in the first place.

The College may have attracted too many “quiz kids” for Lawrence Kimpton’s taste, but it attracted them using a paradoxical rhetoric emphasizing individual freedom and personal autonomy.<sup>126</sup> As is often the case in complex transformations, unanticipated vectors of change were also soon apparent, and the chaotic social laissez-faire that underlay the curricular hyper-intellectualism of the Hutchins College created a space for wit, irony, and theatricality that proved well suited to the

125. *The Chicago Maroon*, June 10, 1954, pp. 1–2. In the early 1950s, Kimpton deployed the word “queer” to describe students who were, in his mind, strange, eccentric, and antisocial. As far as I can tell, he did not use the word with any deliberate allusion to homosexuality.

126. Not all of the College students in the late Hutchins years conformed to this alleged mold of hyper-intellectuals *manqué* in any event. In 1946, a group of undergraduate women students approached Edwin Beyer, a gymnastics coach at the University, asking for help in organizing a cheerleading squad. Beyer encouraged the students to learn acrobatics and gymnastics, and by 1950 he had conjured up a large group of students and recent alumni who performed Acrotheatre, a form of gymnastic entertainment that used a trampoline as well as ballet, musical comedy, and rope climbing and circus tricks to stage an annual revels in Mandel Hall, as well as visiting other schools in the area. The considerable marketing that the University gave to the group—lead story in the alumni magazine in 1951—showed how pleased administrators were with the image of the College conveyed by this group. See Erwin Beyer, “Antics in the Air,” *The University of Chicago Magazine*, March 1951, pp. 14–19.

interests of some particularly self-reliant students. One saw a taste of this playfulness and theatricality on April Fool's Day in 1955 when, in response to Kimpton's anti-"quiz kid" rhetoric, the *Chicago Maroon* created a mythic character, the "last queer kid to leave campus," Aristotle Schwartz. Printing a photograph of a rather down-and-out, dejected student dressed in an oversized coat and carrying two heavy bags, the *Maroon* announced that Schwartz had been detained by University police on April 1, 1955, and escorted from campus, with photographers present. The *Maroon* reported:

The last queer kid has left the UC campus, the Chancellor [Lawrence Kimpton] officially announced this week. Aristotle Schwartz, a 1953 entrant under the OLD B.A. plan was escorted by three campus police Tuesday morning to the corner of 57th and Woodlawn and pointed northwest. He was given a CTA token and a warning never to return to campus. Schwarz was the last victim in a campus-wide queer-kid proscription initiated by the administration last August. The Internal Securities sub-committee of the faculty senate notified the Chancellor last week that the purge had been successfully completed. . . . When asked what the criteria were for the dismissal of several hundred students by the sub-committee, the Chancellor stated that the criteria were known only to the sub-committee members. "If they were made public," he said, "all the queer kids in the neighborhood would be sneaky and pretend to be normal to escape detection. If we must have sneaks, let them be normal ones," he emphasized. . . . When asked to comment upon the successful queer-kid purge, Naomi McCoren, dean of students and chairman of the Student Advisory Boors,



said “Actually, it’s fine. It was done carefully. I rather like it. In fact, I like everything.”<sup>127</sup>

Among the new waves of students entering the all-general-education College after 1945 were personalities who were less conventional and more aesthetically open to new forms of self-expression. This was a side of the Hutchins College that is less remembered now, but it was powerfully visible at the time and, as noted above, the subject of apprehension among senior administrators. Out of this heady atmosphere of earnest idealism and raw creativity came a group of College students and young alumni who combined theatrical talent, ironic wit, and an appetite for risk-taking to make themselves famous in the landscape of American popular theater.

After World War II, the University formally grouped student dramatic opportunities under the organizational rubric of “University Theater (UT)” as a successor to the pre-war Dramatic Association, and in June 1946 a former actor by the name of George Blair, the head of the drama department at the University of Georgia, was hired to lead it.<sup>128</sup> Blair organized and ran solid main stage productions in Mandel Hall, and he encouraged broad participation on the part of students. Often his plays were reviewed favorably by local Chicago newspapers.<sup>129</sup> But Blair’s way of dealing with students was sometimes seen to be abrasive,

127. *Chicago Maroon*, April 1, 1955 [April Fool’s issue, published as the *Chicago Charcoal*], p. 1; and June 10, 1954, p. 1.

128. Janet Peck, “U. of C. Sprouts Tiny Wings for Flyer in Drama,” *Chicago Tribune*, June 15, 1947, p. 6; *Chicago Maroon*, June 28, 1946, p. 3 and September 23, 1946, p. 2.

129. There is a helpful history of early UT prepared by the dissidents from the Actors’ Company in 1961, filed in *Office of Student Activities*, Box 13, folder 5.

and he generated resentment among some of the young College students and dropouts who wanted their aesthetic viewpoints acknowledged by University Theater. In late 1950, a group of these dissidents met and created a new drama group, calling it Tonight at 8:30 after the famous cycle of one-act plays by Noël Coward. The Tonight at 8:30 group seceded from UT because it wanted to stage different kinds of plays than Blair was interested in supporting. The most prominent member of this group was an ambitious young student director, Paul Sills, the son of Viola Spolin, who brought Spolin's acting techniques to the preparation of his dramas. Sills had entered the College in 1948 and became a Hyde Park fixture, often hanging out at the fabled Steinway Drugstore at 57th Street and Kenwood Avenue. Sills's success with such plays as Schnitzler's *La Ronde*, Hofmannsthal's *Madonna Dianora*, and Cocteau's *The Typewriter* gave him significant visibility on campus, and when George Blair was replaced with a more congenial leader for University Theater, Otis Imbodin, it was natural that Imbodin would try to persuade Sills and his faction to reconnect with University Theater. They did so in 1952–53, when Sills directed an impressive production of Brecht's *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* in Mandel Hall. Among those who participated in Tonight at 8:30 and other ventures led by Sills was a young dropout by the name of Mike Nichols, as well as a host of other important figures, including David Shepherd, Elaine May, Edward Asner, Zohra Lampert, Joyce Piven, Severn Darden, and Charles Jacobs. Sills's visibility in local campus theater circles — particularly for the “endless workshops” in improvisational acting techniques that Sills held in 1952–53 — made him a natural partner in the collaborations with David Shepherd that followed, when, along with Eugene Troobnick and a few others, the two opened a theater company in an empty, dingy Chinese restaurant at North Avenue and La Salle Street, calling it the Playwrights Theatre

Club (it was called a club, since it was not open to ticket buyers) in June 1953.<sup>130</sup> The Playwrights Theatre Club evolved in 1955 into an improvisational cabaret called the Compass Players (who performed at the old Hi-Hat Lounge on 55th Street and later at the Dock, near 53rd Street and Lake Park Avenue), and then into Second City in 1959, and the rest is American theater history.

The story of the Playwrights Theatre Club and the Compass Players has often been recounted as part of the lore of the University, but it is of interest here because of its deeply amateurish origins at a very specific time in the cultural history of the College. The historian of the Compass, Janet Coleman, has argued that Sills, Nichols, and the other young renegades of 1950–53 were possible both because of the lack of systematic structures for theater at Chicago, which gave them great flexibility and independence, and because of the hot-house intellectual atmosphere of the College, which recruited highly literate students interested in the humanities and arts, and she is doubtlessly correct.<sup>131</sup> The fact that Chicago had a reputation for free speech and academic freedom during the heyday of the McCarthy era also played a significant role, since the University and Hyde Park were seen as a place where students could express political views, popular or otherwise. Yet ironically, Sills's groups were quite restrictive as to membership, and if he and his fellow revolutionaries began as student amateurs, they were amateurs on a very fast track toward professionalism

130. Janet Coleman, *The Compass. The Improvisational Theatre That Revolutionized American Comedy* (Chicago, 1990), pp. 53, 57–58.

131. Coleman, *The Compass*, pp. 3–15. David Shepherd would later observe, “People like Elaine [May] and Paul Sills and the others, they knew a lot and they were very literate. *Highly* literate. They could talk to the U. of C. Alumni. They could talk Kafka, Shakespeare — anything you want. I mean that was a *smart* company.” Quoted in Jeffrey Sweet, *Something Wonderful Right Away* (2nd ed., New York, 1987), p. 8.

that soon led many of them to outgrow the informality and occasionality that marked student arts on campus. They were an example of the role that gifted amateurism can play in evolving into professionalism, but they were not a particularly good example of the kinds of cultural impact that campus theater might realistically have on the avocational (or vocational) lives of most students.<sup>132</sup> Ironically, the original group, Tonight at 8:30, survived into the late 1950s, mounting an annual “experimental production” including Tennessee Williams’s *The Case of the Crushed Petunias*, a bathroom scene from J. D. Salinger’s *Franny and Zooey*, Henry Zeigner’s *Five Days*, and Omar Shapli’s *The Lesson of H’ar Megigdo*, and by 1959 meriting the tag of “the ‘avant-garde’ arm of University Theater.”<sup>133</sup>

George Blair resigned in mid-1951 and was succeeded by Otis Imbodin, who served until he was succeeded by Marvin Phillips in 1954. Phillips was instrumental in the founding of Court Theatre in August 1955, an outdoor summer drama festival in Hutchinson Courtyard that lasted into the 1980s. Phillips wrote proudly to Lawrence Kimpton that “for the first time in University Theater’s history, we are inaugurating a summer outdoor drama festival. We feel that Hutchinson Court (Court Theatre) is a beautiful and natural location for summer drama. Our choice of a playwright is Moliere, one of the world’s greatest and most suitable to outdoor theatre. We are receiving city and nation-wide publicity for this event. Perhaps our first season may not be too successful, but I believe it is an important step in educational theatre here at the University.”<sup>134</sup> As Anthony Grafton later recalled of Phillips’s work,

132. *Ibid.*, pp. 114, 161.

133. *Cap and Gown*, 1958, p. 131; 1961, p. 86.

134. Phillips to Kimpton, June 21, 1955, *Kimpton Administration*, Box 278, folder 1.

Court Theatre evolved into a “remarkable enterprise, a cross between community and professional theater” in the later 1950s and 1960s.<sup>135</sup> Phillips left in 1957 and was succeeded by a number of talented directors, none of whom was a member of the faculty.<sup>136</sup>

It was natural that the educational programs of the faculty in the Humanities would soon take advantage of the resources of University Theater, and by the early 1950s University Theater was offering dramatic recitals and public readings of plays that were being used in the various Humanities Core courses. It was the goal of the leadership of University Theater to see “drama activity as a learning process. Plays are chosen, not for their value as entertainment pieces, but as significant works of literature meriting close study and deeper analysis.”<sup>137</sup> UT mounted classic and contemporary plays. By the late 1950s, UT took special pride in offering performances of “not-so-well-known plays by well-known authors.”<sup>138</sup>

In spite of the formal unification of theater in 1946, the theater landscape of the 1950s and early 1960s saw the re-emergence of rival groups. The campus theater landscape was never fully settled, and divisive fights and feuds continued to mark the UT nexus. For example, a group of dissidents revived the old group called the Masquers in 1961, arguing that University Theater was responsible for “significant

135. See Anthony Grafton’s short memoir in *The University of Chicago Magazine*, November–December 2006, pp. 8, 10.

136. Phillips was followed by William Alton from 1957 to 1959, then by Robert Benedetti from 1959 to 1963; James Reilly from 1963 to 1970; and Annette Fern from 1970 to 1971.

137. *Cap and Gown*, 1953, p. 117.

138. *Cap and Gown*, 1958, p. 128.

restrictions upon their autonomy as creative artists.”<sup>139</sup> These students eventually transformed themselves into the Actors’ Company, whose request for a loan of \$1,000 met with cold reaction on the part of University officials, who thought the group’s business plan unsound and their planning erratic and unrealistic.<sup>140</sup> Students also sought additional facilities for theater, as exemplified by a request by Pierce Tower students in 1961 that a “little theater” be provided in the second Pierce tower that was still to be constructed along 55th Street, a suggestion that the University administrators thought to be “impractical.”<sup>141</sup>

By the later 1960s, both University Theater and Court Theatre were plagued with financial problems and soaring deficits, so much so that by 1968 both had run up almost \$70,000 in losses. In response, University Dean of Students Charles O’Connell canceled the 1968 summer season of Court Theatre and closed down most of the productions of University Theater for the 1967–68 academic year. Instead, O’Connell noted that he would instruct University Theater staff that they must devote their efforts to “experimental, low-cost student theatre, perhaps even play readings.”<sup>142</sup> In February 1968, a group of faculty, including Kenneth Northcott, James E. Miller, Jr., Edward W. Rosenheim, Robert Streeter, Robert Ashenhurst, and Gwin Kolb, all of whom were deeply concerned

139. David J. Ingle to James E. Newman and Perry A. Constans, undated, but 1961, *Office of Student Activities*, Box 13, folder 5. Ingle was a graduate student in biopsychology, who went on to an academic career at Brandeis University.

140. James E. Newman to John P. Netherton, August 8, 1961, marked Confidential, *ibid.*

141. James E. Newman to John P. Netherton, January 11, 1961, *Beadle Administration*, Box 346, folder 5.

142. O’Connell to Levi, December 13, 1967, *Beadle Administration*, Box 122, folder 12.

about what they perceived to be the unstable leadership of student theater, submitted a proposal that University Theater be brought into the orbit of faculty oversight, arguing that in contrast to art and music, "Theatre alone is entirely outside the academic orbit." They urged that the University Theater should be advised by a committee of faculty members that would "advise on the choice of plays and on budget matters, as well as on the operation and budget of Court Theater. It is assumed that eventually the function of this academic body will be taken over by the new Director of the Theater program."<sup>143</sup> The intervention of this group of faculty—and others to follow—at this juncture would prove to be of crucial historic importance over the next 15 years in eventually generating a professional repertory theater and in reconstituting UT as a vibrant student theater tradition at the University of Chicago.

Running parallel with the increasing interest by faculty in the state of campus theater were vocal concerns about space and facilities. Richard d'Anjou, who served as the associate director of University Theater in the 1950s, produced a detailed analysis of the facilities for theater at the University in 1960, and his findings were not encouraging. The third floor theater in Ida Noyes suffered from the fact that "the acoustics are miserable, the sight lines are only slightly worse, and the stage is much too small for an elaborate theatrical production." International House was hardly any better, with poor lighting, seats, and floor that was not raked, and impeded sight lines beyond the fifth row. The Reynolds Club and Mandel Hall were beset by a host of debilitating problems, including poor lighting and electrical grids, a chronic lack of space for costumes and scenery, torn and ripped curtains and seats, radiators that hissed and

143. "Recommendation Concerning University Theater," February 28, 1968, *Beadle Administration*, Box 122, folder 12.

banged during performances, sound systems designed for instructional purposes but wholly inadequate for artistic events, plumbing facilities that were “totally inadequate,” including the lack of water in the basement, and scene rigging that was so old that it was “impossible to service.” He concluded with a plea that the University consider the construction of a new student theater that was designed to function as a theater, including modern lighting and sound system, adequate stage space and rehearsal rooms, comfortable seating and air conditioning, and adequate parking for guests. As for the intended groups who would use a new theater, d’Anjou fudged by arguing that the theater should be designed so that a professional producer or a student group would both find it congenial and useful, but he also urged that “the time has come for a reevaluation of University policy, or the lack of one, concerning the performing arts. . . . [T]he University of Chicago must decide what kind of theater is wanted. . . . [I]t is my opinion, based on five years of observation, that the University’s students, and faculty, and members of the community which surrounds it, want and need a ‘theater’ which is flexible and can serve the needs of the professional producer as well as those of the student activity.”<sup>144</sup>

The intervention of the faculty group in February 1968 came on the heels of a serious debate among many faculty members in the Humanities that had begun in the mid-1960s about the role of theater on our campus. As part of the planning process for the major development campaign that the University intended to launch in 1967, Provost Edward Levi appointed the faculty Council on the Arts, chaired by James E. Miller, Jr., of the Department of English, to consider the future of the

144. Richard d’Anjou, “Theatrical Facilities at the University of Chicago. A Technical Report,” July 15, 1960, *Kimpton Administration*, Box 119, folder 2.



arts on campus in several diverse domains. The group then split into subcommittees, including a subcommittee on theater. The subcommittee on theater was filled with a group of dedicated high-minded loyalists, all of whom had a strong personal interest in strengthening theater at the University, led by Edward W. Rosenheim of English and Kenneth Northcott of Germanic Languages. Rosenheim took the lead in developing a series of statements about the importance of stronger resources for theater on our campus. As early as June 1963, Rosenheim had proposed that the University create a small 250-seat “laboratory theater” that would enable faculty members to stage works that they were teaching in class and thus to provide graduate and undergraduate students with a richer “theatrical experience.”<sup>145</sup> The problem with the proposal, written with the charm and élan typical of Ned Rosenheim, was that he had no reasonable plans for providing for the organization or steady casting of such productions, and the proposal generated little positive reaction. Four years later, Rosenheim’s thinking became more capacious and more imaginative. In a report that he submitted in 1967, he now imagined a new building with a large and a smaller theater, the former being more professional and devoted to repertory works, works of multi-week runs, visiting productions from other U.S. or world cities, and “high quality amateur performances”; while the latter would be a more experimental venue for plays in foreign languages, plays in support of course work in the College, and plays mounted by “fledgling directors and actors” and open to students, faculty, and community members.

Rosenheim was inexplicit about the idea of the University having its own professional repertory company. In principle he supported such

145. Edward W. Rosenheim to Robert Streeter and Alan Simpson, June 25, 1963, *Beadle Administration*, Box 346, folder 6.

a plan, but he also imagined a host of different kinds of activities that might take place in the larger theater, including visiting companies, single readings, evenings with famous literary figures, imported productions, the production of works written by faculty members, joint faculty-student-University productions, and the mounting of plays that were currently being studied in academic courses. Rosenheim believed that the University's first-order goal was to build a much larger audience pool, and from that other possibilities for a professional company would eventually emerge.<sup>146</sup> Rosenheim saw the city of Chicago as vastly under-resourced in theatrical events and opportunities — a kind of wasteland — and he believed that the University had a responsibility to intervene. A new theater would have the further advantage of bringing “a wide group of interested persons into contact with the activities of the University.”

Rosenheim also praised the creativity of our students, and noted with some irony that “despite this great amount of energy and talent, the students have gotten little encouragement from the University and the University has gotten little mileage — public relations, morale, unity of intellectual climate — out of them. To put it bluntly, though Second City is contributing to theatrical history on a world-wide scale, nobody seems aware that this vital current of new comedy was hatched by University of Chicago people.”<sup>147</sup>

146. “We have talked in the past a great deal about the establishment of a permanent repertory company, but, as we have mentioned above, our major concern should really be with the establishment of a permanent audience.” “A Proposal for a University Theatre,” pp. 2–3; as well as Rosenheim to Charles U. Daly, January 13, 1967, and Rosenheim to the Members of the “Drama sub-committee,” January 2, 1967, *Beadle Administration*, Box 122, folder 12.

147. Rosenheim to Charles U. Daly, January 13, 1967, *Beadle Administration*, Box 122, folder 12.

In spite of (or perhaps because of) Rosenheim's dreamy missives and similar utopian statements by other members of the subcommittee, Provost Edward Levi continued to be frustrated by the lack of a clear, articulate plan for a theater program at the University. Levi believed that it would be impossible to plan for a new building without "a fairly clear theory of why the University has a theatre program."<sup>148</sup> Rosenheim and his colleagues had generated a series of fascinating programmatic ideas, but inevitably they spent most their time worrying about the particular activities that would take place in the new theater, whereas Levi wanted a detailed statement of the operational and logistical structure of the future theater program, viewed as an administrative and financial whole. The faculty themselves must have encountered frustration with their efforts, since James E. Miller, Jr., wrote to Levi in October 1967 requesting that the University hire an outside consultant "to determine the conditions under which a successful and broadened university theatre program might be undertaken." Rather than generating such a report themselves, the faculty now placed themselves in the position of drawing up a "series of questions" that might be posed to the outside expert.<sup>149</sup>

One key issue that had emerged from the subcommittee was the desirability of a professional theater on campus. To test the waters for the possibility of creating a professional repertory theater on campus, Edward Levi agreed (with the partial support of the Rockefeller Foundation in the amount of \$15,000) in 1965 that the University would collaborate with the Goodman Theatre in mounting 29 performances of Molière's *The Misanthrope* in the Law School auditorium from February 4

148. Meeting of the Theatre Subcommittee, December 16, 1966," *Beadle Administration*, Box 122, folder 12.

149. Miller to Levi, October 11, 1967, *Beadle Administration*, Box 122, folder 12.



*Edward Levi, May 7, 1975*  
*White House Photograph*

to 27, 1966. The press release advertising the play explained that “the presentation of *The Misanthrope* is the first production in an experimental program to discover the extent of the audience interested in seeing classic plays performed by professional actors.” Starring Barbara Baxley, Brenda Forbes, and George Grizzard, the play was judged to be both an artistic and a demographic success, with 29 performances for 12,000 people, all of which were virtually sold out. Levi saw the Goodman collaboration as “an interesting experiment in the evolution of a professional group out of a separate sister institution in Chicago,” by which he meant that this might serve as a prototype of a new University-based theater company, perhaps working in concert with the Goodman. Unfortunately, *The Misanthrope* proved to be a singular but lonely success, requiring a University subsidy of nearly \$21,000, and no group or director could be identified to repeat the experiment in the Law School in the second year that would not require a similar level of subsidy. Facing the likelihood of an even greater deficit if the University were to sponsor a second season with different plays, Levi was forced to notify the Rockefeller Foundation that the collaboration would be closed down.<sup>150</sup> Moreover, intramural tensions grew up between local Chicago faculty and the director of the Goodman, John Reich, leading to, in Levi’s words, “an overwhelming current of discontent with the Goodman coming from the faculty and other University personnel. . . . [T]his is an area where everyone is his own expert.”<sup>151</sup> The real issue, however, was money, for the play cost far more than what the Rockefeller subsidy could cover,

150. Levi to Gerald Freund, April 22, 1966, *Beadle Administration*, Box 122, folder 12.

151. Marshall Cohen of the Department of Philosophy wrote to Levi that he found Reich’s staging of the play “shallow, vulgar, and generally irritating.” Cohen to Levi, February 18, 1966, *Beadle Administration*, Box 347, folder 4.

and Levi was unwilling to commit \$90,000 in University funds to a permanent future subsidy for a campus theater program run in conjunction with the Goodman.

The practical experience of the collaboration with Goodman was in the short run gratifying but also disillusioning for Levi, who worried that “the more we have examined the possibility of a theatre at the University the clearer it is, I think, that we could not at this point go it alone. We could not assemble a company and producing staff without the kind of financial commitment which we must not make in our present circumstances.” Levi also worried that by canceling an arrangement with the Goodman and then moving forward with our own professional theatre, the University might alienate Goodman supporters who were also friends of the University: “Another facet of the problem is that the University’s relations in the community, its desire to be a constructive and not a destructive force, preclude, I think, any further attempt at a professional theatre at this time in the University if it is not with Goodman. I have reference to the network of friends of both institutions, as well as the somewhat unlovely example of a university having tried out an experiment, which succeeded, then turning to disown the other Chicago institution.”<sup>152</sup> To Arthur Heiserman, Levi complained, “[E]veryone who talks about this [establishing a theatre on campus] has his own idea of what would be best to do. It is usually something that we aren’t doing. And the financial obligations are uncertain, and the money raising problem terrific.”<sup>153</sup> Nor was Levi tempted by the offer of partial funding for a theater building. In late December 1967, the hotel chain owner Albert

152. Levi to Beadle et al., February 21, 1966, *Beadle Administration*, Box 346, folder 8.

153. Levi to Arthur Heiserman, January 13, 1966, *Beadle Administration*, Box 346, folder 8.

Pick, Jr., offered a pledge of \$1.5 million to create a theater in honor of his wife, Corinne Frada Pick, but the total cost of the building was \$2.5 million and Levi would not budge from an insistence that other external donors had to be found to cover 100 percent of the cost of construction and operations. To Hope Abelson, he responded somewhat tartly, "I believe our problem is that we need money, not counsel. . . . I don't think there is much interest in the theater which manifests itself in giving the kind of funds which are required. That is simply a fact of life...there is no easy way, and the development will simply not occur without funds."<sup>154</sup> Levi's ambivalent reactions to the feasibility of a permanent professional theater in 1966 and 1969 may help to explain the priority that he gave to constructing a new art building and an art museum in 1970–71, when planning for new north campus buildings resumed after the tumultuous sit-in of 1969.

The next major development in the postwar history of theater came in the spring of 1971. As a result of the unsteady financial situation and weak leadership that seemed to be plaguing University Theater, the University Dean of Students Charles O'Connell appointed Professor D. Nicholas Rudall as the first faculty director of University Theater, with the clear expectation that Rudall would exercise the kind of faculty oversight and guidance called for by the authors of the February 1968 memorandum. Rudall was given responsibility for managing the summer Court Theatre as well. Rudall was a British-born classical scholar with a strong personal and professional interest in theater. During his student days at Cambridge University, Rudall had acted and directed in local theaters, and for a time he had considered a professional career in

154. Levi to Hope Abelson, December 16, 1969, *Levi Administration*, Box 69, folder 4. Pick would eventually give Northwestern University funds to help build the Pick-Staiger Concert Hall, which opened in October 1975.

theater. When he went to graduate school at Cornell, he continued his interests, directing such plays as *Rashomon* and acting in *As You Like It*, *Man and Superman*, and *Look Back in Anger*. Rudall had been hired as an assistant professor by the College in 1966, receiving a parallel appointment in the Department of Classics in 1968. In the College, Rudall joined the Committee on General Studies in the Humanities (GS Hum) in 1970, an interdisciplinary concentration launched by Norman Maclean in the early 1950s. The GS Hum group brought together a stimulating and imaginative group of colleagues interested in drama, including Janel Mueller, John Cawelti, Kenneth Northcott, Ned Rosenheim, and Virgil Burnett, and in 1970 several GS Hum faculty created a two-quarter course, Introduction to the Theater, that proved to be extremely popular with students. Rosenheim hoped that the committee would eventually create a theater program as part of its offerings, arguing, “[I]t seems to me a marvelous opportunity to bridge the gap between our scholarly preoccupation with theatrical literature (made the stronger because of the great resources of the Regenstein) and the enthusiasm and talent for acting and production which have traditionally been a major element in the extra-curricular life of the campus.” When the time came to think about the future of student theater on campus in 1971, Rosenheim thought that “the bringing together of these two currents in a single program requires a person of singular gifts and I honestly doubt that, if we had limitless money and time, we could find a better qualified person than Nick.”<sup>155</sup> Since Nick Rudall had played a critical role in the GS Hum theater experiment, when it became apparent that University Theater needed both new leadership and new artistic directions, it was natural for the College and the division to turn to him.

155. Edward W. Rosenheim to John Cawelti, May 13, 1971, *College Archive*.



Nick Rudall was the first faculty member ever to serve as director of University Theater. For the first several years, Rudall provided strong leadership for both University Theater and Court Theatre, and University officials were extremely pleased by his success. But his mandate was in fact dual. In the aftermath of the successful launch of the Smart Gallery in 1971, Edward Levi regained his courage about the possibility of a professional theater on campus and asked Rudall if he might be interested in creating such a theater. Rudall took Levi's commission in deeply earnest seriousness. Beginning in 1974–75, he launched a quiet but deliberate fundraising campaign, which generated by 1979 about \$2.5 million of the funds necessary to construct a new Court Theatre building. By the later 1970s, it became clear that Rudall's greatest ambition was now somewhat different than that of his original mandate from O'Connell, for Rudall was most interested in creating a genuinely professional company and not in supervising student theatrical groups on campus.

Rudall thus became a strong and persuasive advocate for the need to build a new theater building and for using highly talented actors to staff a permanent repertory program, whether the actors were members of Equity or promising individuals who had not yet joined Equity (what Rudall called "though non-union, . . . talented and professional artists").<sup>156</sup> Yet it was inevitable that the rush to professionalism left some students frustrated. Slowly voices of concern came to be heard that drama as a student activity was not receiving the kind of attention and visibility that

156. See "Open Letter to Court Theatre-Goers," summer 1977, *Wilson Administration*, Box 46, folder 1. This memo reflected the dustup with Chicago Equity that occurred in the winter and spring of 1977 over contract negotiations. The University opted out of a formal relationship with Equity for the summer performances of Court Theatre.

many students believed to be warranted. Dean of the College Charles Oxnard worried in May 1976:

It seems to me that the new theater will generate a greatly increased theatrical proficiency. I am sure, for instance, that players and other personnel will come from all over the city, presumably even beyond, and this is appropriate. As a result, however, it seems to me rather unlikely that our own students will be able to participate to any great extent. And I wonder what will happen to current student and University community groups (such as Blackfriars). At the present time, I understand that these groups are heavily handicapped in doing things. The new theater should, it seems to me improve that aspect of theater. . . . It would be very easy to produce a fine theater utterly inaccessible to student, staff, and faculty groups. The analogy might be between big time sports and intramural sports.<sup>157</sup>

Quietly voices were heard that confirmed Oxnard's fears. One former student complained to President John T. Wilson that "over the past five years, University Theater has been taken out of the hands of students and turned over almost entirely to faculty members and professional and community actors. . . . What was formerly a student activity has become, clearly and simply, a professor activity."<sup>158</sup> Commenting for an in-file memo on this letter, University Dean of Students Charles D. O'Connell admitted that "the price of improved quality in UT and Court has been

157. Oxnard to Cannon, May 3, 1976, *Wilson Administration*, Box 21, folder 7.

158. Gwendolyn L. Dietmann to Wilson, September 30, 1975, *Wilson Administration*, Box 46, folder 1.

increasing professionalism and significantly lower student interest and participation. And it is also true that UT has simply muscled Blackfriars and other groups out of the way, despite lip service to the contrary.”<sup>159</sup>

The issue of the future of the project for a new building that would house a professional theater was finally decided in 1979. In October 1976, the University chose Harry Weese and Associates to generate a proposal for design development of a new theater. Weese submitted his plans in September 1977 for a \$3.9 million building with 472 seats, with attached space for scene and costume shops, storage, and office space. Work on this plan stalled because of the large gap between estimated total project costs (\$5 million) and actual fundraising success (\$2.5 million), leading Rudall and his colleagues to become increasingly frustrated. Finally, in mid-June 1978, Nick Rudall informed the outgoing president, John Wilson, that he and his staff would resign if the University did not make tangible and immediate progress on the construction of a new theater by the winter of 1979: “The company and the staff will be forced to disband. I know that my staff feels this way. And I would choose to resign also. The present working conditions militate against any continued effort at professionalism. *I would recommend therefore a return to a haphazard student activity, with one person in charge.*”<sup>160</sup>

Word of Rudall’s frustrations eventually leaked to the Chicago metropolitan press, and in the spring of 1979 University leaders were deluged with letters and petitions urging that something be done to save professional theater in Hyde Park. This outburst of public support was heartfelt and significant, and it demonstrated how much Nick Rudall

159. O’Connell to Kleinbard, October 8, 1975, *Wilson Administration*, Box 46, folder 1.

160. Rudall to Wilson, June 14, 1978, *Wilson Administration*, Box 21, folder 8.

had achieved at the summer and (after 1977) winter seasons of Court Theatre over the course of the 1970s. Upon taking office in the summer of 1978, President Hanna H. Gray explored all possible options and soon forged a compromise, whereby Court Theatre was permitted to go forward with its new building but with a significantly smaller auditorium than had initially been planned. In December 1979, the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees authorized the preparation of new schematic plans by Harry Weese for a smaller building that was to cost \$1.7 million (in project costs), with capacity of 250 seats and more limited support spaces.<sup>161</sup> Court Theatre, which had formerly been managed by the Center for Continuing Education, now received its own independent management structure, with an advisory board of supporters. Court now became the home of a highly successful professional dramatic program dedicated to the classical repertoire, with “classic” understood to be both older and more recent plays that reflected the “essential unity of the human experience.”

Nick Rudall’s transition to artistic leader of a professional Equity company and the opening of the new Court Theatre building on Ellis Avenue, which launched its first full season in the fall of 1981, left the future of student theater on campus in an uncertain situation. By the late 1970s, the organization of theater on campus had been divided between Court Theatre proper, in its emergent role as a professional theater, and a subsidiary unit called Court Studio that was created to serve student and community interests. Since the studio functioned on the basis of open, city-wide competitions, however, students often found themselves at a relative disadvantage. This in turn led to low student participation

161. Including prior expenditures and an endowment of operating costs, the total cost of the project was estimated at \$3,538,000.

rates. Steve Schroer, who was to play a major role in the revival of student theater in the 1980s, later remembered:

Open auditions meant that anyone could audition: students, people from the Hyde Park community, and Chicago actors professional and semi-professional. The result was that students were cast very infrequently, for the simple reason that they were usually not as good as the people they were competing against. A somewhat higher proportion of directors came from the ranks of students, because Court Studio was not exactly a high profile organization and people from Hyde Park were more likely to have heard of it. I estimate that for the 1979–80 and 1980–81 seasons about 30% of the directors and about 15% of the actors in Court Studio were students.<sup>162</sup>

In his role as a part-time coordinator of Court Studio between 1981 and 1982, Schroer made some progress in expanding roles for students, but the situation was less than optimal, and when Schroer's position at Court Studio was eliminated in the spring of 1982, the College found itself at a classic turning point. The organizational dispersion of student theater was clearly an unattractive situation, and a faculty ginger group soon emerged that revived a genuinely student theater on campus and set it in the direction that it still occupies today on our campus. In the fall of 1982, the new dean of students in the College, Herman Sinaiko, and the new master of the Humanities Collegiate Division, James Redfield, engineered a revival and "rebirth" of University Theater by bringing

162. Steven Schroer, "Court Studio and Student Theater at the University," January 12, 1983, *College Archive*.

together a group of faculty and staff interested in a genuine and vibrant student theater program in the College. Steve Schroer, who had been working in the College Dean of Students Office, and Herman Sinaiko were able to help broker a merger of existing groups—Blackfriars, Concrete Gothic, and others—and reestablished a student-dominated University Theater Committee to manage the affairs of student theater on campus.<sup>163</sup> In 1983, Frank Kinahan, a faculty member in English and in General Studies in the Humanities, became the faculty director of University Theater and Steve Schroer was appointed as managing director.

It was owing to the strong leadership of Sinaiko, Kinahan, and Schroer between 1982 and 1992 that the group gained immediate and visible successes, eventually leading to the vibrant student theater culture that is evident on campus today. The “reborn” University Theater immediately gained traction, and by December 1984 student theater claimed to be the second largest student activity on campus, next to intramural sports.<sup>164</sup> Between 1983 and 1990, the number of students participating in some aspect of the theater increased from 120 in 1983 to over 500 in 1990 and the number of main stage student productions sponsored by UT increased from 5 to 20 per year. Equally important, the University now returned to the customary practices of the pre-1945 period, valorizing and empowering the cultural project of student theater to be an institution that should be substantially controlled and organized by the students themselves, with students controlling the standing committee that essentially ran UT, selecting both the plays to be performed and the personnel who would perform them. Kinahan would proudly observe in

163. “Final Proposal for Theater Unification,” May 28, 1983, *College Archive*. The idea of a student-controlled board for UT was first initiated in 1962 by Robert Benedetti.

164. Steven Schroer to Duel Richardson, December 12, 1984, *College Archive*.

1991 that “on both the extracurricular and curricular ends, theater on campus has grown like topsy.”<sup>165</sup>

Also in 1983, the General Studies in the Humanities concentration program, now chaired by Joel Snyder and strongly supported by David Bevington, Janel Mueller, and other faculty leaders, revived the initiative that had begun in 1970–71 and created a Theater Option for its majors involving the history of drama, practical aspects of theater, and dramatic criticism that, over time, attracted growing student interest. The revived GS Hum drama initiative in the 1980s attracted a modest number of student majors, but, as Frank Kinahan predicted, it also generated a huge level of interest among many other College students “who would gladly take one or more of the proposed theater courses as electives.”<sup>166</sup> Over time the Humanities Collegiate Division was able to increase the number of courses offered in drama for College students, enabling Theater and Performance Studies to mature into an independent program, having been voted the status of an academic major and minor by the College Council in May 2008.<sup>167</sup>

Gradually, a student culture emerged over the 1980s and 1990s among Chicago undergraduates interested in drama that meshed performance in theater and the academic study of theater together in quite creative ways. In the fall of 1986, Steve Schroer and Frank Kinahan persuaded Bernie Sahlins of Second City to come to campus to give a class on “The Short Comic Scene” to a group of enthusiastic College students on techniques of improvisational comedy, and a new campus theatrical project was soon born that became Off-Off Campus. Off-Off launched

165. Kinahan to Ralph W. Nicholas, November 8, 1991, *College Archive*.

166. Frank Kinahan to Richard A. Strier, December 4, 1989, *College Archive*.

167. General Studies in the Humanities first offered courses in theater in the early 1970s. The initiative of the early 1980s was a strengthening of this earlier initiative.

its first season in the spring of 1987, and, as the Assistant Dean of the College Steven Loevy reported in June 1987, “[S]omething rare and wonderful was born among you and your colleagues this past year, and I am delighted to have been there to watch the offspring mature.”<sup>168</sup> Over the last 20 years, Off-Off Campus’s revival of the tradition of improvisational comedy first launched in the early 1950s has been the source of many of the most notable recent success stories of College students entering the world of the dramatic arts: David Auburn, Greg Kotis, Abby Sher, Tami Sagher, Andre Pluess, Mark Hollmann, Scott Sherman, and Ben Sussman came out of the Off-Off tradition.

In its revived format, student theater at Chicago, as Herman Sinaiko has rightly noted, became a model for all of the most successful student activities at the University, in that the College encouraged student leadership and student autonomy, trusting the talent, energy, and initiative of our College students to produce high quality work.

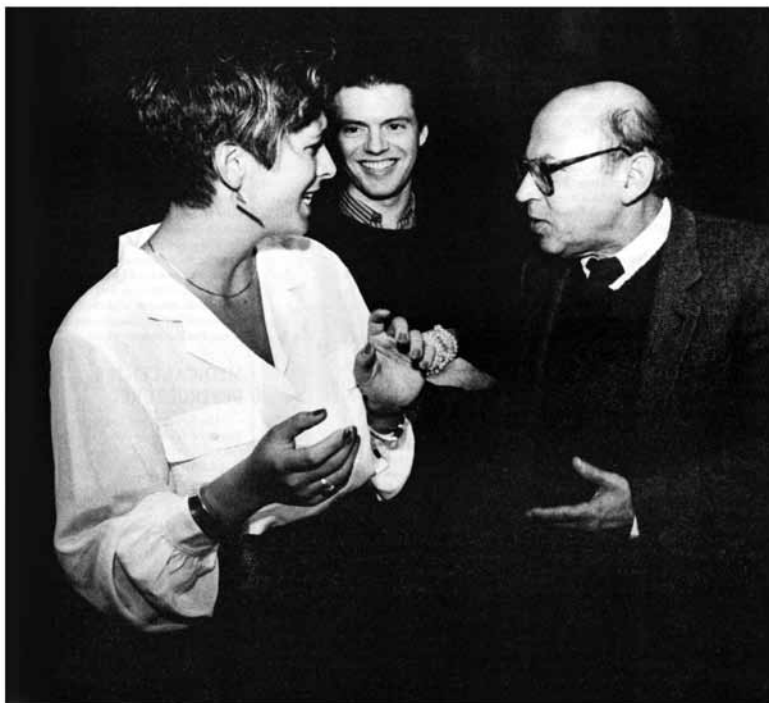
## || ART AFTER 1945 ||

If the emergence of student and eventually professional theater was a fundamental break with the past, the fate of Art and Music in the decades after 1945 was marked by a combination of ongoing attempts to buttress the scholarly prestige of the faculty and to find institutional homes appropriate to the work of Art and Music.

In 1947, the art historian Otto von Simson urged the University to appoint scholars in Art with stronger interdisciplinary credentials who

168. Steven Loevy to Hilary Barnes and other members of the Off-Off Campus ensemble, June 3, 1987, *College Archive*. For the early history of Off-Off Campus, see Mark R. Hollmann, “Of Bubbles and Bangs and Treading the Boards,” *The University of Chicago Magazine*, Winter 1987, pp. 11–27.





J. Bradley Burgess (2)

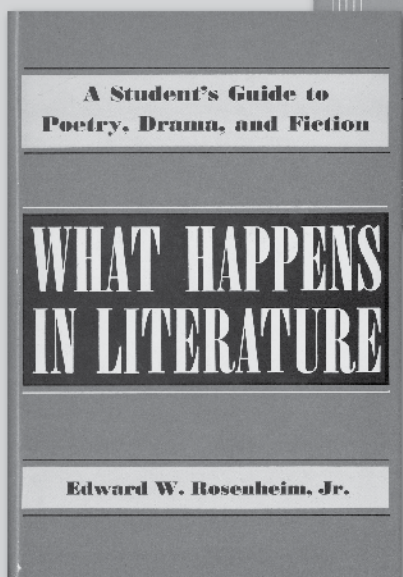
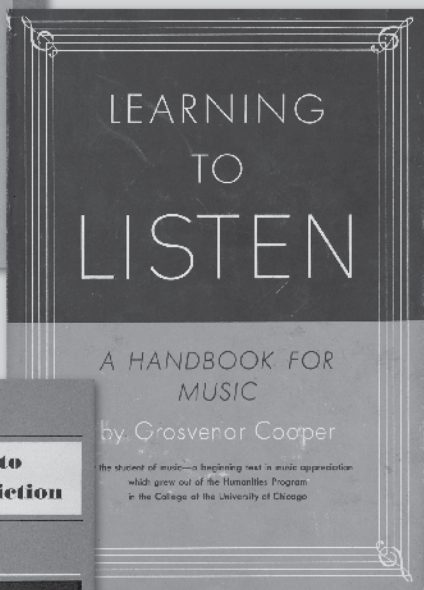
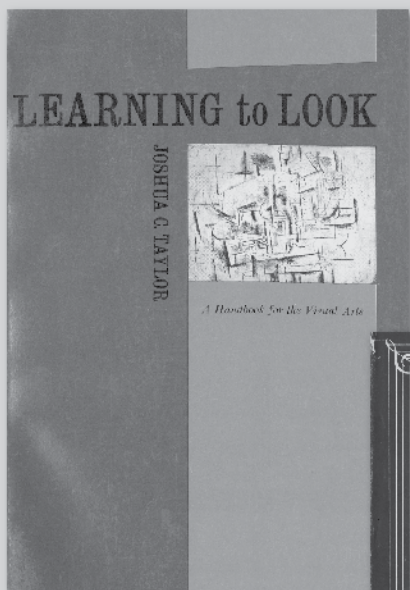
**I**mprovisation is back on campus. Bernard Sahlin, AB'43, (right, above) a co-founder of *The Second City*, taught a course on "The Short Comic Scene" this fall. Above he directs graduate student Ellen Nerenberg, AM'86, and senior Matt Denckla. Below, Sahlin and class members watch some of the aspiring comics rehearse.

would help to “make the Art Department a more integral part of the Humanities Division than it is at present.”<sup>169</sup> One such appointment came about from the initiative of the College in 1949, when it hired a young art historian from Princeton, Joshua Taylor, as an instructor in the Humanities Core. Along with Grosvenor Cooper in Music and Edward Rosenheim and John Cawelti in English, Taylor was instrumental in creating in 1953 a fascinating course in the Humanities Core curriculum that melded together the study of literature, art, and music in one integrated year-long sequence, not by teaching each subject sequentially, but by integrating the study of each art form with the other two forms in the same quarter. Robert Streeter later remarked that this course was “the most effective course of its kind in the country. . . . Bringing together works of literature, music, and the visual arts, Humanities I did not rely upon facile thematic interconnections, but developed, rather, coordinate grammars of interpretation for the several arts it treated.”<sup>170</sup> Out of this course came the three remarkable little books—Taylor’s *Learning to Look* (1957), Cooper’s *Learning to Listen* (1957), and Rosenheim’s *What Happens in Literature* (1960)—that the University of Chicago Press kept in print for many years.

As the faculty grew more ambitious and more eminent, the department struggled in the late 1940s and early 1950s to find a more satisfactory relationship with the Art Institute. Since 1934, the University had allowed Art Institute students to take courses in our downtown adult-education college, and the institute had allowed our students to take courses in the School of the Art Institute. In 1945, Ulrich Middeldorf

169. Simson to Colwell, July 14, 1947, *Hutchins Administration*, Box 19, folder 3.

170. Streeter to Jonathan Z. Smith, February 17, 1975, *College Archive*, Box 38. For the course, see Joshua C. Taylor, “What is Hum I?” *The University of Chicago Magazine*, April 1955, pp. 8–14.



*First editions of Taylor, Cooper and Rosenheim*

sought to radically expand these connections by working with Daniel Catton Rich, the director of the Art Institute, to propose the creation of a center for art studies in Chicago. The center would have essentially merged many functions of the department with the institute into one powerful educational and research venture located near the Art Institute's main building on Michigan Avenue, much like the German institute system that Middeldorf came from. The new center would have its own building and provide classroom and library facilities for both academic instruction and scholarly research, and faculty and curatorial staff would be pooled into one common body, some members of which would have joint appointments in both institutions.<sup>171</sup> The project went through several drafts, but ultimately foundered on the opposition of Dean Richard McKeon, who feared that such a union would pull the department away from the intellectual life of the University and "court the danger of running into a technical vocationalism," and by Robert Hutchins, who in his ineffably forthright way, told his colleagues that "this program is nuts."<sup>172</sup> Facing resistance from the University leaders at a time when other budgetary priorities loomed more immediately on the horizon, Rich refused to engage in less ambitious forms of partnership and the project was stillborn.<sup>173</sup> Subsequent attempts to organize such a center with the moral blessing of the University, but without its financial

171. "A Proposal for the Establishment of a Center for Art Studies in the City of Chicago," *Hutchins Administration*, Box 19, folder 2.

172. McKeon, "Considerations concerning a curriculum in Art as it bears on the problem of cooperation between the Art Institute and the University of Chicago," June 22, 1945, p. 4; memo of Ernest C. Colwell to Robert M. Hutchins, June 19, 1945, *Hutchins Administration*, Box 19, folder 5.

173. Rich to Colwell, November 12, 1947, *Hutchins Administration*, Box 19, folder 2.



support, proved stillborn as well. It is not unlikely that the failure of the center initiative was one important reason why Ulrich Middeldorf decided to leave Chicago in 1953 to return to Europe, specifically to the *Kunsthistorisches Institut* in Florence. Another attempt to create an interdisciplinary arts center, encompassing a number of artistic domains and not connected to formal academic degree preparation, was formulated by a development officer in the Humanities Division, Albert Chris-Janer, in the late 1940s, but also failed to gain traction and was eventually abandoned, with Chris-Janer moving to New York University in 1951.<sup>174</sup>

After the war, studio art and art history courses remained highly popular with College students, and a new avenue for popularizing of art came via the Joseph Randall Shapiro Collection of “Art to Live With” in the 1950s, which permitted students to rent significant works for a small fee to display in their rooms or apartments. At the beginning of each quarter, approximately 100 paintings, prints, and drawings were displayed in Ida Noyes Hall for students to choose from. Students registered for the drawing at the beginning of the quarter, and, if their registration was selected during the drawing, they received an object of their choice in the third week to be displayed for the remainder of the quarter.

Yet the real politics of the later 1950s and 1960s involved ongoing efforts to secure adequate space. When Alan Simpson assumed the deanship of the College in 1959, he was deeply concerned with the crude facilities available for all of the arts, and he launched a campaign to create an arts building on campus. Simpson’s detailed, 30-page proposal advocated for a new building to replace Lexington Hall, a temporary structure on University Avenue just south of the Oriental Institute, that would include an art gallery with space for the Renaissance Society and for art

174. “The Arts Center,” May 1, 1952, *Kimpton Administration*, Box 48, folder 10.

works produced by students, as well as a host of art studios; a modern, state-of-the-art theater seating 900 that would be used for “plays, operas, ballets and occasionally for chamber music performances”; a concert-lecture hall seating up to 1,000 that would serve the University Symphony and Collegium Musicum as well as be available for large public lectures and that would be “acoustically perfect with the appropriate sound absorption and baffles, etc. so that it can be [also] used for the performance of chamber music”; a music library; music practice and music listening rooms; a large room for film screenings; sundry classrooms for instruction in art and music; and office space for the chair of the Music Department, the director of Rockefeller Chapel, and the chair of Humanities Core courses relating to the arts. Simpson estimated that the total cost of the building in 1960 dollars would have been \$3.5 million (in 2009 dollars this would be approximately \$27 million, far less than the cost of the new Logan Arts Center that we are now constructing across the Midway, which will cost \$114 million). The primary student group served by the new building would be undergraduates, whose numbers Simpson believed would grow rapidly by the mid-1960s (he estimated entering first-year classes of 1,000 students by as early as 1963), but Simpson insisted that the building should meet the needs of graduate students as well.

Simpson’s campaign for the arts was part of his larger ambition to modify what he believed to be serious structural and ideological rigidities in the curriculum of the Hutchins College. In this mode, Simpson believed that the new arts building would function as a revolutionary cultural instrument to broaden the work of the College. He insisted that “since the 1930s the University has tended to separate itself from the disciplines of creativity. Discussion and criticism almost alone have controlled the direction and policy of education in the Humanities on both the undergraduate and graduate levels. This has been unfortunate

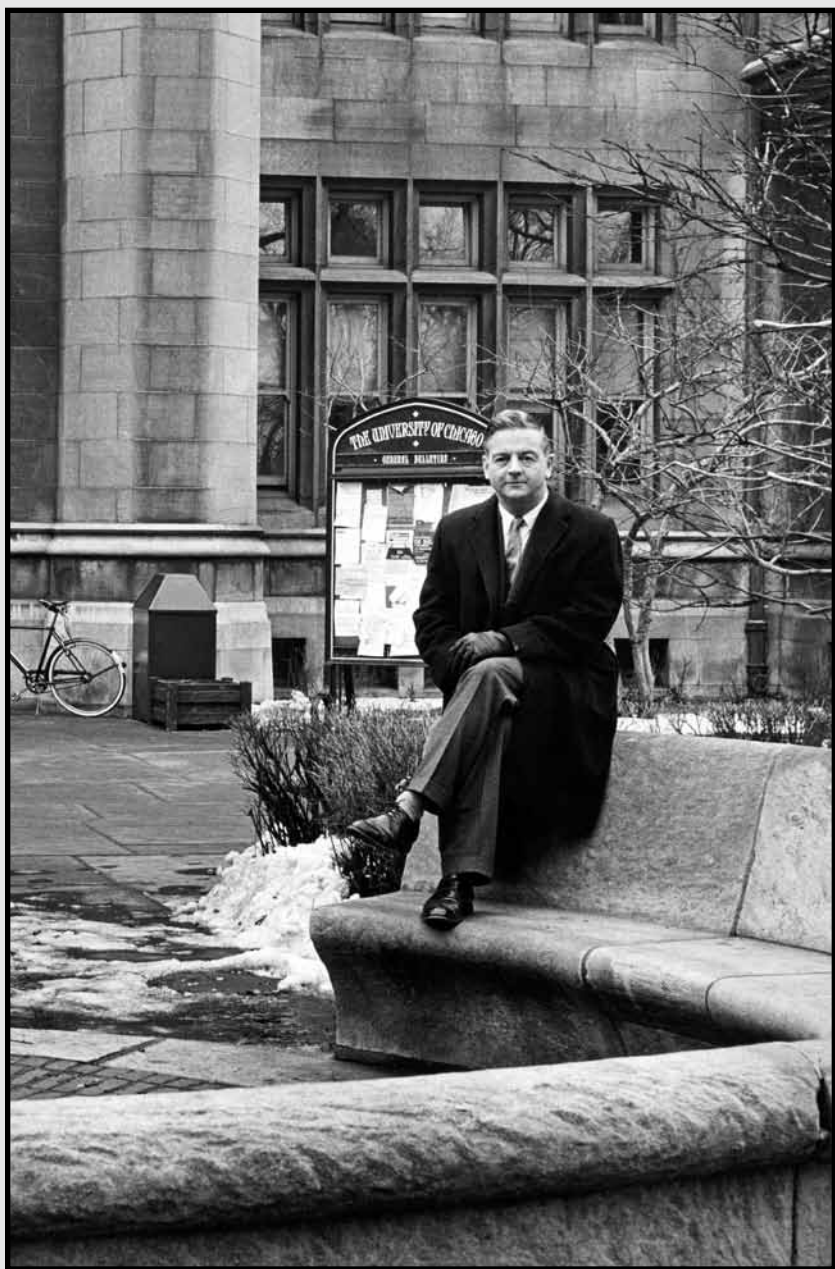


because involvement with the excitement of creative activity is valuable for students and scholars alike. A vital intellectual life involves an exchange between the practicing artist, writer or musician, and his scholarly counterpart. Particularly on the undergraduate level we need such excitement and ferment.” Simpson thus believed that a new building would be more than mere bricks and mortar: “Plant and equipment are important not only because they facilitate the scholarly and education pursuits of the students and faculty, but also because of their effect upon morale and their influence upon the spirit and genius of the University. . . . [O]ur entering students take the first classes in dingy, dilapidated Lexington Hall, our music students are housed in a reverberating sound-box, and our theater copes with lack of space and equipment. They need — they deserve — the spiritual lift, the lift in morale, which a new building would provide.”<sup>175</sup>

Simpson’s plan generated little initial support, especially since the representatives of art and music were at odds over where to locate such a center — Art was eager to create a large center adjacent to Midway Studios on the South Campus, while Music preferred a more central location near Stagg Field, insisting that locating a center on the south campus was “too big a gamble.”<sup>176</sup> But the idea of a new arts center some-

175. Alan Simpson, “Proposal for an Arts Center,” July 26, 1960, *Kimpton Administration*, Box 48, folder 10. See also “College Development Requirements,” November 3, 1960, filed with John Callahan to H. T. Sulcer, November 1, 1960, *ibid.* Simpson’s plan was influenced by a shorter and less developed checklist that Leonard Meyer sent him in February 1960. See Meyer to Simpson, February 18, 1960, Leonard B. Meyer File, *Division of the Humanities Archive*; and Meyer to Levi, November 18, 1965, *Beadle Administration*, Box 366, folder 2.

176. Alan Simpson to Ray Brown, May 1, 1962, *Beadle Administration*, Box 365, folder 16.



*Allen Simpson, February 1964*  
*Photo by H. H. Hartman*





where soon preoccupied all interested parties in the early 1960s. In March 1963, the chairman of the Department of Art, Edward Maser, put forward a plan to create an arts center that would incorporate all of the department's studio work and the teaching and research functions of the department with space for an art library, a University art museum, and the Renaissance Society. Maser believed that this large expansion of facilities could also provide space for non-credit student art making as well, creating one large "art group" on the South Campus distributed in a complex of interconnected buildings.<sup>177</sup> Maser's ambitious scheme explicitly broke with the Ryerson rule that the University should not develop its own permanent art museum. Maser had played a leading and successful role in establishing an art museum on the campus of the University of Kansas during his service there from 1953 to 1960.<sup>178</sup> Maser would continue to lobby for the incorporation of an art gallery in planning for an art building that occurred in the later 1960s. It was largely owing to Maser's advocacy and enthusiasm that the University came to create the Smart Gallery in 1971–73.<sup>179</sup>

Plans for a new art building became all the more relevant when the University decided to launch a new development campaign in the mid-1960s. As I explained in my essay on housing last year, in July 1964

177. Maser to Beadle, March 24, 1963, as well as "Problems Related to Current Development of the Midway Studios Area for the Department of Art and some Future Possibilities," *Beadle Administration*, Box 365, folder 16.

178. Murphy to Napier Wilt, August 15, 1960, Edward A. Maser File, *Division of the Humanities Archive*.

179. In 1961, Maser called for the creation of "a space to house a permanent art collection which it feels sure it can gather together from among the many art collectors in the region." Maser to Leonard Meyer, November 17, 1961, Edward A. Maser File, *Division of the Humanities Archive*.

Edward Levi appointed a major faculty committee chaired by Walter J. Blum to develop a comprehensive plan for new student housing on campus as part of this campaign, and over the course of their deliberations Blum and his colleagues came to believe that it was crucial to include a center for the arts in the Student Village plan, arguing in November 1965, "The Arts Center would give an enormous lift to the development of the new area and prevent it from becoming predominantly a dormitory region."<sup>180</sup> When Edward Larrabee Barnes was commissioned to develop the architectural plans for the Student Village, he was charged with incorporating substantial facilities for art, as well as for theater and music.<sup>181</sup> Barnes's original design projected one large structure for the arts, with different functional areas devoted to music, art, and theater. This led to opposition from the art historians, who in June 1966 demanded their own building. On behalf of his department, Francis Dowley wrote that to put Art History in a building adjoining music and theater would downgrade the reputation and future scholarly prestige of Art History: "[T]he nature of the arts are too disparate to allow efficient use of the same facilities. Art and music could not, for example, use the same library or reading rooms." Dowley was especially negative about sharing a building with a theater: "For our art department to be transferred to a multi-purpose building, where, far from having its own building, it would not even be the major occupant, the effect would be very damaging to our prestige. To share half

180. Blum to Levi, November 16, 1965, *Levi Administration*, Box 69, folder 2; and "Supplementary Report of the Faculty Advisory Committee on Student Residences and Facilities, December 15, 1965," pp. 15–16 ("The full-blown but undeveloped idea of the Committee is that it would be a great advance if means were uncovered for founding a University Arts Center and if that Center were located in the New Area."), *Walter J. Blum Papers*, Box 16, folder 5.

181. "A New Concept in Academic Environment: The North Quadrangle," *The University of Chicago Magazine*, November 1967, pp. 2–9.



of a building with an extra-curricular activity in the form of two theaters would give the impression generally to other art departments, to museums and prospective students that Chicago's art department was being downgraded in importance. . . . [O]ur subordination in prominence and in area to music on the one hand, and our adjacency to a place of entertainment on the other, would be very detrimental to the reputation and morale of our graduate school."<sup>182</sup>

The staunchly conservative démarche of Dowley and his colleagues led to a significant revision in the Barnes scheme, with the upshot that the Art Department not only ended up with its own classroom and office building, but also with a professional art gallery connected by a courtyard. Breaking with the traditions of the past—as late as 1943 Vice President Emery Filbey had confidently asserted that “the University of Chicago would not be disposed to provide a building for use as an art museum. . . . We have a close working relationships with the Art Institute, and our students use the collections there to very good advantage”—the art historians now believed that the University needed a major art gallery along with office and teaching spaces.<sup>183</sup>

Planning continued on several different tracks for the arts center, and Edward Levi was able to generate two major gifts of \$1 million each for the art buildings—a gift from the Smart Family Foundation in October 1967 for an art gallery and a similar gift from the Woods Charitable Fund in January 1968 for a building for the art history

182. Dowley to Streeter, June 20, 1966, *Beadle Administration*, Box 366. Folder 2; as well as Walter Blum and Jerry Frese to Edward L. Barnes, June 16, 1966, *Levi Administration*, Box 69, folder 2.

183. Filbey to T. S. Miller, October 30, 1943, *Hutchins Administration*, Box 19, folder 2.

faculty.<sup>184</sup> Unfortunately, no gifts could be raised for the music or theater components of the original Barnes scheme. For as long as possible, Levi tried to keep the project uniform and holistic, but by August 1970 University planners made it clear that the only plausible component that could be built was the art history section. Levi agreed, but insisted, “[W]e must plan the entire complex, the gallery and all the other elements, completely. If we should proceed in building a first phase, it would only be on the basis that the University commits itself within a finite number of years to completing the whole building. By ‘phasing’ all that is meant is that we are starting off on part, but making an ironclad agreement to complete [the rest].” On the basis of these happy, and clearly over-optimistic assumptions, Levi gave the green light to move forward with the art history buildings in September 1970.<sup>185</sup>

When the University broke ground for the Cochrane-Woods Art Center and the David and Alfred Smart Gallery in October 1971, a reception was held to celebrate the event. Edward Levi told the gathering that he was satisfied with the modest and simple nature of the buildings, which were intended, as Levi put it, “to display rather than to distract from the works exhibited.” Levi was especially proud that the University as a “perverse” place had found a way to create an art building at a time of deep financial constraints, 67 years after Frank Tarbell had first suggested the idea of such a structure.

184. The grant was engineered by Frank H. Woods, who was president of the Sahara Coal Company, a Trustee of the University, and the chairman of the board of the Art Institute of Chicago.

185. Memorandum of the Minutes of a Planning Meeting on September 23, 1970, *Physical Planning and Construction Records*, Box 33. A detailed chronology of the decision-making process between 1966 and 1970 may be found in the memorandum on the “Cochrane Woods Art Center,” October 9, 1970, *Physical Planning and Construction Records*, Box 30.

This is a perverse university. One could say there are many reasons not to begin the creation of an art building and an art gallery today. The financial difficulties of the private universities are well known. We need no new warnings of the financial cost of galleries . . . Moreover, it is commonplace that many galleries at many universities do not contribute in any central way to teaching and research. During this period when budgets are being reduced, and projects everywhere being prodded to have immediately practical results, in terms of the goals set forth in the latest opinion poll, endeavors quaintly termed cultural are frequently the first targets for elimination. There are undoubtedly, many reasons for extending the 67 year delay into the indefinite and uncertain future. And yet, in a way which I think is characteristic of our University in its endeavor to be true to itself, we have determined to go ahead.<sup>186</sup>

Although Edward Maser played a leadership role in the founding and early evolution of the Smart Gallery, in its early days the gallery was deeply associated with Edward Levi's enthusiastic support. Maser observed tongue in cheek that "right now, to put it bluntly, the University of Chicago art gallery still means Mr. Levi."<sup>187</sup> The gallery provided 7,000 square feet of space for the permanent collection and for visiting exhibitions. Maser saw the gallery as a teaching facility, whose major function was to support the instructional activities of the Department of Art. Maser insisted that he was not wedded to obtaining "museum

186. *The Cochrane-Woods Art Center. The David and Alfred Smart Gallery. Groundbreaking October 29, 1971* (Chicago, 1971), p. 15.

187. Maser to Michael Claffey, August 14, 1973, *Levi Administration*, Box 33, folder 4.

quality” paintings and other works of art, since he believed that even damaged or less interesting examples could teach students important issues about critical evaluation and connoisseurship.<sup>188</sup> Having polled the Art faculty in 1969, Maser reported, “[E]veryone felt that no work of lesser quality but of historic or iconographic interests should never be rejected out of hand. For the didactic value of such works could very well exceed in actual value in teaching the evaluation of more fashionable, and therefore more expensive, works.”<sup>189</sup> By 1974, however, Maser had extended his criterion of judgment about possible acquisitions to those that “would be of interest to the general public” as well.<sup>190</sup>

The Smart Gallery received an immediate boost in creating a permanent collection when the Samuel H. Kress Foundation agreed to donate 22 works of European art from 1500 to 1800 worth approximately \$416,000 in 1972 dollars. Edward Maser had served as a consultant to the Kress Foundation between 1963 and 1972 and was able to leverage his contacts into this remarkable gift, which had hung in the New York offices of the foundation as high-level decorative art. The University solicited two outside commentaries on the collection, one by Everett Fahy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, who urged that the University accept the gift, the other by Daniel Catton Rich, the former director of the Art Institute of Chicago (and an undergraduate alumnus of the University), who strongly opposed it on the grounds that the collection was the dregs of the Kress Foundation’s corporate offices

188. Maser to Mrs. Robert Mayer, April 23, 1973, *Levi Administration*, Box 33, folder 4.

189. “Desiderata for the University Art Collections suggested by the Faculty of the Department of Art,” *Levi Administration*, Box 33, folder 4.

190. Maser to the Visiting Committee of the Department of Art, December 5, 1974, *Levi Administration*, Box 34, folder 12.



and essentially “of little use as objects for your students to study and no value to the public for exhibition.”<sup>191</sup> Maser disputed Rich’s judgment on functional and quality grounds, and could not resist suggesting that a certain *Schadenfreude* was also at work: “Perhaps the fact that Mr. Rich, in both of his previous museum positions, never succeeded in getting anything from the Kress Foundation, although it is known that like all American museum directors, he tried to do so, may have colored his attitude toward the proposed gift to the University of Chicago.”<sup>192</sup> To break the tie, the University then consulted Professor H. W. Janson of New York University, who supported Fahy’s opinion and urged that the paintings be accepted. The Kress collection generated immediate controversy in its wake. Its acceptance enraged Katherine Kuh, the legendary former curator of modern art at the Art Institute of Chicago, who was not only a passionate advocate of 20th-century art but who had also had a long romantic affair with Daniel Catton Rich, leading her to repudiate a verbal commitment that she had previously made to Edward Levi to give her collection of modern art to the University.<sup>193</sup> This transaction, modest if fascinating in itself, illustrated the opportunities and the perils of the University becoming an art collector and finding itself swept up

191. Rich to Claffey, May 24, 1972, *Levi Administration*, Box 33, folder 6.

192. Maser to Scranton, June 22, 1972, *Levi Administration*, Box 33, folder 6.

193. Edward Levi wrote on May 31, 1972, to Michael Claffey, “The handling [of the controversy over the Kress gift] means handling Katherine Kuh and living with the results, or not getting the Kress and living with the results.” In a later memo from Levi to Edward Maser from September 6, 1973, Levi refers to the fact that “there is no doubt that Katherine Kuh was very upset by the Kress deal,” and he then makes an allusion to the fact that because the University accepted the Kress gift, Kuh might decide not to give her art collection to the Smart Gallery. Levi to Claffey, May 31, 1962, and Levi to Maser, September 6, 1973, *Levi Administration*, Box 33, folder 6.

in the emotional entanglements that have often accompanied elite-level patronage of art acquisition.

Over the next four decades, the Smart Gallery (renamed the Smart Museum in 1990) became an essential part of the University's program in art history, and its permanent collections have matured and deepened. Today, the Smart is one of the leading university art museums in the United States. Under Directors Teri Edelstein, Kimerly Rorschach, and Anthony Hirschel, the Smart also launched innovative curatorial and docent opportunities for advanced graduate students, valuable internships for College students, and successful public outreach programs for teachers and students in public and private schools and for adults interested in the visual arts. Its greatest public successes came, however, with its imaginative programs of annual visiting exhibitions developed on thematic lines with a strong scholarly focus. These exhibitions, often created with the assistance of Chicago faculty and almost all of them of consistently high quality, have given the museum a strong and attractive profile in the Chicago arts community, just as they have contributed to the public understanding of visual objects in a robust scholarly environment. Gradually, the museum also increased its membership levels and developed robust corporate and private philanthropic connections. Over the last 20 years it has become a very valuable cultural facility not only for the University and for the Hyde Park community, but for the city of Chicago as well. But the museum's central function remains that of a significant and vital resource for the teaching and study of art in our curriculum, both on the undergraduate and graduate levels. Only by fostering a close and cooperative partnership with the Department of Art History and the Department of Visual Arts, and with faculty from other departments interested in the visual arts has the Smart Museum succeeded in fulfilling both its original charter and the high hopes that Edward Levi held for the gallery at its inception.





Ironically, the Department of Art's relationships with the Smart Gallery proved more congenial than its relations with Midway Studios. Although the new Cochrane-Woods Art Center now had a professional art gallery, no provision was made for student practice of visual arts. As was the case before World War II, the department continued to offer courses in the practice of art, and it located these courses either at Lorado Taft's Midway Studios, which the University had acquired in the mid-1940s, or in Lexington Hall. In the reconstruction of Cobb Hall that occurred in the early 1960s, a gallery named in honor of Lindy and Edwin Bergman, had been created on the fourth floor that was intended "to bring art to undergraduate life." This gallery held several exhibitions of student work each year and provided additional studio space for courses in design, but it also provided space for what was called at the time "non-structured creative activity by the students."<sup>194</sup> However, in 1980 the Bergman Gallery was eliminated as a site of student art work and art making, and given over to the Renaissance Society, with all studio work transferred to Midway Studios.

In the quality of physical facilities, Midway Studios left much to be desired. The Women's Board had raised \$200,000 toward its renovation in the late 1960s, but the age of the building and its heavy use made this little more than a drop in the bucket. As Herbert Kessler described it in the mid-1970s, "[T]he Midway Studios remain dilapidated. In part this is because the structure has not received regular maintenance. The roof leaks, the walls are filthy; the heating system does not function properly. There are other problems too. The wiring and lighting have never been sufficient for studio use; there are no provisions for slide projection; there is no

194. "The Components of the Department of Art," November 1972, *Levi Administration*, Box 33, folder 3.

darkroom, etc. Most serious of all — the Studio is unsafe! It is intolerable that in rooms where students work with noxious chemicals and create all manner of air pollution there is no mechanical ventilation.”<sup>195</sup> Two decades later, little progress had been made, as was evident in the forlorn plea of the director of Midway Studios in 1994: “Last week a piece of the ceiling fell on a table filled with food for a reception. The skylights, now at least forty years old, have darkened so much that Herbert [George] can no longer rely on daylight for his Modeling the Figure classes. We have appealed to Lynn Bender to replace the two in the undergraduate sculpture studio, but there are 20 or so more each in a similarly sad state. In 1984 there was a budget to replace them. But then the roof failed and its replacement consumed all those monies.”<sup>196</sup>

Over the course of the 1950s and 1960s, clear tensions within and between the department and the studios were evident, with some of the feuding involving conflicting personalities as well as rival pedagogical interests and priorities.<sup>197</sup> Until the mid-1970s, the department thus had

195. Annual Report of the Department of Art, 1974–75,” *Levi Administration*, Box 33, folder 1.

196. Tom Mapp to Philip Gossett, June 2, 1994, *Division of the Humanities Archive*.

197. Edward Maser encountered these intramural tensions when he arrived from the University of Kansas in the fall of 1961. He reported to the dean of the Humanities, Robert Streeter, in early 1964, “[O]n the debit side I can only say with great regret that I have been unable, in spite of my intense collaboration with the College, to do very much toward healing the twenty-odd year breach between the Department and the art staff in College Humanities. Although many people have said the results of my efforts in the Department were nothing short of miraculous, I feel that they are not, for through effort they have been achieved, and miracles are something impossible to achieve which nevertheless happen. So, in the case of the College, I think that nothing short of a miracle will solve its troubles with the Department. The same is true for the internal dissensions within the Department. Since they have lasted for so long and are



responsibility for supervising all of the activities in Midway Studios, and a nucleus of dedicated teachers (Harold Haydon, Ruth Duckworth, Vera Klement, and Virginio Ferrari among them) managed the Midway programs. But these colleagues often had little to do with the broader intellectual life of the Humanities and had little intellectual contact with the art historians. As Herbert Kessler put it in June 1975, the art historians in the department found themselves having to “judge the professional qualifications of people whose credentials are different from normal academic ones,” which for Kessler raised the follow-up challenge of having “to weigh teaching very heavily while — at the same time — defining what constitutes good studio teaching; and we will have to face the decision of how committed we are to first-rate studio operation.”<sup>198</sup>

The department chair in the mid-1950s, Ludwig Bachhofer, seemed comfortable with this dual mission of the department to support the studio arts as well as the study of art history, insisting, “We are making every effort to point up these programs and to attract attention to them. . . . [T]he Practice section of the Department is as old as the Department itself.”<sup>199</sup> Yet tensions emerged along various fracture lines, and it might well be argued that the strongly scholarly vector that the German émigrés brought to Chicago weakened the capacity of the department to sustain a deep interest in artistic practice alongside its professional com-

so interwoven into the fabric of the Department, nothing short of a miracle will ever solve them either. I have not then, performed miracles.” Maser to Streeter, February 11, 1964, Edward A. Maser File, *Division of the Humanities Archive*.

198. See the Annual Report of the Department of Art, 1974–75, *Levi Administration*, Box 33, folder 2.

199. Bachhofer to Napier Wilt, February 3, 1956, *Kimpton Administration*, Box 27, folder 4.

mitment to a scientific *Kunstgeschichte*.<sup>200</sup> Trends toward high formalism in the study of art history, and a corresponding neglect of the materiality of artistic practice did not go unnoticed by faculty who stood outside the arts. The distinguished historian (and College alumnus) William H. McNeill, who admired the studio programs at the Midway Studios, commented in 1971, “Generally, it seems to me that the humanities disciplines face a real crisis inasmuch as the philological and historical techniques for approaching a work of art which were the pride of 19th century scholarship are in danger of running out of really first rank objects of analysis; and the effort to escape triviality by developing philosophical-aesthetic standards of judgment have met with at best equivocal success — tending to turn every discipline into applied philosophy. In this dilemma to infuse a few more practicing artists into our ranks seems to me a promising way to escaping sterility and the danger of turning the study of the humanities into mere word chopping.”<sup>201</sup>

One cluster of issues involved the allocation of resources to for-credit practical courses sponsored by the department, as opposed to providing students with access to studios to make art for pleasure and inspiration outside the realm of formal academic instruction. Another and much more serious line of tension involved the actual quality of the art-making that went on in the for-credit courses sponsored by Midway Studios. Joshua Taylor, for example, was a harsh critic of the practices of

200. Erwin Panofsky alludes to the greater distance between art scholarship and art making in German as opposed to American universities in “The History of Art,” in W. Rex Crawford, ed., *The Cultural Migration. The European Scholar in America* (Philadelphia, 1953), pp. 91–92. I am grateful to David Nirenberg for this reference.

201. William H. McNeill to Robert L. Scranton, November 20, 1971, Box 37, *College Archive*.



Midway Studios under Harold Haydon's leadership, which he felt were far below the academic standards of the University more generally. To Edward Levi he complained in 1969 of the "embarrassing program" in studio art and insisted that "the program of the studio has not improved even though now, as then, the studio faculty includes two or three good people. A look at the BA projects exhibited at the end of the year in June would be enough to confirm this fact." Nor in Taylor's mind was the MFA program any better: "Although the MFA students are trained before they arrive, in general their work reflects little that might be gained from contact with a university community, and I am told by colleagues at the Art Institute that it is still easier for some to be admitted to our MFA programs than to enter the BFA program at the Institute school."<sup>202</sup> Such comments naturally grated on the emotions and self-respect of the artists who taught at Midway Studios, many of whom were prominent in their fields and who believed that their dedication to student art-making in the College was underappreciated and even ignored by the department. The chair of Art History, Robert Scranton, admitted in 1973 that it would be good to bring the department and the studios "into a more meaningful relation. . . . The problem here is partly the physical distance between the two establishments, which is irrevocable, and the attitudes of existing faculty, who are too concentratedly immersed in their own interests."<sup>203</sup> The newly established Visiting Committee to the Department of Art also commented on this problem, noting, "Our committee questions the status of and relationship between Art History and the Studios. The Studios seem to be weak and require a great deal of strengthening in a number of areas." The committee then proposed, "[C]onsidering the

202. Taylor to Levi, November 15, 1969, *Levi Administration*, Box 33, folder 1.

203. Scranton to Streeter, July 6, 1973, *Levi Administration*, Box 33, folder 1.

near-by existence and availability of the School of the Art Institute with its varied course offerings, the Committee wonders if the focus of the Studios should be shifted to that of a service to the Art Department.”<sup>204</sup> This refrain, which recalls the original ambivalence of Martin Ryerson toward the University’s engaging too deeply in matters that could be better provided by the Art Institute, simply raised once again the question of what kinds of studio art are appropriate in a university academic setting, made more acute by severe budgetary pressures.

In July 1974, a faculty committee chaired by Ted Cohen and including John Cawelti, Neil Harris, and Kostas Kazazis recommended that Midway Studios be separated from the Department of Art and be given its own administrative and leadership structure. The committee concluded, “Neither the studio nor the rest of the Art Department profits from its association with the other, and each is something of a liability to the other. Neither the studio coursework nor its faculty figures essentially in the other programs of the Art Department, and the single one-quarter studio course which is part of the art history curriculum has been unsatisfactory. Studio matters are thus a needless complication in the administrative affairs of the Department. In turn, the Studios do not have the strong and interested support of an integrated department, and in the Studios the morale of both faculty and students suffers seriously from this.” Instead, the committee argued that “what is needed—in any case and especially for the programs that we envision—is to bring together those members of the University who are actively interested in the work of the Studios and to give them responsibility for the well-

204. Mrs. Robert B. Mayer, “Recommendations by the Visiting Committee to the Department of Art to the Board of Trustees of the University of Chicago,” *Levi Administration*, Box 34, folder 12.



being of the Studios.”<sup>205</sup> The Division of the Humanities implemented this recommendation in 1975 with the serious modification that the new Committee on Art and Design, whose faculty would run Midway Studios, would remain a “semi-autonomous subsection” of the Art Department, with the chair of the department serving as the chair of the committee. Tom Mapp was then hired as the first director of the semi-independent Midway Studios. Mapp presided over a successful expansion of the studio arts as a significant component of the visual arts curriculum within the College’s general education program. Over time, the Committee on Art and Design evolved into the Committee on Visual Arts in 1996, and in 2006 the committee was given departmental status.

## II MUSIC AFTER 1945 II

If the colleagues in Art History finally received appropriate facilities to support their scholarly and teaching efforts, those in Music did not. The situation of Music on the eve of World War II was paradoxical: the faculty had generated substantial interest in music on the campus, but voices of criticism were also apparent. In April 1940, one graduating senior wrote to Hutchins, complaining, “If you are having a music department, and have enrolled students, then this department should be as well equipped as any other. The fact that one instructor has a year’s leave of absence should not leave the students stranded. This is enrolling students under false pretenses. I have often felt the need of presenting to you the situation in the music department, and this event

205. Report of the Committee on Midway Studios, July 1, 1974, *Levi Administration*, Box 33, folder 3.

convinces me. Who is the head of the department? Nobody seems to know. How can students be expected to obtain the maximum results of learning when there is nobody who actually outlines the plan of the department, much less organizes the individual courses?" Hutchins lamely responded that "difficult financial circumstances" handicapped the work of the department, but it was clear that Music had a rather circumscribed claim on additional University resources, beyond the limited patronage of the Swifts.<sup>206</sup>

In early 1944, Cecil Smith put forward a bold proposal to divide music into two domains, a department that would undertake research and for-credit teaching, and an institute of music that would sponsor a range of practical training and performance opportunities.<sup>207</sup> The institute was to be chaired by Remi Gassmann and include distinguished artists like Jascha Heifetz, Arthur Rubinstein, and Gregor Piatigorsky. This plan was driven in part because of the curricular change in 1942 that eliminated the departments from any serious role in undergraduate education and gave total control of the baccalaureate degree to the new all-general-education College, but also because Smith believed that "fragmentary, helter-skelter kind of music teaching has not produced good musicians in America, either in the practical field or in the academic." It was of critical importance to the future of the Department of Music that Smith's plans never succeeded and that the department kept control of both scholarly activities and a full range of musical practice.

206. Jane Blumenthal to Hutchins and Hutchins to Blumenthal, April 30, 1940, *Hutchins Administration*, Box 149, folder 6.

207. "Proposals for the Development of Music at the University of Chicago," Smith to Hutchins, February 29, 1944, *Hutchins Administration*, Box 149, folder 6.





Cecil Smith was forced out of the University in June 1946.<sup>208</sup> But remaining colleagues in Music continued to affirm Bricken's notion that the department needed to be active on both the scholarly and performative fronts, and that experience in musical performance had to be an integral part of the training of the musicologists at Chicago. Several years were lost in searches for a new department chair, which gave rise to ruminations about the future of the department.<sup>209</sup> In 1946, Robert Hutchins entertained Arnold Schoenberg at his house as part of a lecture visit to campus sponsored by the Committee on Social Thought and obtained from Schoenberg a rambling exposition of what the ideal music department would look like.<sup>210</sup> In 1949, the department nominated the Swiss composer and pianist Ernst Levy as its chair, but the recommendation was rejected by then Dean of the Humanities Thorkild Jacobsen, who viewed Levy as insufficiently research oriented for a full professorial appointment. Instead, Levy was offered a part-time untenured appointment, which he refused to consider. In a long, thoughtful letter to Robert Hutchins explaining his thoughts about the future of the department, Levy posed the question: "What is the particular

208. Smith had been arrested on a vice charge in December 1944, for which he was later acquitted in court. At the time, Smith was warned that if another public incident occurred, he would be dismissed. When Smith was arrested again in May 1946, the University terminated his contract. See Colwell to McKeon, June 7, 1946 ("It is our judgment that we simply cannot support on our faculty any member who provides publicity of this sort to the degree that Mr. Smith has done."), *Hutchins Administration*, Box 149, folder 7.

209. "Participation in musical performance should be an integral part of the training of the musician. The University attempts to provide opportunities for such participation." Scott Goldthwaite, "Music Department Report, December 17, 1947," *Hutchins Administration*, Box 149, folder 7.

210. Schoenberg to Hutchins, June 2, 1946, *Hutchins Administration*, Box 149, folder 7.

task of the music department of a university as against that of a conservatory?" He then answered by insisting that the "the conflict between music as an activity ("musicus 'musicans', musicus poeta") and music as an object of study ("musicus philosophus") goes back to antiquity." Beginning in the late 18th century, conservatories emerged and the study of music was gradually abandoned in the universities until the late 19th century, when history of music and other *Musikwissenschaften* again came to have institutional anchorage in the universities. Levy insisted that American universities had

a wonderful opportunity to form a type of musician-philosopher who will have to play an important role in the future. Seizing on that opportunity, it should first of all be recognized that "research" cannot mean only "historical-critical" research, but must also include aesthetic research on the basis of artistic creation. . . . Eventually, if your reorganization plans are realized, the universities might take over the conservatories in some sort of decentralized set up, the more so as it seems probable that the demand for the type of musician produced by the conservatory might decrease in the future. . . . Besides, the musical life is undergoing a profound, while slow transformation, which will benefit the music departments rather than the conservatories.

Levy was optimistic about the future of music at Chicago, but only if the department found "its definite and right place in the spiritual geography" of the University, as opposed to the "vacuum" in which the department found itself stranded.<sup>211</sup>

211. Levy to Hutchins, September 14, 1949, *Hutchins Administration*, Box 149, folder 7. Levy eventually agreed to return to Chicago to teach, where he remained in an untenured position from 1951 to 1954, when he left for MIT.



Over the course of the 1950s, the department not only stabilized its institutional position, but it became more prominent and more scholarly. Two faculty appointments were critical to this process of moving the department out of Ernst Levy's "vacuum" and giving it a strong institutional role within the intellectual geography of the University. The first was that of Grosvenor Cooper, who was originally hired in 1947 by the College to teach in the Humanities Core and who received a faculty appointment in Music only in 1952. Trained in classical literature and philosophy as well as music, Cooper was an important leader in the early history of the Committee on General Studies in the Humanities and a loyal participant in the famous interdisciplinary Core course in art, music, and literature that was launched in 1953. His colleagues not only found Cooper to be a brilliant teacher, but also someone who successfully combined a serious engagement with his scholarly specialization with, in Ned Rosenheim's words, the role of "the very finest kind of 'general educator'."<sup>212</sup> Not only did Cooper chair the Humanities I sequence, but he also served as the chair of the Department of Music from 1952 to 1961. In 1968, he left Chicago for the University of California at Santa Cruz.

Levy was particularly critical of Jacobsen's apparent narrowness in acknowledging the full range of what, in Levy's mind, a department of music should encompass: "Mr. Jacobsen is, as you said, a very honest man. But his very honest views are as remote as possible from yours and mine. His ideal is the Nineteenth Century German University. I have the impression that even a musician-philosopher is too much for him. He does emphasize, on the one hand, the importance of the Humanities, but on the other hand he is not willing to carry out the responsibilities that importance entails. His views, I am afraid, will lead to the plastering-up of the few small holes in the ivory tower that with infinite pains are being opened up or have been opened up so far." Levy to Hutchins, February 22, 1950, *ibid.*

212. Tenure evaluation of Grosvenor Cooper by Edward Rosenheim, October 30, 1951, *College Archive*, Box 29.

The second crucial appointment was that of Leonard Meyer as an instructor in Music in the division and the College in May 1946. In one of his last acts as executive secretary, Cecil Smith had recommended Meyer to Richard McKeon, who interviewed him in New York and found him to be a promising young scholar.<sup>213</sup> Trained in philosophy and musicology at Columbia University, Meyer began teaching in the College in 1946 while also studying for a PhD in the history of culture from Chicago, which he received in 1954. Meyer emerged in the late 1950s as a major scholar of musical theory, using psychology and philosophy to develop an account of how listeners' expectancies define and shape their perception of music. His *Emotion and Meaning in Music* was an important contribution to musical aesthetics at the time and won praise from Winthrop Sargeant, who argued, "The vast importance of Mr. Meyer's book, to my mind, is that it explains for the first time, and in a thoroughgoing and precise way, just how music is related to human experience. To the critic it offers tools of increased variety and sharpness, to the composer a badly needed clear statement of his purposes, and to the listener an explanation of why music affects him as it does. It will, I think, do a great deal toward silencing the sophomoric prattle of the formalists—including the atonalists—who for a long time have been mistaking the calligraphy of music for its substance. Mr. Meyer, using, among other things, the resources of modern psychology, has succeeded where many a famous predecessor has failed, and as a result the realm of thinking about music will, I feel, never be quite the same again."<sup>214</sup>

213. "I was impressed by the broad acquaintance he has with literature, history, and philosophy, as well as by the way he talks about music and the teaching of music in a University. . . . [H]e seems to me a promising young man who may develop into a scholar in a field in which we shall need new insights and analyses." McKeon to Colwell, May 20, 1946, *Hutchins Administration*, Box 292, folder 6.

214. *The New Yorker*, January 5, 1957, p. 65.



*Leonard Meyer, 1958*  
*Lee Balterman Photography*

Leonard Meyer also had strong leadership and organizational abilities, and even as a junior faculty member he exerted considerable influence in the department's affairs. It was owing in part to Meyer's initiative, for example, that Cooper was given a departmental appointment and made chairman in 1952.<sup>215</sup> During Meyer's service as chair of the Department of Music, which extended from 1960 to 1970, the modern department was built with the appointments of a number of highly distinguished scholars, including Howard Mayer Brown, Edward Lowinsky, Robert Marshall, Philip Gossett, and others. Further, the appointment of Ralph Shapey in 1964, together with the earlier appointment of Easley Blackwood in 1957, gave Music a formidable compositional wing as well. A fundraising document from the 1970s rightly characterized Leonard Meyer's role as being "the chief architect of the Department's present eminence."<sup>216</sup>

Meyer was also a successful fundraiser, visiting New York foundations and potential private donors in search of support for music as well as for a theater building.<sup>217</sup> His fundraising activities did not come naturally to him, however, and Meyer complained to a University development officer, "I have been able to raise a certain amount of funds for the Department. However, I confess that I find this a difficult and somewhat distasteful task. It seems so partly because it involves mixing one's social and professional activities."<sup>218</sup>

215. Minutes of the Music Department, April 9, 1952, *Archive of the Department of Music*.

216. *General Archival Files*, "Music and Music Department," Box 3.

217. "Prospect Interview Report," July 16, 1964, *Beadle Administration*, Box 346, folder 6.

218. Meyer to O'Brien, October 4, 1966, *Beadle Administration*, Box 220, folder 14.

Leonard Meyer believed that the Department of Music should be committed not only to the scholarly study of music, but also to providing training in musicology to undergraduates and, equally important, to supporting a range of musical activities and performances on campus for the general student body and for the larger University community. This third function was of critical importance in the mission of the department, since it meant that it viewed itself as having strong outreach capabilities and responsibilities in encouraging students both to make music and to enjoy music.<sup>219</sup>

But the most serious problem facing Music after 1950 was its deeply inadequate physical facilities. Lexington Hall at 5831 South University Avenue was constructed in 1903 as a temporary facility for women, and it was not intended to last for long. Unfortunately, it did become a fixture on campus, unloved and much abused, for all manner of activities, including Humanities I, Music, Art, and for a time general College instruction. Music also occupied the former house of the dean of the chapel, an old building on Woodlawn Avenue without soundproofing whose roof leaked and that was too cold in the winter and too hot in the summer. This house, not only drafty but also noisy, was not without a kind of bohemian charm, but it was utterly inadequate for a modern department, especially one that valued acoustics. The department thus had no real rehearsal or practice rooms for its students or faculty. This led to almost comic situations, as happened in June 1963 when women students who were residents of the Woodward Court dormitory complained that someone was playing the piano in the Music Building on the corner of 58th and Woodlawn very loudly all night until 5 a.m. and that this was disturbing their sleep. The faculty member who played the

219. Interview with Peter Rabinowitz, *Chicago Maroon*, October 18, 1962, p. 5.

piano was outraged that the University would try to curb his artistic license, and told the housing staff that, for all he cared, they could call the police on him and get a court injunction if they wanted to.<sup>220</sup>

By default, Mandel Hall became a venerable site for all manner of musical performances, but over time that building too showed signs of severe wear and tear. By the 1960s, Mandel was regularly hosting three main stage University Theater productions each year, all of the traveling musical and dramatic shows that came to campus, the annual Folk Music Festival that began in 1961, annual performances of Gilbert and Sullivan operas, performances by Blackfriars, performances by various student dance and music groups (such as the Contemporary Chamber Players), and in the summer the hall also served as the rain date option for Court Theatre.<sup>221</sup> At the same time, the hall was also the site of film showings and faculty lectures, as well as student meetings sponsored by Student Government and scholarly symposia.

The leaders of the Music Department felt that the imbalance between the scholarly reputation and distinction of the department and the abysmal quarters it occupied was outrageous, and memo after memo argued this point. This situation was all the more frustrating, since Music embraced theory, practice, and performance, and all of its pleas during the 1950s and 1960s for better space were framed by the need to provide more opportunities for musical performance and training for students working both inside and outside of the formal curriculum. In 1957, Grosvenor Cooper prepared a long memo for Dean of the Humanities Napier Wilt on the role of the Music Department beyond its own territorial jurisdictions:

220. See the report in *Beadle Administration*, Box 220, folder 12.

221. For images of the early history of the Folk Festival, see Ronald D. Cohen and Robert Riesman, *Chicago Folk. Images of the Sixties Music Scene. The Photographs of Raeburn Flerlage* (Toronto, 2009).



We have tended to leave things wistfully at that, partly because of being small but busy, more importantly because of the general attitude on our campus toward things practical and things extra-curricular. But this extreme can be as dangerous as the other. It often leaves no place for the University's forgotten man, the seeker after the degree with the nasty name, the "terminal" A.B. In music, this means the enlightened amateur, the man who supports music, with or without the urging of his wife. Another forgotten man is the student outside the Department who wants to have to do with music in some way under the wing of those who, one would think, would provide him with the needed opportunities — meaning us. Why should this unlucky fellow be frustrated, as he is now, by having to join some evanescent student organization, or by finding that there is no place on the campus where he may regularly play scales, if that is what he wants to do? Then, there is the man who, with whatever aim, is a fairly decent musician but needs more practical training. If he is a prospective public-schoolteacher, he may legally need this training. Finally, all music students, no matter how well trained they may be as practical musicians, need the stimulation of a particular musical atmosphere which cannot be found just anywhere, but which is peculiar to universities. I go further and say that the University should provide such an atmosphere for the whole community in which it finds itself. And the main sources of this should properly be under the control of the Division, rather than in the hands of the students. I am not saying there should be no student musical organizations, nor (God forbid!) am I trying to take the Choir away from Rockefeller Chapel; I am simply saying that we should

have something under one control beyond the University Concerts, that it should be known that we do, and that the aim of what we have should be obviously, though not blatantly, educational, that is, it should reflect what we do.<sup>222</sup>

Cooper's comments from 1957 have to be put in the context of Alan Simpson's initiative from 1960 as well — the University needed to provide more “educationally” based extracurricular artistic opportunities, some of which would be left to student autonomy and control, but other parts of which would be under the leadership and programmatic direction of the faculty.

In the 1960s, the department aggressively celebrated its commitment to the performance of music, as well as to scholarly study. Arguing that its mission was to combine “skilled practical musicianship with high quality scholarship and composition,” the department proudly noted that “the campus is a hub of musical activity. . . . Last year the department presented sixty-one concerts and lectures to an audience of 35,000.”<sup>223</sup> Leonard Meyer insisted, “[T]he fact that we do not offer instruction and degree programs in performance does not mean that we consider it unimportant; quite the contrary. Both our faculty and students are continually involved, directly and indirectly, in problems of performance and interpretation. . . . All students in the Department must be performers (this is tested as an entrance examination), and are required as part of their program to participate in one of the performing groups on campus. . . . The Department of Music is dedicated to

222. Cooper to Napier Wilt, August 19, 1957, *Levi Administration*, Box 140, folder 16.

223. “The Music Building. The University of Chicago,” pp. 4, 6.

creating an abundant and exciting musical life at the University — not only for its own students but for the campus community as a whole.”<sup>224</sup>

By the 1960s, the department was supporting a variety of performance groups, including the Musical Society, the Collegium Musicum (refounded by Howard M. Brown), the 57th Street Chorale, and the Rockefeller Chapel Choir. In 1964, Leonard Meyer obtained a grant of \$250,000 from the Rockefeller Foundation to create the Contemporary Chamber Players and recruited Ralph Shapey to come to Chicago as its director.<sup>225</sup> Given this level of activity in the expansive years of the mid-1960s, Meyer naturally harbored serious hopes that the department’s space needs would be met. The department seemed to come close to success in the spring of 1964 when the University Architect’s office raised the possibility that Hutchinson Commons and the Reynolds Club might be given over to the exclusive control of the Department of Music as dedicated performance and teaching spaces. The plan was to convert Hutchinson Commons into a 600-seat concert hall and remodel the Reynolds Club into a music library, 12 music studios, 25 soundproofed practice rooms, and finally a recital hall seating 300 people that would be used for rehearsals, student recitals, and classes.<sup>226</sup> Edward Levi estimated that the cost of the necessary renovations was about \$700,000, and he even wrote to the Rockefeller Foundation in April 1964 seeking support for the new “Center for Music.”<sup>227</sup>

224. Meyer to Beadle, February 14, 1964, *Beadle Administration*, Box 366, folder 2.

225. Meyer to Lloyd, June 23, 1967, *Beadle Administration*, Box 221, folder 1.

226. “A Center for Music. The University of Chicago,” 1964, *Beadle Administration*, Box 366, folder 2.

227. Levi to Gerald Freund, April 30, 1964, *Beadle Administration*, Box 346, Folder 6.

The central administration ran into heated opposition on the part of key Trustees, however, who defended the use of Hutchinson Commons as a student union (of a sort) and who adamantly opposed the plan, and the scheme's political prospects soon collapsed like a house of cards.<sup>228</sup> This turn of events enraged Leonard Meyer, who felt that the department had been jerked around, with no one making serious and realistic long-term plans.<sup>229</sup> Emotions aside, the real problem lay in the fact that the University faced huge catch-up needs in a variety of areas and had too few philanthropic resources to accomplish all of them simultaneously. Even though Dean of the Humanities Robert Streeter insisted in June 1966 that "proper facilities for the Department of Music have the highest priority among our space needs," Edward Levi's highest priority for the Humanities in 1966 was to complete the funding for a great new central library, not a music building (or a theater for that matter), for which ground would be finally broken in October 1967.<sup>230</sup>

With the Hutchinson Commons project dead, planning turned toward the Student Village project of Edward Larrabee Barnes that began to gain political steam in 1967. The Department of Music developed a plan for a \$3.5 million, three-story building that included a 900-seat concert hall, classrooms of various sizes, music practice rooms,

228. Problems also emerged with modifying the commons to meet current city fire regulations, which would "destroy the aesthetic value of their interior." "The Center for the Performing Arts," February 1966, *Levi Administration*, Box 69, folder 2.

229. "In my opinion, the University has treated the Department of Music and its Chairman in a very shabby fashion. The University, and not the Department has vacillated. The University, not the Department, has been unable to fulfill its pledges." Meyer to Levi, November 18, 1965, *Beadle Administration*, Box 366, folder 2.

230. Streeter to Levi, June 14, 1966, *Beadle Administration*, Box 366, folder 2.



faculty offices, and a library. Meyer emphasized the value of public musical performances for members of the University community and the city at large as justifying the scope of the new structure: "The new building will serve as one of the few staging areas for new music outside of New York and London. It will permit Chicagoans to hear rarely performed works from the medieval, renaissance and classical repertory as well as more popular works. It will enable the University to bring distinguished concert arts to the campus. It will open a new dimension in the cultural life of the University, the city and the nation."<sup>231</sup> The building was to be located north of the new art building along the west side of Greenwood Avenue between 55th and 56th Streets.

As late as February 1967, Leonard Meyer was confident that the University "has decided to build a completely new facility for the Department of Music."<sup>232</sup> But this too proved to be an illusion. With no ready funding sources for a new music building, Dean Robert Streeter had to give representatives of Music and Theater the bad news in early 1971, explaining that the buildings for art history and the art gallery would go forward, but that their projects remained frozen.<sup>233</sup> By the time that the Cochrane-Woods Art Center was ready to open, any realistic hope for a new music building on the same site had petered out. When Edward Larrabee Barnes suggested that the University display a model of the Student Village complex at the opening of the Smart Gallery in

231. "The Music Building. The University of Chicago," p. 12. An earlier plan called for the creation of a 600-seat concert hall and a 300-seat recital hall. See "The Center for the Living Arts," November 12, 1965, *Levi Administration*, Box 69, folder 2.

232. Meyer to Streeter, February 1, 1967, *Beadle Administration*, Box 221, folder 1.

233. Calvert W. Audrain, Note to the Files, January 14, 1971, *Physical Planning and Construction Records*, Box 33.

the autumn of 1974, he was told this would be most inappropriate since the “the Village scheme is not current,” meaning that it had for all intents and purposes been abandoned by the University.<sup>234</sup>

Eventually, the wretched condition of Lexington Hall, and particularly the inability of its roof to withstand rainstorms that regularly flooded classrooms and faculty offices, forced the issue, and when the Department of Art History abandoned Goodspeed Hall, that venerable dormitory was remodeled once again to provide offices and classrooms for Music in the early 1980s. The former reading room of the old Classics Library on the third floor of the Classics Building was converted into a 150-seat recital hall, named in honor of David and Amy Fulton. Mandel Hall was given a \$2 million restoration in the early 1980s, which improved acoustics and seating, but the need for adequate performance, training, and practice facilities has haunted the Department of Music down to the present day.

The endless search for proper facilities was grating and depressing. Leonard Meyer summarized the views of his colleagues when he insisted, “Talk has been plentiful, but thus far non-productive. Every time a lead to a potential donor is suggested there is momentary enthusiasm — and then inaction. . . . Though I sense that the Administration and the Development Office are brimming with good will toward the Music Department and even toward the plans for the Music Center, good will (to paraphrase a distinguished colleague) is not enough. I don’t want sympathy; I want action — results!”<sup>235</sup>

234. Harold M. Hellman, Note to the Files, July 13, 1974, *Physical Planning and Construction Records*, Box 33.

235. Meyer to Levi, October 26, 1964, *Beadle Administration*, Box 366, folder 2.

PART III  
THE STATE OF THE ARTS  
IN OUR TIME

B

y the early 1980s, most of the structural prerequisites and organizational preconditions for the study and practice of the arts that still define the University's investment in the arts in our time were in place. Art History had become administratively distinct from the practice of the visual arts and gained for itself a proper office and instructional building and a fine museum and art gallery. Music had come up short on new physical space in the 1970s and was forced to make do with space in Goodspeed Hall, with Fulton Hall, and with the large, but not always appropriately sized facilities of Mandel Hall. Both departments had gained international reputations and produced a host of talented PhDs and College majors, many of whom teach at leading colleges and universities across the nation. By the early 1980s, student theater had begun to flourish once again, and the University now had a fine professional repertory theater as well. One final component of the institutional armature of the arts was put in place in 1992 when the new Film Studies Center was dedicated in Cobb Hall, reflecting an enormous increase in interest in cinema and media studies on the part of our students and faculty alike. Appropriately, Susan Sontag (AB'51) spoke at the dedication, recalling the intense cultural excitement that she had experienced as a young College student on campus in the late 1940s and early 1950s.

Interviewing Nick Rudall after his appointment as director of University Theater in 1971 for the *Grey City Journal*, College senior John Del Peschio asked the following question:

I have sometimes felt, this is my fourth year here now, that the University has this conception of itself as an intellectual institution, which I think is a valid conception. But I think it also has an annoying tendency to think of the performing arts as being dangerously able to pollute the purity of the intellectual atmosphere. I don't think that's necessarily true. Do you sometimes see theater, ballet, music, opera, to a certain extent perhaps, as bastard children of the University struggling to survive in a cold — or warm, intellectual environment? Do you think that the University pays lip service to the arts?<sup>236</sup>

As a young, recently tenured faculty member, Rudall tried to respond as best he could without bringing the University powers-that-be down on his head, but it seems very likely from his guarded and circumspect answers that Rudall basically agreed with Del Peschio's analysis.

The situation has changed dramatically, and on all fronts, since 1971. The appointment of Hanna H. Gray as president of the University in 1978 signaled the beginning of the recovery of the University from the serious demographic and economic difficulties that had plagued it since the later 1940s. The Gray presidency was critical to the restoration of the academic prestige of the University and to the reconfiguring of its student body to include both a larger undergraduate College and more systematic attention to student life issues.

Over the last 30 years, we have seen a steady and substantial growth in faculty stakeholders in the arts. Not only faculty in Art and Music, but colleagues in Cinema and Media Studies, English, Comparative

236. "The Plans and Ideas of Nick Rudall, New UT Director," *Grey City Journal*, October 15, 1971, pp. 6–7.





Literature, History, Romance Languages, Germanic Studies, Gender Studies, and many other departments and committees have a deep professional and personal commitment to the study and practice of the arts. Moreover, the rediscovery of the materiality of objects, anchored in history, that has become apparent in the wake of the movements of cultural studies and the new historicism has helped to create possibilities for future partnerships and collaborations between theorists and practitioners of the arts that might have been impossible 40 or even 30 years ago.<sup>237</sup> What was once a domain of private edification has become a more central concern as our conceptions of cultural knowledge and our conceptions of the significance of cultural forms beyond the printed word have broadened.

We have also found that it is often quite salutary for the University to recruit practicing artists from the metropolitan Chicago area to teach performance and practice-oriented classes in the arts. This is a development that, in my personal view, we should continue and expand, as long as we sustain and protect our standards for high quality teaching. Not every member of every art group needs to be a tenured or even tenure-track faculty member, and I am particularly encouraged by the excellent work of our senior lecturers and full-time lecturers in the domain of the arts.

We have seen and will continue to see huge student demand for instruction in all areas of the arts. All of our courses in the various domains of the arts offer challenging and often transformative intellectual experiences for our students, and taken as a whole, the courses

237. I am grateful to Janel Mueller for sharing her views of this issue with me. See also the insightful comments of Thomas Crow, "The Practice of Art History in America," *Daedalus*, 135/2 (2006): 82–84; and Patricia Emison, *The Shaping of Art History. Meditations on a Discipline* (University Park, Pennsylvania, 2008), pp. 87–96.

offered in support of the College's Arts/Music/Drama general education requirement provide remarkably rich and rigorous introductions both to the practice of the scholarly study of the arts and to the study of an analytically informed practice of the arts. Many students come to the College with strong personal interests in music, film, theater, dance, or the visual arts, and expect to be able to continue these vocational or avocational interests in Chicago. But we also want our students to have the opportunity to expand their knowledge and to experience the arts in a much more rigorous, systematic, and intellectually demanding way than most could possibly have experienced in high school. This rich and complex blend of avocational passions generated by our students themselves and an intellectually disciplined engagement with the arts under the guidance of our faculty has been and will continue to be a hallmark of our approach to the cultural experience of the arts on our campus.

In 2009, 80 percent of College graduates took one Art, Music, or Drama (AMD) course, whereas 20 percent took two or more. Of those students who took an AMD course beyond the minimal requirement, 42 percent took them as electives under the 42-course graduation requirement, while 58 percent took them beyond the 42-course requirement. The selection of AMD courses is reasonably similar by segment: 37 percent of the students took Art History, 30 percent Music, 20 percent Theater, and 13 percent Visual Arts. For those who took two courses, the percentages are similar: 34 percent Art History, 30 percent Music, 18 percent Theater, and 18 percent Visual Arts. However, these distributions may not mirror true preference structures, since Theater and Visual Arts courses have mandatory limits, and we face a shortage of such courses. We know from failed bid patterns that there is in fact a huge demand for courses in Theater and in Visual Arts. For example, in the Spring Quarter of 2009 we had 79 students bid for the 12 places in Acting Fundamentals



and 151 students bid for the 20 places available in Drama: Embodiment/Transformation. Had we more courses in these two domains, it is very likely that the relative share of choices would increase in Theater and Visual Arts. At the same time, courses in our more traditional domains were also vastly oversubscribed. One hundred ten students sought to obtain one of the 13 places in 20th-Century Art, and 78 students sought one of 13 places in Modern Painting in Paris. One sees a similar pattern in demand for Creative Writing courses: Last year Beginning Fiction Writing had 88 applicants for 12 places, and Creative Nonfiction had 56 students apply for 12 places. In total in the Spring Quarter of 2009, 471 College students applied for only 112 places in Creative Writing courses (which also have to provide room for MAPH students and other graduate students), which means that we disappointed a huge number of students seeking such instruction. Even allowing for the obvious phenomenon of multiple bids, the gap between student interest and our available resources is astonishing. Moreover, some of our largest majors seem to recruit students who opt to take more than one Arts course—International Studies, Economics, and Mathematics.

The record of student participation in the arts outside the classroom is equally impressive. This past academic year, we had over 500 College students involved in theater, over 700 students involved in musical groups, 11 different a cappella groups, 80 filmmakers working in Fire Escape Films, and 100 students performing in dance productions. 45 percent of our students regularly attend film screenings, 40 percent musical performances, 50 percent theater performances, 30 percent poetry and other literary arts performances, etc. Perhaps most striking is the fact that current surveys of student vocational plans reveal that almost 14 percent of our College students want to have a career in the arts.

Moreover, all of our arts programs are now situated in a large metropolitan area that has seen a revolution in *its* artistic landscape over the last 40 years. To take only the example of theater: forty years ago, in 1969, Chicago had a total of 25 theater companies (commercial and not-for-profit), whereas today the city has almost 180 such theater companies. Forty years ago, Chicago had 426 members of Actors' Equity, but today the union has 1,481 members. There is also a much larger pool of talented professional actors who are not members of Equity. This growth took place over a period when the permanent residential population of the city itself declined (from 3.4 to 2.9 million people), but that of the metropolitan area increased (from 7.6 to 9.5 million) and, especially important, the number of audience members from outside of Illinois increased (as is the case with opera and symphony, a substantial number of theatergoers now come from other Great Lakes states within driving range of Chicago). Similar increases can be charted for philanthropic gifts to theaters by Chicago donors — a huge arc upwards in the last 40 years.

In contrast to the impoverished urban cultural environment that Edward Rosenheim and his colleagues deplored in the 1960s, Chicago is now seen as a premier place in the United States for all kinds of theater, and the city's rich and diverse set of resources has led to many more opportunities for students to attend theater performances and to find internships and other collaborative learning opportunities. The extraordinary flourishing of the theater community in Chicago — vastly larger and deeper than 40 years ago — has become an important asset to our drama programs in the College. For example, last year 18 of our students submitted scripts to the New Work Week festival held annually in Chicago, and our relationships with the Second City group grows stronger. Off-Off Campus, a genetic link between the University and Second City, has become a fertile and exciting training ground for new



scriptwriters. The new Logan Arts Center should provide both University Theater and Off-Off Campus more opportunities to showcase their performances to members of the Hyde Park community and to the city at large. As Heidi Coleman reports, “the College really excels as the combination of the Core with the commitment to interdisciplinary work with the investment in student ownership fuels the current student momentum. Our proximity to Chicago and current alumni network means that students literally step off the ‘L’ into collaborations. At Court [Theatre] beginning this year, the College has recent alums as the General Manager and Resident Dramaturg.”<sup>238</sup>

The result has been a happy division of labor in which Court Theatre has become a distinguished regional theater with a stunning reputation for high quality professional productions, which not only serve the Hyde Park community and the city at large and bring luster to the University, but which also provide insightful educational experiences for College students in many of our drama courses. At the same time, University Theater, in the organizational structures that Herman Sinaiko, Frank Kinahan, Bill Michel, and others put in place in the 1980s and 1990s, has recovered many of our older traditions of the authenticity and creativity of student-run dramatics. The new Logan Arts Center will give this tradition a solid grounding and establish it as the premier center for student theater activities on campus, just as it will be a magnificent site for musical education and student musical training and performance, for student art-making and arts education, for dance groups, and for the study and making of film and video productions. The Logan Arts Center will be an open, accessible place, filled with great spaces

238. Report of Heidi Coleman to John W. Boyer, August 24, 2009, in possession of the author.

and even dramatic vistas, but also encouraging a mixing together of the various arts, and a de-emphasis on formal status—a democratic building of few hierarchies.

And the cultivation of all of these arts is bound to evolve with our students' heightened interest in a variety of cultural practices. The recent creation and success of Theater and Performance Studies (TAPS) is a sign of stronger faculty leadership, but also of a different sensibility among our students. The perennial tensions throughout our history between amateur versus professional and student versus faculty have not disappeared, but they have been overtaken by the growth of the College and the ever increasing quality of our students—many more students from a large diversity of majors seeking to participate in all levels of drama—and by the emergence of a new generation of students who want *both* a sustained level of student autonomy and also access to semiprofessional training in best practices, so as to achieve ever higher levels of performance quality and aesthetic accomplishment. This new blending of ambition and possibility is remarkable, and is surely a sign not only of the self-confidence and talent of our students, but also of their desire to combine the work of the classroom with the work of the public stage.

In 1954, the student yearbook proudly touted the fact that the University offered no courses in drama and dramatics, suggesting that “dramatics has always been extracurricular” and that the University Theater “has not been a training ground for future stars, nor was it meant to be.”<sup>239</sup> It is telling that although our students today still staunchly defend the autonomy of University Theater from “professional influences,” these same students usually welcome the opportunity to work with a professional director in the staging of a play. For many of our current undergraduates this blend of

239. *Cap and Gown*, 1954, p. 116.



hybridic practice — some days staunchly amateur, other days admiring the competitive quality of professionalism — is congenial, and it may mark the beginning of a new paradigm in student theater at Chicago, and one that the new Logan Arts Center will serve very well. One sees similar trends in Cinema and Media Studies as well. It may have much to do with the ability of our students to blend democratic access with an equally strong commitment to meritocratic evaluation and tough-minded discipline, which are core values of any level of professionalism.

The experience in TAPS is paralleled by the enormous growth in our programs in Creative Writing, which blend strong classroom training and individual mentoring with exciting opportunities to engage broader audiences via University media work, campus journals, and other Chicago-based publications. Over the past decade, our Creative Writing students have registered an impressive array of professional achievements including several books, a host of magazine and journal publications, and numerous writing prizes.

Similar kinds of conjunctures are obvious in Cinema and Media Studies. The case of film is all the more remarkable because, as a domain of the arts, student activism in the study of film ran far ahead of the political willingness of the faculty to incorporate it into the formal curriculum. Harold Haydon remembered the frustrations he encountered in trying to get the study of film in the Core curriculum, complaining in 1968 that “the indifference to film is monumental. Around 1945 I managed to get one week for film into the old Humanities 1, mostly because Prokofiev was respectable and had worked with Eisenstein, but that did not survive for long.”<sup>240</sup> Haydon’s pessimism was understand-

240. Haydon to Sidney F. Huttner, October 27, 1968, *Documentary Film Group Records*, Box 2, folder 2.

able, but change came with the appointment of Gerald Mast to the faculty of the Department of English and the Committee on General Studies in the Humanities in 1978. Mast's efforts to create a serious program of film studies required years to fully blossom — as late as 1982 Mast would report on his efforts to create a modest film library and study center that "since the University of Chicago has paid little attention to film study in the past (and there is still no campus-wide audio-visual center), the present study center is both new and small enough to have escaped the attention of most members of the university community."<sup>241</sup> But since the 1940s, thousands of our students have proved remarkably adept in assembling on their own resources for the study and presentation of film, beginning with the establishment of the Documentary Film Group by a group of students living in International House in 1940. Doc Films quickly found strong support in the wider student culture and evolved into one of the most impressive university-based film societies in the United States.<sup>242</sup> Almost five decades later students involved with Doc Films created Fire Escape Films in 1998 to support student film making, and when the University finally did move decisively over the course of the 1980s and early 1990s to create the kind of film program that Gerald Mast valiantly fought for, a large student constituency was already evident, both for the study of film and for the making of film. Last year, the Film Studies Center supported 29 classes with over 300 screenings and a series of public events that have contributed to the creation of a vibrant film community on campus. Our Cinema and Media Studies program is considered one of the best film

241. Gerald Mast to Donald N. Levine and James Redfield, August 26, 1982, Gerald Mast File, *Division of the Humanities Archive*.

242. Ted Shen, "The Case History and Anatomy of a Film Group," *Grey City Journal*, January 25, 1980, and February 8, 1980.



studies programs in the country. Today, documentary filmmaking is burgeoning on campus, with students using the skills they are learning in film classes to create documentaries on a wide range of subjects as part of their senior projects. Furthermore, students have worked together to create several feature length films over the last five years — one of which was screened at the Sundance Film Festival.

Fascinating transitions have emerged in the College in the liminal zones that stand between amateur and professional, student and faculty, domestic and global, the arts for pleasure and campus community building and the arts for individual connoisseurship and highly developed scholarly sensitivity and, indeed, the liberal arts for their own sake and the liberal arts as a preparation for a vocation in the world. We may be on the cusp of a new set of understandings based on the creation of a number of new border zones that reject past conceptions of rigid demarcations between theory and practice. The extraordinary imagination and high ambition of our faculty and our students give us new and unprecedented opportunities to rethink these border zones.

This year is the 85th anniversary of President Ernest D. Burton's proposal that the University should build a center for the fine arts, and next year will be the 50th anniversary of Dean Alan Simpson's proposal for a University-wide center for all of the arts. Part of the quest that underscored those remarkable and capacious plans ended in 1974 and 1981 when the Cochrane-Woods Arts Center and Court Theatre opened, but as I have noted above, the final fulfillment of the ambitions of Burton and of Simpson has only come now, in our time, with the construction of the Logan Arts Center.

Dedicated faculty members, students, and staff sponsored a remarkably fertile and stimulating series of educational and paracurricular projects in the arts over the course of the last century. Their record was

marked by frustrations and disappointments, but also by heroic interventions and remarkable results that often hinged on the stubbornness, resilience, and courage of a very small number of faculty leaders. Remember, for example, the extraordinary impact of Nick Rudall in creating a professional Court Theatre, and of Frank Kinahan, Herman Sinaiko, and their General Studies in the Humanities colleagues in re-establishing University Theater (Kinahan was also the same man who played a major role along with Joe Williams and Greg Colomb in the creation of our remarkable writing program, the Little Red Schoolhouse). Remember too the work of Leonard Meyer in building a premier Department of Music, the work of Eva Watson-Schütze in creating the modern Renaissance Society, the work of Edward Maser and the Smart Gallery, and the work of Gerald Mast and Miriam Hansen for film studies. If we should ever doubt the capacity of lone individuals or small groups to exert visionary leadership with larger-than-life consequences, the history of the arts at Chicago would dispel such doubts with emphatic force.

The arts are important because they bring the campus together in ways that do not otherwise happen, blurring titles and status and rank, and that integrity and that unity are vital to a University that cherishes a rhetoric of special qualities. The arts do not happen in isolation, but depend on a vibrant community of participation and enjoyment, and in turn they help to enrich the many micro-communities that are made up by their advocates and practitioners. They are important because they remind us that the University lives from and for the creative process, that creativity can find its way in many different venues and give pleasure in many different forms, and that the forms and practices that this creativity manifests have important social consequences. Over the past half century, an indigenous tradition of independent student art-making and art-doing has evolved, and over time this engagement with the arts by



our students across all fields has become an important hallmark of the local campus culture that in a subtle but powerful way has helped to constitute, define, and protect that culture as an autonomous project — not autonomous in the sense that is disconnected from the institutional University and the faculty, but autonomous in the sense that it is a whole thing, a style of life, and indeed for many a lifelong way of life, a structure of life that quickly defines and influences new students within the student educational milieu as a whole. Irony, wit, playfulness, improvisational humor, curiosity, risk-taking, self-reliance, and open-mindedness, combined with discipline and strong belief in merit and in competitive judgment, these are not only personal values but they are group values, and I would argue that in many instances these norms have become part of the autonomous culture of our students via the practice of the arts, wrought by our students themselves over the decades, manifesting a Braudelian *longue durée* that has had a profound influence on the wider culture of the University.

Is it at all accidental that of all the possible sites for the world's greatest scavenger hunt, only at our College has an enormous, campuswide coalition of students since 1987 been able to stage-manage this remarkable annual exercise of improvisational humor, aesthetic fearlessness, and hyper-disciplined silliness? On what other campus could students be summoned to assemble (in various iterations) a live elephant, a nuclear breeder reactor, a life-size battleship, a bust of Abraham Lincoln made out of pennies, a book printed in the American colonies before 1776, and the official exorcist of the Archdiocese of Chicago?

We would do well to continue to invest in the arts, across the board, and to see the Logan Arts Center as a rare opportunity to give shape to new forms of collaboration and new forms of curricular and paracurricular innovation. Whatever we do, we must do it with the highest standards of

creative achievement and discipline of mind. Whatever we do, we should keep in mind that there is no natural enmity between intellectual rigor and strong aesthetic feeling and artistic practice. Indeed, the time has come for an *entente cordiale* between the camp of the thinkers and the camp of the makers. Both camps inhabit the same intense, vibrant community of creativity that our University makes possible and that our College is particularly dedicated to fostering. Alan Simpson, one of my favorite former deans, understood this well when he argued in 1962 that the humanists of the Renaissance might be plausible models for our present: "They understood the possibilities of an educational system which would give the many sides of man's nature some chance to develop in harmony. They thought it a good idea to mix the wisdom of the world with the learning of the cloister, to develop the body as well as the mind, to pay a great deal of attention to character, and to neglect no art which could add to the enjoyment of living. It is a spacious idea, which offered every hospitality to creative energy. Anyone who is seriously interested in a liberal education must begin by rediscovering it."<sup>243</sup> Simpson's invocation of the Renaissance was somewhat different from the use of the same image that the founders of the Renaissance Society had advocated in 1915. Theirs was an overtly defensive Renaissance that would protect against the fearful vistas of urban blight and industrial unrest, whereas Simpson's Renaissance reflected a sober conviction that new cultural, social, and aesthetic impulses defining the post-1945 world in Europe and America had to be both openly engaged and honestly contested.

Simpson and many other faculty fought valiantly over the past 50 years to make artistic creativity and artistic practice, in equal partnership

243. Alan Simpson, "The Marks of an Educated Man," 1962, *Archive of the College*.



with the scholarly study of the arts, central components of the academic and paracurricular mission of the College. Their goal has now, in our time, finally come to full fruition. Having come so far, against so many obstacles, surely we must take advantage of the extraordinary opportunities that now lay before us. For many of our students, the practice of the arts at Chicago involves a serious and enlightened amateurism in the best sense of the word, combined with the high professionalism of many of our current faculty who are deeply involved with the arts in their professional careers. We may not have resolved all of the tensions from the past between the amateur and the professional, between practice or performance and scholarly rigor, between student enthusiasms and faculty careers or University mission. But we have achieved a degree of institutional complexity and maturity, and a quantity of institutional resources both human and financial, that allow us now as never before to hold those conflicts in a kind of creative tension that can serve all parts of our community.

Let me conclude by thanking you for all that you do on behalf of our College students. I wish you a stimulating, productive, and very happy and safe 2009–10.

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