
The California Arts Commission is Alive and Well in Hollister, Eureka, McKinleyville, Monte Corona, Sacramento, and Fresno

You may never have heard of the California Arts Commission. In fact, it is very probable that you haven't unless you live in a small town in Del Norte County, or are blind, or are a very talented high school musician, or simply have a special interest in the arts. After nearly eight years, the Commission remains one of the least known of the many boards and commissions which have accumulated over the years to oversee various state programs. Yet in its quiet way it is an interesting example of how such a body, with limited objectives and (for the moment, at least) limited ambitions, can achieve a modest degree of success.

The California Arts Commission was established in 1963 in legislation carried by Assembly Speaker Jess Unruh at the request of a number of southern Californians concerned about the financial problems plaguing the art community. In setting up the commission, its supporters hoped to create a state body which would stimulate financial support for the arts in California, not only from business and other private sources but from the state as well. There was considerable interest at that time in doing something to rescue the arts from what appeared to be an impending financial crisis, an interest stimulated by a number of national studies such as the Rockefeller Panel report, "The Performing Arts — Problems and Prospects". New York State had already taken the lead in 1960 by setting up a Council on the Arts with an initial budget of nearly half a million dollars to begin supporting touring performances and exhibits, provide special grants to selected artists, develop new educational programs, and aid local communities programs. The New York council was expected to be the prototype for arts councils in other states and for the National Council for the Arts and the National Arts Foundation, which when finally established in 1964 and 1965, were expected to bring new prosperity to the performing and fine arts on the national scene.

Under the terms of the Unruh bill, the function of the California Arts Commission was to "... join with private patrons and with institutions and professional organizations concerned with the arts, to insure that the role of the arts in the life of our community will continue to grow and play an ever more significant part in the welfare and educational experience of our citizens, and establish the paramount position of this state in the nation and the world as a cultural center." As might be expected, however, the first commission members found it to be no simple task to translate this broad mandate and an initial \$50,000 annual budget into a specific program. Their first major action, therefore, was to circulate a questionnaire among the

officers and representatives of a variety of organizations and institutions throughout the state asking for their views as to the "artistic and cultural needs and aspirations of our citizens" and suggestions as to how private and public resources might best be used to serve those needs. In addition, Martin Dibner, the commission's first executive secretary, traveled around the state interviewing many local leaders and acquiring a first-hand impression of the quantity and quality of art facilities and activity.

Survey Results

It was not until January of 1966 that the commission's small staff had completed the survey, and by that time a majority of commission members, who had been chosen to represent the various segments of the art community, had decided that the commission's two principal functions should be to develop a program of touring professional performances and exhibitions and to provide financial and technical support for community organizations — symphonies, museums, art councils, etc. When the commission's survey report was finally published in 1966, it generally supported this policy, concluding that although the growth in interest and activity in the arts in California had been "impressive," it had also been very uneven both in quality and distribution, leaving many communities with little or nothing in the way of either performing or visual arts. Moreover, according to the survey, residents of those communities who wanted to do something about their situation had little idea as to how to go about it.

In the next several years the commission sponsored a number of touring art exhibitions and performances, in some cases putting a small show together from scratch, in others simply providing the necessary guarantee to cover any operating deficit up to a certain level. Among the touring exhibitions which the commission sponsored were an exhibition of 22 pieces of sculpture by Robert Cremean, a display of French paintings borrowed from several French museums, an exhibition of the work of 35 California craftsmen, and a show entitled Seven Decades of Design which focused on the development of contemporary furniture design. In the field of performing arts the commission sponsored tours by the San Diego Symphony and the San Diego Ballet and contributed \$22,500 to the Western Opera Theater to hire two singers and assist with the production costs for 70 scheduled performances throughout the state.

Art for the Blind

More recently the commission has received some acclaim for its sponsorship of a touring exhibition of

sculpture designed especially for the blind, an exhibition of California landscapes and seascapes entitled "Horizons", and a music education program called "Music for Youth". The first of these, described as a "touring art gallery for the sighted and the blind" (titled "Dimension" for its 1970 tour and "Perception" for its 1971 tour) is a display of 30 pieces of sculpture, covering some 3500 years of art, which both sighted and blind visitors are encouraged to feel with their hands. A special modular display system was designed for this exhibition to encourage blind children and adults to enjoy the sculpture and to fit the exhibition to a variety of museum spaces. The cost of the exhibition was covered in greater part by a grant of federal aid through the Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

The commission's 1970 touring exhibition of California landscapes and seascapes, while not an unusual show in itself, was interesting in that it was financed entirely from private sources and, like the art gallery for the blind, required the design of a special modular "museum-like" display system which was easily transportable and could be set up within any space of sufficient size. In seeking private sponsors for the tour, the commission presented its proposal to a number of large business firms, but the first to express interest were three major savings and loan banks which have branches throughout the state that were offered for use as temporary galleries. The commission accepted this offer and established an itinerary which included 30 stops in small communities, downtown areas and suburban neighborhoods up and down the state. The entire display of 22 paintings was transported in a special van and designed so that it could be removed, transported to a new location and installed over a weekend.

Music for Youth

Possibly the most successful of the commission's current programs is "Music for Youth", which is intended to increase community interest in providing music education in the public schools. Working with the California Music Educators Association, the commission has developed a basic plan of taking a small group of outstanding professional and student musicians into elementary and high schools which have little or nothing in the way of music instruction of their own.

The first such program was an eleven-day tour of elementary and high schools in Del Norte and Humboldt Counties, with special demonstration programs for school children in the day and community concerts by the same professional and student musicians at night. A second similar tour was begun in April in Santa Cruz, San Benito, Monterey, and San Luis Obispo Counties. In both cases many of the arrangements for the tour were made by local educators and interested persons in the communities, with assistance and coordination provided by the commission's staff consultant for this project, Leslie Olmstead. Both tours have been very well received in the schools and communities, and the Music for Youth program itself has recently been selected by a national business association for its annual award.

Another current program is the California Dance Project. The principal purpose of this project is to gather information on all of the 200 professional and college dance companies and sponsors throughout the state. This information is to be organized and published in a directory of dance companies available for per-

formances and touring, as well as organizations interested in sponsoring dance programs.

Avoids Controversy

The commission's one brush with controversy occurred several years ago when some public objection arose over the inclusion of a piece of sculpture by Edward Keinholtz in a show at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. As pressure grew for the museum to remove the piece from the show, the commission publicly joined those who opposed what they considered to be an attempt at censorship of the arts. In general, however, the commission has avoided controversy. The commissioners recently decided, for example, to take no part in the dispute as to what should be done with the collection of California art which Cal-Expo has accumulated over the years. After listening carefully to arguments as to whether the collection should be returned to the artists, sold, or put on permanent display, the commissioners decided that the problem was after all one which only the Cal-Expo directors could decide.

Board Members

The commission is made up of 15 members appointed by the Governor for five year terms, plus two Assemblymen and two Senators. When the commission was first formed, the majority of the membership represented the various factions of the art community, e.g., the major art museums, the movie industry, the symphony orchestras, and other interested organizations and institutions. More recently, under Governor Reagan, the majority of appointees have a broader interest in the arts, as community art patrons, for example. Nevertheless, the commissioners appear to take an ac-



tive interest in their responsibilities and do, in fact, set the commission's basic policy and suggest many of its projects. This is not true, however, of the legislative members, who seldom if ever attend commission meetings. The principal exception was former Assemblyman Pearce Young, who had a strong personal interest in the visual arts and served for a time as vice chairman of the commission.

members, who seldom if ever attend commission meetings from its first appropriation of \$50,000, but not a great deal by comparison with the budgets of other state agencies. State support rose to \$170,000 per year by 1968 but remained at about that level for the next three years. The commission's budget for 1972-73, which includes \$200,000 in state funds, provides the

first real increase in four years. In the meantime, however, the commission has developed other sources of funding to enable it to carry out what it considers to be its essential activities. Total expenditures for 1972-73 are expected to reach \$705,000 with the addition of \$380,000 from private donations of money and services and at least \$125,000 in federal funds.

The commission continues to operate with a relatively small staff headed by Executive Secretary Albert Gallo. Gallo, who came to his job from a position as a personnel officer in the Department of General Services, has a varied background which extends back to theatrical experience in New York. He is assisted by four staff "consultants", each of whom has been hired to coordinate one or more specific projects. In addition, Gallo has three full-time employees to provide secretarial and administrative services. The twelve other positions which the commission has been allotted are filled by persons hired to help with the development and operation of individual programs, including the touring exhibitions which the commission sponsors.

Active Commissioners

The commission maintains close contact with each major project it sponsors. As soon as it has been decided to undertake a project, and the necessary funding has been secured, a two to four member subcommittee of commissioners is appointed to supervise all phases of the project, from finding additional co-sponsors, through selection of advisors, production, and final evaluation. These subcommittees are responsible as well for keeping the full commission informed on their projects through progress reports at the commission's regular monthly meetings.

At its April meeting in Monterey the Commission was given a list of some 22 current "projects" and five "anticipated projects" by its executive secretary, Albert Gallo. Among the current projects, are plans for continuation of the Music for Youth program, sponsorship of a writers' conference at Squaw Valley this summer, preparation of brochures on how to conduct touring art exhibitions and how to organize a community arts council, completion of the directory of professional and amateur dance companies in California, sponsorship of conferences of local arts councils, and the annual conference of the Association of California Symphony Orchestras. Taken all together, the list of current and anticipated projects indicates that the commission intends to continue on its present course with no significant change in program or policy except, perhaps, for an increasing emphasis upon art for school children.

A Catalyst

The commission likes to see itself as a catalyst, acting to bring together participants in each of the various arts so that they may solve their common problems regarding fund raising, management, publicity, and the like, and encouraging private business organizations to increase their sponsorship of artistic activity throughout the state. As a matter of policy, it undertakes and supports only projects which are statewide in character rather than of direct benefit to but a single community. In choosing these projects, the commission, according to its own testimony, "seeks to find those areas of service where there is a need not being met by other organizations." How well it does these things can only be judged by the projects it has undertaken or is presently carrying on.

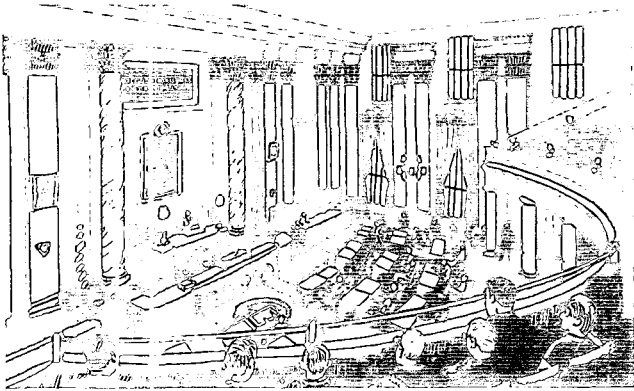
The commission seems to be generally content with the present scope and character of its programs and has little or no ambition to expand its role. Thus it gave a cool reception at its April meeting to a proposal that it ask the Governor and Legislature for a substantial increase in state funding which it could use to subsidize a broad array of artistic activity. The proposal was brought to the commission by Keith R. Williams, president of Musicians Union Local 47 of Los Angeles, who argued that "art is the business of all the people, a valid function of society, and should therefore be, in part, funded by the people collectively." The commission, said Williams, should ask the Legislature for the equivalent of one dollar per California citizen which it would then allocate among a priority list of art projects that it would develop for this purpose.

The commissioners listened politely to Williams' proposal but showed little real interest in considering such a plan. Mrs. Louis C. Olker, the current chairman of the commission, and several other members questioned the legality and propriety of the commission's making such a request on its own behalf and indicated very clearly that they had no intention of making any request for funds which might embarrass Governor Reagan. Executive secretary Gallo also argued against the proposal saying that the disbursement of a large amount of grants would inevitably require an expansion of the staff and draw the commission into politics after the pattern of the New York state arts commission. If the commission is to seek additional funding, he said, it should put together specific projects to be considered on their own merits.

This is the first time in recent years that the commission has been challenged with such a proposal, so that it was rather easily dismissed with promises that it would be looked into. Should the commission receive other similar proposals in the near future, it may indeed be forced to reexamine its position. In the meantime, however, it is evident that the present commission members are pleased with what they have accomplished and have no intentions, for the moment, of changing or greatly expanding their activities. ■

"With respect to the general public, higher education has suffered a series of mishaps, creating a confidence crisis that must be corrected. This requires far more than a popular "public relations" approach. First, it requires a faculty and administration commitment to expend whatever energy is required to bring about a broadly based understanding of what higher education contributes to the well-being of those it serves, those to whom it is responsible, and those to whom it looks for support. Above all we must succeed in restoring public perspective with respect to what happens on campuses today and what will be happening tomorrow. The inward-looking strategy of the past is not acceptable in the decade ahead."

C. O. McCorkle Jr.
Vice-President of the
University of California



Most Legislators are Out-of-Staters

Twenty-two of the state's 40 Senators and 48 of the state's 80 Assemblymen were not born in California, according to columnist Earl G. Waters. Twelve of the Senators and 14 of the Assemblymen represent the districts in which they were born.

Three Foreign-born Legislators

Three members of the state Legislature were not born in the United States. They are Senator Mervyn M. Dymally born in the British West Indies; Assemblymen Leo T. McCarthy, born in Auckland, New Zealand; and Waddie P. Deddeh, born in Bagdad, Iraq.

2 of 7 Constitutional Officers Born Here

Of the state's seven constitutional officers, only two, Edmund G. Brown Jr. and Wilson Riles, were born in California, according to columnist Earl G. Waters. Governor Reagan was born in Illinois, Lieutenant Governor Reinecke is from Oregon, Attorney General Evelle J. Younger is from Nebraska, Controller Houston Flournoy was born in New York, and Treasurer Ivy Baker Priest comes from Utah.

Two More Committee Changes

Senator John Nejedly has been appointed to fill the vacancy on the Senate Agriculture and Water Resources Committee.

Assemblyman Kent Stacey has been appointed to fill the vacancy on the Assembly Constitutional Amendments Committee.

Georgia Gives Legal Aid to Poor

The nation's first statewide legal aid program for poor people, the Georgia Indigents Legal Services (GILS), celebrated its first anniversary in December 1971, according to *State Government News*.

A state welfare department grant of \$54,000 for calendar year 1971 was matched by \$162,000 in HEW funds. For 1972, state funds were increased to \$60,000 and federal to \$180,000. Supplemental funds came from OEO and the United Appeal. GILS operates out of seven branch offices around the State and plans up to three more, but does not serve Atlanta, where older legal aid services exist.

GILS' 16 circuit-riding attorneys cover all counties in the State; they were aided by law school interns last summer.

INTERVIEW (Continued from page 121)

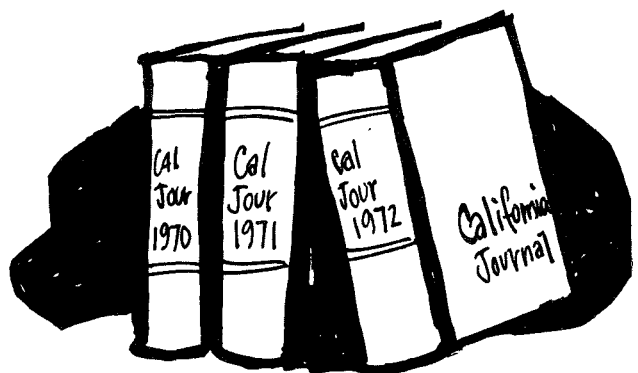
very difficult on reporters. One wire service competes with another; one newspaper competes with another; one television station in the same market competes with another; and so there's a tendency to pick out only those things that are quite controversial at the expense of some other things that might be more substantive in fact. And so that's something that, I assume, concerns every press secretary, every political figure. You know, we wish the press would concentrate more on some of the less controversial but very meaningful things that are happening in state government. But, it's difficult for me. I work closely with all the members of the press. And I try to be understanding of their problems. I think most of them think that they are trying to do a good job; many are.

The other thing I think is that the interpretive nature of the news business today — that you see more and more in the papers — makes it more difficult for readers to make up their own minds. You get the interpretation of the writer. And that's also a concern. I would rather see, I suppose, less interpretation and more a presenting of both sides of an issue.

Journal: It is said that good news doesn't sell newspapers.

Gray: That's right, and that's what I mean. The competitive nature of the news business makes it difficult for reporters who have their orders from their city desks and from their assignment editors to get the story that would be most controversial as soon as possible. They're not able to cover some of the stories that we think really deserve coverage, which I think the people would like to know about, and which, to some extent, they're not learning about because of this. I think they're losers but, on balance, I don't want to complain. Let me just put it this way: With the difficulties of a reporter in Sacramento, I think most of them here are trying to do a good job. ♣

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Schools Prepare for Painful Task of Evaluating Teachers and Administrators

By DENIS P. DOYLE

Every school child's dream of testing his teacher and principal on their achievement will take a long step toward reality beginning in September of this year when California's 1200 school districts will be required to begin implementation of what has become known as the "Stull bill" — AB 293 (1971) by Assemblyman John Stull. Although originally described as a significant reform of teacher tenure laws, the greatest importance of the measure is to be found in those provisions which require that public school officials throughout California to systematically examine the educational goals and standards of their schools and to develop objective measures of competence for school personnel in relation to those goals.

The bill itself was signed in July of 1971, nearly nine months ago, but its operative date has been postponed by subsequent amendment until this fall. This will give the schools more than a year to prepare for implementation, but even with this lead time it may be difficult for most districts to comply fully in the first year, for the Stull bill mandates a major change in the way public school employees are to view themselves and their functions. Traditionally, the schools have been measured in terms of their resources: the amount of money spent per student, the faculty-student ratio, the number of books in the library, etc. The Stull bill requires, instead, that the schools develop measurements of their productivity and their ability to meet the goals set out for them: what and how much students learn, how well teachers teach, and the effectiveness of administrators.

Tenure Problem

Originally the bill grew out of a general legislative concern over the question of tenure for public school teachers, and the common belief that tenure is often an indiscriminate umbrella which protects the deserving and undeserving alike. Thus, the first draft of the Stull bill was seen by educators as a reaction to increasing teacher militance, a stern reminder that he who pays the piper calls the tune. But upon closer examination they found the bill to be a serious attempt to deal with what they acknowledge to be a perplexing problem.

Supporters of the measure argue that tenure itself is not really the issue, that no one has ever seriously proposed that tenure be used to shield incompetent school employees. Rather, they say, the problem has been to develop a set of working criteria to define and identify competence and to establish reference points which may be used to fairly and objectively judge a school employee's performance. To the layman, the clearest index of teacher performance is student performance, and student performance is most effectively

identified by scores on academic tests. By and large, however, professional educators have resisted this notion with unflagging determination. Their view has been that academic attainment is only one of many indices of student progress, and that lack of student progress is often simply a sign of inadequate support for the schools, financial and otherwise. Moreover, they oppose statewide performance standards which, they believe, may not make sufficient allowance for local factors affecting student abilities and school programs.

Middle Ground

The Stull bill, as it was amended, attempted to find a middle ground. It requires the development of standards of school personnel competence, but leaves the development of those standards in the hands of the local school officials. It requires that competence be measured but leaves the choice of the measurement tools and techniques to the local school districts. As a consequence, the responsibility at the local level for the success or failure of this plan is substantial. Each school board must adopt written guidelines for use in evaluating professional competence, covering at least four distinct elements: 1) establishment of standards of expected student progress in each area of study and techniques to assess that progress, 2) assessment of the competence of certified employees as it relates to the established standards, 3) assessment of other duties of certified employees which are adjunct to their regular assignments, and 4) establishments of procedures for determining that certified employees maintain proper control of their classrooms and preserve a suitable learning environment.

In turn, employees are to be fully informed as to their district's evaluation program and are to have access to copies of the written guidelines. Every employee evaluation must be made in writing and given to the employee at least 60 days prior to the end of the school year, and the person who prepares the evaluation must discuss it with the employee. Teachers and administrators whose competence is judged deficient must be provided with follow-up counseling, and the district governing board must provide assistance to such employees in upgrading their performance. In the event that follow-up counseling is unsuccessful, the board may then charge the employee with incompetence.

To expedite the processing of charges of incompetence, the Stull bill creates a new dismissal procedure. At present, school district actions to fire certified employees go directly to the superior courts. Under the new procedure, dismissal actions are to be heard by three-member administrative panels chaired by a hear-