# Bard College Student Newspaper Archive (1895-1999)

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# **BARDIAN**

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faculty art editorial

The exhibition that opened in Orient Gallery the week of October 17 represents the first chance that the entire community has had to inspect closely the work of our art teachers. It is indeed a rewarding show, showing a range of insight seldom seen in one hall.

a remarkable inventiveness, not only in a varied imagery of grace, humor, and strength, but also in the handling of the surface and in the appropriateness of the design to the themes. Personally the print entitled Static and Revolving seems most handsome both for its

A variety of form and purpose is clearly manifest. Such variety is a healthy sign, especially in a college community. In a period of intense confusion about the nature of art, with the resulting search for an absolute mechanized standard. Bard may feel proud that its art faculty has continued to develop individual insight. The cliché of both the academy and the Parisian modernists has been avoided. One can only realize how important this is by looking at the work of other college faculty, and by realizing that the degree of tolerance implied by the exhibit means that Bard art students are not subjected to rigid disciplines and theories, and are thus given a chance to develop personal insights and technical inventiveness.

Mr. Hirsch is represented by four canvasses: two still lifes, one study of the Feast of the Gods by Giovanni Bellini, and a large portrait of his wife, Elsa Rogo. Mr. Hirsch enploys relatively naturalistic images. Especially in his two still lifes can we see his essential concern with light effects and textural contrasts. His art is concerned with supple organic shapes, with the arrangement of his objects on the surface of his canvas, rather than their location in space. One may add that these latest pictures (they were all done during the past year) show a concern more with personal and intimate objects than with social or tragic themes.

The five prints of Mr. Shanker are founded on more abstract interion imagery. Here is found a concern with abstract patterns of movement, with color and design freed from the limitations of appearance. The prints show

The staff of the Bardian would

like to express their sincere regrets

at President Fuller's absence and

hopes for his speedy return to

a remarkable inventiveness, not only in a varied imagery of grace, humor, and strength, but also in the handling of the surface and in the appropriateness of the design to the themes. Personally the print entitled Static and Revolving seems most handsome both for its subtle surface and color. Generally the prints have a directness that leads, not to an expression of brutal force (as so much that is direct tends to do today) but rather to an expression of simple joy and subtle glorification before the movements, carnivals, and inevitable changes of our days.

The sculpture of Mr. Chamberlain also is a marvelously subtle tribute to the organic element inherent in stone, wood and metal. His forms show an acute attention to the qualities of his materials. But there is no idle submission to matter in itself. A mood of calm pervades his works-the slow, enduring peace of organic line. The shapes are self contained or are genuine fusions of space and matter. One must be in a state of balance, of receptivity, to appreciate his work fully. Explosive dramatic vitality is not to be found here but as in his wood nude, a fine grace, a fully realized, not a fragmented, sensuality.

As to the work of Mr. Lischer, I am not fully equipped to judge. The furniture shows a simplicity of design and a varied handling of materials that would probably be most appealing to a well-to-do American public. The California house clearly shows a concern with opening the house to the environment, planned and natural; again, a most suitable arrangement for such a geographical location.

Finally Mr. Burns's three studies for a set and two costumes for Twelfth Night show that Bard can look forward to a thoroughly rewarding spectacle when that play is presented.

Danny Newman

ERRATA: The last word in the editorial of October 4 was meant to read amazement, not amusement.



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at

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nearly

everyone

reads

"The creation as well as the study of a work of art or of an art form, involves the whole person . . . the only conceivable standards applicable to the teaching of the arts are professional ones . . . it is an aim of the (Arts) Division to foster breath of experience and accomplishment rather than narrow specialization . . ." (From the Bard College Catalogue.)

Under present conditions it is impossible for all the art departments to fulfill their stated aims. This failure has serious consequences for the college as a whole.

An art student must, like any other student, be presented with specific techniques, and if he is to create, master them. The departments of dance, music and drama are hamstrung in this fundamental sphere. Learning in any of these fields involves group activity. A musician who plays a wierd instrument (the violin, for example) performs few solos; an actor rarely performs a complete play alone. If a student is to attain professional standards he cannot do so alone—he must work with a body of students who are themselves well on the way to attaining them. He is dependant in large measures on the quality of the group for the quality of his training. Some advances have already been made to correct the abuses existing in this sphere. We have the beginnings of a string ensemble and a madrigal group but these achievements are hardly sufficient. There should be more choral work, more than a rudimentary string quartet, more than semi-solo dance recitals. What insuperable obstacle prevents us from having a chamber orchestra and talented, integrated dance and drama departments?

The departments of drama, music and dance function under a sort of all-or-none law. Either we have a superior body of students, or the few who are good are faced with a choice. They must sacrifice four years to lopsided training in the hope that the broadening experiences offered by the rest of the curriculum are worth the loss, or they are forced to leave for greener pastures.

Of what importance is this situation to the rest of Bard? First let us consider the effect in terms of education. The community is often confronted with group performances toward which tolerance is the only possible attitude, and the deduction that art can be a dull, somewhat ludicrous business is a logical one. It is not very good education.

On another plane, of perhaps greater importance, we must face the fact that we are judged by outsiders more on the quality of our dance, our drama, and our music than by any other criteria. The products of the other divisions are invisible at an undergraduate level. What other evidence is there for outside judgment? It would be to the mutual advantage of both the art majors and Bard if we could strengthen these divisions.

Can we? It should be easy. Our faculty is certainly competent and the Bard system is potentially ideal. It is only in the arts that the tenet of progressive education—"learning by doing"—is not merely the best way, but the only way. Bard should attract art students far more than it has. We offer here the solution to the art student's almost universal dilemma. Such a student needs more than specialized training in his art—he needs (trite as it may sound) the broad orientation which a "liberal arts education" can give him. At the same time he needs the best possible training he can find in his art. Neither an art school nor a conventional college can offer him both. Bard, with its unusual flexibility, can—but only if the conditions outlined above are fulfilled.

The barriers to such a solution do not lie in the departments in question. They must have material to work with. In order to have such material, we must have a large selection of students. And to have such a selection Bard must become better known. The possession of excellent faculty will do no good if no one knows we have it. The root of the difficulty, then, is publicity.

Such a statement is, however, an oversimplification. At present we are involved in a cycle. We need concrete, outstanding achievements in order to publicize ourselves successfully (and the art departments can provide them) and we must publicize ourselves successfully if we are to avoid slipping to a level of comfortable mediocrity from which it will be impossible to rise. This cycle must be broken from one end or the other.

(This is the first of two editorials on publicity and related problems.)

# the bardian

official student publication of bard college, annandale-on-hudson, n. y., november 6, 1949

#### wxbc variety a success

Wednesday night, Oct. 19th, 9:00 in the evening, WXBC, long reputed but rarely believed "voice of Bard College," brought the "Bard College Varieties" to the air both on the Bard campus and over the outside air through the facilities of WKIP, Poughkeepsie.

Nearly all the credit for the show must be given to Peter Stone, the program director of the college station, who wrote, organized, directed and emceed it. The show was amazingly good considering the difficulties involved. It was a completely new endeavor for the members of the station staff, and was a particularly difficult project because of the intricate timing necessary.

Many unforseen difficulties arose as air-time grew near. Robert Cornell, a freshman at Bard, was given the job of running the complicated remote equipment from WKIP. He had about twenty minutes to learn the operations. The piano in the theatre was found out of tune forty-five minutes before airtime and twelve of the cast membersmusicians, actors, and engineers-went over to WXBC, picked up the piano in the studio and carried it to the theatre. It was never possible to rehearse in the theatre. Mike balance for the band, guitar players, and actors had to be taken in the five minutes before the show went on the air.

The show labored under many of the difficulties hampering commercial radio. The campus station could not avoid some of the inevitable pitfalls of radio broadcasting. The band—by no means professional—opened the show with "Tin Roof Blues." They received much criticism from listeners, but the fact that very few in the studio audience agreed with these criticisms seems to indicate faulty "mike balance." The mike placement on the piano was also poor.

Ted Flicker and Joel Fields, representing a dense student and his guard, worked well with each other and sounded very well over the air. Jack Mac-Adie, as a student philosopher, turned in a very funny performance with his inquiries into the nature of "true happiness." Ted Flicker, playing a Brooklynese literature major, turned a fair sketch into a good one with some clever interpretation and voice-work. Herb Severtsen turned out a lively rendition of "Liza."

Randy Reynolds, Helaine Kopp, and Ray Eisenhardt were next in line with hillbilly music. Ray Eisenhardt's song, "Bloody War" was well received, however many felt that too much time was consumed by this trio.

After a rendition of "Royal Garden Blues" by the orchestra, which could have used a bit more rehearsal, Joel Fields, as a biologist, (sounding a good deal like Peter Lorre) went through what was probably the funniest sketch of the show.

The next "interview" was with Sheli Arnason as a psychologist, trying to force a problem on emcee Peter Stone. Although the idea is funny, Mr. Stone's real problem was weak lines. Sheli Arnason carried off her portrayal as well as possible, but the routine missed.

Mr. Leonard was next in line, occupying the featured spot of the show. The professor of music played "Mary Had A Little Lamb" in the styles of Mozart, Beethoven, Chopin and Gershwin. He proved to everyone that he has an amazing ear for music as well as being a good pianist.

The mistakes in the show—a weak routine, too much music of one kind, and so forth—should be kept in mind by the staff of WXBC. But this show, one of the finest on the air here at Bard since the station's inception, has done a great deal toward making the station a respected activity on compus. Marvin Simes, technical director of WKIP at Bard for the show said at the completion of the program, "A good show. Not just a try at a professional show, but a good professional one. I en-

Mona Pine

#### from "ex tenebris"

Still, I would be asleep by now and making dreams from thin threads that have no loom, except in sleeping; but near my window naked trees are grieving; weep in the wind that strips my weary mind of sleeping. So I, my head against the pane, my hand on the sash, keep watch on griefs that have forgotten sleeping.

Whitney Bolton

Dr. Lawrence K. Frank, the second speaker in the Disciplines of Democracy series, held forth a more positive and humanistic point of view than his predecessor, Dr. T. V. Smith.

He began by placing before his audience three problems with which people must cope. They were the problem of survival; of maintaining a secure social group; and of handling human behavior.

One way of finding answers to these persistent problems, Dr. Frank said, was to learn to restate them in the light of new information and attitudes. Referring to T. V. Smith's "solve, resolve, and absolve," Dr. Frank suggested that there are a number of problems we should learn to disolve.

Continuing, Dr. Frank took to task the modern state of mind which places man in a position of obedience and submission to the state and its leaders. While we expounded about our other rights we play down the right to rebel or revolt. Social order, he said, is not something to which people conform but it is rather something in which they participate.

Dr. Frank pictured the existing social order as something dynamic which moves in a circular order. The parts are not separate from the whole unless we single them out for individual inspection as we might look at a minute portion of a larger organism under a microscope. He sees the social order as a system of parts which interact to create the whole, which in turn acts on the parts. It can be compared to a football team in which each player in his particular role responds to the whole as it needs his service.

Social order in this light is not dependent on the elect but on everybody. The "image of self" now becomes very important, for without a healthy understanding and respect for one's self a person can lose all value to himself and therefore to the group.
"Every culture," said Dr. Frank, "is

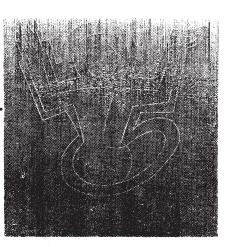
"Every culture," said Dr. Frank, "is an aspiration . . . an ethical adventure." Following this through he said that the most significant aspiration of our country is that human nature has potentialities we haven't even begun to develop. The only evaluation of a society in human terms is its effect on personalities.

In attempting to find a way of life Dr. Frank said, "We shouldn't bow down to the past but rather try and do for ourselves what the leaders of the past did for themselves."

Unlike his predecessor, Dr. T. V. Smith, Dr. Frank expressed a definite appreciation of the importance of art in our society. "We have more to learn from novels and art than we have to learn from science."

He concluded by saying, "If we can really believe in human nature and work from the premises I have outlined, we could well go on to work toward solutions."

R. S. S.



#### drama plans

To those of us who have followed the development of the Drama Department in the past year the current work and plans of that Department are impressive and gratifying.

Scheduled for this term, in addition to Twelfth Night, is Strindberg's The Father, which will feature Al Haulenbeck and Joan DeKeyser in two of the major roles. Aside from these two plays there will be a Studio Workshop to give all the students in the acting classes an opportunity to perform before an audience. These will be informal productions without costumes or sets.

Scheduled for the Spring term is an arena production of Lillian Hellman's *The Children's Hour*, directed by Al Haulenbeck. Two other plays will be produhed next term, one of these will be directed by Joan Abner.

The students mentioned above and Virginia Gaines, Bob Smith and Jay Smith are all working on their Senior Projects in Drama this year.

All the work which these students do in Drama will be part of their Project work and the plays which will be produced have been chosen by them for the benefit of the entire Department. The students, in chosing the plays, have considered them in the light of how they will be in production, not how good a showcase they would make for a particular individual. This attitude has created a more cooperative atmosphere in the Drama Department and the plays should prove more instructive for the members of that Department and provide better entertainment for the Community as a whole. Mona Pine

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The Bardian wishes to express profound sorrow at the death of Edward Lewis on Oct. 31.

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#### more fac art

The line drawing reproduced on this page is by Dr. Werner Wolff from his paintings currently on exhibit at the Three Arts Gallery in Poughkeepsie.

Aside from his teaching duties at Bard, and his numerous psychological works, Dr. Wolff has always felt the need for another creative outlet. Before he came to the United States he wrote poetry and novels that were published abroad. With no opportunity to express himself artistically in his mother language his creative urge turned to painting. Just as he had experimented with other mediums of expression, Dr. Wolff without having any instruction, started to experiment in painting in 1943.

The experimentation took three forms: first, the use of novel materials such as cellophane, beads, metal dust and mirrors in addition to the traditional materials used in painting; second, experiments in form and perception, using apparent movement, three-dimensional effects and other trompe-d'oeil devices; third, experiments in symbolization of abstract ideas, dreams and mythictl concepts.

Another type of experimentation led the artist to trace the source of the creative art.

His paintings are unselfconscious, retaining a certain child-like spontaneity and freshness. There is an intensity, a quality of unusual depth in the work.

It is toward the greater understanding of man's most vital core that the research, the writings and the paintings of Werner Wolff all lead.

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joyed it thoroughly."

#### stefan hirsch speaks at yale

spoke before the American Association of Engineering Teachers at Yale University. In this speech he remarked that the engineers he has known, particularly in South America, are uncultured, socially unhappy people, "With time and tequila heavy on their hands." Essentially, that statement depicts a rather crucial problem that American Universities are facing today. Can people trained in engineering be successful as engineers if they lack a cultural-educational background? Or is it possible to combine the two, to develop a specialist with a decent Liberal Arts training?

Recently the emphasis has been on turning out "good" engineers. In order to create this "good" engineer any aspects of education other than those that pertain directly to engineering are minimized or omitted.

Mr. Hirsch, in his address before the association, suggested a solution to this problem. The speech abounded with humor, gentle (occasionally ungentle) sarcasm, but most important it contained a direct statement of the problem and a possible solution. Here are some highlights from Mr. Hirsch's speech:

"I have never had any working connection with an engineering school, so you will have to forgive me for some involuntary over or understatements, but I have known quite a number of engineers. Naturally I have known many artists. The mutual contempt in which they hold each other would be quite shocking were we not conscious of the contemporary dichotemy between the sciences and the arts. Allow me for the moment to commit that unpardonable sin: to think of the engineer as an artist. The artist is a man, who has an occasionally dangerous ability: to sense new meanings in the relationships between man and man, man and nature, man and his ideas, man and art. Can you find any fault in applying this description to the ideal engineer, or even to the psysical scientist? I doubt it?
"... The Scientific fraternity, I am

afraid, no longer has the ability to foster the imagination during several centuries of naturalism, materialism, and positivism. But despite the inroads these philosophies have made even into art education, especially through the art historians, there are still a few artists left, who, as teachers, understand the problem and know how to deal with it.

"... Most of our engineers go from a humanistically inadequate high school training to a four year course of highly specialized and humanistically retrenched engineering training, to enter the profession directly."

"... But even within our own gates, the anti-intellectual tenor and artistically atrophied character of American life, which favors the highly specialized, humanistically telescoped training of the technician, makes itself felt in wasteful conflict. I grant you that, if our high schools were better, we could probably dispense with a few years of higher education. But they are not, and therefore

"... On the campus, hostility between the scientist and the humanist is thinly veiled. The philosophers are frequently chosen as mouth-pieces for one side or the other, when they should be the very ones to resolve the conflict. The psychologists lead a schizophrenic life, because they cannot make up their minds where they belong. Even the historians find it difficult. Is this good for the education of our youth? I think

... I would have art taught in colleges, universities, yes and in engineering schools, because most art schools err precisely in the same direction. They do not attempt to make whole men of their students, but technicians and followers of fashions. . . . Like engineers they are apt to become narrow specialists. for their narrowness is usually a pittance Unlike engineers, the material reward and their social influence makes itself felt less widely.

... I will not attempt to show how the plastic arts could be introduced. If the study of art should become required,

On October 8, Mr. Stefan Hirsch and I do not think that it should, there ought to be a choice of several arts open to the student whose curriculum is otherwise fairly iron-clad. Literature should be there, not only in the guise of English as a tool for the writing of reports; painting, sculpture and the graphic arts, not purely as decoration or polite pornography; music not just out of an amplifier, as a background noise for boring studies or not so boring love making. They should be offered as sources of enjoyment, as playgrounds for the imagination, as wells of understanding of oneself, of others, of historical periods and of the ideas in other cultures.

"If I were to organize a course in painting at an engineering school, assuming that at least two semesters were available, I would institute one weekly two or three hour session, for groups of no more than fifteen students. They would meet in a well lighted and not too horrible looking studio, equipped with the usual paraphernalia and also with a battery of filing cabinets, well stocked with moderate sized color reproductions of works of art, from the cavemen to Picasso and beyond.

"There would be no lectures! Students would start to paint anything they wish: some of the objects around; objects they have brought themselves; things from memory and imagination; people, landscapes, ornaments, abstractions, dream symbols-in short anything their fancy turns to. And of course in any medium they chose. Speaking of pencils—engineering students must be fed to the teeth with them. They could forget them for a while in this course, forget security to go out on an adven-

"The second session of the course would be entirely devoted to critical and historical work, on the basis of the study of reproductions and of assigned reading. There would be no lectures and no text books, but discussions and an adequate choice of pertinent books in the library. Not a survey course in the history of art, skimming over the surfaces of chronological facts and appearances, it would work in depth. Remember? We don't want to train art critics. We want to cultivate the imagination of engineers.

"To understand a work of art requires a mixture of uncompromising alertness and self-respecting humility. To create a work of art demands, more than any other academic discipline, direct action, after clear cut decision, based on intellectual as well as emotional motivation. In other words, it involves the whole personality, and requires from it what we demand of the good citizen: Heart, Wisdom, Devotion. If these are not the qualities you want to see in engineers, don't let them study art!"

Professor Hirsch's solution is practically a replica of the art program at Bard. In the larger universities, however, there may be some difficulty in developing such a program, their organization being so different from the seminar system. In New York University where the teacher to student ratio is quite small, it is unlikely that such a plan would be practical. However, in Cornell, where the teacher to student ratio is large, such a plan seems significant.

The core of Dr. Hirsch's speech is then, that the dichotomy between the sciences and the arts is mutually wasteful and that this waste creates a vacuum in artistic and scientific achievement and in the receivers of both—society.

Martin Johnson

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