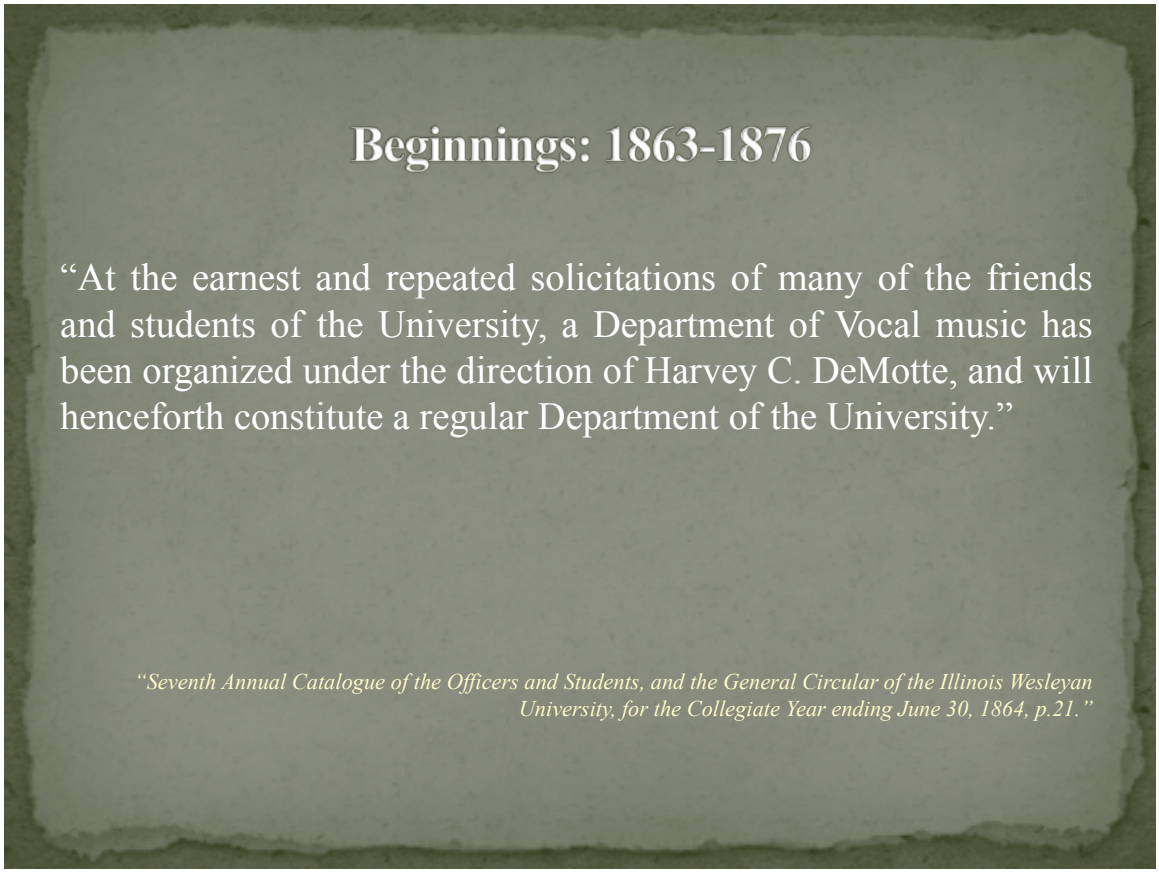


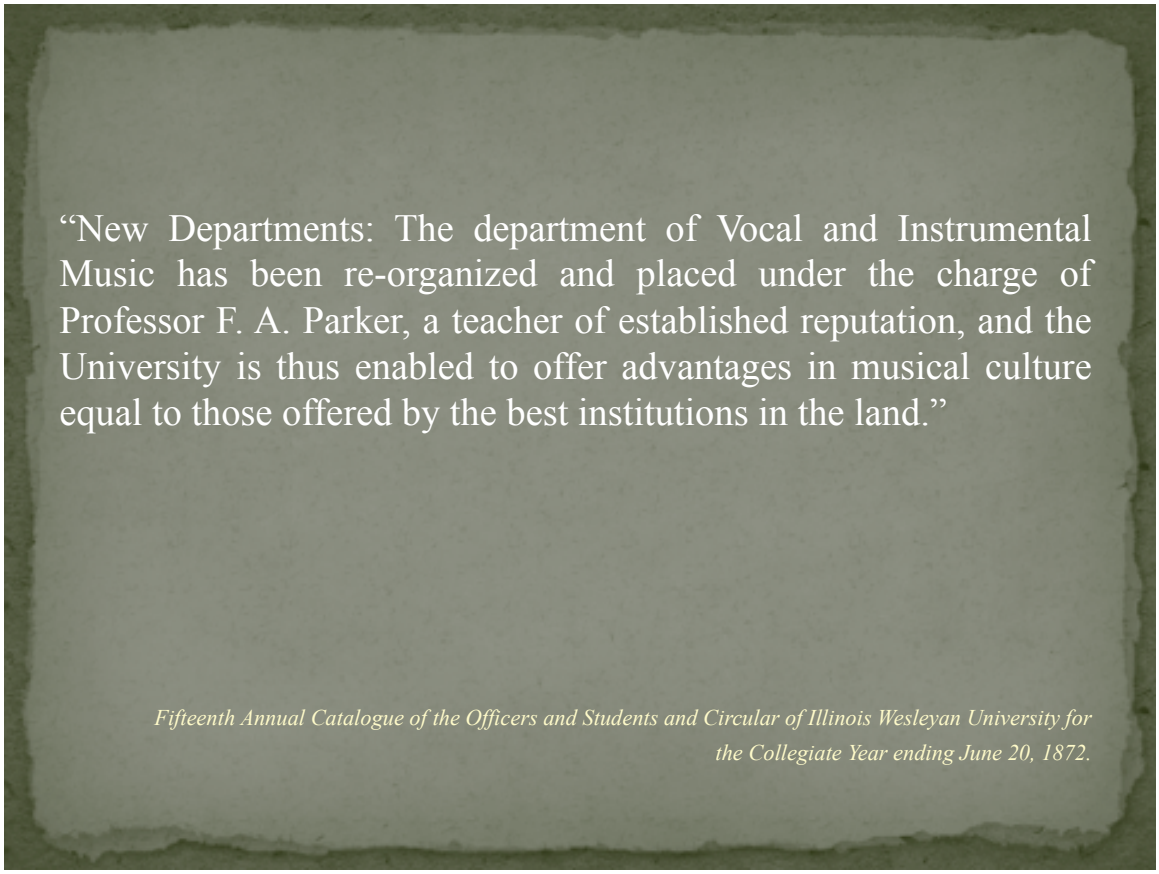
Hello and welcome to Homecoming 2014. My name is Robert Delvin. I am the Fine Arts Librarian at Illinois Wesleyan, a position I have held since 1980, and I am pleased to have been asked to share a bit of my research on the history of the School of Music at Illinois Wesleyan, which this year, as you know, is celebrating its sesquicentennial – 150 years: that's a long time! To attempt to cover such a span of time in 50 minutes is, of course, impossible. Therefore I have concentrated on what intrigues me the most: the earlier history of music instruction at IWU, since without a doubt, the furthest from the experience, or memory of any person in this room today. The unique place that the School of Music holds in the history of Illinois Wesleyan is built upon the dedication and hard work of the many administrators, faculty, students, and alumni that constitute the history of the school. That BTW, includes all of us.

Much of the research that went into this presentation took place during a recent sabbatical leave, when I had the leisure to bury myself for several months in the University Archives, scouring Bd. of Trustees minutes, university catalogs, annual volumes of *The Wesleyana,* and weekly issues *Argus* newspaper, in addition to folders of concert programs, photographs, brochures and other ephemeral materials related to musical life on this campus. I also want to acknowledge the efforts and organizational skills of my colleague, Professor Meg Miner, University Archivist and Special Collections Librarian at The Ames Library, who done so much to make the historical record of Illinois Wesleyan available to students, faculty, and researchers.

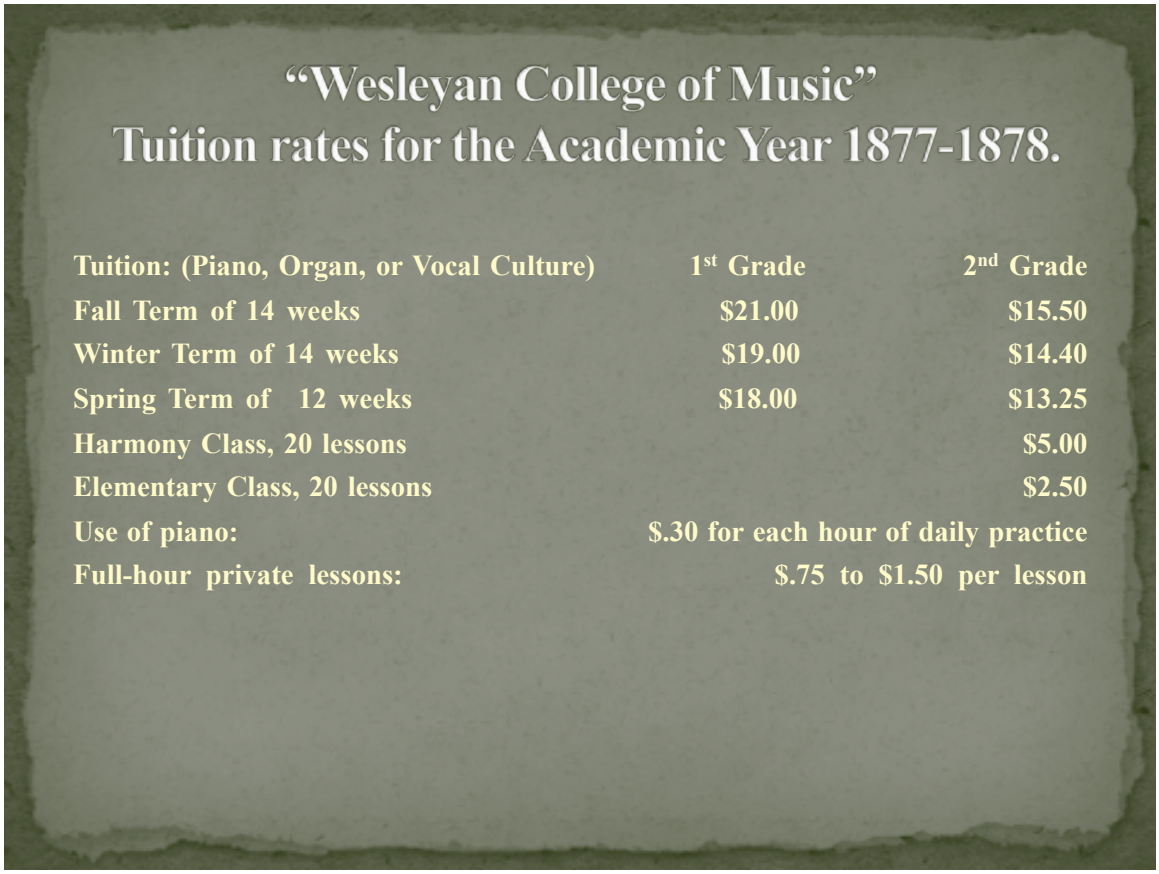
So let's get started on this and see how far we get. If our time this morning runs out (as it likely will), these slides and commentary will be available on the websites of both the School of Music and The Ames Library.



The earliest documented music instruction at Illinois Wesleyan University took place during the academic year of 1863/4 under the direction of Professor Harvey Clelland DeMotte, an enterprising mathematics instructor, who besides providing vocal instruction (most likely, a chorus) also served as the university librarian. In later years became Vice President of the University and accompanied John Wesley Powell, on his explorations of the American Southwest. According to a later description, "the earliest instruction consisted in teaching the rudiments of music to chorus classes, which met twice a week at four o'clock. The sessions were held in one of the recitation rooms. Oftentimes the exercises would be enjoyed by a hundred or more visitors. The violin was the instrument used in conducting, as there were no other instruments placed in the college at this time. All instruction was given free of charge, the only expense being a small sum expended for books, and many pleasant hours were thus spent."[1] Students desiring a more thorough course in vocal or instrumental music were encouraged to enroll in classes at the *Northwestern Academy of Music*, also located in Bloomington, although not officially affiliated with the University. The academy employed a number of instructors who subsequently joined the Illinois Wesleyan faculty following the academy's demise in 1871. Among these was one, F.A. Parker.



Within a decade, The General University Circular (1871/1872) announced that "The department of Vocal and Instrumental Music has been re-organized and placed under the charge of Professor F. A. Parker, a teacher of established reputation", [and proudly boasted] that the University is thus enabled to offer advantages in musical culture equal to those offered by the best institutions in the land."[2] Instruction, at this time was apparently similar to that under Professor De Motte. Individual lessons in instrumental music were also provided by Parker at his private studio located in downtown Bloomington at 318 N. Main St.



Annual notices of the music course at Illinois Wesleyan continued much in this same vein until the circular published in June of 1877. Here we find a more detailed description of the music curriculum and course offerings. We also note, that for the first time, that the Department of Music is referred to as the "Wesleyan College of Music", with F.A. Parker listed as Dean. Not only were more faculty mentioned by name, but their professional credentials also quoted, stressing their Boston, New Work or European pedigrees. Instruction was offered in piano, pipe organ, vocal culture, harmony, and elementary music fundamentals. A library of approved instrumental and vocal studies was to be made available to students, for a small fee, as well as practice facilities. Finally, diplomas would be granted to those students who, completed the two-year course, and who attained "a suitable proficiency in either vocal or Instrumental music, and who demonstrated a corresponding knowledge of theoretical studies."[3] The circular stressed that "it is the aim of the College to provide the best instruction and general advantages at reasonable rates; not to furnish *cheap* instruction at corresponding prices. Only earnest pupils who are willing to work faithfully for true art and culture are solicited to attend."[4]

This slide shows the tuition scale for two years of music study at the Wesleyan College of Music for the year 1877-1878. Enrollment in the College of Music that year was 123 students. Total enrollment at the university that year was 487. Already, we see that music students made up a considerable percentage of the student body. At the conclusion of the following academic year (1879), the College of Music awarded its first diploma to Miss Mattie McIntyre.

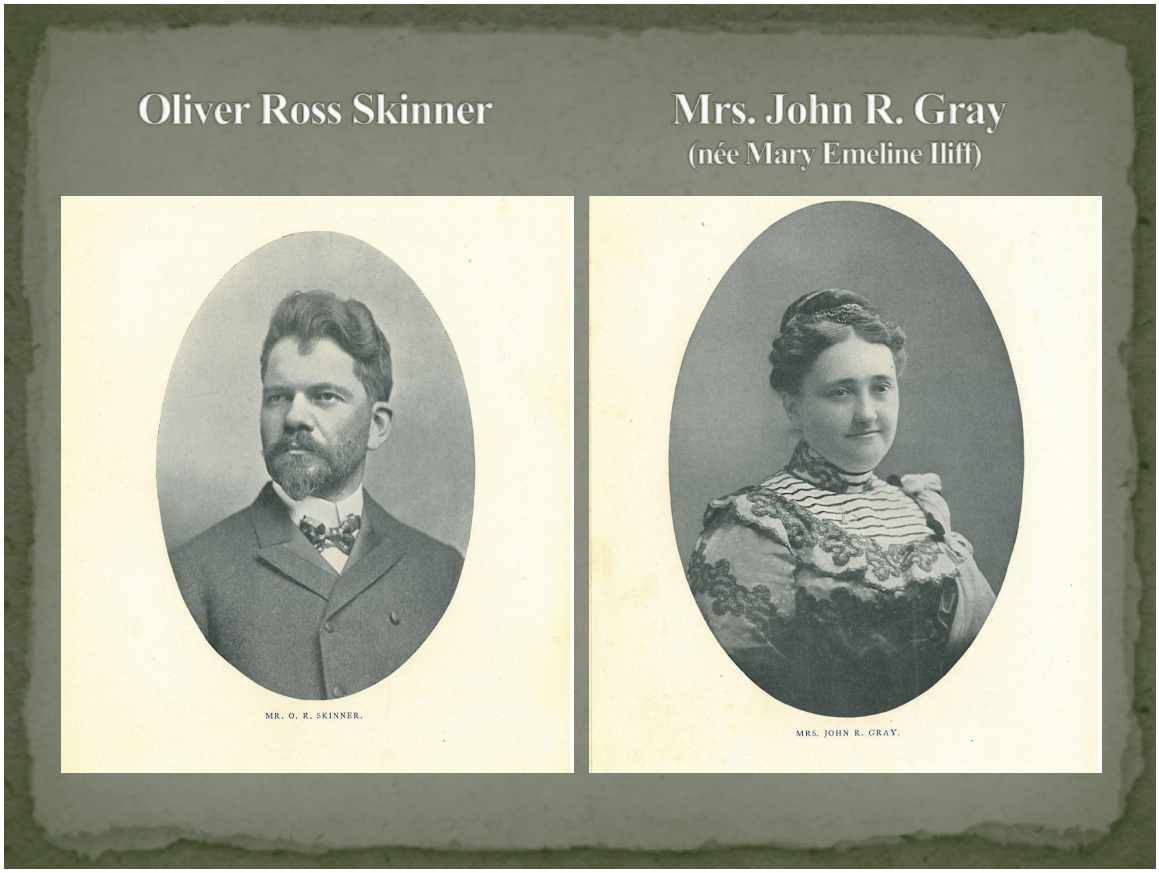


Throughout the remaining decades of the 19th century, the Wesleyan College of Music continued to increase in enrollment, in the number of teaching faculty, and in course offerings. To the core of piano, organ, and voice, were added instruction in violin, flute, clarinet, cornet, guitar, and mandolin. Under the deanship of C. Morris Campbell (a Boston trained organist), the College began to promote *a conservatory* system of instruction, based on "class" or small group instruction, over individual tutelage, emphasizing both the mutual student benefits derived from class participation, as well as its lower cost. The catalogs from 1883-1885 note that while "many are able to pay $10-$15, only a few can pay twice or thrice that amount. [The conservatory system] is adopted by us because it gives students not only a chance to judge their own capabilities, but also those of others. Many students who would do inferior work in a private lesson are spurred on in a class by emulation. Each pupil has the benefit of the whole time afforded the class, and is given ample time to recite at every lesson." [5] The catalogs note however, that those students "desirous of private instruction, may receive it – at an additional fee."

Under the conservatory model, instructors maintained individual studios, recruited their own students, and to some extent, set their own fees - an annual percentage of which was paid to the University, for the privilege of being affiliated with the "Wesleyan." Faculty studios were located either in private homes, or in commercial buildings along of N. Main St. Students could enroll in one of two curriculums or "courses:"

Quoting from the 1884 catalog, "the **Conservatory Course** embraces all the points in a musical education necessary to make a good teacher. This is a feature worthy of consideration from the fact that a limited time only is necessary for its completion. It includes any instruments, with harmony and theory. Voice pupils also pursue this course, and all receive at its completion a regular diploma from the College. The time occupied in the completion of this course is three years." [6] (Notice we have increase a year now.)

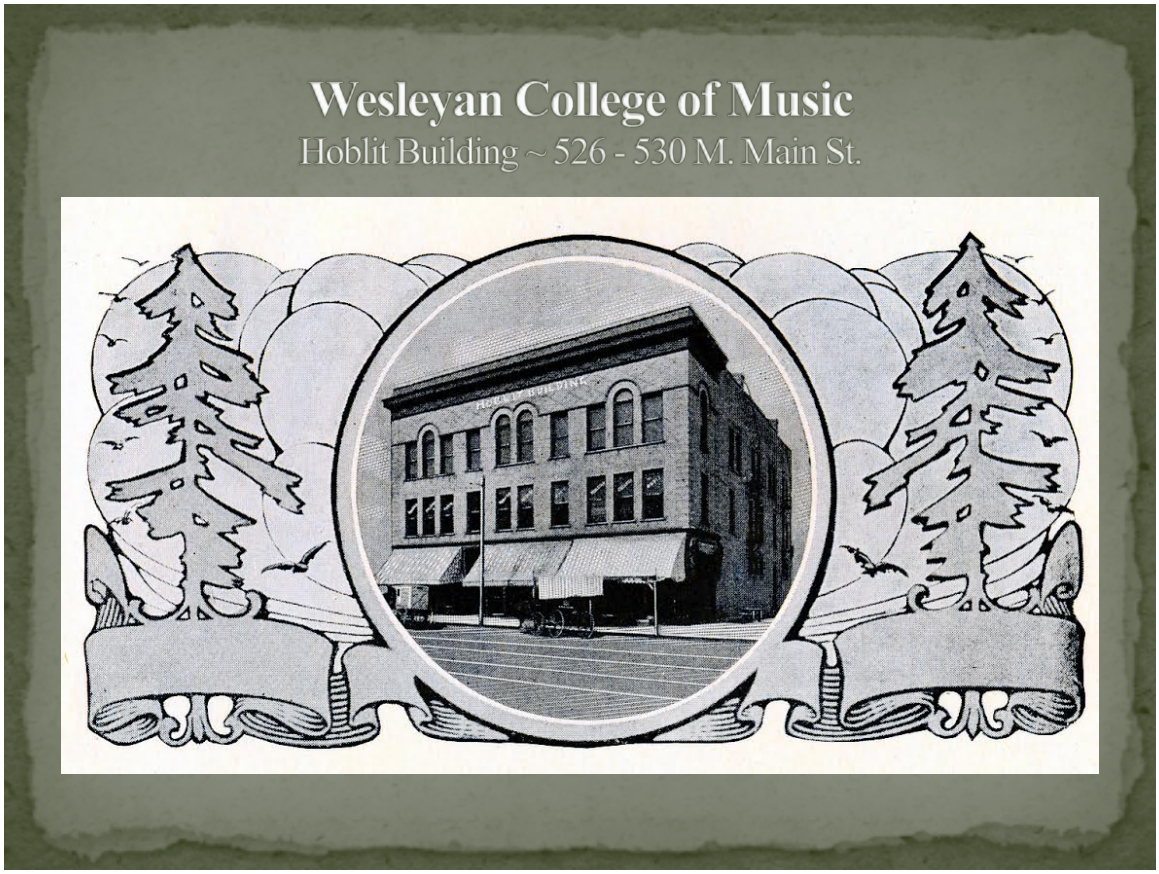
"Following the Conservatory Course is the **College Course**, which includes advanced study of any instrument with regard to concert performance, dramatic and oratorio singing, harmony, theory, counterpoint and composition, knowledge of Latin, Greek, English literature, and the modern languages. It also occupies three years, and constitutes an entrance into the profession. This course requires the student (prior to entering) to be familiar with harmony and theory, the piano sonatas of Beethoven, up to op.53, Chopin's etudes ops.10 and 25, and Liszt's three grand etudes. (How many first-year students could do that now?) In addition, each student is required to pursue or be familiar with the Latin course of some college, and at least one modern language, with German preferred. Three examinations per year are required to be passed at 75%. Graduates of this course are entitled to try for any of the higher degrees. These rules will not be varied in any case where a degree is desired."[7]



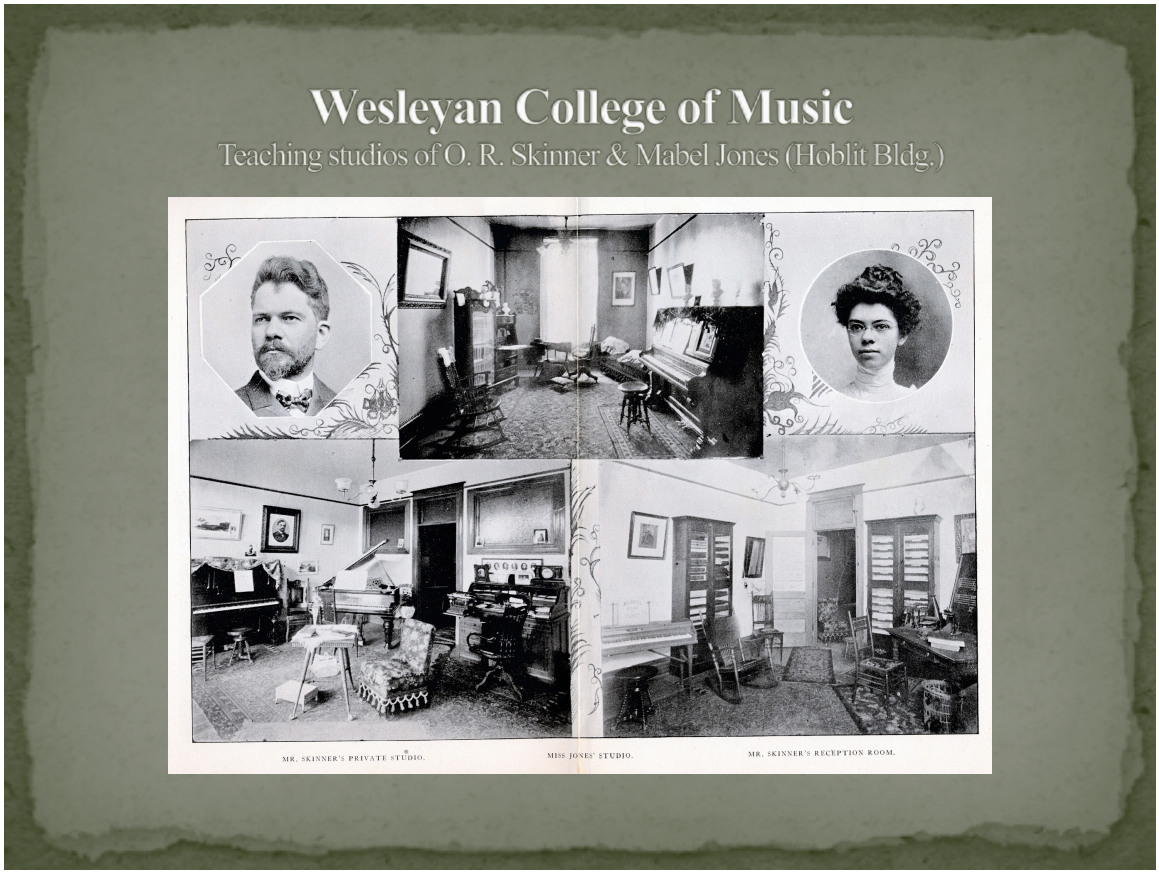
The Wesleyan College of Music was not alone in providing musical training to the residents of McLean County. There were several competing colleges of music operating

in Bloomington simultaneously, vying for students. One such institution was established by Oliver Ross Skinner (1864-1933) a native of Geneva, Illinois. At the age of twelve, Oliver and his parents took up residence in Normal. In 1884 he traveled to Germany to pursue advanced study in piano at the *Neue Akademie der Tonkuns*t in Berlin, founded by the pianist/pedagogue, Theodor Kullak. Upon his return to Central Illinois in 1887, he established the *Bloomington Conservatory of Music.*

In 1890, the Wesleyan College of Music announced the merger of these two schools, with Skinner serving as Joint Director with John Robert Gray, the current Dean of the Wesleyan College of Music. "The College of Music of the Illinois Wesleyan University offers Advantages to Students of Music unequaled in the West. *TO ALL INTERESTED IN MUSIC*: Your attention is called to this circular, issued by the College of Music, and it is trusted you will read carefully and consider well the merits of this institution before deciding where you will go to complete your musical education. It is believed that advantages are here offered as good as any in this country, and at prices within the reach of all. It is no longer necessary to go abroad to secure a liberal education in music; this can now be secured at the Wesleyan College of Music, in Bloomington, Illinois. The recent union of the Bloomington Conservatory (with over three hundred pupils) and the College of Music gives this institution a total of nearly six hundred pupils in all departments. The Faculty consists of eleven experienced teachers, possessing wide reputations as instructors and artists. The principal members of the Faculty are diploma graduates of the best European Conservatories, and have benefitted by years of instruction under the world's most eminent masters."[8] John R. Gray died during an outbreak of measles in March 1893 at the age of 33. His wife, Mary Emeline Iliff - Gray (or Mrs. John R. Gray as she referred to herself throughout the remainder of her life) assumed her husband's role of Joint Director of the Wesleyan College of Music until 1908.



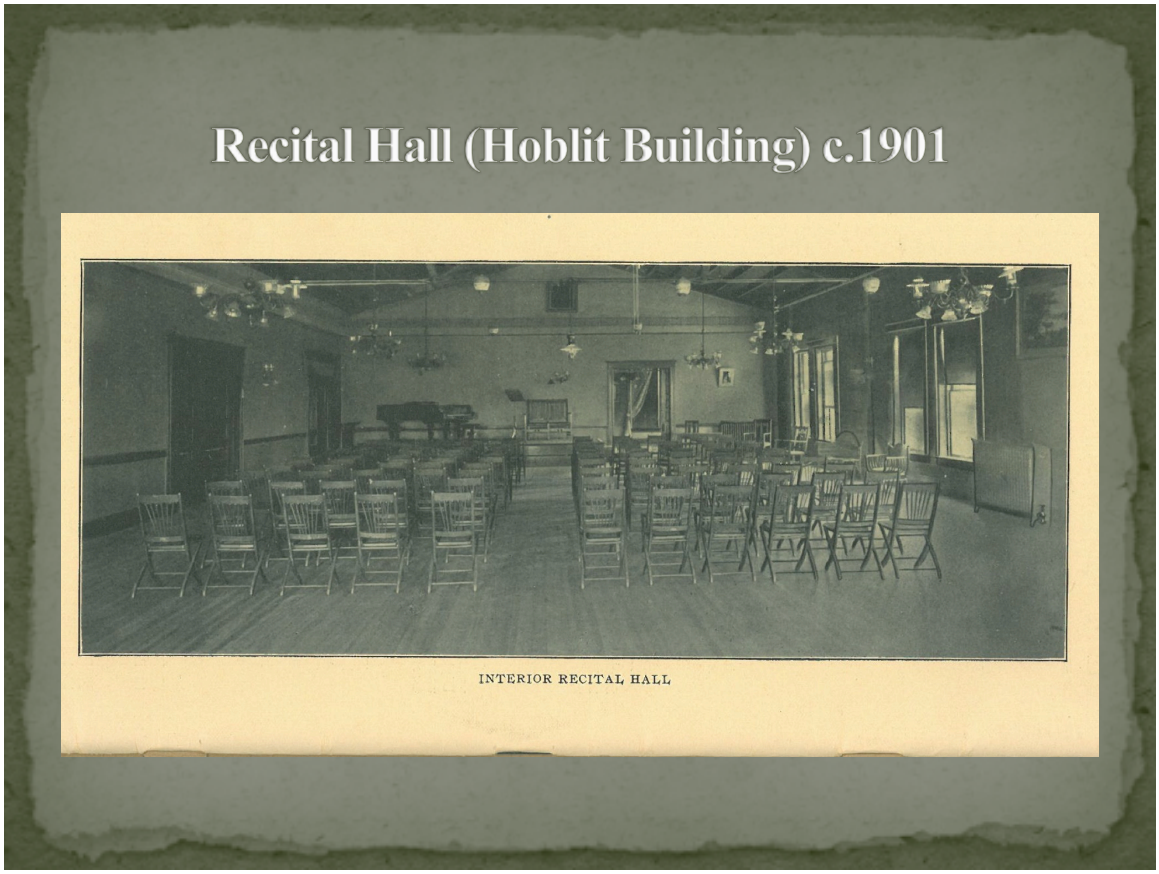
The increase in students and faculty brought the recent merger, the Wesleyan College of Music made it necessary to relocate to larger quarters. During the summer of 1897, the College took over the 2nd and 3rd floors of the newly constructed Hoblit Building at the corner of N. Main and Mulberry Streets in Bloomington. It was described as "centrally located, up-to-date in all respects, with large rooms and modern appointments, sound proofed walls, and the teachers will all have outside rooms."[9] It also boasted a library and a recital hall.



Teaching studios of Oliver Robert Skinner and Mabel Claire Jones in the Hoblit Building, c.1901



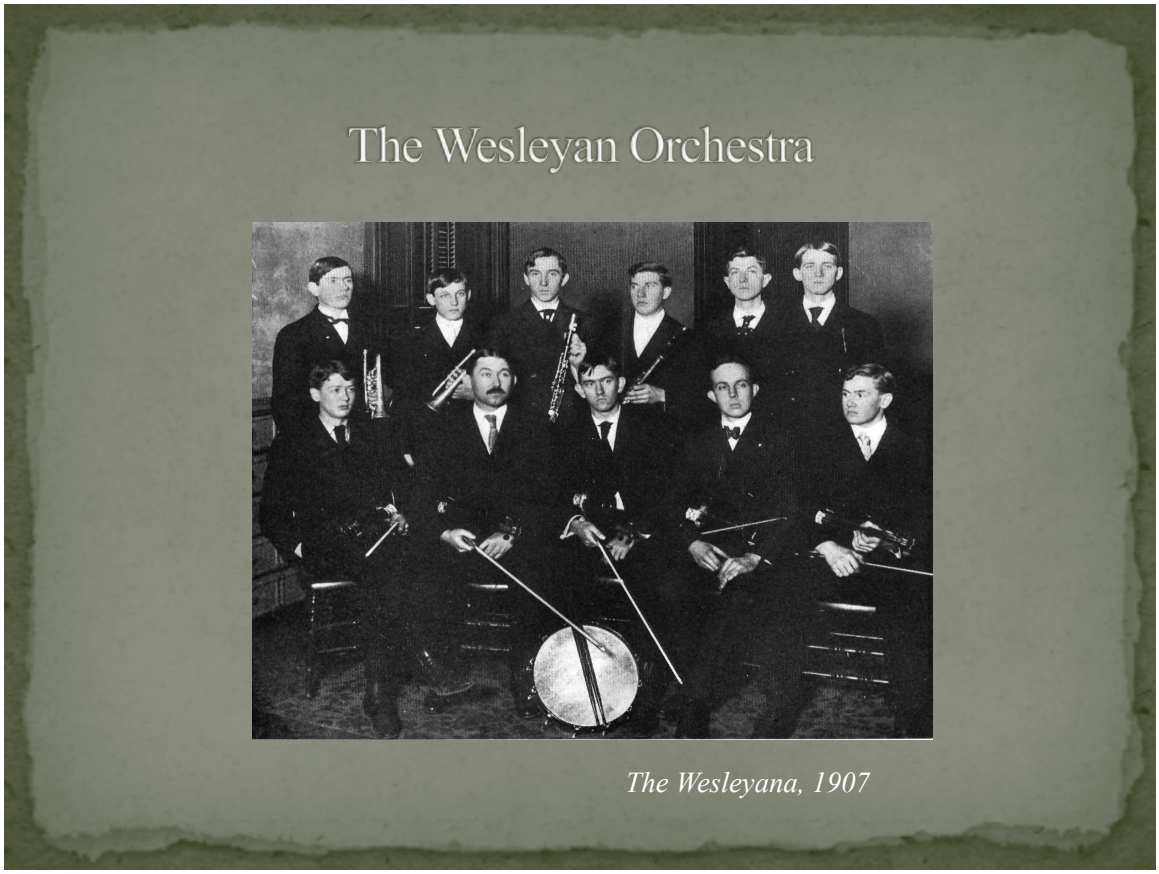
Teaching studio and reception room of Mrs. Robert H. Gray (Hoblit Building), c. 1901



The Wesleyan College of Music Recital Hall (Hoblit Building), c.1901.

Prior to the opening of the Hoblit Building, recitals of the Wesleyan College of Music were held either in Amie Chapel of the University Building (Old Main), or in the sanctuaries of local churches. In addition to his responsibilities at Wesleyan, Oliver Skinner served for many years as organist at the First Methodist Church in downtown Bloomington.

Early accounts of the College of Music note that the first public recital to take place at the college was held in Amie Chapel on October 31, 1889. The IWU Archives however, possesses concert programs extending back approximately five years earlier, to December 12, 1884.



The Wesleyana, 1907

The closing years of the nineteenth century saw the introduction of a variety of instrumental and vocal ensembles to the musical life of the Illinois Wesleyan campus. We learn about these largely from *The Argus* and their popularity steadily grew with the ensuing years.

Wesleyan Orchestra: The November 11, 1897 issue reported that the College orchestra [established the previous year] had been increased to six pieces with the addition of Leon Kerrick, a violinist, and later a trustee of the University. "They play with a vim that is enjoyed by all…we voice the sentiment of the majority when we say that the orchestra is one of the most enjoyable things in connection with the college. We appreciate the music [and] the musicians, even though we do not often tell them."[10] From this photo, eight years later, we see that the Wesleyan Orchestra had increased in size ever further, to number eleven players. Given the size and instrument make-up of this budding orchestra, one wonders what repertoire constituted its early concert programs. (A topic for further research.)



Glee Club & Mandolin Club: We read in the October 15, 1898 issue of *The Argus* that, "on last Wednesday afternoon the initial steps were taken in the organization of a glee club among the Wesleyan boys. The club in under the direction of J.P. Morse and is composed of twelve singers…. The Mandolin Club, also of recent birth, is making progress. The boys are planning to take the students by storm some morning at chapel and to extend their triumphant tour to several adjoining towns and cities during the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays." [11]

Glee Club & Mandolin Club – Debut Performance: We read further in the December 15, 1898 issue of *The Argus* that "on Thursday evening December 8, an entertainment was given in the Wesleyan Chapel by the Wesleyan Glee and Mandolin clubs, assisted by the college of Music and Oratory, and the Euterean Quartette. This was the first performance of the Glee Club, and it was received with great enthusiasm. The Club is composed of 16 voices: the very best which the college affords. Individual voices however, cannot of them selves make a successful Glee Club. It takes careful study to secure a harmonious blending of these voices. As in every other college organization, unity or "team work" plays a very important role. It is here that our Glee Club surprises us. We expected to find weakness [but] we found strength! The boys sang in a manner that we are not able to commend too highly. They showed to a flattering degree the result of careful training which they have received from their director, Mr. W. H. Kerrick." [12]

Ten months later (October 4, 1899), *The Argus* continued to tout the successes of men's Glee Club under the direction of its new director, Mr. Arthur Bassett (also formerly of the Bloomington Conservatory of Music), commenting that the club rehearses three evenings a week, and is scheduling performances in neighboring Lexington, Pontiac, Lincoln, and Clinton, Illinois. It laments however that, "last year we also had a very fine Mandolin & Guitar Club, whose only fault was the few times it performed. These few times, however, scored wonderful successes. So far this term, nothing definite can be said as to the prospects for another one. Mr. Morse is putting forth a great deal of energy in securing the material, but so far has met with indifferent success. Some very good players have been found, but there is still a woeful want. This is surprising, for among the students enrolled [at Wesleyan] are certainly [those] talented enough as to constitute a fine club. It is supposed that modesty prevents the discovery of this. [But gentlemen] this should not stand in the way. Offer yourselves for a trial at least and reflect credit on yourselves and the Wesleyan as well. Don't let the fellows who sing get ahead of you!" [13]



The Wesleyana, 1907

The 1907 *Wesleyana* records that "the University has also been blessed with the organization of a Girls' Glee Club. Without a girls' glee club a college is in an awful predicament. In former years we have had girls' glee clubs that have lightly flitted onto the stage of college life, and have, immediately, as lightly flitted off that same stage into the silent abysses of oblivion. But none of these former aggregations have been anything like so talented or energetic as is the present contingent. The Girls' Glee Club was organized during the first part of the year and the members after having gone through the

process of simmering down to the faithful few, set to work with such diligence and enthusiasm that today, the Wesleyan may boast of the best organization of the kind that has ever added its charm to college life. The club has made many appearances in public since the event of its coming and on every one of these occasions has made a decided hit. Their contribution to different college events has been greatly appreciated. It is the intention to preserve the club as a permanent organization, and if its progress in future years keeps pace in any proportion with its growth since its birth, we will have a Girls' Glee Club at the Wesleyan that will not only have no equal, but that can have no equal" [14].



The Wesleyana, 1906

"The Band a Reality" Finally, the November 11, 1900 issue of *The Argus* announces the organization of a Wesleyan Band. "The Wesleyan Band is a go! A meeting for temporary organization was held Monday afternoon last, and a great deal of business was transacted. Professor Ferguson was the chairman of the meeting and was given authority to appoint a committee to arrange by-laws and to provide for the management. It was [further] decided to have the band consist of 22 instruments. There will be two meetings a week for practice, but the time has not been selected as yet." (p. 4) Two weeks later (November 30, 1900) we read that "six or seven men have been found who can play horn, and two or three more are clarinetists. Mr. Naylor has had several years experience as a leader of an orchestra and is willing to take the matter in charge. It is a most worthy enterprise and we hope to see it carried out." [15]

"First appearance of the Wesleyan Band": (*The Argus,* February 6, 1901) "the first appearance of the Wesleyan Band was in every way most successful, and the music was heartily appreciated by the student body. We have heard rumors and distant strains of music for some time, which have betokened activity among the members of that organization, but the progress that has been made was a surprise to many. The selections given in chapel brought out the individual and collective ability of the band, and gave great satisfaction. It requires pluck and energy to make an enterprise of this kind succeed, and much credit is deserved by all concerned." [16]



Early in the 20th century, the University Administration desired to tighten the relationship between itself and the College of Music. At its June 1902 meeting, the Board of Trustees determined that to accomplish this a restructuring of the latter would be in the best interest of the university. Over the course of the next eight to ten years, a variety of measures were taken to affect this restructuring. Some measures were of an administrative or fiscal nature. Others were of a more collegial or disciplinary nature.

The first change was the elimination of the position of Dean of the College, with the President of the University assuming responsibility "for the entire management and control of the school; the object being to affiliate the College more closely with the University, and to afford the individual teachers with more independence and scope."[16] The administrative changes took effect at the beginning of the 1902-1903 academic, year with President Edgar M. Smith listed as the ex-officio administrator of the College.

Several years later in 1906, the Board issued a set "*Articles of Agreement between the Faculty of the College of Music of Illinois Wesleyan University and the Illinois Wesleyan University.*" [18]

These stipulated that:
The Executive Committee is to receive:
Eight per cent (8%) of the total figures of all lessons given by members of the faculty of the college during the school year beginning September 3, 1906
All diplomas and certificate fees shall be paid to the Executive Committee
All fees from affiliated teachers shall be paid to the Executive Committee
The Executive Committee to have the nominations and appointment of all teachers and assistants
The Executive Committee is to render the following service to the College of Music:
To advertise the College of Music in all catalogs on good paper, but the individual teachers are to furnish all half-tone places. The cost of catalogs and postage on the same is not to exceed $300 per annum, subject to arrangement between teachers and Dr. Barnes.
To provide Amie Chapel for ten general recitals; and two graduating recitals yearly, free-of-charge.

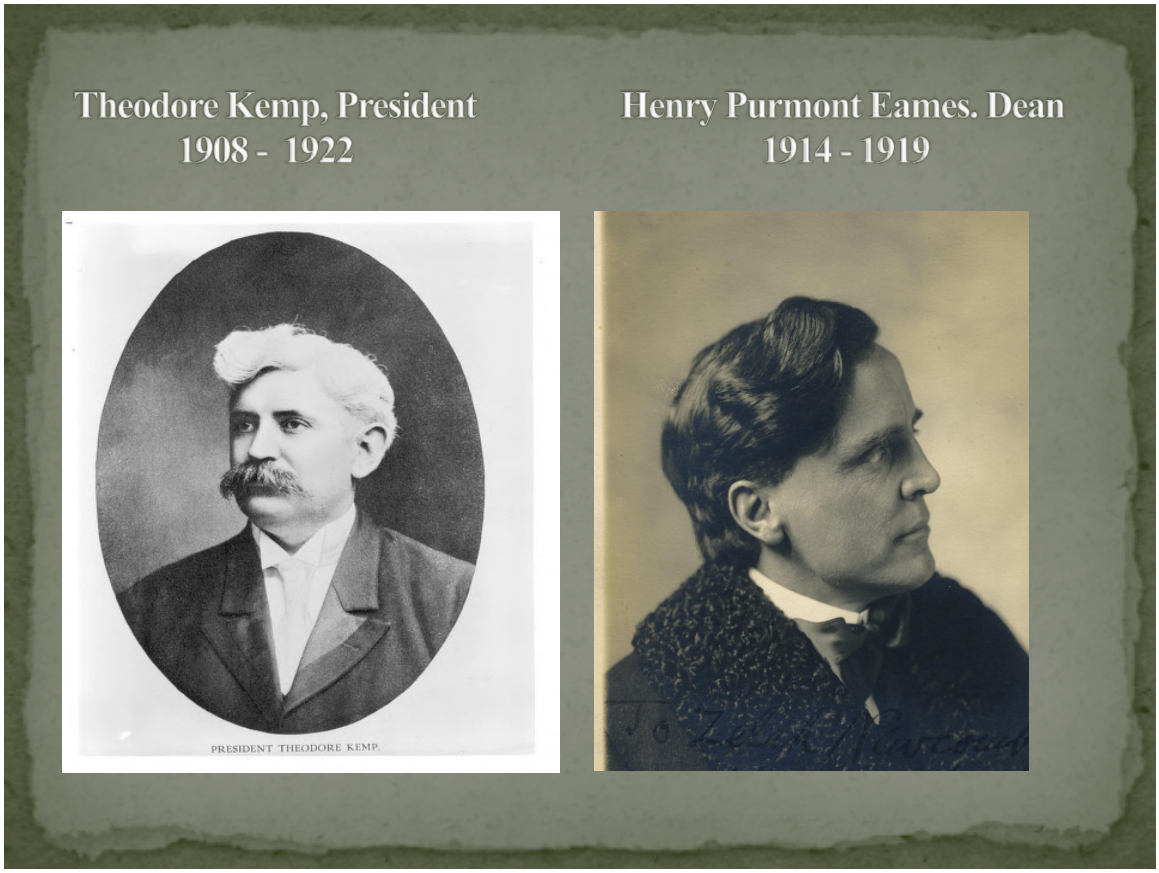
Further: (and now is where I think it gets interesting) it has been decided by the Executive Committee that:
The Joint Directors in the College of Music [having been discontinued] with the President of the University [acting] as director during the ensuing year,
Teacher in the College of Music shall treat each other in a courteous manner, and no teacher shall comment either publicly or privately concerning the [personal] character, or the work of another teacher to his or her detriment, or to solicit another teacher's pupils. Any violation of this condition may be considered sufficient reason to sever a teacher's connection with the college. All complaints of any kind of character must be referred to the President of the University.
The arrangements indicated in this proposition throughout go into effect September 3, 1906 and continue until further action is taken by the Board of Trustees; it being understood, that no action will be taken to interfere with this arrangement prior to June 13, 1907.

Three contracts were signed in behalf of the University and the faculty of the College of Music;
1. One with O.R. Skinner, Mrs. Faire Stevick-Skinner, Miss Vida Litchfield, Mrs. H.K. Roush and Harry M. Phillips.
2. Another with Mrs. John R. Gray, Clarence Mayer, and Miss Ella Lewis.
3. And a third between the University and L.E. Hersey.

By the close of the 1907 academic year, Mr. & Mrs. Skinner, Vida Litchfield, Harry Philips and Mrs. Roush resigned from the University. By the close of the following year, Mrs, Gray, Ethel Mae Harris, and Ella Lewis also resigned. Only Clarence Mayer (piano) and Lynnwood Hersey (violin) remained. A number of new faculty were quickly

hired to fill the vacancies left by the resignations; some of these would continue at Illinois Wesleyan for extended periods of time.

Note: Both Skinner and Gray established competing schools within the Bloomington community. Skinner retired to Californian in 1924 where he died in July 1933. Mrs. John R. Gray continued to teach until her death on August 18, 1920, at her College of Music located at 911/913 N. Main Street, Bloomington. This grey, rusticated stone structure still stands on the East side of Main St, near Empire.



Theodore Kemp was serving as pastor of the Grace M.E. Church in Bloomington, when he elected in 1908, to succeed Francis Barnes as the eighth President of IWU. President Kemp is remembered as one of the greatest presidents of the institution. He significantly reduced the university debt load that had accumulated over the previous two administrations and he steer-headed the first, major capital campaign to build up the university's endowment.

During his presidency, the **Amateur Music Club of Bloomington** was established (1908), which until the 1980s sponsored musical performances by leading national and international touring musicians and ensembles.

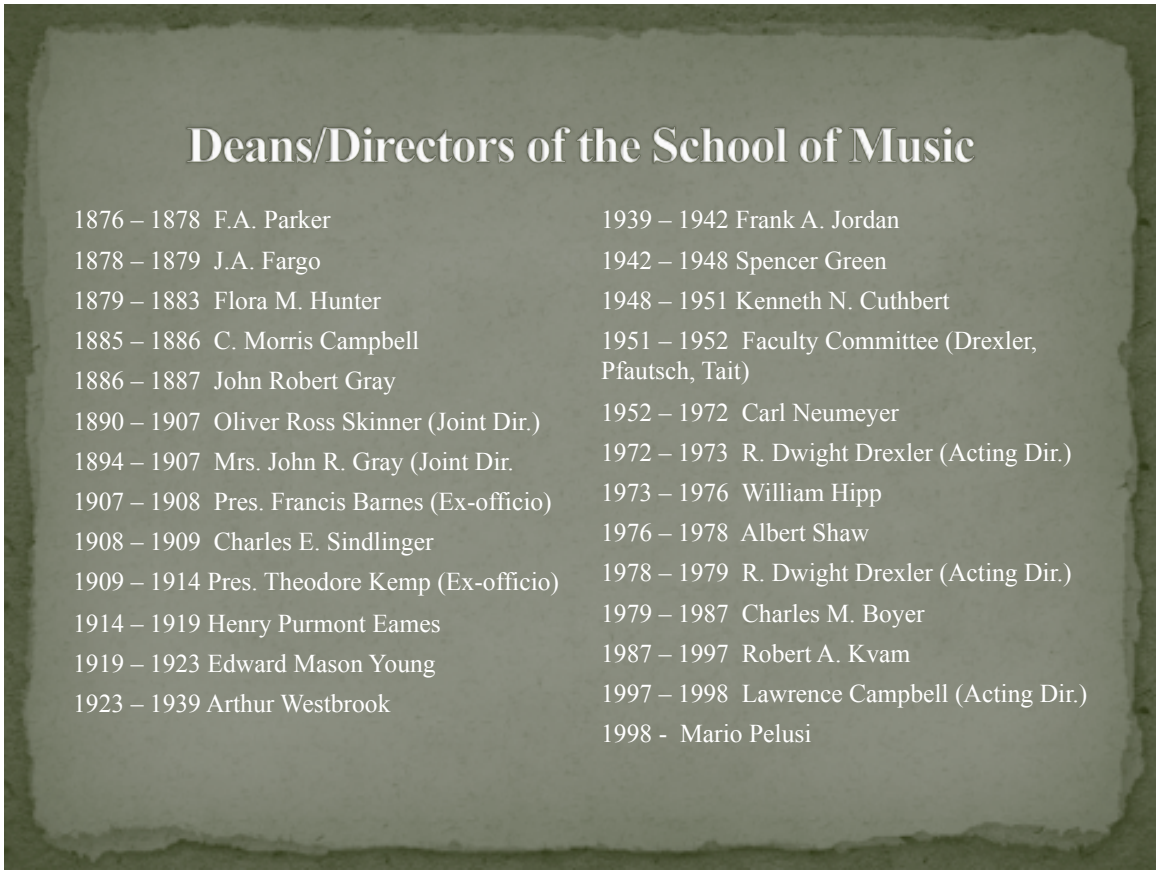
President Kemp continued to serve as the Dean, ex-officio of the College of Music, until 1914, when Henry Purmont Eames was appointed Dean of the Illinois Wesleyan

University School of Music. The change in name from College, to School of Music had taken place in 1910, as part of the re-structuring of the School.

One of the earliest opera productions mounted at Illinois Wesleyan was directed by Purmont Eames in February 1915. *The Pipe of Desire,* composed by Frederick Converse was staged with two performances at Chatterton's Opera House in downtown Bloomington. The prospect of "grand opera" at Wesleyan produced a fair amount of hype in the *The Argus*, with articles announcing auditions, casting results, and performance reviews.



What's in a Name? When perusing the early catalogs and circulars published by Illinois Wesleyan University, we find a variety of evolving names ascribed to the musical department: Department, College, Conservatory, School. This likely reflects the somewhat loose relationship that existed between the two organizations during the early years. Nor, is there always consistency in naming within individual years' publications. This may however, may reflect more on editorial practice than on issues of identity. Nevertheless, it wasn't until President Kemp's initiatives to solidify the relationship between the two parties, that the name "Illinois Wesleyan University School of Music" was adopted. This took place in 1910.



Deans and Directors of the School of Music at Illinois Wesleyan University.
Similarly, the titles given to administrators also fluctuated over the decades: sometimes being listed as Director; at other times, as Dean. The title of Dean was first ascribed to F.A. Parker in 1876. This changed to Director with the joint of administration of Oliver Skinner and Mrs. Gray. In 1908 the title of Dean was reassigned to Charles Sindlinger (1908-1909). Henry Purmont Eams (1914-1919), and Edward Mason Young (1919-1923) are once again listed as Directors. Following Young, Arthur Westbrook was given the title of Dean. The title of Dean remained in effect until the resignation of Dean Kenneth Cuthbert in 1951. It is interesting to note that beginning in the fall of 1948 (under President Holmes) the university at large was divided into two colleges: the College of Liberal Arts, and the College of Fine Arts, consisting of the Schools of Music, Art, and Theater. While the School of Music was administered by a dean, the corresponding administrators of the School of Art, G. Rupert Kilgore, and the School of Theater, Lawrence Tucker are listed as directors. Carl Neumeyer (1952-1972) retained the title of Dean throughout his leadership of the School of Music, although in its review of Illinois Wesleyan University in 1967/1969, The North Central Association of Colleges and Schools recommended dropping the designation of College of Fine Arts, accusing it of being a college in paper only. [19] Since Dr. Neumeyer's death in 1972 the title of Director has been given to this position.



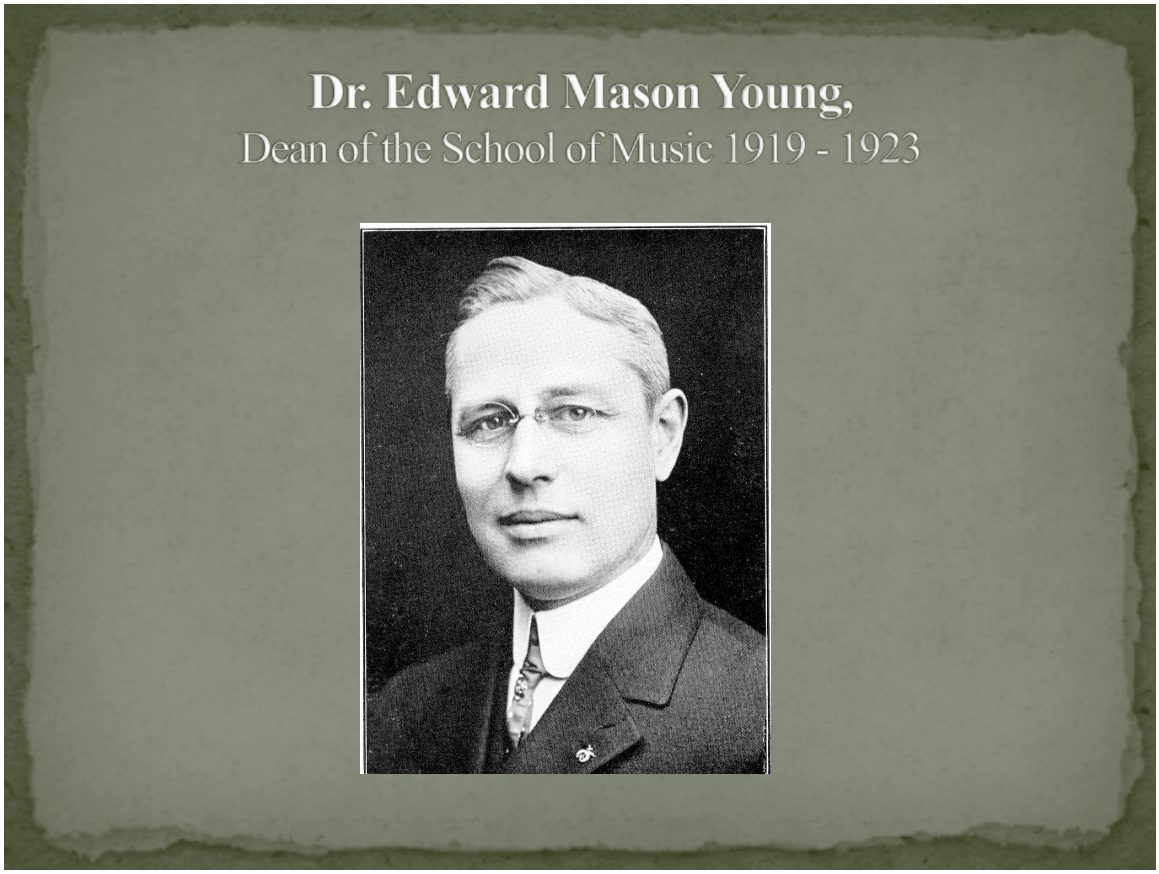
The year 1911 saw the publication of the *Wesleyan Cheer Song*, with words by Chalmers H. Marquis (Class of 1910) and music by Ralph S. Freese (Class of 1911).

Illinois Wesleyan Ukulele Club



The Wesleyana, 1918

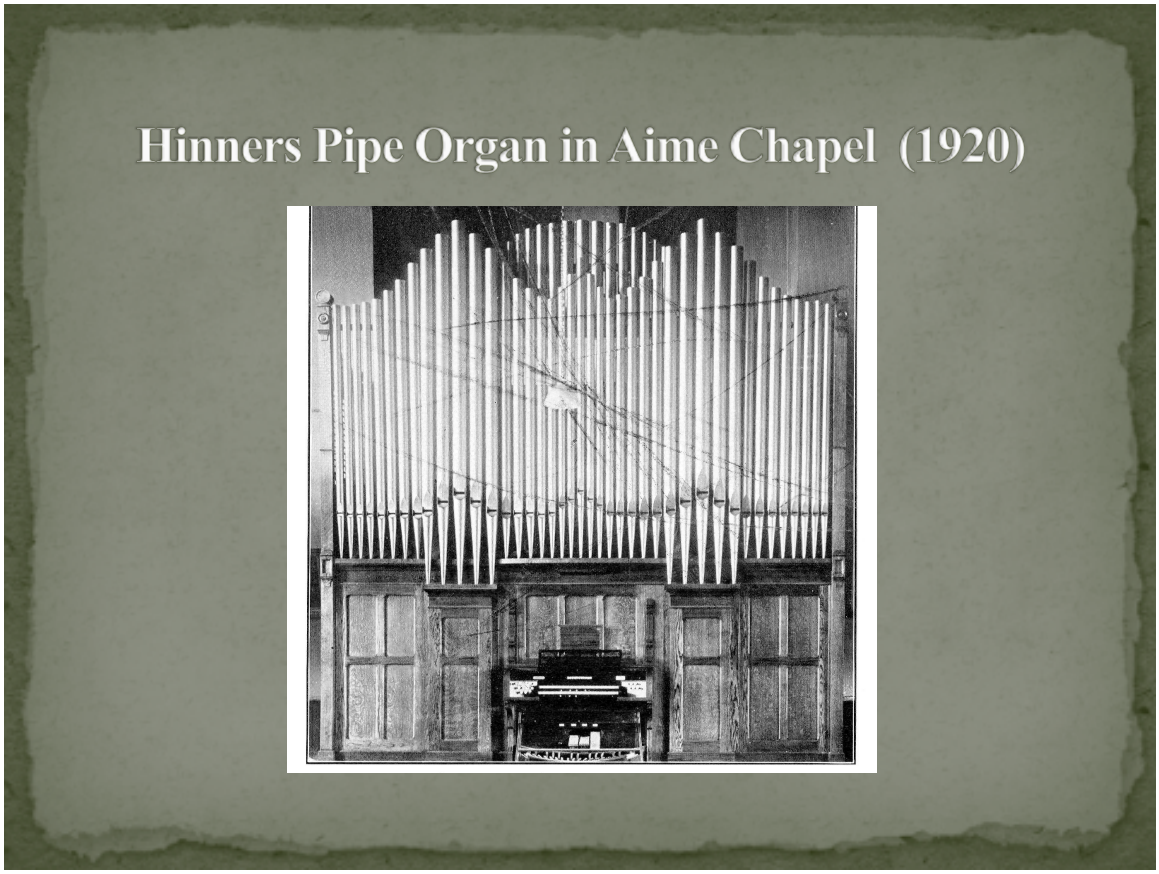
The Illinois Wesleyan University Ukulele Club formed in 1918. In spite of its attractive membership, the short-lived club made only one more appearance in *The Wesleyana* of the following year (1919).



In the fall of 1919, Dr. Edward Mason Young, formerly a professor of piano and organ at the Ohio Wesleyan University, was appointed Dean of the School of Music, following the departure of Purmont Eames. During his four-year tenure, the School of Music became an even more integral part of the academic and campus life of Illinois Wesleyan. Dr. Mason adopted as his motto for the School, "Musical worth combined with Christian culture" looking to the university's Methodist constituency to support his efforts to make the Illinois Wesleyan School of Music all that it could be." [20]



Dr. Young was closely aligned with President Kemp's desire to strengthen the relationship between the School of Music and the university. He steered efforts to relocate the school to the university campus. Beginning in 1919, three residences were successively purchased along East Street, just north of University Street, facing the quadrangle, on the site of what is now the site of Memorial Student Center. These were refitted to serve as teaching and practice facilities for the faculty and students. Academic music instruction continued to take place in Old Main Hall, with recitals being held either in Aime Chapel or downtown, in the Hoblit Building recital hall, which the University continued to rent for yet some years.



As an accomplished organist, Dr. Young sought to have an instrument suitable for teaching and recital purposes at the disposal of the university without having to resort to instruments in local churches. With permission from the Board of Trustee, Young designed and negotiated with the Hinners Organ Co. of Pekin, Illinois, an instrument of eighteen stops. The cost was $5000. This was the first of several pipe organs built by the Hinners Company for Illinois Wesleyan. It was completed and installed in Amie Chapel during the summer of 1920. An inaugural recital was performed on November 9th by Clarence Eddy, the most famous American organist of early 20th century.

Without doubt however, Mason Young's chief accomplishment at Illinois Wesleyan was the establishment of the **Bachelor of Music** degree program. Students entering this program were required to have completed 15 units of high school credit, the same as required for admission to the College of Liberal Arts. Students were encouraged to pursue two lines of applied music study, in keyboard, instrumental, and/or vocal combination. Students were also required to study music theory throughout their program, to participate in musical ensembles, to complete two years of college English, and two years modern foreign language study. The degree of Bachelor of Music was conferred upon those students who met these requirements, and who above all, demonstrated artistic skill in performance. Inducements were also directed at students in the College of Liberal Arts, to the extent, that 18 hours of credit toward the baccalaureate degree could be earned for coursework taken in the School of Music. Mason Young's rationale was that "music in this day and age is no longer considered an accomplishment,

but [rather] a vital necessity to the young man or woman who wishes to secure a liberal education." [21]

The first Bachelor of Music degree at Illinois Wesleyan was conferred upon Lois Evelyn Hoffman in June 1921.

Both President Kemp and Edward Mason Young left Illinois Wesleyan at the close of the 1922 academic year. Theodore Kemp's final act as President was to lay the corner stone of Buck Memorial Library, the climax of a building program begun during his administration, which also included the Science Hall in 1912 (now Stevenson Hall or the School of Nursing), the creation of a women's dormitory, renamed Kemp Hall, and the erection of the Memorial Gymnasium in 1921. Dean Young left Wesleyan to assume the music directorship of a large Peoria church.



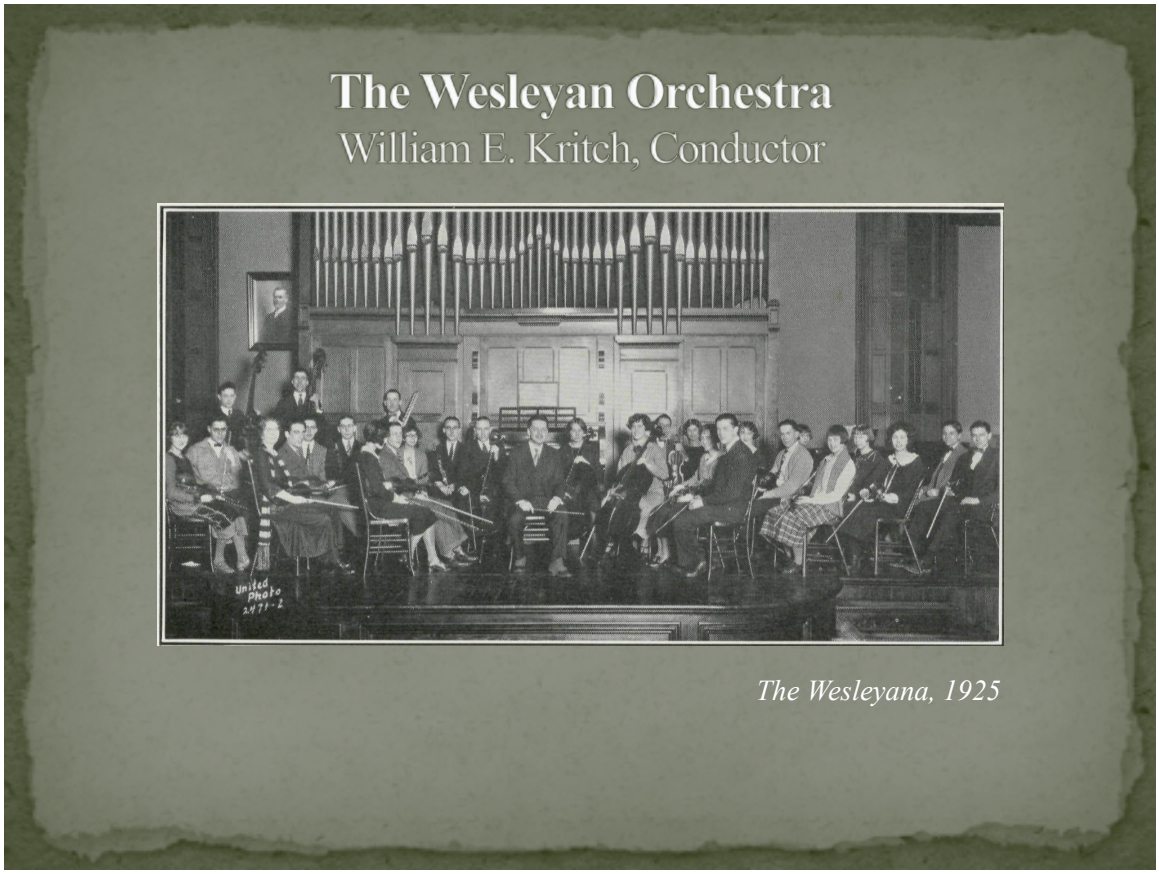
President William J. Davidson assumed office in September 1922, with a faculty of 51 and a student body of 961, 436 of which were enrolled in the School of Music. Of these, nearly 300 students resulted from the merger of the School of Music with yet another competing Bloomington musical academy, the *Bloomington School of Music*, which had been established in 1915 by six disgruntled Wesleyan College of Music faculty members who had resigned during the deanship of Purmont Eames.

In 1923, President Davidson hired Arthur E. Westbrook to be Dean of the School of Music. Dean Westbrook destined to become an iconic figure in the history of Illinois Wesleyan University. A native of Kansas, and educated at Albion College in Michigan, he held similar positions at the Kansas State Agricultural College, and the Dunlap Operatic School, prior to coming to Illinois Wesleyan. Within two years of his arrival, the total enrollment of Illinois Wesleyan exceeded 1,200 students. A third of the student body was affiliated with the School of Music. This had an impact on both the academic and social life of the school. Additional faculty members were required to teach – particularly in the area of applied music. The need for studios, practice facilities, and equipment was acute. A third residence along East Street was purchased in 1924 to help alleviate the stress.



This photo c.1924/5 shows the School of Music faculty (along with numerous students perched in the background), standing on the curb in front of the 3 re-fitted houses to accommodate the School of Music. The occasion of this photo was the arrival of 32 upright Cable pianos for use in the studios and practice rooms located in these buildings. Some attempt was made at soundproofing the walls between adjoining teaching studios. Closets served as practice rooms. One can only imagine the combined sounds that vibrated the walls and emanated from windows these buildings during warm weather.

The size of the School's musical ensembles also increased dramatically during this period. The following slides depict the orchestra, band, chorus, women's and men's glee cubs from the 1925 issue of *The Wesleyana.*



The Wesleyana, 1925

The Wesleyan Band

George W. Marton, Conductor



The Wesleyana, 1925

The Wesleyan Chorus

Arthur E. Westbrrook, Director



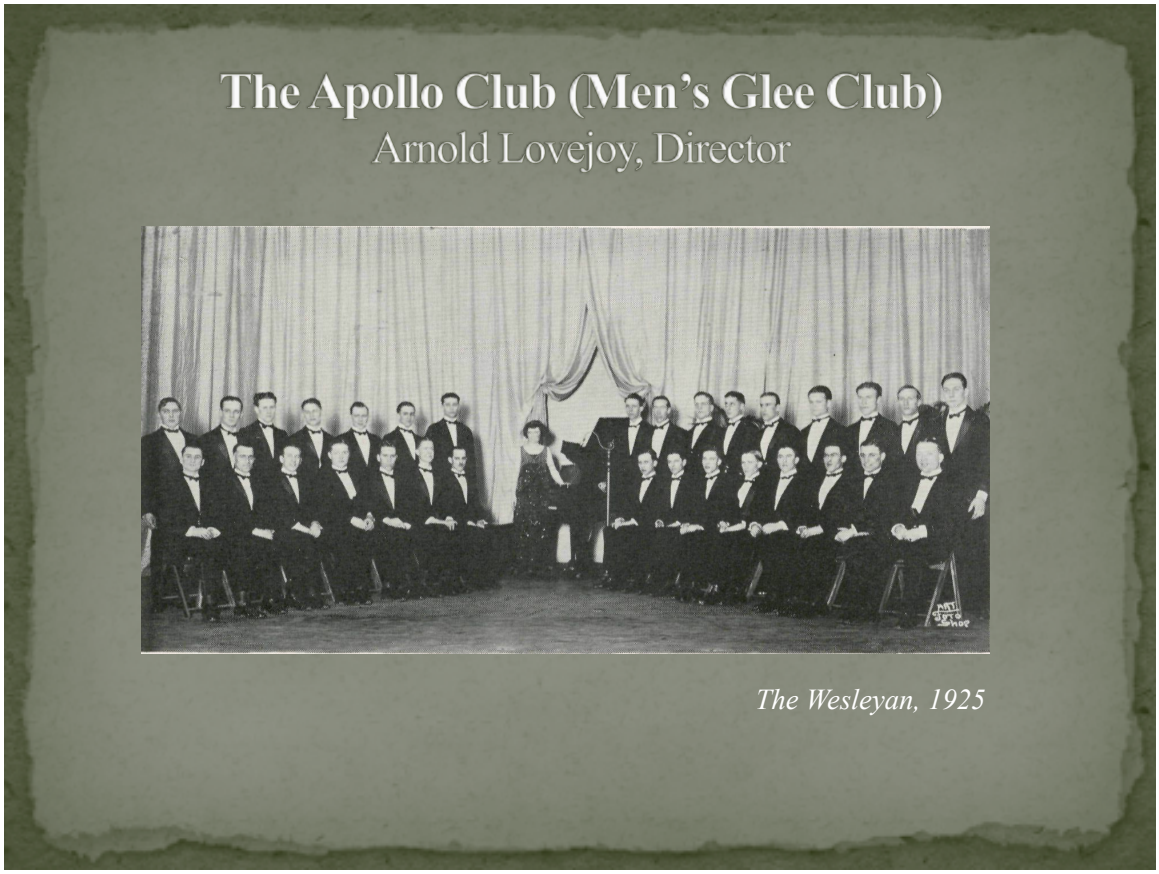
The Wesleyana, 1925

St. Cecilia Club (Women's Glee Club)

Arthur Westbrook, Director



The Wesleyana, 1925



The director of the Men's Glee Club, Arnold Lovejoy, also came to Illinois Wesleyan in 1923 (the same year as Arthur Westbrook) as a voice instructor. Through his efforts (and sometimes personal resources) he single-handedly brought the Jazz Age to the university campus. The glee club adopted the name of *The Apollo Club* under Lovejoy's direction. In 1929, he purchased train tickets for the boys to travel to Chicago to broadcast over NBC radio. This was the first-ever glee club to broadcast nationally over the NBC network whose audience at the time was estimated to be about 5 million people.



In 1932, a four-member spin-off of the group “The Apollo Quartet” began to appear regularly in concert on the Wesleyan campus, and quickly became one of its most popular student organizations. The quartet also toured the state of Illinois with performances at schools, churches, and community organizations. The larger ensemble was disbanded later in the 1930s but the Quartet continued to entertain throughout the 1970s. Two later Illinois Wesleyan School of Music faculty members, Henry Charles and Frank Bohnhorst sang with the quartet as students, while Dwight Drexler served as the piano accompanist.

Top Left: Apollo Quartet (1956) Top Right: Apollo Quartet (1960)
Bottom Left: Apollo Quartet (1971) Bottom Right: Apollo Quartet Reunion (1988)



Arnold Lovejoy also organized a instrumental jazz ensemble called the *Wesleyan Collegiates.* In 1928 he maneuvered to book this group of stylishly dressed young men on a French ocean liner bound from New York to France, for a six-week playing engagement in Parisian hotels and cafes. (One can easily imagine that after their Parisian adventure, these young men were never the same!) Lovejoy left the university faculty in 1931, however the *Collegiates,* like their vocal counterparts, continued to thrive at Illinois Wesleyan, becoming the forerunner of later jazz bands.



Greek life had been an established part of the Illinois Wesleyan community since 1866, with the appearance of university's first social fraternity, Phi Kappa Delta. It wasn't until March of 1920 however, that a group of Wesleyan School of Music students banded together to form a social *Musical Club* under the supervision of Dean Westbrook. The Club's charter, stipulated that club was "to be composed of the pupils of mature age."[22]

In four years however, the first chapter of a national Greek music service organization was established at IWU. The Sigma Alpha Chapter of *Sigma Alpha Iota* Sorority was chartered on March 3, 1924. This was followed in three months by the Alpha Lambda Chapter *of Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia* on June 6, 1924. Two years later, the Sigma Chapter of *Delta Omicron* was established (May 1, 1926). These three organizations remain an active part of the Greek fabric of our campus to the present day, each sponsoring musical, social and service-related activities both on and beyond the university campus. All are open to any students with an interest in music, regardless of major.



Even with the three residences along East Street, purchased to ease both the School of Music and the university administrations desired a permanent facility, built specifically to meet the educational needs of musicians. In December of 1925, President Davidson was approached by representatives of the Presser Foundation (established by the founder of the well-known Philadelphia music publisher, Theodore Presser), with an offer of $75,000 toward the construction of such a building, provided the university could raise matching funds, and an additional $15,000 for furnishings. President Davidson officially launched a ten-day campaign beginning on March 13, 1928 to raise what seemed at the time, the extraordinary amount of $90,000. While no major donations were received, many small and mid-sized gifts, by townspeople and alumni were. Much to his own astonishment, President Davidson announced ten days later, that over $92,0000 had been received in signed pledges. Illinois Wesleyan went into contract with the Presser Foundation on March 26 and ground was broken for Presser Hall on October 31, 1928.



THE ARGUS

February 7, 1930

VOLUME XXXVI — BLOOMINGTON, ILLINOIS, FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 1930 — NUMBER 14

Presser Hall is Dedicated with Four-day Services

FIRST CHAPEL HELD IN PRESSER AUDITORIUM

St. Cecelia Club, Apollo Club, Speakers, on Opening Program

FERGUSON PRESIDES

Wesleyan students and faculty held their first chapel meeting in the auditorium of the newly dedicated Presser Hall Wednesday morning, February 5. A special program was arranged for the opening of the new chapel, and a farewell was given to Amie chapel in Main Hall, which for the past half century has served as the regular chapel hall.

Mrs. Vera Pearl Kemp opened the program with two selections on the new four manual Hinners organ. The St. Cecelia society, women's glee club, under the direction of C. Warner Calhoun, continued the program with several choral selections.

Ferguson Presides

Vice-president Wilbert Ferguson, in the absence of President Davidson, led in a short devotional service. In a short address to the assembled students he recalled much of the early history of Wesleyan, especially that phase connected with the completion of Amie chapel fifty-nine years ago. Professor Ferguson, who is the oldest professor in the matter of years service at the school, cited the early growth of Wesleyan from its beginning as an academy located in the building now known as Old North Hall, which at that early date served as chapel, science hall, library, and everything connected with the university.

In a short while, according to infor-

Illinois Wesleyan Dedicates Presser Music Hall

DR. WM. J. DAVIDSON, PRESIDENT OF WESLEYAN — ARTHUR E. WESTBROOK, DEAN OF THE MUSIC HALL

Presser Hall, Wesleyan's new School of Music Building, erected at a cost of nearly $190,000, was dedicated with an impressive four-day program, February 2, 3, 4, and 5th. The building is splendidly equipped with musical instruments, an auditorium seating 750, and a new four-manual electro-pneumatic Hinners organ. President Wm. J. Davidson heads the music school, and Professor W[illegible]brook is dean of the new Hall.

DEDICATORY ADDRESS IS GIVEN BY DR. J. F. COOKE

Presentation and Delivery of the Keys to New Building is Program Feature

FACULTY ARTISTS PLAY

Dr. James Francis Cooke, president of the Presser Foundation of Philadelphia, presented the dedicatory address at Wesleyan's new music hall Monday evening at 7:30. He told the capacity assemblage that a new day in American music is at hand with more people to actually take part in the art rather than to be merely spectators.

"We are facing a new day in music," Dr. Cooke stated. "The accomplishments which are being made in music are astounding and the opportunities we are going to find in music are so great as to be almost incredible."

The place of music in the lives of great men and increased greatness gotten through the study of it was described by Dr. Cooke as being only one of the great things that music can do.

Radio is Valuable

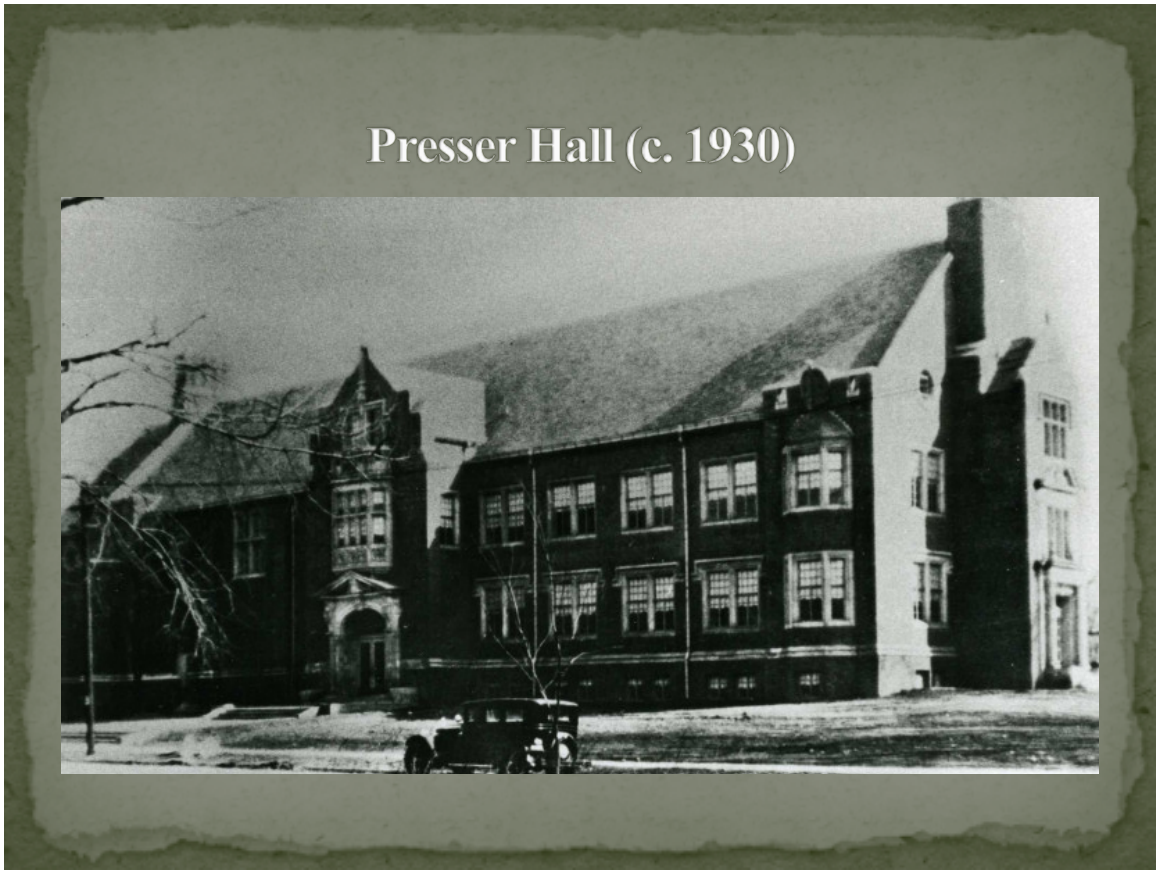
Dr. Cooke said that the radio is the greatest advertisement that music has. It tends toward study and appreciation of music rather than against it, he stated. America, as regards radio, holds an enviable position among the nations of the world for the opportunities and advantages in music. Other countries do not have as adequate a system of radio broadcast.

"The place of music in education is being recognized for its value," the

The construction of Presser Hall progressed at a steady pace and was completed just prior to the devastating stock market crash in October 1929. The new building boasted 25 teaching studios and classrooms, 30 practice rooms, a small recital hall (Room 11) and an auditorium with a seating capacity of 750. The studios and practice rooms were soundproofed, and equipped with 58 pianos, and 5 pipe organs, including a large four-manual (keyboard) and pedal instrument for the auditorium (again built by the Hinners Organ Company of Pekin, Illinois).

Presser Hall was dedicated with celebratory events spanning four days, February 2 – 5, 1930. It was marked with religious services, addresses by President Davidison, Dr. James F. Cooke, President of the Presser Foundation, and various state education officials. The new pipe organ was inaugurated with a recital, performed by Arthur Dunham, a Bloomington native, and the organist of the First Methodist Episcopal Church of Chicago.

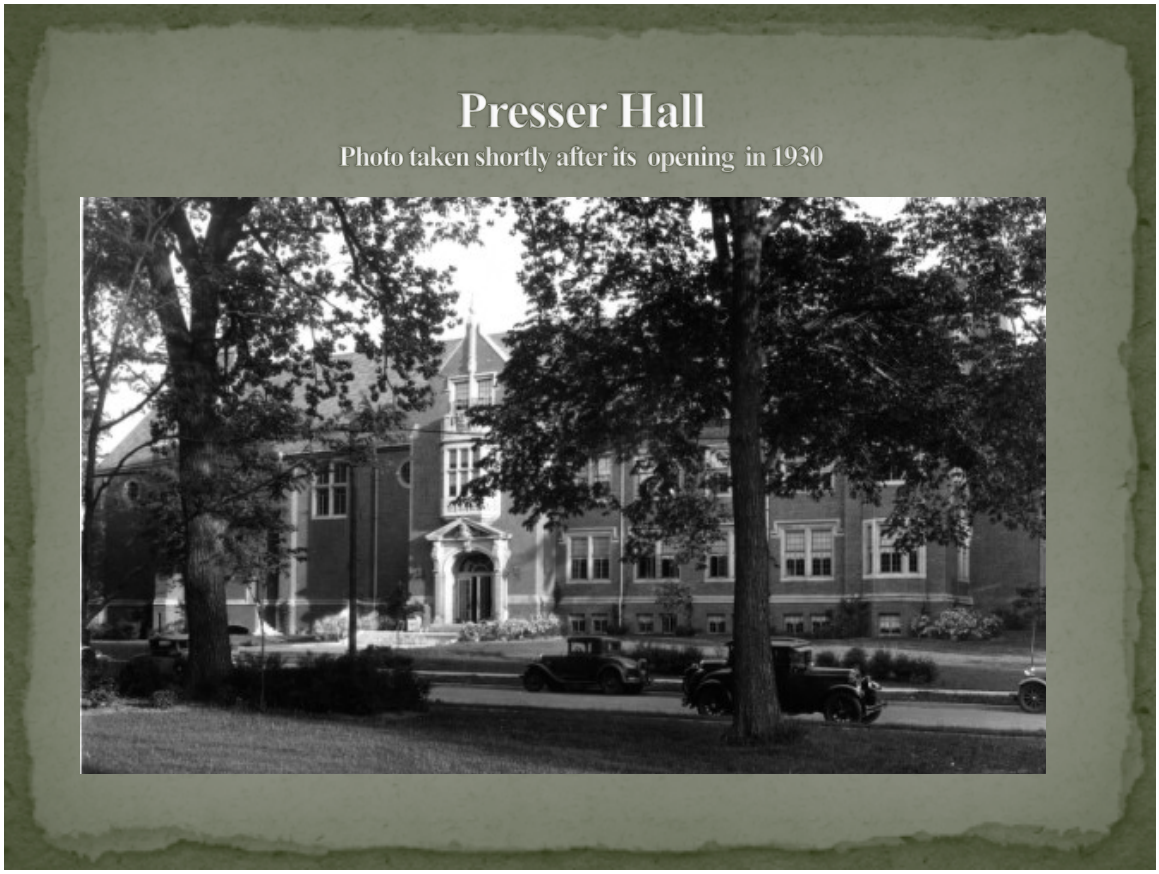
The dedicatory events culminated with an open house for the Bloomington-Normal public.



On December 30, 1930, the Illinois Wesleyan University School of Music was admitted to membership in the National Association of Schools of Music, an organization founded in 1924, as the accrediting agency for conservatories, colleges and universities granting the Bachelor of Music degree; a function that the association continues to carry to this day. At the time of its admission, Illinois Wesleyan and Northwestern University (Evanston) were the only member institutions in the State of Illinois.



This is a view of the auditorium of Presser Hall taken from the stage.

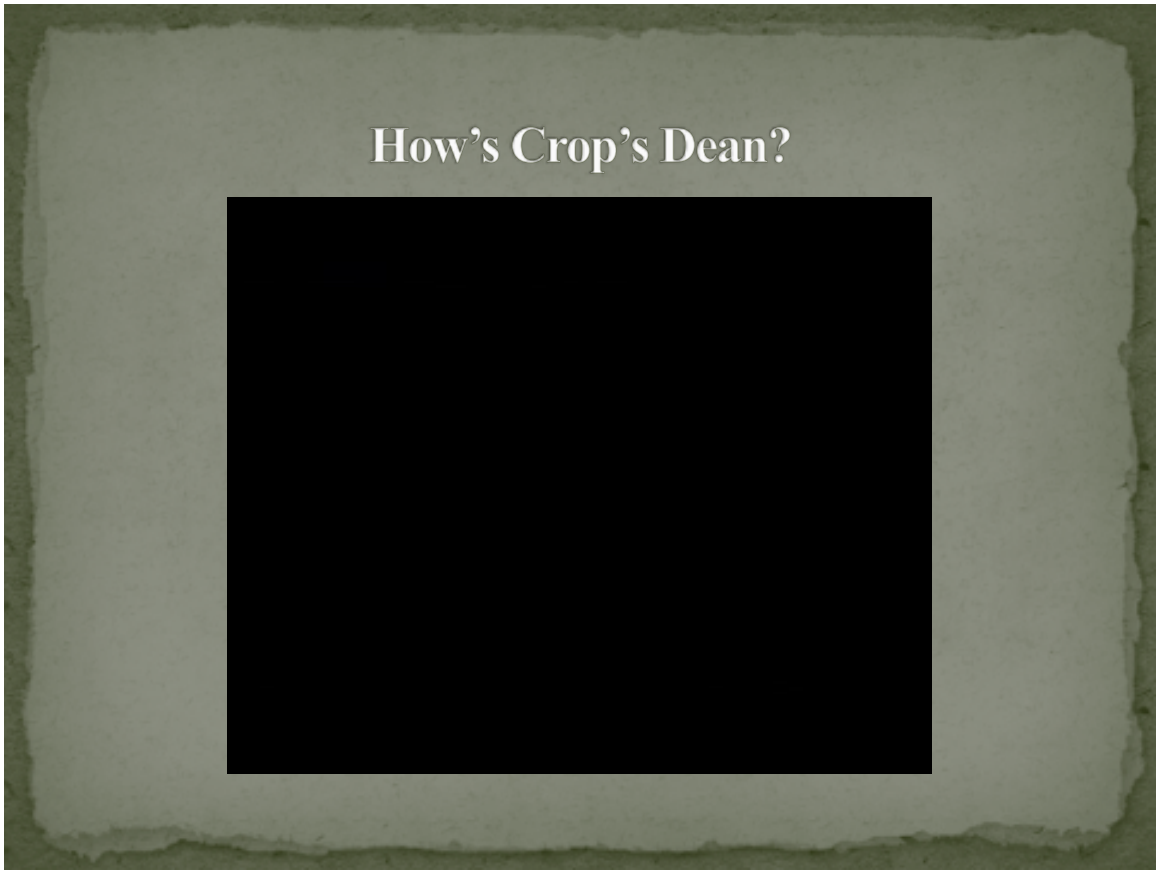


Its acceptance into N.A.S.M. brought increased national attention to the School of Music. In response, Dean Westbrook and the university administration sought to establish an advanced program in selected areas of music study at Wesleyan to meet a perceived downstate need for such programs.

The **Master of Music** degree program in Applied Music or Music Education was introduced during the 1932-1933 academic year. Supervision of the "graduate department" was entrusted to a faculty committee consisting professors Frank Jordan, Head of the Organ Department, Spencer Green, an instructor of voice and music theory, and Dean Westbrook. The first Master of Music degrees were conferred in the spring of 1935 to George Christopher, Florence Kiers, Jewett Kepley, Leah Oester, Pauline Simmons and Richard Weckel. This masters program continued at Illinois Wesleyan until 1975 when it was disbanded, due to decreasing enrollment numbers and the growth of competing programs at neighboring institutions.



Even with the completion of Presser Hall, Illinois Wesleyan did not escape the financial hardships of the Great Depression era. Harry W. McPherson became president of Illinois Wesleyan in 1932, following the resignation of President Davidson, due to failing health. McPherson was another graduate of Illinois Wesleyan (Class of 1906) born of a Cumberland County farm family. He served as a member of the Board of Trustees for 16 years, and was a fiscal conservative. Given the tough economic climate of the day, one of President McPherson's chief concerns was attracting and retaining students for Illinois Wesleyan. In the fall of 1932 he announced that the University would accept tuition from farm families in the form of bartered goods: produce, (grain, potatoes, corn – corn, no doubt), livestock, or other goods at "premium above market price." In addition, first-year, women from farm families could get room and board by the same means."[23] Students with little or no money were allowed to work on campus to offset tuition costs, which in the fall of 1932 amounted to $90 per semester, for up to 16 hours of class credit. Paramount News picked up the story and visited the campus to create a film during the fall registration. The tenor of the film was light-hearted, but the purpose was dead serious – and apparently effective: the fall enrollment in 1932 was 8% above the previous year, where other schools reported decreased enrollments of 13 per cent.[24]



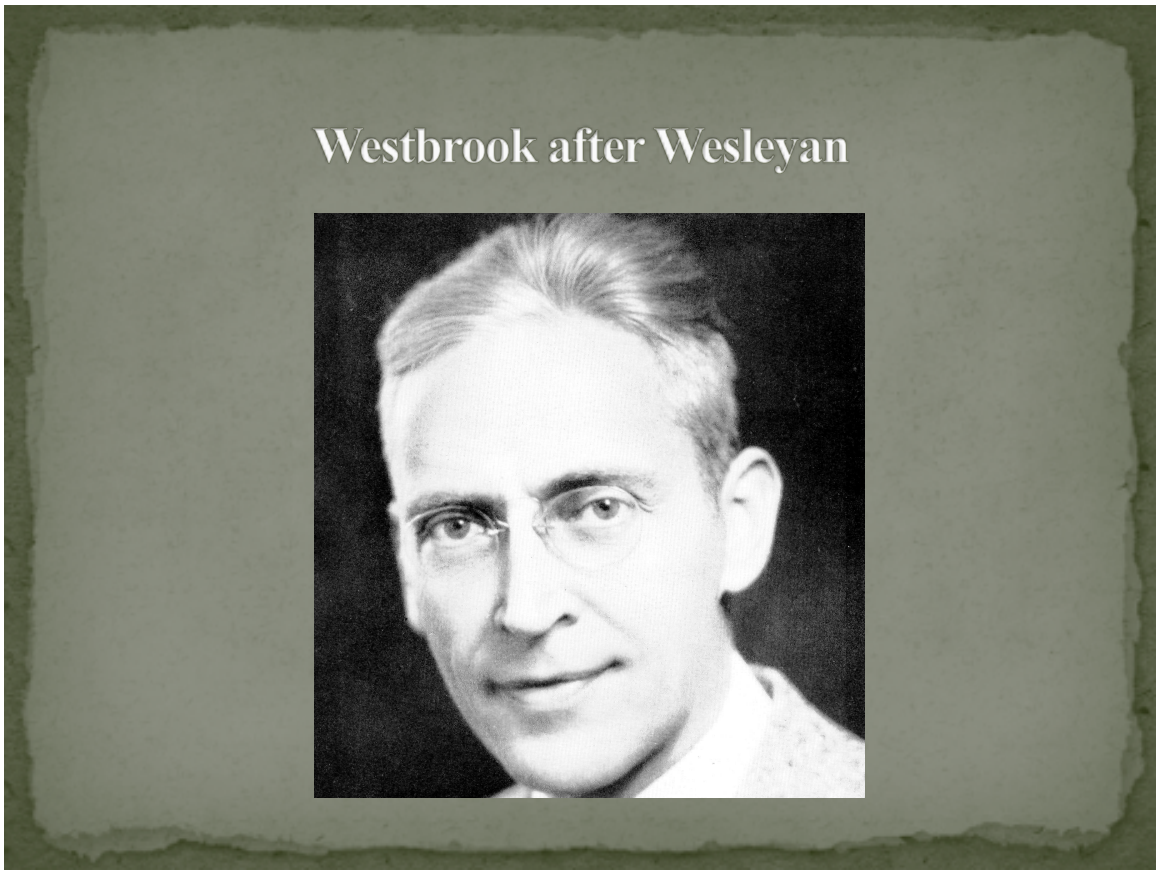
I thought you might enjoy watching this short video, particularly because of the student offering to trade a pair of canaries for voice "crooning" lessons. (He obviously had heard of the Apollo Club.) He is shown being interviewed by Dean Westbrook.

Harry McPherson resigned his presidency of Illinois Wesleyan in 1937 to assume the position of Executive Secretary to the Methodist Episcopal Board of Education. He was replaced by Wiley G. Brooks who, while only serving two years as president, oversaw a further initiative to assist prospective students in earning a degree in music at Illinois Wesleyan.

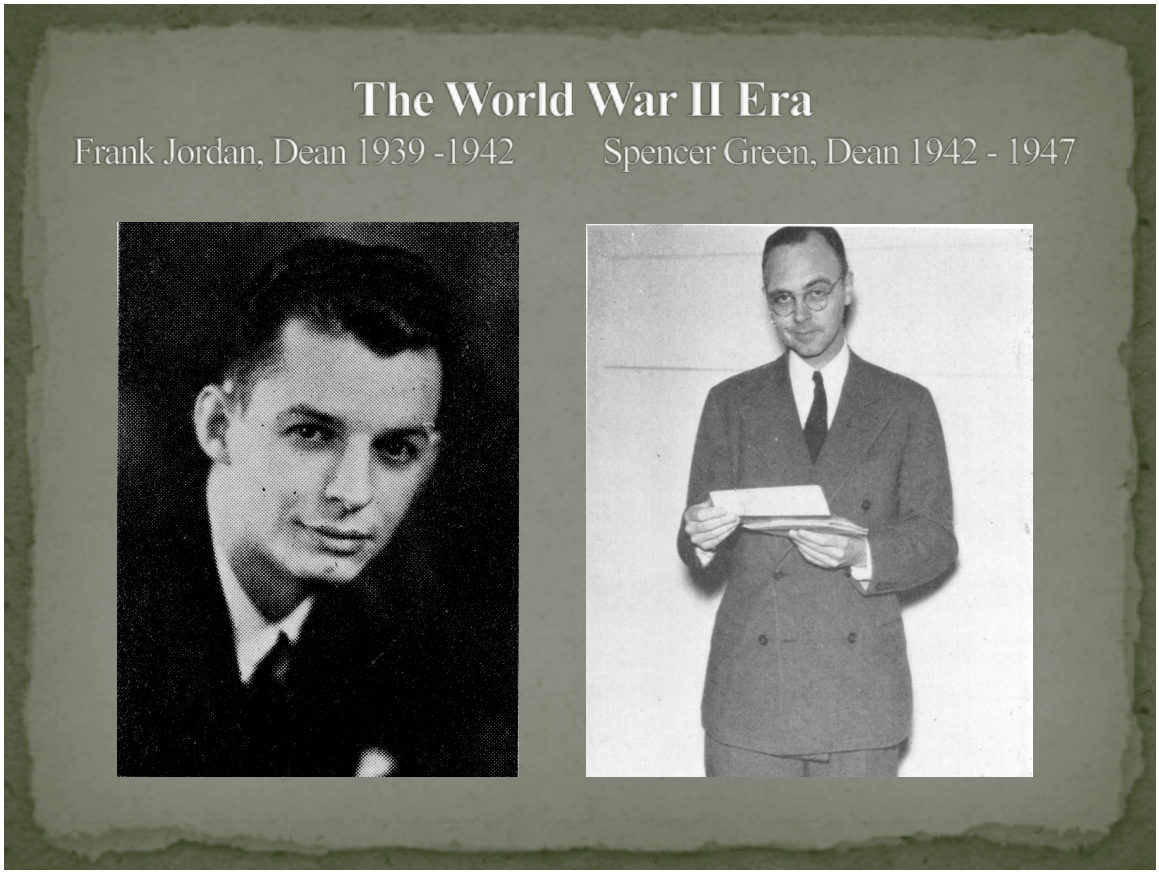
Opening in fall of 1938, Illinois Wesleyan established a *Junior College of Music*, located in Springfield, IL, to "make available to the residents of the Springfield area, at less expense, the same outstanding musical opportunities afforded students at the School of Music at Bloomington, undoubtedly the most rapidly growing institution of its kind in the Middle West. Since living expenses represent the largest item in the budget o a student away from home, Springfield musicians can complete the first two-year of study locally at a minimum cost. Then by entering the parent school at Bloomington as juniors, instead of a freshmen, the can afford not only the two remaining years necessary for the bachelor's degree, but also an additional year of study toward the master's degree, a privilege that many talented and ambitious students could not otherwise enjoy. Illinois Wesleyan Junior College of Music at Springfield presents courses exactly the same [at

the Bloomington campus]. The faculty is comparable in every way and the high standards of the parent school are strictly maintained. This college also provides the opportunity for younger students to build thorough musical foundations for later advanced study of for participation in the musical life of their community. Private lessons and classes are open to adults who which to continue their music education." [25]

The Junior College operated under the direction of Carl and Alma Abbot-Lundgren, plus seven additional faculty members. Studios were located in the Pasfield Building, at 230 S. Sixth Street in Springfield. Classes continued until June 5, 1954, when it was felt, both by the Lundgrens and Illinois Wesleyan, that the Junior College had served its original purpose, and that accredited music instruction was now available at other Springfield institutions.



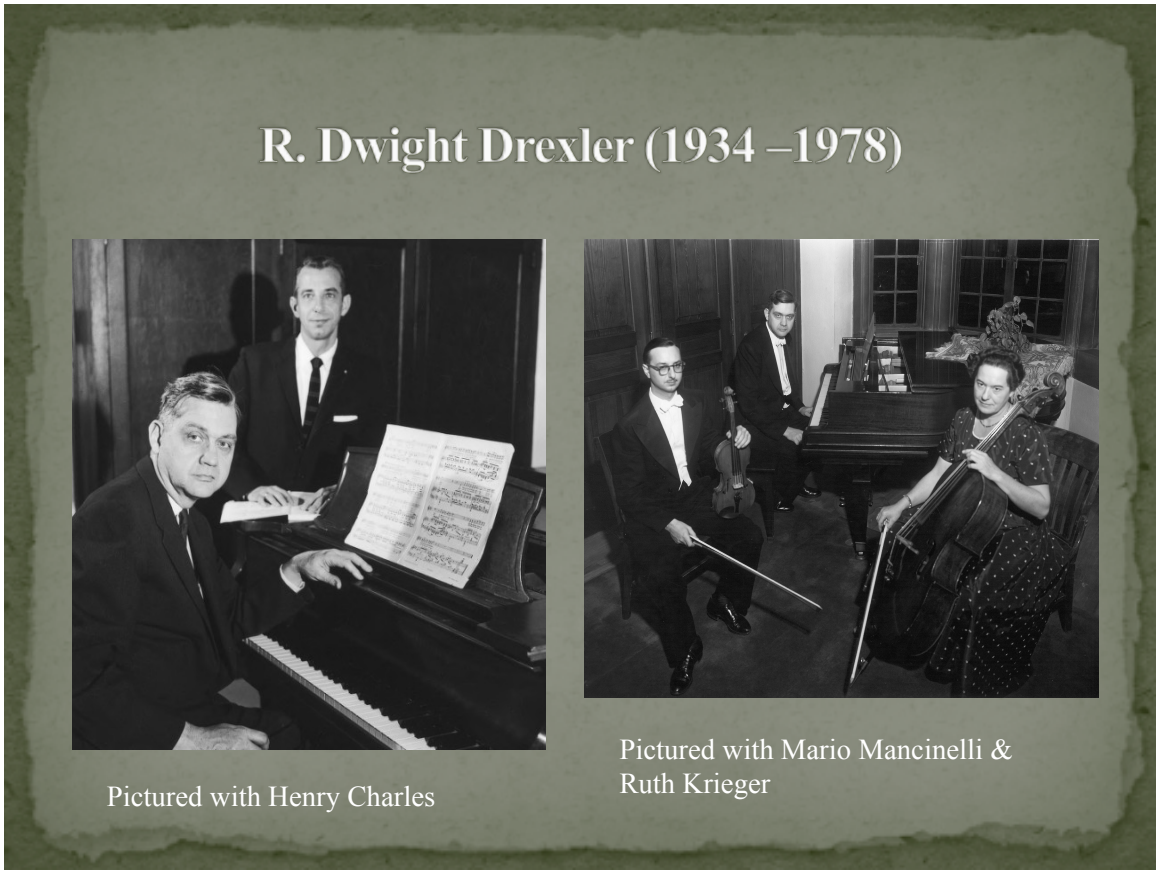
Arthur A. Westbrook left Illinois Wesleyan in the spring of 1939 to assume the directorship of the Music Department at The University of Nebraska-Lincoln, a position he held until 1951. He continued there however as a Professor of Music and choral direction until his retirement in 1955. Following "retirement", he joined the music faculty at Nebraska Wesleyan University (also located in Lincoln) where he taught until his death in January of 1961. In 1964, the auditorium of Presser Hall (IWU) was re-named for Dean Westbrook, and several years later, in 1967, the University of Nebraska named its new (and current) music building after Arthur Westbrook as well.



Spanning the World Wart II era, the School of Music was served by two consecutive deans, Frank Jordan, an organist and Wesleyan alumnus, (Class of ’29) who left Wesleyan in 1942 to become the Dean of Fine Arts at Drake University, in Des Moines, IA.

Spencer Green, also an IWU alumnus, joined the faculty of the School of Music as a voice instructor upon his graduation from Wesleyan in 1931. Like his predecessor, he served as co-chair of the graduate division of the School of Music before being appointed Dean in 1942. He left Wesleyan in 1948 to pursue professional work in Chicago.

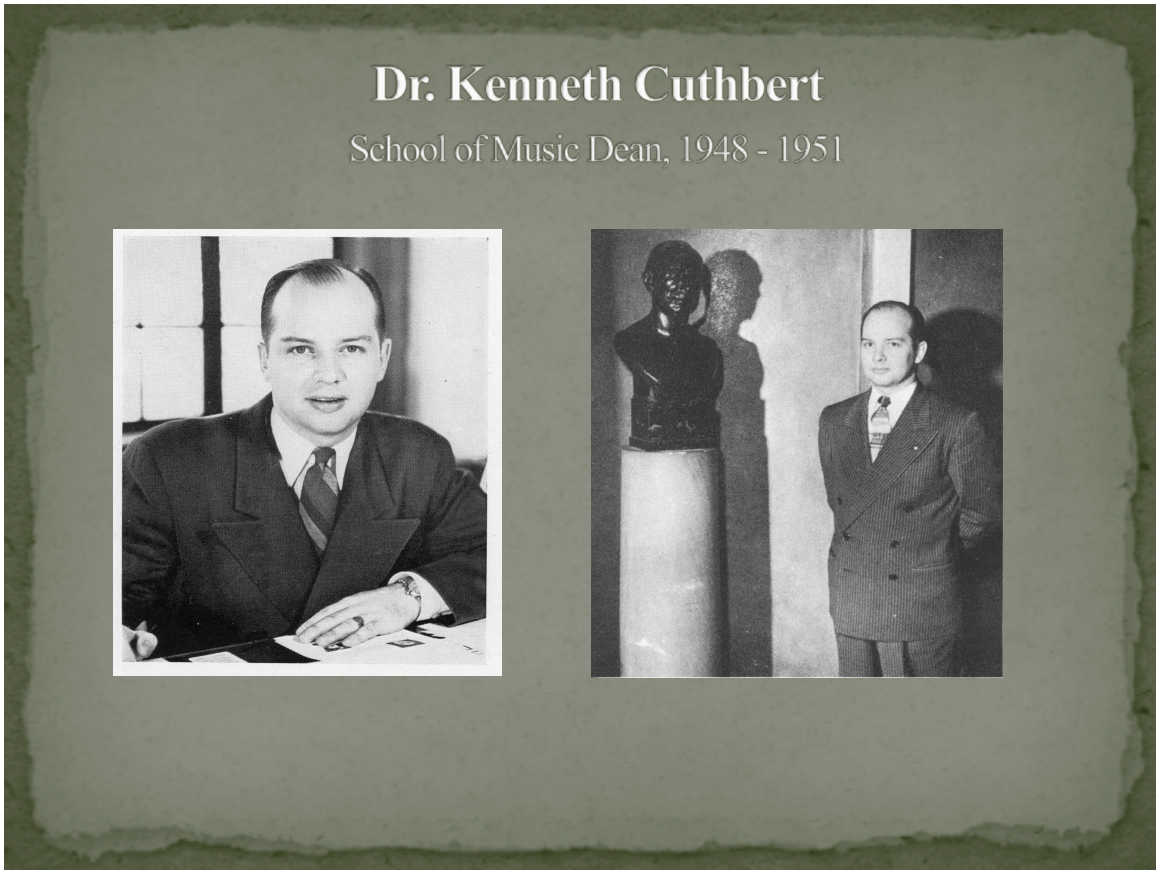
WWII took its toll upon the School of Music as with the university in general. By the fall of 1942, the male presence on campus had decreased significantly. The student enrollment was 621, with 106 fewer men than in the previous year. Male students no longer outnumbered female students, as had frequently been the case. Also absent were a number of young faculty members.[26] From the School of Music, R. Dwight Drexler (piano) and Edward Preodor (violin) were called up for military duty in the U.S. Army. Clarinetist & band director Robert W. Ross enlisted in the U.S. Navy. In all 1,210 Illinois Wesleyan students served in the armed forces during WWII. Forty-eight gave their lives in that service.[27]



Dwight Drexler and Edward Preodor returned to the campus in 1946 to resume their teaching careers. Four years later, Drexler was appointed chair of the piano department, a position he held until his retirement in 1978. Pictured here are Left) Dwight Drexler with Voice professor Henry Charles, and Right) Drexler with violinist Mario Mancinelli, and cellist Ruth Krieger.



Certainly one of the major campus events to take place during the decade of the 1940s was the spectacular, accidental burning of Old Main or "Hedding Hall" on the night of January 9, 1943, a fire caused by faulty electrical wiring. Gone were Amie Chapel (and presumably the Hinners organ), classrooms, offices, historic documents, as well as other archival materials and objects. On a more positive note, the graduate program of the School of Music was included that year, in the first list of schools in the United States approved for graduate study by N.A.S.M.



In January 1948 Dr. Kenneth N. Cuthbert was appointed Dean of the School of Music, Professor of Music Education, Director of University Orchestras, and Chair of the Graduate Division. Under his leadership, a number of new faculty members were added to the school roster. Two new faculty performing ensembles also made their debut during his administration: a piano/string trio named the *von Franari Trio*, initially consisting of professors Mario Mancinelli (violin), Yvonne Tait (violoncello), and Frank Miller (piano). It represented the School's first ensemble, devoted to the performance of instrumental chamber music. A second ensemble, called *The Opera Jesters*, featured soprano Gretchen Van Roy, tenor Henry Charles, and bass-baritone Francis Barnard. They specialized in operatic scenes, performing for various audiences in the Bloomington-Normal community. In 1951 both the **Bachelor of Sacred Music,** and the **Master of Music Education** programs were introduced to the curriculum.



Finally, during this period a branch music library was established on the entrance level floor of Presser Hall in the room that is now referred to as the Reception Room. It held the school's collection of music related books and musical scores. Across the hallway, was housed a collection of music recordings, with specially built turntables, equipped with earphones for individual listening. The library was supervised by Virginia Husted, a former cellist and teacher of music history.

Kenneth Cuthbert departed Illinois Wesleyan late in the summer of 1951 to take an administrative position at East Carolina College in Greenville, NC. Until a new dean could be found the School of Music was administered by a faculty committee consisting of Dwight Drexler, Lloyd Pfautsch, and Yvonne Tait.



The Collegiate Choir, *The Wesleyana, 1951*

Lloyd Pfautsch, 1948-1958

In the Spring of 1952, Professor Lloyd Pfautsch, Director of Choral Activities at Illinois Wesleyan initiated a choral commissioning series, inviting prominent American composers to create works for the Collegiate Choir to perform both in concert at Illinois Wesleyan, and on its annual Spring choir tour. This commission program continues to the present day and is the oldest active commission series of its kind in the United States. Among the composers represented in the series are Anthony Donato, Louise Talma, Ulysses Kay, Leo Sowerby, Jean Berger, Kenneth Gaburo, John Joubert, Pauline Oliveros, and Jean Eichelberger Ivey. The commissions have historically been paid for through donations from Collegiate Choir alumni. Lloyd Pfautsch left Illinois Wesleyan in 1958 to take up a similar position at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, TX. His successors at Illinois Wesleyan, Lewis Whikehart (1958-64), David Nott (1964-95) and Scott Ferguson (1995 -) have carried on the tradition.[28]

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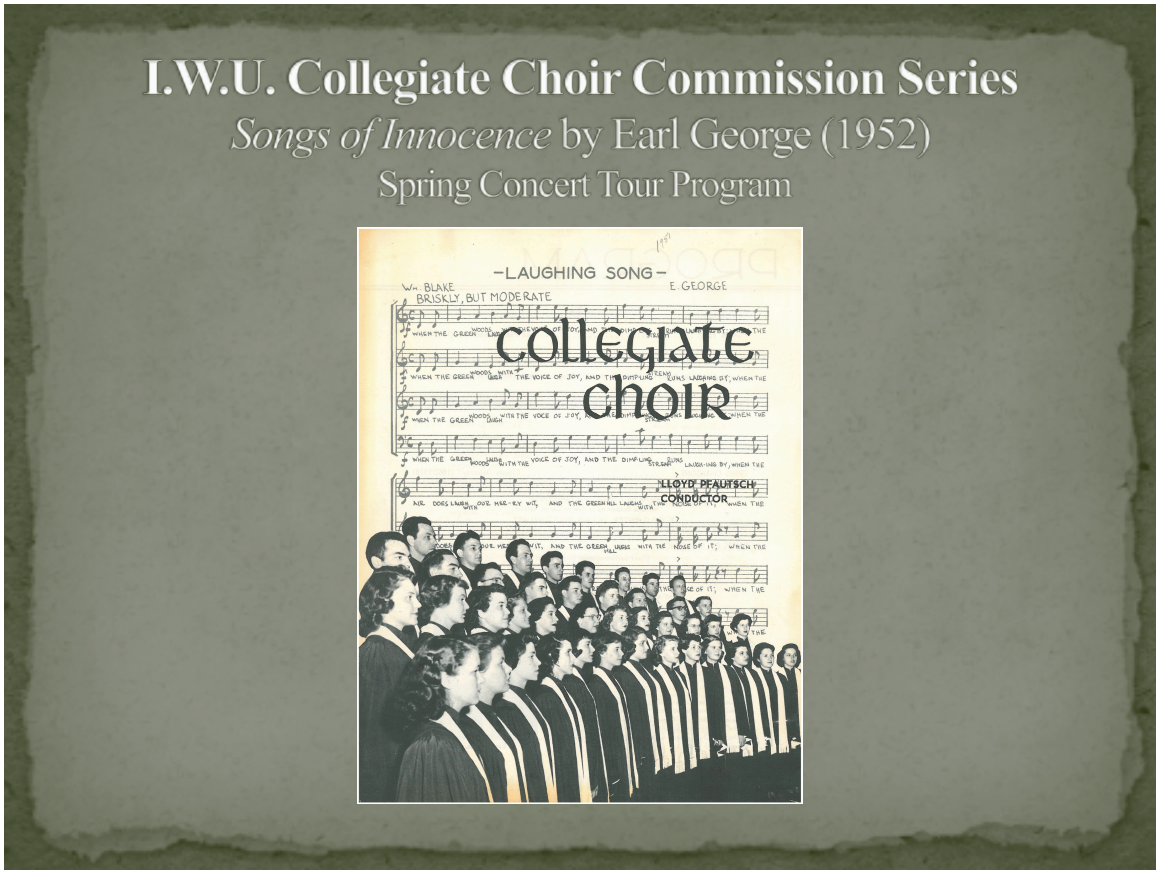


This slide shows the spring 1952 Collegiate Choir Tour program featuring the newly commissioned *Songs of Innocence* by Earl George.

Symposium of Contemporary American Music



Frank Bohnhorst (1924-1956)



Aaron Copland - Symposium, 1958

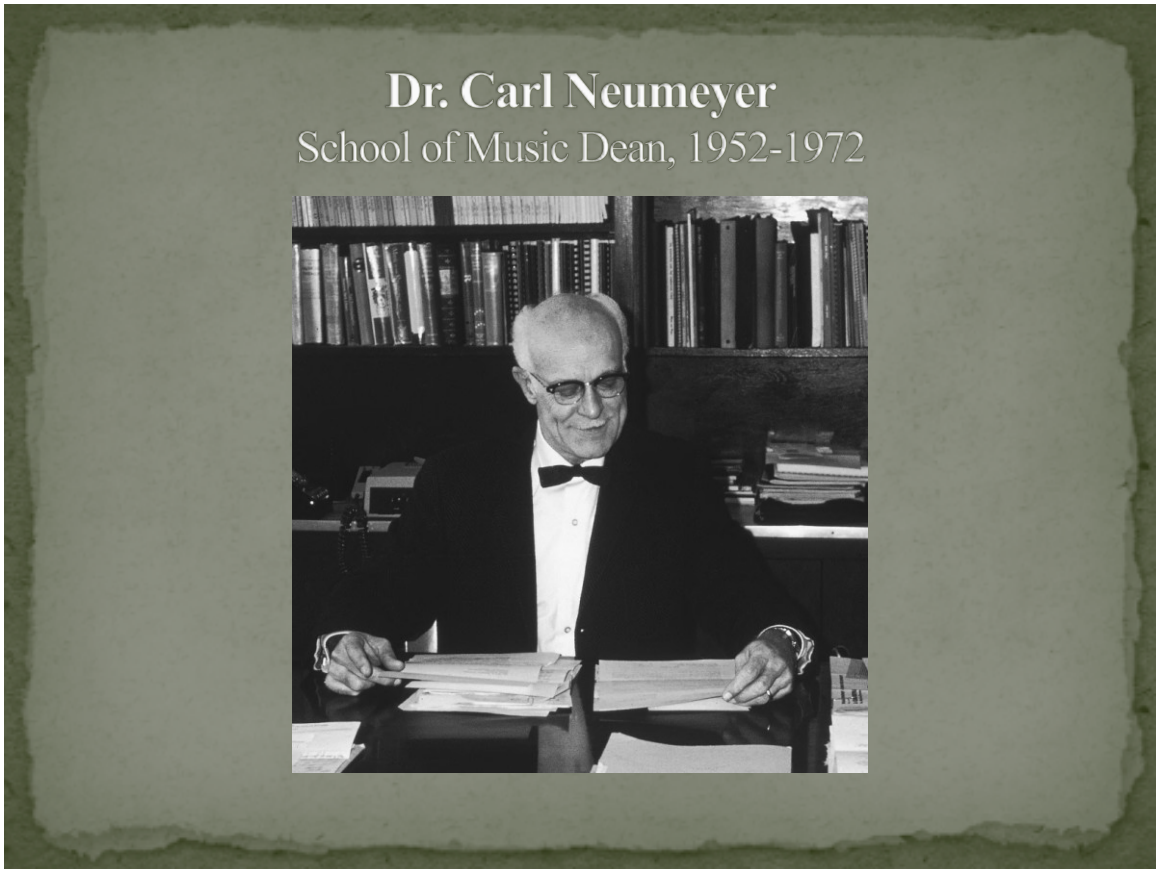
Another milestone from the spring of 1952 was the creation of a two-day symposium dedicated to the performance and study of contemporary American music. For this event, prominent American composers were invited to the campus for student performances of their works, lectures and master classes. The driving force behind the symposium was a young organist and composer in residence, by the name of Frank Bohnhorst, a 1944 graduate of Illinois Wesleyan. Featured in the first symposiim, was the music of composers Earl George, Grant Fletcher and Burrill Phillips. It included the premier performance of Earl George's *Songs of Innocence,* sung by the Collegiate Choir under the direction of Lloyd Pfautsch, (the first of the Collegiate Choirs' commission series). Also featured was a performance of Bohnhorst's *John Brown's Prayer* set to texts by Stephen Vincent Benet, and performed baritone Lloyd Pfautsch, violinist Mario Mancinelli, cellist Yvonne Tait, with the composer playing piano.

The symposium brochure stated that, "for a culture to be creative musically, there must be a close relationship between composer, performer, and listener. This symposium is organized as a means of bridging the gap between today's composers and their audience. The [performance] and hearing of representative contemporary works and the interchange of ideas are directed to the purpose of encouraging active participation in the creative currents of our time."

Over the ensuing decades, the roster of Symposium guests have included many of the foremost American composers of the latter half of the 20th century, including Peter

Menin, Ulysses Kay, Ernst Krenek, Aaron Copland, Roy Harris, Ezra Simms, Kenneth Gaburo, George Rochberg, George Crumb, Lou Harrison, David Diamond, John Corigliano, and William Bolcom, to mention only a few.

Sadly, Frank Bohnhorst died pre-maturely at age 32, after having served only three years on the faculty of the School of Music. He left behind, a widow, Janet Whitely-Bohnhorst (‘46) and two young daughters. It is a testimony to Frank Bohnhorst that the *Symposium of Contemporary American Music* has continued annually since 1952, bringing well in excess of 100 composers and performing artists of national and international reputation to our campus. (As a post-script, during the past summer, The Ames Library acquired the musical manuscripts of Frank Bohnhorst from his heirs. These are currently being processed for inclusion in the university archives, with the hope that some of these compositions will receive performances during this sesquicentennial year.)



The post-WW2 era at Illinois Wesleyan has been characterized as one of “stability and quality, where the School of Music in particular, was less affected by enrollment fluctuations than other segments of the campus.” This was the more remarkable for the increased competition that the School of Music was beginning to face from other regional colleges and universities, in attracting high quality students. Part of its success, was the reputation of the faculty, who had become increasingly active in professional organizations such as N.A.S.M. One such educator was Dr. Carl Neumeyer, appointed Dean of the School of Music in 1952, after having served for ten years as Assistant Dean

to the School of Music at Southern Methodist University. Dr. Neumeyer remained at the helm of Wesleyan's School of Music for two decades. His tenure spanned three university presidencies, and he remained in office until his death in 1972. It has been commented more than once by former faculty members and alumni that the Neumeyer years represented a golden age for the School of Music.

Beside the stability and quality of its enrollment during this period, the number of recitals and concerts sponsored by the School of Music increased in both number, and in the stature of its guest artist and composers. I have already named some of these in relation to the *Symposium of Contemporary Music.* Appearances were not limited to classically trained musicians however. Jazz greats such as Dizzy Gillespie and Count Basie were also engaged to perform at university during the 1950s.

In lieu of the disbandment of the Junior College of Music in 1954, the first of a long string of annual music camps was held that summer at Lake Bloomington, providing quality, summertime music instruction to high school age students, no doubt with the ulterior motive of potentially recruiting students for the university. Looking even further to the future, the IWU Preparatory Department was established under Dean Neumeyer, with the aim of providing even younger students with applied music lessons from professionally trained teachers.

Current Wesleyan students were availed opportunities to participate in European music tours, lead by various faculty members, and scheduled to coincide with major European music festivals; the precursor of our present day May term travel courses. In 1956 a *Collegium Musicum* was established by Professor Bedford Watkins, for the study and performance of early music.

Through a second Presser Foundation grant, the School of Music auditorium was renovated in 1962-63, including the installation of a new 3-manual, Schantz pipe organ. An annual *Illinois Wesleyan Church Music Conference* was established shortly thereafter by the chair of the sacred music program, Lillian Mecherele McCord, with organist and composer Roberta Bitgood as the first clinician. Mrs. McCord was a popular teacher and tutored many students, several of whom achieved prominent careers as performing organists and teachers. Former students have related to me how much they enjoyed, and looked forward to attending organ recitals at nearby churches and universities riding with "Aunt Lillian" in the Cadillac Fleetwood automobiles she always drove.

Dr. Neumeyer died on December 7, 1972. A campus wide memorial service was held in Westbrook Auditorium on December 11.

The list of faculty members who were hired by Dean Neumeyer is extensive, and I feel privileged to have known and/or worked with many of these. I have already mentioned Bedford Watkins, whose passion for early music, books and libraries remains an inspiration to me, long after his retirement. Others include John McGrosso (clarinet), Robert Bankert (piano & percussion), Robert Donalson (voice & music history), David Nott (voice & choral music), Carole Thibodeaux (piano & chair of the preparatory

program), Abram Plum (theory, composition), Richard Hshman (music education), Susan Brandon (piano), Sam Scifres (voice), Glenn Patton (my predecessor as Fine Arts Librarian), David Gehrenbeck (organ & sacred music), and Tom "Doc" Streeter (trombone and director of the jazz program).



"Fire destroys Presser Hall stage." This was the headline of the May 15, 1970 issue of *The Argus.* The article reported that, "two fires broke out early Tuesday morning (May 12) in Presser Hall. One blaze was above the stage in Westbrook Auditorium. The other blaze was in a basement practice room on the building's northwest side.
Destroyed by the flames were two grand pianos on the stage valued at $8000 each. Also lost was an $8-10,000 pipe organ in the practice room. The fires were discovered by two [Wesleyan] security officers about 12:20 a.m. Smoke was seen coming from the southeast corner of [the building]; no flames were visible. The fire department was notified at 12:26 a.m. The fire in the basement was discovered a couple of minutes later. [The] Bloomington Fire Department arrived soon after security called. Two pump trucks, two ladder trucks and a light plant arrived. The two shifts not on duty were called in on a general alarm. Bloomington police were called to regulate traffic. [The] Normal volunteer fire company was called at 12:30 a.m., supplying one pumper, one ladder truck and 15 men.

[By] 12:30 a.m. flames were clearly visible in the windows on the east end of Presser and crowd was beginning to gather. Ten minutes later flames were in evidence around the edge of the southeast corner of the roof. A fireman on a snorkel ladder was dousing flames through the window high on the east end of the building.
At approximately 12:50 a.m. a fireman went up on a ladder to the window on the south end of the stage. The southeast corner of the roof fell in at 1:05 a.m. The gutter on the south end of the stage fell off at the same time knocking the fireman off the ladder.
When the fire was at its zenith, about 1:15 a.m. smoke was pouring heavily out of the band room windows on the west end of the third floor, as well as other areas of the building. A second smaller, fire at the west end of the building was quickly extinguished by the firemen. The fire completely destroyed the practice organ.
The blaze on the stage was confined principally to the south [side]. A concert grand piano was in its piano box in the southeast corner. The box was completely destroyed, [as was the piano.] A wooden platform above the south end of the stage, holding lumber and chairs was also destroyed. Some lights, cables, [organ] pipes, and all the curtains were also burned. Other than water damage around the base, the recital organ console sustained no apparent damage.
At approximately 1:50 a.m., all visible evidence of the fire was gone. The brick wall surrounding the stage proscenium contained the fire to the immediate stage area. The rest of the auditorium was left in a useable condition. The fire department had sent most of its men home by 3:00 a.m., but a few remained until dawn. The men of Phi Mu Alpha guarded Presser as campus security closed the building."[29]
The cause of the fire was almost immediately lay on arson, and because of the rapid spread of the flames, gasoline or some other volatile catalyst was suspected. A trash container normally located near the stage was found in the gutted practice room. Two ISU students were seen fleeing an attempted arson at a nearby garage and were arrested. They were later cleared of the charge, after it became known, that several juveniles had been chased out of the building on the day before the fire by Professor Robert Donalson. It was two years however, before the perpetrators were apprehended, and even though they provided detailed confessions of how the fires had been set, they were never convicted in a jury trial.[30]

In the aftermath of the fire, because the damage was largely limited to the eastern end of the building, some music classes could continue to be held in Presser Hall, while others took places in other buildings on the campus. Chapel services and recitals were held in the main lounge of Memorial Student Center or in spaces volunteered by local churches.



Even before the Presser Hall fire, the idea to update and expand the Fine Arts facilities on the South side of the quadrangle had been envisioned by President Lloyd Bertholf. The recent renovation of the School of Music auditorium, made possible through the second Presser Foundation grant, was the first step along this pathway. The second was the construction a new theatre, completed early in 1963; funded by the estate of President Harold McPherson, and thus bearing his name. The fire hastened the completion of the project, and thanks to a major donation by the Chicago, philanthropist and industrialist, Foster G. McGaw, work was commenced on the remaining segments of the project: a new building for the School of Art (completed by the end of 1972), and a 25,000 sq. ft. addition to the south side of Presser Hall (completed early in 1973). With specially designed rehearsal rooms included as part of the renovation, the music library was relocated from its cramped quarters on entry level to the spacious third story space, atop Presser Hall, that had previously functioned as an ensemble rehearsal, and instrument storage room. The entire complex was named the Alice Millar Center for the Fine Arts after, McGaw's mother, herself a trained musician. The dedication ceremony took place on March 18, 1973, and included a performance of Ernest Block's *Sacred Service*, featuring the university orchestra, the Collegiate Choir and University Chorus, with David Nott singing the bass-baritone solo, and conducted by Richard Hishman.

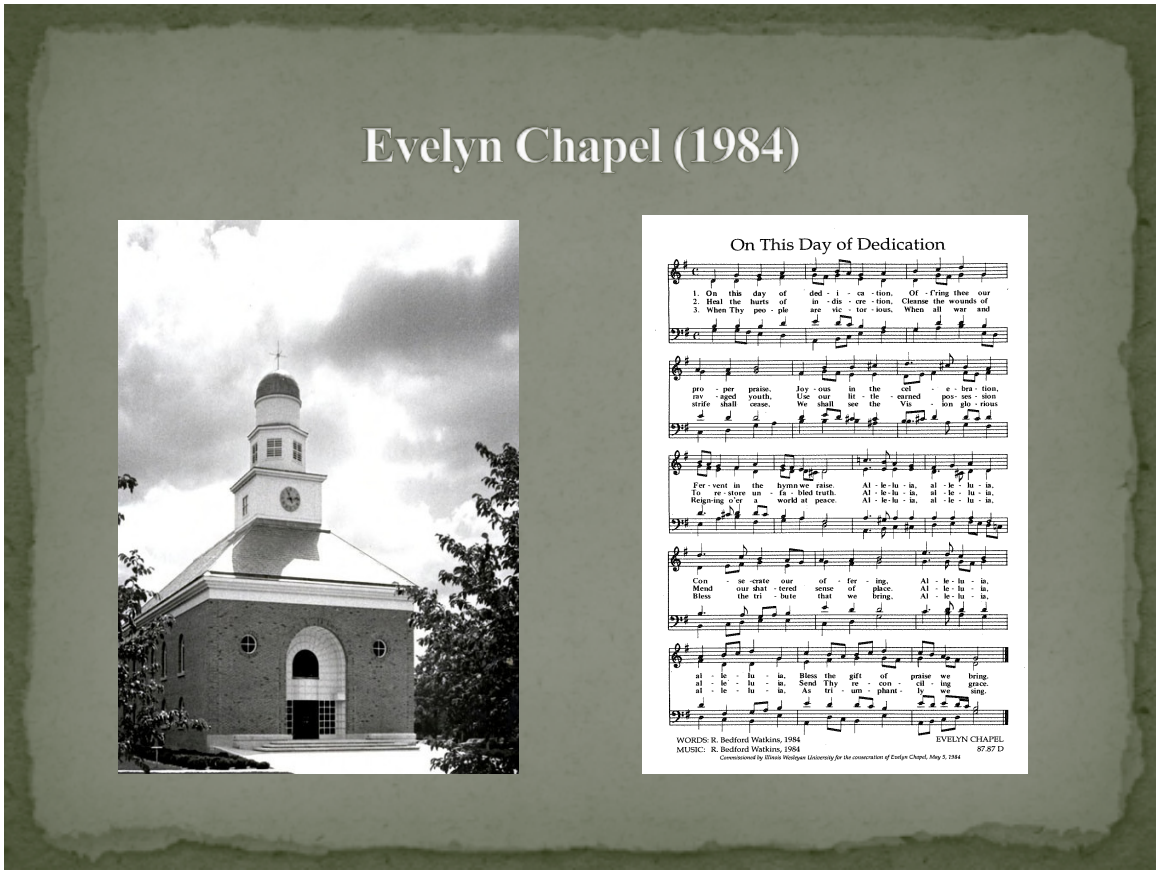
And perhaps as icing on the cake, the Gamma Upsilon Chapter of *Pi Kappa Lambda*, the National Music Honor Society (founded at Northwestern University, Evanston by Peter C. Lutkin) was chartered at Illinois Wesleyan later in 1973.



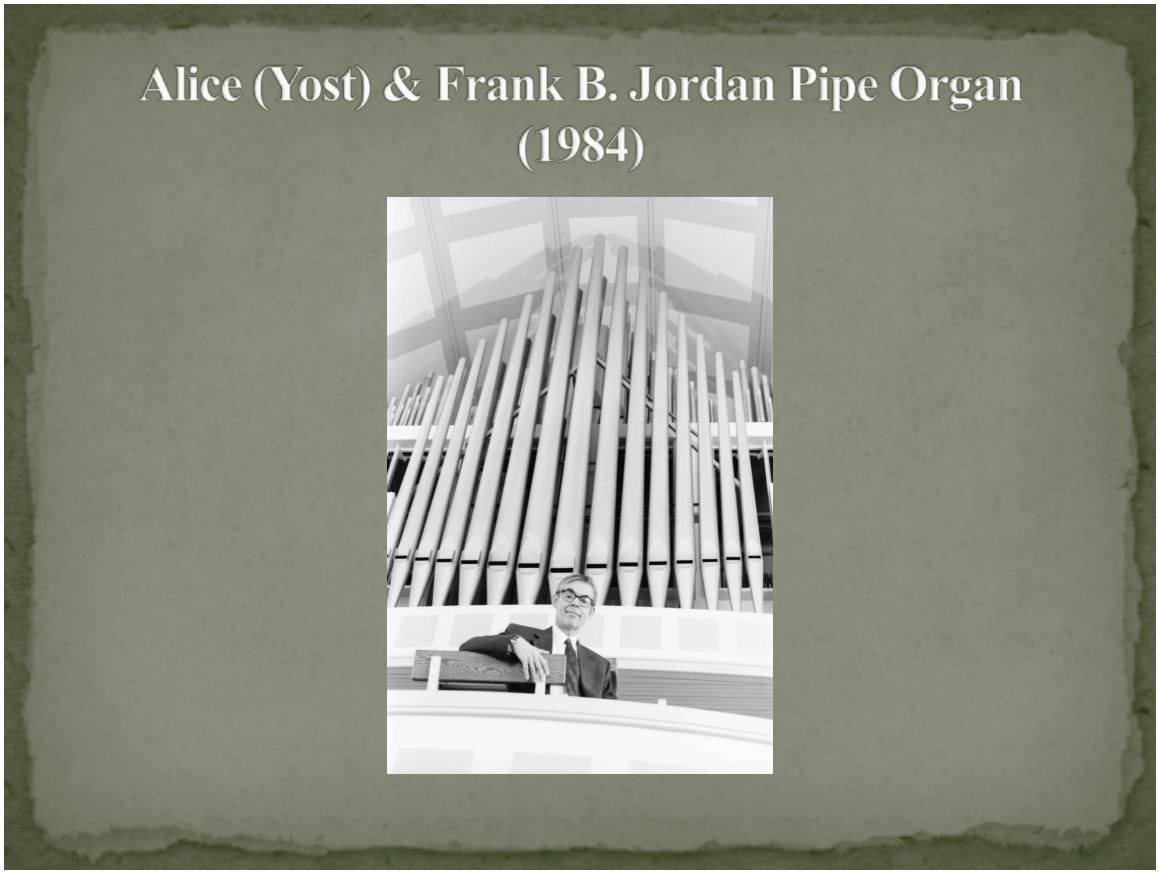
In President Robert Eckley's 1992 memoire of his administration, "Pictures at an Exhibition" he writes sympathetically of the School of Music, noting that regardless of the stability and success it had achieved during the 1950s, 60s, and early 70's, it was not without its problems. He attributes the problem in part to the difficulty he shared in sustaining robust leadership of the School, particularly following the death of Carl Neumeyer. He notes that "the replacements didn't always succeed, and four times searches ran into one or two additional years, necessitating temporary replacements." [31] Dr. Eckley further writes that, "strong programs can be a mixed blessing". They tend to sustain and enhance themselves because of the attraction for both students and faculty. At the same time they invite ossification when things are working and there [seems] little reason to change. The School of Music was delicately poised between these antipodes for the decade 1968-78, and then, partly as a result of the lack of sustained leadership, it failed to adapt rapidly enough as enrollments in music education declined in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The Music School had many very accomplished faculty and students and we saw some of the clouds approaching, but we lacked the ability to bring about change before our student numbers tumbled distressingly. We were slow in learning that the need for student recruitment (as opposed to thinking that students were bought with financial inducements), liberal arts students interested in music study were not encouraged for too long, and methods and programs were allowed to languish rather than react to meet new conditions." [32]

The first action to remedy the situation, as I have referenced earlier, was the discontinuation of the Master's Degree Program in the fall of 1975, at the recommendation of N.A.S.M. Not all actions taken were by way of retrenchment however. There were numerous enhancements to the program that also took place at this time. Where the great strengths of the School of Music had long resided in vocal and keyboard music, concentrated efforts were made to beef up the strings, winds, and brass programs. These included both new faculty appointments, the replacement of retiring faculty members, new performing ensembles, special events, and the introduction of new programs that would have a long-term impact on the School. For example,

In **1975** the first annual IWU, Jazz Festival was instituted by Tom Streetor.
In March of **1976**, organist David Gehrenbeck launched a series of organ recitals to commemorate the Tri-centennial of the birth of J.S. Bach. The recitals consisted of performances of the composer's complete organ works, spanned a decade culminating in March1985, and involved 43 student, faculty, and community organists.
Cellist and conductor Robert Luke joined the faculty in **1977** as conductor of the university orchestra. Soprano Linda Snyder also joined the voice faculty that year.
Pianist Lawrence Campbell was added to the piano faculty in the fall of **1978**, to replace Dwight Drexler, who retired the following spring, after serving 45 years on the School of Music faculty. Other retirements from the School of Music around this time included those of Ruth Krieger (cello), Mario Mancinelli (violin) and Maurice Willis (band instruments).
1978 also saw of the introduction of the **Bachelor of Fine Arts in Music-Theatre** program, an inter-disciplinary degree program jointly sponsored by the Schools of Music and Drama.
In **1979**, under Charles Boyer's leadership of the School of Music, flutist Philip Sample and trumpeter Steven Eggleston were added to the wind faculty. Professor Eggleston organized the Wind Ensemble and later succeeded Robert Luke as the conductor of Wesleyan-Civic Orchestra, a podium that he held until his retirement in 2013. The **Bachelor of Music in Piano Pedagogy** program was further added to the curriculum in 1979 under the supervision of Professor Carole Thibodeaux.
In **1980**, violinist Rico McNeela joined the faculty, and along with Larry Campbell, and Robert Luke, resuscitated the faculty trio, which had languished for several years. I was also hired that year as Fine Arts Librarian.
In **1981** Todd Tucker was hired to head the music theory department, and in 1982, Bill West joined the faculty, teaching flute and music theory as well.



Evelyn Chapel on the campus of Illinois Wesleyan was dedicated on September 19, 1984, and even though has never been an official part of the School of Music, its space and superb acoustics have made it a desirable venue for many musical performances sponsored by the School. For the dedication of the Chapel, School of Music faculty member, Bedford Watkins penned and composed text and music for the hymn "On this Day of Dedication." A new Casavant pipe organ was commissioned for the Chapel and named in honor of Alice (Yost) and Frank B. Jordan, the instruments principle benefactors.



The 1984 Alice (Yorst) & Frank B. Jordan Pipe Organ in Evelyn Chapel pictured here with Professor of Organ and Sacred Music, David M. Gehrenbeck (1971-1996) who was responsible for the design of the instrument. The initial dedication of the organ took place in November 1984, followed by a dedicatory recital by Professor Gehrenbeck. In October 1986 the Board of Trustees named the instrument in honor of its principal benefactors, Alice (Yost) and Frank B. Jordan ‘29. The University took this opportunity to rededicate the chapel organ to the glory of God and the service of humankind. The recitalist at that occasion was Robert S. Baker ‘38, a protégé of Frank Jordan.



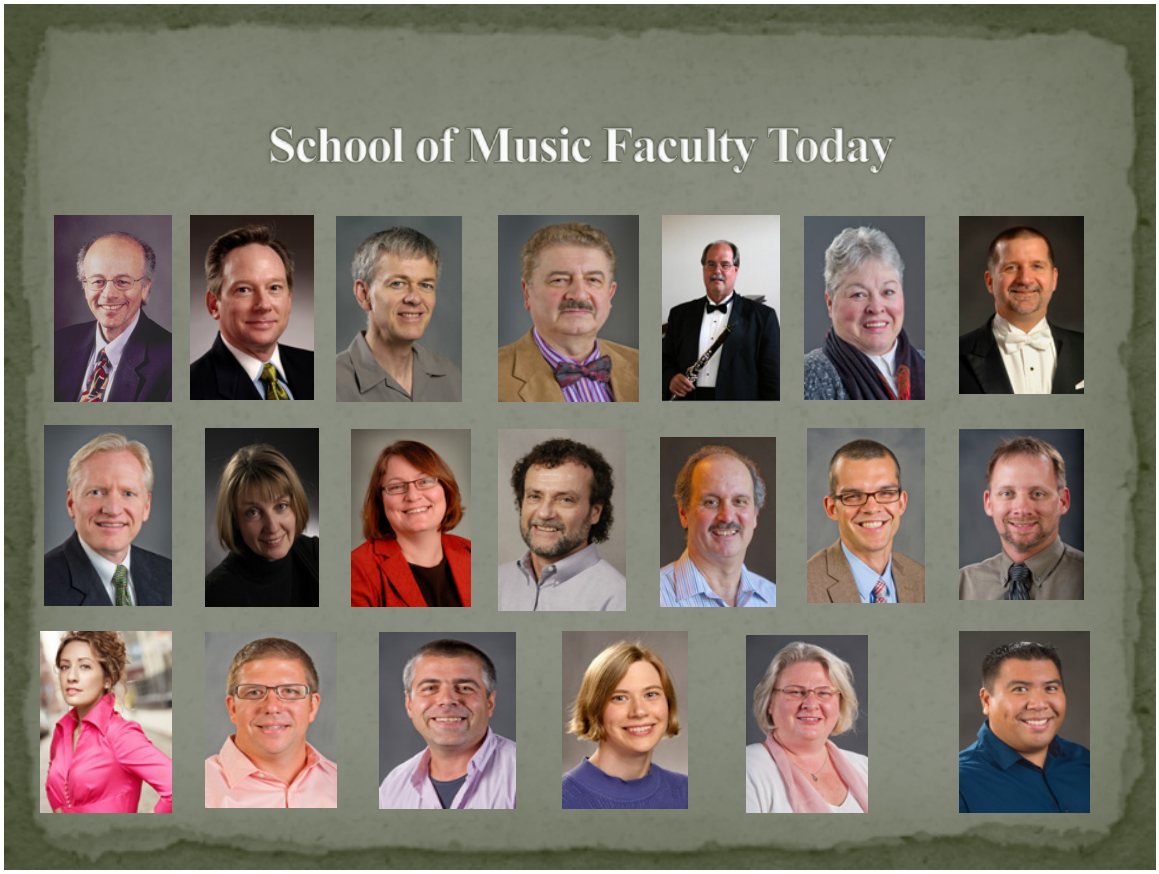
Robert A. Kvam joined the faculty of Illinois Wesleyan as Director of the School of Music in 1987. During his 10-year administration several faculty were hired who continue to play vital roles within the School. Among these are Professors Vadim Mazo (violinist and chair of the String Department), Linda Farquharson (mezzo soprano), Roger Garrett (clarinetist), composer and theorist David Vayo, and Scott Ferguson, Chair of the Voice & Choral Department. Other faculty members hired by Dr. Kvam who have since gone on to teach elsewhere include Mark Hansen (piano), Barrington Coleman (voice), Sheila Bondurant-Kohler (music education), and Michael Cooper, (musicology).

In response to the diminished interest and enrollment of students, both the Bachelor of Music degree programs in Piano Pedagogy, and Sacred Music were dropped from the curriculum. On the other hand, increased interest in string and chamber music, lead to the creation in 1987 of the *Wesleyan Camerata,* a chamber orchestra directed by Professor Vadim Mazo. In 1991 Professor David Vayo initiated the *New Music Café* concert series, highlighting the music of IWU student composers. And also in 1991, the first *Martin Luther King Gospel Music Festival* was held at IWU, both honoring Dr. King, and reaching out to the African-American community of Bloomington/Normal.
Dr. Kvam left Illinois Wesleyan at the close of the 1996/97 academic years to assume a position as Dean of the College of fine Arts at Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana.

Following a year in which Professor Lawrence Campbell served as Acting Director of the School of Music, Dr. Mario J. Pelusi was hired in 1998 to be School Director and

Professor of Music Composition & Theory. Dr. Pelusi arrived with an established record as a composer, theorist, conductor, and music educator. He also brought with him a career in the commercial music industry; both as a performing jazz musician, and as a composer of film and television scores. This background well-positioned him to lead the school at a critical time, when across the nation, music curricula in higher education were in a state of flux, and when demographics, musical backgrounds, and interests of music students, often differed from those earlier generations.

The new generation of students might equally be interested in pursuing careers in jazz or popular music, music technology, or in combining musical studies with other disciplines such as anthropology, business or psychology. Responding to such diverging interests, and remaining competitive with neighboring college and university music programs, was and continues to be a s challenge - to the School of Music and Illinois Wesleyan in general.



In 2014, the Faculty of the School of Music hold performance, research, and teaching expertise in a wide variety of musical concentrations, striving to keep the curriculum vital and responsive to today's diverse musical scene. Among their endeavors are the development of new courses, the creation of new performance ensembles/venues, and the establishment of multiple opportunities for student, and student/faculty research.

Pictured above are: Mario Pelusi (Director of SoM, music composition & theory), William West (flute, music theory) David Vayo (Chair of the Composition & Theory Department), Vadim Mazo (violin, Chair of the String Department), Roger Garrett (clarinet), Linda Farquharson (voice), Scott Ferguson (voice, choir, Chair of the Voice & Choral Department), Kent Cook (piano, Chair of the Keyboard Department), Nina Gordon (violoncello chamber music), Adriana Ponce and Steven Press (musicology), Robert Mangialardi (voice), Joseph Plazak (music theory), William Hudson (voice), Jamie Rose-Guarinne (voice), Timothy Pitchford (trombone, Chair of Woodwind, Brass & Percussion Department), Ilya Radoslavov (piano), Lisa Nelson (violin, viola), Tamara Thies (Chair of the Music Education Department), Andrew Dahan (music education).



Finally, what about the alumni of the School of Music; their careers and accomplishments? I have spoken very little of these, because to do so would require many more hours of your time. But as you well know, Illinois Wesleyan has consistently attracted music students of high caliber, from all regions of the United States and beyond. And like the teaching faculty, many have achieved national and international recognition as performing artists, educators, church musicians, composers, and scholars. So look around the room today, at the people seated next to you, and you will see the history of the School of Music at Illinois Wesleyan University. Thank you for attending this whirlwind tour and I hope you enjoy the remainder of your Homecoming weekend.

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