

A PROGRAM FOR THE ARTS: NEW WHIRL

Richard Christensen

Panorama, Daily News, Chicago, 1966

THE CULTURAL SURVEY:

BOON OR BOONDOGGLE?

A Special Report and
an Analysis of the City's
New "Program for the
Arts in Chicago"

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A PROGRAM FOR THE ARTS': NOW WHAT?

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What we have tried to do in this issue of Panorama is to apply our individual talents in taking a considered and critical look at "A Program for the Arts in Chicago." This 180-page report, released just last week under the city seal, is a unique product of at least a year's time and \$60,000. It proposes spending \$31,000,000 from 1966-80 on several projects in the arts.

If you live in or near Chicago, if you have even the most casual acquaintance with theater, movies or concerts, if you take books out of the public library, if you walk through a museum once in a while, if you have children in school, then this cultural survey affects you. It needs, asks for, demands your attention.

So we have into it, considering a report on the survey as part of our job here at Panorama, and we have come up with a summary on what the report contains and some conclusions on what it might have included, and where it succeeded and where it failed.

But before that, a word from the report's sponsors, the Cultural Advisory Committee of the Mayor's Committee for Economic and Cultural Development. The advisory committee, chaired by Daggett Harvey, president of Lyric Opera and vice-chairman of the board of Fred Harvey, Inc., does not want to stand on every paragraph of its long report, but its feeling about the survey's work is expressed in two paragraphs in Harvey's letter submitting the report to Mayor Richard J. Daley:

"The report is not a statement of what exists in Chicago compared to what exists in other cities. It is impossible to detail all the vast amount of activity in a city the size of Chicago in a report of this size. Rather the report attempts to give the type, variety, extent and flavor of cultural activity in Chicago and, most importantly, to indicate how that activity measures up to the needs of Chicago's people.

"As anticipated, the report describes deficiencies in Chicago's cultural life. It also describes substantial assets. The primary importance of the report, however, is not in what it says about what exists but rather in what it recommends to strengthen cultural opportunities for all Chicagoans. The Committee believes that these recommendations are both necessary and feasible. Moreover, to us at least, they are very exciting."

And there you have it. The committee stands behind the recommendations, and having arrived at its conclusions - black and white and in a report between two covers - it now believes a plan for action can be promoted.

Characteristically, the committee's first item of business is to form a committee or, in this case, a Chicago Arts Council. Let's get organized, it states. Hold an "action conference" (I quote from the report), set up an office, enlist members, determine objectives, retain fund-raising and public relations counsel, organize development campaigns, prepare "packages" and presentations for projects, identify potential sources of support, lay out plans, activate volunteer development committees and task forces, initiate steps toward obtaining gifts and grants. (And sell that soap!)

What is depressing about this first step is not so much the possibility of such a council, although even here there are doubts. As envisioned in the program, the council would serve as a central clearing house, offering aid and advice on mutual problems of Chicago's many artistic efforts. The council, for example, could offer a calendar of events, cultural planning, practical expertise, a cultural information center, management counseling, etc.

Certainly such programs would be helpful, if they do not duplicate or unnecessarily destroy similar efforts already in existence. Along with presenting a united front for the arts in Chicago, there is always a danger of presenting a tightly controlled body of censors and arbiters who could easily discourage and damage efforts that do not flow with their mainstream, or encourage and enlist support for trivial projects that do.

But the report does emphasize the need for broadening the base of support and a more democratic leadership for Chicago's cultural institutions, and, according to committee staff members, this is a significant suggestion.

No, what is depressing about the committee's plan to form a committee is that it is a major instance of the report's primary quality of Group-Think.

This quality of content is evident in the report's flabby prose style, in its generalities and superficialities, in its public relations imagery, in its failure to dig into some hard criticism of the more sensitive problem areas in Chicago culture, in its over-all lack of the bite of individuality.

The result has been to produce a report that, at best, confirms what already has been established, even in its most laudable recommendations.

The program is full of the rhetoric of ringing cries for cultural greatness, but what it does not have, in spite of its search for what Chicago's people need, is a feeling that it was devised and prepared by individuals who understand and love the city and its culture.

But one definition of a healthy Chicago culture must be that it heightens one's pleasure in being human, and in being a citizen of one's community.

Where is the shock of recognition, the joy of discovery, the excitement and pride, the awareness of being involved, that a deeply felt cultural encounter can set off? Chicago is full of such experiences, but they are not in the report. And I sorely miss them.

THE REPORT: NOT PUBLIC OPINION

Joseph Haas

The decision to conduct a survey on Chicago cultural resources was made in February, 1964, by the Cultural Advisory Committee of the Mayor's Committee for Economic and Cultural Development, and the survey was assured late in 1964 after private contributors had been found to finance its \$60,000 cost.

Richard Ross, deputy director of the mayor's committee, said that "ten or twelve" firms applied for the survey contract. Eventually, the New York fund-raising and public relations firm of John Price Jones Co. was chosen because, Ross says, its proposed plan of action most suited the advisory committee's desires about the survey.

Alec Sutherland, an Englishman who formerly directed the University of Chicago's Center for Continuing Education and who, before that, was program director of the North American Bureau of the British Broadcasting Corp., was assigned by John Price Jones to direct the study.

According to Sutherland, he first collected the names of people active in the city's cultural life. He interviewed many of them and from them got additional names of other culture-conscious Chicagoans who could be expected to have opinions on the city's cultural health.

Over a period of 2-1/2 months, Sutherland says, he and two or three aides conducted interviews with 200 such people, ranging from 25 minutes to two hours.

What was most important about the survey, says Ross, were those 200 personal interviews, as well as other information collected by John Price Jones through library research and interviews with people concerned with questions of cultural conditions in the nation. "That's why we didn't have to hire an opinion research firm. The important part of the study was the valuation of expert opinion on local culture.

"Throughout the survey, anywhere it says 'the public wants' or 'random public prefers,' it was meant to mean the specialized public interested in culture."

The opinions of the cultural advisory committee also were reflected in the survey, since they were among those 200 key people who were given the personal interviews so important in the report's conclusions. The advisory committee members were selected by the Mayor's Committee, members of which were appointed by Mayor Daley. After collating the results of these interviews, John Price Jones prepared a questionnaire on the status of culture in Chicago.

Asked the role of the advisory committee in preparing the questions, Sutherland says, "My memory isn't too strong on that. We did meet with the committee once a month, and we got valuable suggestions from them. It's hard to remember who suggested what questions. I should imagine most of their suggestions were incorporated to help shape the final questions - but the emphasis was always on attempting to discern the facts."

Here are samples of the 20 questions in that questionnaire:

"6. How important do you believe it is for Chicago to do a great deal more than it has been doing in each of the areas below (Training and developing new creative talents; encouraging talented creative and performing artists to remain in the area; informing people elsewhere in the U.S. about its present cultural attractions and resources)? "

"15. The present Mayor's Cultural Advisory Committee fulfills such functions as the endorsing of new projects, public relations activities, and acting as a channel to help new groups find sponsors. It also determines cultural needs and tries to fulfill them. Some cities have formed Community Arts Councils to do such things. Would you approve or disapprove of forming a Chicago Arts Council? "

Ross says, "We structured the questionnaire to get answers to the kinds of questions we were interested in. You can't ask neutral questions, that's a waste of paper. People respond to specific stimuli or you get no response."

Sutherland adds, "We knew before we began what the 2 per cent of people interested in culture felt was important, and that 95 per cent of people are not culture-consumers. The fact is that from conversation with people involved

in culture, we learned what they felt were its various shortcomings, and we wanted a measurement of the scale of need. The questionnaire was designed to determine that."

The questionnaire was sent to some 2,500 persons in such categories as "general interest (in the arts)", 596; board members of cultural organizations, 538; clergyman, 273; politicians, 213; business executives, 202; performing artists, 113; labor officials, 68, and so on. Another 500 were sent to the "random public," names chosen from the telephone directory.

Ross says that "18 or 20 per cent, maybe a little less" of the "random public" returned the questionnaires - perhaps 90 people. Of the 2,500 other questionnaires sent to people involved in the city's cultural life, about 50 per cent responded, some 1,250 people. These questionnaires then were tabulated, by percentage of response rather than by numbers of respondents, and these tables fill 32 pages of the report.

Sutherland feels that 500 "random public" names (with a response of 90) was a "sufficiently broad sample" to consider the results a reflection of public opinion on the cultural climate.

The final step in the survey was for Sutherland to study all of the information collected and to write the report, which recommends a total expenditure of \$31,000,000 through 1980 to improve the city's cultural status.

Specifically the report recommends, in the period 1966-68: \$6,000,000 toward construction of a resident professional theater; \$500,000 to complete restoration of the Auditorium Theater and for "plans to provide programs at moderate prices"; \$300,000 toward purchase and first three years' operation of a Museum of Contemporary Art; \$200,000 for two years' underwriting of a Chicago Arts Council; \$100,000 for two years' underwriting of a Young Audiences program; \$350,000 for a mobile theater; \$100,000 toward a center for arts and crafts; \$25,000 for a Chicago Cultural Resources Book, \$30,000 for a cultural calendar and other publications, and \$300,000 in organizing expenses and other contingencies.

In the second phase, 1970-80: \$8,000,000 for neighborhood and suburban arts centers; \$3,000,000 for additional resident and touring companies, orchestras, opera, theater, dance, etc.; \$2,000,000 in endowments for creative arts; \$5,000,000 in endowments for educational programs; \$2,000,000 in endowment funds for experimental programs, and \$3,000,000 for publications, scholarships, festivals, conferences, etc.

ART: IMPORTANT, BUT . . .

Franz Schulze

It is not only easy but sensible to be favorably impressed by a first encounter with "A Program for the Arts in Chicago." It is equally likely, however, that the cheerful feelings will be joined by some sour ones the more one examines and reflects upon the long report.

My initial reaction to the survey was to take a Chicagoan's pride in the fact that no American city ever has undertaken so exhaustive a study of its own cultural resources, achievements, problems and objectives as this.

In almost every branch of the arts in Chicago, and very certainly in the visual arts, the need for dramatic improvement has been felt in the last few years. This column, moreover, has repeatedly observed that responsibility for the improvement rests more with the "patron class" - the cultural and civic leaders of Chicago - than with anyone else. Thus there was reason to rejoice that the Mayor's Committee is largely composed of such leaders, together with a brace of competent professionals, and that these are the people who stand behind the report. The memory of the Chicago tradition of No Little Plans came welling up suddenly, and it felt good.

And it is good that so many necessities long regarded as high in priority within the art community itself are now underscored by so public a document bearing so important an aegis.

The report recommends, explicitly, the establishment and/or the encouragement of a Chicago Arts Council, a museum of contemporary art, a high-quality Chicago-based art magazine, and, implicitly, a better School of the Art Institute, plus more activity from the art departments of local colleges and universities. These developments are indeed called for. We may also welcome the compilation of a large variety of data, of like kind and from all the arts, within one book. It can serve as a valuable reference manual.

Or can it? Here is where the bloom begins to fade. Careful scrutiny of those sections devoted to art alone disclose a disconcerting number of less-than-reliable statements - not so much provable errors of fact (though there are a few) as comments which are incomplete, out of date, undocumented, or unnecessarily opinionated. We are led to believe, for example, that the newly organized Museum of Contemporary Art plans both a permanent school and an international invitational biennial exhibition of painting and sculpture. More scrupulous writing would have made it clear that these two propositions, advanced more than two years ago, have never been official policy of the museum; that the

museum actually will have no formal policy, except that which can be expressed in more general terms than the report tends to use, until a director is hired. Policy must wait until then.

Furthermore: an appendix on Chicago's cultural history includes a section on the visual arts which is such a mere fragment of the truth that the truth as a whole is distorted. Artists of comparatively modest accomplishment are singled out, while others of international influence are left unmentioned.

The statement, "Among the visual arts in Chicago, painting has very little place," cries out for a documentation or a qualification that is never convincingly presented, perhaps because the only cited source for determining importance among Chicago painters is "Who's Who in American Art." This is a directory of limited reliability, as anyone genuinely acquainted with American art can - or should - testify. (There is not a word in the report about the development of Chicago painting since World War II, a period which is one of the most exciting in the city's history.)

The several pages dealing with the Art Institute are similarly unsatisfying. Though the history of the collections seems treated adequately enough, the problems and needs of the museum are at best obliquely considered, at worst ignored.

There is a brief reference to the miseries that have, at least until very recently, beset the School of the Art Institute, but nothing is said about the low faculty salaries and trustee indifference which have been among the prime causes of the school's embarrassment over the years.

And if the report neglects matters that should be dwelt on, it likewise dwells in detail on things that should be consigned to minor or incidental status. Several paragraphs are applied to the defense of outdoor art fairs, and a whole section to the cause of artmobiles, while only the thinnest lip service is paid to the far more important need for a new, serious and professional local art journal. The report appears, in fact, to be surprisingly content with what Chicago magazine has done along critical lines, despite the fact that this essentially promotional publication exercises next to no influence within the Chicago art world.

Meanwhile, nearly two full pages are allocated to the need for a new museum and center for contemporary crafts. This proposal is unquestionably welcome, a good idea for Chicago and Chicago craftsmen. Yet the discrepancy between the careful attention it gets (an initial funding of \$100,000) and the casual, off-hand call for a critical journal do not inspire confidence in the committee's power of discrimination.

(The report's section on architecture seems happily free of these faults; one of its best passages is the paragraph given to attorney Calvin Sawyer's thoughtful proposal about a preservation ordinance for the city on landmark buildings.)

It may be argued that these are all small criticisms, especially when measured against the report's admirable scope. But what is not so small is the pattern they represent, for they deal with failings which are apparently typical of committees.

The standard objection to committees is that they arrive at ceremonious definitions of what is already well known, that they are far better at classifying problems than at proposing solutions, that they shy away from controversy, that they are bodies of compromise rather than of consensus. While such criticisms are frequently unfair, they seem to apply to a significant degree in the case of this report.

Perhaps the most disturbing misgiving is the feeling that the committee at times approached culture as if it were a problem in business administration or a creature whose troubles require the balm of Madison Avenue. An implausible essay by Richard Ross, deputy director of the Mayor's Committee and coiner of such terms as "Athenian Breakthrough," "high quality cultural goods," and "tactics of cultural development," is the most unabashed instance of this. But there are others.

That is enough, however, of harsh words. There are virtues and there are flaws. To summarize judgment, it may suffice to say that the appearance of the report is an important and hopeful event because it reflects an earnest concern for the arts on the part of some powerful people and agencies; on the other hand that concern needs considerable refinement and, above all, some meaningful implementation, before there are grounds for real jubilation. Clearly the tasks of the Mayor's Committee have not ended. They have only begun.

MUSIC AND DANCE: NO SERIOUS OVERVIEW

Donal J. Henahan

At the bare minimum, one would think, a cultural survey should survey culture. Not penetrate it in depth, perhaps, if that should prove impossible or too expensive; but a sweeping view ought to be given, and the \$60,000 spent on the Mayor's Committee report does seem adequate for that.

But, in the areas of music and dance, at least, the 192-page booklet fails to give any overview worth taking seriously. Full of truisms ("No city can be great without a culture of its own.") and business-school prose, it tries to peddle the need for art on a spuriously commercial basis ("Marketing efforts designed to increase the frequency of participation on the part of already existing cultural consumers. . ."). Big industrialists looking for art projects in which to invest evidently are supposed to eat this up.

Beyond woolly generalizations, the report trips up in almost every musical field it tries to study. Incredibly, it lists the Grant Park Concerts under Supplementary Cultural Activities, ticking it off in two lines, and nowhere else mentioning this Chicago Park District project - a musical program unique in this country, by the way. Edward Gordon, managing director of the concerts, reports that no surveyor talked to him or anyone else in his department. If this were an isolated slipup, there could be little complaint.

The Fine Arts Quartet, this city's most widely known chamber group, is named only once in the report, also under Supplementary Cultural Activities, where it is listed along with the Norwegian Festival Orchestra, the Julliard (sic) String Quartet, and other "visitors" to Chicago. The Fine Arts Quartet has been a resident here since shortly after World War II, and its series of concerts now is heading into its seventh season. Last year it played to soldout houses.

Richard Covello, manager of this distinguished group, was indeed interviewed for "about an hour" in the summer of 1964, at the Merchandise Mart. He says he lavished on the surveyor all the information he had about the Fine Arts, and also filled him in on other chamber-music groups in and around Chicago. Little of this shows in the report, and the one mention of the Fine Arts is inaccurate.

Also one of Chicago's Supplementary Cultural Activities is the Ravinia Festival. A 27-line discussion provides no information or opinion beyond what might be included in a chamber of commerce brochure.

"Choral societies have shown considerable activity, too." Perhaps so, but the only ones mentioned (again under Supplementary Cultural Activities) are five foreign touring choruses and "the Chicago children's choir of the Rev. Christopher Moore at the Hyde Park Unitarian Church." Did the surveyor know of the existence of the choral activity of Margaret Hillis and Thomas Peck, or of the Apollo Musical Club, the Swedish Choral Club, the Paulist Choir, the North Shore Chamber Choir, and others? Any such report should have, not an enumeration of these choral groups necessarily, but some hint of their existence.

The Chicago Symphony is discussed in four paragraphs under Orchestras, blandly and superficially. Half a page is given over to quoting reviews of the orchestra's March, 1966, tour. Silas Edman, the manager, was not consulted by anyone connected with the survey; however, one of the orchestra's trustees, Daggett Harvey, is chairman of the Cultural Advisory Committee of the Mayor's committee, and the survey thus had access to all the Chicago Symphony data it could require. Another trustee, Louis Sudler, now president of the Orchestral Assn., was not personally interviewed, but says he received a questionnaire. Several other trustees also were polled. Out of this came a pitifully thin summation of Chicago's most venerable musical institution.

On the other hand, the relatively unimportant Chicago Chamber Orchestra is treated in great detail under Orchestras and elsewhere. We are warned that

"it is quite possible that further weakening of support could cause the Chicago Chamber Orchestra to vanish from the city."

Misstatements of fact in all areas abound. We are told that "The Chicago Symphony Orchestra usually performs about six times a year in the Rockefeller Chapel." Not so. Members of the orchestra play in the oratorio series there, but members of the orchestra also play at weddings.

Under Opera, we find Lyric Opera treated in 39 lines, in ludicrously inadequate fashion, while 26 lines are given over to the Apollo Opera Company, one of several fringe groups putting on scratch performances in neighborhood halls.

One of the primary sources on audience-building was Lyric Opera's press agent, Danny Newman. He was not consulted about Lyric itself, however, or he might have been able to put the Chicago opera picture in better perspective for the report.

That there is literally no comparison in quality between two such organizations any experienced cultural surveyor might be expected to understand. One major trouble with the entire report, however, would seem to be that it was compiled by someone without knowledge of, or experience in, this city, and who evidently lacked the investigative ability to make the necessary research contacts.

Many of the survey's statements are unassailable. It is perfectly true that "the city badly needs a facility to accommodate about 400 people, and probably another with a capacity of around 1,000. There is no place for the coming artist to demonstrate his talent." One of the first columns I wrote, ten years ago, pointed out these two serious lacks in Chicago's music. I had taken my own, relatively inexpensive, survey.

One can cheer the report's suggestion, too, that the Auditorium Theater be given funds to complete restoration and launch "plans to provide programs at moderate prices." And yet, have we all not been propagandizing for the Auditorium's rebirth? The survey adds nothing that was not already clearly understood.

However, the survey protests that "although many of the facts are already well known to a number of professional writers and critics, as well as those engaged in various phases of the arts, the drawing of them together between covers makes it possible to base upon them a broad plan." If that proved true, of course, one would excuse all superficialities and gobbledegook.

In surveying Chicago dance, which it finds possible to do in 46 lines, the Mayor's report takes 16 lines to ponder problems of the Allegro American Ballet Company, dismissing Ruth Page's Chicago Opera Ballet (which is also the Lyric Opera Ballet, of course) in five lines.

"The Chicago Opera Ballet," we read, "appears to be the only permanent company to be organized on a profit-making basis." Whatever one may think of its level of accomplishment, the Ruth Page troupe is an entirely professional group and deserved more searching treatment. Other groups are not mentioned at all, such as the Phyllis Sabold Company and the Illinois Ballet. Mention is made of Sybil Shearer, and the Harper Dance Festival is cited as "another reason for optimism about dance in Chicago." As a fillip to this stupefyingly inadequate treatment of a labyrinthine subject, the report rises to a moment of Churchillian eloquence: "If there is one truth that can be stated in this province, it is that only the dedicated can succeed in dancing. Its people believe that struggle sharpens the blade, and realize that whatever the rewards are, they are not financial." This, surely, was the survey writer's finest hour.

It would be wrong to suggest, however, that there is nothing of value to be gleaned from the Mayor's report. Despite its flaws of basic reportorial research and its hasty organization, it does include in its Summary a thought that should be chiseled in the brows of all cultural committees:

"One of the easiest ways to waste money is to put it into efforts which are not sufficiently thought out."

THEATER: BIG MONEY FOR A TOP PRIORITY ITEM

Richard Christiansen

The largest chunk of money devoted to a single item in the report is the \$6,000,000 recommended for the construction of a resident professional theater in Chicago.

The committee telegraphed this prize punch two months ago with a separate 7,500-word statement on its plans for a theater, and, in large part, the new cultural survey simply summarizes the conclusions of that earlier recommendation. (Both reports, incidently, originally were to have been released at the same time, but delay in preparing the cultural survey forced a change in plans.)

Briefly, the report suggests that a drama program ought "to bring good theater to Chicagoans at a reasonable price, and to move it to the doorsteps of those to whom theater is a rare or unknown experience. As a practical investment, it should not only pay, or nearly pay, its way, but it should offer spiritual satisfaction to all sectors of its potential audience."

The main structure of a resident theater is seen as the mother of most of these

projects, but there also is a recommendation for a mobile theater, adapted from successful New York efforts in bringing drama to impoverished neighborhoods.

"Nine out of ten persons" interviewed, the report states, believed a top-ranked resident theater was the first cultural priority of Chicago.

Like all of the programs mentioned in the report, this one gets no specific direction in financing, except for a general conclusion that a subsidy "may come from government, foundations, corporations, private donors, or all of these groups, in one form or another."

Nor is there a particular suggestion for the location of the theater. In this area, however, it should be noted that the new Central Area Improvements Program, unveiled just this Thursday, allows for a "cultural facility building" in that area north of Grant Park, over the Illinois Central R. R. and on land lying next to the river and the lake.

William E. Hartmann, senior partner in Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, architectural firm which helped prepare the plan, is also chairman of the steering committee to plan for a resident professional theater.

The steering committee is just getting under way now, and will soon be meeting to plot the first steps in its course toward a superior theater.

In covering other aspects of Chicago theater, the report hops, skips and jumps across several names and organizations, acknowledging their existence and hinting at some problems, but doing little more than that. Most of the key persons involved in professional and community theater in the area received the survey questionnaires, but few that I questioned were interviewed personally, even though some had taken considerable effort to let the committee know they wanted to be helpful.

Exceptions are Bruce Sagan, owner of the Harper Theater, and John Reich, director of Goodman Theater, who is a member of the cultural advisory committee. Even at that, the very real and pressing problems of space, financing and instruction at Goodman are given short shrift.

Not to talk to such representative and active individuals in this city as Robert Sickinger of Hull House, Bernard Sahlins of Second City and William Pullinski of Candlelight Dinner Playhouse seems to me slipshod and negligent in duty.

Curiously, the one theater group that gets the greatest attention in the report is the National Repertory Theater, a touring troupe that has played Chicago for the past three seasons and will be with us again in February.

After observing that the Chicago founders' group of NRT is an extremely active organization, the report states that NRT "has learned that there is no better way to encourage attendance than to have higher and higher standards of production." Amen to that, but should it take so long to find that out?

The American Conservatory Theater, which arrived here after the report and the theater steering committee statement had been completed, gets glancing notice through mention of the Pittsburgh Playhouse, its former home, but that is all.

The report gives nice pats on the head to Sagan for keeping his Harper Theater open, neglecting to investigate why he had such a hard time keeping it open, and it praises the Theater on the Lake program of the Chicago Park District, expressing the hope that it might expand because it is so well attended and ignoring the slight content of most of the plays presented there.

The Park District drama program, which could be a seedbed for a true community theater in Chicago, is similarly given almost no attention.

The Chicago critics, those tried and true villains of the city's cultural life, get still another going over, although no critic is called by name and no specific example of his destructive power is cited.

However, says the report: "One authoritative commentator said 'the critics in Chicago are a wrecking crew, trying to make a name for themselves. Critics never build anything. Theater has been set back in Chicago mostly by devastating critics.' Another commentator said: 'One hesitates to criticize critics because they seem to consider themselves above criticism and to demand complete immunity on the grounds of freedom of the press.'"

The report immediately follows up with this sentence: "Good criticism can be an invaluable component of a cultural program." Later, it praises the city's "fine corps of critics."

Heaven knows individual Chicago critics have weaknesses and could use some good, constructive criticism. But to haul out such tired harangues as these is not the way to bring it about.

In fact, the report's general failure of nerve in not presenting any kind of meaningful comment on the state of Chicago's cultural criticism is, in itself, a major disappointment.

Perhaps in the long run, the report's worth will come in the incidental recommendations it makes. In one of its definite suggestions, the report says that "it would seem wise" to review outdated Fire Department regulations in theater buildings. Some good could come from the report if this suggestion alone were followed.

For the most, however, the report is content to stick primarily with its central concept of the resident professional theater and a recommendation for a mobile theater program. Both are laudable projects and let us hope that by 1968, terminal point for the report's first phase, they are both well on their way to completion, as the report suggests.

But we had a right to expect more, much more, from this effort.

CULTURAL EDUCATION: SUPERFICIAL AT BEST

Norman Mark

Although the cultural survey continually emphasizes that "more programs are needed to educate children and young people in the arts," the coverage of the cultural education of Chicago's youngsters is so superficial that it approaches neglect.

The important education section of the report begins with praise for recent public school architecture and ends with the vacuous statement that "any inadequacies of the Chicago Public Schools must be a matter of continuous study, as are the problems of any great city's educational system." The reader is not told what committee or individual should perform this "continuous study," exactly what should be studied is not spelled out and how much this would cost is not estimated.

The report praises efforts to keep construction costs down; the art teaching programs in the schools, and the James C. Petrillo Foundation's support of musical group visits to the schools. It does not take up future school construction, the quality of art education or the difficulties schools face when they tangle with the Musician's Union. (Evening dances cost the students twice as much as they would if the school did not have to pay for unwanted union musicians who play waltzes when the students want to Watusi.)

The survey states that \$1,200 is allocated for free bus trips to museums at about \$10 a trip, but doesn't say if 120 trips are enough to get every sixth to eighth grader to a museum "at least once during a semester," as the report says the schools try to do.

After pointing with pride to symphony visits, low-priced Lyric Opera tickets and the all-city band and choir, the survey inaccurately states that teachers for the band and choir are "not staff members" (they are). According to the report, Goodman Theater provides special performances of classics for high school students, with tickets paid for by the Board of Education. According to Miss Gertrude Cuthman, the board's cultural resources consultant, the students pay \$1 each for the tickets.

There is no mention of a new program to introduce instrumental music instruction to youngsters in 100 elementary schools. The program costs \$500,000 and needs to be expanded throughout the system.

Nor is there anything about the Board of Education's part in taking 70,000 children to Goodman Children's Theater productions this summer as part of the poverty program. True, these are recent innovations, but the report did find time to explore a Mayor's Committee suggestion for a resident professional theater, released in July.

Throughout the education section, there are a host of unattributed and unproved statements, such as "the disappointment expressed in the Chicago press at the demise of NBC's 'Artist's Showcase' early in 1966 must have been shared by education authorities."

Under the suggestions for the use of Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which allocates money for projects to advance creativity in education, the report mentions programs in Gary, Ind., New York, California, and Delaware. It neglects to say anything about Chicago's loss of nearly \$1,000,000 a year for a federally-backed repertory theater. Although Chicago was considered, Providence, R. I., and New Orleans, La., got the program, partially financed under Title III. A professional company will perform four classics in school hours to 90,000 high school seniors in the two areas and will charge parents to see the same productions on the weekend. There was no comment on why Chicago was dropped from consideration, or if the city will try for the money again.

Although there are pious laments on the nearly complete passing of dance and drama from the Chicago high school scene, there are no suggestions on how to remedy this situation.

The survey states that "Professor Havighurst's report on the schools . . . certainly gives a useful set of guidelines and is a most valuable document." The Havighurst report, never followed by the Board of Education, was a nuts and bolts study on how to improve schools. Its index contains no notations about culture, music, art, drama or dance; but at least it had an index, which is more than can be said about the survey.

Moving to "University Programs," the report seems more interested in a public relations effort than in a close analysis of how our colleges are doing in cultural fields. Every local school is singled out for saccharine praise, with the exception of the entire junior college system, which isn't mentioned at all.

The survey notes that Loyola uses "a store room under the L for experimental drama," but doesn't go into the problems that accompany such an operation.

It talks about the Pier Players at the Chicago Circle Campus, but is silent about the lack of an on-campus theater there. There were student petitions for one in the spring and a valued instructor left because of the difficulty of putting on theater in a lecture hall. With its planned theater delayed until after 1970, and after being moved out of the lecture hall, the University drama group has been forced to move off-campus to the 11th Street Theater.

The report states that DePaul has a large area for art exhibits that it doesn't use, but doesn't say how this situation can be helped. It praises Northwestern University's WAA-MU show, but doesn't say that less than 15 per cent of all the writing for the show is done by students currently enrolled in the school, with the remainder done by established professionals.

Of equal timidity is the report on libraries, which concludes, "This may well be the proper time for a study of the Chicago system by bringing together a number of consultants to study any possibility of improvement." Sutherland said, after the report was issued, that this should be the City Council's responsibility, but no such defining of whose task it is occurs in the report. (He also said that library workers call the narrow card catalog room "the bump room," because it is impossible to get a card out without bumping someone. Now there's a fact that might have spiced up a dull survey.)

The report does state that "you couldn't call it (the Chicago Public Library) the jewel in the crown of American Libraries," crediting that remark to "one State Librarian (not from the Midwest)."

There is no mention of the state of high school libraries (a point criticized in the Havighurst Report) and no word about the controversies surrounding librarian Gertrude Gscheidle or about her walk-out from a City Council investigation of the library in 1965.

Ald. Paul Wigoda (49th) has fought for years for a library in the Edgewater area, where a bookmobile comes only on Saturdays. "The Chicago Public Library is derelict in its duties and I'm not sure that it even understands the function of a library," Wigoda said. "They didn't say enough in the report to really tell me what kind of a study they are talking about."

Even the report's library circulation figures are misleading. They refer to a 20 per cent increase in circulation in 15 years, yet don't mention that 1965's 10,000,000 volumes were considerably below the library's 1931 peak of nearly 16,000,000.

There is a suggestion that the elderly should be given some sort of CTA "transport pass" to the library. The University of Chicago, Northwestern University and Newberry libraries are favorably mentioned, but nearly equal weight is given to the Negro Museum, without saying how many reference books it holds.

The survey of Chicago's museums is well-rounded and generally factual. It rightfully praises the Field Museum, the Art Institute; the Museum of Science and Industry and the Chicago Historical Society. There are also some nice words about the depressing and decrepit Chicago Academy of Sciences.

There are some general statements about low curators' salaries and the need for financial support for museums now that the Poverty Program is sending more children to them, but, once again, there is nothing specific.

One of the well-researched sections concerns the plight of the Adler Planetarium. The survey states that the Planetarium is handicapped because of its relationship with the Park District and that certain collections remain uncataloged because of lack of funds. The report "strongly recommends" that the Planetarium be taken away from the Park District, that it be put under control of the Field Museum (why that particular museum is chosen is never explained) and it suggests that needed exhibit space, classrooms, office and administrative facilities would cost \$1,500,000.

The Park District suggestion and the \$1,500,000 improvements are lost by the end of the report in the Major Recommendations section, the results of an impressive bit of printed legerdemain.

The Park District did not schedule any discussions of the Planetarium suggestion at its last meeting.

Near the end of the survey, there is a recommendation that \$100,000 be given over a two-year period to form Young Audiences Inc. in Chicago. Originally founded in New York, this group sends musicians to various schools to give ensemble performances.

The survey failed to state the Young Audiences would nearly duplicate the Urban Gateways program, which provides low-price tickets for out-of-school performances and in-school recitals. The exact funding for Gateways was not spelled out, although its program was praised, presumably because it is now supported almost completely by the Anti-Poverty Program.

The president of the Institute for Cultural Development, which ran the Urban Gateways program, Mrs. Helen Kolar, recently resigned because of the difficulties encountered while trying to run a summer program with whimsical poverty program financial support. She complained of sudden cancellations of bus service, of people being told they wouldn't be paid four weeks after they were hired, and other problems which caused her first to recommend that poverty funds be rejected by the Institute and, finally, to resign her post.

Although \$100,000 for Young Audiences was mentioned as a major recommendation, no suggestion offered in the education, libraries or museums sections was deemed important enough to be included in the final recommendations. The

Adler Planetarium, the library study, and the schools study were all buried in the report, far away from "A Program of Action."

These sections appear pervaded with a fear of making any sort of unequivocal statement about established institutions. No names are mentioned unless someone is praised, and generalization and over-simplification are the rules. "Our job wasn't to simply tear them apart," Sutherland said. But it is just possible that constructive, creative, new approaches were the survey's "job," and they are notably lacking from these sections of the report.

AND WHAT ABOUT THE ARTISTS?

Michaela Williams

Perhaps it follows, as the tail the dog, that a survey of the arts that starts out talking about the "cultural consumer market" and "purveyors of culture" will be more esteemed by businessmen, who supposedly speak the language, than by artists, who don't. But if the report reflects accurately and in depth the city's artistic needs, if it recommends plausible, imaginative action, then such hard-sell hucksterism can be overlooked.

But when, as is the case, it is an outline for improving the city image, tourism and the influx of business with a display case full of puffworthy culture, then its evasions, inaccuracies and irrelevancies become monumental. Monumental, in this case particularly, because of its lack of recognition that artists make the culture, not public relations.

The case of films, for instance:

Film is handled in six paragraphs, entitled, mysteriously, "Experimental Film." (This may be an evasion tactic so as not to mix it up with commercial movie exhibitors, whose problems, achievements and responsibilities are quite ignored.)

The section starts out telling us that hardly anybody in Chicago practices the art of experimental film - maybe 20 people - despite New York and West Coast interest in the medium. (This is true. Why? What should be done?) The next sentence says, "Roosevelt University was one of the original founders of the Film Society." The relationship of this statement, and practically all the succeeding ones, to experimental film is elusive.

The Roosevelt University Film Society indeed is a venerable and worthwhile institution. So are numerous other film societies, some of which are mentioned,

but their function is primarily to provide a museum for the study of film classics. Roosevelt's fall series, "The Stars, Hollywood Style," starting with "The Big Parade," can hardly be called experimental.

The report does not recommend the promotion of a renting or lending film library that might make the job of film societies easier, as well as serve film historians.

Some space is given, deservedly, to the value of high school and college film courses, though no suggestion is made that the Chicago Board of Education adopt film curricula. The magnificent breakthrough in film appreciation envisioned by the report is that "we may see a growing audience more interested in who directed a film than who is starring in it," a state of awareness achieved at least a decade ago by numerous viewers.

The second half of the section on films (three paragraphs) is devoted to Michael J. Kutza Jr. and his Chicago International Film Festival. It says young Kutza once had a "bring your own film" session to which no one brought a film, so he decided to start a film festival.

Kutza, who says he was never consulted by the survey and never had such an experience, nonetheless did start a festival with \$10,000, and he is going to have another. The survey says, "Here we have an example of artistic initiative by a tiny group of people with slight resources. If the Chicago International Film Festival is to grow into something of international significance, it needs money for awards significant enough to attract significant entries, and to publicize its activities."

Indeed, though the merits of film festivals in general could be debated, the emphasis of that endorsement is on the "something of international significance" part. Kutza is admittedly putting on a commercial festival with its focus on feature films - independent or experimental activity is a small part of it. There's nothing wrong with that, and if he's going to do it, he should be allowed to put together the best festival money can buy (he says \$50,000 would help), but what does all this mean for film makers in Chicago?

Not much. What the report characteristically avoids is people actually involved in experimental film here. Such persistent groups as Aardvark Cinematheque, Hull House, even John Heinz and his Hyde Park Art Center group, represent creative film making in Chicago, all have practical ideas as to how the film maker can and must be helped, not one was consulted or interviewed.

The key to this may lie in the report's recommendation for the displacement of a \$1,500,000 endowment fund that would "encourage experimental programs," the only stipulation being that "these would have to give clear evidence of viability." One can only shudder at such practical advice.

MILWAUKEE
MAY 1958

The other grey area that must be talked about if a valid picture of films in Chicago is to be presented is censorship. The situation here has been greatly relieved by a liberal Appeals Board, but the condition of police censorship in the arts should be a subject of constant debate. It is not mentioned in the report.

The whole field of literature barely missed being added to the list of areas not covered, after zoos, aquariums, folk art (folk art?). Charged with representing all writers is a 14-paragraph section on "Poetry." Nowhere, not even in that comparatively long section, is there a mention of creative writing, play writing, the qualities of local journalism, workshops for writers, outlets (or the lack of them) in terms of magazines (to flaunt Chicago magazines is an egregious sham), willing book publishers, or what might be done about it.

Poetry was no doubt selected as safe to represent literature because, after all, we do still have Poetry magazine to claim as Chicago's pride, even if Chicago poets feel somewhat differently about it.

The poetry section starts out in kind, with some aquarium imagery featuring "small schools of poets swimming in different directions" and concludes that "although 'Poetry' is the pre-eminent publication, there are many others in and around Chicago" (Do they need help? Should they be subsidized?) "The development of poetry concerts can be stimulated with only small support" (a daring proposal). "As is the case with film festivals, there is enough dynamic for a small investment to show rewarding returns."

In view of the emphasis of the report, it should not be surprising that the majority of writers are excluded from this survey. After all, they are only people, and the survey falters pathetically when it has to deal with flesh, instead of flash.

In a catch-all section called, euphemistically, "Talent," some philosophizing is done as to why people like Mike Nichols leave Chicago. To show how bad the situation is, it quotes a speech made 22 years ago by Stanley Pargellis, then head of the Newberry Library, about how the Middle West is the "vineyard of literature" and that the Coast bottles up our best champagne and takes it away. (Incidentally, the only other mention of "literature" in the 192-page book is in Appendix I on page 132 - Notes on Chicago's Cultural History - which, along with some other hyperbole, evokes one scholar's opinion that "Chicago has been or will be the cradle of that elusive work, The Great American Novel." So stick with it, kids.)

The report concedes that "artists of stature move to 'where the action is'," action being a state the elements of which seems to dismay the writer of the report, even when it means something as simple as work, national recognition, the company of peers.

the company of peers.

But the report's probing falls down most dreadfully because it does not think to ask, 'Who and where are the young people who should become the next Mike Nicholsons and Barbara HARRISES? Do they need help and encouragement? What can we do for them even if they are destined to leave us?' The report's advice to them is as obscure as it is meaningless, that "amateurs become semi-professionals and create improving circumstances for themselves."

Yes, the implementation of this report could have a profound effect on Chicago culture - it could effectively bury those who create that culture.

MASS MEDIA: WHERE THE ACTION ISN'T

Dean Gysel

There are several mildly interesting aspects to the survey of local broadcasting in the city's new "Program for the Arts in Chicago," the least of which is the conclusion that television is boring us out of our socks. We didn't need a \$60,000 study sponsored by the Mayor's Committee for Economic and Cultural Development to tell us that.

What is more pertinent is that the author, Alec Sutherland, made his survey last January, which is three seasons ago, in television time. Yet despite some oversights, the situation generally has not changed since then or, at least, it is not much worse. What the report lacks in timeliness, it supplants with sound guesswork.

Sutherland talked to professional critics and publicists for the stations, who apprised him of current programs and proposed projects. Most of these projects are still on the back of restaurant menus.

According to the report: "Despite the fact that Chicago television stations are estimated to have achieved revenues totaling \$73,000,000 in 1965, there is small evidence of activity according to a year-end (1965) report in Variety.

"There have been no outstanding programs. While the press of the city has been dealing with such matters requiring public attention as insurance company failures, wage ganishments, conditions in some schools . . . the TV news media have followed their old pattern of heading local bulletins with crime and accident stories.

"No new personalities have been established, no documentary program has excited wide interest. Actors and musicians, who might have expected to share the affluence, grow more dispirited as their opportunities seem to dwindle. The situation is neatly summed up in the headline (Variety) 'Chicago TV: No Local Action, Just Bucks and Boredom. '"

Only WBBM-TV praised the report and endorsed its recommendations. This is partially because the station contributed \$5,000 to underwrite the survey.

Of the seven TV stations, WTTW, the educational television outlet, was most concerned about the survey. The report complimented the station on "an interesting schedule" and an efficient fund raising operation, but added that WTTW's "initiative in local affairs is regarded as considerably less than satisfactory by many who complain that as a 'community station' it does not reflect as much community activity as it should. "

Edward L. Morris, program director of WTTW, countered that "more than 100 community organizations" are represented on Channel 11. He said the survey failed to mention Facet, a program devoted to the arts and using local talent; a playwriting contest in which four original dramas will be produced, and a proposed monthly series on "Life in Chicago. "

Morris' main complaint is that the report recommended spending \$31,000,000 through 1980 on opera, theater, music, etc., but not a cent for WTTW.

"It's unrealistic and unfair not to recommend dollar support to educational television. We reach people who have never before seen a first class Hamlet or have never been to Orchestra Hall to hear Andres Segovia. With money, we could establish a television repertory theater and regional musical programs. Chicago talent is dying for opportunities. "

Morris cited a chart in the survey which showed that 85 per cent of the "random public" felt it was "extremely important" to have more cultural programs on radio-TV. However, it did not indicate whether these people would watch the programs.

Morris' point is well taken. One television show can reach more people than a year of neighborhood theater dramas. But while expressing a need for improved programming, the survey apparently considers television a lost cause.

The survey singled out WFLD (Channel 32) or more precisely, its general manager, Sterling Quinlan, as the last hope for excitement in local broadcasting.

"At ABC his record was one of vitality and innovation and with the resources now behind him, it is possible that the city will witness the fostering of a new creative entity in a region in which there have been complaints about too much pedestrianism. "

The report continues that WFLD's contributions are still on the drawing board. "WFLD cannot yet claim to have done anything noteworthy, but the Field Newspapers invariably give it a reference as a nightly 'highlight.'" I must take exception to that remark. The Daily News does not give reference to WFLD as a nightly highlight, and how can he write off a station that brings us Mods and Music at Maxim's?

The report had kind words for WBKB's local shows but was pessimistic about the development of WCIU (Channel 26). Of the latter, it said, "Its aim was to supply ethnic material, but there has been little in the operation to permit the hope that this franchise will add much to the Chicago scene."

Concerning WMAQ, it mentioned several programs, past, present and never, but omitted an appraisal of WMAQ's 10:30 to 11 p. m. Sunday slot. This valuable period is reserved for specials but among its subjects have been newspapermen and, a week ago, Glenview Naval Air Reservists. Newspapermen are notorious crowd pleasers, to say nothing of reservists and their mothers, but is there nothing more provocative?

Independent station WGN received mixed treatment. "Although it is not particularly strong in cultural offerings," said the report, "it was quick to pick up the Artists Showcase program dropped by NBC and put it in prime weekend time (8:30 p. m. Sunday)."

The survey also mentioned a WGN idea for a joint effort with other stations on a documentary about Chicago, to be shown internationally. It quoted a WGN spokesman as saying that the project is still in the preliminary stages of cost estimation and plan of procedure. Sutherland said this was probably a "euphemism for the fact that the project is stalled."

I checked with a spokesman and got a more precise answer: "I would not say we have made a tremendous amount of progress, but we have cut down a lot of the underbrush. It's not a simple thing . . . we have to find and produce the proper film. We're moving along pretty good. I can't give you a date . . . there are many problems . . . things to be done."

About the radio stations, the survey commends WFMT for its high programming standards. By omission, the report dramatizes the paucity of good music stations, AM and FM, especially those which play classical music. Now that FM stations are recognized as good advertising avenues, the number of stations broadcasting good music will become even fewer by the time of the next civic survey. (At a later date I will give more attention to the state of radio in Chicago.)

As for television, all stations say they do not have enough money, manpower or time to expend on series devoted strictly to the arts. It is the field of news and documentaries that the stations are best equipped for and the sole area in which we can hope for some excitement.