

THE JUILLIARD SCHOOL
ARCHIVAL SCRAPBOOKS

Scrapbook # 58

John Erskine Clipping Book

Nov. - Dec. 1936

(New Orleans)

blank pages
not filmed

NEW ORLEANS ASSOCIATION OF COMMERCE

NEW ORLEANS

P.O. BOX 1460

(THE PORT OF THE MISSISSIPPI VALLEY)

November 13, 1936

VIA AIR MAIL

Dr. John Erskine,
Columbia University,
New York City.

Dear Dr. Erskine:

In the back of its sentimental old head, New Orleans has long had the idea of rebuilding the old French Opera House.

But we have never quite gotten down to definite action.

No stimulant, however, is so strong as that which enables you at times to see that you stand high in the regard of those who are outside of your immediate family.

Your letter in Liberty and the encouragement given by the magazine's editors in presenting your idea so forcefully have given New Orleans just the impulse needed to bring into active unison the scattered forces which have heretofore been talking about a revival of the old culture around this traditional center.

Within the next few days our Music Committee and our Convention & Visitors' Bureau will meet with others who feel with you that New Orleans can be a focal point for the preservation, expression and development of a distinctive American culture.

We are moving with the assumption that behind your letter there is a definite indication that you and your associates would be willing to advise us in the development of this project so dear to your heart and so close to ours.

Is it possible that within the next few months you might find the time to come down here and sit in with us as we formulate detailed plans?

Very truly yours,

H. Van R. Chase
General Manager.

HVRC:LL

AMERICA'S MOST INTERESTING CITY

November 16, 1936

H. Van R. Chase, Esq.
New Orleans Association of Commerce
P. O. Box 1460
New Orleans, La.

Dear Mr. Chase

I greatly appreciate your letter of the 13th.

For some time I have been talking over with friends in New York my dream of a music festival in New Orleans, and I have confined my conversations to men who have come from New Orleans. I of course am out of it, being an errant New Yorker, but at least I am New Orleans at heart.

We feel that in order to develop a national movement and to receive sustained support from the whole country, it would be wise to have a board of directors in charge of the festival - those directors to be chosen from distinguished men and women who originally came from New Orleans but who are now leading important careers in other parts of the United States. We have been sketching a list of such people from coast to coast.

I needn't enlarge on the advantage such a board of directors would be. Of course there would have to be some group on the spot in direct charge, and some one expert manager. But the active people could be chosen by this board of directors and by your Chamber of Commerce.

With such an organization I foresee no difficulty in se-

-2-

curing all the support necessary.

When your Chamber of Commerce is ready for more specific suggestions, I'd be glad to send a list of names.

I hope to be in New Orleans some time in February working on a book, the scene of which is laid in your city. When I arrive I'll let you know, if I may, and we can talk further.

With cordial regard,

Faithfully yours

THE COMPANY WILL APPRECIATE SUGGESTIONS FROM ITS PATRONS CONCERNING ITS SERVICE

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Received at 114 ST. NICHOLAS AVENUE, N. Y.

NAV202 137 DL=NEWORLEANS LA 11 255P

JOHN ERSKINE, AUTHOR=

130 CLAREMONT AVE=

1936 NOV 11 PM 4 44

YOUR ARTICLE CURRENT LIBERTY REGARDING MUSICAL FESTIVAL AT NEWORLEANS STOP WE FORMED CORPORATION FOUR DAYS AGO CALLED LOUISIANIANS INCORPORATED FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND REVIVAL OF HISTORICAL PLACES AND ATMOSPHERE NEWORLEANS ALSO STATE LOUISIANA STOP YOUR ARTICLE CONFIRMS PLANS FOR WINTER FESTIVAL BEGINNING PRESENT SEASON HOWEVER TIME NOT SUFFICIENT TO INCLUDE REBUILDING OF FRENCH OPERA HOUSE THIS SEASON STOP WHAT IS YOUR REACTION ON SUCH A FESTIVAL THIS FIRST YEAR WITHOUT THE FRENCH OPERA HOUSE BUT WITH TEMPORARY INTERIOR INSTALLATIONS IN REPLICA FRENCH OPERA HOUSE STOP CAN WE ASK YOU TO RENDER US FURTHER ASSISTANCE BY THE BENEFIT OF ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS OR IDEAS YOU MIGHT HAVE IN MIND ON THIS SUBJECT ESPECIALLY AS TO TALENT ORCHESTRAS AND ARTISTIC ANGLES STOP I AND THE OTHER PROMINENT MEMBERS OF OUR CORPORATION WILL DEEM IT A PRIVILEGE TO RECEIVE YOUR SUGGESTIONS=

A M WILHELM ROOSEVELT TRAVEL SERVICE INC.

THE QUICKEST, SUREST AND SAFEST WAY TO SEND MONEY IS BY TELEGRAPH OR CABLE

November 17, 1936

A. M. Wilhelm, Esq.
Roosevelt Travel Service, Inc.
New Orleans, La.

My dear Mr. Wilhelm

Thank you for your telegram of the 11th. I have just written to Mr. H. Van R. Chase of the Association of Commerce, and would suggest that you get in touch with him and talk over what I said to him.

My first impression is that it would be a mistake to have the festival before the opera house is finished. The proper organization and the artistic side would take some time to work out, and you ought to have the initial advertisement of dedicating the new house.

I shall be in New Orleans in February, and shall be glad to help in any way I can.

With cordial regard,

Faithfully yours

November 19, 1936

Dr. H. W. Stopher
School of Music
Louisiana State University
Baton Rouge, La.

Dear Dr. Stopher

I have your letter of November 12th, and should be sorry if my suggestion interfered in any way with the development of your Music Department.

But I can't see the conflict. I am sure that you and the other artists in your faculty would not say that an undergraduate music department, no matter how promising, could make the same use of the old French Opera as professional and experienced artists could make, nor could the University music department with undergraduate students create a national music festival comparable to that at Salzburg. Frankly, I think the old French Opera House, if rebuilt in the old quarter, would be a spiritual asset for the country far too valuable to be used for such a purpose.

My own University, Columbia, badly needs a proper hall for its music department. I would not recommend, however, abandoning the Metropolitan Opera House and turning over the House to the students.

But the music festival which I propose would not take the whole year, and I don't see why your music department could not put on performances at other times.

However, that is all a matter for you to settle in your own

-2-

state and in your own locality. I made the suggestion from the most disinterested motives. It means nothing to me personally one way or the other. If New Orleans develops such a festival as I outlined, it will have the ardent support of many of us from other parts of the country. If the house is used merely as a laboratory for your University music department, the students will of course have our best wishes, but we shall not go to New Orleans to hear them. You doubtless go to Salzburg to hear the great performances there. I shouldn't expect you to make the same sort of pilgrimage to New York, just to hear the Juilliard students.

With cordial regard,

Faithfully yours

SCHOOL OF MUSIC

LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY
AND
AGRICULTURAL AND MECHANICAL COLLEGE
BATON ROUGE, LA.

November 12, 1936

Mr. John Erskine
President, Julliard School of Music
49 East Fifty-second Street
New York City, N.Y.

Dear Mr. Erskine:

At the risk of boring you, I take the liberty of sending this lengthy letter about our situation in Louisiana. The letter is in response to your "Letter to New Orleans", published in Liberty of November 21, 1936, page 58.

All of our faculty and students at the State University School of Music are eagerly anticipating your visit to our school this session. It would have made the whole thing perfect if your article could have waited until you visited us. You have probably never heard of me. This is my twenty-third year at this school, beginning at nothing in 1915. With the constant support, the very best the University could do year after year, we now have the most modern building for music education in the world.

There are 237 students for either the Bachelor or Master of Music degree in Music. We give opera as no other school in America gives it. Mr. Pasquale Amato is the head of the voice department with five able assistants. There are 110 voice major students. Mr. Amato is also artist director of the opera department. Mr. Louis Hasselmans is to take up his duties here as head of the Chamber Music department and director of opera, beginning the first day of December this year. I believe you know Hendrik Buytendorp, our teacher of String Bass and Brass Instruments and general assistant with the orchestra. You may know Louis Ferraro, now teaching violin and coaching opera. These three men, Mr. Amato, Mr. Hasselmans and Mr. Ferraro represent only one department (opera) of our school in which there are thirty faculty members, all receiving a stated salary, the largest budget of any State University in America.

For these years since 1915, I have worked every day toward the logical expression of Louisiana in Opera. W.P.A. has practically offered to rebuild the French Opera House as a project and give it to the University, requiring only that the University pay approximately seventy-five thousand dollars, (\$75,000.00), incorporating many of the features which you express as desirable in your article. All this is undercover yet for a few days. A good friend is on his way to Washington

-2- John Erskine

in its interest. Architects plans are drawn. The committee representing the City of New Orleans meets tonight to get the final word about the option on the site.

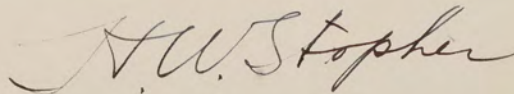
Only a sense of the value of your time prevents my writing on and on the things that we have already done pointing toward this.

Mr. Henri Wehrmann, Concertmaster at the French Opera House at the time it burned in 1919, has been in the employ of the Louisiana State University School of Music for several years. He has collected nearly all of the necessary material to write a complete history of opera in New Orleans. It will come out as a set of several books, the only authentic and complete account of opera in New Orleans from 1807 to 1919 ever written. In addition to writing the story of the French Opera, Mr. Wehrmann has constantly been on the lookout for libretti, scores, newspaper articles and anything at all about the old French Opera. These we have accumulated in our library.

In short, I have worked day and night these twenty years and more, always hoping to beat time in this very project, so please hurry on down to our school and see what we have done that makes it logical to have the French Opera House rebuilt and placed at the disposal of Louisiana State University School of Music. It would be useless to describe what our students do day by day. You would not believe it, but we will show you when you come.

With very best wishes, cordial greetings and assurance of our gratification that you are thinking along the same line that we have been thinking and working all these years, I remain,

Sincerely yours,



Dr. H. W. Stopher, Director
School of Music

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Roy L. Alciatore

The Caranagh, 2. W.
1526-17th St. N.
Washington, D.C.
December 22, 1936.

Mr. John Coskine
New York, New York.

Dear Mr. Coskine:

Many thanks for your
letter to New Orleans.
Ever since the Opera
House burned I have
been telling friends,

4.
I enjoyed reading your "Master
Villon" - the French side of me
makes me enjoy things about
France.

Would that I could write like
you. From the lives of my friend's
ancestors, I have mapped out a story
which would rival Noel Coward's
Cavalcade - perhaps you would
write it in collaboration with me.
This story could be used during the
Museum Festival. Respectfully,
Juanita Cavallero Addison.

Americans and foreigners.
We saw a lot of that - that
is the result of the kind of many
nationalities. I saw the daughter of a
French father, born in France
Parisian - French - my mother
was born in New Orleans of French
parents. I certainly am happy to
know you love my mother.

2.
I should be
rebellious. I suppose you
know they organize
one of the best, went
with my plane when
the house was destroyed.
At the festival, all
them. Repair the
works of commerce
Americans, etc., as
that one of the American
can enjoy the beauty
of the festival, but
I really and a lot
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Antoine's
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Antoine's Restaurant

ROY L. ALCIATORE, Proprietor

713 to 717 ST. LOUIS STREET

Established 1840

New Orleans, La.

December 2nd.
I 9 3 6

Professor John Erskine.,
c/o Liberty Magazine.
Chanin Bldg. N.Y.C.

Dear Professor Erskine:-

I can not begin to tell you how much I enjoyed your "Letter To New Orleans", The thought which you have so admirably put forth in your article merits most serious consideration, and I am happy to enclose a little clipping from the journal of the New Orleans Association of Commerce in which you will see that steps are being taken to make this suggestion an established fact.

In the old days of the French Opera, Antoine's was the rendezvous of the music lovers and the Opera stars, many of them having made their home in the old rooms above the restaurant.

My father had often told me of how he himself brought some hot consomme to the famous Sarah Bernhardt at the conclusion of a strenuous performance.

My most sincere good wishes to you and please be assured that we all appreciate the kind interest which you have taken in New Orleans our beloved city.

Very sincerely,

Antoine's
Per Roy L. Alciatore Prop.
Roy L. Alciatore

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Antoine's

er Roy L. Alciatore Prop.
Roy L. Alciatore

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mine - it should be
rebut. I suppose you
know the original
Pine of Gidda' went
up my plane when
the figure was destroyed.
At the festival, let
them require the
works of Louisiana
musicians, etc., so
that we of this generation
can enjoy the beauties
of Bach, Beethoven, Brahms,
Debussy and a host
of other prominent

musicians and composers.

We are a city of taste - that
is the result of the blend of many
nationalities. I am the daughter of a
Spanish father, born in Mahon
Balearic Islands - my mother
was born in New Orleans of French
parents. I certainly am happy to
know you love my birthplace.

NEW ORLEANS, LA.
ITEM

NOV 11 1936

Noted Author Hails Orleans As Ideal For Music Festival

Boosts City



JOHN ERSKINE, author, educator and musician, suggests in this week's Liberty that New Orleans is the ideal city for an annual musical festival.

John Erskine Writes Letter To City, Giving His Ideas

John Erskine, who modernized Helen of Troy and who wrote a number of other books, suggests in an article in this week's Liberty that New Orleans is the ideal place for a musical festival.

In the article, which is in the form of an open letter to New Orleans, the famous author points out that New Orleans is the logical city for such a festival because of its musical and cultural background.

Mr. Erskine's suggestion is partly in line with the Spring festival which is proposed here for next year from March 10 through the 17th. Warren Miller, the guiding light of the Sugar Bowl game, already a city institution, is the backbone of the Spring festival.

Music Festival Plans

This festival contemplates an extensive musical program, including Negro spirituals, an opera by L. S. U. students, an Evangeline pageant which will have considerable music, a series by the City Civic Symphony and a queen's pageant which will also feature musical numbers.

"Why don't you establish a festival in the Vieux Carre?" writes Mr. Erskine. "If you offered us the right things we'd all be here—and by 'we' I mean the art lovers of Central America as well as the United States."

Mr. Erskine suggests that the city might start by rebuilding the old Opera House. He adds that he thinks it should be designed in the "spirit of the Vieux Carre."

He Offers A Program

As a program, Mr. Erskine offers:

"Give, first, a week or a fortnight or a month of opera, and let it be exclusively pre-Wagnerian opera. Confine yourself to the musical expression of that Latin culture—French, Spanish, Italian—which produced the charm of New Orleans. A house large enough for Wagnerian performances is too large for proper performances of the old French and Italian operas. At present Wagner dominates the great opera houses of the world. Make it your province to give perfect performances of the music which your citizens loved long before most other American towns had any opera."

"When you have concluded your opera program, or perhaps, during the intervals of it, bring together in a series of concerts the artists and orchestras of Central America, as well as those from the southern part of the United States."

"When your entire musical program is concluded, give us a season of French, Spanish and Italian plays."

NEW ORLEANS, LA.
STATES

NOV 14 1936

DR. ERSKINE INVITED TO COME TO ORLEANS ON OPERA HOUSE PLAN

Dr. John Erskine of Columbia university has been sent an invitation "to come to New Orleans within the next few months to sit in at the formulating of plans for the proposed rebuilding of the French Opera House." H. Van R. Chase, general manager of the New Orleans Association of Commerce, announced Friday.

Dr. Erskine is the author of an article recently published in a national magazine which urged the rebuilding of the old opera house here.

Mr. Chase's letter read, in part: "Your article presenting the idea so forcefully has given New Orleans just the impulse needed to bring into active union the scattered forces which heretofore have been talking about a revival of the old culture around this traditional center."

"Within the next few days our music committee and convention and visitors' bureau will meet with others who feel with you that New Orleans can be a focal point for the preservation, expression and development of a distinctive American culture."

SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH
DESERET NEWS

NOV 21 1936

Erskine Voices Need Of American Music Festival

NEW YORK, N. Y.—A plea for an American Musical Festival prototype of the famous Salzburg event—is made by John Erskine, noted author and music lover.

Erskine, recently in Liberty magazine, makes his demand for an American festival on the basis that the majority of music lovers who travel to Germany every year are citizens of the United States. Why not have our own festival in America? the writer asks.

Erskine suggests New Orleans as the ideal city to hold the festival because of that city's cultural and musical background.

"If you offered us the right things," he says, "we'd all be there—and by 'we' I mean the art lovers of Central America as well as of the United States."

Directing his plea specifically at New Orleans, Erskine writes: "Give, first, a week or a fortnight or a month of opera, and let it be exclusively pre-Wagnerian opera. Confine yourself to the musical expression of that Latin Culture—French, Spanish, Italian—which produced the culture of New Orleans."

"When you have concluded your opera program, or perhaps during the intervals of it, bring together in a series of concerts the artists and orchestras of Central America, as well as those from the southern part of the United States."

MONTGOMERY, ALA.
JOURNAL

NOV 12 1936

AMERICAN MUSIC FESTIVAL

It is not surprising that John Erskine, the philosopher, should make the suggestion that the United States should have a great music festival rivaling anything of the kind held in Europe, but it is surprising that he should have mentioned New Orleans as the most appropriate place in America for the holding of such festival. Northern men do not usually concede that much to Southern communities. Yet New Orleans has the atmosphere, it has the talent and it has a long history of music and concert encouragement that well entitle it to first consideration as the home of a great American music festival association.

NEW ORLEANS, LA.
TRIBUNE

NOV 1 1936

Suggests Festival



JOHN ERSKINE, famous author and musician, suggests that a great music festival, the Salzburg festival, be held annually in New Orleans.

JOHN ERSKINE FAVORS MUSIC FESTIVAL HERE

NEW YORK, Nov. 10.—That an American music festival be given annually in New Orleans is made in an open letter by John Erskine appearing in this issue of "Liberty."

Mr. Erskine is a noted

AMERICAN BK. BLDG.
Phone Main 1825

Nov. 11, 1936

Nov. 12, 1936

Nov. 13, 1936

Nov. 14, 1936

Nov. 15, 1936

Nov. 16, 1936

Nov. 17, 1936

Nov. 18, 1936

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Nov. 20, 1936

Nov. 21, 1936

Nov. 22, 1936

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Nov. 24, 1936

Nov. 25, 1936

Nov. 26, 1936

Nov. 27, 1936

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Erskine, recently in Liberty magazine, makes his demand for an American festival on the basis of the majority of music lovers to travel to Germany every year to see the United States.

Erskine suggests New Orleans as an ideal city to hold the festival because of that city's cultural and musical background.

If you offered us the right thing," he says, "we'd all be there and by 'we' I mean the art lovers of Central America as well as of the United States."

Erskine's plea specifically at New Orleans, Erskine writes: "First, a week or a fortnight of music, and let it be exclusively pre-Wagnerian opera. Fine yourself to the musical extension of that Latin Culture—French, Spanish, Italian—which has produced the culture of New Orleans."

When you have concluded your program, or perhaps during intervals of it, bring together series of concerts the artists orchestras of Central America, as well as those from the southern states of the United States."

MOBILE, ALA.
JOURNAL

NOV 12 1936

AMERICAN MUSIC FESTIVAL

Not surprising that John Erskine, philosopher, should make the suggestion that the United States should have a great music festival rivaling that of the kind held in Europe, is surprising that he should have suggested New Orleans as the most appropriate place in America for the holding of such a festival. Northern men do not usually concede that much to Southern cities. Yet New Orleans has a long history of music and encouragement that well entitles it to consideration as the home of an American music festival association.

NEW ORLEANS, LA.
TRIBUNE

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JOHN ERSKINE FAVORS MUSIC FESTIVAL HERE

NEW YORK, Nov. 10.—A plea that an American music festival be given annually in New Orleans is made in an open letter by John Erskine appearing in this week's issue of "Liberty."

Mr. Erskine is a noted author, lecturer, educator and musician, and lectured in New Orleans last April.

He points out that a majority of those who support the Salzburg festival every year are Americans.

and asks "why not have an American festival in New Orleans, in the Vieux Carre?"

People would come to New Orleans from all parts of the United States and from Central America to attend such a festival, he predicts. Such an annual pilgrimage of thousands of music-lovers to New Orleans would be brought about, he says, by the re-building of the old French Opera house, where Adelina Patti and other famous singers appeared.

"You are a city of taste," he writes. "Your art lovers, your Chamber of Commerce, your hotel keepers and your shop owners might well put up that Opera house at once. You would find your doors crowded. We should not have to cross the ocean for our musical festival."

Spring Fiesta

Although plans for the rebuilding and opening of the old French Opera have been rumored a number of times, so far nothing definite has been announced.

Plans have been announced, however, for a Spring Fiesta, to be held this year from November 10-17, and during the week two musical events are included. One is an opera by the L. S. U. school of music, probably Lescaut's Manon, or Gounod's Faust; and the other a program of spirituals by the Dilard university singers.

This Spring Fiesta is planned to provide a third tourist season for New Orleans, and other attractions will be the annual flower show; the Queen's pageant and ball; a pageant at City park depicting the story of Evangeline; trips through the Vieux Carre and along the floral trails of the city; tours of old homes and possibly an open performance of Le Petit Theatre du Vieux Carre.

This Spring Festival is sponsored by the Orleans Foundation, and according to Warren Miller, the giving of the opera depends on whether or not the Municipal auditorium may be obtained at a reasonable rate.

NEW ORLEANS, LA.
TIMES-PICAYUNE

NOV 15 1936

For a Salzburg Here

SINCE prophets are notoriously without honor in their own country, it is natural, perhaps, that any section should look elsewhere for its seers. Hence the widespread interest created locally by the full-page letter, in Liberty magazine, carrying the appeal of John Erskine that New Orleans be made a great international music center. Doctor of literature, music, law and philosophy; writer of best sellers and learned works that excite the intelligentsia; successful as an educator and in various other fields, John Erskine presumably has no ax to grind and no special increase of either honors or income to expect from his suggestion. Apparently it is from the heart, or rather from the reasoning of a logical and most incisive mind.

Dr. Erskine would make this city an American Salzburg, drawing patronage from all our neighbors to the south as well as from the United States. About the nucleus of a new opera house, built in conformity to New Orleans' cultural traditions, he would establish here such a musical center as the Western Hemisphere has not known previously, giving it proper setting and perspective and providing the commercial background which would make it not only self-sustaining but highly profitable.

The idea is not entirely new, but seldom has it been put in more concrete and forceful form. New Orleans had the first and for years the only opera in what is now the United States, but gradually it fell into decline through misfortune and other causes until, some two decades ago, it ceased almost entirely. Since the burning of the French opera house we have made sporadic efforts to bring it back to life, but these have not had general community backing, nor have they offered a solution for the vital question of how such an institution would be supported.

The Erskine letter has had the immediate effect of stimulating interest among public leaders, several of whom have voiced enthusiastic approval. Even the brilliant mind of John Erskine cannot lay down, in a space of some 500 words, a plan that could be used as a working diagram for so complex a structure, but he has put the idea in clear form before a tremendous, nationwide audience. Through the rising sap of business the scheme, or one corresponding to it, appears on its surface to have a big chance of success, granted that the enthusiasm can be encouraged and made the basis for intelligent planning.

NEW ORLEANS, LA.
TRIBUNE

NOV 14 1936

Erskine Plea Is Subject

As the result of an open letter to New Orleans written by John Erskine, novelist and musical critic, a movement to rebuild the Old French opera house and to develop New Orleans once more into a center of American music will be discussed at a special meeting to be held soon, H. Van R. Chase, general manager of the Association of Commerce announced yesterday.

Mr. Erskine has been invited to come here and talk over the matter with various groups. "Your letter in 'Liberty,'" Mr. Chase wrote Mr. Erskine, "and the encouragement given by the magazine's editors in presenting your idea so forcefully have given New Orleans just the impulse needed

to bring into active unison the scattered forces which have heretofore been talking about a revival of the culture around this traditional center."

"Within the next few days" our Music Committee and our Convention and Visitors' bureau will

meet with others who feel with you that New Orleans can be a focal point for the preservation, expression and development of a distinctive American culture.

"Is it possible that within the next few months you might find the time to come down here and sit in with us as we formulate detailed plans?"

NEW ORLEANS, LA.
ITEM

NOV 16 1936

A Music Festival

JOHN ERSKINE'S suggestion that New Orleans rebuild the French Opera and hold an annual music festival of international scope arouses some enthusiasm. The Association of Commerce invites Dr. Erskine to help frame plans. We hope he accepts. His experience in music would make his advice of high value.

Several committees of the Association will confer soon on the festival proposal. They should ask representatives of other civic organizations to sit in with them—as many as possible and soon. The project appeals to civic pride, our reviving interest in the arts, our desire to build prosperity by promoting distinctive enterprises.

NEW ORLEANS, LA.
TRIBUNE

NOV 12 1936

A Music Festival

JOHN ERSKINE suggests that New Orleans hold an annual music festival, one comparable to Europe's famous festival. The proposal is welcome on several counts. Mr. Erskine is a musician as well as a novelist. The idea is practical. He emphasizes New Orleans' strategic position. Many Central and South American musicians and amateurs could be persuaded to come here who might not attend a festival much farther North.

As a community of artistic pretensions, we sometimes disappoint ourselves. A recent concert by Mischa Elman was meagerly attended. On the other hand, visiting symphony is usually well supported, and opera for two seasons has filled the Municipal Auditorium. Music is growing here, but we are still unsure of ourselves.

This artistic uncertainty, and occasional lapses into indifference, need not be considered in planning such an enterprise as an annual music festival for ourselves and our neighbors north and south. We might not be able to distinguish the tones of a piano from those of a bagpipe, and still establish such a festival among national institutions. Promotion of the festival would demand organization and promotion rather than local musical talent or appreciation. We may be sure that a few music festivals would educate a lot ourselves.

NEW ORLEANS, LA.
TIMES-PICAYUNE

NOV 14 1936

OLD OPERA HOUSE MAY BE REBUILT

Dr. John Erskine Invited to
Help Formulate
Plans

An invitation to come here "with us in the next few months and sit in with us as we formulate detailed plans" for the proposed rebuilding of the old French Opera House was extended Friday by H. van R. Chase, general manager of the New Orleans Association of Commerce, in a letter sent to Dr. John Erskine of Columbia university.

Dr. Erskine is the author of an article recently published in a national magazine which urged the rebuilding of the old opera house here.

Mr. Chase's letter read, in part: "Your article presenting the idea so forcefully has given New Orleans just the impulse needed to bring into active unison the scattered forces which heretofore have been talking about a revival of the old culture around this traditional center."

"Within the next few days our music committee and convention and visitors' bureau will meet with others who feel with you that New Orleans can be a focal point for the preservation, expression and development of a distinctive American culture."

NEW ORLEANS, LA.
TRIBUNE

NOV 26 1936

MAY RESUME OPERA

A committee of five representatives of the Association of Commerce music committee and seven members of the body's convention and visitor's bureau will consider John Erskine's recent suggestion that New Orleans recreate its old French Opera house and hold an annual musical festival at a meeting at 3 p. m. Tuesday in the association's headquarters.

John Erskine Proposal To Be Studied Today

John Erskine's "Letter to New Orleans," published in the November 21 issue of LIBERTY, in which this noted educator, author and musician urged the rebuilding of the French Opera House and the establishment of a festival in the Vieux Carre like that held at Salzburg, will be considered at a meeting at 3 p. m. today.

It will be a joint meeting of a special committee from the Convention and Visitors Bureau and a special committee from the Music Committee.

NEW ORLEANS, LA.
TIMES-PICAYUNE

NOV 26 1936

TRADE DIRECTORS CALL FOR FIGHT ON RED ACTIVITY

Association of Commerce
Board Would Halt 'Sub-
versive' Elements

Resolutions urging a fight on "all subversive activities in New Orleans," suggesting that the youth of the nation be taught the aims and purposes of the communistic movement, and asking Congress to make advocacy of the overthrow of the federal government by force a criminal offense were approved Wednesday by the directors of the New Orleans Association of Commerce.

John M. Taylor was named by the board as a representative of the members' council of the association for a place on the new state board of industry and commerce to be appointed by Governor Richard W. Leche. Mr. Taylor's name was submitted to the governor "in recognition of the valuable services rendered by him to the association, the city of New Orleans and the state of Louisiana during his term of office as president of the association."

The board also approved a call for a joint meeting of two special committees Tuesday at 3 p. m. to consider the suggestion of John Erskine of New York that the old French Opera House be rebuilt.

Committee Members

These two committees are one from the convention and visitors' bureau of the association and the other from the music committee of the association. The bureau committee comprises George S. Clarke, chairman; Hunter C. Hicks, Milton Adler, B. C. Pitts, Richard Foster, Darwin S. Fenner and Otto Gottschko. The music committee appointees are Miss Mary M. Conway, chairman; Paul Felder, Benedict Grunewald, Allison Owen and Walter Loubat.

NEW ORLEANS, LA.
TRIBUNE

NOV 26 1936

Music

One concert artist who played here recently had practically no audience. The next one to come remarked that if our music were as good as our food we might talk about our appreciation of the arts. But appreciation of music, as of any other art, grows slowly. Under the circumstances I think it would be the discreet thing to forget about John Erskine's suggestion for an annual music festival. Even if we brought several thousand musicians here for such an event, they would soon be laughing at us for our ignorance and pretensions.

NEW ORLEANS, LA.
ITEM

DEC 1 1936

TALK MUSIC FESTIVAL

John Erskine's suggestion that an annual music festival be held in New Orleans, like that of Salzburg, was considered Monday at a meeting of representatives of the Association of Commerce. The association's music committee and the convention and visitors' bureau representatives. Proposals of a revival of the old French Opera were discussed.

Erskine's Ope



JOHN ERSKINE
GOV. R. W. LECHE

United States is gratified to make these activities p

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Both groups named seven of their
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Activity

Vox Pop

Erskine's Opera Suggestion Wins Governor Leche



© C. Bennett Moore
GOV. R. W. LECHE

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT, BATON ROUGE, LA.—Mr. John
Erskine's Letter to New Orleans in November 21 Liberty
concerning the rebuilding of the French Opera House on its
old site in that city is a timely suggestion, and I hope it will
have the effect of spurring the citizens there into action.

Recently there has been some discussion along this line
in that city by a few leading men and women, and I hope to
see it develop to the point where active work may begin.

Sometimes the home people associated daily with such
things lose sight of their interest and importance. It takes
the outsider like Mr. Erskine to impress upon them the com-
munity value, aesthetically and financially.

Mr. Erskine's suggestions for the full utilization of the
French Opera House and the Vieux Carré in New Orleans
as a center of activities for Central America and Southern
United States is gratifying to me, and I hope he has supplied the incentive to
make these activities possible.—(Signed) R. W. Leche, Governor of Louisiana.

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NEW ORLEANS, LA.
ITEM

NOV 26 1936

Music Festival To Be Considered

The prospect for revival of New
Orleans as a national musical cen-
ter, through a recreation of the old
French Opera House with an an-
nual musical festival for the city,
will be considered at a joint meet-
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music committee and the conven-
tion and visitors' bureau of the
Association of Commerce at 3 p. m.
Tuesday at the association, it was
announced today.

Both groups named seven of their
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JOHN HANSON KENNARD
COUNSELOR-AT-LAW
151 W. 105TH ST.
NEW YORK CITY

17th, November, 1936.

Dr. John Erskine,
Macfadden Publications,
1926 Broadway,
New York City.

"A LETTER TO NEW ORLEANS"

Dear Dr. Erskine:

I was very much interested in your article which appeared in LIBERTY of the 21st of November, 1936.

The first thirty-three years of my life were spent in New Orleans and for the last six, I was the opera critic of the French Opera for the DAILY STATES. I was practically brought up on opera, my first recollection being that I used to retire to the rear of the family box and take a nap when such performances as "Le Prophete" and "Robert Le Diable" were going on. My first adult participation in opera activities was as a subscriber for Saturday night performances acting as opera critic and I was a member of the French Opera Club.

You can readily understand from the foregoing that I am in hearty sympathy with your suggestion; unless, however, the cooperative spirit of the population has increased considerably since I left there in 1897, I doubt whether anything demanding as much as cordial cooperation as your plan, could succeed. I certainly hope that your most interesting article will inspire its undertaking for should it succeed it would be a wonderful thing, not only for New Orleans but for music. Perhaps my fear that the cooperative spirit does not exist to such an extent as to make your plan feasible, arises from my memory of other attempts in the past which failed dismally.

New Orleans never lacked generous citizenship but extensive and continuous cooperation seemed impracticable.

One year when the French Opera was in the doldrums, we would have had no troupe the next year had not Harry Howard generously come forward and guaranteed the expenses of the season, offering the impresario the profits — if any. As I remember that season, the output was \$125,000. and the intake \$125,002, and Mr. Howard very generously gave the impresario \$1000. out of his own pocket.

At the end of another disastrous season, the late Horace Fletcher, who was quite an opera enthusiast, conceived the idea of a guarantee fund as a means of securing an impresario — for impresarios had had very hard sledding in preceeding years. In

Dr. John Erskine

- 2 -

17th, November, 1936.

as much as the losses on the season had never exceeded \$50,000, Fletcher decided that if opera lovers should create a fund of \$50,000 to insure an impresario against loss, a good one might be secured and, if the season was successful, the guarantors would have nothing to pay; if partly successful only a portion of their subscriptions; and if a failure only the amount of their subscriptions.

Fletcher talked the matter over with me and I told him that it sounded alright but I advised him strongly against the undertaking telling him that New Orleans was rather set in its ways and that it received suggestions of outlanders rather unsympathetically. Fletcher was an outlander in the sense that his family had only come to New Orleans when his brother started a sanitary flooring business there about fifteen years before Horace arrived to take charge of the business.

Horace Fletcher carried out his plan and secured subscribers for his guarantee fund. The season was not a success; the subscribers had to pay in full; and Horace, of course, was blamed for the failure, which, I think, more than anything else, resulted in his leaving New Orleans.

I am not writing this to discourage any effort that you may decide to make but because I think it will interest you and may be of some help in avoiding difficulties and discounting failure. Should you undertake the matter, I wish you the fullest measure of success.

Very sincerely,

John Hanson Kennard

JOHN HANSON KENNARD.

JHK:LG

Antoine's Restaurant

ROY L. ALCIATORE, Proprietor

713 to 717 ST. LOUIS STREET

Established 1840

New Orleans, La.

December 12 Th.

I 9 3 6

John Erskine,
130 Claremont Ave.
New York City. N.Y.

Dear Professor Erskine:-

I am most grateful
to you for your charming letter of December
9 th. It makes me very proud to know that
you have enjoyed the Antoine's cuisine, and
it is my sincere hope that we may have the
honor of having both the Opera and your kind
self back in New Orleans before very long.

My very best wishes to you.

Sincerely,

Roy L. Alciatore