



The Indiana University School of Music: A History

George M Logan

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""How did the foremost American school of music, a major world cultural institution, come to be at a state university in a provincial town, amid the cornfields of southern Indiana?"" George Logan has not been alone in posing this question, but his reply is unique: this magnificent volume.

This institutional history, enlivened with anecdotes and photographs, reveals modest beginnings indeed, when the orchestra for the 1833 Commencement ""was composed of two flutes, one of them cracked"". The major shift came in 1919 with the arrival of Winfred Merrill, a dean who was also a violinist, conductor, and composer -- as well as a seasoned administrator and teacher. He advertised for students, and soon not even seven pianos could meet the demand for practice instruments. Other visionary improvements and expansions were implemented, but not without a fight. The world's greatest artists were engaged to perform in tremendously popular concert series beginning in the 1920s. Under the deanships of Robert Sanders, Wilfred Bain, Charles Webb, and David Woods, the push to recruit the very best intensified -- and succeeded. With scholarly scruples, George Logan has resisted the temptation to give a wine-and-roses rendition of history, and tales of vinegar and thorns get ample play as well.

What emerges is the epic of a glorious institution, a source of tremendous pride, brought into being and sustained through genius, hard work, and some strokes of incredibly good luck.

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