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Postwar Culture Beneath the Pines:
The Idyllwild School of Music and the Arts, 1946-1962

By

Clark Noone

A thesis submitted to the faculty of Claremont
Graduate University in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in
History and Archival Studies.

We certify that we have read this document and
approve it as adequate in scope and quality for the
degree of Master of Arts.

Faculty Advisor Dr. Janet Farrell Brodie

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Introduction

“The most astonishing new institution in the West”

Nineteen forty-seven was a banner year for the resort town of Idyllwild, a weekenders’ paradise nestled high in the pine and cedar forest of Southern California’s San Jacinto Mountains. The *Town Crier*, a homespun weekly newspaper, celebrated one year in print. A Lion’s Club, an American Legion post, and a Boy Scout troop were organized. The town acquired a fire engine and a sheriff’s deputy—the better to protect its new bowling alley, grocery store, and community center. Residents celebrated the opening of the new Banning-Idyllwild Highway and the prospect of economic growth it brought. Down the road, neighbors in Pine Cove “shelved their Coleman lamps and backyard power generators with the installation of electricity,” as the *Town Crier* put it, while local residents thought more and more in terms of capacity: of lots sold and cabins built, trails improved and new campgrounds laid out. Though Idyllwild had been a seasonal resort since the early 1900s, these developments pointed to the emergence of a permanent, year-round community—a welcome change after the lean years of Depression and war, which had seen Idyllwild’s tourist trade all but vanish.¹

Yet few developments attracted more local attention in 1947 than the work of the newly formed Idyllwild Arts Foundation, the brainchild of Dr. Max Krone, dean of the University of Southern California’s Institute of the Arts, and his wife Beatrice, a prominent music educator and author. Acting on a dream they had nourished since their first visit to Idyllwild years before, the Krones sought to establish a summer school for the arts which would combine expert instruction,

¹ Ernie Maxwell, “Family Album,” *Idyllwild Town Crier*, October 30, 1948. For Idyllwild’s Depression and World War II-era history, see Robert B. Smith and the Idyllwild Area Historical Society, *Idyllwild and the High San Jacintos* (Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2009), ch. 4.

outdoor leisure, and relaxed living. Against the backdrop of skyrocketing enrollment and overburdened facilities at USC, they envisioned a tranquil place where college students could earn course credit and adult vacationers, children, and teenagers could pursue new talents in the mile-high air of one of Southern California's most pristine landscapes. With \$50,000 in private funds, the Krones and a group of USC colleagues purchased 350 acres in Idyllwild's Domenigoni Flats, a one-time ranching and agricultural area bounded by national forest land. Of this tract, they set aside 150 acres for subdivision and sale to friends of the Foundation, leaving the rest for the future campus.²

For Max Krone, the Idyllwild project was a new test in a career marked by visionary thinking and organizational acumen. In her commissioned history of the USC School of Music, Pauline Alderman likened Krone to a miracle worker who "perform[ed] wonders of organization and cooperation" in burnishing the School of Music's reputation as its director in the early 1940s.³ By attracting top faculty and instituting new graduate programs, Alderman writes, Krone turned a once-moribund music department into "the most progressive School of Music in the country."⁴ With hindsight, we can recognize Krone as an exemplar of what historian Terence Ball has described as "a new...figure in the [postwar] American academic landscape: the

² "Site for Music Camp Acquired," *Los Angeles Times*, August 2, 1946. See also Alderman, *We Build a School of Music*, 220. According to Carol Merrill-Mirsky, Krone also used residential lots to lure high-profile names to ISOMATA's faculty, including the composer Meredith Willson and the ballad duo Josef and Miranda Marais. Carol Merrill-Mirsky, interview with author, February 22, 2019.

³ Pauline Alderman, *We Build a School of Music: The Commissioned History of Music at the University of Southern California* (Los Angeles: The Alderman Book Committee, 1989), 163.

⁴ Alderman, *We Build a School of Music*, 207.

academic entrepreneur or grantsman skilled in the art of securing government and foundation funding.”⁵ Krone previewed these skills in 1946 when he created USC’s Institute of the Arts, a special division which combined the school of music with the departments of fine arts, radio and television, cinema, and speech. The Institute became the template for ISOMATA’s integrative approach to arts education.⁶

Krone spent 1947 selling Southern Californians on the Idyllwild Arts Foundation’s vision, telling newspapermen and social clubs how the proposed school would “interweave a superior type of teaching, a most desirable environment and a sense of community relationship.”⁷ Krone begged his listeners’ generosity and faith, and even promised that the Idyllwild school would contribute to “international understanding thru the arts” for years to come.⁸ His message proved persuasive. Before long, a community of artists, academics, businessmen, civic leaders, and private patrons coalesced around the Foundation’s idea. By early 1947, a USC film crew was in Idyllwild to make a promotional movie about the project. By 1949, a 250-acre campus, designed by USC architects steeped in Southern California modernism, began taking shape on one of the mountain’s most scenic tracts. And by the summer of 1950, the school—now officially the Idyllwild School of Music and the Arts, or ISOMATA for short—was at last in operation.

⁵ Terence Ball, “The Politics of Social Science in Postwar America,” in *Recasting America: Culture and Politics in the Age of Cold War*, ed. Lary May (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 83.

⁶ See Claire Margaret Morris, “Grouping of Arts Pioneered at SC,” *Southern California Alumni Review* vol. 32, no. 4 (December 1950), 5-6.

⁷ “Camp Idyllwild,” *Idyllwild Town Crier*, January 25, 1947.

⁸ Max Krone, “Dr. Krone Writes,” *Idyllwild Town Crier*, September 24, 1949.

In ISOMATA's inaugural season, some forty adult students attended teacher training courses in arts and crafts, music, and folklore. From these humble beginnings, the school grew exponentially. Within five years, ISOMATA was serving over 1,000 students with new offerings in art, music, theater, dance, cinematography, and environmental conservation. When USC assumed formal control over ISOMATA in 1962, enrollment had crested 2,000 students, the faculty had expanded to 75 instructors, and the campus had grown to encompass new studios, residence halls, a conference center, a subdivision of A-frame cabins, and a state-of-the-art swimming pool.⁹ Though ISOMATA was not the only arts camp to sprout in postwar Southern California, no other institution matched its programmatic diversity, institutional pedigree, and ability to attract high-profile instructors to its campus. Instructors such as folksinger Pete Seeger, modern dancer Bella Lewitzky, and landscape photographer Ansel Adams helped ISOMATA gain the consistent attention of local and national media throughout the decade, as the school also won praise for its innovative course offerings, attractive campus, and therapeutic emphasis on nature, art, and community. The lifestyle magazine *Holiday* went so far as to call ISOMATA "perhaps the most astonishing new institution in the West."¹⁰

This thesis seeks to understand why ISOMATA appealed so strongly to the students and patrons who supported it, the overwhelming majority of whom belonged to Southern California's white middle class. Drawing upon promotional films, brochures, correspondence, media coverage, and oral histories, I argue that ISOMATA offered an experience of arts education, modern living, community, and intercultural exchange which resonated with both the idealism

⁹ "USC to Take Over Idyllwild Arts Campus," *Los Angeles Times*, January 25, 1962.

¹⁰ Ray Duncan, "California's Musical Mountain," *Holiday* magazine, 1954, box 92, folder 2, USC Thornton School of Music Records.

and anxieties of the early postwar period. Amid growing fears of suburban conformity and uncontrolled technocracy, ISOMATA promised a humane and fundamentally liberal vision of American life—one premised on creative self-realization, cultural pluralism, and a connection to nature. ISOMATA's founders, whose roots lay in the progressive education movement of the 1930s, were genuinely committed to this vision and succeeded in creating a cultural institution that was, in many ways, strikingly innovative for its time.

At the same time, I also argue that ISOMATA's cultural politics remained firmly within the bounds of the postwar liberal mainstream. Despite the school's commitment to multicultural education, ISOMATA largely mirrored the racial exclusivity of the region's expanding white suburbs. Moreover, where leftist summer camps tied a back-to-nature ethos to a politics of social change, ISOMATA's founders understood the school's primary objective in the more apolitical terms of therapy. Art and nature experiences, they believed, would ameliorate the stresses of modern life and thus enable ISOMATA's students to lead more productive lives the rest of the year. Of course, this stance was political insofar as it signified tacit acceptance of the social conditions they deemed problematic in the first place. Whether in their approach to arts education or intercultural exchange, ISOMATA's leaders displayed a cautious liberalism which earned the school an enviable reputation for innovation without courting criticism from the ascendant forces of conservatism in the early Cold War.

This thesis is organized in two chapters. In chapter one, I explore how ISOMATA was conceived and promoted as an antidote to the urban problems facing postwar Los Angeles. In its promotional film *Music from the Mountains*, the Idyllwild Arts Foundation presented ISOMATA as a refuge from the dysfunction of the city and the stresses of modern life, and as a place where students could find artistic, physical, and spiritual renewal. I argue that the film belonged to a

postwar discourse about urban space which animated the creation of exclusive white suburbs, while also reflecting the narrowed social vision of progressive educators in the early Cold War. Chapter one also interrogates the effort to brand ISOMATA as both a landscape of tradition and a landscape of modernity, where a rhetoric of rustic living and community spirit merged with a desire for modern design and planning. For ISOMATA, these varied promotional efforts created a dynamic institutional identity which looked both backward and forward, and which promised the school's white, middle-class audience a desirable experience of art, leisure, and community.

In chapter two, I move beyond the regional framework to explore ISOMATA's programs in the context of the early Cold War. Specifically, I analyze how ISOMATA's multicultural approach to arts education evolved throughout the 1950s. The school's early emphasis on cultural internationalism reflected a liberal desire for world peace in the wake of World War II, but the school's leaders also cultivated direct ties to the emerging field of Cold War cultural diplomacy. I argue that the school's ethos of cultural exchange reflected and legitimated the Cold War ideology of a modern, integrated, and American-led world. The corollary of this ethos was a view of foreign cultures which often traded in simplicity and sentimentalism. I contrast the cultural politics of ISOMATA's Cold War internationalism with the more robust multiculturalism of the late-1950s folk music revival. To meet the growing demand for folk music programs, Max Krone and the Idyllwild Arts Foundation opened the school to activist-performers like Pete Seeger, whose form of participatory and politically grounded folk music challenged the school to move beyond the platitudes of Cold War internationalism toward a heightened concern for cultural authenticity and political action.

As I explored and contextualized the values which motivated ISOMATA's leaders, I conversed with a varied historiography befitting the school's blending of the summer camp,

university extension program, fine arts conservatory, and grassroots culture festival. The school's hybrid character can be beguiling. As such, my goal is not to offer an exhaustive accounting of ISOMATA's many programs and personalities. Nor does this study substantively interrogate the day-to-day experiences of ISOMATA's students and staff. That kind of social history, though potentially useful in clarifying where the school's rhetoric and reality parted ways, is beyond the scope of this study. My more limited aim is to illuminate the key inflection points of ISOMATA's early history and investigate how the school's values variously clashed and aligned with the dominant cultural trends of the postwar period.

Historiography

Historians studying the 1950s have increasingly problematized the view that a politics of consensus, forged in symbiosis with Cold War anticommunism, permeated all aspects of American social and cultural life. If suburbanization and white flight, an ascendant corporatism, and the retreat from New Deal liberalism remain fundamental to how scholars understand the decade, a more nuanced picture has nevertheless begun to emerge. "To be sure," Howard Brick writes, "these conditions marked that time, but whether they were so tightly bundled into a coherent system as to stamp a single identity on the period is another matter."¹¹ Scholars of the 1950s have pointed to ongoing ferment in civil rights and women's activism as evidence that early Cold War politics were more complicated and contested than previously thought.¹² In some

¹¹ Howard Brick, "The Disenchantment of America," in *Liberty and Justice for All?: Rethinking Politics in Cold War America*, ed. Kathleen G. Donohue (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2012), 159.

¹² This is not to say that progressive activism proceeded in a linear fashion in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Historians have presented ample evidence of the devastatingly repressive effects of anticommunism on individuals, families, and left-wing politics generally. See, for instance, Ellen Schrecker, *Many Are the Crimes: McCarthyism in America* (Boston: Little,

respects, this shift in the historiography is long overdue. It has been three decades since Warren Sussman pointed out the irony that “the postwar success story was also the ‘age of anxiety.’” Sussman showed how the achievement of security abroad and abundance at home was greeted warily in the cultural realm, as filmmakers, playwrights, novelists, and intellectuals raised alarms about the society’s slide into technocracy, consumerism, and conformity.¹³ This thesis builds on Sussman’s work by attempting to move beyond the default view of the 1950s as a period of cultural stasis and political quiescence toward a richer comprehension of complications and cross-currents.

This thesis also intervenes in the historiography of Southern California. Given the region’s explosive wartime growth, the proliferation of defense-related industries, and the ongoing influence of Hollywood on the nation’s psyche, Southern California has occupied an outsized role in studies of postwar politics and culture. Historians have analyzed how the region’s virulent strain of McCarthyism and the related rise of a white, suburban conservatism which helped to launch the national political careers of Ronald Reagan and Richard Nixon.¹⁴

Brown, 1998). Nevertheless, recent works point to the ability of some progressive groups to withstand the conservative orthodoxy of the domestic Cold War. See Andrew J. Falk, *Upstaging the Cold War: American Dissent and Cultural Diplomacy, 1940-1960* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2010); Wendy Wall, *Inventing the “American Way”: The Politics of Consensus from the New Deal to the Civil Rights Movement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); Nancy MacLean, *Freedom is Not Enough: The Opening of the American Workplace* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press: 2006); Lary May, ed., *Recasting America: Culture and Politics in the Age of Cold War*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989); Kathleen G. Donohue, ed., *Liberty and Justice for All?: Rethinking Politics in Cold War America* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2012).

¹³ Warren Sussman, “Did Success Spoil the United States? Dual Representations in Postwar America,” in *Recasting America: Culture and Politics in the Age of Cold War*, ed. Lary May (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 19.

¹⁴ Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001); Becky Nicolaides, *My Blue Heaven: Life and Politics in the*

Scholars have also investigated the interplay of race and space in the Los Angeles conurbation. Eric Avila has explored how popular culture inscribed whiteness in the region's fast-growing suburbs in symbolic opposition to the perceived ills of the multiracial city, resulting in a new urban imaginary of "chocolate cities and vanilla suburbs." Laura Barraclough has applied a similar lens to the San Fernando Valley, where white homeowners labored to create a semi-rural landscape steeped in a symbology of frontier nostalgia. To an extent, the history of ISOMATA parallels these analyses of the social and spatial fragmentation which, in tandem with an increasingly conservative political culture, characterized much of Southern California life in the 1950s.¹⁵ Though ISOMATA's leaders were politically liberal and steeped in the progressive education movement, they harnessed a rhetoric of anti-urbanism to sell the school to a white, middle-class audience. However well-intentioned, they also created a school dedicated to cultural exchange whose student body nonetheless remained overwhelmingly homogenous.

Nevertheless, historical studies of postwar Southern California also show that the region's politics were never completely hostile to progressive activism. Nor did white flight

Working-Class Suburbs of Los Angeles, 1920-1965 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002); Michelle Nickerson, *Mothers of Conservatism: Women and the Postwar Right* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010); Ellen Chase Verdries, "Teaching with the Enemy: An Archival and Narrative Analysis of McCarthyism in the Public Schools," PhD diss., Claremont Graduate School, 1996.

¹⁵ Eric Avila, *Popular Culture in the Age of White Flight: Fear and Fantasy in Suburban Los Angeles* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004); Laura Barraclough, *Making the San Fernando Valley: Rural Landscapes, Urban Development, and White Privilege* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2011). See also Matt Garcia, *A World of Its Own: Race, Labor, and Citrus in the Making of Greater Los Angeles, 1900-1970* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2001); Lawrence Culver, *The Frontier of Leisure: Southern California and the Shaping of Modern America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); Josh Sides, *L.A. City Limits: African American Los Angeles from the Great Depression to the Present* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); Peter La Chapelle, *Proud to Be an Okie: Cultural Politics, Country Music, and Migration to Southern California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).

foreclose the possibility of dynamic cross-cultural interactions. Jonathon Bell, for instance, has pointed to the quiet but steady growth of grassroots liberal activism in 1950s California, while Shana Bernstein and Charlotte Brooks have uncovered how Los Angeles reformers used the Cold War rhetoric of fighting communism to make important gains in housing integration and civil rights coalition building. As Bernstein explains, “winning the war for hearts and minds against communism abroad” empowered California liberals to promote equality at home. In the grassroots realm, Anthony Macias has documented the interethnic music subculture of Southern California’s swing and R&B scene, while in the mass culture realm, Tony Shaw has emphasized that Hollywood’s Cold War always allowed for a modicum of liberal dissent. Though these works are preoccupied with different aspects of Southern California society, they share in expanding our sense of the region’s cultural and political complexity in the postwar era.¹⁶

This thesis remains open to that complexity. The fact that ISOMATA’s progressive values of art and community proved so appealing shows that Southern California’s white middle class was not uniformly enthralled with suburbanization and political conservatism. Moreover, while it is crucial to bring a critical eye to ISOMATA’s engagement with ethnic and foreign cultures, we should also acknowledge the real impact which multicultural learning had on ISOMATA’s white students. In contrast to the racist presentation of Native American and African American figures at nearby Disneyland, for instance, ISOMATA provided a forum in

¹⁶ Shana Bernstein, *Bridges of Reform: Interracial Civil Rights Activism in Twentieth-Century Los Angeles* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011): 4; Jonathan Bell, *California Crucible: The Forging of Modern American Liberalism* (Philadelphia : University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012); Charlotte Brooks, *Alien Neighbors, Foreign Friends: Asian Americans, Housing, and the Transformation of Urban California* (Chicago : University of Chicago Press, 2009); Anthony Macias, “Bringing Music to the People: Race, Urban Culture, and Municipal Politics in Postwar Los Angeles,” *American Quarterly* 56, no. 3 (Sept. 2004), 693-717; Tony Shaw, *Hollywood's Cold War* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007).

which its mostly white student body could learn from expert tradition bearers as part of a cohesive community. Ultimately, as a new piece of the historiography of postwar Southern California, this thesis may be most useful in showing how the key dynamics of the period—spatial expansion, social fragmentation, and white identity formation—functioned in the context of a liberal institution.

Chapter 1

“Into the forest for inspiration”: Selling the Idyllwild Vision

To generate public interest in ISOMATA, the Idyllwild Arts Foundation harnessed multiple promotional mediums, from films to glossy pictorial brochures, and a rhetoric which invoked both the aspirations and anxieties of postwar Southern Californians. Above all, the Foundation emphasized how ISOMATA would provide a therapeutic experience of creative education, outdoor leisure, and harmonious community as an antidote to the stresses of contemporary life. In the words of Ernie Maxwell—an ISOMATA conservation instructor and founder of the local *Town Crier*—the school made the case that “the time had come for artists and people interested in culture to move out of the city and into the forest for inspiration.”¹⁷ ISOMATA’s promotional rhetoric was never entirely consistent or unitary; shaped by many hands, the Foundation’s attempt to sell the school contained layers of sometimes contradictory meanings. Reflecting, variously, the values of progressive education, the traditional anti-modernism of the summer camp movement, and the anti-urban ethos of postwar Southern California, ISOMATA’s rhetoric underscored the complicated values which animated the school’s leaders.

It is tempting to draw a straight line from ISOMATA’s promotional rhetoric to the school’s ultimate success. Certainly, as this chapter makes clear, ISOMATA’s sophisticated promotional efforts effectively conveyed the school’s values to a wide audience of potential donors and students. However, source limitations prevent an in-depth analysis of how these promotional materials were received and understood by members of the ISOMATA community.

¹⁷ Ernest Maxwell, “Idyllwild Art Center Draws 2,000,” *Riverside Press Enterprise*, September 1, 1959.

Moreover, this style of analysis would risk underestimating the role of word-of-mouth and personal networks in drawing new students to Idyllwild. Thankfully, we can still use ISOMATA's promotional rhetoric to illuminate important truths about how the school's leaders navigated the cultural climate of the postwar period. As historian Matthew McNiece points out in his study of McCarthy-era rhetoric, "Historical analysis of rhetoric need not necessarily prove causality."¹⁸ This is to say, historians can find much of consequence in the way rhetoric reveals the social and psychic conditions of a given historical context. Rather than fixate on the concrete outcomes of ISOMATA's promotional efforts, we can simply describe and contextualize the rhetorical choices which the school's leaders made—and venture to answer why they made them.

Music from the Mountains

The Idyllwild Arts Foundation began its promotional efforts by diagnosing a series of problems facing postwar America. This was the objective of a 1947 brochure, the Foundation's first, which asserted gravely, "The war has left many serious problems in its wake, not the least of which is the rebuilding of an emotional and moral stability in the youth of our country at a time when the world needs stability more than at any other period in its history."¹⁹ Dramatic photographs of Idyllwild and the stark, black-and-white human figures of Hungarian artist Francis de Erdely underscored the power of the brochure's warning. Whereas "science in our day...has no trouble securing almost limitless aid from government and business," the narrative continued, only "the spiritual and emotional force and creative drive" afforded by the arts could truly restore national stability. What was needed, the brochure concluded, was "a school where

¹⁸ Matthew A. McNiece, "'Un-Americans' and 'Anti-Communists;': The Rhetorical Battle to Define Twentieth-Century America" (PhD diss., Howard Payne University, 2003), 24.

¹⁹ Idyllwild Arts Foundation, *The Idyllwild School of Music and the Arts* (promotional brochure, 1947), Idyllwild Area Historical Society, ISOMATA collection.

California's—[and] America's—youth could build healthy minds and bodies” and where they could learn to be “co-operative laborers in a society that now *must* learn to live and work together or perish collectively.” The rest of the brochure outlined the plans for ISOMATA's campus and programs before ending with an appeal for donations. Distributed to prominent patrons of the arts in Los Angeles, the 1947 brochure—by turns alarmist and idealistic—no doubt caught the attention of its readers.²⁰

Music from the Mountains (1947), a USC-produced promotional film which dramatized ISOMATA's origins, enlivened and expanded upon the brochure's key themes. Conceived by its creators, USC graduate film students Bill Blume and Hal Albert, as an “attitude formation film,” the film's technical sophistication was an early signal of the institutional resources behind the Idyllwild project.²¹ By delivering “an informal narrative account of the conception of the idea and birth of the [ISOMATA] project,” Blume and Albert sought to create in the viewer a favorable emotional and moral response to the school. They were well-suited to this task, having served in film units of the armed services during World War II.²² More importantly, their graduate training coincided with the USC cinema program's postwar embrace of the sponsored

²⁰ “Brochure Tells Project's Needs,” *USC Daily Trojan*, May 23, 1947.

²¹ Harold Albert and Wilbur T. Blume, “Conception and Production Problems as Related to the Creation of an Attitude Formation Film” (M.A. thesis, University of Southern California, 1948), 3.

²² Hal Albert's involvement with military film work continued after the war; the *USC Daily Trojan* reported in 1947 that he had recently finished “a hush-hush film for navy research” (see R.L. Matthews, “Factual, Artistic SC Color Movie Pictures Educators' Dreams, Hopes,” *Daily Trojan*, May 23, 1947). Bill Blume became involved with the newly formed Methodist Radio and Film Commission, a pioneering church communications agency. His 1950s output is described in Terry Lindvall and Andrew Quicke, *Celluloid Sermons: The Emergence of the Christian Film Industry, 1930-1986* (New York: NYU Press, 2011), 68.

film. According to Dino Everett and Jennifer Peterson, sponsored films “became one of the most beneficial and lucrative expansions of the USC [cinema] department in the 1950s,” as students were enlisted to produce cutting-edge films on behalf of educational groups and corporations.²³ Max Krone, understanding how effective a persuasive film could be in generating interest and raising funds for the Idyllwild project, threw his full support behind the project. The result—filmed with the latest Kodachrome color technology and featuring contributions from some 200 students—was considered one of the most ambitious projects ever taken up by USC’s vaunted cinema program up to that time.²⁴

“GI Joe is now Joe College, and Joe has problems.” So begins the narrative of *Music from the Mountains*, which covers a wide narrative terrain in its short twenty minutes. “Living is cramped and studying difficult,” the narrator intones, as a series of vignettes personalizes the returned veteran’s struggle to succeed at USC’s overcrowded urban campus. One student tries to study while looking after his infant child; another hangs laundry in the tight quarters outside his trailer home. Then, by narrative sleight of hand, the narrator’s concerns shift abruptly to a more existential set of preoccupations. “In a world of jittery materials values,” the narrative continues,

youth finds only confusion. Our machine-made culture provides speed, convenience, and efficiency. We’re willing to pay for those. We make liberal appropriations for science, advancement, and destruction. But what of other values? We need more than bread alone to feed men’s hearts.

²³ Dino Everett and Jennifer Peterson, “When Film Went to College: A Brief History of the USC Hugh M. Hefner Moving Image Archive,” *The Moving Image: The Journal of the Association of Moving Image Archivists* 13, no. 1 (2013): 46.

²⁴ R.L. Matthews, “Factual, Artistic SC Color Movie Pictures Educators’ Dreams, Hopes,” *Daily Trojan* (USC), May 23, 1947.

Soon the orchestration quickens and grows more ominous—providing, in the filmmakers’ words, “an ever-present sense of frustration that the student experiences.” Soon the vignettes of individual students give way to a fast-moving montage of the USC campus, its thoroughfares choked with cars and pedestrians, and its classrooms filled beyond capacity with stressed-out students. At the sequence’s climax, a student slams his book shut in anger over the traffic din outside his window, and the screen fades to black.²⁵

The filmmakers’ fixation on urban dysfunction and national malaise effectively sets up their subsequent presentation of the ISOMATA plan. After a brief “Birth of the Idea” scene which recreates the first planning meeting of the Idyllwild Arts Foundation, the filmmakers take the viewer on a scenic tour of Idyllwild’s open vistas and colorful landscapes, complemented by their use of “pleasant pastoral music.” In Idyllwild, the narrator says, students will find a place abounding in “inspiration for creative work,” where they might “build healthy minds and bodies while they worked under inspired leadership” in the arts. After an overview of the planned campus and a brief appeal for funds, the film closes with a USC orchestra performing among the Idyllwild pines—the men in shirt sleeves, the women in summer dresses. Suntanned, focused, and relaxed, they appear well-served by their mountain retreat.²⁶

From its creation in 1947 until the opening of ISOMATA in 1950, *Music from the Mountains* was shown widely to civic clubs and arts organizations in Idyllwild and throughout greater Los Angeles. Ever the savvy promoter, Max Krone even submitted the film to the Academy Awards’ best short documentary category, boasting in his nominating letter that the

²⁵ See Appendix item 1 for still images.

²⁶ *Music from the Mountains*, written and directed by Bill Blume (University of Southern California, 1947), USC Hefner Moving Image Archive, <https://vimeo.com/293984106>.

film was “probably the first effort on such a scale produced entirely by students of the Cinema.”²⁷ More indicative of the film’s actual bailiwick was the *Town Crier*’s report that showings had occurred “at various Lion’s clubs, where it has stimulated a great deal of interest.”²⁸ In terms of how *Music from the Mountains* appealed to these audiences, three elements of the film’s narrative stand out as particularly important: the film’s concern for veterans’ readjustment to civilian life; its emphasis on the need for relief from the urban environment; and its promise of the therapeutic benefits of art and nature.

The first of these elements—the film’s preoccupation with the fate of the returned GI—was, on one level, a natural response to circumstances at USC. Prior to World War II, USC accommodated roughly 7,000 full-time students. With the end of war, the passage of the GI Bill, and the university’s flexible entry requirements, enrollment soared to 24,000 in 1947—more than three times the size of UCLA.²⁹ Such a rapid and haphazard growth spurt severely tested USC’s capacity to serve its students and catalyzed new commitments to fundraising, construction, and expanded student services. At the same time, the GI explosion caused a culture change at USC. In the words of historians Servin and Wilson, the veterans were more serious, well-traveled, and demanding of professors than their civilian peers, and their dominant presence after 1945 helped to transform USC from “a football, country-club, Greek-house dominated institution” into a less

²⁷ Max T. Krone to Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, January 9, 1948, attached as addendum to Albert and Blume, “Conception and Production Problems as Related to the Creation of an Attitude Formation Film.”

²⁸ *Idyllwild Town Crier*, “School of Arts Progressing,” May 28, 1949.

²⁹ USC was the alma mater of the majority of returning GIs in Southern California. See Manuel Servin and Iris Higbie Wilson, *Southern California and Its University* (Los Angeles: The Ward Ritchie Press, 1969), 191.

parochial and more civically engaged university.³⁰ By underscoring the Idyllwild Arts Foundation's commitment to veterans' academic and creative success, *Music from the Mountains* aligned ISOMATA with the ongoing transformation of the university's culture. More broadly, connecting the Idyllwild project to the fate of the returning GI—a figure whose college experiences elicited extraordinary public interest in the late 1940s—likely lent the school a sheen of civic responsibility and patriotic virtue.³¹

In Blume and Albert's hands, the GI's scholastic struggles do not merely reflect the failure of universities to keep pace with skyrocketing enrollment. Rather, the filmmakers explain the GI's predicament—and thus the need for ISOMATA—in terms of “the distractions of metropolitan life, and the fact that these disturbances of concentrated effort are detrimental to the fullest creative study of music and the arts.”³² They convey those distractions in the film's opening sequence, which exaggerates the chaos and congestion of USC's urban campus to persuasive effect. In doing so, they situated *Music from the Mountains* within a discourse about the demographic crisis confronting postwar Los Angeles. Eric Avila has described the 1940s as a series of “rude awakenings” for the region, as the old booster myths of Los Angeles as a bucolic, suburban city gave way to the realities wrought by wartime urbanization: worsening traffic congestion, smog, an acute housing shortage, and a severely inadequate infrastructure.³³ In turn,

³⁰ Servin and Wilson, *Southern California and Its University*, 185-189.

³¹ See Daniel A. Clark ““The Two Joes Meet—Joe College, Joe Veteran”: The GI Bill, College Education, and Postwar American Culture,” *History of Education Quarterly* 38, no. 2 (1998): 165-190. Clark tracks the culture's fascination with the returning veteran in popular magazines.

³² Albert and Blume, “Conception and Production Problems,” 7.

³³ Avila, *Popular Culture in the Age of White Flight*, 37.

these problems gave rise to a planning craze among the region's power brokers. Master plans abounded throughout the decade; they aimed to create what one prominent planner described as "a completely harmonious community" designed for "maximum safety, health, and sociability."³⁴ As Avila has argued, this discourse—which included film noir's bleak portrayals of city life—precipitated "such transformative urban processes as suburban development, urban renewal, and highway construction," all of which served to deepen the region's fragmentation along class and racial lines.³⁵

By selling ISOMATA as a refuge from the city and its problems, *Music from the Mountains* thus located the school squarely within the emerging sociospatial paradigm of white flight in postwar Los Angeles. At the same time, however, the film's implicit critique of the city was also consonant with the anti-urbanism which had characterized American summer camps since the turn of the twentieth century. Responding to anxieties over the impact of urbanization on modern childhood, summer camp organizers promoted the camp experience as an antidote to the perceived ills of city life.³⁶ Summer camps were thus linked with other back-to-nature landscapes of the industrial era, such as urban parks and residential suburbs. Envisaged largely by the Anglo-American middle class, these spaces responded to white worries about the pace of racial, ethnic, and economic change in American cities.³⁷ As a liberal and integrated institution—

³⁴ Mel Scott, *Cities Are for People: The Los Angeles Region Plans for Living* (Los Angeles: Pacific Southwest Academy, 1942), 27, foreword.

³⁵ Avila, *Popular Culture in the Age of White Flight*, 78.

³⁶ Sharon Wall, *The Nurture of Nature: Childhood, Antimodernism, and Ontario Summer Camps, 1920-55* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2010), 5-7.

³⁷ Abigail Van Slyck, *A Manufactured Wilderness: Summer Camps and the Shaping of American Youth, 1890-1960* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), xxi.

albeit an overwhelmingly white one—ISOMATA’s promotional efforts never included an explicit appeal to white identity. To some extent, middle-class whiteness was already encoded in the very premise of summer camping. Nevertheless, by presenting the school as a corrective to the dysfunction and overcrowding of USC’s urban campus, *Music from the Mountains* recycled a potent tradition of anti-urbanism and white anxiety at a time when those themes were deeply salient to Southern Californians.

Albeit more subtly, *Music from the Mountains* also situated ISOMATA within the national debate over the role of arts education in American life. By critiquing American society’s preoccupation with material wealth and technology and emphasizing the role of the arts in building a better society, the film updated the reformist creed of the progressive education movement. Beginning in the 1920s, progressive educators throughout North America sought to replace the rote learning methods of Victorian-era schools with an experiential pedagogy based on the natural interests of children and the social conditions of contemporary life.³⁸ Progressive innovations included the field trip and school project, both of which encouraged learning outside school walls. In the arts, progressives rejected a pedagogy premised on drilling in favor of a new emphasis on sensory experience and imaginative expression. In the New Deal era, progressive educators tied their faith in self-expression to social democratic aims and advocated using arts education to intervene in the daily life of communities.³⁹ Still, progressive educators’ attempts to

³⁸ Andrew Hartman, *Education and the Cold War: The Battle for the American School* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 10.

³⁹ See Arthur D. Efland, *A History of Art Education: Intellectual and Social Currents in Teaching the Visual Arts* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1990), 208. Progressive art education had its New Deal-era apotheosis in Minnesota’s Owatonna Art Education Project (1933-1938). Funded by the Carnegie Foundation, the Owatonna project piloted a community-

align the school with society were not without contradictions or blind spots. As Theodore Christou has noted, progressives “were driven by a strong sense of middle-class Christian morality to reduce conflict, foster community, and build social responsibility,” but their actions betrayed an aversion to class and racial mixing. While broadly committed to democratic reform, their solutions assumed the form of Anglo-conformity and allegiance to the state.⁴⁰

This was the context in which Max and Beatrice Krone forged their philosophies. Beatrice Krone taught at the Ohio State University Laboratory School, an important site of pedagogical experimentation, and her 1937 book *Music in the New School* was an important summation of the progressive arts credo, calling for “much more opportunity for individual learning” and a focus on teaching skills “as they grow out of the needs and problems of the children.”⁴¹ For his part, Max Krone received his PhD at Northwestern University—another hotbed of progressive pedagogy—and built his professional career advocating for the importance of student bands, choirs, and orchestras in school and community life.⁴² Not surprisingly, then, Krone’s arguments for ISOMATA were steeped in the progressive language of creative expression and social awareness. As he told the *Idyllwild Town Crier* in 1947, the school would provide an “educational program in music and the arts in a setting most conducive to creative

based arts curriculum, with students enlisted in decorating storefronts, creating new labels for local products, and designing new homes and landscapes.

⁴⁰ Theodore Michael Christou, *Progressive Education : Revisioning and Reframing Ontario’s Public Schools, 1919 to 1942* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), 13.

⁴¹ Quoted in Michael L. Mark and Charles L. Gary, *A History of American Music Education* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007), 225.

⁴² Mark and Gary, *A History of American Music Education*, 308.

expression.”⁴³ He later insisted, in 1950, that ISOMATA was needed to nourish the “esthetic, emotional, mental and physical health” of its students.⁴⁴ By 1954, Krone and the Idyllwild Arts Foundation codified these ideas into a cogent statement of values, the first of which stressed their belief that the arts “can enrich the lives of ALL people. We believe in art for man’s sake, that the arts may and should serve an important therapeutic as well as aesthetic need.”⁴⁵ Like *Music from the Mountains*, this rhetoric emphasized the school’s progressive dedication to the physical, mental, and spiritual health of society writ large.

Nonetheless, ISOMATA’s rhetoric also qualified the nature of the school’s progressivism. In particular, the school’s phraseology of health and therapy embodied how progressive educators were re-tooling their messaging in the early Cold War period, a time marked, as Robert McMahon writes, by a “narrowing of the permissible boundaries of political discourse.”⁴⁶ As Cold War anxieties calcified in the late 1940s and politicians ascribed new ideological importance to education, critics attacked progressive educators for failing to produce vigilant cold warriors.⁴⁷ Historian Andrew Hartman writes that conservatives used anticommunism “as a blunt weapon to attack all things seemingly liberal or relativistic” in

⁴³ “Camp Idyllwild,” *Idyllwild Town Crier*, January 25, 1947.

⁴⁴ Krone, “A New Experiment in Teacher Training in the Arts,” *Music Educators Journal* 36, no. 5 (1950), 55.

⁴⁵ “We Believe,” ISOMATA brochure (Idyllwild: Idyllwild Arts Foundation, 1954), box 91, folder 1, USC Thornton School of Music Records.

⁴⁶ Robert McMahon, *The Cold War: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press), 118.

⁴⁷ Andrew Hartman, *Education and the Cold War: The Battle for the American School* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 1.

progressive education, while liberal critics charged that progressive educators' emphasis on creativity and self-expression—however well-intentioned—ultimately amounted to “a disavowal of the school’s primary function, which was to provide intellectual training.”⁴⁸ Progressives responded to the new climate by adopting the more apolitical language of “life adjustment.” Whereas progressive educators in the 1930s had sought to reform society, life adjustment theory was premised on the idea of conforming students *to* society so that they might become useful and well-adjusted Americans. Life adjusters championed such innovations as vocational guidance and standardized testing, both tools which served to bring the nation’s schools into closer alignment with the manpower needs of employers. In the process, as Hartman argues, progressive education transformed “from something potentially radical into a conservative force for stability and order.”⁴⁹

Whether in calling attention to the “emotional and moral stability” of American youth or insisting that “workers in the arts can be normal folks,” ISOMATA’s early rhetoric was strongly indicative of life adjustment ideology. In fact, the school’s rhetoric bore an uncanny resemblance to the literature on life adjustment produced by the Vocational Education Division of the U.S. Office of Education in the late 1940s. As Arthur Efland has pointed out, this literature stressed “the physical, mental, and emotional health” of students, the “present problems of youth as well as their preparation for future living,” and the importance of emphasizing “active and creative achievements” while adjusting young people “to existing conditions” of American society.⁵⁰ The

⁴⁸ Hartman, *Education and the Cold War*, 5; Arthur D. Efland, *A History of Art Education*, 228.

⁴⁹ Hartman, *Education and the Cold War*, 56.

⁵⁰ Efland, *A History of Art Education*, 228.

vogue of this new ideology—and, more importantly, the political safety it afforded in the early Cold War climate—was almost certainly not lost on Max Krone. Beginning in the early 1940s, Krone had shown an acute awareness of progressive educators’ messaging needs as a board member and contributor to the *Music Educators Journal*. On the brink of America’s entry into the Second World War, for instance, he penned an article entitled “Music in a Time of Stress” in which he emphasized the nation’s need for the arts in times of crisis.⁵¹ The journal dedicated subsequent issues to topics such as “Music in Our Democracy” and “Music as a Restorative Force.” Krone’s close involvement with the journal underscores both his knowledge of new trends in arts education and his sensitivity to the national political climate and underscores the likelihood that ISOMATA’s therapeutic rhetoric was a calculated response to the increasingly conservative mood of the late 1940s.

By the mid-1950s, newspaper and magazine commentators writing about ISOMATA were giving anecdotal form to the ideological values encoded in *Music from the Mountains*. They did so by portraying ISOMATA as a place where world-weary professionals could escape the demands of everyday life to find creative rejuvenation. Both *Holiday* magazine and the *Los Angeles Times*, for instance, recounted stories in which tourists stumbled unwittingly upon ISOMATA and remained there for the rest of their vacations. *Holiday* told of a telephone lineman who “stopped by to look around” one day and, at Max Krone’s invitation, stayed around for the rest of the summer. Similar was the case of the physicist from the Howard Hughes Aircraft Plant who discovered ISOMATA by chance and enrolled in painting and music classes on the spot. According to *Holiday*, he was so impressed that he made a brochure to share with his

⁵¹ Max T. Krone, “Music in a Time of Stress,” *Music Educators Journal* 28, no. 1 (1941): 60–62.

colleagues, calling the ISOMATA experience “too good for school people only. The rest of us want and need what it offers.”⁵² Notably, these stories portrayed ISOMATA as a classless institution where the white- and blue-collar worker alike could find creative rejuvenation. More importantly, these stories made a case for ISOMATA in life-adjustment terms by showing how the school was producing happier, more fulfilled, and more productive American workers.

Ultimately, *Music from the Mountains* presaged an institution whose politics conformed to what the historian Godfrey Hodgson called “a strange hybrid, liberal conservatism.”⁵³ To be sure, the film warned against the ill effects of American materialism and unchecked faith in science, signaling that ISOMATA would champion a liberal and humanistic social vision in the years to come. At the same time, by casting ISOMATA as an antidote to the ills of the postwar city, the film joined a discourse which was underpinning the accelerating spatial and social fragmentation of Southern California. As many historians have pointed out, the result of the region’s postwar fragmentation was greater racial and economic segregation which were broadly at odds with ISOMATA’s professed values. Finally, by selling ISOMATA in terms of the emerging educational trend of life adjustment, *Music from the Mountains* also signaled the school’s fundamental dedication to the political and economic status quo. The film may have decried the growing role of consumerism and technocracy in American life, but its emphasis on therapy ultimately signified a tacit acceptance of those very conditions. Thus when, in 1950, Max Krone declared the soon-to-open ISOMATA a “A New Experiment” in arts education, what

⁵² Ray Duncan, “California’s Musical Mountain,” *Holiday* magazine, July 1954; see also Bill Murphy “Arts Bloom in Mountains,” *Los Angeles Times*, August 19, 1957. The *Times* story also mentions the physicist from the Hughes Aircraft Plant, which raises the likelihood that his story was a favorite promotional tool of Max Krone and the Foundation.

⁵³ Hodgson is quoted in Jennifer A. Delton, *Rethinking the 1950s: How Anti-Communism and the Cold War Made America Liberal* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 2.

he could not say was that the experiment would ultimately reflect the more limited ambitions of progressive arts educators in the early postwar period.

Making the Mountain Modern

As ISOMATA evolved from an idea into a reality, the form and function of the school's promotional efforts changed. Brochures filled with photographs of the campus became a new way to communicate the school's values. Likewise, the Foundation's promotional literature commenced to highlight the growth of ISOMATA's myriad arts and culture programs, underscoring the seriousness of the school's commitment to youth and adult education. These materials emphasized how ISOMATA was a thoroughly modern and future-oriented institution, a place where students could live, learn, and play in a structured environment driven by expert planning and knowledge. And yet the school's leaders sought to hearken backward as well as forward. Filled with references to the nature, Indian lore, and community life of Idyllwild, ISOMATA's promotional materials situated the school's modernity within a richly symbolic landscape of tradition. In doing so, they forged a unique institutional identity for ISOMATA which nevertheless replicated the core tension at the heart of American summer camps—namely, the tension between modern sensibilities and antimodern nostalgia. As historian Sharon Wall has pointed out, “Modernity was neither wholly resisted nor wholly embraced [at summer camps]; rather, camps were hybrid institutions.” ISOMATA was no exception.⁵⁴

For those who built, managed, and experienced them, summer camps were not merely understood as a refuge from urban pressures and anxieties. They also represented a rustic and restorative counterpoint to modern life itself. The antimodernism of camp life assumed a variety

⁵⁴ Sharon Wall, *The Nurture of Nature*, 14.

of forms in the first half of the twentieth century. Many camps mimicked the trappings of pioneer life while encouraging a spirit of militarism or the racialized fantasy of “playing Indian;” other camps stressed local handicrafts and folklore, often undergirded with a leftist embrace of grassroots culture.⁵⁵ What unified these camps was the antimodernist belief that something critical had been lost in modern life: a rootedness in the land and tradition which summer camps would help to restore. As historian Leslie Parks writes, “This nostalgia was critical to camps’ appeal among the adults who founded and promoted them. Criticizing the ‘artificiality’ and ‘speeded-up’ pace of contemporary life, camp leaders claimed to better socialize the next generation by returning them, if to a limited degree, to a simpler way of life.”⁵⁶ As with most landscapes of leisure, however, the summer camp’s promise of simple living always involved modern technologies and new ideas about education and development, leisure, and wilderness.

Idyllwild itself was a product of this complicated negotiation of modernity. Just as the proliferation of summer resorts and chautauquas in the late-nineteenth century had depended upon an expanded network of rail transportation, Idyllwild’s viability as a resort was linked to the expansion of new and improved highways into the San Jacinto Mountains. Beginning in the 1920s, drivers from Los Angeles and San Diego began visiting Idyllwild with greater frequency, beckoned by advertisers’ call to “the Yosemite of the Southland”—a reference which played

⁵⁵ These practices are explored in a wide-ranging literature on American summer camps. See, for example, Philip Deloria, *Playing Indian* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), chapter 4; Bill Horne, *The Improbable Community: Camp Woodland and the American Democratic Ideal* (United States: Bill Horne, 2016); Paul C. Mishler, *Raising Reds: The Young Pioneers, Radical Summer Camps, and Communist Political Culture in the United States* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999); Michael M. Lorge and Gary Phillip Zola, *A Place of Our Own: The Rise of Reform Jewish Camping* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2006).

⁵⁶ Leslie Paris, *Children's Nature: The Rise of the American Summer Camp* (New York: NYU Press, 2008), 9.

upon both the natural splendor and federally protected status of the San Jacintos. The completion of the new Banning-Idyllwild Panoramic Highway in 1949 made Idyllwild even more accessible for travelers. In the ensuing years, a series of “Trip of the Week” stories in the *Los Angeles Times* urged automobilists to explore the new road, calling Idyllwild “a scenic wonderland” and “cultural center” where “residents [were] proud of the Idyllwild School of Music and the Arts” and its coterie of “outstanding artists, bands, and orchestras.” These stories rarely failed to mention Idyllwild’s quaint charm or the fact that the area “was [once] popular with desert Indians for untold centuries.”⁵⁷ Promoting modern leisure tourism, natural scenery, and local color, the *Times* travelogues presaged the mixed symbolism of ISOMATA’s own promotional efforts throughout the 1950s.

The Idyllwild Arts Foundation’s early program guides frequently alluded to Idyllwild’s Indian antecedents. These references were sometimes specific to ISOMATA’s programs in Native American arts and crafts, which I describe in the following chapter. More often, however, they serviced the Foundation’s desire to depict the campus as a place steeped in evocative local tradition. A 1949 program guide pointed out, for instance, that the “Idyllwild School [was] a former Indian Campground.” Explaining that “many of the grinding holes in which the Indian women ground the acorns from the oaks in the area are still very much in evidence in the woods at the heart of the school,” the guide concluded that “the sounds of Indian music and dancing next summer will not be new or strange to these great boulders...[formed] by some prehistoric

⁵⁷ Lynn Rogers, “Palms to Pines Tour Intrigues Motorists,” *Los Angeles Times*, December 3, 1950; Lynn Rogers, “Highway Leads to Scenic Region,” *Los Angeles Times*, July 24, 1955; Lynn Rogers, “Idyllwild Region Charms Visitors,” *Los Angeles Times*, May 20, 1956

glacier.”⁵⁸ A 1951 guide to adult study camps in the United States took a cue from this description, calling attention to the ISOMATA campus’s former incarnation as “a large Indian encampment” and further noting the preponderance of “grinding holes [once] used by the Indians of the San Jacinto mountains for grinding.”⁵⁹ Meanwhile, prospective ISOMATA students and donors were growing accustomed to promotional brochures featuring images of “Indian” traditions at ISOMATA, such as the campfires led by the Native arts instructor Ataloo. As I discuss in the next chapter, ISOMATA’s commitment to Native American culture was also both genuine and substantive. Nevertheless, these promotional images, along with the descriptions of the campus’s Indian past, served mostly to envelop ISOMATA in the romantic aura of an idealized tradition. As Philip Deloria has shown, this fascination with Native American primitivism had deep roots in white Americans’ search for authentic identities, and this search became all the more urgent in the 1950s amid fears that a national identity had been lost to encroaching consumerism and suburban alienation. ISOMATA’s promotional use of Indian lore belonged to this freighted quest for an affirmative identity by white Americans, many of whom saw (per Deloria) “an infusion of Indianness as a solution to America’s collective worries and to the anxiety of its individuals.”⁶⁰

At the same time as it made figurative use of local Indian history, the Idyllwild Arts Foundation stressed ISOMATA’s warm and casual relationship with the community of Idyllwild. This effort began with *Music from the Mountains*. In one of the film’s key scenes, Max Krone

⁵⁸ “Idyllwild School a former Indian Campground,” *ISOMATA Notes*, vol. 1, no. 5, August 28, 1949, Idyllwild Area Historical Society, ISOMATA collection.

⁵⁹ “Idyllwild School of Music and the Arts,” *Adult Study Camps*, ed. Margaret Willis and Mary J. Alton (Louisville, Kentucky: Franklin Press, 1951), 4.

⁶⁰ Philip Deloria, *Playing Indian* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998), 130.

presents the ISOMATA plan to a gathering of village citizens at the rustic Idyllwild Inn. “These are the folk on whom a large part of the [school’s] success depends,” the narrator says, as Krone—with his back to a roaring fireplace—is shown answering questions from a cast of colorful, flannel-clad local characters. The gathered citizens show evident enthusiasm in the project, making clear to viewers that ISOMATA would be part of a harmonious and supportive community. The filmmakers, Blume and Albert, later described the twofold rationale of this “Town Meeting Sequence:” not only would the scene give the opportunity to explain the school proposal “to the town meeting audience and thus to the film audience,” but it would also “inject a portion of local color into the film.” They further explained, “Since the town meeting is such a picturesque tenant of American life, [the scene] was filmed in a documentary manner on the spot in Idyllwild.”⁶¹ This was all true save for one telling fact: the scene was actually filmed at a meeting of the Idyllwild Chamber of Commerce. By eliding this subtle but important point, the filmmakers played up the homespun folksiness of the community and, by extension, the antimodern bona fides of ISOMATA.⁶²

As a key ally and promotional vehicle for ISOMATA, the Idyllwild *Town Crier* further burnished ISOMATA’s image as a familiar community institution. That the paper’s publisher and editor, Ernie Maxwell, should have supported the school was not surprising. A Berkeley graduate, professional cartoonist, and environmental activist, Maxwell had moved to Idyllwild in the early 1940s in search of a more rustic way of life. In 1946, he began printing the weekly *Town Crier*, which featured his humorous cartoons along with local reporting and commentary

⁶¹ Albert and Blume, “Conception and Production Problems,” 24-25.

⁶² For descriptions of the Chamber of Commerce meeting, see Idyllwild *Town Crier*, February 8, 1947, 1; and “Music School Report,” Idyllwild *Town Crier*, July 26, 1947.

by Maxwell and his wife, Betty. Combining a cosmopolitan worldview with an earnest regard for his community, Maxwell became the leading advocate for the protection of Idyllwild's natural resources and village character in the postwar period.⁶³ Maxwell also became a prominent supporter and eventual board member of the Idyllwild Arts Foundation, and by 1952 he was spearheading the Foundation's college-level courses in wilderness leadership and resource conservation.⁶⁴ The Foundation also made use of Maxwell's creative side; his lighthearted cartoons of forest animals and mountaineers were fixtures of ISOMATA's 1950s promotional brochures, forming a striking counterpoint to images of ISOMATA's sleekly modern buildings. All the while, Maxwell's *Town Crier* provided positive coverage of ISOMATA and emphasized shared values between the school and community, such as thrift, simplicity, and a do-it-yourself attitude.

An illustration of Maxwell's style of coverage—and of its implications for ISOMATA's public image—was his article about the dedication of the school's Atwater Kent Bowl in 1949. Built with funding from the radio manufacturer Atwater Kent, the Bowl was the first structure completed on the campus. According to Maxwell, a “feeling of the pioneer spirit” pervaded the dedication ceremony. He pointed to local contributions which made the Bowl's opening possible. Thanks to road construction by the local Lion's Club, for instance, “Persons attending the dedication...can travel to the concert ALL of the way on blacktop or oil. No dust.” Likewise,

⁶³ “Mountain History,” Idyllwild Area Historical Society, accessed June 13, 2019, <http://www.idyllwildhistory.org/sj.7.html>. Maxwell's contributions to local conservation efforts are described in Richard Carter Davis, “Wilderness, Politics, and Bureaucracy: Federal and State Policies in The Administration of San Jacinto Mountain, Southern California, 1920-1968” (Ph.D., University of California, Riverside, 1973).

⁶⁴ Technically, the Foundation's conservation courses were part of a separate school, the Idyllwild School of Conservation and Natural Science, founded in 1952 as a companion to ISOMATA.

Maxwell made clear that the new Bowl itself—with its “benches [made] of timber from Clarence Bischof’s sawmill”—bore the imprint of Idyllwild’s self-sufficient ethos. Nevertheless, even as Maxwell assured readers that “the dedication ceremonies were gay and informal as befitted the mountain setting,” the event was also a magnet for elite visitors from Los Angeles. The Idyllwild Arts Foundation had sent more than 500 special invitations to “distinguished persons of the music and film world,” while speakers included representatives of the Atwater Kent Foundation and the Riverside County Chamber of Commerce. Foregrounding his account in the contributions of the local community, Maxwell nevertheless admitted that ISOMATA was indebted to a cross-section of regional and even national boosters, as well as to corporate foundation money.⁶⁵ Importantly, Maxwell’s reporting was not limited to Idyllwild readers alone. As a special reporter for the *Los Angeles Times* and *Riverside Press-Enterprise*, his folksy coverage of ISOMATA would have reached interested parties throughout Southern California and impressed them with the school’s apparently seamless integration with the quaint community of Idyllwild.

In *The Frontier of Leisure*, the historian Lawrence Culver argues that Southern California’s twentieth-century growth was tied to the promotion of leisure and recreation as “a permanent way of life.” Moreover, like the region’s boosterism more generally, the promotion of leisure was a racialized process which reflected white Americans’ romantic ideas of the West. In Southern California, Culver writes, “white Americans believed that they could find rejuvenation by reconnecting with nature, community, and tradition. If the independent ‘island community’ of

⁶⁵ “Bowl to Be Dedicated,” *Idyllwild Town Crier*, June 18, 1949; “Musical Milestone,” *Idyllwild Town Crier*, July 9, 1949.

the preindustrial era had been lost, perhaps it could be founded anew.”⁶⁶ Culver’s work helps to explain why ISOMATA’s antimodern and community-focused promotional rhetoric may have been a valuable way to entice students and donors to Idyllwild. By stressing the campus’s link to a romanticized Indian history and the school’s ties to its frontier-spirited white community, the Idyllwild Arts Foundation created for ISOMATA an image steeped in tradition. This is not to suggest that either Ernie Maxwell or the Foundation presented a deceptive picture of the school’s relationship to the community. Quite the contrary: as it grew throughout the 1950s, ISOMATA did cultivate a genuine stake in the lives of locals, as is amply clear from documentary and oral evidence.⁶⁷ Still, by emphasizing this aspect of the school’s identity, as well as Idyllwild’s Native American past, the Foundation sent a meaningful signal to its audience of white, middle-class Southern Californians that ISOMATA was a place where they could find—if only for a time—the sense of authentic tradition and community which they lacked in everyday life.

At the same time, antimodernism was hardly the sole emphasis of ISOMATA’s promotional rhetoric. Like other summer camps, ISOMATA combined antimodern rhetoric with a thoroughly modern preoccupation with management, design, and planning. Even as he asserted that Southern Californians needed an experience of living “as close to nature as possible” as an antidote to modern tensions, Max Krone assured prospective students in 1950 that “living itself should not be difficult or uncomfortable in such an environment.” With modern cabins, recreational facilities, and the benevolent California climate, Krone wrote, the ISOMATA

⁶⁶ Lawrence Culver, *The Frontier of Leisure: Southern California and the Shaping of Modern America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 4, 10.

⁶⁷ Carol Merrill-Mirsky, phone interview with author, February 22, 2019.

lifestyle would be “not only comfortable but luxurious.”⁶⁸ Krone’s statement was consistent with the Foundation’s desire to impress potential donors and students with the modern expertise that went into building the school. “The planning [of the campus] is progressive, thorough, and sound,” the narrator of *Music from the Mountains* assured viewers in 1947, further predicting that the campus would serve “as an example of California’s leadership in graceful living.” As landscape historian Abigail Van Slyck has pointed out, the summer camp’s “search for pastoral relaxation and rejuvenation was rarely uncomplicated” by modern concerns. This was manifestly true of ISOMATA.⁶⁹

ISOMATA’s campus was an exemplar of California modernism. Its designers were Arthur Gallion, dean of the USC School of Architecture, and Calvin Straub, an influential professor of architecture at USC. Gallion, whose book *The Urban Pattern: City Planning and Design* (1951) became the standard textbook of urban design in the 1950s, brought an impeccable planner’s eye to the ISOMATA design. Moreover, as chair of the Los Angeles City Regional Planning Unit, Gallion played a significant role in shaping the city’s postwar development—a fact which underscores ISOMATA’s connection to the physical transformation of the wider urban region.⁷⁰ For his part, Calvin Straub helped pioneer the aesthetic of California modernism in architecture. On his own and later as a partner of the landmark Los Angeles design firm Buff, Straub, & Hensman, Straub modeled the use of simple materials, clean lines, open

⁶⁸ Krone, “A New Experiment in Teacher Training in the Arts,” 56.

⁶⁹ Van Slyck, *A Manufactured Wilderness*, xx.

⁷⁰ Gallion was also the author of influential guides to modern architecture in Southern California, which were influential in establishing critical recognition for contemporary California design. See Andrew D. Manuel and Chris Marino, “Arthur B. Gallion Collection” (finding aid), Environmental Design Archives, University of California, Berkeley.

spaces, and the integration of indoor and outdoor living. Through his teaching and design work, which often featured in *Sunset* magazine, he would influence a generation of California architects.⁷¹

In their design for ISOMATA, Gallion and Straub used modern ideas about structure, planning, and aesthetics to create a casual yet refined environment in harmony with the mountain landscape. Their first three structures at the school—the Lora Steere Sculpture Studio, Bowman Art Center, and Birchard Music Building—differed in size and function but were unified by local wood and stone, shed roofs, open floor plans, and ample windows. Gallion and Straub also strove to integrate natural features into the campus, such as the landscape’s ubiquitous boulders. The effect of these design choices was summed up by an Idyllwild villager in 1954, who marveled, “Their buildings look like they grew in the woods. You can’t tell whether you’re indoors or out.”⁷² This sense of an organic campus blended into nature was also the product of Gallion and Straub’s overall layout, which followed the unit plan idea promoted by popular camp planning manuals of the 1940s.⁷³ Conceived along the lines of residential suburbs, the unit plan recommended a decentralized pattern of buildings connected by walking trails. According to historian Linda McClelland, the unit plan “created the illusion in the minds of visitors that the

⁷¹ Among Straub’s acolytes were Frank Gehry and Pierre Koenig. See Shelly Kappe, “Calvin Straub,” in *Toward a Simpler Way of Life: The Arts and Crafts Architects of California*, ed. Robert Winter (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 291-299; “Buff, Straub & Hensman,” Los Angeles Conservancy, accessed March 31, 2019, <https://www.laconservancy.org/architects/buff-straub-hensman>.

⁷² Ray Duncan, “California’s Musical Mountain, *Holiday* magazine, 1954.

⁷³ Foremost among these manuals was the National Park Service’s *Park and Recreation Structures*. Published in 1938 to celebrate the Park Service’s New Deal-era achievements (including the unit plan), the manual contributed to the professionalization of camp planning. See Van Slyck, *A Manufactured Wilderness*, xxix, 31.

landscape had never been disturbed.”⁷⁴ The testimonies of former ISOMATA students, which emphasize memories of “complete freedom” and a sense of ISOMATA as a “wall-less” campus, testify to Gallion and Straub’s successful manipulation of the mountain landscape.⁷⁵

Paradoxically, their expert deployment of modern design heightened visitors’ sensation of inhabiting a natural, pre-modern landscape.

Modernism served an important promotional function for ISOMATA. On one level, the evident soundness of the campus’s design reinforced the professionalism and refined taste of the school’s leaders—no small objective considering the competition which ISOMATA faced from other camps.⁷⁶ Along these lines, the Idyllwild Arts Foundation boasted in 1954 that “we are custodians of one of the most beautiful sites and group of modern school buildings...in the country,” and further clarified that “Idyllwild is a *campus*, not a *camp*” (emphasis in the original).⁷⁷ The Foundation stressed the school’s modern refinement in attractive photographs

⁷⁴ Linda McClelland, *Building the National Parks: Historic Landscape Design and Construction* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 1-8, quoted in Van Slyck, *A Manufactured Wilderness*, 31.

⁷⁵ Ellen Chase (former ISOMATA student), interview with author, February 22, 2019; Evan Mills, “Many nights sitting on those rocks...,” November 11, 2015, comment on ISOMATA!, “Original Gallion & Straub architectural drawing of Bowman Arts Center,” Facebook post, November 11, 2015, <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10153784103419337&set=oa.10153061074035356&type=3&theater&ifg=1>, accessed March 2019.

⁷⁶ ISOMATA faced competition from several arts camps in Southern California. See Karl Richard Kultti, “Development of Summer Music Camps in the Western United States” (Master’s thesis, University of Southern California, 1951), 12. These included Camp Arrowbear and Arrowhead Music Camp (San Bernardino County), Pacific Music Camp (San Joaquin County), and Camp Pacific (San Diego County).

⁷⁷ “We Believe,” ISOMATA brochure (Idyllwild: Idyllwild Arts Foundation, 1954), box 91, folder 1, USC Thornton School of Music Records.

appearing in yearly programs and mailers, some of which were produced by the celebrated fine arts printer Ward Ritchie.⁷⁸ Featuring artists, dancers, and musicians plying their crafts amid the campus's sun-dappled rocks and modern studios, these photographs conveyed a sense, as *Life* magazine reported in 1959, that Idyllwild was “one of [the] fanciest summer workshops in the country.”⁷⁹ Not unlike Palm Springs, where, as Lawrence Culver writes, “modernist architecture served to remind tourists that they had come to a trendsetting resort,” ISOMATA's modern campus reinforced the school's image as a progressive and experimental arts institution.⁸⁰ In an even broader sense, promotional images of ISOMATA's modern campus conveyed the promise of the California good life. Art historian Wendy Kaplan has traced how California modernism conveyed values such as “optimism and democracy, fearless experimentation, and a love of new technology.” Postwar boosters celebrated “The California Look” as a reflection of the Golden State's casual refinement and openness to invention.⁸¹ By using the school's attractive modern campus as a promotional calling card, ISOMATA's leaders laid claim to these values and, more importantly, promised prospective students the chance to enjoy a distinctly Californian way of life.

These complicated cross-currents of modernist refinement and antimodern nostalgia were on full display in ISOMATA's 1953 program guide, a sleek pictorial brochure entitled *This is*

⁷⁸ Among Ritchie's other clients was the publishing arm of The Huntington Library. See Sarah Lehmann, “The Ward Ritchie Collection” (finding aid), Occidental College Library, Special Collections Department.

⁷⁹ “Spare Time Creativity,” *Life*, December 28, 1959, 140.

⁸⁰ Culver, *The Frontier of Leisure*, 171.

⁸¹ Wendy Kaplan, “Living in a Modern Way,” in *California Design, 1930–1965*, ed. Wendy Kaplan (Los Angeles: The MIT Press, 2011), 28.

Idyllwild. The guide's most striking image shows an evening piano recital at the Bowman Art Center, with its modernist shed roof, floor-to-ceiling windows, and seamless integration of indoor and outdoor space. The camera's exterior perspective reveals a refined atmosphere inside, where a pianist plays to a small attentive crowd bathed in moody performance lighting. Meanwhile, outside the building and closer to the camera, a small overflow audience sits beside a blazing campfire and large boulder, their attention fixed on the pianist through the windows. The entire scene—the modernist architecture, the open-air lifestyle, the common enjoyment of art—makes visual the idea of “Culture Beneath the Pines,” a tagline which the Idyllwild Arts Foundation first used in the previous year's program guide. “During the summer months,” the brochure told readers, “you will find yourself at the hub of a growing cultural center in Idyllwild.” The brochure offered the prospect of “intimate programs” at the Bowman Art Center “with Tahquitz Peak as a backdrop and a canopy of stars overhead,” as a quintessential example of the ISOMATA experience.⁸²

Beginning with *Music from the Mountains* and continuing through the program guides of the 1950s, the Idyllwild Arts Foundation sold ISOMATA as both an answer to postwar problems and a vehicle for postwar ambitions. By pitching the need for the school against a backdrop of urban dysfunction, the Foundation aligned ISOMATA with a wider discourse which was transforming the spatial and social fabric of Southern California, and which would ultimately give rise to a conservative politics in the expanding white suburbs. At the same time, the Foundation sold ISOMATA in progressive terms as an antidote to the growing force of

⁸² “Lillian Steuber in recital in the Bowman Art Center Lounge” (photograph), *This is Idyllwild* program guide (Idyllwild Arts Foundation, 1953), box 91, folder 3, USC Thornton School of Music Records; “Culture Beneath the Pines,” ISOMATA program guide, 1952 (Idyllwild Arts Foundation, 1952), box 91, folder 6, USC Thornton School of Music Records.

consumerism and scientism in American life, even as the school's therapeutic language signaled tacit acceptance of the economic and political status quo. These messages were further complicated and enriched by the Foundation's tendency, evident by the early 1950s, to portray the school as both a landscape of tradition and a landscape of modernity. In short, Max Krone and the Idyllwild Arts Foundation sold ISOMATA by communicating a varied set of values and symbols. Combining the rhetoric of a modern, progressive arts schools and a rustic summer camp, they positioned their school as a forward-looking but tradition-bound institution that could enhance the lives of Southern Californians and positively influence the future development of the entire region.

By 1962, the year USC assumed formal ownership of ISOMATA, Max Krone was confident in his assessment that the school had succeeded "as a source of inspiration, relaxation and recreation for all of southern California."⁸³ Enrollment had increased every year since 1950 and the school's programming had grown more diverse in keeping with popular demand. In 1956 alone, ISOMATA offered programs in high school band and orchestra, children's programs in art and outdoor recreation, and adult programs in painting, ceramics, folk and chamber music, folk and modern dance, and outdoor education.⁸⁴ ISOMATA's dynamism was not lost on commentators. *Holiday* magazine praised the school's "flexibility," noting that its curriculum ranged from "an intensive college-level review of 18th Century choral music to a careful analysis of a local beaver dam." The *Riverside Press-Enterprise* had much the same takeaway, writing

⁸³ Krone is quoted in "Art for Man's Sake on USC's Mountain Campus," *USC Alumni Review*, October 1962, box 91, folder 5, USC Thornton School of Music Records.

⁸⁴ "Adult Vacationers' Program, Summer 1956" (brochure), Idyllwild Arts Foundation, Krone Library.

that ISOMATA “is no art colony. The program is so flexible that it offers as much opportunity for advancement to children interested in modeling clay as it does to the intense, dedicated college-level music student.”⁸⁵ This praise complemented the Idyllwild Arts Foundation’s increasingly robust promotional efforts. In the 1956, the Foundation distributed over 85,000 brochures and announcements, and its mailing list had grown to include over 2,000 families.⁸⁶ Their addresses—from Pacific Palisades to Claremont, Pasadena to Anaheim, Palos Verdes to farther afield in San Diego and Sacramento—provide a window into the demographics of ISOMATA’s mostly white, middle- and upper-middle class student body. In these growing and affluent pockets of postwar California, ISOMATA’s hybrid message of art, nature, therapy, rusticity, community, and modernity found its target audience.

⁸⁵ Ray Duncan, “California’s Musical Mountain,” *Holiday* magazine, 1954, USC Thornton School of Music Records 92.2; Helen Jackson, “Unique Summer School Amid Nature’s Splendor,” *Riverside Press-Enterprise*, July 8, 1956.

⁸⁶ Max T. Krone, “President’s Report, 1955-1956,” Idyllwild Arts Foundation, box 91, folder 9, USC Thornton School of Music Records.

Chapter 2

“This cross section of the world”: Negotiating Multiculturalism at Idyllwild

On the afternoon of August 28, 1949, the Idyllwild Arts Foundation celebrated the end of the inaugural concert season at the Atwater Kent Bowl with a program entitled “International Folk Music and Dances.” As its name suggests, the program featured a survey of folk music and dance from around the world. To begin the evening, USC’s Associated Indian Students club performed several traditional songs and dances from India. They were followed by a group from Lithuania—“all working folks who dance purely for the joy of dancing”—which presented a series of folk dances from the Baltic region. The show’s final act was a local square dance troupe who delighted the crowd with lively hoedowns from the rural South and West. According to the concert program, the twilight showcase was “an appropriate one to end a season which has been devoted both to good music and to an understanding of our neighbors around the world.” Indeed, just a few weeks earlier, the ISOMATA bowl had been the scene of a wide-ranging program of Latin American folk songs and dance. Now, as the campus’s first summer concert season ended, the Idyllwild Arts Foundation expressed its gratitude to “our friends from India, our Lithuanian friends and neighbors from Los Angeles, and our friends and neighbors from San Jacinto, who are presenting this cross section of the world in dance for us this afternoon.” ISOMATA’s leaders would repeat this sentiment often in the coming years as their school became a forum for an eclectic kind of multicultural exchange.⁸⁷

No less than their belief in the therapeutic power of art and nature, the Krones’ early efforts at Idyllwild were guided by a liberal desire for world peace and intercultural dialogue in

⁸⁷ Idyllwild Arts Foundation, “Some notes about today’s performers and their dances” (concert program), August 28, 1949, box 91, folder 5, USC Thornton School of Music Records.

the wake of World War II. To that end, they selected a diverse group of artists and musicians to serve on ISOMATA's early advisory board, among them the Danish actor Jean Hersholt, the Spanish conductor José Iturbi, the Hungarian composer Miklos Rozsa, and two of America's most celebrated Jewish musicians, Benny Goodman and Yehudi Menuhin. However symbolic, the makeup of the advisory board underscored the Krones' commitment to achieving, in their words, "international understanding through the arts." As they wrote in a 1954 statement of values, "We believe that the arts, and especially music at the folk level, provide one of the best media for promoting friendship and understanding among people." Adding that "music comes closest to providing a common language of any of man's activities," the Krones emphasized ISOMATA's commitment to giving "foreign and American students" the opportunity to "know each other better by living, playing, and working together."⁸⁸

From 1949 until the mid-1950s, this internationalist ethos provided the primary framework in which art and music were taught and enjoyed at ISOMATA. This chapter explores how the school's programs in arts and crafts, folk music, and dance helped to make ISOMATA a forum for multicultural education in Southern California, where students could explore everything from Native American music and lore to the folk songs and dances of Europe, Asia, and Latin America. Yet ISOMATA's cultural internationalism also functioned within a Cold War frame of reference. Not only did Max Krone contribute to the government's Cold War cultural diplomacy as an envoy to the Middle East and Europe, but the school facilitated cultural exchange programs in keeping with the government's objective of an integrated American bloc.

⁸⁸ "We Believe," ISOMATA brochure (Idyllwild: Idyllwild Arts Foundation, 1954), box 91, folder 1, USC Thornton School of Music Records.

This chapter also explores the impact which the folk music revival of the late 1950s had on ISOMATA's multicultural programming. A period of unprecedented popular interest in traditional American and ethnic music, the folk revival also resuscitated the style of protest singing which had thrived in the pro-labor milieu of the Great Depression era. The revival brought to ISOMATA several left-leaning folk musicians—chief among them Pete Seeger—for whom multiculturalism served a broader belief in the political possibilities of art. The revivalists expanded ISOMATA's folk music program to include a diverse group of traditional musicians and politically minded folksingers, while harnessing the participatory ethos of the civil rights movement. In the process, they encountered tension with Max Krone and ISOMATA's earlier paradigm of internationalism. Ultimately, the folk revival period illuminates key elements of continuity and divergence between Cold War internationalism and the more robust multiculturalism which arose in the 1960s.

Singing Songs of Many Lands

ISOMATA's cultural internationalism reflected Americans' growing interest in the musical cultures of foreign countries at midcentury. This interest emerged in full force after World War II, but its stirrings were evident earlier in the century. Music educators, for one, had begun integrating ethnic folk dance and music into their curricula in the 1920s, often with the aid of early recordings of European and American folk songs. The aftermath of World War I gave new impetus to this development, as schools became newly fixated on promoting intercultural understanding.⁸⁹ Franklin Roosevelt's Good Neighbor Policy of the 1930s, which fostered unprecedented cultural exchange with Latin American countries, further expanded Americans'

⁸⁹ Terese M. Volk, *Music, Education, and Multiculturalism: Foundations and Principles* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 49.

cultural awareness, while the New Deal arts projects brought new attention to regional and ethnic American folk traditions. By the early 1940s, as Patricia Campbell has pointed out, the so-called “songs of many lands” phenomenon was well established in American music curricula, at educators’ conferences, in concert halls, and on radio.⁹⁰

These developments were a prelude to the watershed of World War II, when intense media coverage of world events combined with the travels of American servicemen and women to engender a new consciousness of the global community. The theme of international understanding gained new urgency among educators and policymakers after 1945, as evidenced by the creation of educational and cultural exchange programs in the Fulbright Act (1946) and the Smith-Mundt Act (1948), and by American participation in the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). As Terese Volk notes, postwar educators saw their mission as building “a *new* world, a changed society”—one which valued “world citizenship, cooperation, and interdependence among nations.”⁹¹ Their commitment was mirrored in the realm of popular music, where left-leaning folk groups like the Weavers achieved national popularity in the early 1950s with an eclectic repertoire of American and foreign folk songs.⁹² Though their commercial viability was shortly extinguished by the rising tide of anti-communism, the Weavers’ success testified to the growing American openness to the sounds of other cultures in the early postwar period.

⁹⁰ Patricia Shehan Campbell, "Music Education in a Time of Cultural Transformation." *Music Educators Journal* 89, no. 1 (2002): 29.

⁹¹ Volk, *Music, Education, and Multiculturalism*, 55.

⁹² Robert Cantwell, *When We Were Good* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), 34.

The growing national interest in foreign cultures aligned with Max and Beatrice Krone's pedagogical interests and liberal political orientation. Beginning in the early 1940s, they authored or co-authored dozens of song collections for students which focused on music from around the world. These included such titles as *Songs of Norway and Denmark* (1941), *Spanish and Latin American Songs* (1942), *Inter-Americana: Folksongs of Our Southern Neighbors* (1945), and *Songs and Stories of the American Indian* (1949), as well as the book series *Together We Sing* and *A World in Tune*.⁹³ Beatrice Krone was also the co-author of *Literature and Music as Resources for Social Studies* (1955), a pedagogical guide for integrating folksongs into social studies curricula. The Krones saw their books as part of a broad project of intercultural exploration and understanding. As Beatrice Krone told the *Riverside Daily Press* in 1955, "By singing songs of other people in the world, we discover that basically we're all pretty much alike. Songs several hundred years old generally reveal the same interests among people as those today."⁹⁴ For the Krones, folk songs thus served the twofold purpose of facilitating musical instruction while also broadening students' cultural horizons.

The Krones' faith in intercultural learning aligned them with the emerging field of Cold War cultural diplomacy. In the late 1940s, the United States government began to focus increasing attention on cultural exchange programs as a cornerstone of its anti-Soviet foreign policy. As Liping Bu writes, exchange programs became "an important instrument to project favorable images of the United States [abroad], symbolized by its abundance of material wealth,

⁹³ The Krones' various books were published by the Neil A. Kjos Music Company and the Follett Publishing Company, both of Illinois. They enjoyed wide circulation as school textbooks.

⁹⁴ Ernest Maxwell, "Their Desire for a World in Tune Speeds Music Output," *Riverside Daily Press*, January 3, 1955.

consumer culture, technological know-how, individual freedom, and political democracy.” Critically, as Bu further notes, the word “exchange” was often a misnomer, given the unilateral character of American cultural diplomacy in the Cold War.⁹⁵ In 1951, Max Krone became an active participant in the government’s cultural exchange efforts. Selected by the State Department as part of President Truman’s Point Four program of technical assistance, Krone led a three-month education film mission to Turkey and Iran. Besides showing films to rural audiences on topics including American agriculture, democracy, sanitation, and health—the trip’s primary purpose—Krone also gathered folk songs, procured native instruments, and took note of local political developments. Upon his return to California, reporters eagerly relayed his impression that “Iran [was] headed for revolution.” Noting the desperate poverty of the Iranian peasant class, Krone told the Riverside *Independent Enterprise* that “Russia apparently senses the situation, and realizes that all they need to do is to sit back and let the pot boil over” until a pro-Soviet faction took power. In a talk to the Kiwanis Club of Beaumont, he similarly warned that “75-80 percent of the teachers in [Iranian] secondary and higher institutions were Communists,” making the country a “fertile field for reds.” Krone scarcely mentioned the outcome of the educational film mission, or of his song-gathering endeavors.⁹⁶

Max Krone’s direct involvement with Cold War cultural diplomacy appears to have diminished in the mid-1950s, when ISOMATA was experiencing its greatest growth spurt.

⁹⁵ Liping Bu. “Educational Exchange and Cultural Diplomacy in the Cold War,” *Journal of American Studies* 33, no. 3 (1999): 394.

⁹⁶ For Krone in Iran and Turkey, see “Idyllwild Arts Foundation Head to Lead Turkish Mission,” unknown newspaper, c. 1950 (see author for copy); “Arts Educator Thinks Iran Revolution Near,” *Riverside Independent Enterprise*, June 6, 1951; “C of C Group Bandies Gerwing’s Dual Role,” *Riverside Independent Enterprise*, July 18, 1951; “Dr. Krone Points Out Fertile Field for Reds in Iran,” *Riverside Independent Enterprise*, August 2, 1951.

During this period, however, the State Department began circulating ISOMATA brochures in Europe as part of an effort to show, according to *Holiday* magazine, “how free enterprise makes music.”⁹⁷ Then, in 1958, Krone was chosen by the Army to direct the music program for U.S. Dependent Schools in Europe. In this position, Krone was tasked with organizing a curriculum for more than 50,000 students across France, Italy, and Germany, most of whom were children of American military and civilian personnel. Prior to assuming his post, Krone told the *Riverside Daily Press* that he looked forward to tackling “the problems of international good will...through music.” He also planned to use the trip to engage European artists and students to visit ISOMATA in the future. As with his previous travels to the Middle East, however, Krone’s impressions from his year of Army service dwelled mostly on Cold War political dynamics. In an *Idyllwild Town Crier* retrospective of his trip, Krone noted with amazement how, with American help, Germans “not living behind the Iron Curtain...have created from World War II ruins completely modern and bustling cities.” By contrast, East Germany was “a sad sight.” “Wherever America has poured in support,” Krone continued, “the Russians have drained it away so that East Germany is depressing and stark.” Still, Krone came away from his tour of duty filled with optimism about America’s role in fostering international understanding through music and art. Recalling his experience of conducting a choir of German and American children, he described how the performance gave the European audience “a basis for belief in America, in youth, and in their own future.” He recalled, too, how “European children [were] proudly

⁹⁷ For State Department and ISOMATA brochures, see Duncan, “California’s Musical Mountain,” *Holiday* magazine, July 1954.

wearing cowboy outfits”—a further sign, in his eyes, of a promising new era of American-led cultural exchange.⁹⁸

Krone’s cultural diplomacy may have taken him far from Idyllwild, but the animating belief in global friendship was a cornerstone of ISOMATA’s workshops and special events beginning in the school’s inaugural summer of 1950. That July, for instance, the school celebrated the completion of its new Birchard Music Studio with a symposium entitled “Better Human Relations Through the Arts.”⁹⁹ The day included demonstrations of Native American arts and crafts, an orchestral performance of “Music of the Peoples of the World,” and a keynote address on “The Arts and World Understanding.” One faculty member later wrote that the day’s festivities “gave new inspiration and renewed determination to help build a better tomorrow through the medium of the arts.”¹⁰⁰ Other special events that summer included “Coachella Valley Day,” featuring a performance by the “international balladeers” Marais and Miranda; an American Indian dance program by several of ISOMATA’s Native arts instructors; and concerts of Mexican and South Asian folk music by noted experts. In the ensuing years, international folk music and dance programs became standard fare at ISOMATA. In 1953, for instance, an intensive, week-long “Idyllwild Folk Dance Workshop and Festival” provided integrated training

⁹⁸ For Krone’s Army service in Europe, see “Idyllwild Arts President Gets Position in Europe,” *Riverside Daily Press*, July 16, 1958; “Friendship Through Music: Dr. Krone Reports European Army Tour,” *Idyllwild Town Crier*, October 2, 1959. Krone’s pre-plans were also discussed in an Idyllwild Arts Foundation memo concerning tenth anniversary activities at ISOMATA. See “Planning Committee Report: ISOMATA Tenth Anniversary,” box 91, folder 10, USC Thornton School of Music Records.

⁹⁹ “Birchard Music Studio Dedication Program,” Idyllwild Arts Foundation, July 22, 1950, box 8, folder 2, USC Thornton School of Music Records.

¹⁰⁰ Rolla Foley to Raymond Kendall, July 24, 1950, box 8, folder 2, USC Thornton School of Music Records.

in various folk and national dances, folk arts and crafts, and folk music. Several weeks later, this program was followed by the more academically oriented “Music and International Understanding” program, featuring performance and discussion of music from Japan, the Philippines, Afghanistan, Turkey, and Ecuador.¹⁰¹ Notably, these were all countries which either supported the United States or remained neutral in the Cold War struggle. Idyllwild may have been an unlikely outpost for American foreign policy, but ISOMATA’s programs formed a cultural corollary to the animating political objective of U.S. policymakers: namely, the simultaneous containment of the Soviet Union and integration of the capitalist “free world.”¹⁰²

In 1951, with the aid of the State Department, the Idyllwild Arts Foundation began facilitating exchange visits for foreign students. In doing so, the Foundation joined a growing network of government, foundation, and university efforts to foster foreign exchange programs for students, academics, technical experts, and artists. As part of these exchanges, Liping Bu writes, foreign students “were encouraged to learn about American values and democratic ideals while Americans abroad were encouraged to spread American concepts and ways of life.” Moreover, the government considered arts and culture exchanges to be especially valuable, as they countered foreign perceptions that the United States was a country devoid of culture.¹⁰³ By all indications, ISOMATA’s exchanges succeeded in achieving these aims.

In 1951, the Kronos hosted a group of foreign students for a Thanksgiving potluck in Idyllwild, several of whom would return to Idyllwild for the next summer’s folk music and dance

¹⁰¹ For folk dance and music conferences, see *This is Idyllwild*, 1953 program guide, Idyllwild Arts Foundation, box 91, folder 3, USC Thornton School of Music Records.

¹⁰² Christina Klein, *Cold War Orientalism: Asia in the Middlebrow Imagination, 1945-1961* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 25.

¹⁰³ Bu, “Educational Exchange and Cultural Diplomacy in the Cold War,” 396, 402.

programs. Hailing from Holland, Denmark, Norway, Korea, Iran, Ceylon, and Afghanistan, the students celebrated their first Thanksgiving meal at the Krone home, followed by an “international potluck” at the Idyllwild Community Church the following night. In his unique style, the *Town Crier*’s Ernie Maxwell described the potluck as a night of community spirit and shared enlightenment. The students “were unanimous in their praise of American kindness and generosity,” Maxwell noted, and all concurred that “the Marshall Plan has done more to stem communism than any other force.” After a post-dinner performance of Afghani music, the group “stepped out into the crisp night with soft flakes of snow drifting down.” Maxwell registered the symbolism of the moment, concluding that “the snow seemed like a benediction to an evening of joy among friends from around the world.”¹⁰⁴ With this event still fresh in mind, Krone and the Foundation soon began developing plans for an International Youth Chorus at ISOMATA, to be comprised of students from over a dozen countries.¹⁰⁵

The Krones also made sure that their brand of cultural internationalism inflected daily life at Idyllwild. They accomplished this primarily through the ISOMATA songbook, an 80-page booklet entitled *Songs of the Out of Doors* which drew from their published song collections. First published in the early 1950s, the songbook was used to facilitate Beatrice Krone’s famous morning sings, as well as during group hikes and evening campfires.¹⁰⁶ The songbook’s 118 songs were drawn from more than 20 countries and included Anglo-American, Native American,

¹⁰⁴ “International Potluck,” Idyllwild *Town Crier*, December 3, 1951.

¹⁰⁵ “International Chorus Planned,” Riverside *Daily Press*, March 12, 1952.

¹⁰⁶ Former ISOMATA instructor Carol Merrill-Mirsky recalls the ISOMATA songbook as a touchstone across ISOMATA’s various programs. The songbook’s use was particularly pronounced during the junior and senior high school orchestra programs. Group singing occurred after breakfast (Beatrice Krone’s morning sing), during hikes, and at other gatherings throughout day. Carol Merrill-Mirsky, email to author, March 1, 2018.

European, African, Asian, Latin American, and Hawaiian folk songs. In their foreword to the ISOMATA songbook, the Krones instructed students on how to enliven the songs with “authentic” arrangements. For the Native American song “Arise,” for instance, they advised students “to recreate a complete Indian sunrise ceremony using flute, tom-tom, Indian rattles and dance, with an echo in the distance.” Likewise, the “gay abandon” of Latin American songs could be achieved with shakers, sticks, scrapers, and drums, while the “unique nature of much Oriental music” could be captured with the use of “drum, woodblock, sticks and triangle...one instrument per beat.” Ultimately, whether students followed these suggestions or merely enjoyed the melodies, the Krones insisted that singing these songs would help to “unite us all in closer fellowship through the common bond of music.”¹⁰⁷

Commentators took note of ISOMATA’s idealistic brand of cultural internationalism. In 1951, the *Los Angeles Times* reported how Idyllwild students were learning that folk music was a “universal language.” Whether singing songs from Europe, Asia, or America, the *Times* noted, ISOMATA’s students were discovering that many melodies, dances, and themes—namely those of “love, joy and security”—were “familiar to all nationalities.”¹⁰⁸ The Riverside *Independent Enterprise* similarly commented, “Students and faculty at [ISOMATA] now realize that people everywhere are concerned with essentially the same interests”¹⁰⁹ Still, the ISOMATA songbook’s

¹⁰⁷ *ISOMATA: Songs of the Out of Doors* (Idyllwild Arts Foundation: Idyllwild, California, date unknown). For scans of the songbook, contact author.

¹⁰⁸ “Universal Language of Folk Music Taught at Idyllwild Mountain School,” *Los Angeles Times*, July 31, 1951.

¹⁰⁹ Ernest Maxwell, “Artists Discover Music Crosses National, Cultural Boundaries,” Riverside *Independent Enterprise*, July 19, 1951. Given the close chronology and similar language between the *Independent Enterprise* and *Los Angeles Times* stories, it seems likely that Ernie Maxwell wrote the *Times* piece as well.

approach to foreign musical forms—like the rest of the Krones’ published catalogue—was not without detractors. In a journal review of their book series *Together We Sing*, for instance, the music educator Sylvesta Wassum argued that the Krones’ Anglo-American style of arrangement was “so free that it loses the characteristics inherent” in other musical cultures. Regarding their adaptation of a Japanese song, for example, she cautioned that “the introduction and suggested rhythmic pattern are neither authentic nor helpful in approaching a true Japanese idiom.” What was lacking, Wassum concluded, was a sincere commitment to the cultural specificity of the foreign folk materials, especially since “we are constantly becoming more aware of the small geographical area which the western world comprises.”¹¹⁰ Though confined somewhat narrowly to questions of arrangement, Wassum’s criticism of *Together We Sing* underscores how, even as they sought to expand students’ cultural horizons, the Krones tended to collapse cultural idiosyncrasies into an easily replicable, Anglo-American musical style—a “universal language” which served the objective of global friendship and understanding.

The promotional film *The Ballad of Idyllwild*, produced in 1951, literalized the internationalist vision of the ISOMATA songbook. The film’s plot follows a day in the life of the school, accentuating the good health, curiosity, and community spirit of ISOMATA students as they participate in music and art classes, leisure time at the swimming pool, and a spirited evening campfire session. More fundamentally, however, *The Ballad of Idyllwild* showcases the opportunities afforded to these students—all of whom are young and white—to partake in cross-cultural learning experiences. From the film’s opening sequence, in which the folk duo Marais and Miranda hold forth on the Anglo-American ballad tradition, to its ending, in which a young

¹¹⁰ Sylvesta Wassum, “Together We Sing” (review), *Journal of Research in Music Education* 4, no. 1 (1956): 67-68.

man in Swiss-style dress plays an authentic Alpine Horn, the film depicts ISOMATA as a place where students could literally inhabit an array of world cultures. One group of students learns weaves Native American textiles under a grove of trees; another performs a German folk dance in costume; another sits around a sun-dappled boulder and listens transfixed to a Spanish flamenco-style guitarist. The film's most visually and thematically striking scene features an ensemble performance of a Japanese song, likely the same example of "Oriental" music that appeared in the ISOMATA songbook. Dressed in kimonos and affixed with straw hats, parasols, wood blocks, and gongs, the students sit in a circle amid a darkened theater lit by paper lanterns. Their awkward, self-conscious performance underscores how ISOMATA's style of cultural internationalism was often indistinguishable from exoticism and racialized fantasy.¹¹¹

If its predecessor, *Music from the Mountains*, situated ISOMATA within a discourse of modernity and nostalgia specific to postwar Southern California, *The Ballad of Idyllwild* centered the school in a national context of Cold War cultural politics. The film accomplished this by modeling white Americans' eager embrace of foreign cultures. As historian Christina Klein has argued in *Cold War Orientalism*, cultural products which stressed the racial tolerance and goodwill of Americans offered legitimation for the consensus surrounding the United States' global hegemony in the Cold War. As the United States sought to integrate non-Communist Asia into the "free" world, Klein argues, popular cultural texts like Rodgers and Hammerstein's musicals *The King and I* and *South Pacific* provided positive examples of cross-cultural interaction for American audiences. These texts portrayed Americans living and working in Asia

¹¹¹ *The Ballad of Idyllwild* (1952), directed by Robert M. Krone, produced by the Idyllwild Arts Foundation and the University of Southern California, USC Hefner Moving Image Archive, accessed May 13, 2019, <https://vimeo.com/294233874>. See Appendix item 2 for still images.

as paragons of racial tolerance and understanding, while also rendering Asian characters “familiar, articulate, and approachable” for American viewers.¹¹² In the process, they “presented the Cold War as something that ordinary Americans could take part in,” and animated the country’s Cold War quest for a multinational and integrated anti-Soviet bloc.¹¹³

Klein’s concept of Cold War orientalism helps to illuminate the political resonance of *The Ballad of Idyllwild* and ISOMATA’s early multiculturalism more broadly. By emphasizing the ease, enjoyment, and exotic appeal of cross-cultural learning, ISOMATA gave its students a forum in which to partake of the integrationist vision of America’s Cold War. Moreover, by welcoming foreign exchange students into the Idyllwild community, the school’s leaders substantiated their liberal, internationalist values without fundamentally altering the homogeneity of ISOMATA’s student body. The fact that these exchanges inspired some Idyllwild families to adopt Asian children—an act, in Klein’s view, which signified the apotheosis of postwar internationalism—only underscores how ISOMATA affirmed a Cold War conception of the free world as a benevolent “American family.”¹¹⁴

Of course, historical actors were never entirely unified around the objectives of Cold War cultural policy. As Liping Bu points out, the U.S. government embraced cultural exchange to advance short-term foreign policy aims. By contrast, educators were more interested in long-term educational goals and often chafed at the government’s overt propaganda efforts.¹¹⁵ Though

¹¹² Klein, *Cold War Orientalism*, 132.

¹¹³ Klein, *Cold War Orientalism*, 7.

¹¹⁴ For Idyllwild adoptions, see “Family Album,” *Idyllwild Town Crier*, March 27, 1953. See Klein, *Cold War Orientalism*, 153.

¹¹⁵ Bu, “Educational Exchange and Cultural Diplomacy in the Cold War,” 409.

more research is necessary to clarify the scope and motives of Max Krone's cultural diplomacy, it is clear from the existing evidence that his commitment to cultural exchange was, like his wife's, grounded in both an earnest interest in cultural diversity and an idealistic faith in the benefits of intercultural exchange. If the ISOMATA songbook and *The Ballad of Idyllwild* showed a tendency to simplify and exoticize foreign cultures, the Krones also provided an early platform for serious practitioners of multicultural education. Chief among this group was the Chickasaw artist, educator, and activist Ataloo (née Mary Stone McClendon), a pioneer in the field of Native American arts education who was a driving force behind ISOMATA's programming throughout the 1950s.¹¹⁶ Based in the conviction that "it is not too late to educate both the Indian and the white man to the intrinsic values in Indian art and culture," Ataloo's contributions to ISOMATA highlight the progressive potential of Cold War cultural exchange.¹¹⁷ Indeed, as Christina Klein has noted, Cold War internationalism accommodated multiple visions of foreign engagement, some of which reflected a "genuine utopian impulse" toward global unity and cultural equity.¹¹⁸

Ultimately, ISOMATA's brand of cultural internationalism was a dynamic reflection of liberals' engagement in the early Cold War. Even as Max Krone and the Idyllwild Arts

¹¹⁶ Among other distinctions, Ataloo was a founder of the Indian studies program at Bacone College in Oklahoma, a guiding force in the formation of the Institute of American Indian Arts at Santa Fe, a fellow of the Rockefeller Foundation, and a member of the NAACP and League of Women Voters. See Lisa Kay Neuman, "The Dream of an Indian Princess," in *Indian Play: Indigenous Identities at Bacone College* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2013); Garnet Wind and S. Matthew DeSpain. "'As Tall in Her Moccasins as These Sequoias Will Grow on Mother Earth': The Life of Ataloo," *The Journal of Chickasaw History and Culture* 11, no. 2 (2008): 14-43.

¹¹⁷ Ataloo is quoted in Neuman, *Indian Play*, 95.

¹¹⁸ Klein, *Cold War Orientalism*, 9.

Foundation participated in government-sponsored cultural diplomacy and exchange, they shaped an arts school which in many ways previewed the more robust multiculturalism of the post-1960s era. Perhaps nobody exemplified the school's mixed impulses better than Ataloo, who in addition to her teaching and advocacy work served as a field representative for the Center for International Students and Visitors. In this position, she worked to facilitate the exchange programs which were central to the U.S. the government's foreign policy of integration.¹¹⁹ Ataloo's work encapsulated the idealism at the core of ISOMATA's internationalism, while also demonstrating how seamlessly that idealism could function within the ideological framework of America's Cold War.

Making Way for the Folk Revival

By the mid-1950s, the stirrings of a new cultural movement were evident at ISOMATA. What would soon be known as the folk revival—a surge of public interest in American roots music which reached critical mass in the late 1950s and early 1960s—took root in the fertile soil of ISOMATA's Cold War internationalism. As folk music gained unprecedented popularity among middle-class youths, Max Krone and the Idyllwild Arts Foundation moved to expand the depth and breadth of ISOMATA's folk music programming. The folksinger and Idyllwild instructor Sam Hinton later described the exploding demand for folk music classes as “more than ISOMATA knew how to handle.” Hinton's association with the school illustrates his point. In the school's first two summers of 1950-1951, he visited ISOMATA as a weekend performer. By 1952, he was “doing more teaching, and within a few years we had a regular two-week college-

¹¹⁹ Ataloo's work on behalf of the Center for International Students and Visitors was described by the *Town Crier*. See “Exchange Students for Weekend,” *Idyllwild Town Crier*, September 4, 1953.

credit course going, with special activities on weekends.” Soon, “these sessions grew to mammoth proportions” featuring some of the folk revival’s central figures, most notably Pete Seeger. For Hinton, the growth and popularity of ISOMATA’s folk offerings showed “that [there] was an audience out there waiting for folk music.”¹²⁰ For ISOMATA’s leaders, however, the folk revival signified a new paradigm of multicultural learning—one which would reveal the fault lines of their liberal politics.

Historians agree that the period beginning in 1958, when the Kingston Trio’s version of the Appalachian murder ballad “Tom Dooley” became a national sensation, and lasting through the mid-1960s, was a time of significant and sustained popular interest in folk music. Spurred by grassroots musical activity, an expanded commercial market for folk records, and the parallel energy of the civil rights movement, the folk revival twined American youth culture to, in Robert Cantwell’s words, “a rich and energetic tradition of folksong scholarship, collection and performance” which musicologists, antiquarians, and left-wing organizers had nurtured since the 1930s. Historian Neil Rosenberg has called the period of 1958-1965 the “great boom,” a time when folk music moved “from the margins into the center” of American culture and, in the process, inspired countless young people to learn folk songs and instruments, buy folk records, affect new styles of speech and dress, and seek out communities of like-minded folk enthusiasts.¹²¹ The causes of the revival were myriad, but most historians offer variations of a premise articulated by Gillian Mitchell: namely, that the revival represented a “longing for community and cultural identity in a sterile, mass culture-driven world.” To the revival’s mostly

¹²⁰ Sam Hinton to Ronald Cohen, April 13, 1993, box 1, folder 2, Sam Hinton Papers, UC San Diego.

¹²¹ Neil Rosenberg, “Introduction,” in *Transforming Tradition: Folk Music Revivals Examined*, ed. Neil Rosenberg (Urbana, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 5.

young, white, and middle-class participants, the eclectic sounds of African American spirituals, Appalachian string bands, calypso, blues, and ethnic European music—and the cultural cohesion which these forms were seen to represent—held out the promise of a more authentic and traditionally grounded life.¹²²

As a cultural and political formation, the folk revival of the late 1950s built on the work of earlier folksingers, particularly those associated with the left-wing urban folk scene of the 1930s-40s. As part of the broad Left culture of the Popular Front, early revivalists like Woody Guthrie embraced what Ronald Cohen describes as “traditional rural songs and melodies with a radical twist” for raising class consciousness among American workers.¹²³ As David Dunaway writes, these first-wave revivalists, many of whom were members of the Communist Party, “wanted to sing their way to action, to build labor unions, to remind people the world over that they were brothers and sisters.”¹²⁴ Amid the anticommunist hysteria of the McCarthy era, however, folksingers’ left-wing orientation left them vulnerable to red-baiting attacks. Harangued by right-wing crusaders and singled out by blacklists, folk musicians and organizations largely retreated from the public spotlight. Paradoxically, as Robert Cantwell points out, the McCarthyite suppression of the first-wave revivalists enabled the great boom of

¹²² Gillian A.M. Mitchell, “Visions of Diversity: Cultural Pluralism and the Nation in the Folk Music Revival Movement of the United States and Canada, 1958–65,” *Journal of American Studies* 40, no. 3 (2006): 606-608.

¹²³ Ronald D. Cohen, *Rainbow Quest: The Folk Music Revival and American Society, 1940-1970* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2002), 26.

¹²⁴ David King Dunaway, “Introduction,” in David King Dunaway and Molly Beer, *Singing Out: An Oral History of America’s Folk Music Revivals* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 2.

the late 1950s “to flourish as it did, outside any sectarian context,” while still retaining a fundamentally liberal orientation.¹²⁵

As the foregoing discussion makes clear, however, cultural internationalism provided a legitimating framework in which some folk musicians could continue to teach and perform in the early 1950s, provided they eschewed overtly political content. This was precisely the type of folksinger favored by the Krones. As dean of the USC School of Music in the 1940s, Krone had invited the Kentucky ballad singer John Jacob Niles to perform on campus. A political conservative, Niles also had a background in classical music—another characteristic which Krone evidently looked for in folksingers.¹²⁶ As Robert Cantwell points out, Niles was among a group of performers who attempted to “elevate the folksong socially” to the concert stage. Quite unlike the participatory form of performance used by left-wing folksingers, Niles’s style was “merely an articulation of polite culture in the name of folksong.”¹²⁷ Several years later, Krone and the Idyllwild Arts Foundation would build ISOMATA’s early folk music programs around a similar act, the self-styled “balladeers” Marais and Miranda. Their backgrounds and repertoire aligned well with the Krones’ internationalism. Josef Marais was a white South African and classically trained violinist; he met his wife Miranda, a Dutch-born classical pianist, while both were working in radio for the Office of War Information during World War II. By the early 1950s, they had become popular recording artists with their own show on NBC Radio. Fastidiously apolitical, Marais and Miranda also performed folk music in a quasi-classical style. They dressed formally,

¹²⁵ Cantwell, *When We Were Good*, 22.

¹²⁶ For a description of Niles’s USC visit, see Alderman, *We Build a School of Music*, 200.

¹²⁷ Cantwell, *When We Were Good*, 259.

planned their programs carefully, and disdained the proletarian folk style typified by Woody Guthrie.¹²⁸

As a commercially successful act, Marais and Miranda were a feather in the cap of the Idyllwild Arts Foundation during ISOMATA's formative phase. More importantly, their classically influenced and politically safe approach to folk music was consistent with Max Krone's pedagogical philosophy and musical tastes. Former participants in ISOMATA's folk music weekends have recalled the widespread impression that Krone—a choral director and orchestra conductor at heart—looked down upon folk music as a simple and unsophisticated art form.¹²⁹ Of course, these opinions represent only part of the truth—Krone had been publishing folksong collections since the early 1940s, after all—but they do shed light on the biases which informed the nature of ISOMATA's early folk programs. Terese Volk has described, for instance, how the cultural internationalism of music educators at midcentury was often grounded in a conception of ethnic folk songs as primitive “stages in the development of classical or art music.”¹³⁰ This dynamic was at least partly evident at ISOMATA, particularly in the oversimplified arrangements of the ISOMATA songbook.

Whether or not Max Krone was personally convinced of folk music's intrinsic value, his embrace of Marais and Miranda indicated a related but more important bias. That is, Krone saw folk music as political only insofar as it served the consensus of Cold War internationalism; he

¹²⁸ For more on Marais and Miranda, see Cohen, *Rainbow Quest*, 76, 88-89; Sam Hinton, “Marais and Miranda: Biographical Information,” undated contribution to Marais and Miranda biographical website, accessed July 25, 2019, <http://mosaic.echonyc.com/~jhh1/MandM/bio.html>.

¹²⁹ Pat Chapman and Ellen Chase, interview with author, November 8, 2018, Mt. Baldy, California.

¹³⁰ Volk, *Music, Education, and Multiculturalism*, 45.

demonstrated no interest in engaging left-aligned folksingers until the late 1950s. In this way, Krone and ISOMATA endorsed the increasingly narrow parameters of what counted for authentic art in the early Cold War period. Historian Grace Elizabeth Hale has pointed out how, amid the conservative turn of the late 1940s and the art world's concurrent rejection of the social realist style of the Popular Front, art critics, patrons, and teachers developed new frameworks for judging artistic merit and authenticity. Whether celebrating the abstract canvases of Jackson Pollock or the Pueblo pottery of New Mexico, Hale argues, the art world advanced a view that authentic art "did not...have a politics. Instead, true artistic and intellectual achievement provided evidence of either individual genius or some pre-modern, anti-commercial, and collective spirit." As Hale further notes, this ideology did not empty art of political meaning, but rather promoted an "anti-popular aesthetic in service to another form of politics, an anticommunist and indeed broadly anti-leftist liberalism."¹³¹ In this way, the emerging consensus over artistic authenticity resembled the parallel rise of life adjustment pedagogy in education, as discussed in the previous chapter. As with their adoption of life adjustment and its rhetoric of therapy, the Krones' alliance with the steadfastly apolitical Marais and Miranda underscores their determination to situate ISOMATA within the cultural and political mainstream of the early Cold War.

It was thus a fundamental shift of ISOMATA's cultural politics when, in 1956, Max Krone invited Pete Seeger to join ISOMATA's folk music faculty for the upcoming summer.

¹³¹ Grace Elizabeth Hale, "The Union of Folk Music and Left Politics," In *Liberty and Justice for All?: Rethinking Politics in Cold War America*, ed. Kathleen G. Donohue (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2012), 245. An incisive study of modern art as a rejection of New Deal social democracy can be found in Erika Doss, "The Art of Cultural Politics: From Regionalism to Abstract Expressionism," in Lary May, *Recasting America*. In a related vein, Greg Barnhisel has explored modern art's function as a Cold War symbol of American freedom and ingenuity. See Greg Barnhisel, *Cold War Modernists: Art, Literature, and American Cultural Diplomacy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015).

Seeger's central role in stewarding the folk revival has been well documented elsewhere.¹³² It suffices to say, as Grace Elizabeth Hale notes, that Seeger was the foremost advocate of "the union of authentic art and left politics" during the difficult years of the early Cold War.¹³³ An alumni of the Popular Front folk scene of the 1940s, Seeger tried to keep the dream of a singing Left alive through the McCarthy era. This proved difficult; he was blacklisted for suspected ties to the Communist Party and called before the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) in 1955. Seeger's refusal to cooperate with HUAC resulted in legal troubles—and a cloud over his name—which would linger into the 1960s.¹³⁴ Still, he kept his career alive through what he called "cultural guerilla tactics" during the mid-1950s, bringing his politically resonant folk music to friendly college campuses, leftist groups, and summer camps. In 1956, he played a benefit for Martin Luther King and the Montgomery Improvement Association in support of their bus boycott, presaging the fusion of folk music and civil rights activism which would emerge in the early 1960s.¹³⁵

For Max Krone, the invitation to Seeger represented a surprising willingness to court political risk, though his motives in bringing Seeger to Idyllwild are not altogether clear. To be sure, though his Cold War cultural diplomacy underscored his own anticommunist credentials, Krone was still a liberal and may have found HUAC's smearing of Seeger contemptible. Beyond

¹³² See, for instance, Cantwell, "He Shall Overcome," in *When We Were Good*; and David King Dunaway, *How Can I Keep from Singing: Pete Seeger* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1981).

¹³³ Hale, "The Union of Folk Music and Left Politics," 245.

¹³⁴ Cohen, *Rainbow Quest*, 177.

¹³⁵ Hale, "The Union of Folk Music and Left Politics," 262.

this, Krone may have registered the fact that, by 1956, the high tide of anticommunist hysteria had passed. The Korean War was over, the anticommunist crusader Senator Joseph McCarthy had been stripped of his political power, and internal tensions over the perceived threat of a Communist insurgency had eased.¹³⁶ Quite likely, Krone also viewed the still-popular Seeger as a lucrative draw for new students. After all, some early critics had attributed Krone's rise to institutional power at USC to his business, networking, and fundraising skills.¹³⁷ Likewise, former ISOMATA folk music students have stated their belief that Krone's decision to expand ISOMATA's folk music offerings was merely an opportunistic response to growing demand.¹³⁸ Whatever the case, Krone's initial entreaty to Seeger only went so far. After a warm exchange of correspondence in late 1956 in which Krone stressed his "faith" in Seeger, Krone abruptly rescinded Seeger's appointment in April of 1957. Writing that "the whole matter has been taken out of my hands," Krone informed Seeger that USC would not permit the hiring of any individual who refused to comply with a congressional committee and wished Seeger luck in clearing his name. Seeger replied with what he called the most political letter he had ever written, a spirited defense of his Americanism and a summation of his belief that "the primary need of our generation is to bring people together." The episode demonstrated how, despite signs

¹³⁶ Cohen, *Rainbow Quest*, 87.

¹³⁷ The wife of composer and USC professor Ernest Toch called Krone "a tremendous businessman for the university" whose status as a "money bringer" made him a "taboo" and afforded him enormous power at USC. Krone withdrew the faculty appointment of Toch's husband following a dispute over book royalties. See Dorothy Crawford, *A Windfall of Musicians: Hitler's Émigrés and Exiles in Southern California* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 148.

¹³⁸ Pat Chapman and Ellen Chase, interview with author.

of a thaw, the institutionalization of Cold War anticommunism had outlasted the height of the postwar red scare.¹³⁹

Seeger would finally make it to Idyllwild in the summer of 1958, in what was a sure sign that the folk revival had arrived in full force at ISOMATA. That year saw a dramatic expansion of the school's folk music offerings, which spanned a two-week college credit course and consecutive weekend festivals open to the public. This template was followed over the next several years, as the folk music faculty expanded to include an eclectic mix of traditional artists and activist-performers steeped in the world of the civil rights movement. The traditionalists included stalwarts of African American roots music such as Sonny Terry, Brownie McGhee, and Bessie Jones's Georgia Sea Island Singers, while Jean Ritchie, the New Lost City Ramblers, Frank Hamilton, and others offered specialization in the music of Appalachia. Among ISOMATA's activist-performers were not only Seeger but Guy Carawan, the music director and song leader of the Highlander Folk School in Tennessee—a hotbed of labor and later, civil rights organizing—and Bernice Johnson Reagon, a founding member of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) Freedom Singers. Seeger, Carawan, and Reagon formed a direct link between ISOMATA and the civil rights struggle, while the traditionalist faculty members satisfied the growing demand for musical and cultural authenticity in the folk revival. Collectively, they recreated in Idyllwild the folk revival's dual identity as both a tradition-based and deeply contemporary movement.

¹³⁹ Pete Seeger to Max Krone, December 10, 1956, box 1, folder 12, Sam Hinton Papers; Max Krone to Pete Seeger, April 25, 1957, box 1, folder 12, Sam Hinton Papers. Seeger's letter is collected in *Pete Seeger: In His Own Words*, ed. Rob Rosenthal and Sam Rosenthal (New York: Routledge, 2015), 156-158.

The 1960 program provides a snapshot of how the folk revival manifested at ISOMATA. Moses Asch, the founder of the seminal *Folkways* record label, moderated a workshop on traditional folksong. Argentine folksinger Elena Paz taught a class on Spanish-language songs. Bluesmen Brownie McGhee and Sonny Terry taught workshops in blues guitar and blues harmonica, respectively. Their contributions dovetailed with familiar ISOMATA rituals such as Beatrice Krone's morning sing, evening campfire sessions, and Ataloa's sunset program of Native American folkways at the nearby Inspiration Point overlook.¹⁴⁰ Former ISOMATA students have described the folk revival environment as one of "intense excitement" and participatory learning, where traditional musicians eagerly shared their knowledge and where songs of the civil rights movement punctuated spontaneous song-swapping sessions and lively evening concerts.¹⁴¹ The experience was evidently no less impactful for members of the folk music faculty. The folklorist Bess Lomax Hawes, a veteran of the Popular Front folk scene of the 1940s and a pioneer of African American folklore studies, has described ISOMATA's folk revival programs as a rare opportunity to connect with a diverse group of like-minded peers.¹⁴²

¹⁴⁰ Idyllwild Arts Foundation, folk music weekend program, July 8-10, 1960, box 3, folder 12, Sam Hinton Papers.

¹⁴¹ Robin Steere Axworthy, phone interview with author, February 22, 2019; Ellen Chase, interview with author, February 22, 2019, Claremont, CA; Pat Chapman and Ellen Chase, interview with author, November 8, 2018, Mt. Baldy, CA.

¹⁴² Bess Lomax Hawes was the daughter of John Lomax and sister of Alan Lomax, both pioneering folklorists who did much to catalyze popular interest in American folk music in the twentieth century. Whereas her father and brother concentrated primarily on song collecting, Bess Lomax focused her efforts on teaching and performance. With Pete Seeger and Woody Guthrie, she was a member of the New York City-based Almanac Singers in the 1940s. The Almanac Singers pioneered the use of folk music for union organizing and political activism. Lomax Hawes would later embark on a distinguished career in public folklore. In 1977, she joined the National Endowment for the Arts as the first director of its Folk Arts Program. For more on Bess Lomax Hawes, see Cohen, *Rainbow Quest*. For more on John and Alan Lomax,

Hawes recalled how the faculty members enjoyed “their own private revival” at ISOMATA by “exchanging songs, gossip and family news, guitar licks and fiddle tunings, ideas and tall tales, teaching and performing when and as they wanted to.” For the folk music teachers, ISOMATA was “a once-in-a-lifetime chance to have some time—one week, even two weeks—to breathe deeply and refuel their artistic engines.”¹⁴³ The sense of dynamic community and cultural transmission which Hawes described underscores how far ISOMATA had come from the staid stylings and concert-based format of the school’s earlier approach to folk music and multicultural learning.

The folk revivalists found an eager audience at ISOMATA, as evidenced by the yearly growth of enrollment in the school’s folk music program in the late 1950s and early 1960s.¹⁴⁴ In the process, they made ISOMATA a key terminus of the revival in Southern California, which counted some twenty folk music clubs and coffeehouses by 1962.¹⁴⁵ Nevertheless, the revivalists never felt entirely at ease operating in Max Krone’s Idyllwild. This is evident from a series of letters exchanged between Pete Seeger, Bess Lomax Hawes, and Sam Hinton, who was the chief organizing force of ISOMATA’s folk programs in the folk revival era. Following their participation in the 1959 season, Seeger and Hawes expressed doubts about teaching at Idyllwild

see Benjamin Filene, *Romancing the Folk: Public Memory & American Roots Music* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000).

¹⁴³ Bess Lomax Hawes, *Sing it Pretty: A Memoir* (Urbana, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 88.

¹⁴⁴ For enrollment figures, see “ISOMATA Tells Detailed Plans for Folk Musics,” *Desert Sun*, June 6, 1960.

¹⁴⁵ Robert Shelton, “The Folks Out West,” *New York Times*, July 22, 1962. See also Cohen, *Rainbow Quest*, 153-154.

again. In Hawes's words, "only congenial company makes the irritating regulations and the constant pressure [of ISOMATA] worthwhile." Hawes likely referred to ISOMATA's regimented schedule and Max Krone's influence over class planning.¹⁴⁶ In response to Hawes's reservations, Sam Hinton acknowledged that the reality of Idyllwild often failed to live up to "the idea of Idyllwild, and its possibilities." He intervened with Max Krone to rectify Hawes's and Seeger's qualms about the lack of creative control afforded to the faculty, as well as their protests over the school's low pay.¹⁴⁷ Though Seeger and Hawes returned to Idyllwild in subsequent summers—a sign that Krone addressed the remuneration issue—it is not clear whether the critical question of the folk music faculty's creative freedom was ever resolved.

Ultimately, the tensions between Max Krone and the revivalists—though something of a tempest in a teapot—were indicative of how their values and approach to multicultural education differed from those of Max Krone. This issue is clarified by an anecdote recounted by former ISOMATA instructor Carol Merrill-Mirsky, who taught folk music at Idyllwild in the early 1960s. Merrill-Mirsky recalled leading the school's morning sing one day during the height of the civil rights movement. Inspired by the music of the movement, she led participants in a round of African American spirituals. Max Krone, who had been watching the program from nearby, approached Merrill-Mirsky afterwards and registered his disapproval, instructing that "she

¹⁴⁶ See Pete Seeger to Sam Hinton, September 10, 1960; Bess Lomax Hawes to Pete Seeger, undated letter (September 1960), box 3, folder 12, Sam Hinton Papers. Hawes's reference to "irritating regulations" were confirmed by Ellen Chase, a former ISOMATA student and daughter of Dorothy Chase, who served alongside Hawes on the folk music faculty. According to Ellen Chase, the regimented nature of ISOMATA was a constant source of annoyance for the folk music faculty, as was the perceived elitism of Max Krone. Ellen Chase, interview with author, February 22, 2019.

¹⁴⁷ Sam Hinton to Pete Seeger, September 27, 1960; Sam Hinton to Max Krone, September 27, 1960, box 3, folder 12, Sam Hinton Papers.

should plan [her] songs to be more balanced.”¹⁴⁸ Beyond emphasizing Krone’s somewhat imperious style of leadership, Merrill-Mirsky’s story underscores Krone’s view, so pervasive in ISOMATA’s earlier internationalist phase, that folk music programs should provide a careful survey of foreign cultures. By contrast, a politically salient session of black gospel music encapsulated the revivalists’ commitment to the union of art and politics and signified a clear departure from the “songs of many lands” approach of the late 1940s and early 1950s.

Still, there were elements of continuity between ISOMATA’s early internationalism and the school’s late-1950s embrace of the folk revival. For one thing, members of the early faculty remained—most notably Marais and Miranda but also Ataloa and Beatrice Krone—and by all evidence collaborated willingly with the incoming revivalists.¹⁴⁹ Moreover, the instructors to whom Max Krone afforded the greatest influence over the revival-era folk program—Sam Hinton, Bess Lomax Hawes, and Pete Seeger—had connections to academia which aligned with ISOMATA’s institutional profile. In his varied professional life, Hinton was an oceanographer, administrator, and lecturer in folklore at the University of California San Diego; Hawes was a professor of folklore and anthropology at San Fernando State College (now California State University Northridge); and Seeger, though not a professional scholar himself, was deeply versed in academic folklore as the son of the celebrated musicologist Charles Seeger. Straddling the worlds of folklore, performance, and organizing, they served as go-betweens who connected the

¹⁴⁸ Carol Merrill-Mirsky, phone interview with author, February 22, 2019.

¹⁴⁹ The revivalists did consider Marais and Miranda an oddity of a bygone era, as was made clear in multiple oral history interviews with the author. The *New York Times* folk music critic Robert Shelton, a key chronicler of the national revival, similarly dismissed the duo and their music as marred by “too much coyness, [and] too much conscious charm.” See Robert Shelton, “The Chad Mitchell Trio Without Chad Mitchell,” *New York Times*, December 19, 1965.

Krones' world of fine arts and academia with the revival's world of musical activism and grassroots engagement. Finally, while the folk revivalists diverged in crucial ways from ISOMATA's Cold War internationalism—particularly in their concern for musical authenticity and connection to movement politics—they shared the basic commitment to cultural diversity which had defined ISOMATA's programming from the beginning.¹⁵⁰

Folk music did not last forever at ISOMATA. As more local colleges adopted folklore studies into their curricula, it became harder for the Idyllwild Arts Foundation to compete with lower fees and shorter distances. After 1964, the Foundation decided it was no longer financially feasible to continue the two-week folk festivals which had become central to the school's identity since the late 1950s.¹⁵¹ At the same time, the folk revival itself began to lose the unitary force of a cultural movement. As Bruce Jackson writes, the revival did not die “so much as it became ordinary,” as its concern for ethnic traditions became institutionalized in the public sector and its fusion of art and politics was subsumed into the burgeoning counterculture.¹⁵² Nonetheless, the revival impacted ISOMATA and its students in ways that reverberated in ensuing years. Former students have emphasized how ISOMATA's folk revival programs began

¹⁵⁰ The issue of cultural authenticity—defined in terms of who had the right to sing traditional ethnic folk songs—was hotly debated and ultimately never resolved during the folk revival. Sam Hinton opined on the subject in a widely read essay in the journal *Western Folklore*, which was later reprinted in the influential volume *The American Folk Scene: Dimensions of the Folksong Revival*, edited by De Durk and Poulin (1967). See Sam Hinton, "The Singer of Folk Songs and His Conscience," *Western Folklore* 14, no. 3 (1955): 170-173.

¹⁵¹ The denouement of folk music at Idyllwild is described in an unofficial ISOMATA history which, though unattributed, appears to have been written by (or in close consultation with) Bee Krone. See “1960,” unofficial ISOMATA history, Idyllwild Arts Foundation, Krone Library.

¹⁵² Bruce Jackson, “The Folksong Revival,” in *Transforming Tradition*, ed. Neil Rosenberg, 79.

their lifelong engagement with cultural preservation at the local level. Among them, Ernest Siva, a member of the Morongo Band of Mission Indians, recounts how Pete Seeger inspired him to preserve and promote the traditional music of the Cahuilla people. Siva's Cahuilla Bird Singers group became a touchstone of Idyllwild's Native arts programs into the twenty-first century, continuing the rich and complicated legacy of cultural exchange born out of ISOMATA's Cold War internationalism.¹⁵³

¹⁵³ Ernest Siva, interview with author, February 27, 2019, Banning, CA; see also David Wells, Joe Baker, and Ernest Siva, "Native American Arts at ISOMATA 1950-2013," YouTube video, 1:31, posted by Idyllwild Arts, August 19, 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wLPkgHq0xq0>.

Conclusion

A School for the Sputnik Age

Writing retrospectively about the genesis of ISOMATA, Max Krone explained in 1958 that the men and women of the Idyllwild Arts Foundation had been motivated by the troubling question of “what happens to man’s mind and soul in a ‘Sputnik age.’” Fearing the growing “pressures and tensions” which the average Southern Californian faced “as the tempo of his life has speeded up, the competition for a decreasing number of jobs becomes stronger, and the number of people around him has increased,” the Foundation endeavored to create a new kind of educational institution—one which emphasized “art for man’s sake rather than art for art’s sake”—as an answer to the worrying drift of postwar life. ISOMATA, Krone continued, was conceived to provide “medicine for body, mind, and soul,” where the individual’s experience of art, nature, and community living would establish a healthier “pattern of living for the rest of the year—[and] even for the rest of one’s life.” Citing the school’s decade-long trajectory of growth, educational innovation, and community involvement, Krone concluded that the Foundation’s founding vision had been realized. Thanks to the efforts of its “public minded citizens,” ISOMATA had become “an increasingly precious heritage of Southern California.”¹⁵⁴

Certainly, ISOMATA’s successes were as real as they were varied. The school nurtured a vibrant arts colony with a national profile, modeled the possibilities of California modern design, and impacted students with a program in multicultural education which was largely ahead of its time. Whether these successes should surprise us is another question. For though a hundred miles

¹⁵⁴ Max T. Krone, “The Arts and the Out-of-Doors,” reprinted from the *Palm Springs Villager*, April 1958, box 91, folder 10, USC Thornton School of Music Records.

removed from the pulsing heart of Los Angeles, ISOMATA could not help but reflect the broader transformation of both the region and the nation in the postwar period. Whether in its dual promise of modern planning and rustic community or its evolving form of multicultural education, ISOMATA manifested the future-oriented culture of the postwar moment and catered to a white, middle-class audience in search of new experiences of art and music, foreign cultures, authentic community, leisure, and nature. The fact that these aims were often contradictory suggests an ambivalence toward postwar realities and underscores why historians have characterized the 1950s as both an age of consensus and an age of anxiety.

This thesis has argued that ISOMATA's promotional rhetoric and multicultural programs reflected liberal values which nonetheless fit within the social and cultural mainstream of the postwar period. The school's founders were steeped in the experimental tradition of progressive education, but they framed the school's mission in terms that resonated with the anti-urban sentiment and consensus politics of the postwar period. As its promotional efforts evolved, the Idyllwild Arts Foundation also sold the school as both a landscape of tradition and a landscape of modernity. Insofar as their efforts revealed a tension between antimodern nostalgia and contemporary boosterism, that tension was a productive one. By invoking an idealized past and an exciting future, ISOMATA's promotional rhetoric invited students to see the school as a place where they could variously claim a romantic heritage, enjoy the fruits of modern design and expertise, pursue outdoor recreation, and join a community of like-minded artists and learners.

At the core of ISOMATA's varied appeal was the opportunity the school afforded for multicultural engagement and exploration. Like many educators, the school's leaders embraced liberal internationalism in response to the divisions and destruction of World War II. By making ISOMATA a forum for Native American and foreign cultures, Max Krone and the Idyllwild Arts

Foundation enacted their faith in a future of mutual understanding and goodwill while giving the school's white students access to other cultures. Yet as became clear from Max Krone's own cultural diplomacy in Europe and the Middle East, ISOMATA's internationalism also fit within the emerging ideology of the Cold War. By promoting a simplified view of foreign cultures and facilitating the State Department's policy of foreign exchange, ISOMATA gave its students a way to participate in the Cold War quest for an integrated but American-led free world.

Ultimately, the school's framework of Cold War internationalism was unsettled by the politics of the folk music revival of the late 1950s. With their commitment to cultural authenticity and belief in the union of art and politics, the folk revivalists challenged both the style and substance of ISOMATA's early internationalism. In the process, the revivalists imprinted the values of cultural preservation and musical activism on a generation of ISOMATA students.

For the sake of analysis, the dynamics discussed in the foregoing two chapters have been addressed as separate facets of ISOMATA's history. In reality, however, the school's promotional rhetoric and evolving multiculturalism were intertwined aspects of a broader cultural and political orientation. For instance, quite apart from the context of the Cold War and folk revival, the school's embrace of ethnic folk music reinforced the idea of ISOMATA as a landscape of tradition. Likewise, by emphasizing ISOMATA's modern design and credentials as "an example of California's leadership in graceful living," the school's leaders echoed the ideology of capitalist modernization which both animated and legitimated America's global hegemony in the Cold War era. By straddling local, national, and global contexts, ISOMATA's history suggests a heretofore understudied synergy between the spatial expansion of postwar Southern California and the American imaginary of Cold War integration. That synergy presents a promising focus of future inquiry.

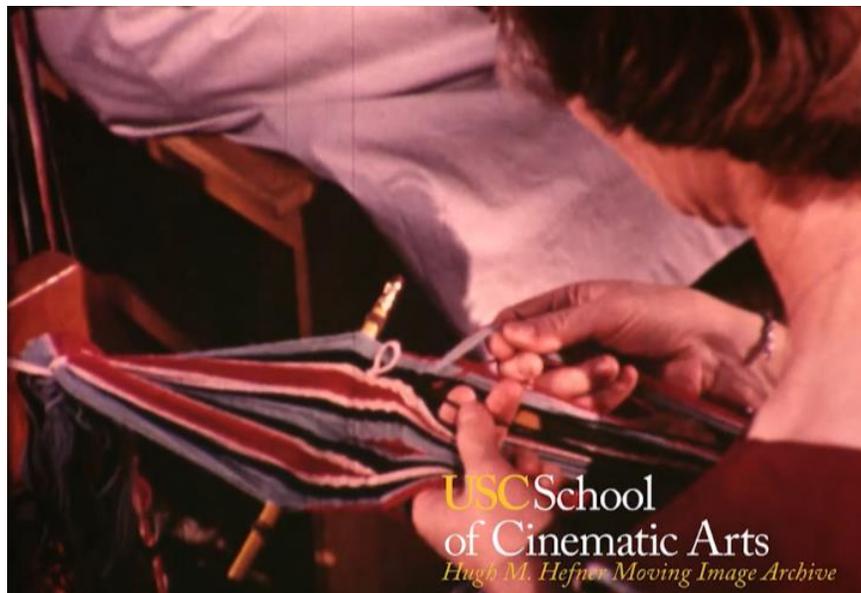
Appendix

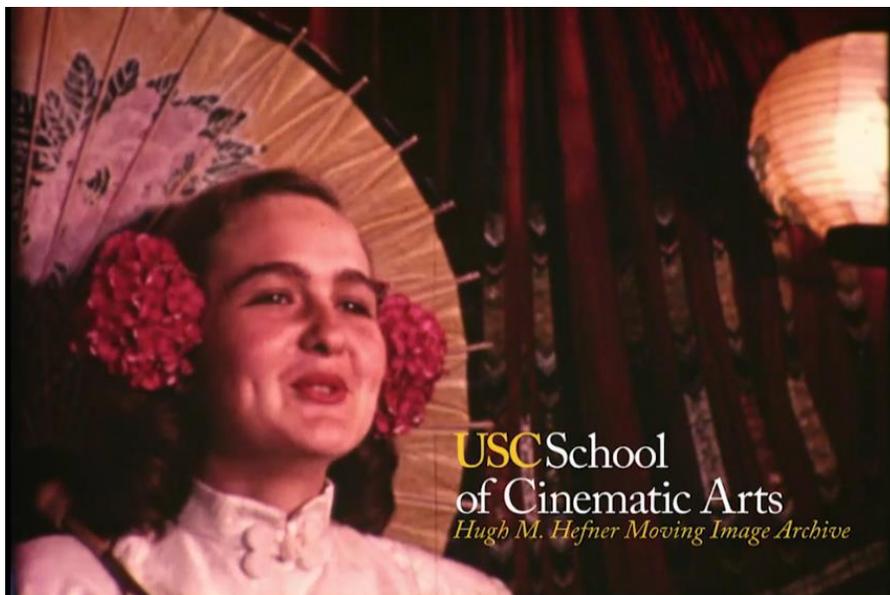
1. *Music from the Mountains* (1947), directed by Herbert Albert and Wilbur T. Blume. The film contrasts urban crowding and modern anxiety with the picturesque beauty and recreational possibilities of Idyllwild. Reproduced with permission from the USC Hefner Moving Image Archive.





3. *The Ballad of Idyllwild* (1951), directed by Robert Krone. The film presents a survey of ISOMATA's cultural internationalism, including Native American textile weaving, German dancing, and an exoticized performance of Japanese music. Reproduced with permission from the USC Hefner Moving Image Archive.





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