

Los Angeles Guitar Quartet

American Guitar Masters

Wednesday, September 25, 2019
7:30 pm



Photo: Jiro Schneider



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Los Angeles Guitar Quartet

JOHN DEARMAN
MATTHEW GREIF
WILLIAM KANENGISER
SCOTT TENNANT

Wednesday, September 25, 2019, at 7:30 pm
Hancher Auditorium, The University of Iowa

American Guitar Masters

- | | |
|---|--|
| <i>Icarus</i> (1972) | Ralph Towner (b. 1940); arr. W. Kanengiser |
| <i>Twang</i> (1997) | Bryan Johanson (b. 1951) |
| <i>Chorale</i> (2012, rev. 2017) | Frederic Hand (b. 1947) |
| <i>Three Country Tunes</i> | |
| • “Blue Ocean Echo”/“Country Gentleman” (1964) | Chet Atkins (1924–2001);
arr. W. Kanengiser |
| • “Shenandoah” | Traditional;
arr. Andrew York (b. 1958) |
| • “B and B” (inspired by Blake and Bromberg) (2003) | Andrew York |

INTERMISSION

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <i>Aerial Boundaries</i> (1984) | Michael Hedges (1953–1997); arr. M. Greif |
| <i>Hidden Realm of Light</i> (2006) | Andrew York |
| <i>Alki Point</i> (2011) | Kevin Callahan (b. 1958) |
| <i>Road to the Sun</i> (2016) | Pat Metheny (b. 1954) |

Pat Metheny's *Road to the Sun* was commissioned through the International Arts Foundation, Inc. for the Los Angeles Guitar Quartet by the lead commissioners: Newman Center for the Performing Arts/University of Denver and Krannert Center for the Performing Arts, College of Fine + Applied Arts, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Additional support provided by co-commissioners: Lobero Theater Foundation, Hopkins Center at Dartmouth College, 92nd Street Y, Performing Arts Series at Johnson County Community College, and Soka University of America/Soka Performing Arts Center.

Program subject to change.

Frank Salomon Associates, Inc., manages LAGQ
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EVENT PARTNERS

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Photo: Jiro Schneider

About the Artists

For over three decades on the concert stage, the members of the Grammy® Award-winning **LOS ANGELES GUITAR QUARTET** have continually set the standard for expression and virtuosity among guitar ensembles, while perennially redefining themselves in their musical explorations. Popularly known as the LAGQ, the Los Angeles Guitar Quartet is recognized as one of America's premier instrumental ensembles. As one of the most charismatic groups performing today, their critically acclaimed transcriptions of concert masterworks provide a fresh look at the music of the past, while their interpretations of works from the contemporary and world-music realms continually break new ground.

The LAGQ has given recitals in many of the world's top venues, including Chicago's Orchestra Hall, London's Wigmore Hall and Southbank Centre, Tokyo Opera City, and New York's Lincoln Center and Carnegie Hall. They have toured extensively in Europe and Asia, where they were featured at the Hong Kong, Singapore, and Manila International Arts Festivals, and have performed with orchestra and in recital in Australia.

Highlights of the LAGQ's 2018-19 season include making their Philadelphia Orchestra debut performing Rodrigo's *Concierto Andaluz*, a work they have previously performed for the composer's official centenary in Spain, as well as for a *Live with the Boston Pops* television feature, and to a crowd of thousands at the Hollywood Bowl. In addition they tour to venues in California, Iowa, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, Tennessee, Texas, and return to New York's fabled Town Hall continuing to premiere *Road to the Sun*, the new work by guitar legend Pat Metheny, commissioned specifically for them.

Among past seasons' highlights are the world-premiere performance and recording of the Metheny, and the reprisal of their beloved *Nutcracker Suite* for the holidays. Continuing to grow the repertoire for guitar quartet and guitar orchestra, the LAGQ toured *By Chants* throughout Arizona to audience and critical acclaim. This new work, based on Native American themes, was written for them by composer and longtime LAGQ member, Andrew York. Their 2017-18 season also included tours to China, Norway, and Sweden.

Additional highlights include LAGQ's role as Artistic Directors of the 2015 Laguna Beach Music Festival. As the focal point of the festival, they treated audiences to four days of performances, outreach activities, and celebrations, including a joint concert with the LA Percussion Quartet in which the combined octet premiered a new work by composer Jeff Holmes; a *Latin Romance* Valentine's program with mezzo-soprano Janelle DeStefano and L.A. Flamenco; and a closing performance of *The Ingenious Gentleman Don Quixote: Words and Music from the Time of Cervantes* with guest artist, Firesign Theatre veteran and voiceover actor, Phil Proctor. This last work was captured live at St Louis's historic Sheldon Concert Hall and released on DVD in March 2012. This multi-disciplinary project was originally developed and premiered in collaboration with the British actor John Cleese in Santa Barbara.

Recent seasons have focused on many works written specifically for the LAGQ as well as collaborative works such as *Interchange*, the concerto written for them by Sérgio Assad, and *SHIKI: Seasons of Japan*, a work written for them with guitar orchestra. The world-premiere performance of *SHIKI* took place as part of an extended residency in Loudoun County (VA) a few days after the one-year anniversary of the Japanese earthquake. Since the premiere in 2012, this work, inspired by and dedicated to those affected by the earthquake

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About the Artists

and tsunami, has been performed in numerous communities throughout the United States. Pushing boundaries once again, the LAGQ participated in the groundbreaking 2015 premiere of *How Little You Are* for voices and guitars, by Nico Muhly, one of today's most sought after composers. The work was hosted by Texas Performing Arts in partnership with the Austin Classical Guitar Society and Conspirare; a reprisal tour and recording with Conspirare are in the works for fall 2019.

The Telarc CD release of *Interchange* marked the LAGQ's first recording of concertos by Rodrigo and Assad, and Assad's *Interchange for Guitar Quartet and Orchestra* received a Latin Grammy® nomination for Best Classical Contemporary Composition. *Interchange* premiered at the Southwest Guitar Festival with the San Antonio Symphony in 2010 and was later recorded with the Delaware Symphony and Music Director David Amado, along with the Rodrigo *Concierto Andaluz*. Members of the quartet have also performed and recorded two works of Osvaldo Golijov with the Atlanta Symphony and at the Ojai (CA) and Ravinia (IL) festivals.

LAGQ's *Guitar Heroes*, released on Telarc, won the group their first Grammy® Award in 2005. It is a heartfelt salute to the great players who inspired the quartet, as individuals and as a group. It has received raves for its unique ability to capture the feeling and fervor of diverse musical styles such as jazz, bluegrass, rock, and flamenco. In November 2008, this recording joined those by artists such as The Who, Pink Floyd, and Dire Straits on *Sound & Vision's* "Top 10 Surround Discs of All Time." Their first Telarc CD, *LAGQ - Latin*, features their popular transcription of Bizet's *Carmen*, along with works from Chile, Cuba, and new original works by members of the quartet. This CD, which has received raves from listeners and critics alike, received a 2003 Grammy® nomination; the Super Audio CD (SACD) version won the award for "Best Made for Surround" at the First Annual Surround Music Awards. The LAGQ's release, *SPIN* (Telarc, 2006), shows yet again the group is equally at home in a wide variety of musical genres and also features several commissioned works from their collaboration with percussionist Colin Currie. *LAGQ - Brazil!* (Telarc, 2007) continues to receive raves and includes performances with singing sensation Luciana Souza. The DVD of *The Ingenious Gentleman Don Quixote* (2012) appears on the Mel Bay Artist Series, along with their first live-concert DVD. Their newest recording, *New Renaissance*, (LAGQ, 2015), is a modern take on classic works. It includes long-awaited instrumental works from *Music from the Time of Cervantes*, and new works by Bogdanović and Krouse, among others.

JOHN DEARMAN began as a self-taught guitarist, learning pieces from Chet Atkins and Segovia records, until he met and became a protégé of the Romero family. He continued his studies at the USC Thornton School of Music, where, along with William Kanengiser and Scott Tennant, he became a founding member of LAGQ and played in the historic 1981 Segovia Master Classes. In 1987, he and luthier Thomas Humphrey developed a new design for a seven-string guitar with expanded upper and lower registers, creating an instrument that has become something of a standard in modern quartet formations. A frequent teacher and judge at guitar festivals and competitions, including the Koblenz and Guitar Foundation of America Festivals, John is currently director of the Guitar Chamber Music Program at California State University, Northridge. He is a devotee of the food-truck scene in LA, collects vintage motorcycles, and still thinks he can one day become a ten-handicap in golf.



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About the Artists

MATTHEW GREIF became a member of the LAGQ in 2006. In addition to being a classical guitarist, he has an extensive background playing in other styles, such as jazz, rock, flamenco, and bluegrass. Matthew's recordings include *Permanent Transition*, which features duo improvisations with Andrew York and Dušan Bogdanović. Matthew was named Outstanding Graduate of the USC Thornton Guitar Department. He also studied jazz with Joe Diorio and Frank Potenza. Matthew currently teaches guitar at Cal State University, Dominguez Hills, in the Los Angeles area. When not playing and teaching music, Matthew likes biking, watching movies, and continuing his search for the world's best Mexican restaurant.

WILLIAM KANENGISER is an acclaimed soloist, recording artist, and professor at the USC Thornton School of Music, and one of the few classical guitarists to have won the Concert Artists Guild New York Competition. His solo recordings on the GSP label display his unique approach to programming, ranging from the music of the Old World to the Caribbean to jazz. He has earned critical acclaim for his imaginative arrangements for solo guitar and guitar quartet, and for producing two instructional videos for Hot Licks. Although Bill may be best known as the classical guitarist in the 1986 film *Crossroads*, his true talent is imitating other famous guitar players; on his DVD *Classical Guitar and Beyond* for Mel Bay Recordings, he captures the voices and personalities of 22 legends of the guitar. Besides cooking gourmet meals for his family, Bill is also irrationally fascinated with *Don Quixote* by Cervantes.

SCOTT TENNANT is celebrated as a concert artist, author, and teacher, and has been concertizing since the age of ten. In high demand as a solo artist, Scott has recorded for Delos International, GHA Recordings, and Guitar Co-Op labels. His playing has been featured in such films as *Joe versus the Volcano* and *Strangely in Love*. The author of many books and articles on guitar playing, his best-selling book and video series *Pumping Nylon*—a technical handbook for the classical guitarist—has reached cult status. He is an Associate Professor at the USC Thornton School of Music and Master Teacher at the Pasadena Conservatory of Music. When Scott isn't playing, teaching, or listening to music (mainly Renaissance, Baroque, Celtic, and Reggae), he is firmly committed to brewing the perfect cup of espresso, is fascinated by strange bicycles, and maintains a unique Asian sword collection.



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Program Notes

By William Kanengiser

Celebrating nearly four decades playing together, the Los Angeles Guitar Quartet has established itself as America's most innovative classical guitar ensemble. As a tribute to the many artists who inspired them along the way, LAGQ has crafted this program entitled *American Guitar Masters*.

RALPH TOWNER is a multitalented composer and instrumentalist, most admired for his unique blending of jazz, folk, and early-music influences in the seminal group Oregon. When Oregon recorded his classic tune *Icarus* in the early '70s, it became an instant anthem for the folk-rock movement. William Kanengiser's homage to the fingerstyle hero infuses the original Towner melody with the bossa-nova infused music from the film *Black Orpheus*, morphing it into a hybrid "Black Icarus." The piece's Brazilian flavor showcases some of LAGQ's signature extended effects, including imitating the cuica (produced by plucking the string above the nut) and other percussion, and leaves room for some free improvisation by Matt Greif.

BRYAN JOHANSON is a stunningly prolific composer, able to deftly traverse musical territory from nearly every period and style. He is especially gifted at arranging and composing for guitar quartet, having written a number of works for LAGQ (*On All Fours*, *Pluck, Strum and Hammer*, and *Let's Be Frank*) and countless works for his own Oregon Guitar Quartet. *Twang* was written to unapologetically evoke the rock-and-roll essence of the guitar, with specific nods to funk, blues, and surf music. Featuring a driving set of chords over a twangy open E string, the piece features angular guitar licks traded off in call-and-response fashion, punctuated by bluesy string bends. This gives way to a lyrical pizzicato section and short fugal passages before the four guitars return to strumming away on the opening thrumming chords.

FREDERIC HAND is a Grammy-nominated composer and sought-after guitarist, currently on the faculty of the Mannes College of Music in Manhattan. His compositional style freely mixes Baroque, Americana, and jazz styles into a lyrical and harmonically rich palette, and his intimate knowledge of the guitar draws a full sonority from the instrument. In his *Chorale*, Hand turns the guitar quartet into a plucked version of a vocal a capella group; the seeming simplicity of the piece belies the difficulty of four guitars moving with the freedom and spaciousness of a chorus. Hand writes of his piece, "*Chorale* was originally commissioned by the New York City Classical Guitar Society for the New York City Guitar Orchestra in 2012. It was re-imagined for guitar quartet in this new version for the Los Angeles Guitar Quartet. Based on a simple theme of three notes ascending in whole steps, *Chorale* is inspired by the Renaissance and Baroque choral music that I listened to in my youth. Although I've integrated some of my favorite jazz harmonies and rhythms into the fabric of the music, I feel that, at its core, it very much has an 'early music' sensibility."

In a set of *Three Country Tunes*, LAGQ's love of traditional American styles comes to the fore. It begins with an homage to the legendary Nashville guitarist Chet Atkins. William Kanengiser combined two classic Atkins tunes, "Blue Ocean Echo" and "Country Gentleman," into a new setting for four guitars. Mimicking the effect Chet used on his recording of "Blue Ocean," he turns the quartet into a giant Echo-plex: the guitarists pass notes back and forth, reverberating across the group. This moves into a setting of "Country Gentlemen"—an obvious choice given that it was Chet's personal anthem. It has a distinctly Hawaiian flavor in its B section, for which the LAGQ echo machine is turned off and bottleneck slides emerge to imitate Hawaiian lap guitar.

Program Notes

Former LAGQ member **ANDREW YORK** arranged the classic American folk tune “Shenandoah” for LAGQ several years before he actually joined the group. Having grown up near the Shenandoah Valley, Andrew knew the piece well and adapted it in his own original style. Opening in a haunting minimalist setting, the tune reveals itself gradually, unfolding into a full chorale-like treatment.

ANDREW YORK composed his piece “B and B” for the seminal 2014 recording LAGQ’s *Guitar Heroes* as a tribute to his fingerpicking guitar heroes, Norman Blake and David Bromberg. Long before *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* sparked a resurgence of interest in bluegrass music, Blake and Bromberg raised flatpicking to a high art. Drawing inspiration from the classic “Arkansas Traveler,” “B and B” calls on the guitarists to flatpick their nylon strings, imitating mandolins, banjos, steel-string guitars, and the double bass, and even add a “hum”-orous syncopated vocalization filling a pregnant pause.

To begin the second half of the concert, LAGQ presents a set of miniatures by three distinctly original American composers.

The first is by the hugely influential **MICHAEL HEDGES**, who created a revolution in steel-string guitar playing with his innovative tapping and opening creations. Revered for his virtuosity and sonic brilliance, he was also a composer of great depth and sophistication. He took the world by storm with his groundbreaking 1984 recording *Aerial Boundaries*, and Matthew Greif’s arrangement of the title track presents it faithfully, providing a brief excursion before returning to Hedges’s original. **ANDREW YORK**’s scintillating *Hidden Realm of Light* shows his brilliance as a musical colorist, with flashes of bright tones over muted pizzicato accompaniment. Freely playing with the interplay of 6/8 and 3/4, the piece has some overtly African overtones. **KEVIN CALLAHAN** is a Seattle-based composer and guitarist who freely informs his classical guitar pieces with rock, jazz, and folk elements. *Alki Point* is a wistful portrait of the historic settler’s point on the westernmost coast of Seattle, now a home to a vibrant artist colony. Opening with a plaintive melody over a polyrhythmic ostinato, the piece diverges into an insistent section over a pulsing bass rhythm. This gradually turns back into the opening material, with a distinctly jazzy coda.



Program Notes

Jazz-guitar legend and inexhaustibly creative composer **PAT METHENY** has established himself as one of America's true guitar masters. In 2017, he wrote the following comments on his piece *Road to the Sun*. "A few years back, I was flattered to have one of my compositions included in the LAGQ's Grammy-winning CD *LAGQ's Guitar Heroes*. The idea of writing a large-scale guitar quartet inspired by the talents of the LAGQ has been simmering somewhere in the back of my mind ever since. The thought of addressing the instrument in a more formal way under the auspices of what this quartet has come to embody was something I really wanted to do; it was just a matter of finding the time. After a particularly active touring schedule, I finally saw a window opening up in late 2015. With the approval of the guys and a few really useful tips from all of them, I jumped in, hoping to write a concert piece of seven to nine minutes.

"Two weeks later, I found myself with a nearly 25-minute, six-movement treatise on the potentials of a multi-guitar format, blazingly inspired by the thought of hearing these four incredible guitarists play these notes. The piece just literally poured out. In particular, I decided to really embrace the instrument and 'get under the hood' of a bunch of things that I do with the guitar that are somewhat identified with my particular style. As much as those components provided an aspirational environment to work from, I was also reaching for the narrative element of storytelling that is always the imperative and primary function for me as a musician.

"With the piece now complete, it feels like an emotional journey to me, almost a road trip in scale and scope. Somehow, through the challenge of writing for this unique platform and aiming it towards the hands of these especially talented players, I was able to get to a very personal area of what music itself is to me. As I was writing, my mind would sometimes flash to the stunning views of the trip up to Glacier National Park on the famous 'Going-to-the-Sun Road,' right after hearing LAGQ play live for the first time at a festival in Montana. I am very excited to hear what William, Scott, John, and Matt will do on their journey with this work."

© William Kanengiser





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César Pelli (1926–2019)

Hancher architect and friend

César Pelli was a brilliant architect, and it was truly an honor to have him design the current Hancher Auditorium. We were even more honored to call him our friend.

That friendship began immediately after Pelli Clark Pelli Architects was selected to design a new Hancher Auditorium following the destruction of the original building by the flooding of 2008. César felt a personal connection to Hancher's work, and he made sure to connect with members of the staff and the University of Iowa community to ensure his ideas honored Hancher's past and elevate its future. At his firm's offices in New Haven, Connecticut, he devoted an entire room to the project, and he was always happy to share his thoughts about the building with visitors.

César was delighted by the beautiful setting—often commenting that it was the most gorgeous site for which he had designed a building—and he was committed to making the most of the space. He brought the indoors and the outdoors together in the lobby spaces and rehearsal room and designed an exceptional performance space.

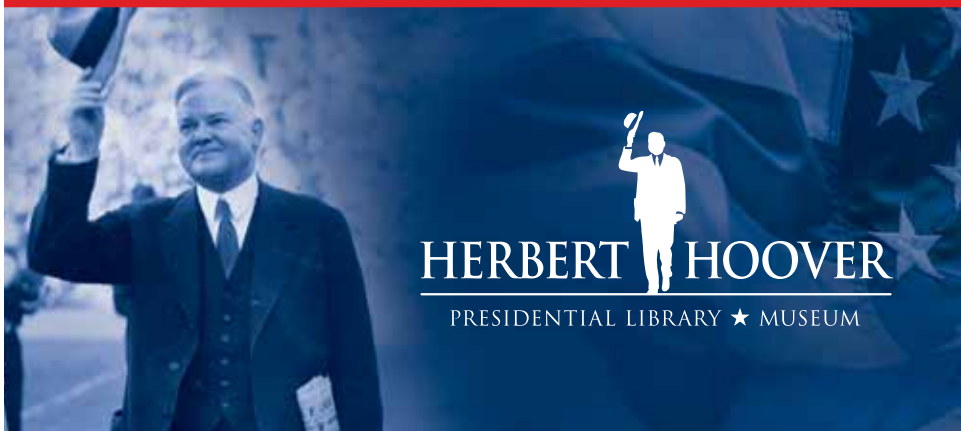
His joy for the project was palpable from beginning to end. He came to Iowa City for the major milestones of the project, including our Site Ceremony connecting the original Hancher to the new, our Leave Your Mark beam signing (after which he joined hundreds of construction workers on the as-yet-unfinished stage for lunch), and our Gala Opening. On opening night, César took the stage with Hancher Executive Director Chuck Swanson to launch a new era for Hancher. We'll always remember his words that night: "Hancher was built with love."

We are saddened to lose our friend. We are blessed to have the opportunity to serve our campus and community in a building that will always stand as a tribute to César.

Above: César Pelli at the opening night of the Hancher Auditorium, 2016 (Photo: Bill Adams)
Opposite page photos: scale model of Hancher Auditorium at Pelli Clark Pelli offices in New Haven, 2012; Hancher Executive Director Chuck Swanson (seated) looks at scale model while César Pelli (holding glass) looks on from behind, 2012; Pelli and the rest of the Pelli Clark Pelli team in front of Hancher during the Leave Your Mark event, 2014, (Photo: Miriam Alarcón Avila); Pelli and Swanson in 2016 (Photo: Bill Adams); Pelli and Swanson at opening night of the new Hancher Auditorium, 2016 (Photo: Bill Adams); exterior of Hancher Auditorium (Jeff Goldberg/Esto).

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The Vision for Hancher Auditorium: A Lifetime Commitment

This is the first in a series of essays about Virgil Hancher and his vision for the arts in general, and Hancher Auditorium in particular, at the University of Iowa. The essays will appear in playbills throughout this season and will be available on the Hancher website, as well.

By Daniel Boscaljon

Virgil Hancher was born 04 Sept 1896 in Pocahontas County near Rolfe, Iowa, and attended the University of Iowa (called the State University of Iowa [SUI] through the vast majority of his lifetime). He toyed with transferring to Northwestern, but ultimately chose to complete his undergraduate studies and his J.D. at Iowa and received a B.A. from Oxford as a Rhodes Scholar (Hancher returned to Oxford to receive an M.A. when he completed law school). The combination of these experiences in his early years—small town Iowa, SUI, Evanston, and international education—remained important for the rest of Hancher’s life. After serving on the board of the Alumni Association and as its president while an attorney in Evanston, Illinois, Hancher became the thirteenth president of the University, serving from 1940-1964. He died unexpectedly in New Delhi, India, on 30 January 1965, while working with the Ford Foundation and thus did not, as planned, return to Iowa as a part of the law school faculty.



Virgil Hancher in 1956

Hancher’s recollection of his formative years as an undergraduate offers an initial indication of why he felt an urgency to create a space for community on campus. He wrote:

There were no dormitories for men, there was no student union, there was no orientation, and there were few organized activities in which a freshman could participate...He might make friends through his classes or a church group but, by and large, he led a lonely life.

Hancher’s drive to create communities and connections is clear when considering his biography. Not only was he active in the alumni association, and a leader on multiple local, national, and international boards and organizations that ranged from education to religion, he was also relentless in forming and informing organizations that would bring humans together productively.

By 1940, when Hancher returned to Iowa, the campus had grown. Nonetheless, his vision for a space on campus where students could feel like part of a larger whole remained. Hancher sensed that SUI needed a space in which a community could come together that would stand apart from church and class as an essential part of human—and thus also student—life. He believed that the arts offer an essential contribution toward human vitality.

In the State University of Iowa Auditorium report of 1964, Earl Harper—who served as Director of the Iowa Memorial Union when that space had been the artistic heart of the campus—wrote the following as a way to summarize the “twenty years of dreaming, planning, and so many frustrations” about what became Hancher Auditorium:

Today...will be a movement fraught with great good for our community, a visible symbol of the unifying interest of the entire university family, administrators, faculty and staff members, students of every degree of advancement and of every curricular interest, alumni and friends of the university generally in a frequent coming together for those many, varied, and important interests, inspirations, pleasures, and intellectual stimulæ which only can be adequately implemented through such an auditorium, such an opera-symphony hall, such a musical theatre, such a center of convocations, lectures and parliamentary gatherings as is now authorized.

The thought that an auditorium could provide this particular sort of community seems almost quaint, given the current size and complex structure of the university system.

Yet what Harper envisions, and what Hancher Auditorium has continued to offer over the years, is a space for musing rather than amusement. While entertainment provides a way to passively pass the time, distracting audiences from their problems for a time of shared interaction, art's role is more serious. Art invites a level of engagement that harnesses mind and soul. It creates a space of wonder—not just to marvel at how humans can move or the sounds humans can make—but also a space to reflect on the meaning of our lives. Whether through speech, sound, or silence, the space of Hancher steadfastly inspires audiences to engage in meaningful experiences that provide a sense of depth—something remains memorable even if it cannot be put into words. Distractions rarely inspire more than a sense of waking up after it is done: the arts provide a sense of awakening during the performance.

This kind of community event—a coming alive around the space of creation rather than a waking up, individually, afterward—is what Hancher had in mind as a way to interrupt the tendency toward alienation and loneliness. Although Hancher felt that both religious communities and academic institutions provided important resources for a flourishing human life, he felt that the arts inspired a distinct sense of togetherness that was equally important. The Hancher Auditorium that exists today—rebuilt—is a continuation of this initial vision.

Daniel Boscaljon is a longtime contributor to arts writing in the ICR, often providing interviews, reviews, and essays on aesthetics for Little Village and The Englert as well as for Hancher. An independent scholar, teacher, and arts critic, he is committed to inviting others to incorporate wisdom and joy as part of everyday life. In addition to teaching workshops and holding free public conversations in the area, Daniel also has three current ventures including the Center for Humanist Inquiries (professional consultations), Coffee with Dan (spiritual direction and philosophical life coaching), and The Thoughtful Life (a non-profit venture that includes his "Making Space for Yourself" podcast). You can find his writing and more information about his services at danielboscaljon.com.

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