



University Playhouse staged "Caligula" (above) during last year's theatre season, with set, costumes and special effects all executed by School of Drama students. Mrs. Helen Lauterer, associate professor of drama, supervised the elaborate costuming.

The faculty of the College of Fine Arts is tending the budding artists  
with all the care of a first-rate gardener. From their efforts they can expect

## *A Few Exotic Blossoms*

By John Wagoner, '51

University Playhouse last month titillated an audience with Clair Booth Luce's play *The Women*. Students in the school of Music opened their winter series of recitals, affording an opportunity for young musicians to meet an audience. And youngsters in the School of Art displayed their latest creative efforts.

By headline standards these were not vital happenings. But to the students in the University's College of Fine Arts and the faculty which watches over them like a horticulturist tending a hotbed of plants

which will someday produce a few exotic blossoms, they were happenings of import.

Perhaps the outstanding thing about these events was that they did not smack of amateurishness. There's a good reason why amateurish performances rarely rear their heads in the College of Fine Arts' productions. A powerful antidote for the amateur virus is administered in heavy doses to students in all three divisions of the college—music, art and drama. The antidote is professional attitude.

Shortly after a student enrolls in Fine

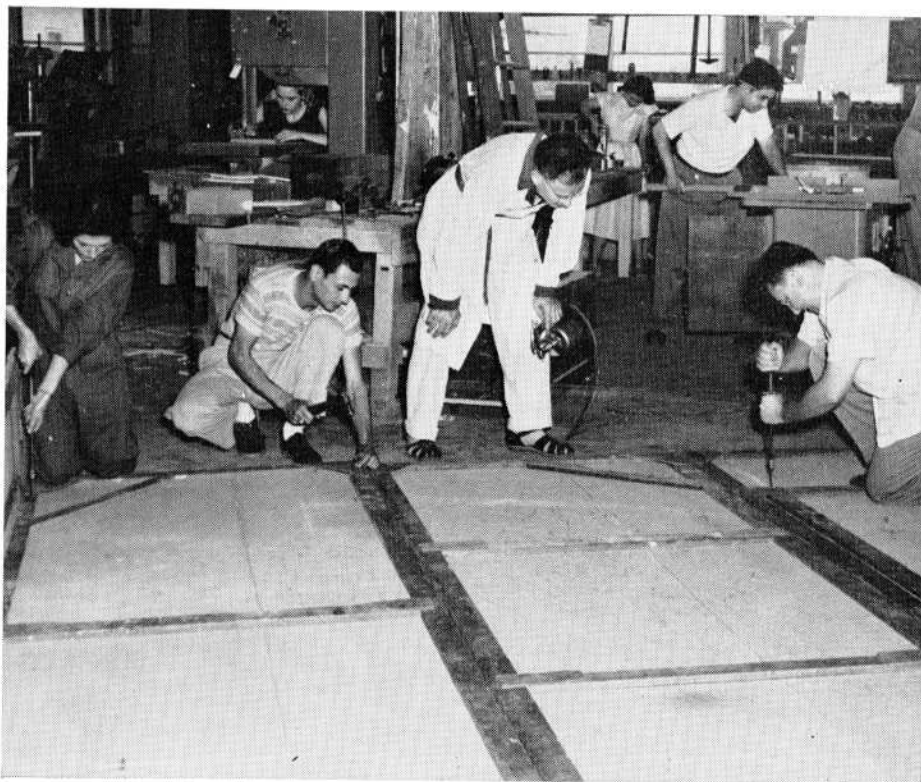
Arts, he is given his first injection, and from time to time he is given booster shots in the form of constructive criticism. The student is expected to help the process along with work, work and more work. There's a certain amount of applying the seat of the pants to the seat of the chair sort of work. But most students in Fine Arts find the real proving ground in the art studios, music practice rooms, and on stage. It's there that they produce. And it's there that they realize their shortcomings.

Directing the three schools which take

the would-be professionals in tow during their four years at the University is Harrison Kerr, dean of the College of Fine Arts. A newcomer to the ranks of the University deans, he has assumed the job of developing the aesthetic resources of the University.

**Legacy: a Corset.** One of the headaches which had hounded Dean Kerr's predecessors, lack of adequate building space, has been handed down as a legacy which is breathing hot on his neck. Holmberg Hall, which houses the School of Music and the University's only large auditorium, is scheduled for an overhauling this year. The School of Music will have to be housed in temporary quarters while the project is underway, and when the building is ready for occupancy again, there will be an improved auditorium but actually no more space.

Corseted in the confines of Holmberg Hall for years, the School of Music recently took a couple of staves from its girdle and expanded into a new practice wing built at the beginning of the University's postwar expansion program. The modernistic 3-story structure houses 68 soundproof, air-conditioned rooms where music stu-



Sprawled on the floor of the School of Drama's scenic studio, a set for a Playhouse production takes form. A building and power tools acquired from the Navy give O.U. the largest scenic studio on any U. S. campus. Even the ingenues man the wood saws.



Van Heflin, '32ba, Hollywood star, tops the list of Drama School graduates who have their names in lights. He is pictured here signing the register at a session of the Southwestern Theatre Conference.

dents work out. But the present large enrollment calls for the removal of a few more staves for comfortable breathing.

The schools of art and drama have profited from the University's expansion to the two Norman Navy bases vacated at the end of World War II. The School of Art is now quartered in a building on the South Base, and the School of Drama has found a home in the large administration building on the North Base.

**Too Little and Too Late.** Another problem of the College of Fine Arts—inadequate libraries—is getting its share of attention. Funds available through regular University channels are barely sufficient to provide the libraries with current needs, to buy books and other materials which are appearing every week and month. Each of the three libraries should have a fund of ready cash which can be used immediately whenever opportunities occur for the purchase of out-of-print items, books and periodicals and other materials necessary to complete the files and to make the libraries useful. Frequently an important item will be advertised in a catalog. By the time it can be ordered through regular channels, the item will have been sold.

To take care of this need a committee appointed by President Cross has established the Paul S. Carpenter Library Fund. Efforts are being made to raise \$3,000 to

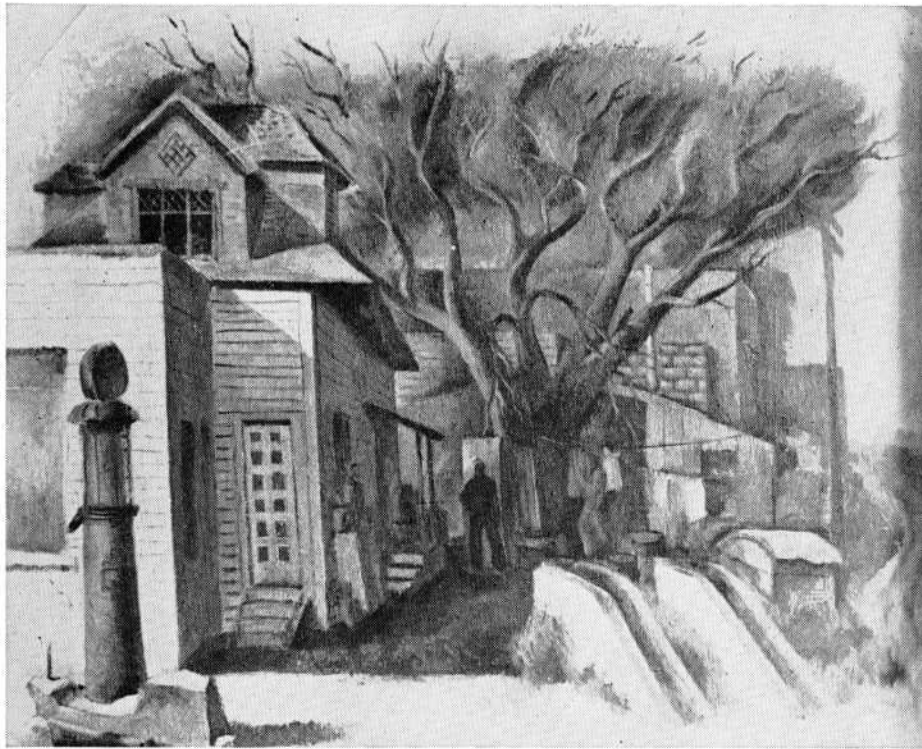
create a living memorial to the late dean of fine arts who gave 35 years to the artistic development of Oklahoma and the Southwest.

All of Dean Carpenter's friends are invited to contribute to the fund; if they prefer, they can make a gift of books or other objects which will help in the growth of the libraries. A book plate bearing the likeness of Dean Carpenter will be inserted in each book, or attached to each object in the libraries, indicating that it is a part of the collection dedicated to his memory. The plate will also bear the name of the donor.

The College of Fine Arts owes much to Dean Carpenter. To develop the latent aesthetic and spiritual resources of Oklahoma and the Southwest, he spent the better part of his life. He thought of Oklahoma as one of the best proving grounds of his idea that the artistic life of America can come from nowhere except the communities in which human beings live and have their own aesthetic experiences.

When the library committee launched its fund drive it stated:

"In Dean Carpenter, the University recognizes one of the forces which should be perpetuated in our state. It has accordingly approved a plan for the creation of a memorial to him which will carry forward in an active way the great work he began. In a vital way we can continue his work by im-



**Wartime Gas Station**, by William Harold Smith, director of the School of Art, was awarded second prize in oils at the Sixth Annual Oklahoma Artists' Exhibition at Philbrook Art Center in Tulsa. Like all faculty members of the School of Art, he is a producing artist; other staff members have won recognition in recent months.

proving the libraries of the Schools of Art, Drama, and Music."

But in spite of problems faced by the College of Fine Arts, one must admit the young people and the faculty are getting things done. A trip through Holmberg Hall is accompanied by a muddle of voices running the scale and a variety of instruments pouring a weird mixture of sounds into the halls. Rooms in the Art Building display the works of students already engrossed in new projects. And the rehearsal stage on North Campus always has a long list of workouts scheduled. It's easy to see that the students and faculty are up to their elbows in their undertakings—if not up to their eyebrows.

**Trippingly on the Tongue.** The rehearsal stage on North Campus is a good example of the work being done. The students produce three 1-act plays or one full-length play each week—which means seven or more rehearsals are scheduled at any given time.

Professor Rupert Jones, director of the School of Drama, recalls that things operated on a much slimmer scale when he joined the faculty in 1931. The school was then a 4-year-old stripling of the College of Fine Arts, and was holding session in Holmberg Hall.

The School of Drama enrolment totaled only 75. Casting a play was a complicated business because there were only five men majoring in drama. If the cast called for more than five men the director had to

shop around in the various schools and colleges to fill out the male portion of the cast.

The stage in Holmberg had to be shared with the School of Music, a situation which complicated matters even more. The drama students had to rehearse in the afternoons and then work on sets late at night while the music students were not using the stage. Set construction in those days was a slow, time-consuming job because the school didn't have a single power tool. Everything was done by hand. Thanks to the Navy the school now has what Jones describes as "probably the largest scenic shop in any University in the country." Power saws and other tools secured from the Navy enable students to expedite the building of sets they design in short order.

Jones has a profound appreciation of the power tools. Many years ago he and John Dunn, now director of University Radio Station WNAD, drove to Oklahoma City to purchase the school's first power saw. "We hauled the saw back to Norman with the feeling that we had passed a milestone," Jones recalls.

Students in the School of Drama work in the University theatre during their first three years; during their fourth year they become producers, selecting their plays, casts and scenery. Senior students direct three or four 1-act plays during the year, and graduate students direct full-length plays.

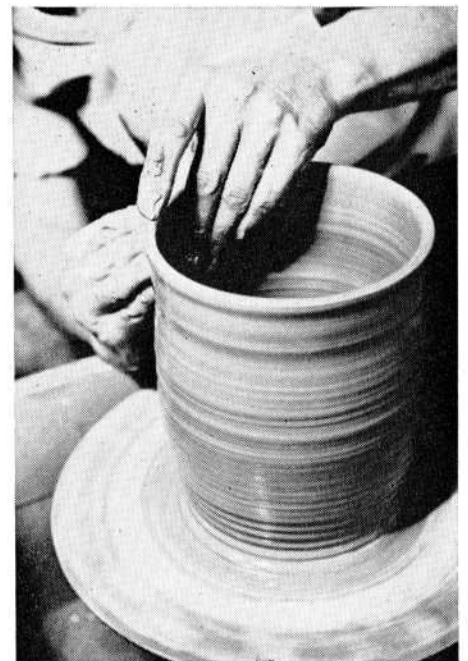
**For Feeling: Paint.** Theatrical back-

ground is parceled out in courses in acting, scene design, costuming, stage lighting, directing, history of the theatre and play writing. Those who wish to become playwrights smear on grease paint and tread the boards along with their fellow students to get the feel of the theatre.

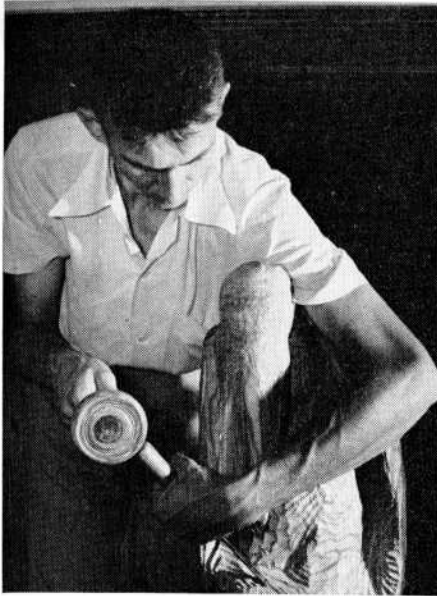
Each year the University Playhouse presents a series of plays for an all-University audience. The Playhouse productions utilize student actors and are directed by members of the School of Drama faculty. The polish acquired from weekly productions in the school usually brings a good response from the audience when the Playhouse productions open in Holmberg.

When the stage in Holmberg is enlarged it will be a boon to the University's thespians. The pint-size dimensions of the present stage have necessitated the trimming of sets on numerous occasions. Sets are an important phase of the training in the drama school. Courses in scene design and scene construction drink deeply of the energy and exuberance of the students. The same is true of courses in stage lighting and costume designing.

Topping the pyramid of talent the School of Drama has unleashed on the theatrical world is Van Heflin, '32ba, movie star. Others who have made their mark are: Subert Turbyfill, '25fa, '26ba, '32ma, director of the Balboa Little Theatre in the Canal Zone; Lonny Chapman, '47fa, currently playing in *Come Back Little Sheba*; Joe Callaway, '41fa, who has appeared with



The art student above is working at a pottery wheel, fashioning a vase in a ceramics course. Ceramics has been developed into one of the most popular phases of work in the School of Art.



Sculpturing and painting have been consolidated to form a new department in the reorganized School of Art. Edward Yates, art student, (above) works in one of the studios on the South Campus.

the Globe Theatre players; Murial Brenner, '32fa, with NBC in Chicago; Amzie Strickland, '40fa, with NBC in New York for several years and now writing and acting in television shows for the network.

A picture in the November issue of *Theatre Arts* reveals Lonny Chapman is giving O.U. some subtle publicity. In *Little Sheba* he plays the role of an athlete, and an illustration accompanying the review shows him on stage, wearing an O.U. letter jacket.

The School of Drama is also winning regional recognition through the annual Southwestern Theatre Conference. Organized at the University in 1948, the conference has drawn attendance from Texas, New Mexico, Arkansas, Louisiana and Oklahoma. Jones, who was elected first president of the organization, explains its purpose:

"The conference aims to get together people who are interested in advancing the educational, community, and professional theatre in the Southwest. In our meetings we exchange ideas and make plans for the theatre in this region."

**Free Reign.** An air of individuality which exists among the students in the School of Drama seems even more pronounced in the School of Art. Using the technique in teaching which calls for ideas to be drawn out of the students, the art faculty gives free reign to the expression of the individual.

The very appearance of the old Administration Building on South Base, new home of the Art School, more than hints what sort of instruction goes on there. The

long corridors are lined with work produced by the students, presenting a wide array of expression and technique. Doors to faculty offices stand open, an invitation to the students to come in and talk over their problems.

New students in the school are taught the importance and use of color, line, shape, value and texture. They are told these are tools for expression, and each student decides in what manner he is going to express himself. There is almost a complete absence of "cramming in" teaching; the whole process operates on the theory that each student is an individual, and that his work in the art school should reflect only himself.

**Popped Gusset.** The faculty has almost split a gusset in the rapid efforts which have been made to give the school a new student-teacher attitude since it was reorganized last September. All members of the faculty are producing artists, and they have thrown open their office-studios so students can see what they are producing. The reason behind the move is sound and simple. Each instructor produces in his own medium in his own manner; observing this fact, the students are given the opportunity to realize that they can produce in a style of their own and stand on their own legs.

Formerly organized as one unit, the school was split into two distinct divisions at the beginning of the fall term. The two

new sections, department of painting and sculpture and department of design, allow the students to specialize and work toward a more definite objective. Areas in which the students work are painting, lithography, design, sculpture, ceramics, art education and art for industry.

Broad stretches of windows and numerous cubicles lining long corridors make the old Navy Administration Building a good home for the school. Formerly housed in the Art Building on the main campus, the school was moved first to a small building on the Navy base. Recently, it moved into its present quarters. The building on the main campus is now being used as the Art Museum and for classes in art taught by the School of Home Economics.

Lack of adequate space exerts severe pressure on the Art Museum. "We have five times the material that can be shown," Dean Kerr pointed out. There is no large art museum closer than Tulsa, with the exception of a small one in Oklahoma City. That creates a difficult problem for art students who need to be in contact with a large museum having a comprehensive collection.

Like the School of Drama, the School of Art has recently acquired a power tool shop of which it is rather proud. Equipped with saws, a lathe, joining machine and other equipment, it is an essential part of the department of design.

Top men in the reorganized school are



Art students in the studio located in the former Navy Administration Building on the South Campus use line, color and form to express themselves in a painting class. Another type of work which has gained in importance in recent years is lithography.



Werner Landshoff, violoncellist; Keith Wallingford, pianist; and Robert Gerle, violonist, are appearing in various Oklahoma towns as the University Trio, an event scheduled by the University Extension Division. Participating in the University's community service program, the three School of Music faculty members comprise a chamber music group which devotes itself to presenting masterworks of music.

William H. Smith, director; Eugene Bavinger, chairman of the department of design; and Joseph R. Taylor, chairman of the department of sculpture and painting.

**Nectar of the Gods.** Oklahomans who live outside Norman probably are more familiar with the School of Music than they are with either the School of Art or the School of Drama. An annual tour made by the men's glee club, Extension Division programs, the annual music clinic for high-school students and guest appearances of students and faculty members bring an amazingly large number of people into contact with the school each year.

More than 150 musical events a year are presented on Holmberg's stage, a double-step schedule calling for two student recital programs each week. Junior students share the recital program with another student, and each senior student presents a full program.

The faculty also shares the Holmberg spotlight with the annual faculty concert series. A new trend in the recitals was set this year with the introduction of a "Three Centuries of Music" program. Each of the recitals features selections from various eras of music with members of the staff performing.

Emphasis on stringed instruments and

chamber music was launched last fall after the school acquired Robert Gerle, 26 year-old Hungarian violinist, and Werner Landshoff, violoncellist, from Europe. Another recent outstanding addition to the faculty is Miss Eva Turner, internationally-known soprano. Carlos Moseley, young director of the School of Music, heads a faculty which includes a number of people who have made their name in the music education field.

Ten members of the Oklahoma City Symphony are students in the music school at the present time. The University chorus has appeared with the symphony twice in the last two years, performing the Verdi Requiem and Mount of Olives. Several of the students have gained experiences with the Dallas Light Opera Company and other organizations in the Southwest. Robert Whitley, senior organ major, won nationwide recognition last year when he placed first in the National Organ contest in Boston. He is currently appearing in recital in several states.

Students in the School of Music focus their study on three major areas: applied music, music education and theory and history of music. The music education division has turned out many of the instructors who are now teaching in Oklahoma's high-

schools and colleges. Joseph Benton, '20ba, '21fa, '41ma, who has appeared in opera both in Europe and this country, is now a member of the faculty.

The life of the music student is anything short of a lieurely life. Under constant observance of their instructors, they polish, practice, rehearse and finally present their performances. Then the cycle begins again. It's all part of the professional approach—a device which appears to be paying off.

At the time of his death, the late Dean Carpenter was putting the finishing touches on a book which he entitled *Music, an Art and a Business*. An examination of the work going on in the College of Fine Arts indicates that the actions of Dean Kerr's faculty and the productions of the students show that something of the art and business attitude most certainly exists. Whether it's art, drama, or music, it's art to them. And it's most certainly a business.

(Editor's Note: The Pride of Oklahoma, the University's marching band, was not included in the above article since it is not actually a part of the College of Fine Arts. Space limitations this month also prohibited use of a separate article on the band. A future issue of *Sooner Magazine* will feature the band and its director, Leonard Haug, associate professor of music at the University.)



Eva Turner, soprano of international fame, is pictured above in the role of Turandot, one of the triumphs of her career. She is one of the group of outstanding faculty members who have recently joined the School of Music staff.