AMBASSADORS OF THE ARTS:
AN ANALYSIS OF THE EISENHOWER ADMINISTRATION’S
INCORPORATION OF PORGY AND BESS INTO ITS
COLD WAR FOREIGN POLICY

DISSERTATION

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By

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* * * * *

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To Kristine
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Congress shall have power . . . To promote the progress of science and useful arts, by securing for limited times to authors and inventors the exclusive right to their respective writings and discoveries.

Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution of the United States stipulates that the government may exercise the above actions with regards to the arts. Although it neither obligates nor forbids a formal relationship between government and the arts, presidents and legislators have long spoken about the role of the arts in public policy and the value of the arts to society. However, their speeches usually produced more rhetoric than any actual policies. Still, as such diverse examples as Franklin Roosevelt’s Federal Theatre Project of the 1930s and the current National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) illustrate, the government of the United States has been inclined, if somewhat reluctantly, to subsidize the arts.

Much of the early efforts of government patronage centered on planning building designs and decoration for the federal buildings of Washington, D.C. Additionally, the
federal government has occasionally commissioned artists as when John Trumball was paid $32,000 in 1817 to paint scenes from the Revolutionary War. While other examples can be cited, the early record of arts patronage in the United States is relatively sparse. In fact, it was not until President Roosevelt introduced the Federal One arts projects of the Works Progress Administration in 1935 that the United States government had a significant, albeit short-term, policy on the arts. Another twenty-five years passed before legislation establishing the NEA was drafted and signed into law.

While the reasons for the various arts initiatives vary from project to project, the official attitude towards the arts has remained constant. First, government patronage has never emanated from a sense of obligation or altruism towards the arts. In the United States, government support of the arts has been predicated on a *guid pro quo* relationship. Example after example illustrates that the arts have been supported only to the degree that they are viewed as useful in achieving other objectives. For instance, Roosevelt’s Federal Theatre Project was supported not to build a national theatre, but it was created as a temporary measure to alleviate unemployment. As Alexis de Tocqueville accurately observed over two hundred years ago, democratic nations will "habitually prefer the useful to the beautiful, and they will require that the beautiful should
be useful."  Second, whether it was the early efforts to decorate federal buildings, the WPA arts projects, or even the NEA, arts policy has mainly been viewed in the context of domestic policy. Accordingly, the government has coopted the arts as tools to achieve domestic policy objectives. When the NEA was established, its proponents promised that subsidy of the arts would produce a multitude of benefits including invigorating state and local economies, broadening the educational and cultural opportunities for the poor and disadvantaged, and developing the nation's cultural legacy. While the arts have long been incorporated into domestic policy initiatives, it was not until the 1930s that the United States government began to explore the potential role of the arts in foreign affairs. It was during this period that cultural diplomacy was first incorporated as an instrument of foreign policy. During the next thirty years, the arts were increasingly seen as an effective and peaceful way to accomplish international objectives. Although each succeeding presidential administration practiced cultural diplomacy, there was no consistent or permanent policy until President Dwight Eisenhower signed into law the International Cultural Exchange and Trade Fair Act of 1956

and negotiated the first exchange agreement with the Soviet Union in 1958.

One of the most interesting and significant pre-1956 cultural programs was Eisenhower's Emergency Fund for International Affairs. It provided the administrative and policy model for the 1956 legislation. Through the fund, hundreds of artists were employed as cultural ambassadors for the United States. The most prominent example was the Blevins Davis and Robert Breen production of Porgy and Bess. My dissertation examines Eisenhower's emergency fund and its patronage of that opera.

A Brief History of Cultural Diplomacy in the United States

While the history of government sponsored cultural diplomacy in the United States is primarily a twentieth-century phenomenon, cultural diplomacy has long been utilized by European governments as a component of their international relations. In an effort to promote French culture, France began modern cultural diplomacy with the creation of the Alliance Francaise in 1883. Germany began its efforts in 1896 and England established the British Council for Relations with Other Countries in 1935.² Cultural relations only became a formal part of United States' foreign policy in 1938 when the Roosevelt

administration incorporated the exchange of educators, students, and the arts as part of State Department responsibilities.

Although it has continued to be a part of official government policy since the 1930s, the practice of cultural diplomacy has undergone significant changes to meet the objectives of particular administrations and the demands of changing global circumstances. From the administrations of Franklin Roosevelt to Dwight Eisenhower, the attitude towards cultural diplomacy changed from relative disinterest to a cautious willingness to sponsor exchange to the aggressive cooption of the methods of exchange for propaganda purposes. A brief examination of the history of cultural diplomacy as practiced by the United States from the 1930s to the beginning of the Eisenhower administration in 1952 follows.

Until the Roosevelt administration initiated its various cultural policies, American exchange programs had been the domain of private philanthropic organizations. Foremost among these groups was the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the Guggenheim Foundation. While the missions of these foundations differed, each was guided by an idealistic philosophy which believed that mutual understanding fostered through peaceful exchanges of ideas and cultures would promote peace between the nations of the world. A belief
that exchanges could only be effective if they were conducted free of government involvement and propaganda was central to the efforts of these organizations. This is not to say that such exchanges did not serve the diplomatic and political interests of the United States. As Frank Ninkovich writes:

> The liberal internationalist outlook, in cultural affairs and foreign policy as a whole, solved a basic riddle of American policy by promoting American global interests without involving the nation in welpolitik or resorting to an undesirable reliance on state power.

This reliance and even preference for a system of private organizations conducting cultural relations remained strong throughout the 1920s, but global events of the 1930s necessitated the entry of government into cultural diplomacy. As Ninkovich concludes, "The pessimistic climate of the 1930s, with a tendency toward cultural nationalism and the aggressive employment of cultural policy for political ends clearly evident among the major powers, the voluntarist approach was less satisfactory."

The decade of the 1930s brought with it a growing government involvement and, not surprisingly, an increasingly politicized approach to the practice of

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4 Ninkovich 23.
cultural diplomacy. There were two significant events during this period which signaled the beginning of United States' cultural diplomatic activity. In the first instance, the Roosevelt administration introduced a resolution at the Pan American Conference for the Maintenance of Peace in 1936 for an exchange of educators and students to be conducted under the auspices of the governments of Latin America and the United States. On December 23, 1936, representatives of the governments signed the agreement which allowed for the annual exchange of two students and one professor. The second change occurred on May 23, 1938 when the Roosevelt administration announced the formation of the Division of Cultural Relations within the Department of State. While a new bureaucratic organization was created to administer the government's cultural policy, there was no major departure from the established practice of private organizations conducting exchange programs. The Division was primarily responsible for assisting and coordinating the activities of the private groups. Ninkovich argues that its modest authority was shaped by a tradition which emphasized a strong private sector role and an increasingly conservative Congress unwilling to authorize more New Deal bureaucracies.\(^5\) Although a meager beginning, these two events signaled a new willingness on the part of the Roosevelt administration to claim activities previously

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\(^5\) Ninkovich 29.
conducted by private agencies and incorporate them into official policy.

The initiation of educational exchange and the creation of a formal bureaucracy within the State Department to oversee cultural relations foreshadowed both the nature of the United States cultural diplomatic efforts and the problems that government involvement brought with it. It reasserted the notion that cultural relations were most effective if they were conducted by the private sector and that the government could best aid cultural relations by playing a limited coordinating role. These actions also underscored the potential conflicts when cultural activities are employed in the service of foreign policy objectives. Ostensibly, the educational and cultural exchanges were another aspect of Roosevelt’s "Good Neighbor" policy. Designed to promote United States’ interests in Latin America, the administration’s policy sought to create political, economic, and cultural unity with these countries. Yet, during the 1930s there emerged a new urgency in the United States’ diplomatic relations with the countries of Central and South America. The increased efforts of Nazi Germany to win the loyalty of Latin America through its own diplomatic actions forced the United States into a battle for the minds and allegiance of those countries. As Charles A. Thomson and Walter A. Laves note, "The Nazi drive . . . threatened to undermine the efforts of
half a century to transform Pan-Americanism from a pretentious phrase into the substance of solid unity among the republics of the hemisphere."

While maintaining a commitment to cultural relations free from political considerations, the government's first efforts emanated not from a new appreciation of the intrinsic value of cultural relations, but from foreign policy considerations. Kevin Mulcahy writes:

> From the beginning then American cultural diplomacy was judged according to two, not necessarily complimentary, standards. On the one hand, cultural programs were conceived as essentially nonpolitical and concerned with promotion of mutual understanding among nations. On the other hand, the programs were seen as instrumental in consolidating a country's international political objectives. The use of cultural assets was thus comparable to, if not equal to, the use of economic and military advantages.

The tension between these two competing aims would surface not only in Roosevelt's policies but in succeeding administrations's efforts to maintain a free exchange of ideas and cultures with other nations while pursuing foreign policy objectives not always conducive to mutual exchanges.

With the seeming inevitability of world conflict approaching, the Roosevelt administration intensified its

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cultural relations efforts with a decidedly more political approach. The Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs (CIAA) was created on August 10, 1940 with the task of funding short-term efforts designed to reach large numbers of people. Separate from the State Department's Division of Cultural Relations, the CIAA was designed as a temporary agency to meet the growing international threats to American security in the Western Hemisphere. CIAA administrator Nelson Rockefeller revealed the new sense of urgency with which the Roosevelt administration approached cultural relations when he stated that "intellectual imperialism, the imperialism of ideas, was at the moment just as serious a threat to security and defense of the hemisphere as the possibility of military invasion."

With a budget of $3,500,000, the CIAA quickly overshadowed the more meager State Department program. While the new agency continued the policy of funding private efforts, it did not require the activities to be reciprocal. Consequently, CIAA activities were not so much mutual exchanges, but a concentrated propaganda effort to promote the United States' interests in Latin America. Amidst protest by State Department officials over the aggressiveness of CIAA activities, a Joint Committee on Cultural Relations was formed whereby the State Department determined policy, while the CIAA provided the funds. This

8 Qtd. in Ninkovich 36.
partnership established precedent for the Department of State and the United States Information Agency relationship in the 1950s.

During World War II, the Roosevelt administration galvanized its cultural and informational programs with the formation of the Office of War Information (OWI) in 1942 and the creation of Cultural Attache positions in 1943. The net effect of these efforts was a greater propaganda slant to cultural activities and a more activist government role.

In the post-war years, the State Department assumed more authority over cultural relations policy. In 1945, President Truman combined the emergency OWI and CIAA agencies with the Division of Cultural Relations to form the Office of International Information and Cultural Affairs (OIC). One year later, it was renamed the Office of International Information and Educational Exchange (OIE). Of the various changes, Mulcahy writes:

CU [Division of Cultural Relations] was always something of an anomaly in the State Department as the frequent reorganizations and name changes would suggest. Cultural relations were most often subordinated to whichever foreign policy operation was important at the time.⁹

In short, United States' cultural policy developed incrementally with the changes resulting in an increased emphasis on propaganda over exchange.

⁹ Mulcahy 277.
The next major event occurred when the Congress passed the United States Information and Educational Exchange Act in 1948. Commonly known as the Smith-Mundt Act after its principal sponsors, the bill established under State Department auspices separate advisory commissions on information and education designed to "promote the better understanding of the United States among the peoples of the world and to strengthen cooperative international relations."\textsuperscript{10} Its operational objectives were two-fold: (1) "to disseminate abroad information about the United States, its people, and policies promulgated . . ."; and (2) a service to promote exchange of education, arts, and sciences.\textsuperscript{11} While the informational and educational activities were designed to be separate, they were only segregated on paper. In truth, the Smith-Mundt bill was crafted in response to the aggressive propaganda campaign employed by the Soviet Union. With a global competition underway, the often thin line between propaganda and cultural exchange evaporated. The Cold War hastened the trend begun in the 1930s of coopting the rhetoric and tools of cultural diplomacy and employing them in the advancement of foreign policy objectives.

\textsuperscript{10} United States, United Statues at Large, 80th Cong., 2nd sess., 1948 (Washington: GPO, 1949) 6.

\textsuperscript{11} United States 6.
In the early 1950s, international events converged to compel the Truman administration to re-evaluate the United States' propaganda efforts. After the occasion of the first Soviet atomic explosion in September 1949, the National Security Council (NSC) issued a report calling for an invigorated propaganda campaign to counter Soviet advances in military strength and world prestige. Of the new propaganda efforts, Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs Edward W. Barrett wrote, "It was not enough just to have the U.S., its motives and aspirations, understood. The time had come to take the psychological offensive, with a bolder, more aggressive campaign."¹² In a speech before the American Society of Newspaper Editors on April 20, 1950, President Truman introduced the State Department's new information program. He said, "[Our] task is nothing less than to meet false propaganda with truth all around the globe. Everywhere that the propaganda of Communist totalitarianism is spread, we must meet it and overcome it with honest information about freedom and democracy."¹³ Truman concluded his remarks by calling for an aggressive "Campaign of Truth" to combat the Soviet's program.


Initially, Congress reacted coolly to the plan which sought to "roll back Soviet influence, not by arms, of course, but by all means short of force."\textsuperscript{14} Congressional opposition mainly stemmed from a skepticism about the benefits of information activities and a negative reaction to the use of government sponsored propaganda. However, opposition abruptly turned to support with North Korea's invasion of South Korea. The original $32.7 million budget for international information was increased with a $79 million supplemental appropriation. The funding was used to increase Voice of America's programs and output, the production and acquisition of propaganda films by 300%, and the publications program by tenfold.\textsuperscript{15} Additionally, the State Department developed the Private Enterprise Cooperation Unit which coordinated private sector cultural, educational, and business efforts to promote goodwill between the United States and other countries. The degree to which these efforts were promoted in a particular country depended upon the perceived strategic value of that country. And within each country, groups were targeted to help coordinate and propagate information programs. In a press release, Barrett concluded, "The results of this intensified campaign are encouraging. In some parts of the

\textsuperscript{14} Barrett 79.

\textsuperscript{15} Barrett 89-91.
world arena, we have the commie off balance; in others, he's on the ropes."

Concurrent with the United States' efforts, the Soviet Union escalated their own activities in the field of cultural affairs. Barrett reported, "A little more than a year ago, a major change in Soviet tactics became evident. Faced with certain deficiencies in its political and economic propaganda, and with China 'safe' and the North Koreans saturated to the point of fanaticism, the Soviets decided to launch an all out assault on the cultural front." He cited several incidents where the Department of State thought the United States had "lost" cultural battles. For example, Barrett pointed to the Soviets' domination at the 1950 International Music Contest at Brussels and to the Milan Fair also in 1950 where the Soviets sponsored sixteen exhibits while the United States failed to make an appearance. Barrett discounted any notions that Soviet cultural diplomacy signaled a lifting of the iron curtain. He suggested that it "must be remembered that cultural exchange has become a major tool of Soviet propaganda. As such, it is an instrument of national

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16 Department of State, "Address by the Honorable Edward W. Barrett, Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs, Before the Institute of International Education," 14 Nov. 1951, Robert Breen Collection, Box 22, Lawrence and Lee theatre Research Institute, Library of The Ohio State University, Columbus, 1.

17 Department of State 2.
Barrett concluded his press release with a call for the best talent the United States had to offer to engage in the cultural war.

While named the "Campaign of Truth" by President Truman, the new information and exchange program was less concerned with promoting the truth than with countering Soviet propaganda efforts. With funding of over $100,000,000 for fiscal year 1951 (four and half times the appropriations under the Smith-Mundt Act in 1949), the Department of State's information and educational exchange program took on an unprecedented significance. Concurrent with increased appropriations, strategic and political objectives came to dominate planning with the notion of \textit{mutual} exchange a secondary consideration. In short, the Truman approach led to a complete politicization of the cultural program.

\textbf{Eisenhower's "New Look" Cultural Diplomacy Policy}

During the presidential campaign of 1952, the Republican party nominee General Dwight D. Eisenhower campaigned against the Soviet Union as much as he did against his Democratic opponent. Of the Soviet Union he stated, "It is committed to subversion and revolution and war until the continents are its slave camps and all human

\footnote{18 Department of State 4.}
kind are its chattel." According to Eisenhower, the United States needed to move beyond the reactive foreign policy of the Truman administration. He maintained that a new positive foreign policy was needed. Candidate Eisenhower argued that his approach would be predicated on the following objectives: (1) building a strong military and economy; (2) establishing greater cooperation with other democracies; and, (3) seeking the freedom of all captive nations.  

At the foundation of Eisenhower's foreign policy agenda was the belief that Soviet aggression was the primary source of instability and conflict in the world. In retrospect, this belief ultimately led Eisenhower as president to overestimate the role of communist subversion, particularly in the rise of Third World nationalism. As Eisenhower scholars Chester J. Pach, Jr., and Elmo Richardson conclude, "Although he recognized the power of nationalism, he could never truly alter his outlook to admit that anti-American hostility was unconnected to Cold War intrigue." Regardless of the correctness of Eisenhower's understanding  

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20 Eisenhower, "Address" 35-36.  

of the scope of communist aggression, it formed the basis of his world outlook and the foreign policy of the United States during the 1950s.

In President Eisenhower's self-titled "New Look" foreign policy, information and propaganda activities would be the primary weapons in the global struggle between the United States and the Soviet Union as long as the cold war did not heat up into armed conflict. In his first inaugural address, he characterized Soviet propaganda activities.

"The enemies of this faith know no god," Eisenhower stated, "but force, no devotion but its use. They tutor men treason. They feed upon the hunger of others. Whatever defies them, they torture, especially the truth." 22 From his perspective, the scope of the conflict was no less than "lightness against the dark." 23 In this epic conflict, Eisenhower believed that the United States had to skillfully execute information activities in order to seize the initiative from the Soviets. If they were successful, Eisenhower concluded:

Then, the story of America will be repeated on the tom-toms of the African jungle, in the gossip of Arab bazaars, under the shady streets of the Champs Elysees, in the temples and along the holy rivers of the East - and the ring of truth


23 Eisenhower, "First Inaugural" 28.
around the world will drown the strident lies of Moscow's propaganda.\textsuperscript{24}

Just days into his new administration, Eisenhower established the President's Committee on International Information Activities. Known as the Jackson Committee (after its chairperson William H. Jackson), it was set up to "make a survey and evaluation of the international information policies and activities of the Executive branch of the Government."\textsuperscript{25} In its report to the President, the committee concluded:

Soviet rulers will be most reluctant to run deliberately a grave risk of general war. However, the USSR will continue its efforts to undermine and destroy the non-communist world by political warfare. In these circumstances, the United States must intensify its efforts to achieve a greater measure of strength and unity in the free world.\textsuperscript{26}

Propaganda activity was prescribed as a means to "create a climate of opinion in which national policy objectives can be most readily accomplished."\textsuperscript{27} In a critique of the heavy-handed tactics of Truman's "Campaign of Truth," the

\textsuperscript{24} Eisenhower, "Address" 37.


report argued that propaganda activities would only be effective if they were "dependable, convincing and truthful." The committee suggested that all forms of media including radio, cinema, and educational exchange should be part of the government's efforts to build unity between the United States and other nations. They concluded that the "goals and desires which we hold in common must be exploited in ways that will cause others to join with us in achieving them." 

As an outgrowth of the Jackson Committee recommendations, President Eisenhower requested a supplemental appropriation of $5,000,000 for Funds Appropriated to the President for the fiscal year 1955. In a letter to the President of the Senate, Eisenhower explained the nature of his request. He wrote:

For expenses necessary to enable the President to take such measures as he deems appropriate to meet extraordinary or unusual circumstances arising in the international affairs of the Government, $5,000,000 to remain available until expended for use in the President's discretion and without regard to such provisions of the law as he may specify. . . .

26 Jackson Committee, "Propaganda" 1.

29 Jackson Committee, "Propaganda" 4.

In his request, Eisenhower cited his intention that the funds would be targeted for participation in international trade fairs in order to promote a "wider understanding of American products and our private enterprise system." 31 Additionally, he asserted the necessity for cultural groups to go "forth and demonstrate that America too can lay claim to high cultural and artistic accomplishments." 32 As proof of the benefits of cultural ventures, Eisenhower pointed to the success of the international tour of Porgy and Bess in fostering goodwill towards the United States. As the President indicated, however, friendship was not the only objective. He wrote the Senate, "I consider it essential that we take immediate and vigorous action to demonstrate the superiority of the products and cultural values of our system of free enterprise." 33 In other words, the President's plan was designed to take the offensive in the propaganda war by enlisting American business and culture to help promote the United States.

The Emergency Fund for International Affairs

The administrative structure of the President's Emergency Fund for International Affairs left little question about its objectives. In August 1954, a Special

33 Eisenhower, "Supplemental Appropriation" 2.
Action Group of the Cabinet consisting of an inter-agency committee for trade fairs headed by the Department of Commerce and a Department of State administered group for cultural activities was established to coordinate the fund's projects. On September 10, the two operating committees were placed under the jurisdiction of the National Security Council's Operations Coordinating Board (OCB). Five days later, Theodore Streibert, the director of the newly formed United States Information Agency (USIA), was designated as the coordinator of the emergency fund. According to administration documents, it was the USIA's task to assure the various projects' "proper psychological impact and to plan their exploitation and publicity abroad."\(^{34}\) Clearly, Eisenhower did not seek to practice cultural exchange as a reciprocal venture. By placing cultural diplomacy under the guidance of the OCB, the State Department, and the USIA, he signaled that cultural diplomacy was to be a tool of foreign policy. As an internal report on the fund stated, the activities serve to refute "as directly as possible the communists' anti-American propaganda line and reinforces the foreign policy of the United States."\(^{35}\) This statement was consistent with the Jackson Committee recommendation that

\(^{34}\) Cultural Presentations Staff, "Report on the President's Emergency Fund for Participation in International Affairs," 6 Dec. 1954, White House Central Files, Box 910, Eisenhower Library, 1.

\(^{35}\) White House, "Report" 1.
"any program supported by government funds can only be justified to the extent that it assists in the achievement of national objectives."\textsuperscript{36}

As the relatively meager appropriation indicates, the Eisenhower program was designed to encourage private sector activity while limiting the federal government’s role. It was not the intention of the administration to fully subsidize artists or performance groups, but to provide funds to offset losses incurred by symphonies, theatre and dance companies, and sports figures who toured overseas under the State Department’s auspices.

To facilitate the selection of artists, the American National Theatre and Academy (ANTA) was chosen as agent of the State Department. With the self-defined goal of supporting only the highest level of artistic achievement, ANTA appointed advisory panels in the fields of Music, Dance, and Drama to evaluate and recommend performers for the program.

Through ANTA’s guidance, the President’s fund supported numerous artists and groups during the two years the program existed. The list of subsidized performers included: the Jose Limon Troupe, the first to receive funds for appearances in Latin America; the New York Philharmonic Orchestra; the Symphony of the Air which toured Japan, Seoul, Taipei, Hong Kong, Manila, and Honolulu; the Martha

\textsuperscript{36} Jackson Committee, "Propaganda" 4.
Graham Dance Company; and Issac Stern who played in Iceland. In a Paris festival entitled "Salute to France," Medea with Judith Anderson, The Skin of Our Teeth with Helen Hayes and Mary Martin, Rodgers and Hammerstein's Oklahoma!, the New York City Ballet, and the Philadelphia Orchestra with William Warfield as guest soloist were among the entries performing with the fund's assistance.37

A Brief History of PORGY AND BESS as Cultural Ambassador

The Blevins Davis and Robert Breen production of Porgy and Bess was the most prominent recipient of funds from the President's Emergency Fund for International Affairs. During the four years that the production of Dubose Heyward, George and Ira Gershwin's opera toured, it played in twenty-nine countries before audiences speaking eighteen different languages. Among its various cast members were a young Leontyne Price, William Warfield, LaVern Hutcherson, Cab Calloway, and Maya Angelou.

Of the 208 weeks that the production toured, Porgy and Bess received government funds on three different occasions from two Presidential administrations for a total of 31 weeks. The production was first sponsored by the Truman administration in the fall of 1952. Producer/director Breen and his company appeared in post-war Vienna and Berlin under

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37 See Appendix A for a complete list of sponsored performers.
the auspices of the State Department via ANTA. Early in his presidency, Dwight Eisenhower commented on the production's overseas success. In a letter to Blevins Davis, he wrote, "You and your company are making a real contribution to the kind of understanding between peoples that alone can bring mutual respect and trust. You are, in a real sense, ambassadors of the arts."38 Almost a year and half after Eisenhower wrote that letter, his administration selected the Porgy and Bess company for the first of two tours underwritten by the President's emergency fund. To offset prohibitive travel costs and losses of revenue from lower ticket prices, Everyman Opera, the non-profit corporation producing the opera, was allocated over $707,000 out of the fund's total budget of $4,500,000 over a two year period.39

The first tour subsidized by the emergency fund covered a period from December 11, 1954 through February 13, 1955. Porgy and Bess was presented in Yugoslavia, Egypt, Greece, Israel, Casablanca, and Spain. The second tour occurred from July 7, 1955 to October 25, 1955. Limited to Latin America, the company traveled to Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina, Chile, Peru, Columbia, Venezuela, Panama, and Mexico.

38 Dwight D. Eisenhower, "Letter to Blevins Davis," 30 March 1953, Robert Breen Collection, Box 44, File 37, Lawrence and Lee Theatre Research Institute, Library of The Ohio State University, Columbus.

Before, between, and after these sponsored tours, the production toured without government sponsorship throughout the United States and Europe including the Soviet Union and other Iron Curtain countries. In a somewhat ironic twist, it was the Soviet government which subsidized the company's appearance in the U.S.S.R. Breen had tried to persuade the State Department to sponsor the company's trip to the Soviet Union and a proposed tour of China. The State Department declined to fund the trip to the Soviet Union, but it did give Breen and Everyman Opera permission to accept the Soviet offer. The Department of State denied the company permission to travel to China.

The international scope of the tour and the size of the government's subsidy are evidence of the significance of the *Porgy and Bess* tour. Of the various artists and groups that the State Department cultural task force chose to send abroad in its cultural offensive, Robert Breen and his company of singers and actors received the most funds and publicity. The production's popular appeal and artistic merit are chronicled in theatre and music critics' reviews in newspapers from around the world. While its impact as a goodwill ambassador for the United States is impossible to prove with statistics, the perceived value of the tour is evident in the comments of government officials. Typical is Brigadier General Dale O. Smith's comments in an OCB memo:

*Porgy* has been a resounding success, not only as a piece of art but in creating favorable
U.S. opinion. It is a secret weapon as far as the U.S.S.R. is concerned. . . . Most deceptive feature of the weapon is the cast which, off-stage, is so well-mannered, well-dressed, happy and free.  

Smith's characterization of *Porgy and Bess* as a "weapon" adroitly illustrates how the president, diplomats, and bureaucrats in the administration viewed the performers they subsidized. Artists were funded not in the name of arts patronage, but as instruments in a propaganda campaign.  

*Porgy and Bess* was seen as a particularly effective vehicle to sponsor because officials believed that it would help dispel "myths" about the lives of African-Americans in the United States. Some worried that the portrayal of African-Americans in the opera would foster negative perceptions about the United States. And, indeed, a few foreign newspapers did use the *Porgy and Bess* performances to criticize the United States. Despite some unfavorable reactions, it was generally believed that the appearance of the educated and highly trained performers more than countered the opera's treatment of African-Americans. As a U.S.I.A. staff study stated:  

> Other public reactions abroad have repeatedly demonstrated the errors in predicting that this show will work against U.S. policy. One factor not often considered in such predictions is that the cast itself, when off the stage, deports itself in such a manner as to belie Communist

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Indeed, the numerous concerts, personal appearances, and other outreach activities of the cast members overwhelmingly received positive reactions from the public and the media. Moreover, the company understood that they were expected to be goodwill ambassadors and, for the most part, they eagerly played that role.

Much of the tour's artistic and diplomatic success can be attributed to the work of its producer and director Robert Breen. He brought to his efforts previous experience with the workings of government and cultural diplomacy. In the 1930s, Breen administered the Federal Theatre Project's Chicago Unit. Afterwards, he was executive director of ANTA where he was a pioneer in establishing that organization's early cultural exchange efforts. In 1949, Breen directed and starred in the first American production of Hamlet to appear in the International Hamlet Festival in Elsinore, Denmark. Also, he was instrumental in helping to arrange the international tour of the American National Ballet Theatre in 1950. Those experiences helped convince Breen

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42 Robert Breen, "Outline of pre-production phase of Porgy and Bess," Robert Breen Collection, Lawrence and Lee Theatre Research Institute, Library of The Ohio State University,
that the arts could play an important role in building understanding between nations. "Real understanding is the only key to everything good," Breen argued, "and communication is essential to understanding." 43 In his opinion, "Theatre, music and dance, the most living and dynamic arts, are vital in such communications." 44

Robert Breen brought an almost missionary zeal for cultural exchange to his work with *Porgy and Bess*. He not only aggressively lobbied the White House, administration officials, and legislators for funds and recognition for *Porgy and Bess*, Breen even courted foreign officials to arrange tours for his company. For example, he cabled both Nelson Rockefeller and Soviet Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov that he would be available for discussions during the 1955 Geneva summit between England, France, the Soviet Union, and the United States. And on his own initiative, Breen arranged for mutual exchanges with the Soviet Union and China.

Although Robert Breen can be credited with much of *Porgy and Bess*’ international success, his concept of cultural exchange and his ambitious agenda for his production fostered conflict with United States’ officials

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Columbus.


44 Breen, "Cultural" 1.
on several occasions. In part, the problems resulted from philosophical differences. Breen held a purist view of cultural exchange while the Eisenhower administration viewed exchange through an ideological prism shaped by the Cold War. In a New York Times article, Breen revealed his own critical opinion of the administration’s cultural program. He wrote:

Unfortunately, arts exchange is not yet officially viewed here as being intrinsically desirable or necessary. It is used, as it were, in ‘combat’ as a tactical arm - fighting culture with culture - a new but not-so-secret weapon for use in various, ever changing target areas.  

When his request for funds to tour the Soviet Union was refused and his proposed exchange with China denied, Breen criticized State Department officials for taking an "early 19th century approach" to cultural diplomacy.  

While Breen demonstrated a genuine commitment to exchange, he was also willing to use the government’s cultural program to pursue his own agenda. Breen had ambitious plans for his production. He envisioned extensive tours with multiple casts, film rights, and other ventures involving an African-American repertory company. And he knew that the viability of these plans depended to a large extent on adequate government funding.

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45 Breen, “Cultural” 1.

extent on the success of *Porgy and Bess*. To garner publicity as well as funds for his work, Breen looked to the President's emergency fund program. When the administration appeared to be moving too slowly, he conducted well publicized diplomatic efforts to arrange tours independently of the State Department. When Breen undertook discussions with Soviet and Chinese officials, it was without the consent of U.S. officials. Not only did he negotiate major tours for *Porgy and Bess* in both countries, but Breen arranged for the Moiseyev Ballet and the Official Ensemble of the People's Republic of China to perform in the United States. Understandably, the Eisenhower administration did not appreciate Breen's independence. First, reciprocal exchanges of large groups were expressly against NSC and OCB policy. Second, his discussions with the Soviets and Chinese occurred when the administration was struggling to negotiate a cultural exchange treaty with the Soviets at the Geneva Summit of 1955. Third, the Cultural Presentation Committee had already established a policy of not assisting performing artists' tours to the Soviet Union at least until an exchange treaty had been ratified. Consequently, the Eisenhower administration rejected the tours because they circumvented existing policy without furthering established foreign policy objectives.
Statement of Purpose

My dissertation examines the advent of cultural diplomacy as a propaganda weapon in the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union. It traces the development of the Eisenhower administration’s emergency program designed to subsidize the international tours of selected artists. My study analyzes the objectives of the Emergency Fund for International Affairs and examine them in the context of the administration’s overall foreign policy goals. After discussing Eisenhower’s policies, it employs the Blevins Davis and Robert Breen production of Porgy and Bess as an example of the activities the emergency fund sponsored. In the process, cultural diplomacy as it was viewed by both the Eisenhower administration and by the leadership of Porgy and Bess is analyzed. By examining their respective objectives and the incidents where those aims were in conflict, the aporia between the rhetoric and actual practice of cultural diplomacy is illuminated.

A study of this nature is significant for two reasons. Primarily, it documents the history of one of the earliest and most prominent examples of the use of artists as cultural ambassadors by the United States’ government. With the exception of Laurie Schmeling’s unpublished Master’s thesis, "Negotiating ‘Catfish Row’: The Robert Breen Production of Porgy and Bess, 1952-1956, and the Question of Cultural Hegemony," which explores such social issues as
hegemony and cultural stereotypes but does not examine political and policy issues, such a study of the Breen production of *Porgy and Bess* has not been conducted. Consequently, the Breen archives remain a vast and valuable, but undocumented collection. Secondly, this study of the history of Eisenhower's program and the Breen production offers insight into the often tenuous relationship between government and the arts. Although *Porgy and Bess* is a singular example of the employment of the arts as cultural ambassadors, it serves to illustrate several important points. The United States' government has only viewed arts patronage as a means to a specified end and not as an end in itself. Although artists may have their own ambitions, the government has its own agenda. A fruitful venture requires some level of compatibility between their aims. If a subsidized artist or organization circumvents or subverts the government's agenda, it will jeopardize its continued support. It was a lesson that Robert Breen learned when he attempted to arrange exchanges with the Soviet Union and China without the administration's support.

There have been numerous books dealing with cultural diplomacy. Among the most notable books are Frank A. Ninkovich's *The Diplomacy of Ideas: U.S. Foreign Policy and Cultural Relations, 1938-1950* (1981) which provides a detailed account of pre-Eisenhower policy as well as an analysis of the differing philosophies guiding the practice
of cultural diplomacy. In his chapter "Cultural Diplomacy: Foreign Policy and the Exchange Programs" from the book *Public Policy and the Arts* (1982), Kevin V. Mulcahy summarizes the changes in the objectives and administrative structures of the United States' cultural exchange programs. Charles A. Thomson and Walter H.C. Laves' *Cultural Relations and U.S. Foreign Policy* (1963) also provides a general account of the history of cultural diplomacy policy and its practice. J.D. Parks' *Culture, Conflict and Coexistence: American - Soviet Cultural Relations, 1917-1958* analyzes the early efforts at exchange between the United States and the Soviet Union. While these sources offer solid summaries and analyses, they only provide, if at all, a cursory description of Eisenhower's Emergency Fund for International Affairs.

There have been only two books which deal with the Blevins Davis and Robert Breen production of *Porgy and Bess* in a substantial manner. The first is Truman Capote's gossipy, some might say malicious, *The Muses are Heard* (1956) which selectively details the production's tour of the Soviet Union. The other book is Hollis Alpert's *The Life and Times of Porgy and Bess: The Story of an American Classic* (1990) which devotes the middle section of his comprehensive history of the opera to the Breen production. While the scope of the book makes it a noteworthy secondary source for scholars of twentieth century American theatre
and music, its usefulness is limited. Alpert fails to examine critically or objectively significant aspects of the Porgy and Bess history. He only provides a surface analysis of the controversies over its status as a legitimate opera and the merits of its music, while his treatment of the debate over the work's portrayal of African-Americans lacks a depth necessary to such a complex issue. Alpert's summary of the Breen production is the most thorough study to date, but it is more a backstage biography than an attempt to examine the production within the context of the Eisenhower administration's policies.

The primary sources for this study include records from several archival collections. From the Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library, I utilized materials from various special collections including the Ann Whitman Files, White House Central Files, the Papers of the Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs, and the Jackson Committee records. Additionally, I have researched the records of the Robert Breen Collection housed at the Lawrence and Lee Theatre Research Institute at The Ohio State University. The correspondence, administrative records, and other materials from these libraries provide insight into the formation of the President's emergency fund, its implementation, and the experiences of one of the performing groups selected to represent the United States.
Other significant primary sources include Congressional records and Department of State publications.

Chapter Two provides a history and analysis of the Eisenhower administration’s cultural diplomacy program. In particular, it focuses on the formulation, activities, and results of the two year emergency fund operation. Chapter Three centers on the Blevins Davis and Robert Breen production of *Porgy and Bess*. It details its production and tour history, the efforts of Breen to obtain government sponsorship, and the reactions of both United States and foreign officials to the production in its role as cultural ambassador. Chapter Four examines Robert Breen’s efforts to negotiate reciprocal exchange with the Soviet Union and China and the administration’s response to his independent acts of diplomacy. Chapter Five is the summary and conclusions.
CHAPTER II

THE EISENHOWER ADMINISTRATION'S

"NEW LOOK" AT DIPLOMACY, PROPAGANDA, AND THE ARTS

Introduction

In reaction to the perceived threat from the Soviet Union's "cultural offensive" of the 1950s, the United States government initiated its own efforts designed to counter the Soviets' activities and win the allegiance of strategic nations through a blend of diplomacy, propaganda, and the arts. As a precursor to these efforts, a thorough evaluation of the United States' information and exchange programs was undertaken during the early days of the Eisenhower presidency. On the basis of this study, the new administration redefined the nature and objectives of government sponsored propaganda and cultural activities within the context of its self-proclaimed "New Look" foreign policy.

Underlying the Eisenhower administration's information and cultural programs was the belief that communist countries, and in particular the Soviet Union, were proliferating a false image of the United States as a materialistic society void of cultural worth while
presenting an equally false portrayal of their own economic and cultural progress. In describing these propaganda programs to a meeting of the President's Cabinet, Theodore Streibert, director of the United States Information Agency (USIA), stated:

The psychology of the cultural offensive is basic. . . . When the sophisticated Parisian audiences are impressed by the artistry of the Peking Opera, they unconsciously credit Communist Chinese with cultivated human qualities similar to their own. Artistry and skill are used to neutralize unfavorable attitudes and build common ground between the cultures.¹

Streibert argued that the above example "is not a true cultural exchange in the sense in which we [the United States] use the term. The exchange is deliberately employed, and strictly controlled for propaganda purposes."² While he offered a valid characterization of communist countries' exploitation of the arts, Streibert misrepresented the nature of the United States' program. In fact, his description of the Chinese program was equally applicable to the United States' cultural efforts. According to a confidential policy paper, the President's fund was, after all, "designed as to refute communist propaganda by demonstrating clearly the United States's


² Streibert, "Communist."
dedication to peace, human well-being and spiritual values." Due to differing governing systems, philosophies, and societal values, there were substantial differences in the type and degree of governmental control of their respective propaganda programs, but the overall objectives were similar. Obviously, what constitutes propaganda depends upon who is defining the term.

This chapter examines the nature of the Cold War as viewed by the Eisenhower administration. It describes their efforts to craft a new propaganda program which included the incorporation of the arts into its foreign policy operations. And it provides a history and analysis of the President's Emergency Fund for Participation in International Affairs.

The Nature of the Conflict: The Cold War Between the United States and the Soviet Union

In the Cold War climate of the 1950s, the United States government's policy considerations, both foreign and domestic, were dominated by a sense of intractable military, philosophical, and economic conflict with the only nation possessing the capability to inflict mass destruction upon

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the American populace. Such an atmosphere affected all aspects of the government from the Eisenhower administration’s policy priorities to the Pentagon’s strategic military decisions to the Congress where witch hunts for communist subversives dominated the agenda and the national news.

Consistent with the Cold War thinking of the period, the Eisenhower administration argued that it was the perceived "Soviet drive for world domination" which threatened the United States and other democratic nations.\(^4\)

It described the clash between the world’s two dominant nations in a report which read:

> The nature of the conflict lies in this fundamental clash, and the conflict will continue until one side or the other drops behind in the development of capabilities or loses its will to continue the struggle. This view is widely held, but there has not always been a full recognition of the measure of the task imposed upon the United States.\(^5\)

Under such circumstances, the administration believed that the United States’ foreign policy objectives were two-fold:

> The purposes of the United States in its actions abroad spring from two basic concerns: first, for the physical security of the United States; second, for the development of a world environment favorable to the survival and flourishing of free institutions.\(^6\)

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\(^5\) Jackson Committee, "Nature" 2.

\(^6\) Jackson Committee, "Nature" 2.
The newly-elected President planned to achieve these objectives by implementing an aggressive foreign policy program which would include a propaganda and cultural counter-offensive.

The Report of the President’s Committee on International Information Activities

Three weeks after his election as President, General Dwight Eisenhower set in motion a comprehensive review of the United States’s foreign policy. With the threat of global nuclear war a harrowing but very real possibility, Eisenhower sought to expand the United States’ Cold War arsenal beyond military options to include economic and propaganda warfare.

In a memo dated November 21, 1952, Eisenhower advisors recommended that a secret committee be appointed to survey current "psychological warfare" activities and recommend new strategies for engaging the Soviet Union. Following the advice of the internal memorandum, Eisenhower established the President’s Committee on International Activities with William H. Jackson as chairman of the committee. Additional members included Robert Cutler, Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, Fortune magazine’s C. D. Jackson, representing the State Department; Sigurd Larmon, representing the Director for Mutual Security; Gordon Gray; Barklie McKee Henry; John C. Hughes; and Abbott
Washburn as Executive Secretary of the Committee. The committee's staff was comprised of representatives from the following agencies: Department of State; Department of Defense; Central Intelligence Agency; Mutual Security Agency; and Office of Defense Mobilization. In a letter detailing its mission, Eisenhower directed the committee to "make a survey and evaluation of the international information policies and activities of the Executive Branch of the Government and of policies and activities related thereto with particular reference to the international relations and the national security of this country."

In late June of 1953, the President's Committee or as it was more commonly known, the Jackson Committee, reported to Eisenhower with its findings. Their conclusions were predicated on the fundamental premise that the chief threat to the United States and other democratic nations emanated from the Soviet Union. While the Jackson committee doubted that the Soviets would risk provoking a general war, it did believe that the "USSR will continue to undermine and destroy the non-communist world by political warfare."


9 Eisenhower, "Memo to James S. Lay, Jr."

10 Jackson Committee, "Nature" 5.
In the committee's opinion, it was the United States' responsibility to counter the Soviet Union's activities. "In order to make the free world invulnerable to such efforts," the committee argued, "the United States must seek to strengthen the existing coalition, to win new allies and to find and exploit weaknesses in the Soviet system."  

While these assumptions basically reaffirmed the established positions of previous administrations, it did indicate the Eisenhower administration's understanding that the Cold War would be fought by means other than military warfare.

While emphasizing the notion that information activities were only one aspect of the nation's foreign policy, the committee argued that propaganda had a useful and necessary role in the United States' international activities. It not only reaffirmed a decades-old commitment to the use of propaganda to further foreign policy objectives, but the Jackson Committee report established the basic character and aims of the Eisenhower administrations' propaganda policies.

The Jackson Committee posited that previous administrations' information, exchange, and cultural programs were characterized by diverse, often conflicting operational objectives. They maintained that too often past efforts were hampered by a lack of clear goals. In essence, their report attempted to resolve the tension between the

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competing aims of a free positive exchange of ideas, individuals, and cultures versus hard-hitting, anti-communist propaganda by rejecting the significance of either one of these approaches. Instead, the Jackson Committee contended:

The dissemination of truth is not enough. Friendship for the United States is neither a prerequisite to nor a guarantee of action in the interest of the United States. Anti-Communist propaganda may antagonize more foreigners than it convinces. While all of these elements have a legitimate place in an information program, the Committee believes that any program supported by government funds can only be justified to the extent that it assists in the achievement of national objectives.¹¹

Consequently, it was argued that limitations or conflicts existing within or between operational tactics could be resolved by sublimating them to broader national security objectives.

The committee defined the primary aim of propaganda activities when it concluded:

The primary and over-riding purpose of the information program should be to submit evidence to the peoples of other nations that their own aspirations for freedom, progress and peace are supported and advanced by the objectives and policies of the United States. The efforts of all media -- radio, press and publications, motion pictures, exchanges of persons, and libraries and information centers -- should be directed to this end: to show the identity of our goals with those of other peoples. These goals and desires which we hold in common must

be explained in ways that will cause others to join with us in achieving them.\textsuperscript{13}

Placed within the context of the Cold War, the propaganda program was viewed by the Jackson Committee as one weapon in the United States' arsenal with which to achieve the primary goals of securing the physical security of the nation and developing a world climate favorable to the policies and values of the United States and other democratic nations.

The Jackson Committee argued that the United States' previous propaganda programs had been inadequate. Their study stated, "Opportunities have been missed to take the offensive in global propaganda campaigns. Too often, the program has been merely defensive."\textsuperscript{14} In their final report to President Eisenhower, the committee offered specific recommendations to insure a more aggressive international propaganda program. Among their suggestions, they advised that more of the United States' propaganda work should be covert or unattributed to the government. Moreover, the committee suggested, "Far greater efforts should be made to utilize private American organizations for the advancement of the United States objectives."\textsuperscript{15} A reliance on the private sector to conduct information, educational exchange, and cultural activities not only

\textsuperscript{13} Jackson Committee, "Propaganda" 4.
\textsuperscript{14} Jackson Committee, "Propaganda" 6.
\textsuperscript{15} Jackson Committee, "Propaganda" 19.
appealed to the new Republican administration's desire to limit government power and bureaucracy, but it was in itself a propaganda advantage to be able to point out that, unlike in the Soviet Union, the American participants were not agents of the State. As the report concluded, the "gain in dissemination and credibility through the use of such channels will more than offset the loss by the government of some control over content."\textsuperscript{16}

To facilitate the coordination of the administration's "New Look" foreign policy including propaganda initiatives, the formation of a new inter-agency committee was recommended. Created within the structure of the National Security Council, the Operations Coordinating Board (OCB) was "designed to achieve better integrated direction . . . and to fill the gap which has existed in the past between the formulation of general objectives and the detailed actions needed to give effect to them."\textsuperscript{17} Based upon the Jackson Committee's recommendation, Eisenhower commissioned the OCB with the following members: the Under-Secretary of State, as chairman; the Deputy Secretary of Defense; Deputy Director for National Security; the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, and a Special Assistant to the President. While the OCB would serve many functions within the Eisenhower administration, one of its

\textsuperscript{16} Jackson Committee, "Propaganda" 19.

\textsuperscript{17} Jackson Committee, "White House Press Release" 2.
responsibilities would be to oversee the operations of the President’s Emergency Fund for Participation in International Affairs. In that capacity, it had significant control over the fund’s operation, including final approval of artists and the allocation of funds. When examining the President’s fund, it is essential to keep not only in mind the fund’s subordination to the OCB, but the Jackson Committee origins of the OCB and its association with the National Security Council because those agencies dictated the nature and purpose of the cultural program.

After the Jackson Committee issued its report, its ideas and rhetoric were often repeated in the private and public stances of the Eisenhower administration over its two terms in the White House. For example, Eisenhower delivered a speech entitled "Building a Cooperative Peace" before the American Newspaper Publishers Association. In his remarks, the President attributed the Soviet’s repeated characterization of the United States as a society preoccupied with material objects while ignoring intellectual and cultural endeavors to two sources. Eisenhower believed that "these misconceptions are partially the result of Communist propaganda. But they flourish in the lack of comprehensive, truthful two-way information."  

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He argued that if "this is not to be the age of atomic hysteria and horror, we must make it the age of international understanding and cooperative peace."\textsuperscript{19}

The rhetoric of the Cold War era often resulted in a bi-polarization of the conflict: it was democracy versus communism, us versus them, good versus evil, and freedom versus slavery. It is tempting, and often appropriate, to dismiss the language of both Americans and Soviets as either alarmist or crass propaganda. But such characterizations would be a misleading simplification of very real issues and concerns. It was the early years of the Cold War, television and international communications were still in their infancy. The world had not yet been linked into a global community whereby citizens could receive via televisions or personal computers daily information about each other. Consequently, the Eisenhower administration took seriously the threat of communist propaganda which portrayed the United States in negative light. As evidence of their concern, Vice-President Richard Nixon argued in a commencement address at Lafayette College that "we must, at whatever cost, place additional emphasis on developing the kind of ideological program which is designed to win the minds and hearts of men."\textsuperscript{20}

\textsuperscript{19} Eisenhower, "Building" 701.

A White House Cabinet meeting in July, 1955, further demonstrated the administration's concern over the effectiveness of the Soviet Union's propaganda activities. After two dress rehearsals and a slew of visual and audio accompaniments in hand, USIA chief Theodore Streibert presented a thirty minute briefing on the Soviet Union's cultural and propaganda program before the President, his Cabinet, and the National Security Council (NSC). In between slides demonstrating examples of Communist propaganda, Streibert stated, "Since 1952, this selling campaign has been very greatly accelerated. It has now reached the dimension of a 'cultural offensive'."\(^{21}\) He stressed that much of this activity resulted from increased numbers of artists, athletes, and scientists traveling to other countries. In Streibert's opinion, "The recent 'soft' approach of Communist propaganda with its emphasis . . . on 'peace' and 'culture' is especially dangerous and difficult to meet."\(^{22}\) As the creation of the President's fund suggests, the President agreed with Streibert's grave assessment.

\(^{21}\) Streibert, "Communist."

\(^{22}\) Streibert, "Communist."
The President's Emergency Fund for Participation in International Affairs

On July 27, 1954, President Eisenhower submitted a request to the Senate for a supplemental appropriation of $5,000,000 for the fiscal year 1955. The communication read:

For expenses necessary to enable the President to take such measures as he deems appropriate to meet extraordinary or unusual circumstances arising in the international affairs of the Government, $5,000,000 to remain available until expended for use in the President's discretion and without regard to such provisions of the law as he may specify: Provided, That the President shall transmit to the Committees on Appropriations of the Senate and of the House of Representatives, not less often than quarterly, a full report of expenditures under this appropriation.\(^2\)

Eisenhower informed the Senate that the fund would be used to finance activities designed to "demonstrate the superiority of the products and cultural values of our system of free enterprise."\(^3\)

It was the Eisenhower administration's intention to utilize the $5,000,000 fund for two activities: (1) to insure that United States' businesses were represented in international trade fairs; and, (2) to assist the international tours of performing artists. Eisenhower


\(^3\) Eisenhower, "Supplemental" 2.
posited that participation in international trade fairs would help insure a "wider understanding of American products and our private enterprise system." And on the cultural front, he suggested "we need greater resources to assist and encourage private musical, dramatic, and other cultural groups to go forth and demonstrate that America too can lay claim to high cultural and artistic accomplishments." As evidence of the potential benefit from subsidizing the travel of artists abroad, Eisenhower pointed to the successful State Department sponsored tour of *Porgy and Bess* to Austria and Germany in 1952. He wrote, "The contribution which such presentations make toward a better understanding of America can scarcely be exaggerated." On August 19, 1954, the Congress indicated its support for Eisenhower's assessment when it approved the President's Fund.

As to the necessity of a special fund, particularly one with a comparatively minuscule appropriations, Eisenhower argued that there was no money "available to meet the numerous unforeseen and unexpected contingencies, both great and small, which arise constantly in the day-to-day conduct of the international affairs of the Government."

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26 Eisenhower, "Supplemental" 2.


President of the United States, Eisenhower had various funds available to him for the development and implementation of policy. For example, under section 401 of the Mutual Security Act of 1954, Eisenhower had at his discretion a special fund totaling $150,000,000 to use for unforeseen contingencies in the foreign aid program and for any purposes he believed vital to the security of the United States. However, he contended that these funds were "inappropriate for dealing with many situations which, although highly important, do not come within the purview of this fund."^{29}

Despite the President's public assertions, there was discussion within the administration as to whether the President's Emergency Fund should be merged into the larger special fund provided by the Mutual Security Act. In an internal memo in 1956, arguments, both pro and con, were offered for such a course of action. While such an arrangement would give the Emergency Fund a more substantial and secure funding source, it was suggested that to "tap the 'Special Fund' . . . would require a determination and recommendation to the President that there are sufficient unobligated balances to take care of this program after providing for all other higher priority contingencies."^{30}

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^{29} Eisenhower, "Supplemental" 2.

Consequently, there could be no guarantee that funds would be available for trade and artistic ventures. Additionally, there were those in Congress who not only viewed with skepticism government sponsored propaganda but opposed any large new information programs. During this period, Senator Joseph McCarthy was accusing United States overseas libraries of holding the writings of alleged communist authors. It was probably these reasons and Eisenhower’s genuine belief that the United States had to respond to the Soviet efforts which led him to request a small, but separate, fund to insure participation in trade fairs and to conduct cultural diplomacy.

The Bureaucratic Structure of the Emergency Fund

In a letter dated August 18, 1954, President Eisenhower informed Theodore C. Streibert, director of the United States Information Agency, that he was forming an action group of the Cabinet to coordinate the activities of the President’s Emergency Fund for International Affairs. The action group would be comprised of the following members: the Secretaries of State, Commerce, Labor, and Health, Education and Welfare as well as the Directors of the

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Foreign Operations Administration and the USIA. Other agencies, including the Central Intelligence Agency and the Department of Defense, would participate as needed.

One of the first actions the representatives decided upon was to divide the fund’s operations into two divisions, one for trade fairs and the other for cultural affairs. It was agreed that the Department of State would manage the inter-agency operating committee for cultural activities while the Department of Commerce would coordinate the one for trade fairs.

In September, further changes altered the bureaucratic and power structure of the emergency fund. On September 10th, the Cabinet action group placed the trade fairs and cultural committees as regular working groups of the Operations Coordinating Board (OCB). A few days later, Eisenhower appointed the USIA’s Streibert as coordinator of the emergency fund’s appropriations. The fact that the fund was to be under the aegis of the National Security Council’s OCB and the nation’s propaganda agency clearly indicated the Eisenhower administration’s priorities for the fund. According to an administration report, it was the responsibility of the Director of the USIA to “see that each time the United States is represented abroad, the

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representation refutes as directly as possible the
communist's anti-American propaganda line and reinforces the
foreign policy of the United States."^{32}

Due to the number of government agencies involved, it
is difficult to delineate the specific responsibilities of
each department in the operation of the fund. To briefly
summarize, the OCB inter-agency committees for trade and
cultural activities approved specific projects developed
with private cultural groups and industry. Afterwards, the
Departments of State and Commerce worked with the individual
projects to develop tour sites, itineraries, and to arrange
for overseas transportation. While they did the planning
for the projects, the USIA worked with the two departments
"to assure their [the sponsored projects] proper
psychological impact and to plan their exploitation and
publicity abroad."^{33} In the targeted countries, the United
States ambassador worked to insure the effective completion
of the projects once they were overseas.

To insure that the subsidized artists represented the
best the United States had to offer, the American National
Theatre and Academy (ANTA) was contracted to represent the
Department of State in its dealings with the artists. In

^{32} Operations Coordinating Board, "Report on the
President's Emergency Fund for Participation in
International Affairs," 6 Dec. 1954, White House Office,
Central Files, Box 910, Eisenhower Library, 1.

^{33} Operations, "Report" 1.
selecting the congressionally-chartered ANTA to participate in the Emergency Fund, the Eisenhower administration tapped an organization which had already ventured into the cultural exchange arena. In 1949, ANTA had accepted an invitation from the Danish National Theatre to present *Hamlet* at Kronberg castle in Elsinore. It sponsored the Ballet Theatre’s tour of eight countries in 1950. In 1951, 1952, and 1953, ANTA coordinated the appearance of various attractions including the appearance of the Theatre Guild’s production of *Oklahoma!*, the New York City Ballet, *Meadow* with Judith Anderson, and *Porgy and Bess* at the Berlin Festival in cooperation with the Department of State.

ANTA brought more than experience to the cultural program. First, it assured a level of artistic credibility that neither politicians nor bureaucrats could provide. Second, its selection reflected philosophical and propaganda considerations. In part, ANTA symbolically affirmed the administration’s commitment to private sector initiatives over increased bureaucracy. As an administration report concluded, the not-for-profit organization was chosen in order to "conduct the cultural performers program through private channels as much as possible."\(^\text{34}\) ANTA symbolically affirmed the administration’s commitment to private sector initiatives over increased government bureaucracy. More importantly, ANTA’s involvement had propaganda value in that

\(^\text{34}\) Operations, "Report" 2.
the administration could point to it as proof that the emergency fund was not a strictly government run propaganda program.

Robert W. Dowling, Chairperson of the Board of ANTA, appointed Robert C. Schnitzer to administer the program. In turn, a special executive committee composed of Dowling, Mrs. H. Alwyn Innes-Brown, Clarence Derwent, Roger L. Stevens, George Freedley, C. Lawton Campbell, and Rosamond Gilder supervised ANTA's portion of the cultural program. Additionally, advisory panels in the areas of theatre, dance, and music were established to "consider the artistic calibre of all candidates applying for support, as well as to suggest appropriate attractions or performers who should be encouraged to participate in the program."

The following individuals were appointed to the Drama Advisory Panel: Dr Oscar J. Campbell, Columbia University; John Chapman, New York Daily News drama critic; Richard Coe, drama editor of the Washington Post; George Freedley, Curator of the Theatre Collection of the New York Public Library; Rosamond Gilder, Director of the International Theatre Institute; Walter Kerr, drama critic for the New York Herald-Tribune; Herman Levin, President of the League of New York Theatres; William Hawkins, drama critic for the World-Telegram and Sun; Alfred Lunt, actor; Tom Prideaux,

entertainment editor of *Life* magazine, and Joseph Verner Reed, theatre producer.

The Dance Advisory panel was composed of the following individuals: Emily Coleman, dance and music critic of *Newsweek* magazine; Hyman R. Faine, Executive Secretary of the American Guild of Musical Artists; Lucia Chase, of the Ballet Theatre; Doris Humphrey, choreographer; Martha Hill, Department of Dance, Julliard School of Music; Walter Terry, dance critic for the *New York Herald-Tribune*; and Lincoln Kirstein of the New York City Ballet.

Members of the Music Advisory panel included: Virgil Thompson, composer; Dr. Harold Spivacke, Chief of the Music Division, Library of Congress; Olin Downes, music critic for the *New York Times*; Dr. Howard Hanson, Director of the Eastman School of Music; Jay S. Harrison, music editor for the *New York Herald-Tribune*; Dr. Paul Henry Lang, music critic for the *New York Herald-Tribune*; Edwin Hughes, Executive Secretary of the National Music Council; Al Manuti, President of the American Federation of Musicians, Local 802; William Schuman, President of Julliard School of Music; and Dr. Carlton Sprague Smith, Director of the Music Division of the New York Public Library.  

In a hearing before the Senate's Committee on Foreign Relations, Robinson McIlvaine, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs and chairman of the Operations

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36 ANTA, *International*. 
Coordinating Board's working group on cultural activities, described ANTA's role in the selection and funding process. Using a fictional orchestra as an example, McIlvaine told the committee that the orchestra would first submit its plans and proposed budget to ANTA for consideration. He explained, "This budget would include all operating, travel, and other expenses of the orchestra and would indicate the amount of money, if any, which the orchestra is able to raise through private sources, and the estimated income the orchestra expects to receive from its various engagements overseas." If the budget is approved and the appropriate panel approves its artistic credentials, ANTA sent the proposal to the Department of State for evaluation. "The project is reviewed in the department and, if satisfactory," McIlvaine stated, "is submitted to the interagency committee." If the request for the grant-in-aid is approved, funds are transferred to ANTA to distribute to the orchestra. It was then ANTA's responsibility to insure that the money was "properly expended and accounted for and that any surplus ... returned." 

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38 United States, International 24.

Both administration and ANTA records indicate that ANTA played a significant, although not decisive, role in the conduct of the emergency fund. Besides giving its artistic stamp of approval to potential participants and administering the distribution of funds, ANTA also suggested a variety of policy considerations to the administration including advocating mutual exchanges with Eastern bloc countries especially the Soviet Union. Despite its role as agent of the Department of State, the actual influence of ANTA was limited. Its selection of participants was subject to review by the administration and its significant proposal for exchanges with the Soviet Union was not implemented. In an editorial in The Nation, Ira Wolfert wrote:

With a Congressional appropriation to be accounted for, the experts went out the window and politics came in. ANTA’s power to pick the shows was reduced to advising on them and the Operations Coordinating Board - the old Psychological Warfare outfit with its ramifications in the Defense Department, the Central Intelligence Agency, the United States Information Service, the State Department and Congress - took over.  

While his contention that the OCB was simply a reconfiguration of the World War II era propaganda agency mischaracterized the purpose and scope of its activities, Wolfert was correct to assert that it was the administration and various agencies which controlled the fund. After all, it was the Jackson Committee’s edict that all programs

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should establish as their guiding objective the advancement of foreign policy goals. It is not surprising then that issues of national security and propaganda considerations outweighed artistic concerns.

Perhaps the most historically interesting, but least significant, figure associated with the President's Emergency Fund for International Affairs was the president himself. Both administrative records and personal observations of those involved with the program indicate that Dwight Eisenhower played a minor role in formulating policy decisions and in the operation of the fund. For the most part, his role seems to have been limited to final approval of major decisions and to signing the occasional letters of appreciation to the fund's participants. Eisenhower's own words support this description of his participation in the program. In a personal letter to his brother Edgar, the President responded to his brother's unsolicited request to include the musical group Fred Waring and the Pennsylvanians in the program. After explaining the basic aims of the project, he concluded by asking Edgar to "keep this letter personal and confidential because it is just possible that my information on the whole matter may not be up to date or may be completely inaccurate."  

Clearly, operational control came from the OCB, USIA, Department of State and other agencies and not from the Oval Office.

Eisenhower's level of involvement should not be interpreted as a lack of support for the program. He was known, and often criticized, for practicing a managerial style which emphasized the delegation of authority to subordinates. It was a leadership style he learned while in the military. As Chester J. Pach and Elmo Richardson observed:

He also absorbed [General George C.] Marshall's managerial philosophy, the two most important tenets of which were these: first, the decision maker must not be distracted by problems that subordinates should resolve for themselves; and second, the assistants must have ready the precise information needed to make decisions.42

While he left its operation to others, the objectives and political philosophy guiding the cultural and trade fair program were indelibly influenced by Eisenhower's view of government and the world. The fund's emphasis on the utilization and participation of the private sector reflected the President's belief in limited government, while its pro-active nature fulfilled his pledge to pursue a more aggressive foreign policy.

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The Nature of the President's Emergency Fund

The Eisenhower administration requested and received supplemental appropriations for the fiscal years 1955 and 1956. In each year, Congress allocated $5,000,000 of which $2,225,000 went to the cultural program, $2,225,000 went to fund participation in trade fairs, and the remaining $500,000 went to the USIA to cover its administrative costs. In 1956, the administration asked the Congress to enact legislation which would place the emergency fund's activities on a permanent basis. In turn, Congress passed the International Cultural Exchange and Trade Fair Participation Act of 1956 which made trade fair participation and cultural diplomacy a permanent component of the United States' foreign policy.

Over its two year existence, the President's emergency fund subsidized nearly sixty international tours of musicians, singers, orchestras, theatre groups, and other performing artists. While a diverse array of performers from the traditional to innovators in the arts were sponsored, the very nature of the program placed requirements upon the selection process which had more to do with national security issues than with artistic concerns.

43 A detailed list of sponsored performers can be found in Appendix A.
The President's emergency fund differed from the Department of State's regular exchange program. Whereas the International Educational Exchange Program (IES) sponsored mutual exchanges among educators, scientists, artists, business persons, athletes, and others, the emergency fund had different objectives. In testimony before a House committee hearing, USIA Director Streibert candidly told the Committee on Foreign Affairs that the "main purpose of all this is psychological and in the field of propaganda." Accordingly, the administration had no interest in using the emergency fund to finance reciprocal ventures. As Clive L. DuVal, General Counsel for the USIA, stated, "it is a one-way operation. We don't expect to have Oklahomas and Porgy and Besses coming back to this country. The intent of this program is entirely different." As a propaganda program, the intent was not to foster a mutual exchange of ideas but to disseminate the truth about the United States as defined by the Eisenhower administration.

Although the Department of State selected ANTA to insure the artistic integrity of the program, aesthetic concerns were secondary to foreign policy considerations. From the selection of artists to the choice of countries,

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45 United States, Providing for Cultural 6-7.
OCB, State Department, and USIA officials exerted final authority over the cultural program. After ANTA approved a particular performing artist or group based on artistic merit, the administration's foreign policy units evaluated the "character" of the selected participants. In written testimony prepared for the House Appropriations Committee, Robinson McIlvaine wrote that because the artists acted as goodwill ambassadors "every effort must be made to ensure that performers or groups be . . . good representatives of the U.S.A. . . . "

46 He suggested that a "known loud-mouth, an alcoholic, a communist or even a party liner" was the type of individual who was prohibited from receiving funds. 47 McIlvaine acknowledged that in larger groups, such as symphonies, the administration had to trust the group's management to select appropriate participants. He pointed to the Symphony of the Air's aborted trip to the Middle East and India as a case where a scheduled tour was canceled due to negative character questions. Although the symphony was a previous recipient of funds, changes in its management caused the Eisenhower administration to reconsider its continued support. "When we made our routine check of the new management," McIlvaine explained, "it was


47 McIlvaine 4.
clear that we did not have the types that could be counted upon to be good representatives abroad." 48 His assertion that several members were thought to be "politically unreliable" was a thinly veiled insinuation that they were communist sympathizers. 49 Fearing adverse publicity, the orchestra was told that the "projected Middle East tour had proved to be impractical considering the unsettled conditions in that part of the world." 50 The OCB cultural group not only evaluated the artists or groups, it had final approval over their tour destinations.

Appraisals of the President's Emergency Fund

One of the inherent conflicts evident in the practice of cultural diplomacy has been the tension between the need for immediate results to justify the continuation of appropriations versus the long-term nature of changing people's attitudes and opinions. While it is possible to conduct financial audits to determine how funds for cultural diplomacy were expended, it is immensely more difficult to analyze the effectiveness of the policy. The practice of cultural diplomacy involving the introduction of a culture, values, and ideas to another country is a slow process which requires patience and vision. These are qualities which

48 McIlvaine 12.
49 McIlvaine 11.
50 McIlvaine 12.
have not always been associated with the United States government.

In both public and private communications, the Eisenhower administration enthusiastically approved of the emergency fund’s activities. Typically, comments consisted of rhetorical flourishes about the value of cultural diplomacy punctuated with anecdotal examples of international goodwill resulting from the artists’ tours. While their evaluations reselected a genuine support for the program, the administration’s public reports should be viewed as an extension of the fund’s propaganda activities. After all, their remarks were crafted with the objective of winning the support of Congress as well as convincing the public that the United States was winning the "cultural war."

In a draft letter from Eisenhower to the Secretaries of State and Commerce and the Director of the USIA, the President expressed confidence in the program. The President wrote:

> It has always been my belief that contacts between individuals help create a more intimate understanding. We should show these peoples how we Americans work and play -- show them the things we produce, not only the products of our working men but also the attainments of our artists. The Emergency Fund Program has been uniquely successful in achieving this
goal so often neglected in these times of overriding international problems.\textsuperscript{51}

After thanking the respective departments for their efforts, Eisenhower concluded by writing, "I am convinced that we have won millions of friends and left seeds of doubt among those less well disposed toward us in many lands. The results have been far more than could have been expected with the funds expended for this program."\textsuperscript{52}

A USIA report to Congress offered this favorable evaluation of the fund's work:

> The information posts abroad gave vigorous support to appearances overseas by outstanding American literary, dramatic, dance, musical and athletic personalities, including those whose tours were sponsored under the President's Fund and arranged by the Department of State.\textsuperscript{53}

Assistant Secretary of State Robinson McIlvaine offered the following assessment of the fund. He stated before a Senate Hearing:

> These [examples of funded projects] have been sufficient, however, to illustrate that the peoples in other countries have gained a respect and admiration for the United States in the areas of performing arts, athletic prowess, and sportsmanship which they did not have before.

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\textsuperscript{51} Dwight D. Eisenhower, "Draft Letter From the President to the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Commerce and the Director of the United States Information Agency," 6 May 1955, White House Office, National Security Council Staff: Papers, 1948-1961, OCB Central File Series, Box 14, Eisenhower Library, 1.

\textsuperscript{52} Eisenhower, "Draft Letter" 3.

At the same time American leaders, press, and general public have become increasingly aware that in these type of activities our country has a source of great strength in promoting abroad friendship and understanding for the United States.  

Beyond listing the funded projects and describing the favorable reactions they received in various countries, neither the USIA report or McIlvaine's statement offered specific data to show permanent changes in attitudes or policies towards the United States. For example, the USIA report quoted the Times of Indonesia as commenting, "If ever this paper came perilously close to forgetting its policy of leaning neither to the East nor to the West, it was during Martha Graham Week because this talented woman presented something of the United States that we could wholeheartedly approve of." The dilemma facing proponents of the President's fund was to provide evidence that this opinion was more than a reflection of momentary enthusiasm. Due to the nature of cultural diplomacy, such evaluations require years of observations. But in the short term, it was the best evidence available to justify future appropriations to continue the program. And during the Cold War, it could be argued that the actual effectiveness of the program was less important than the perception, both abroad and in the United States, of success. If the Soviet Union was conducting a

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55 United States Information Agency 8.
"cultural offensive", then the Eisenhower administration believed it had to respond in kind.

Perhaps the best indicator of the Eisenhower administration's belief in the Emergency Fund Program was that they successfully initiated and obtained legislation to make it permanent. As Streibert told a hearing before the House Committee of Foreign Affairs, "Because the program has proved successful and because of increasing Communist activity in similar programs, it has been decided to request the Congress to place the program on a permanent basis."56 Upon enactment, the International Cultural Exchange and Trade Fair Participation Act of 1956 replaced the President's fund, although it maintained the same bureaucratic structure.

While the administration's public rhetoric was unquestionably positive, reactions of commentators in the news media were mixed. The mainstream press often echoed the Cold War rhetoric of the administration, while those associated with the arts tended to be more critical. In an article entitled "Arts and Entertainment: Latest 'Cold War' Weapon for U.S.", U.S. News and World Report depicted the United States as the underdog and used the language of war to describe the fund's activities. For example, the article read, "It's a new field for the U.S. The Communists, for the first time, are meeting real competition in a global

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56 United States, Providing for Cultural 2.
battle of the arts." 57 *Newsweek* boasted that it "looked as if the Russians had better get busy again hauling up their cultural ambassadorial big guns..." 58 As these examples indicate, the administration succeeded in elevating cultural diplomacy into a Cold War battlefield.

The United States' media was not entirely uniform in its praise for the President's program. For instance, theatre critic Brooks Atkinson questioned the efficacy of mixing art and government propaganda. In particular, Atkinson was responding to the Department of State's cancellation of the appearance of *The Diary of Anne Frank* at the Paris International Theatre Festival of 1956. Fearful that a drama involving Nazi persecution of Jews would harm the delicate relations between France and Germany, officials decided against sponsoring the production. Of the incident, Atkinson wrote:

> From the point of view of a Government administrative agency, the decision seems to be a rational one. But it is one more piece of evidence that the functions of the Government and the function of art are not the same, and are sometimes in opposition. In the overseas programs, our Government uses American art as propaganda. It is engaged in a 'Cold war' with the Soviet Government, which uses Russian art as propaganda, and the points of view of both sides inevitably become similar.


But in the world of art there is only one fundamental criterion. What is the quality of the work of art?\textsuperscript{59} 

In an article for \textit{The Nation}, Richard Coe supported the program but criticized the administration for not more aggressively incorporating cultural diplomacy into its foreign policy. He argued that the program was underfunded and inadequate in scope. Coe wrote, "It is clear that the public and professions involved are poorly informed about the plan. It is also evident that the State Department's policy heads don't know a good thing when they're using it."\textsuperscript{60} 

Despite the criticisms of Atkinson and Coe, the media tended to echo the rhetoric of the administration. The President's Fund for International Affairs was generally regarded in the press as an important and effective way to present a positive image of the United States abroad while combating the negative effects of Soviet propaganda.

\textbf{Conclusion}

The 1950's witnessed the escalation of the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union. During this period, their respective governments built large military


\textsuperscript{60} Richard L. Coe, "Behind the Curtain," \textit{The Nation} 19 July 1957, 56.
arsenals designed to assure the unconditional surrender of the other. However, armaments were only one aspect of the competition between the two nations. Each sought to achieve their respective international objectives via other means. It was in this environment that the arts became coopted as an official instrument of foreign policy. For its part, the Eisenhower administration initiated an "emergency" two year program designed to counter the Soviet's perceived cultural offensive.

Over the two year history of the President's Emergency Fund for Participation in International Affairs, the administration partially subsidized the travel of nearly sixty individual performers and groups. While the President and others in his administration spoke forcefully about the intrinsic value of cultural diplomacy, they were clearly more interested in the propaganda potential of the arts. This aporia between the rhetoric of cultural diplomacy and the practice of propaganda has been evident historically in other administrations' information and exchange policies and it was equally true for Eisenhower's program. As a result, foreign policy and national security issues superseded artistic and aesthetic concerns. In the Cold war era, the distinction between cultural diplomacy and propaganda was not merely blurred but it was non-existent.
CHAPTER III
SOLDIERS ON THE FRONT-LINE OF THE COLD WAR:
ROBERT BREEN’S PRODUCTION OF PORGY AND BESS

Introduction

It was shortly before Christmas 1954 and the Porgy and
Bess company was traveling into a Communist country for the
first time. On this particular day, the train, transporting
them to destinations in Yugoslavia, stopped in the town of
Trieste. According to Ollie Stewart’s account in Theatre
Arts magazine, the cast members’ curious gazes out of the
train windows were met by the solemn stares of the station
guards. After a few moments, some of the performers decided
to serenade the troops with a selection of Christmas carols
as a goodwill gesture. After a few songs, the guards began
to respond to the singers’ efforts. “And by the time the
singers were starting a merry rendition of ‘Jingle Bells,’”
Stewart wrote, “undeniable proof that music hath charms was
plain for all to see. The guards, now openly smiling, were
humming the air vigorously in time with the music.”¹ With
an impromptu performance in an unlikely theatre, the Porgy

¹ Ollie Stewart, “An American Opera Conquers Europe,”
and Bess company eased cold war tensions just a little by fostering friendship through the arts.

Whether the story is a factual account or a romanticized version of the truth, it neatly captures the promise of cultural diplomacy and the experiences of the Porgy and Bess production. Government reports, press accounts, audience reactions, and the experiences of the company members attest to the fact that it was not a singular incident. Throughout Europe, South America, and the Middle East, the company was received by royalty, government officials, and large audiences with overwhelming approval and goodwill. Even President Eisenhower dubbed the performers "ambassadors of the arts" and observed that the Porgy and Bess company had made a "real contribution" to building a new level of understanding between the United States and the countries they visited.²

Much of Porgy and Bess' international success was due to producer and director Robert Breen's tireless work on behalf of the production. His association with the opera began when he was in Europe during the summer of 1949. On the streets and in restaurants, Breen heard people whistling

² Dwight D. Eisenhower, "Letter to Blevins Davis," 30 March 1953, Robert Breen Collection, Box 44, File 37, Lawrence and Lee Theatre Research Institute, Library of The Ohio State University, Columbus.
and humming songs from the opera. This convinced Breen that there was an international market for a production of *Porgy and Bess*. As he concluded, "Its first-rate theatre and good entertainment and something so much from our roots that no one but our own people can do it." In the spring of 1950, Breen began making arrangements to produce and direct the opera.

While his work as director garnered popular and critical acclaim, it was Breen's work as producer which ensured the production's success and longevity. In securing government subsidies for *Porgy and Bess'* international tours, Breen brought an almost missionary zeal for cultural diplomacy to his work with the Eisenhower administration. His involvement with cultural exchange began during his tenure as executive director of the American National and Theatre Academy. In 1950, Breen arranged for ANTA to sponsor, in coordination with the Department of State, the first European tour of the Ballet Theatre. The following year, he helped establish the working partnership between ANTA and the State Department which resulted in the appearance of *Oklahoma!, Medea*, and other entries in the Berlin Festival. From these experiences, Breen realized that there was a unique role for the arts to play in

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3 Robert Breen, "Outline of pre-production phase of *Porgy and Bess*," 22 April 1953, Robert Breen Collection, Theatre Research Institute.

4 Stewart 32.
generating better understanding and goodwill between countries and individuals.

Breen's purist view of cultural diplomacy conflicted with the Eisenhower administration's approach. As an artist, he approached it from a perspective which viewed cultural exchange as an intrinsically worthwhile and necessary component of international relations. For its part, the administration coopted the language of cultural diplomacy as a tactic in its propaganda and ideological contest with the Soviet Union. Its plans for the program were rooted in foreign policy concerns and objectives rather than the promotion of a free exchange of cultures and ideas. The President may have referred to the *Porgy and Bess* company as "ambassadors," but it is more accurate to say that they were viewed as soldiers on the front-lines of the propaganda battle. While not unaware of the political and policy considerations involved in the conduct of foreign policy, Breen, nevertheless, disdained the fact that the arts were "used, as it were, in 'combat' as a tactical arm - fighting culture with culture - a new but not-so-secret weapon for use in various ever-changing 'target areas.'"^5

As part of his efforts to conduct cultural diplomacy, Breen not only aggressively lobbied the Eisenhower administration, Department of State officials, and

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legislators for funds and recognition for Porgy and Bess, he even courted foreign officials to arrange tours for his company. From his perspective, Porgy and Bess was a tremendous asset for the United States. He wrote, "The effects of regular professional diplomacy are sometimes fleeting, whereas the results of this ambassadorial ensemble have been basic and permanent because real heart-to-heart contact was made." 6 It is not surprising that when Breen campaigned, without administration support for reciprocal exchanges with the Soviet Union and China, his efforts were rebuked. While he believed that such exchanges would provide a "solid basis for further and more extensive cultural cooperation and exchange," the administration viewed his plans as counterproductive to its established foreign policy objectives. 7

Besides differences in philosophies, other problems originated from Breen’s ambitious plans for his production. He envisioned Porgy and Bess as the centerpiece of an African-American repertory company involving multiple casts, extensive tours, film ventures, and other activities. Although Breen had a genuine commitment to cultural exchange, he viewed the President’s fund as an opportunity to enhance his production’s visibility and finance his extensive touring plans. Despite his assertion that the

6 Breen, "Cultural" 1.

7 Robert Breen, "Cultural" 1.
"Department needs a company such as ours more than we need the Department's 'blessing,'" Breen needed the government fund to help underwrite *Porgy and Bess* and future productions such as *Blues Opera*. Even with $707,000 from the President's fund and the patronage of several benefactors, the production incurred debts of $276,000 over a four year period. It was the subsidy from the Eisenhower administration which allowed Breen to minimize debts and keep the production in performance.

As part of his strategy to secure government funding, Breen conducted an intense publicity campaign to keep administration officials, including the President, and the press informed of the company's travels. It was Breen's belief that continued support of *Porgy and Bess* and other ventures would "depend entirely, I am sure, on how much 'good press' this tour gets in the United States." He seemed to have little hesitation about promoting his efforts, because he believed that the administration would be foolish not to sponsor the production. "I may be a bit immodest in my frankness when I say to you," Breen wrote to his public relations firm hired to promote the production, "that I think the Department [of State] is very lucky indeed

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to have *Porgy and Bess* to send around. I think it will be a long time before they find anything as universally acceptable. . . ."  

And when the Eisenhower administration seemed too hesitant or uninterested in additional tours, Breen conducted well publicized diplomatic efforts independently of the White House.

The Eisenhower administration’s support of *Porgy and Bess* provides an example of a successful partnership between government and the arts. While the program’s scope and funds were limited, the incorporation of *Porgy and Bess* and other ventures into the Eisenhower administration’s Cold War foreign policy activities represented the most direct and significant pre-National Endowment for the Arts policy since the Works Progress Administration’s arts program of the 1930s. Both artists and the administration benefited from the President’s emergency fund program. The sponsored artists received official recognition and funds to subsidize their work. And through such productions as *Porgy and Bess*, the administration fulfilled its objective of demonstrating to other nations that the United States could "lay claim to high cultural and artistic accomplishments."

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While the Eisenhower administration's patronage of *Porgy and Bess* was generally viewed as successful partnership, it is illustrative of the potential problems involved when the government mixes the practice of cultural diplomacy with the objectives of a propaganda program. As participants in the President's cultural fund program, the Eisenhower administration promoted the *Porgy and Bess* company as ambassadors of culture and goodwill. For their part, Robert Breen and his company proudly accepted Eisenhower's title of ambassadors of the arts. However, Breen's concept of cultural diplomacy and his view of the company's role was at odds with the Eisenhower administration's vision for the program. While officials used the rhetoric of cultural diplomacy, they were, in reality, operating a propaganda program. Their differences resulted in incidents of disagreement and conflict over funding and choice of countries.

The government's sponsorship of *Porgy and Bess* also offers insight into the often tenuous relationship between government and the arts. As a director and producer, Robert Breen had his own agenda which he actively pursued. At times, his plans undermined the agenda of the Eisenhower administration. His independent efforts to promote his production at times circumvented existing policy without furthering established foreign policy objectives. Although *Porgy and Bess* is a singular example, it serves to
illustrate the point that although artists may have their own ambitions, the government has its own objectives. If an artist’s plans conflict with the government’s agenda, she or he will jeopardize continued support.

In this chapter, the history of the international tours of Robert Breen’s production of *Porgy and Bess* is summarized. The reactions of the various government agencies, including the White House, the Department of State, and the Congress to the selection of the production to represent the United States are examined. Also, the impact of the administration’s patronage on Breen’s plans for international tours of *Porgy and Bess* is analyzed. Finally, Breen’s attempts to use the government’s cultural diplomacy program as a means to realize his plans for future projects involving an African-American repertory company are described.

**A Brief History of the International Tours of Porgy and Bess: 1952–1956**

Robert Breen’s production of the Dubose Heyward, George and Ira Gershwin opera *Porgy and Bess* toured for 208 weeks while appearing in seventy cities in twenty-nine countries across Europe, the Middle East, and North and South America. The company played before audiences speaking eighteen different languages. And the production introduced
audiences throughout the world to the talents of such notable artists as William Warfield, Leontyne Price, Cab Calloway, and Maya Angelou. For Breen and his performers, the highlight of four years of touring occurred during their appearance at the renowned Teatro alla Scala in Milan, Italy. Its engagement at the theatre represented a series of historic firsts: it was the first American company to play at the theatre; it was the first time an opera played a full week at the theatre, and it was the first time that the Scala’s rule against applause during a new work was ever broken.

Besides its artistic successes, the Breen production’s role as cultural ambassador was arguably its most significant accomplishment. Of the various performing artists and groups that the President’s Emergency Fund for International Affairs sponsored, Robert Breen and his company were among the most publicized and well-funded participants in the Cold War era program. *Porgy and Bess* received government subsidy on three different occasions from two Presidential administrations for a total of 31 weeks. For these reasons, Breen’s production of *Porgy and Bess* represents a significant example of the United States government’s coopting of the arts to achieve foreign policy objectives during the 1950s as well as a significant example in the incremental development of a public policy towards the arts in the United States.
Porgy and Bess premiered in Dallas at the State fair auditorium on June 9, 1952. Leontyne Price debuted as Bess while William Warfield was featured as Porgy. The box office gross of $93,000 for fourteen performances set a record for the theatre. The production went on to appear in Chicago and Pittsburgh before it played at the National Theatre in Washington, D.C., where President Truman attended the opening night performance on August 6th. While it was not unusual for a President to attend important cultural events, Truman’s appearance had added significance. Mindful of the need to counter the Soviet’s aggressive use of cultural diplomacy and the perception that the United States was a segregated society, the Truman administration had decided to underwrite the appearances of Porgy and Bess in Vienna and at the Berlin Festival in Germany. According to author Hollis Alpert, "Truman’s intercession during his last year in office may have been a factor in propelling this revival of Porgy and Bess on a lengthy odyssey."

In part, the production was selected by the Truman administration because of the friendship between the President and Breen’s co-producer Blevins Davis. As an old neighbor from Missouri, Davis had access to the President.

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12 See Appendix B for a complete list of Porgy and Bess’ performances.

But he brought more than high-level contacts to his partnership with Breen. Davis had experience in organizing international tours. He had presented Breen’s *Hamlet* in Denmark, sponsored a theatre group from Howard University at the Ibsen Festival in Norway, and sent the Ballet Theatre, of which he was President, on its tour in ten European countries. Davis also served as a member of ANTA’s Board of Directors. Together, Breen and Davis had formed the not-for-profit Everyman Opera to produce *Porgy and Bess*. However, it was his substantial personal financial resources which were most valuable, at least in the beginning, to the production. It was Davis’ initial underwriting of *Porgy and Bess*’s production costs which allowed it to begin.

Due to the performances in Europe, Breen decided to cancel the production’s scheduled appearance at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York City. From Breen’s perspective, the lost opportunity to play at the prestigious Met was disappointing, but he knew that the association with the government would help finance his plans for a European tour as well as possibly lead to future subsidies. While the Truman administration did not cover all expenses, it did underwrite travel costs plus four weekly payments of $15,000 to cover salaries and housing expenses. For the non-profit company, this was quite important because the cost of

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transporting seventy to ninety people and 50,000 pounds of equipment would have been extremely prohibitive. With the subsidy, the company was able to play its "official" dates and then continue on with its own commercial bookings in England and France. After their engagements, Air Force planes returned the company to the United States.

With the mission of representing the United States in the international cultural arena, the cast and crew of Porgy and Bess began their first venture with government sponsorship with less than a glorious start. On September 1, 1952, the company left Washington, D.C. on an Air Force C-54 plane for Vienna. After three hours in the air, the plane had to return to Washington after one of its engines had fallen off. The next day, the company successfully and safely flew to Austria.

Correspondence between Breen and his spouse and top assistant Wilva Breen indicates that he was upset by the administration’s decision to fly the company in a military transport airplane. Prior to their return to the United States, he complained that it is "shocking that they want to bring the company back in one of those cattle-cars . . . It will hurt the moral of the company." ¹⁵ In part, Breen believed that Department of State only flew the company in a

¹⁵ Robert Breen, "Letter to Wilva Breen," 8 Feb. 1953, Robert Breen Collection, Box 5, Theatre Research Institute, 2.
military plane because they were persons of color.\(^{16}\) He also thought that the choice of transportation reflected a lack of commitment to the company's work as cultural ambassadors. Wilva Breen's request to State Department officials for new transportation was greeted with a reminder that it was "exactly the way our wounded men are brought back from Korea" and that "this is not a commercial airline."\(^{17}\) The incident shows that Breen would not be a passive recipient of funds. He had his own concerns and agenda which he was more than willing to bring to the attention of administration officials.

Once in Vienna, *Porgy and Bess* opened on September 7th at the Staatsoper in der Volksoper. According to press reports, the President of Austria and the United States High Commissioner, Llewelyn Thompson, led an ovation that lasted for thirty minutes. *Theatre Arts* magazine quoted the newspaper *Wiener Tageszeitung*, "If more foreign cultural products circulated in the world in this way there would be

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\(^{16}\) To his credit, Breen was passionately aware of the daily discrimination his performers encountered solely because of the color of their skin. Throughout the four-year tour, he was committed to obtaining fair and equal treatment for his company. In his book, *The Life and Times of Porgy and Bess: The Story of an American Classic*, Hollis Alpert writes that Breen required the Dallas Manager of the State Fair Auditorium to desegregate the theatre for all performances of the opera (167-168). This was not a singular example, but one of many which occurred throughout the production's four-year run.

\(^{17}\) Breen, "Letter to Wilva Breen."
better understanding among peoples." The production was so well received that an extra performance was added. To accommodate the company’s schedule, the U.S. High Commissioner’s Office in Austria, the post-war agency designed to oversee United States’ interests in Germany and Austria, agreed to pay the costs of flying the scenery and equipment to Berlin so that it would be there in time for their appearance at the Berlin Festival.

In Germany, Porgy and Bess performed at the Berlin Festival from September 18th through the 27th. At the opening, Breen claimed to have recorded 29 minutes of applause by stopwatch during twenty-one curtain calls. Of the Berlin performances, columnist Jack Raymond of the New York Times wrote that "it is almost inconceivable how the United States could have done better by itself than it did in sending 'Porgy and Bess' here." While praising the production's artistry, Raymond recognized the propaganda value of the opera. He observed:

The impression, therefore, that these Americans have made constitutes the best possible propaganda for our country. Negroes have shown up here as great artists, putting the lie to a good deal of the Communist exaggerations about the limitation of Negroes' opportunities in the United States. At the same time, they have unembarrassedly presented a slice of sordid Americana which, instead of lending unwarranted weight to Communists assertions about depressed Negroes

18 Stewart 32.

in America, simply has recognized the undeniable truth that there are poor, wretched, superstitious people in the United States as well as Europe, and they behave the same way.\(^\text{20}\)

His comments addressed directly the fears of those who believed that *Porgy and Bess* was an unflattering choice to represent the United States. Although the press from East Berlin made no mention of the American company’s presence at the festival, East German currency began to appear at the box office. To enable more East Germans to see the production, the Department of State ordered the money be accepted at face value rather than the then current exchange rate of five marks to one United States dollar.\(^\text{21}\)

Without government subsidy, the company departed West Germany and traveled to London where the company began a three-week run. Due to its popularity, the engagement was extended to four months. *Porgy and Bess* concluded its first European tour with a two week appearance in Paris. On March 10, 1953, the company began a thirty-four week run at the Ziegfeld Theatre in New York. From December 1, 1953 through September 18, 1954, the opera toured to eighteen cities in the United States and Canada.

In late September, 1954, the *Porgy and Bess* company began their second international tour after the Eisenhower administration agreed to underwrite an extended tour

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\(^{20}\) Raymond 2:3.

\(^{21}\) Alpert 176.
throughout the Middle East and Europe. As recipients of $285,000 from the President's Emergency Fund for International Affairs, the Breen production traveled to Yugoslavia, Egypt, Greece, Israel, and Spain. The tour included a single concert performance in Casablanca for United States personnel at the Nousasseur Air Depot. By most accounts, the production was received enthusiastically in all the countries. For example, at the Habimah Theatre in Tel Aviv, over four hundred broke through the glass in the doors and sat in the aisles to view the last twenty minutes of the performance. In Zagreb, family members divided the tickets so that one member saw the first and another the second half of the opera. After their last performance in Barcelona, Spain, the production toured to Italy, Switzerland, France, and Belgium without government sponsorship.

In July, 1955, Robert Breen and his company embarked on a four month tour of Central and South America with the assistance of a $422,000 grant from the Eisenhower administration. Under the sponsorship of the United States government, Porgy and Bess performed in Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina, Chile, Peru, Columbia, Venezuela, Panama, and Mexico. Perhaps as a testament to the popular appeal of the arts in international relations, the Porgy and Bess

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22 Breen, "George Gershwin’s" 9.

23 Stewart 31.
company’s positive reception was in stark contrast to the hostile and violent reception given Vice-President Nixon during his 1958 goodwill tour of Latin America. In all, an estimated 170,000 people saw the production from July 7 to October 25, 1955.

Furgy and Bess began its third and final European tour on November 9, 1955. On this excursion, the company performed in a number of countries, but the highlight of the tour was the trip to the Soviet Union and other communist-bloc countries including Poland and Czechoslovakia. After deliberation involving the Department of State, the United States Information Agency, and the White House, the Eisenhower administration chose not to finance any portion of this tour. Ironically, the Soviet Union itself subsidized the company’s travel and production expenses during their tour of Moscow and Leningrad. In the end, the production which had been described by an administration official as a "secret weapon" was sponsored by the United States’ Cold War "enemy." The Soviet Union tour and a proposed engagement in China are examined in Chapter Four.

An Analysis of the Reactions to PORGY AND BESS’ Role as Ambassador of the Arts

In his request for an emergency fund to underwrite the international tours of a select group of performing artists,
President Eisenhower reminded the Senate of the success that Robert Breen’s production of *Porgy and Bess* had in Europe while under Department of State sponsorship during the Truman administration. He wrote:

> The enthusiasm with which this type of cultural offering is received abroad is demonstrated by the fabulous success of *Porgy and Bess*, playing to capacity houses in an extended tour of the free countries of Europe. The contribution which such presentations make toward a better understanding of America can scarcely be exaggerated.24

Eisenhower’s praise reflected, for the most part, the general tone and attitude of the administration’s comments about the production. As one of only five theatre productions to receive support during the President’s two year emergency program, *Porgy and Bess* was granted the largest subsidy of any group and, arguably, received the most publicity and acclaim.

From the administration’s perspective, the Breen production was successful as a cultural ambassador for several reasons. According to President Eisenhower’s directive, the objective of the emergency fund was to "demonstrate the superiority of the products and cultural values of our system of free enterprise."25 To that end, *Porgy and Bess* was recognized universally as a substantial work by one of the premier American composers, George


Gershwin. By the time the administration decided to fund the Breen production in the fall of 1954, the production was already a critical and popular success in the United States and Europe. And most significantly *Porgy and Bess* had demonstrated its potential as a goodwill ambassador for the United States when the Truman administration sponsored appearances in Berlin and Austria.

On the two occasions when the production was sponsored by the Eisenhower administration, the United States government's overseas personnel monitored the public's reactions to the production. Their reports uniformly affirmed that *Porgy and Bess* was a critical and popular success. A dispatch from the USIA Belgrade office stated:

> The high quality of the *Porgy and Bess* production has had a lasting effect in Yugoslavia. Today, three months after the group's appearance in the country, people still refer to the event with respect. Radio stations have not only emphasized George Gershwin's music, but other American music as well. . . .

The USIA office in Barcelona informed the Department of State that it "is the consensus of the Consulate General and USIS that the appearance here of this first class theatrical production represents an outstanding cultural triumph for the United States."  

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27 Smith, "Office Memorandum" 3.
While the opera was viewed as a popular work, its selection to represent the United States was a controversial decision. It is important not to overstate the intensity of opposition, because, for the most part, the Breen production was well-received by audiences and critics alike and its partnership with the government was viewed as a positive and significant event. However, within Congress and the African-American community, there was criticism of the opera’s portrayal of blacks and the image it would present abroad of American society. But the Eisenhower administration believed that *Porgy and Bess* provided a unique vehicle with which to further diplomatic efforts as well as to dispel the view that the United States was a racially polarized society.

Opposition from the African-American community questioned the appropriateness of the United States government subsidizing an opera which James Hicks of the *Afro-American* characterized as the "crap shooting musical which is delighting the bigots on Broadway and putting the colored race to shame." Criticism of the opera’s portrayal of African-American’s as uneducated, promiscuous, gamblers, and drug users was as old as the opera itself. However, the cast members seemed to have rejected the

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complaints. In an article for *Equity*, cast member Georgia Burke wrote:

There was a bit of controversy in some of the papers as to whether 'Porgy and Bess;' set in a Negro slum in Charleston, South Carolina some decades ago, showed the ideal side of American life which we would want to show abroad. I don't know what people in general thought of that - but among the company the attitude was that 'Porgy and Bess' has no sociological overtones, that it is simply good theatre and would be accepted as such by any intelligent audience.²⁹

William Warfield, the production's Porgy, wrote in his autobiography that there was a "strong sentiment among the cast . . . that *Porgy and Bess* was a celebration of our culture, and not an exploitation of it . . . It ennobled the characters it depicted, and awakened generations of music lovers and theatregoers in America, and abroad, to the universality of the 'primitive' civilization of Catfish Row."³⁰ Both performers' comments seemed to reflect the company's general attitude towards the opera. There seemed to be genuine belief among the actors that their work was important both artistically and diplomatically.

While the African-American critics were concerned with the image of blacks presented in the opera, the opponents in Congress were much more worried about the image of the United States. Representative Ralph W. Gwinn, a Republican


from New York, objected to the spending of tax money to subsidize *Porgy and Bess*. In a letter to Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, he complained:

I never dreamed that I was voting for any such appropriation to finance such a program of presenting America before the peoples of the world, some of whom are very critical and hostile and even full of hatred toward us. This play, in my judgement, confirms their worst impressions of us.31

In hearings before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Representative John M. Vorys of Ohio questioned Robert C. Schnitzer, General Manager of ANTA's International Exchange Program, about the production. Vorys admitted that the "music is perfectly wonderful," but he questioned "whether the story . . . is a very good picture of our cultural or social achievements?" He continued, "For the life of me, I can't see how that sort of story does us a lot of good."32

In a lengthy reply, Schnitzer responded:

I assure you this was seriously discussed by not only our organization but the specialists in the State Department and the United States Information Agency before the final decision was taken.

It was finally taken on this basis: that it is in the first place a work of art. Whenever a foreigner thinks of American music he thinks probably first of Gershwin. While not grand opera, it is operatic in style.


We thought we could present it as saying that it was something out of the past. It is not a statement by us that this is the condition in America now.

It was written 20 or 30 years ago. But this production is an example of what our Negro artists have achieved as artists.\textsuperscript{33}

Schnitzer's response was repeated by other administration officials. Air Force Brigadier General Dale 0. Smith, a member of the OCB cultural committee, commented:

Porgy has been a resounding success, not only as a piece of art but in creating favorable U.S. opinion. It is a secret weapon as far as the USSR is concerned... Most deceptive feature is the is the cast which, off-stage, is so well-mannered, well-dressed, happy and \textit{free}.\textsuperscript{34}

Despite the harsh and often stereotypical portrayal of its characters living in poverty and ignorance, the administration believed that the positive image presented by the cast would refute the images of segregation and oppression offered in the opera.

In evaluating the success of the international tours of Porgy and Bess, the Eisenhower administration was positive in both its public and private assessments. In his report to the Secretary of State, the United States ambassador to Yugoslavia wrote:

All members of cast have conducted themselves with grace and dignity which has resulted in most

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{33} United States, Providing for Cultural 146.
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favorable comment locally. Believe presentation here was well worth effort involved in overcoming great technical and other difficulties. My opinion is that this will certainly be the cultural success of the season and our thanks go out to all who have made it possible.\textsuperscript{35}

A confidential staff study conducted by the Department of State concluded that the "effectiveness of all these performances to date can only be described as spectacular. It has been a great critical and popular success and it has admirably served the purpose of the President's fund in demonstrating the cultural achievements of the United States."\textsuperscript{36}

As one of the most enthusiastic supporters of \textit{Porgy and Bess}, Brigadier General Smith corresponded frequently with Robert Breen. In one letter, he told the director:

\begin{quote}
It is through operations such as \textit{Porgy and Bess} that World War III can be won without a fight. This means that you are saving lives and keeping our country free with every performance. Perhaps the thought that you are in the true front lines of the next war will help you to endure the many hardships and inconveniences which I know your work entails.\textsuperscript{37}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{35} Ambassador Riddleberger, "Telegram to the Secretary of State," 17 Dec. 1954, Ann Whitman Files, Administration Series, Box 37, File 2, Eisenhower Library.


Smith evidently thought so highly of Robert Breen and his production that he recommended to the Department of State that the company be given official recognition for its service as cultural ambassadors. Acting Assistant Secretary of State Robinson McIlvaine denied his request because "it would be unwise to single out any one particular group or individual for commendation or decoration. . . ." 38 While Smith was particularly fond of the production, his praise was echoed by others involved with the cultural program.

Overall, correspondence and records indicate that the Eisenhower administration viewed its patronage of Porgy and Bess as a successful venture. From its own assessments, the Eisenhower administration concluded that its support of Porgy and Bess furthered their Cold War objectives. As a goodwill ambassador and propaganda "secret weapon," the production fulfilled the President's directive to go "forth and demonstrate that America too can lay claim to high cultural and artistic accomplishments." 39

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An Analysis of the Impact of Government Subsidy on PORGY AND BESS

The administration believed that it benefited from the use of public money to subsidize selected international tours of Porgy and Bess, but the impact of public subsidy for Robert Breen and his production is more complicated to evaluate. As an official representative of the United States government, Breen’s production received increased publicity. And its association with the President’s fund provided a status that no amount of money or self-promotion could create. Because of the government sponsorship, it was not just Robert Breen or Blevins Davis promoting their production, but the United States government giving Porgy and Bess its seal of approval. While these intangible benefits were crucial to the production’s longevity and international success, it was ultimately the $707,000 which the Breen production received to conduct two major international tours which was most critical to its four year run.

Porgy and Bess concluded its touring in 1956 with a total deficit of $276,000 of which $100,000 was due to Blevins Davis as part of his original loan in 1952. It should be noted that the production experienced financial difficulties almost from the beginning. As a non-profit corporation, the Everyman Opera Company was never intended to make money, but neither was it to have incurred such
large losses. According to Breen’s own report, "If it had been organized on a regular commercial or 'business-like' basis, it would have run only a very few weeks and certainly never beyond May, 1953." While Davis’ resources were key to initiating the production, he soon became more interested in recouping his money than with further underwriting the tour. At one point, Breen claimed that Davis sold Herman Sartorius, a European investor, a one quarter interest in the production for $100,000 without informing him that Everyman Opera was a non-profit corporation. Of the incident Breen wrote, "Herman was talking about criminal proceedings - but we side-tracked that idea. The money was paid back - but not until nearly two years later - and Herman exacted a 10 percent interest from Blevins, and kept insisting that Blevins should see a psychiatrist [sic]." Without Davis’ financial resources, Breen had to rely on public funds.

The President’s fund was established to assist the international tours of performing artists and groups to areas targeted by the Eisenhower administration as strategically significant. It was not the intention of the administration to fully subsidize the tours, but to make

40 Robert Breen, "Arbitration Hearings," Robert Breen Collection, Box 42, File 8, Theatre Research Institute, 4-5.

them both attractive and financially feasible for performing artists and groups to undertake. However, Robert Breen relied on the government subsidy for the continued existence of *Porgy and Bess*. It was the administration’s continued support which allowed Breen to minimize debts and keep the company together.

It is ironic that the very source of financial salvation for Robert Breen created further budgetary problems for him. Even with underwriting from the Truman administration for the performances in Vienna and Berlin and the Eisenhower administration’s partial funding of the Middle East and South America tours, the production lost money every time that it was sent overseas under the auspices of the United States government. While part of the problem could be attributed to Breen’s management skills, considerations imposed upon the production by the Eisenhower administration exacerbated the financial problems. For example, the production lost potential revenue because of the frequent travel days required by the tours. On one occasion, the Department of State requested that the company appear in Panama after its performances in Caracas. However, when an ANTA financial study reported that the change in schedule would create at least $20,000 in additional deficits, the proposed performances were canceled. In lieu of the Panama tour, Breen scheduled additional dates in Caracas where the production was earning
a profit. But after an appeal from the American embassy in Panama, the Department of State reinstated the appearances in Panama. As a result, Breen had to cancel the extra performances. The additional transportation costs and revenues lost at the box office added over $20,000 to the deficit.42

On its first government subsidized European tour, the Truman administration agreed to pay Everyman Opera four $15,000 weekly payments as well as provide air transportation to and from Europe for the company and scenery. Despite the obvious benefits such an arrangement brought, Everyman Opera actually lost $11,000 during its four week under government patronage. Without subsidy, the production accrued even larger deficits with losses of $44,000 in London and $8,000 in Paris.43 In this context, the use of government transportation was particularly significant. The cost of transporting almost ninety individuals and equipment weighing 50,000 pounds would have made the European tour too prohibitive for Everyman Opera to undertake on its own. However, under the terms of their agreement with the Truman administration, the company was able to schedule a five month engagement in London and


eighteen performances in Paris after their "official" performances in Vienna and Berlin. And even though the company concluded its affiliation with the Truman administration in September, the United States Air Force still flew them back on an Air Force plane to New York in March.

After its first European tour, Breen scheduled a year long tour of the United States and Canada which included a nine month engagement at the Zeigfield Theatre in New York. During the tour, Breen received requests to perform at the Festival of Contemporary Music in Vienna as well as at the historic Teatro Alla Scala in Milan. With another European tour in the making, the Eisenhower administration offered to sponsor performances in Yugoslavia, Egypt, Greece, Israel, Casablanca, and Spain. Everyman Opera received $285,000 from the President’s fund to offset transportation expenses and losses at the box office due to lower ticket prices. While Porgy and Bess was a critical and popular success, the production continued to lose money. According to a financial report prepared by Everyman Opera, the company had costs of $13,231 in excess of the government subsidy. Under its own auspices, Porgy and Bess continued on a tour of Italy, Switzerland, France, and Belgium. During this portion of the production’s travels, Everyman Opera accrued $81,484 in additional debt.44

44 See Appendices C and D.
Despite the increased deficit, Breen refused to cancel the production and disband the company. In a financial report, he explained that he assumed "full and sole responsibility for not having dissolved the Porgy and Bess company and terminating its tour in March - thereby leading the company to its present financial predicament." Breen argued that even when the production was not sponsored, Porgy and Bess was making a significant contribution in developing goodwill for the United States. By keeping the company together, Breen reasoned that he was doing a favor for the government. He wrote:

If Porgy and Bess had disbanded this winter and come the time I.E.P wished to sponsor the production for other areas . . . I.E.P. would have been responsible for monies necessary to re-bond, re-fiance, re-assemble and replace, re-rehearse, plus the cost of several 'break in' engagements within the United States prior to departure.

Breen’s assertion was specious at best. The Eisenhower administration never intended to act as a producer. The emergency fund had no provisions to authorize funds for the purposes which Breen described.

On May 6, 1955, Robert Breen notified the company that the increased deficit necessitated the cancellation of the remaining two-and-half weeks of their Rome engagement. He explained that he was forced to temporarily disband the company without pay until its next scheduled performance in

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Zurich, Switzerland on June 3, 1955. During this period, Breen left for Paris to continue negotiations for a possible tour of South America. On May 14, he received notification that the Department of State would grant Everyman Opera $400,000 from the President's fund for a sixteen week tour of South America. The news provided a financial reprieve for the company and allowed Breen to continue with his plans.

Shortly after *Porgy and Bess*' third sponsored tour was approved, Breen wrote to ANTA with a request to grant immediately $99,000 of the proposed $400,000 subsidy to Everyman Opera. He explained that the funds were needed to cover losses incurred during the twelve week period after the Middle East tour. "This grant-in-aid is desperately needed at the earliest possible moment," Breen explained, "inasmuch as the Company's Bank has been refusing to honor checks for some days now."47 In a preemptive rebuttal to criticism about Everyman's continuous financial problems, Breen wrote:

*Porgy and Bess* is the most powerful instrument the I.E.P. has -- and I.E.P. must realize it is not possible to simply 'pick up' this company at will -- with little or no notice. This *Porgy and Bess* company will not always be around. Therefore, it should be cherished and sustained somehow while it is in existence and can be utilized.48

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In the same letter, Breen offered the following criticism of the Department of State:

I.E.P.'s approach toward Porgy and Bess has appeared to be passive -- in that I.E.P. has not assumed the initiative in long-range planning of tours . . . By virtue of its position and mission, it would seem that I.E.P. should take the initiative -- and engineer Porgy and Bess touring plans -- instead of passively awaiting an 11th hour request for help from the company.\(^4^9\)

Although ANTA denied Breen's request, his letter is significant because of what it indicates about Breen's view of the President's emergency fund. His critique of the cultural program revealed a complete misunderstanding of the purpose of the program and his production's role as a participant in the program.

Publicity and Promotion: Robert Breen's Efforts to Sell PORGY AND BESS

Robert Breen demonstrated a genuine commitment to the practice of cultural diplomacy, but he also viewed the Eisenhower administration's selection of Porgy and Bess to sponsor overseas as an opportunity to fulfill his own ambitious plans for the opera and future productions. He envisioned extensive tours with multiple casts, films, and other ventures involving an African-American repertory company. As an Everyman Opera press release stated:

But Porgy and Bess is not all. Robert Breen, co-producer and director of the opera, has plans for

developing a musical repertory company, which would be the only one of its kind. The second production, Blues Opera, with music by Harold Arlen, . . . is to be put into rehearsal in the very near future, and will be played alternately with Porgy and Bess. After that, there will be more.  

Breen knew that his ability to arrange and finance international tours for Porgy and Bess and future productions depended on its association with the government's cultural efforts.

In a memorandum dated December 21, 1954, Breen wrote to his wife Wilva that the "future of this program depends on the good press it gets in the United States and I was alerted by Mary French [Department of State official] the other day that the Department itself is not going to do anything about it, and is depending on us - and not ANTA to see that it gets good coverage in this country."  

Breen complained:

When we were in Europe last time we had arranged for translators through the Embassies or Consulates and had them alerted to go to work immediately and feverishly the minute the reviews came out so that translations of them . . . could be sent back to the United States. Thus far, on this European tour, we have never been able to use in the press any excerpts of any kind, because they've always come too late.

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51 Breen, "Memorandum to Wilva Breen."

Early into the tour of the Middle East, Breen hired Foladare, Greer and Bock, a Hollywood publicity firm, to help promote the tour in the United States press.

In an effort to keep members of the Eisenhower administration, Department of State officials, and other prominent individuals informed of Porgy and Bess' accomplishments, Breen sent packets including reviews and press accounts from the various countries where the production appeared. Along with these materials, he was not hesitant to write letters containing requests for additional funds or criticisms of the program's operations. On one occasion at the end of Porgy and Bess' four year tour, Breen wrote to Maxwell M. Rabb, Special Assistant to the President, about the possibility of a White House reception for the company. He reminded Rabb that it "has been hinted here and there the American Negro artist is considered as perfectly all right as a 'cultural ambassador' abroad, but that he is still, perhaps, a second-rate citizen back home."[^53] He asserted that a meeting at the White House would go far to dispel such notions. Of course, Breen was probably correct. A White House reception would have great symbolic value, but he also had to know that it would have even greater publicity value for his company. For the most part, the administration seemed to appreciate Breen's

efforts to promote *Porgy and Bess* because it also brought publicity to the President’s program. However, his publicity efforts were not always well received. ANTA’s Robert Schnitzer told a congressional panel, "I do hope that you don’t think from the fact that *Porgy and Bess* has the best press agent in the world that that is the only attraction we have sent out. Every time somebody claps his hands, the press agent for *Porgy and Bess* gets a notice in the *New York Times* yet we have used many other equally successful attractions."  

Wherever *Porgy and Bess* appeared, Breen enlisted the United States diplomatic corps to help promote the production and its diplomatic efforts by hosting receptions and other events. Even when the production was appearing without subsidy, the overseas staffs extended their services. Always aware of an opportunity to promote *Porgy and Bess*, Breen developed guidelines for working with the diplomats. In a letter, Breen explained that "we have built up a long list of standard practice procedures with the Embassies and Consulates -- which go into effect long before the company arrives." Breen described his efforts:

> We give them the opportunity of conducting the initial press conference with Company members on arrival, if they wish. They usually do. We provide the U.S. Mission with a certain number of opening night tickets. The Embassy or Consulate usually wishes to give a reception for the Company. But that is only the beginning of it.

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54 United States, "Providing for Cultural" 146.
The whole routine is so long and involved, we carry a special person just to handle this aspect of the work.\textsuperscript{55}

In this manner, Breen attempted to maximize \textit{Porgy and Bess}' relationship with the government with or without its subsidy.

On those occasions when the administration seemed to be moving too slowly in securing future tours, Breen conducted well publicized diplomatic efforts independently of the government. He courted foreign officials, educators, artists, and others in every country they visited. Even when the company was touring on its own without government subsidy, Breen continued with his own diplomatic and goodwill efforts. He took seriously his company's role as representatives of the United States and was critical of ANTA and the Department of State for not doing more to assist their efforts. In the absence of an official request for a report on their tours, Breen, with the assistance of Wilva, conducted his own evaluation of his company's efforts including issues of production quality, costs of touring, and success in reaching the targeted audiences with the objective of improving the program.

Breen's diplomatic efforts were also motivated by the realization that the future of his own plans were linked to the success of the President's fund. At the beginning of

\textsuperscript{55} Breen, "Letter to Leonard Key."
the Middle East tour, he wrote a memorandum to one of his staff in which he instructed:

If you are talking to any foreign officials of any kind and if they express any enthusiasm please ask them to cable to Secretary Dulles or President Eisenhower. THIS SORT OF THING IS VITAL TO THE FUTURE PROJECTS OF THIS SORT. IF THE TOUR IS CONDUCTED 'IN SECRET', SO TO SPEAK, HEADQUARTERS IN WASHINGTON WILL NOT BE TOO AWARE OF THE IMPACT THAT THE PRODUCTION AND THE PROGRAM HAVE. [emphasis Breen's own]

Breen even suggested that the staff person tell the official to "give you the text and sign his name to it, YOU will send the cable." 56

The results of Breen's independent efforts at promotion were mixed. Porgy and Bess was arguably the most celebrated of the performing groups sent abroad by the Eisenhower administration. It received $707,000 over a two year period out of the fund's total $4,500,000. Robert Breen's tireless work on behalf of his production certainly contributed to its success. But his aggressive actions also led to incidents of conflict with the Eisenhower administration. In promoting his own agenda, Breen jeopardized future support from the government.

Conclusion

The Eisenhower administration's selection of Porgy and Bess as a participant in the President's Emergency Fund for International Affairs represents one of the most successful

56 Breen, "Letter to Rose Tobias" 2.
examples of the government’s policy towards the arts in the 1950s. Through the production’s international tours, the administration achieved its objectives of countering the Soviet Union’s propaganda activities by demonstrating the cultural achievements of the United States. Both the administration’s public and private evaluations of the *Porgy and Bess* company’s role as ambassadors of the arts indicate satisfaction with their efforts.

One of the major reasons that the sponsored tours of *Porgy and Bess* were effective was due to the vision and work of its director and producer Robert Breen. His willingness to use the production to help further the diplomatic objectives of the United States government demonstrated Breen’s genuine commitment to the practice of cultural exchange. But his approach to the use of arts in international diplomacy differed from that of the administration. Whereas Breen viewed exchange as intrinsically worthwhile, the Eisenhower administration coopted the language of cultural diplomacy as a tactic in its propaganda and ideological contest with the Soviet Union. As part of his efforts to conduct a "pure" form of cultural exchange, Breen conducted well-publicized campaigns, independently of the administration, for reciprocal exchanges with the Soviet Union and China. His efforts led to incidents of conflict with the government.
Robert Breen’s efforts on behalf of his production of *Porgy and Bess* were motivated by more than an altruistic commitment to cultural diplomacy. He viewed the President’s fund as an opportunity to enhance his production’s visibility and finance his extensive touring plans. The government subsidy was critical because *Porgy and Bess* incurred financial losses from the beginning of its four year run. Even with subsidy, the production continued to accrue deficits, but the prestige and publicity resulting from government sponsorship offset the losses. The success of *Porgy and Bess* was crucial to Breen’s future plans which included an African-American repertory company involving multiple casts, international tours, film ventures, and other activities. To insure continued support, Breen conducted an intense publicity campaign to promote his production. As with the proposed tours to the Soviet Union and China, his efforts led to a loss of assistance from the administration.
CHAPTER IV

NEGOTIATIONS AND TRIBULATIONS:

AN EXAMINATION OF ROBERT BREEN’S EFFORTS TO TOUR PORGY AND BESS IN THE SOVIET UNION AND CHINA

Introduction

The history of public patronage of the arts in the United States has been one of bringing the often disparate interests of artists and politicians together for the purpose of achieving the policy objectives established by the government. Example after example, including the current National Endowment for the Arts, show that government support has never emanated from a sense of obligation or altruism towards the arts. While the motives for various arts policies have varied, subsidy of the arts has been predicated on a *quid pro quo* relationship. In the United States, the arts have been supported by the government only to the degree that they have been viewed as useful in achieving objectives often unrelated to the advancement of the arts. For their part, artists have their own agendas for which they desire subsidy. A fruitful union of the government and the arts requires some level of compatibility between the aims of the artists and the
politicians. If a subsidized artist or organization circumvents or subverts the government's agenda, she or he will jeopardize continued support.

During the 1950s, the arts were seen as an effective and peaceful vehicle to accomplish the international objectives of the Eisenhower administration. As a result, the President requested a special fund to underwrite the appearances of selected performing artists in targeted countries. With the objective of countering the Soviet Union's own cultural and propaganda campaign, the administration, including the Department of State, the USIA, and the National Security Council, chose participants based not only upon their artistic accomplishments but their perceived propaganda value. Robert Breen's production of *Porgy and Bess* was not an exception to this rule. It received partial underwriting from the Eisenhower administration for two international tours for the following reasons: (1) the opera, featuring the music George Gershwin, was considered a significant and recognizable example of American musical theatre; (2) the production had received critical and popular acclaim on its first European tour undertaken with the support of the Truman administration; (3) the management and the company had demonstrated an adeptness at cultural diplomacy; and, (4) the administration believed that the highly trained and accomplished African-American cast would undermine the perception that
persons of color were victims of prejudice and segregation in the United States. As these reasons indicate, Porgy and Bess’ continued support was predicated more on its success as a propaganda vehicle than its artistic accomplishments.

While Porgy and Bess’ tours through Europe, the Middle East, and South America under the auspices of the Eisenhower administration are illustrative of a successful venture, Breen’s proposed tour to the Soviet Union and China and the administration’s reaction to his plans demonstrate the often tenuous nature of the relationship between government and the arts. While ostensibly pursuing these tours on behalf of the administration’s cultural program, Breen conducted his own brand of diplomacy by negotiating reciprocal exchanges with the Soviet and Chinese governments without the prior approval of officials in Washington. Moreover, Breen’s discussions with high level Soviet and Chinese officials occurred when the administration was involved in a very public effort to negotiate a cultural exchange treaty with the Soviets at the Geneva Summit of 1955. In fact, Breen even interjected himself into the summit meeting by traveling to Geneva and notifying both Soviet and American officials that he was available for talks concerning his production. In these instances, Robert Breen allowed his own plans for Porgy and Bess to supersede the administration’s agenda. As a result, the Eisenhower administration rejected his requests for funds to underwrite
a tour to the Soviet Union and forbid the company to travel to China.

In this chapter, Robert Breen's efforts to arrange and obtain government funds for tours to the Soviet Union and China are detailed. Also, the Eisenhower administration's reactions to his actions are described. In the process, the area of conflict between the government's agenda and Breen's plans for *Porgy and Bess* are examined.

**The Geneva Summit: Setting the Stage for East-West Exchanges**

On July 18, 1955, the leaders of the United States, France, England, and the Soviet Union convened in Geneva to discuss issues of disarmament, the reunification of Germany, and the possibility of cultural, educational, and scientific exchanges. While the summit produced no new agreements, President Eisenhower and the other leaders issued a communiqué which directed the Foreign Ministers of each country to return to Geneva to conduct further discussions on East-West exchanges. The directive read:

> The Foreign Ministers should, by means of experts, study measures, including those possible in organs and agencies of the United Nations which could (a) bring about a progressive elimination of barriers which interfere with free communication and peaceful trade between people; and (b) bring about freer contacts and exchanges as are of the mutual advantage of the countries and peoples concerned.¹

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While the leaders were able to agree on a general course of action, author J.D. Parks posits that there was disagreement between the United States and the Soviet Union over what was meant by exchanges. As evident by statements of Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov, the Soviets were primarily interested in exchanges of technology and removing restrictions barring trade. On the other hand, Parks asserts, "The western statesmen were not interested in trade, but in removing the obstacles that barred the Soviet population from access to 'ideas and information' coming from the West."²

On October 27, 1955, the Foreign Ministers from the Soviet Union, France, and England joined Secretary of State John Foster Dulles in Geneva to continue the talks begun in July. At the conference, the allied countries of the West presented a seventeen point plan calling for a "freer exchange of information and ideas."³ The specific points called for a variety of actions including the opening of information centers, reciprocal distribution of books, newspapers, and periodicals, the end to jamming of radio


broadcasts of news and information, and exchanges of persons in educational, scientific, and technical fields. In regards to cultural diplomacy, point fourteen stated that there "should be cultural and sporting exchanges on a reciprocal basis, drawing on the best each has to offer under the auspices of the principle cultural institutions and sporting organizations on both sides." The Soviet representatives rejected the western nations' plan while presenting their own ideas for improved trade relations. After several weeks of negotiating, the two sides were unable to reach an agreement.

In the period following the Geneva Summit, the National Security Council prepared a policy report concerning the United States' objectives with regard to the implementation of East-West exchanges. NSC 5607 argued that the Eisenhower administration should pursue exchange opportunities but only as a vehicle to achieve its Cold War foreign policy objectives. As with the President's emergency fund program, the NSC contended that any exchange initiatives should seek to dispel communist propaganda about the United States. Also, NSC 5607 urged that the United States' exchange policy be "offensive in terms of promoting a desire for greater individual freedom, well-being and security within the Soviet Union, and greater independence within the satellites," but it was cautious about the prospects of

4 Department of State, "Seventeen" 139.
increased contacts with the Soviet Union. The study reveals an administration concerned with controlling exchanges so that established policy was not undermined by either the Soviets or private citizens of the United States. According to the report, "The exchanges should in large part be initiated by the United States itself, and we should not be content with the negative or neutral position incident to passing upon Soviet initiatives or private groups within the United States." While the NSC advised that initiatives from the private sector should be received, approval for such ventures must be contingent on whether "they advance U.S. policy or seem to be an acceptable and necessary price for what will advance U.S. policy." Clearly, the National Security Council statement was an attempt to direct the use of cultural diplomacy to further foreign policy objectives. It had very little to do with encouraging reciprocal exchanges between the East and the West.

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6 National Security Council 136.

7 National Security Council 136.
An Examination of Robert Breen's Effort to Negotiate a Tour of PORGY AND BESS in the Soviet Union

In reply to the question, "What was the single most significant change in your area during 1955?", Columbia Broadcasting System Moscow news correspondent Daniel Schorr stated:

In the Soviet Union, the best thing we did was to exchange farmers and engineers and newsmen, to lift passport restrictions on travel to Russia, to send a company like PORGY and BESS; in a word, to blow a little fresh air into the window they opened.⁸

The appearance of PORGY and BESS in Moscow and Leningrad generated much publicity and press coverage. LIFE magazine did a feature article on the tour and Truman Capote created a stir with his controversial chronicle of the company's travels. And in the Soviet Union, the production was a popular success with the leaders of the communist government leading the applause. In fact, the only people who did not support the trip was the Eisenhower administration. Within the administration, the tour of Robert Breen's production to the Soviet Union was the focus of intense debate.

The exact origins of the proposal to tour to the Soviet Union are unclear. In his expansive history of the opera, Hollis Alpert writes that Soviet ambassador Andrei Vishinsky extended an invitation to Robert Breen to bring PORGY and BESS to Moscow after seeing the production in New York.

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during the spring of 1954. While he notes that Breen and Blevins Davis informed the Department of State of the offer, there was no action taken on the matter until early 1955 when an opportunity to tour the Soviet Union arose once again. Alpert writes, "Through a Paris contact, Georges Soria, who had been instrumental in arranging a visit of the Comedie Francaise to Moscow and an exchange visit of the Bolshoi Ballet to Paris, he learned that the Soviet Union would look favorably on his bringing Porgy and Bess."\(^9\)

After the conclusion of the subsidized European and Middle East tour, Breen began his own efforts to arrange the tour.

Eisenhower administration records reveal that the Department of State became aware of Breen's efforts in the spring of 1955. The minutes from a March 31, 1955 meeting of the OCB Cultural Activities Group indicate concern about the origins of the proposed tour. According to the document, "The source of this proposal is rather mysterious and roundabout. The original communication to the Troupe manager originated with an unspecified Polish ambassador, and further information was received through Congressman Adam C. Powell of New York."\(^{10}\) That the committee chose


the adjectives "mysterious" and "roundabout," while perhaps an accurate reflection of the circumstances surrounding the actual source of the proposal, reflected the caution and skepticism with which they approached the possibility of Porgy and Bess appearing in the Soviet Union.

In the early stages of discussions, the basic arguments and positions of individuals and agencies within the government over the merits of the tour began to take shape. While he was not present at the meeting, it was noted that USIA Director Theodore Streibert was in favor of the venture. Likewise, members of the OCB committee posited that "if we have to choose between a 'back door display' of American culture in the Soviet Union and a project frankly sponsored by the United States Government, there might be some advantage in taking the bull by the horns and making this a fully supported U.S. project. ..." 11 They furthered noted that official approval would demonstrate an "appreciation of art above politics, an attitude which would certainly be of great psychological value in the free world, as well as in the Iron Curtain countries." 12 It was the potential political ramifications of American artists touring the Soviet Union which had the Department of State concerned. It feared that the Soviets would exploit the Porgy and Bess visit in an attempt to force the United

11 Operations 1.

12 Operations 1.
States to extend a reciprocal invitation to a Russian group. From its vantage, the specter of a Soviet request for the Bolshoi Ballet or another group to tour the United States posed security and public relations problems. While the government was interested in penetrating the iron curtain, it was clearly troubled by the idea of the Soviets conducting their own cultural offensive within the United States.

With the foreign policy branch of the United States government divided over the efficacy of the tour, Robert Breen initiated a private diplomatic campaign to win the support of both Eisenhower administration and Soviet officials. While on tour with *Porgy and Bess* in Brussels, Breen sent telegrams to Soviet Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov, Premier Nikolai Bulganin, and First Secretary Nikikta Khrushchev. In the July 14, 1955 correspondence, he informed the officials that the "company would certainly appreciate presenting *Porgy and Bess* before Soviet audiences and would welcome invitation from Soviet authorities... ."

Hoping to capitalize on the upcoming Geneva summit discussions, Breen then suggested that the "atmosphere at Geneva conference may conceivably provide opportunity and occasion for expression [of] interest and willingness [to]
extend invitation by Soviet delegation members to members of American delegation."\textsuperscript{14} In closing, Breen wrote that he would be in Geneva and available for discussions.

On the same day, Breen cabled Nelson A. Rockefeller, Special Assistant on Disarmament for Cold War Strategy, to announce that he would be available for discussions about \textit{Porgy and Bess} during the Geneva summit. Moreover, he advised that there was a "possibility [that] cultural exchange subject may arise informally [at the] Geneva conference."\textsuperscript{15} Breen neither mentioned the fact that he had contacted the Soviet delegation or that he had suggested to the Soviets that they use the summit as a forum to invite the production. By attempting to orchestrate a formal invitation for his production, Breen was in fact trying to interject himself into one of the most significant diplomatic events of the early years of the Cold War.

The turbulent summit in Geneva produced verbal fireworks but little actual progress towards resolving the areas of conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union. Under those circumstances, it was not surprising that there was no action taken on the \textit{Porgy and Bess} matter. Still, Robert Breen kept approaching the administration. While in Geneva, he wrote to the White House with a request

\textsuperscript{14} Breen, "Telegram to Molotov."

\textsuperscript{15} Robert Breen, "Telegram to Nelson A. Rockefeller," 14 July 1955, Robert Breen Collection, Box F27, Theatre Research Institute.
for support. In response, Theodore Streibert assured him that the administration was supportive, but stopped short of making any commitments. He wrote:

As you know we are entirely receptive to the idea of *Porgy and Bess*’s going to Moscow. However, we were unable to make any kind of commitment to this effect, as you know, because there was no proposal on the basis of this previous advice, I would think you would have been warranted in assuring the French intermediary [Georges Soria] mentioned in your letter, that there was no justification for any fear of rejection on our part of an invitation.\(^{16}\)

As events would later reveal, Streibert was not only speaking prematurely, but his comments did not reflect the thinking of other officials within the administration.

On July 30, 1955, Breen initiated a bold and controversial gambit. In an effort to capitalize on the Geneva summit discussions on cultural exchange, he wrote to Premier Bulganin with a new proposal. Breen suggested a reciprocal exchange between the United States and the Soviet Union involving his production of *Porgy and Bess* and the Moiseyev Folk Ballet. He assured Bulganin that this "offer is in no way a perfunctory 'gesture,' but is a concrete and genuine proposal, which has the blessing of the proper authorities within the American Government."\(^{17}\) Despite his


\(^{17}\) Robert Breen, "Letter to Premier Nikolai A. Bulganin," 30 July 1955, Robert Breen Collection, Box F27, Theatre Research Institute.
claims, there is no evidence that Breen had the approval of the Eisenhower administration to tender such an offer. At that time, the government had serious reservations about entering into exchange agreements with the Soviet Union while a cultural, educational, and scientific treaty was being negotiated.

In his letter to Bulganin, Breen not only emphasized *Porgy and Bess*’s previous work on behalf of the Department of State, but he wrote as if he were acting on behalf of the United States government. For example, Breen stated, "It is firmly believed, that the exchange of these two distinctive and representative artist groups between USSR and USA, will provide a solid basis for further and more extensive cultural cooperation and exchange between the two nations."\(^{16}\) And he claimed that "nothing would be more ideal from our point of view, than to receive this great group from the Soviet Union simultaneously with the *Porgy and Bess* appearances in [the] USSR."\(^{19}\) In this last statement, his use of the word "our" is ambiguous, but it appears that Breen was trying to create the impression that he represented the United States government.

In an attempt to expedite the negotiation process, Breen informed Bulganin that China had just extended an invitation to *Porgy and Bess* to perform in either November

\(^{16}\) Breen, "Letter to Bulganin."

\(^{19}\) Breen, "Letter to Bulganin."
or February. He explained that it was his intention to coordinate a tour of the Soviet Union with a trip to China. Breen wrote, "From a scheduling point of view it is rather urgent that the *Porgy and Bess* company be able to make its plans for such an exchange at the earliest possible moment." He also knew that there were other factors which necessitated a quick resolution to the matter. With the company scheduled to conclude its sponsored tour of South America in late October, there was a limited amount of time left to arrange the Soviet tour before he would have to make other plans or disband the company. On August 26th, he contacted the United States Ambassador to the Soviet Union, Charles E. Bohlen, with a request for permission to send Wilva Breen to Moscow to meet with the Embassy staff. While there had not yet been an official invitation from the Soviet government, Breen noted that the "problem of keeping this excellent unit of *Porgy and Bess* together is a great one indeed, and long-range planning is the only channel by which the Company can be kept in existence and used as an instrument in important areas." Breen's letter to Ambassador Bohlen illustrates the difficulties involved when both an artist and the government pursue different agendas. While the Eisenhower administration was content to proceed

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20 Breen, "Letter to Bulganin."

cautiously, Robert Breen had no time for the laborious pace of diplomatic negotiations over the extent and timing of East-West exchanges. The company's continued existence and, by extension, his plans for future tours depended upon securing performances in the Soviet Union.

In September, Breen finally received a formal invitation through the Soviet Embassy in Washington for a three week tour in Moscow and Leningrad. Breen traveled to Washington to brief the OCB Cultural Activities Group about the offer and to request financial assistance for the tour. A September 19, 1955 memorandum noted that Breen told the committee that he believed there was a possibility that the tour could be extended to ten weeks with additional stops in other eastern-bloc countries. Under the terms of the invitation, the Soviet government agreed to pay all travel expenses from the production's last pre-tour performance in Berlin to Leningrad and then from Moscow back to Berlin. It also offered to underwrite all housing and travel expenses within the Soviet Union. Even with this subsidy, Breen estimated that there would be an additional $300,000 to $400,000 in expenses which he hoped would be covered by the President's emergency fund program. At the conclusion of the meeting, the reaction of administration officials was mixed. While Robert McIlvaine of the State Department was undecided, Brigadier General Dale O. Smith of the OCB favored the venture. He wrote, "My recommendation: Do it.
Porgy has been a resounding success, not only as a piece of art but in creating favorable U.S. opinion."22

On September 20, 1955, the Department of State and the United States Information Agency each issued their own recommendations about the proposed tour. Although it was in the process of negotiating an East-West exchange treaty, the two reports reveal an administration hesitant about actually conducting cultural exchanges. Officials desired exchange as a means to exploit increased contact with the Soviet people, but they were unsure about the potential repercussions of initiating relations with its Cold War nemesis.

In its report, the Department of State staff study lavished praise upon Porgy and Bess for its artistic and diplomatic accomplishments. It concluded:

This production of Porgy and Bess is a completely American folk opera, widely recognized as a great work of art and performed by a cast of unusually high artistic ability. It has proven itself many times over through its successful appearances before many types of audiences . . . The cast is a group of personable, well educated American Negroes who have also made millions of friends through their many voluntary off-stage activities.23

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The study predicted that performances in the Soviet Union would match previous successes. However, it did caution that sponsorship of the tour would possibly subject the administration to criticism from some members of Congress and African-American organizations. "It can be expected," the study warned, "that these critics will express strong objection to the presentation in the USSR where the audiences will be culturally unsophisticated and predisposed by Soviet propaganda on Negroes in the U.S. to misinterpret the opera and accept it as a true picture of the decadence and misery of the American Negro community."  

After considering the merits and liabilities of *Porgy and Bess* as a cultural representative of the United States, the State Department study examined the policy considerations involved in the matter. First, it considered the issue of reciprocity. It argued that if the "Department approves financial assistance to *Porgy and Bess*, it should be prepared to accept a visit to the United States of a comparable attraction from the USSR, such as the Bolshoi Ballet."  

While the administration was publicly urging mutual exchanges at the Geneva summit, it was still privately following the National Security Council's directive number 5508/1 which permitted the exchanges of

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24 Department of State, "Proposed Tour" 2.

25 Department of State, "Proposed Tour" 2.
individuals and small groups but excluded large groups such as ballets. Additionally, there were complications created by the Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1952 which required the finger-printing of tourists from communist countries. The Department of State knew that the Soviet government would not consent to having its citizens finger-printed. Both of these issues made reciprocal exchanges nearly impossible until an exchange treaty could be signed.

Breen's request for funds from the President's Emergency Fund for Participation in International Affairs presented additional problems. According to the study, it was the established policy of both the State Department and the Operations Coordinating Board not to use the fund to subsidize tours to the Soviet Union or other countries within the sphere of Soviet influence. It suggested that this policy would be re-evaluated after the October Foreign Ministers Conference in Geneva, but that it was still currently the operating procedure. The staff report also cited the impact of sponsoring Porfy and Bess on the funds other activities. It contended that "almost, if not all, of the funds presently allocated for expenditures in Europe would be used for this project, necessitating the reduction of allocations for other areas of the world if other projects are to be undertaken in Europe."26 Finally,

26 Department of State, "Proposed Tour" 3.
the report questioned the appropriateness of granting additional funds to a production which had already received over $700,000 out of the fund's total $4,500,000.

The Department of State concluded its study with the recommendation that the administration deny Robert Breen's request for funds. Despite the past success of *Porgy and Bess*, the Department believed that the "reversal of policy decisions which would be required plus the enormous and somewhat questionable expenditures of public funds involved would offset the advantages to the United States of a tour of the USSR by this company."  

Whereas the Department based its decision on policy considerations, the USIA was more concerned with the potential propaganda benefits of underwriting the tour. Its report concluded:

The two-year success of *Porgy and Bess* abroad in improving the climate of opinion in favor of the U.S. justifies it playing in the Soviet Union. The U.S. should take the initiative in efforts to break down the Iron Curtain and in showing its willingness to further the "Geneva Spirit." A backing off at this time, particularly when the USSR invitation has been publicized, could possibly hinder U.S. efforts at the Foreign Minister's Conference in October. Any coolness on our part will undoubtedly be criticized by the press at home and abroad.  

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27 Department of State, "Proposed Tour" 3.

Accordingly, the USIA recommended that the administration grant financial assistance to *Porgy and Bess*.

In light of the two agencies' different conclusions, it is not surprising that they also disagreed over the appropriateness of Robert Breen's independent efforts to secure a tour of the Soviet Union for his company. While the Department of State report praised the production, it was highly critical of Breen's discussions with Soviet officials. The study read, "The Department was never informed by Mr. Breen of his negotiations with Soviet officials while they were going on. Several attempts were made to caution him on the matter." ²⁹ According to the report, State Department officials noted that Breen told a September 14th meeting that he was "counting on government assistance, admitting that he had purposely undertaken the negotiation without prior reference to the Department [of State]." ³⁰ Moreover, it complained that Breen failed to follow established procedures for requesting funds from the cultural program. Instead of submitting a formal proposal to ANTA, he went directly to administration officials with his proposals.

For its part, the potential publicity bonanza generated by a tour of the Soviet Union by American performers made the USIA more willing to excuse Breen's actions. "Although

²⁹ Department of State, "Proposed Tour" 1.

³⁰ Department of State, "Proposed Tour" 1.
Mr. Breen's negotiations may have been overly enthusiastic and not fully coordinated with the Department of State," agency officials argued, "this behavior should not cloud the issue." They attributed Breen's breech of bureaucratic protocol to the lateness of the Soviet offer and the need for a quick decision to insure the company's continuation.

In the end, the White House concurred with the Department of State and refused Robert Breen's request for funds. However, the Eisenhower administration did agree to permit Porgy and Bess to appear in Moscow and Leningrad as well as accept the Soviet's offer of financial support. Despite its own unwillingness to underwrite the company's expenses, the United States government did cooperate with Robert Breen during the production's tour of the Soviet Union from December 26, 1955 through January 17, 1956. For example, a representative for the American Embassy in Moscow was assigned to travel with the company and the United States Ambassador Charles Bohlen hosted a reception for the company.

Robert Breen's actions on behalf of his production were not the deciding factor in the administration's rejection of his proposal. The administration was simply not prepared to alter established exchange polices until a formal agreement had been concluded in Geneva. But as the comments from the

31 United States Information Agency 1.
Department of State indicate, officials were critical of Breen’s independent efforts at diplomacy. From the administration’s point of view, his discussions with the Soviet Union forced officials to make a key policy decision they would have preferred to avoid. By calling into question its commitment to exchanges, the Eisenhower administration found itself in an untenable position at the very time it was advocating an East-West treaty in Geneva. Moreover, it allowed the Soviets to achieve a propaganda victory through their willingness to subsidize the tour. In this sense, Breen’s actions undermined the government’s policies and actions.

An Examination of Robert Breen’s Negotiations for an Exchange Agreement with China

During the same period that Robert Breen was attempting to secure government sponsorship of the Porgy and Bess tour to the Soviet Union, he was also negotiating an exchange agreement with officials from China. While his efforts received less publicity in the news media and created less debate within the various government agencies than the Soviet episode, it serves to further illustrate Breen’s willingness to ignore the established policies of the Eisenhower administration in an attempt to further his own agenda.
According to a record of events which Breen maintained, the idea of bringing the production to China was first mentioned by Georges Soria to Breen at a May 12, 1955 meeting in Paris. Soria was the European contact who was helping facilitate the discussions with the Soviets. At the meeting, Soria explained that there was a possibility of a reciprocal exchange involving *Porgy and Bess* and the Official Ensemble of the People’s Republic of China also known as the Peiping Opera. Like the American company, the Chinese theatre troupe had previous experience with international tours including an appearance at the International Drama Festival in Paris as well as performances in Belgium, Holland, Italy, Switzerland, and England. Without committing himself to future negotiations, Breen replied that "no reply or even comment [was] possible until inquiry regarding ‘feasibility.’"\(^{32}\)

On May 26th, Breen learned that Theodore Streibert of the USIA would be visiting the United States Embassy in Rome. At that time, Breen and his company were also in Rome on a forced hiatus. Although he failed in his effort to meet personally with Streibert, Breen asked the embassy’s Public Affairs Officer Phillip J. Conley to inform the USIA Director of his proposal. According to correspondence from Breen to an ANTA official, he claimed that Conley said

\(^{32}\) Robert Breen, "Log of Events," 30 July 1955, Robert Breen Collection, Box F38, Theatre Research Institute, 2.
Streibert believed that the "China idea was very interesting and that it would be received with interest." Breen took that response to mean that "there will be no 'rebuff' if the Chinese extend Porgy and Bess an invitation." On June 4, 1955, Breen gave permission to Soria to explore the possibility of an exchange between the United States and China involving *Porgy and Bess* and the Official Ensemble of the People's Republic of China.

During the month of June, Soria and Breen negotiated with Chang Chi-hsiang, a Vice-Minister of Culture in China and Director of the Ensemble, about possible dates for *Porgy and Bess* performances in China and the Chinese Ensemble's appearances in the United States. On July 5th, Breen requested the USIA's Public Affairs Officer in Brussels to attend the next session of talks. But the official said that it was "inadvisable" because the United States maintained no formal diplomatic relations with China. On the next day, the Chinese Vice-Minister proposed that *Porgy and Bess* should visit the following eight cities: Peking, Tientsin, Shanghai, Canton, Nanking, Hankow, Chunehing, Shenyang.

By July 14, 1955, the two sides had composed a joint declaration detailing the purpose and scope of the exchange.

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33 Breen, "Log" 2.
34 Breen, "Log" 3.
35 Breen, "Log" 3.
Before he signed the agreement, Breen sought the advice of several government officials. He noted that Abraham Manell, the Public Affairs Officer in Brussels, suggested that "such an 'agreement in principle' ought not to be signed, especially in view of the then forthcoming 'summit' Conference in Geneva, without prior clearance from Washington." Breen countered Manell's advice by arguing that "none of our officials would listen to nor consider seriously such a prospect, unless I had tangible evidence of agreement in principle from the other side."36 Also, Breen telephoned Brigadier General Dale O. Smith, an OCB member and supporter of *Porgy and Bess*, for his opinion. After discussions with other administration officials, Smith told Breen not to sign the agreement because the government did not feel that the company would be safe in China. Furthermore, he pointed out that the Chinese government was still detaining American nationals and until that matter was resolved the administration could not support any overture to China. Breen responded that such a venture might be the very thing to prod the Chinese to release the prisoners. In a letter to Smith, he wrote:

> If only we could prevail on someone there in Washington to forget some of the 19th century methods of diplomacy in the approach to this particular project, I KNOW [emphasis Breen's own] the desired objective could be achieved and the Chinese would not have much choice in the matter. But, I cannot inquire directly about these

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36 Breen, "Lcg" 4.
detained nationals; I am not a governmental 'agent.'

In this case, the administration was unanimous in its opposition to the tour.

Against the advice of various government officials, Robert Breen signed the joint declaration on July 14, 1955. The document stated that it was the participants' "common wish to reach a closer understanding and more direct communication between the theatres and the peoples of both countries." Both sides recognized that the exchange agreement was "subject to, and dependent upon the accord of, and facilitation and implementation by and through their respective governments." Under their totalitarian system it was highly likely that Chinese officials at the highest levels were aware of the negotiations so this last statement was directed more to the United States government.

On August 12, 1955, Walter S. Robertson, Assistant Secretary of State, informed Robert Breen that his proposal for exchange visits of Porgy and Bess and the Official Ensemble of China was denied. He wrote:

It is the policy of the Department of State not to validate the passports of American citizens for

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39 Breen, "Joint."
travel to Communist China. There are several reasons why this decision was originally made and conditions have not changed sufficiently to warrant its modification. It has been followed consistently in the cases of all those who have applied for permission to visit Communist China.⁴⁰

With that letter, Breen’s attempt to inaugurate cultural relations with China and, by extension, secure the continued government patronage of Porgy and Bess ended.

In the aftermath of the Eisenhower administration’s decision to not approve funds for a tour of the Soviet Union and its rejection of a trip to China, Breen was highly critical of the government. He accused State department officials of acting like “old W.P.A. Administrators — rather than custodians of a fund and program for which President Eisenhower had clearly enunciated standards for American involvement in international exchange.”⁴¹ In a letter to Sherman Adams, Assistant to the President, he wrote:

I feel that in such times as these when the international ‘situation’ is tense and uncertain -- it is even more important to maintain at least some sort of a ‘trickle’ continually seeping under the Iron Curtain. We have everything to gain and certainly nothing whatsoever to lose and it seems a shame for us to deny ourselves this opportunity.


In a blunt attack on the administration, Breen wrote, "I fully realize that in high Governmental circles there is little realization of the true practical value of this sort of project." 42

Breen’s criticism of the administration’s timidity was correct. While the administration was eager to initiate a cultural exchange treaty with the Soviet Union, it also feared the potential results of granting increased access of communist propaganda to the United States. In short, the Eisenhower administration wanted to pursue cultural diplomacy, but it was willing to do so only on its own terms. In arranging tours to the Soviet Union and China, Breen was attempting to change the government’s policy before it was ready. As a result, the administration decided not to subsidize the tour of the Soviet Union and canceled the trip to China because Breen’s plans no longer furthered the foreign policy agenda of the government.

Conclusion

Robert Breen’s efforts to conduct his own diplomatic negotiations with Soviet and Chinese officials undermined the Eisenhower administration’s international activities. Even though the government was proposing an exchange agreement in Geneva, it was not prepared to actually

initiate cultural relations with the Soviet Union or China. By pursuing his own agenda at the expense of the government’s policies, Breen forced the administration to discontinue its support of *Porgy and Bess.*
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Introduction

On June 3, 1956, Robert Breen's production of *Porgy and Bess* performed for the last time. From its debut in Dallas in 1952 to its final showing in Amsterdam nearly four years later, the production appeared in twenty-nine countries. It received both critical and popular acclaim as it played before audiences speaking eighteen different languages. And on three separate occasions, two Presidential administrations requested *Porgy and Bess* to represent the United States as ambassadors of the arts.

Despite its artistic success and government support, the production had accumulated $276,000 in debts by the end of its four year run. Without the prospect of future government sponsored tours, it was no longer financially feasible to continue to keep the company together. Critical of the Eisenhower administration's decision to not sponsor his company's trip to the Soviet Union and its rejection of the exchange treaty he personally negotiated with the Chinese, Breen placed on hold his plans for an African-
American repertory company and began an unsuccessful effort to make a film version of *Porgy and Bess*.

While the administration’s rejection of Robert Breen’s plans signaled the end of his involvement with the government and cultural diplomacy, the period between 1955 and 1958 witnessed an increased willingness on the part of the Eisenhower administration to incorporate the arts into its propaganda and diplomatic activities. Building upon the success of the emergency fund program, the President initiated policy changes to make the arts a permanent component of the United States’ foreign policy program.

**The Legacy of the President’s Emergency Fund for Participation in International Affairs**

Almost a year after *Porgy and Bess* was denied government funds for its tour to the Soviet Union, the Eisenhower administration sponsored the performances of the Boston Symphony Orchestra in Moscow and Prague. When Robert Breen had requested a subsidy for his company’s tour, the administration had not yet finished formulating its policy on exchanges with eastern bloc nations. But by June of 1956, President Eisenhower had approved the National Security Council’s directive number 5607 which advocated increased contacts with the Soviet Union and other countries within its sphere of influence. From the administration’s perspective, it had decided that it was politically and
strategically appropriate to expand the activities of the emergency fund and to aggressively pursue the initiatives proposed in Geneva.

An effort to revise the government's cultural diplomacy program had been contemplated for some time. In October of 1955, the administration began working with the Congress to draft legislation to elevate the President's emergency fund program into a permanent program. In part, the legislation for the International Cultural Exchange and Trade Fair Participation Act of 1956 read:

The purpose of this Act is to strengthen the ties which unite us with other nations by demonstrating the cultural interests, developments, and achievements of the people of the United States, and the contributions being made by the United States economic and social system toward a peaceful and more fruitful life for its own people and other people throughout the world; and thus to assist in the development of friendly sympathetic, and peaceful relations between the United States and other countries of the world.

The new program would retain the same bureaucratic structure as the emergency fund program. The Department of State would continue to coordinate the cultural activities and the Department of Commerce would oversee participation in trade fairs. And it was the responsibility of the United States Information Agency to insure that the program continue to

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"influence public attitudes abroad toward a truer conception of American society and its achievements."²

The legislation increased the fund's appropriation from $5,000,000 to $9,000,000 for the fiscal year 1957. In an indication of the administration's priorities, $5,987,000 was allocated for the trade fair program while the cultural program received only $2,700,000.³ While the administration spoke highly of the effectiveness of such groups as Porgy and Bess, its spending priorities indicate that the government did not value the arts as highly as business. Ironically, it was one of the objectives of the fund to challenge the notion that the United States was a society which valued business and material attainments over cultural achievements. The remaining funds were marked for promotion of the program's activities. With the exception of the larger budget and its permanent status, there was little real difference between the emergency fund and the new program. Despite the administration's public rhetoric about the value of cultural relations, it was still a

² United States, Cong., House, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Providing for Cultural and Athletic Exchanges and Participation in International Fairs and Festivals, 84th Cong., 2nd sess., (Washington: GPO, 1956) 3.

propaganda program with the purpose of countering the Soviet Union's activities. In hearings held before the House Committee on Foreign Relations, USIA Director Theodore Streibert explained the need for a permanent program. He stated:

The Communist cultural offensive now shows every sign of being a permanent technique of the cold war, which we must be prepared to combat with steady efforts on our part. Moreover, the success of our trade fair exhibits and our cultural activities abroad has demonstrated the importance of our efforts quite aside from the Communist efforts. Under these circumstances, it no longer seems appropriate to continue our efforts on an emergency basis.  

While the new legislation was a continuation of a previous policy, it was a significant development because it signaled the beginning of a consistent and permanent approach to the use of the arts in propaganda and diplomatic activities.

With successful examples from the President's emergency fund program to prove the effectiveness of the arts in international diplomacy, the administration entered into negotiations with the Soviet Union for a bi-lateral exchange treaty. Fulfilling the promise of Geneva, the 1958 General Exchanges Agreement was signed by representatives of the United States and the Soviet Union on January 27, 1958. The treaty provided for specific exchanges in the areas of the arts, science, education, athletics, film, and radio during

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*United States, Providing 4.*
1958 and 1959. The joint communique accompanying the agreement read:

This agreement is regarded as a significant first step in the improvement of mutual understanding between the peoples of the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and it is sincerely hoped that it will be carried out in such a way as to contribute substantially to the betterment of relations between the two countries, thereby also contributing to a lessening of international tensions.5

As a direct result of the exchange treaty, the Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra and the New York Philharmonic under the direction of Leonard Bernstein performed in the Soviet Union. In return, the Bolshoi Ballet and the Moiseyev dancers traveled to the United States.

Until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 signaled the end of the Cold War, the 1958 exchange treaty formed the basis of the most enduring agreement between the two countries. Over the years, the agreement was renewed and its scope of activities expanded. Although temporary suspensions of exchanges forced by such events as the war in Vietnam and the Soviet invasions of Czechoslovakia and Afghanistan demonstrated that both nations still viewed cultural diplomacy in strategic and political terms, exchange provided the one consistent forum for peaceful coexistence during the turbulent Cold War era.

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Conclusion: The Legacy of the Eisenhower Administration’s Sponsorship of PORGY AND BESS and Its Ramifications for Government Patronage of the Arts

Although the President’s emergency fund program’s activities were limited by its operational objectives, the incorporation of Porgy and Bess and other ventures into the Eisenhower administration’s Cold War foreign policy activities represented the most direct and significant pre-National Endowment for the Arts arts policy since the Works Progress Administration’s program of the 1930s. In a period when indifference characterized the government’s attitude towards the arts, the federal government established a program, albeit a temporary one, designed to subsidize the work of private sector artists and performing groups for the first time in the history of the United States. Granted, its creation was a product of foreign policy considerations rather than a desire to support the arts community, but it represented an important step in the incremental development of a national public policy towards the arts. The program not only provided a framework for the use of the arts in diplomatic and propaganda policy for the succeeding thirty years, but it was a harbinger of the creation of the National Endowment for the arts in the 1960s. In particular, the administration’s partial underwriting of artists’ activities established precedence for the NEA’s grant program. Moreover, the fund’s use of the American
National Theatre and Academy to review the artistic merits of potential participants is a direct antecedent of the NEA’s peer review panel system. Finally, the International Cultural Exchange and Trade Fair Participation Act of 1956 authorized the formation of an Advisory Committee on the Arts with members appointed by the President. This action laid the groundwork for the current Council on the Arts which advises the President on arts policy matters.

The Eisenhower administration’s support of Porgy and Bess provides an example of a mutually beneficial partnership between the government and the arts. Through its association with the emergency fund program, Robert Breen’s production received $707,000 in federal money to conduct international tours. In light of his company’s continuous financial problems, the administration’s patronage was critical to Breen’s ability to keep his company together for four years. Additionally, Porgy and Bess benefited from the free publicity generated from its association with the cultural program. For its part, the administration fulfilled it objective of presenting the unique artistic and cultural heritage of the United States by its sponsorship of the production. Moreover, officials believed that the African-American company helped to undermine the image of the United States as a segregated and racist society.
While the Eisenhower administration’s sponsorship of *Porgy and Bess* provides an example of a successful venture, it also demonstrates the potential problems involved when the government mixes the practice of cultural diplomacy with objectives of a propaganda program. The administration freely coopted the rhetoric of cultural diplomacy as a tactic in its propaganda and ideological contest with the Soviet Union. Its plans for the fund were rooted in foreign policy concerns and objectives rather than the promotion of a free exchange of culture and ideas. For his part, Robert Breen viewed cultural diplomacy from the perspective of an artist. He believed that it was an intrinsically worthwhile and necessary component of international relations. Breen’s purist concept of cultural diplomacy and his view of his company’s role as ambassadors of the arts conflicted with the Eisenhower administration’s vision for the program. The *aporia* between the administration’s rhetoric and its actions led Breen to criticize officials in the White House and the Department of State. Ultimately, their differences resulted in incidents of disagreement and conflict over funding and selection of tour locations.

The Eisenhower administration’s patronage of *Porgy and Bess* also offers insight into the often tenuous relationship between government and the arts. As a director and producer, Robert Breen had his own agenda which he actively pursued. He had ambitious plans for his production of *Porgy
and Bess. He envisioned it as the centerpiece of an African-American repertory company involving multiple casts, extensive tours, film ventures, and other activities. Although Breen had a genuine commitment to cultural exchange, he viewed the President’s fund as an opportunity to enhance his production’s visibility and finance his extensive touring plans.

As part of his strategy to secure government funding, Breen conducted an intense publicity campaign to keep administration officials, including the President, and the press informed of the company’s travels. And when the administration seemed too hesitant or uninterested in additional tours, Breen undertook well publicized diplomatic efforts independently of the White House. At times, his efforts undermined the government’s agenda. His attempt to arrange reciprocal exchanges with the Soviet Union and China circumvented existing policy without furthering established foreign policy objectives. It placed the administration in the awkward position of rejecting a goodwill overture to the Soviet Union at the very time it was negotiating an East-West exchange treaty in Geneva. As a result, officials chose not to underwrite Porgy and Bess’ performances in Moscow and Leningrad and they rejected the exchange agreement which Breen signed with Chinese officials.

Although Porgy and Bess is a singular example, it serves to illustrate several points about the nature of
government patronage of the arts. Arts advocates may argue that the government has an obligation to support the arts, but the history of arts policy in the United States shows that patronage has never emanated from a sense of obligation or altruism towards the arts. The arts have been supported only to the degree that they are viewed as useful in achieving a variety of policy objectives often unrelated to the arts.

As the government has as an agenda regulating its relationship with the arts, artists often have their own plans. A fruitful venture requires some level of compatibility between the aims of the both the government and the artist. As the example of Robert Breen and _Porgy and Bess_ indicates, if an artist’s plans conflict with the government’s agenda, he or she will jeopardize the continued patronage by the government. This is not to imply that artists should not attempt to change policies with which they disagree, but they must be smart politically and willing to risk the loss of support. Robert Breen lacked political acumen and did not fully take into account the repercussions of his actions.

The relationship between government and the arts can be mutually beneficial. The government not only has a vested interest in nourishing the nation’s cultural heritage for present and future generations, but the arts can be a valuable tool with which to achieve a variety of both
domestic and foreign policy objectives. Through patronage, artists receive not only financial assistance but confirmation that the work they do is valued and important to society. However, artists do pay a price for the privilege of patronage. If an artist wants the benefits of subsidy, she or he must be willing to pursue the government’s agenda often at the expense of personal and artistic ambitions. This may not be a palatable choice for artists, but as Robert Breen discovered it is the reality of arts policy in the United States.
APPENDIX A:
A CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF PROJECTS FUNDED
BY THE PRESIDENT'S EMERGENCY FUND
FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Jose Limon & Dance Co.: Nov. 22 - Dec. 12, 1954. (Brazil)
Rio de Janeiro, San Paulo; (Uruguay) Montevideo.

Zagreb, Belgrade; (Egypt) Alexandria, Cairo; (Greece)
Athens; (Israel) Tel Aviv; (French Morocco) Casablanca;
(Spain) Barcelona; (Italy) Naples, Milan.

Fizsale and Gold (duo-pianists): Dec. 28, 1954. (Italy)
Palermo.

Issac Stern (violinist): Jan. 5 - 9, 1955. (Iceland)
Reykjavik.

Ervin Laszlo (pianist): Jan. 5 - April 17, 1955. (Iceland)
Akureyri; (Greece) Patras, Volos, Athens, Salonika;
(Israel) Kfar Schmariaku, Tel Aviv, Haifa, Jerusalem;
(Lebanon) Beirut; (Egypt) Cairo, Alexandria.

- Feb. 26, 1955. (Tunisia) Bizerte, Tunis, Sfax,
Sousse; (Algeria) Bone, Philippeville, Quelma,
Constantine, Sitif, Bougie, Alger, Maison-Carree,
Orleansville, Affreville, Blida, Medea.

Jubilee Singers: March 13 - May 8, 1955. (Yugoslavia)
Ljublijana, Zagreb, Sarajevo, Belgrade, Novisap,
Skoplje; (Turkey) Istanbul; (Pakistan) Karachi; (India)
Lahore, Delhi, Calcutta, Bombay, Poona, Madras;
(Ceylon) Colombo.

New York City Ballet: April 9 - July 8, 1955. (Monaco)
Monte Carlo; (France) Marseilles, Lyons, Bordeaux,

1 United States, Cong., House, Committee on Foreign
Affairs, 84th Cong., 2nd sess. Providing for Cultural and
Athletic Exchanges and Participation in International Fairs
and Festivals (Washington: GPO, 1956) 142-144.
Paris; (Italy) Florence, Rome; (Portugal) Lisbon; (Switzerland) Lausanne, Zurich; (Germany) Stuttgart; (Holland) Amsterdam, The Hague.

Philippa Schuyler (pianist) and Everett Lee (conductor): April 14 - June 14, 1955. (Brazil) Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Santos; (Uruguay) Montevideo; (Argentina) Rosario.

Symphony of the Air: May 3 - June 25, 1955. (Japan) Tokyo, Nagoya, Takarazuka, Kyoto, Hiroshima, Fukuoka, Sendai, Yokohomma, Shizuoka; (Korea) Seoul; (Okinawa); (Formosa) Taipei; (Philippines) Manila; (Thailand) Bangkok; (Malaya) Singapore, Kula Lumpur; (Ceylon) Colombo.

Philadelphia Orchestra: May 17 - June 18, 1955. (Belgium) Brussels; (Holland) Amsterdam; (France) Bordeaux; (Portugal) Lisbon Oporto; (Spain) Madrid, Barcelona; (Italy) Milan, Genoa, Turin, Lugano; (Austria) Strasbourg, Vienna; (Germany) West Berlin; (Sweden) Stockholm; (Finland) Helsinki.

Nell Tangeman (mezzo-soprano): May 18 - June 30, 1955. (Greece) Athens; (Syria) Damascus; (Lebanon) Beirut; Yugoslavia.


William Warfield (baritone): May 24 - June 15, 1955. (Portugal) Lisbon; (Spain) Madrid, Barcelona; (Italy) Milan; (Austria) Strasbourg, Vienna; (Germany) West Berlin.

E. Power Bigg (organist) and seven members of the Boston Symphony: June 6 - 22, 1955.


Ballet Theatre: June 28 - Nov. 1, 1955. (Mexico) Mexico City; (Guatemala) Guatemala City; (Costa Rica) San
Jose; (Panama) Panama City; (Colombia) Bogota, Medellin, Cali; (Ecuador) Quito, Guayaquil; (Peru) Lima; (Chile) Santiago; (Argentina) Buenos Aires; (Uruguay) Montevideo; (Brazil) Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo.

_Porgy and Bess:_ July 7 - October 22, 1955. (Brazil) Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo; (Uruguay) Montevideo; (Argentina) Buenos Aires; (Chile) Santiago; (Peru) Lima; (Colombia) Bogota, Cali; (Venezuela) Caracas; (Panama) Panama City; (Mexico) Mexico City.


New York Philharmonic: Sept. 3 - Oct. 5, 1955. (Scotland) Edinburgh; (Austria) Vienna; (Belgium) Brussels; (Germany) Berlin; (France) Paris; (Switzerland) Geneva, Berne, Basle, Zurich; (Italy) Milan, Perugia, Rome, Naples, (Greece) Athens; (England) London.


Martha Graham Dance Company: Nov. 1, 1955 - Feb. 12, 1956. (Japan) Tokyo; (Philippines) Manila; (Thailand) Bankok; (Malaya) Singapore, Kuala, Lumpur; (Indonesia) Djakarta; (Burma) Rangoon; (Pakistan) Dacca; (India) Calcutta, Madras, Bombay, New Delhi; (Ceylon) Colombo; (Pakistan) Karachi; (Iran) Abadan, Teheran.

John Sebastian (harmonica virtuoso): Nov. 2 - 28, 1955. (Germany) Bremen, Hamburg, Hannover; (Italy) Brescia,
Montechiari, Carcina, Gardone, Salo, Pontedera, Lucca
Siena, Vicenza, Milano, S. Benedetto, Permo, Tocentino,
Ancona, Turino.

(Brazil) Rio de Janeiro.

Benno and Slyvia Rabinof (violinist and pianist): Dec. 22,
1955 - Jan. 29, 1956. (Greece) Syros Island, Athens,
Patross, Salonika, Pyreaus.

Everett Lee (conductor): Jan. 8 - Feb. 12, 1956. (Spain)
Madrid, Barcelona.

New Music Quartet: Jan. 9 - March 17, 1956. North Africa,
Italy, Germany, France, Spain.

Philippines, Singapore, Indonesia, India, Pakistan,
Japan.

Tom Two Arrows (American Indian dancer/singer/lecturer):
Jan. 15 - May 15, 1956. Pakistan, India, Burma,
Indonesia.

(Tunisia) Biserte, Tunis, Sfax, Sousse; (Algeria) Bone,
Philippville, Quelma, Constantine, Sitif, Bougie,
Alger, Maison-Carree, Orleansville, Affroville, Blida,
Medea; (France) Dinan, St. Malo, Rennes, St. Brieue,
Brest, Lesneven, Lorient, Vannes, Quimper, Lannion,
Laval, Alencon, Caen, Le Havre, Pecamp, Rouen, Lisieux,
Flers, Libourne, Marmaude, Montauban, Perigueux, Agen,
Toulouse, Tarbos, Dax, Mount de Marsan, Pau, Bayonne,
Bordeaux, Angouleme, Saintes, Chatellerault, Cahors,
Cognac.

Eugene, Istomin (pianist): Feb. 2 - 7, 1956. (Iceland)
Reykjavik, Ketlaviuk Air Base, Haifnarfjordur.

Syria, Greece, Turkey, Yugoslavia.

Robert Shaw Chorale: March 20 - May 31, 1956. Egypt,
Lebanon, Israel, Turkey, Greece, Yugoslavia, Italy,
Austria, Germany, Switzerland, Spain, Portugal, France,
England, Holland, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Finland,
Iceland.

(India) Bombay, Calcutta, New Delhi, Madras.
Dizzy Gillespie (jazz band): March 27 - May 21, 1956. Iran, Pakistan, Lebanon, Syria, Turkey, Yugoslavia, Greece.


Teahouse of the August Moon: 15 weeks beginning April 15, 1956. Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Venezuela, Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina, Chile, Peru, Ecuador, Columbia, Panama, Costa Rica.


New York City Ballet: Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov., 1956. Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Belgium, Italy.


APPENDIX B

Tour Schedule of Robert Breen’s *Porgy and Bess*, 1952-1956

United States Tour 1952
Dallas, Texas  State Fair Aud.  June 9-20
Chicago, Illinois  Civic Opera House  June 25 - July 14
Pittsburgh, Penn.  Nixon Theatre  July 22-30
Washington, D.C.  National Theatre  Aug. 6-30

Europe 1952-1953
Vienna, Austria  Staatsoper in der Volksoper  Sept. 7-12
Berlin, Germany  Titania Palast  Sept. 18-27
Paris, France  Theatre de l’Empire  Feb. 16-Mar. 1

New York, New York 1953
New York  Ziegfeld Theatre  Mar. 10-Nov. 28

United States and Canada 1953-1954
Washington, D.C.  National Theatre  Dec. 21-Jan. 16
Richmond, Va.  Mosque Theatre  Jan. 18-23
Pittsburgh, Penn.  Nixon Theatre  Jan. 25-30
Cincinnati, Ohio  Taft Theatre  Feb. 1-6
St. Louis, Mo.  Music Hall  Feb. 8-20
Kansas City, Mo.  American Theatre  Feb. 22-28
Chicago, Ill.  Civic Opera House  Mar. 2-20
Minneapolis, Mn.  Lyceum Theatre  Mar. 24-April 3
Toronto, Canada  Royal Alexandra Theatre  Apr. 6-17
Cleveland, Ohio  Hanna Theatre  May 10-22
Columbus, Ohio  Hartman Theatre  May 24-29
Denver, Colo.  Denver Auditorium  June 1-5
San Francisco  Curran Theatre  June 14-July 10
Los Angeles, Ca.  Philharmonic Theatre  July 12-Aug. 14
Boston, Mass.  Shubert Theatre  Aug. 20-28
Toronto, Canada  Royal Alexandra  Aug. 31-Sept 11
Montreal, Canada  Her Majesty’s Theatre  Sept. 13-18

1 Robert Breen, "Tour Schedule," Robert Breen Collection, Box 5, Theatre Research Institute. Boldface text indicates the cities toured to under government sponsorship.
Europe and Middle East 1954 - 1955

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Theatre/Opera</th>
<th>Dates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Venice, Italy</td>
<td>Teatro La Fenice</td>
<td>Sept. 22-25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paris, France</td>
<td>Theatre de l'Empire</td>
<td>Sept. 30-Dec 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zagreb, Yugoslavia</td>
<td>Theatre de l'Opera</td>
<td>Dec. 11-14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Belgrade, Yugoslavia</td>
<td>Theatre de l'Opéra</td>
<td>Dec. 16-18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alexandria, Egypt</td>
<td>Theatre Mohamed Aly</td>
<td>Dec. 31-Jan. 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cairo, Egypt</td>
<td>Theatre de l'Opéra</td>
<td>Jan. 7-12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Athens, Greece</td>
<td>Royal National Theatre</td>
<td>Jan. 17-22</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tel Aviv, Israel</td>
<td>Habiman Theatre</td>
<td>Jan. 26-30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Casablanca</td>
<td>(Concert only)</td>
<td>Jan. 31</td>
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<tr>
<td>Barcelona, Spain</td>
<td>Gran Teatro del Liceo</td>
<td>Feb. 3-13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Naples, Italy</td>
<td>Teatro di San Carlo</td>
<td>Feb. 15-17</td>
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<td>Milan, Italy</td>
<td>Teatro Alla Scala</td>
<td>Feb. 23-27</td>
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<td>Genoa, Italy</td>
<td>Teatro Carlo Felice</td>
<td>Mar. 1-6</td>
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<td>Florence, Italy</td>
<td>Teatro Comunale</td>
<td>Mar. 9-13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lausanne, Switzerland</td>
<td>Theatre de Beaulieu</td>
<td>Mar. 16-23</td>
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<td>Marseilles, France</td>
<td>Opera Municipal</td>
<td>Mar. 26-Apr. 4</td>
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<td>Turin, Italy</td>
<td>Teatro Alfieri</td>
<td>Apr. 9-17</td>
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<td>Rome, Italy</td>
<td>Teatro Quattro Fontane</td>
<td>Apr. 21-May 14</td>
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<td>Zurich, Switzerland</td>
<td>Hallenstadion</td>
<td>June 3-12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brussels, Belgium</td>
<td>Theatre de la Monnaie</td>
<td>June 15-21</td>
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<td>Antwerp, Belgium</td>
<td>Hippodrome Theatre</td>
<td>June 23-30</td>
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South America 1955

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<td>Rio de Janeiro, Brazil</td>
<td>Teatro Municipal</td>
<td>July 7-13</td>
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<td>San Paulo, Brasil</td>
<td>Teatro Santana</td>
<td>July 16-24</td>
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<tr>
<td>Montevideo, Uruguay</td>
<td>Teatro Solis</td>
<td>July 26-31</td>
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<tr>
<td>Buenos Aires, Argentina</td>
<td>Teatro Astral</td>
<td>Aug. 3-21</td>
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<tr>
<td>Santiago, Chile</td>
<td>Teatro Municipal</td>
<td>Aug. 25-30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lima, Peru</td>
<td>Teatro Municipal</td>
<td>Sept. 3-7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bogota, Colombia</td>
<td>Teatro Colombia</td>
<td>Sept. 13-18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cali, Colombia</td>
<td>Teatro Municipal</td>
<td>Sept. 21-23</td>
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<tr>
<td>Caracas, Venezuela</td>
<td>Teatro Municipal</td>
<td>Sept. 27-Oct. 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Panama City, Panama</td>
<td>Teatro Nacional</td>
<td>Oct. 6-7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mexico City, Mexico</td>
<td>Teatro Bellas Artes</td>
<td>Oct. 11-25</td>
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Europe 1955 - 1956

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<th>City</th>
<th>Theatre/Opera</th>
<th>Dates</th>
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<tr>
<td>Antwerp, Belgium</td>
<td>Theatre de l'Hippodrome</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dusseldorf, Germany</td>
<td>Apollo Theatre</td>
<td>Nov. 18-22</td>
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<td>Frankfurt, Germany</td>
<td>Staatstichen Buhnen</td>
<td>Nov. 25-27</td>
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<td>Deutsches Theatre</td>
<td>Dec. 1-6</td>
</tr>
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<td>Titania Palast</td>
<td>Dec. 9-15</td>
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<td>Palace of Culture</td>
<td>Dec. 26-Jan. 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Moscow, USSR</td>
<td>Stanislavsky Theatre</td>
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<td>Warsaw, Poland</td>
<td>National Opera House</td>
<td>Jan. 24-Feb. 1</td>
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<td>Wyspanski Theatre</td>
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<td>Karlin Theatre</td>
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<td>Theatre de la Monnaie</td>
<td>Mar. 25-31</td>
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<td>Location</td>
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<td>Luxor Theatre</td>
<td>Apr. 13-20</td>
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<td>Volks Theatre</td>
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<td>Theatre Carre</td>
<td>May 19-June 3</td>
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APPENDIX C

Brief Summary of Losses Incurred During Porgy and Bess' Middle East Tour (12/6/54 - 2/19/55)¹

Company costs in excess of gov. appropriation...... $  3,439.19
John Stark expenses........................................ 2,993.50
Tour bills received (unpaid).............................. 1,058.00
Tour bills received prior to tour, but paid during tour... 5,640.70

Costs (paid and unpaid) in excess of gov. appropriation........................................ $13,231.39

Subsequent Tour (without subsidy): Feb. 22 - May 14, 1955
Loss from Feb. 22 - April 17.............................. $39,469.06
Loss from April 18 - May 14................................ 53,215.01

Total loss...................................................... $92,684.07

Subtract subsidy received from Italian government...... 11,200.00

Net loss........................................................ $81,484.07

Unpaid bills...................................................... 10,917.83

Subtract amount of unpaid bills listed under Mideast tour... 1,058.00

Total unpaid bills........................................ 9,859.83

Total deficit from Dec. 6, 1954 - May 14, 1955:
Expenses in excess of subsidy from Mideast tour................. $  6,432.69
Loss from subsequent tour.................................. 81,484.07
Unpaid bills...................................................... 10,917.83

Total deficit................................................................ $98,834.59

APPENDIX D

Breakdown of Expenses of One Week (6 performances) of *Porgy and Bess* in Cairo, Egypt (1/7 - 1/12/55)¹

Operating expenses........................................$17,735.66
Receipts.......................................................... 6,230.76
Deficit............................................................$11,504.90

**Operating expenses:**

**Salaries:**
- Cast and chorus...........................................$ 7,257.50
- Music director and assistant......................... 650.00
- General Manager and assistant....................... 400.00
- Stage Managers............................................ 695.00
- Production assistant................................... 175.00
- Company crew............................................. 1,120.00
- Press agent................................................. 125.00
- Wardrobe woman.......................................... 90.00
- Booking agent............................................. 612.00
- Administrative staff................................... 1,827.50

Royalty fees:
- Author, music.............................................. 774.00
- Author, lyrics............................................. 154.00
- Author, book.............................................. 619.00

Publicity:
- Advertising................................................. 400.00
- Photos and signs.......................................... 14.35
- Press agents............................................... 243.05
- Other promotional expenses......................... 558.74

Departmental:
- Care of wardrobe......................................... 189.42
- Care of properties....................................... 15.00

Other expenses:
- Rental of equipment .................. $625.00
- Office expenses ....................... $300.00
- Auditing ................................ $100.00
- Payroll tax ............................. $325.55
- Insurance .............................. $250.00
- Road office expense .................... $62.55
- Legal .................................. $125.00

Total expenses .......................... $17,735.66
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