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Women In Utah History

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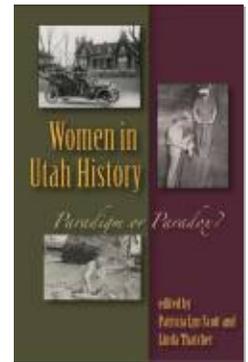
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Women in the Arts

Evolving Roles and Diverse Expressions

Martha Sonntag Bradley-Evans

A healthy artistic climate does not depend solely on the work of a handful of supremely gifted individuals. It demands the cultivation of talent and ability at all levels. It demands that everyday work, run-of-the-mill work, esoteric and unpopular work should be given a chance; not so much in the hope that genius may one day spring from it, but because, for those who make the arts their life and work, even modest accomplishment is an end in itself and a value worth encouraging. The pursuit of excellence is a proper goal, but it is not the race itself.

—Gough Whitlam, Prime Minister of Australia, 1973–74¹

While it has been true that Utah women have created art throughout the region's history, the value that society has placed on their work has ranged dramatically. Navajo women fashioned some of Utah's earliest and most beautiful blankets and baskets. During the nineteenth century, this work was conducted privately, away from the "public" world of commerce; and the work women produced in the private sphere of the home was not considered "real" work but part of a woman's calling or role. Society considered artistic expression an appropriate female pursuit, in part because it enriched family life.

In the twentieth century, more and more women created art for pay, either as educators, as performers, or as fine artists who showed their art and sold their art in public venues. By then art was considered "real" work, or labor required for survival, a source of financial support for many women artists. The obstacles keeping women from producing art once it became "work" were enormous and included religious and societal prejudices, familial and personal responsibilities, and cultural assumptions.

Yet women drawn to the arts, like their male counterparts, were seldom impelled only by economic motives. They felt compelled to communicate

intangibles to those around them and to use their art as a way of engaging in the world. Many of them could not imagine doing anything else. It required a sometimes formidable exercise of personal power, opposing the societal forces worked against them. The indomitable human spirit helped many of them succeed.

FEMINIST THOUGHT AND WOMEN ARTISTS

Beginning in the 1960s, feminist studies produced new theoretical angles which help access the contribution and experience of women artists, including Utah women artists. These approaches included the recognition by art historians of the traditions of domestic and utilitarian production by women that had conventionally been represented in negative ways in relation to both creativity and high culture. A desire to acknowledge the contribution of women, as well as centering women artists in the past two centuries' cultural production, emerged from the decade of the 1960s. This analysis questioned traditional categories of art and definitions of artists structured within past art history which privileged the work of men. Art Historian Whitney Chadwick suggests, "Originating in the description and classification of objects, and the identifying of a class of individuals known as 'artist,' art history has emphasized style, attribution, dating, authenticity, and the rediscovery of forgotten artists. Revering the individual artist as hero, it has maintained a conception of art as individual expression or as a reflection of preexistent social realities, often divorced from history and from the social conditions of production and circulation."²

As a whole, new scholarship produced during the past three decades during the last quarter of the twentieth century establishes that, while the experience of women artists is a gendered one, a single-image "woman artist" does not exist but instead is a myth and a stereotype that ignores reality. Germaine Greer's *The Obstacle Race* suggests that women artists were not "a string of over-rated individuals but members of a group having much in common, tormented by the same conflicts of motivation and the same practical difficulties, the obstacles both external and surmountable, internal and insurmountable of the race for achievement."³ The experience of women artists was extraordinarily diverse, characterized by distinctive connections among class, race, historical context, and opportunity. Many women artists have worked in surprising isolation, while others served as apprentices to their husbands, fathers, or relatives. As a group, women have scaled daunting barriers to the production of their art and the recognition of their contribution in the official annals of art history and in society more generally. This is due in part because of art history's traditional identification of art "with the wealth, power, and privilege of the individuals and groups who commissioned or purchased it, and the men who wrote about it and identified with it."⁴

Scholarship on women's art history has drifted from historical categories of "art" and "artist" to broader, more pervasive ideologies such as gender, sexuality, power, and representation. This shift is supported by a "reexamination

of the woman artist's relationship to dominant modes of production and representation in the light of a growing literature concerned with the production and intersection of gender, class, race, and representation."⁵ The result is a more holistic vision of the contribution of women as well as a stronger theoretical analysis.

This chapter presents a general overview of the history of women's involvement in the arts in first the Territory and then the State of Utah. By focusing on women who have worked professionally in the visual arts, sculpture, dance, music, and theater, and on the ideologies which have shaped production and representation for women, this survey identifies major issues and summarizes the work which has been done to date. It also considers the discourses that have impacted women's choices about producing art and the way that art was accepted by society.

THE "PROPER ROLE" OF WOMEN

The history of Utah women and art is influenced by a strong sense of the proper role of women, gender, and the complication of the domestic sphere. In 1906, John Stuart Mill acknowledged the fundamental differences between men and women and the meaning of those differences in a way that accurately captures attitudes prevalent in nineteenth-century Utah:

The love of fame in men is encouraged by education and opinion: to "scorn delights and live laborious days" for its sake is accounted the part of "noble minds" even if spoken of as their "last infirmity," and is stimulated by the access which fame gives to all the objects of ambition, including even the favour of women; while to women themselves all these objects are closed, and the desire of fame itself considered daring and unfeminine. Besides, how could it be that a woman's interests should not be all concentrated upon the impression made on those who come into her daily life, when society has ordained that all her duties should be to them, and has contrived that all her comforts should depend on them?⁶

Barbara Welter's pathbreaking work on what she called the "cult of true womanhood" described the complex discourse that defined the appropriate role women played in the nineteenth-century American world as perpetuated in women's journals, seminaries, and popular literature. Women were expected, Welter writes, to be pious, pure, domestic and submissive. "Put them all together and they spelled mother, daughter, sister, wife—woman. Without them, no matter whether there was fame, achievement, or wealth, all was ashes. With them she was promised happiness and power."⁷ Education threatened a woman's marketability as a wife, and might even jeopardize her spirituality. Women's seminaries sought to instill and enforce religious values and to produce an "accomplished" woman.⁸ Debates waged over the nature of female education centered on these values and questioned whether such subjects and history or

literature would cause more danger to a woman than good, “whether a ‘finished’ education detracted from the practice of housewifely arts. Again it proved to be a case of semantics, for a true woman’s education was never ‘finished’ until she was instructed in the gentle science of homemaking.”⁹

The women of Utah Territory enthusiastically embraced this view, accepting the tenets of true womanhood despite the vast contradictions in their frontier lives which instead required considerable independence, aggressiveness, and ingenuity. In these debates, the arts—such as music, water-color painting, and poetry—escaped condemnation but instead seemed to be appropriate female pursuits. As long as women engaged in art as “hobbies” and “refinement,” but without hoping to earn a living by their production, women’s creative pursuits were tolerated and, on some level, encouraged.

Welter’s discussion is significant to this discussion about the contribution of female artists to Utah’s art history because gender identity is a social construction, reflecting the values of the world from which it emerged. In fact, “gender identities act as cognitive filtering devices, guiding people to attend to and learn gender role behaviors appropriate to their statuses. Learning to behave in accordance with one’s gender identity is a lifelong process.”¹⁰ Family and society both reinforce and construct ideas about womanhood. As we move through our lives, society demands different gender performances from us and rewards, tolerates, or punishes us differently for conformity to, or digression from, social norms. As children and, later, as adults learn the rules of membership in society, they come to see themselves in terms they have learned from the people around them.¹¹ Such messages are difficult to challenge, and they imprint girls and women’s minds with what is possible and desirable for their lives.

A persistent theme explored by feminist historians after the 1960s explaining the differences between the experience of men and women was the separation of sexual spheres in structuring the social order. In this schema, “appropriate” women inhabited the domestic sphere while the political or economic activities of the world outside the home belonged to men. A simplistic dichotomy, this division failed to recognize the role that even the most reserved women played in the public arena—visiting sick friends or neighbors, working in charitable organizations, or participating in church services and auxiliaries.¹²

The division makes sense if society is construed as a double culture governed by different norms or values. The aggressiveness, intelligence, and self-interested search for power that characterized business or politics was foreign to the refuge provided by home and characterized by nurturing, feelings, and caring. As historian Barbara Welter suggests, the “cult of motherhood” perpetuated these divisions and placed responsibility for the character development of children on women’s shoulders. “The purpose of women’s vocation was to stabilize society by generating and regenerating moral character,” comments historian Nancy Cott. “This goal reflected an awareness, also apparent in other

social commentary and reform efforts of the time, that the impersonal world of money-making lacked institutions to effect moral restraint.”¹³ Although such activities were important, “an emphasis on women’s activity in certain areas, such as child-rearing could coexist with a conception of women as idle.”¹⁴

Anthropologist Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo claims that women’s lives are shaped largely by the perceptions of others: “Woman’s place in human social life is not in any direct sense a product of the things she does (or even less a function of what biologically she is) but of the meaning her activities acquire through concrete social interactions.”¹⁵ In other words, Rosaldo questions the universal domestic/public separation because it obscures the diverse causes and content of gender roles, and is a discourse that is socially constructed.

Also important during the last decades of the nineteenth century was a shift from the family as a vital unit *of* production to a haven *from* production, a restriction of the family’s role in the past. As a result, the difference between private and public worlds became less distinct and a nondomestic sphere emerged for women. Linda Nicholson suggests that this “non-domestic sphere must be related to another social change: the increasing individualization of social relationships *within* the family. In the course of the modern period, the family, again most strikingly in its white, middle-class version, has increasingly come to be viewed as consisting of autonomous individuals whose relations with each other are of the nature of a contract.”¹⁶

The concepts of domestic spheres and gender roles are significant in understanding the role women played as artists during the nineteenth century in Utah because they help define the limitations and parameters of the world in which they produced their art. A woman who could sing or play an instrument, paint a lovely watercolor, or act a convincing scene was considered an adornment of her home, an amenity to her community. She would have made the lives around her better, more cultured, and filled with entertainment. Women artists in Utah during the nineteenth century were seldom revolutionaries who challenged the patriarchal, religious worldview of the communities they lived in. They expressed their femininity in culturally acceptable ways. Art was not only permitted but was considered an appropriate expression of the feminine nature. The ways of being an artist would expand as women sought formal education and professional status.

COMMUNITY BUILDING AND THE ARTS

In Utah Territory, the arts were part of community building from the first, and thus Utah women artists were easily granted a place, though a restricted one. After the first pioneer company reached the Salt Lake Valley, some group members turned back to greet members of the next. Apostle John Taylor led this second party and met members of the first company at the Sweetwater River, four hundred miles east of the Great Salt Lake. That night, the pioneer encampment celebrated that nearing end of the journey: “Preparations were

made for dancing; and soon was added to the sweet confusion of laughter and cheerful conversation the merry strains of the violin, and the strong clear voice of the prompter directing the dancers through the mazes of quadrilles, Scotch-reels, French-fours and other figures of nameless dances." At the end, Taylor said, they felt "mutually edified and blessed."¹⁷

Dancing, music, and theatricals were arts valued by the pioneer settlers of this region who saw them as contributing a richness, not a threat, to their righteousness. Many pioneer women brought with them hand organs, fiddles, accordions, or flutes carefully packed beneath linens, clothing, or other family treasures, although it was more often men than women who took the role of public performers. The arts helped build community, made it possible for the settlers to forget the difficulties of their lives building homes and communities, swept them away to imaginary places, and stimulated memories and emotions long buried by the challenges of life.¹⁸

Within a few years, virtually every town had its own dancing school. In 1853 in Brigham City, John Bynon directed a dancing school where young girls learned "Money Musk," "Twin Sisters" and other older, traditional dances accompanied by the accordion.¹⁹ Former Mormon John Hyde carped, "In the winter of 1854–1855, there were dancing schools in almost every one of the nineteen school houses [in Salt Lake City]. . . . Necessarily so much more attention to dancing involved so much less attention to study. Just so much less education and just so much more injury."²⁰ Despite the fact that the pioneers came as a group to settle Utah territory, they came from diverse backgrounds—from the East and the South, from Great Britain and Scandinavia. Dance and music brought diverse people together in a common community activity.

Five decades after settlement, art patron and state legislator Alice Merrill Horne reflected on the important role art played in creating a city that was more than a frontier outpost in the West:

If art reigns in the home there will grow out of it beautiful parks, streets, thoroughfares and cities. If art reigns in the home it will be surrounded and filled with influence of Honesty, Purpose, Work, Simplicity, Sentiment, Peace, Unity and Harmony, while banished must be Coarseness, Vulgarity, Deceit, Slothfulness, Shallowness, Gaudiness, Discord and Unrest. Life in the influence of art trains the soul to respond to the God-like in man and nature, to feel the beautiful and to cherish and follow higher ideals. Soul greatness is the ultimate end and aim of all effort. When this life is done I believe men will be judged more by what they think and feel and love and know than for the deeds done in the flesh.²¹

Although Mrs. Horne tellingly says "*men* will be judged," Utah's women contributed their share to the arts in Utah. And the most important contribution of her statement is that it captures so succinctly the nineteenth-century perception that the arts contributed to community building and

were, in fact, essential to the good life. Women's contribution to community was valued and considered appropriate in Utah. Brigham Young's daughters danced on the Salt Lake Theater stage, for instance. One of his daughters, Zina Presendia Young Williams, sold her wax flower arrangements at local galleries to help support herself and her two sons after her husband's death.²² What's more, the state has also given prodigious public support for arts organizations, made available numerous opportunities for education and training, developed several important professional companies, and encouraged widespread participation in cultural activities.

Perhaps because social isolation exacerbated the natural solitariness of arts, Utah art associations have flourished in the state. Both the 1863 Deseret Academy of Fine Arts and the 1881 Deseret Art Union welcomed male and female members. In 1873, the first powerful art organization in the state for artists, the Society of Utah Artists, excluded women, possibly in reaction to the Salt Lake Polysophical Society's policy of offering drawing classes for "ladies only." The Department of Fine Arts at the University of Utah was created in 1889, and periodically had women on its faculty. For instance, in the early twentieth-century, Myra Sawyer and Florence Ware were instructors and conducted careers as professional painters.²³

DRAMATICS

Only three years after the founding of Salt Lake City, Brigham Young organized the Deseret Dramatic Association in 1850 out of the earlier Deseret Musical and Dramatic Society, which in turn was formed from the Nauvoo Brass Band. The group performed in the old bowery, an open-air building with a roof of branches laid over vertical poles, the forerunner of the first tabernacle. The first play performed there was *Robert Macaire* with three women in the cast—Mrs. Oran, Margaret Judd, and Miss May Badlam.²⁴ The Saints also gathered for group singing, oratory, and worship in the bowery.

Only two years later in 1852, at the top of State Street near South Temple the Social Hall, replaced the bowery as the principal amusement center of Salt Lake City. Here dances, theatricals, and socials were held on a regular basis. At the Social Hall amateur casts and crews performed then-popular musicals and farces. This modest forty by eighty foot building had a gabled roof and basement level perfect for dances, theatricals, and other social events. The year it first opened, Brigham Young announced: "I want it distinctly understood that fiddling and dancing are no part of our worship. The question may be asked, What are they for, then? I answer, that my body may keep pace with my mind. My mind labors like a man logging, all the time; and this is the reason why I am fond of these pastimes—they give me a privilege to throw everything off, and shake myself, that my body may exercise, and my mind rest. What for? To get strength, and be renewed and quickened, and enlivened, and animated, so that my mind may not wear out."²⁵ Leading actors and actresses performed

at the Salt Lake Theatre alongside local talent who worked in virtually every capacity—as actors, as costumers, and set designers.

Within a decade, the Social Hall was too small for the crowds who came.²⁶ A British visitor to Salt Lake City, Sir Richard Burton, described a party that continued for thirteen hours in the Social Hall with Brigham Young leading the first cotillion. “Dancing seems to be considered an edifying exercise. The Prophet dances, the Apostles dance, the Bishops dance. . . . The dance is not in the languid, done-up style that polite Europe affects; as in the days of our grandparents, positions are maintained, steps are elaborately executed, and a somewhat severe muscular exercise is the result.”²⁷ The first plays performed in the Social Hall were *Pizarro*, *The Lady of Lyons*, and a farce called *The Irish Lion* in 1853. Young, who began by prohibiting tragedies and non-Mormon actors, favored light-hearted farces.

In 1862 with the construction of the Salt Lake Theatre, more elaborate costumes, scenery, props, music, and dancing enhanced theatrical presentations. More than 1,500 persons attended the March 6, 1862, dedication of the new theater, which was featuring *Pride of the Market*, a farce. George Goddard recorded in his journal: “The new theater was dedicated, after which a new play was performed; Elisa and Mary Goddard took part as French peasant girls.”²⁸

The Salt Lake Theatre also created a great impetus for theater dancing—a performance dance that was a natural outgrowth of pioneer square dances as a universal form of entertainment for both children and adults in every ward. Brigham Young had called for dance numbers in performances in the late 1850s, because he had noticed that many of the young women in the valley, including his own daughters, were becoming “round shouldered.”²⁹ Theater dancing was usually ballet pantomime, specialty dances, or some sort of after piece. Sara Alexander, Charlotte Clive, favorite local dancers, or one of their students usually danced in the background or played characters who danced.

At the opening of the theater, Brigham praised its potential effect on the city:

There are many of our aged brethren and sisters, who, through the traditions of their fathers and the requirements of a false religion, were never inside a ball-room or a theater until they became Latter-day Saints, and now they seem more anxious for this kind of amusement than are our children. This arises from the fact they have been starved for many years for that amusement which is designed to buoy up their spirits and make their bodies vigorous and strong, and tens of thousands have sunk into untimely graves for want of such exercises to the body and mind. They require mutual nourishment to make them sound and healthy. Every faculty and power of both body and mind is a gift from God. Never say that means used to create and continue healthy action of body and mind are from hell.³⁰



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The Salt Lake Theatre was dedicated in 1862 and was known as a center for drama and music. Photo taken May 3, 1910.

In the 1870s, Salt Lake Theatre manager Hyrum B. Clawson formed a calisthenics class in which local girls (including several of Brigham Young's daughters) danced, did vocal drills, and exercised with wooden swords and wands. Clarissa Young Spencer, a daughter of Brigham Young, remembered these classes: "We [Brigham's daughters] had regular teachers to instruct us in gymnastics, fencing, and solo dancing. It was probably because of our training in dancing that the girls of our family were in such demand for fairy or ballet dances."²⁹

"Fairy dancing" was a type of romantic dancing popular across the country. Sara Alexander, a comic actress, and a leading dancer of the Deseret Dramatic Association, taught a group of local girls how to do it and often choreographed dances to accompany theatrical works. Sara sometimes lived with the Youngs in the Lion House as a guest.³² Young put his own daughters on the stage to set an example for others. Hepworth Dixon, writer for *New America*, a magazine, visited the Salt Lake Theater in the 1860s and described it for national readers: "Young understands that the true work of reform in a playhouse must begin behind the scenes; that you must elevate the actor before you can purify the stage. To this end, he not only builds dressingrooms and a

private box for the ladies who have to act, but he places his daughters on the stage as an example and encouragement to the others. Three of these young girls, Alice, Emily, and Zina, are on the stage."³³ Dixon had seen Zina Presendia, then a teenager in the role of Mrs. Musket in a farce, *My Husband's Ghost*. He described her critically as "a ladylike girl, tall, full in figure, moon-faced (as the Orientals say), not much of an artist."³⁴

One Utah actress, Maude Adams, began her career in the Salt Lake Theatre as she literally rocked in her cradle, oblivious to the audience who admired the realistic touch of an actual baby in a domestic scene. In 1878 her mother, Annie Adams Kiskadden, took the precocious five-year-old actress to San Francisco where Maude would perform for the rest of her life. Adams was renowned across the nation for her interpretation of Peter Pan. Salt Lake City was a regular stop on her national tours, and her appearance on her home stage predictably inspired lively publicity and fanfare. "La Petite Maude" played leading roles in numerous national but now forgotten productions in San Francisco including *La Belle Russe*, *Across the Continent*, *Barney's Courtship*, *Fritz*, and others. She acted with Charles Frohman's stock company in *All the Comforts of Home*, *Men and Women*, *Lost Paradise*, *My Geraldine*, and *Diplomacy*. In her own touring company, she played leading roles in *The Little Minister*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Quality Street*, and *Peter Pan*.³⁶

In addition to Maude Adams, nineteenth-century Utah actresses like Sara Alexander and others, showed up repeatedly on the programs of local performances and successfully made their careers outside the state as actresses. Although there was enthusiastic support for the theater in Utah, it was not economically possible to sustain a professional career outside of the national theater centers in New York, Chicago, and San Francisco. Traveling troupes presented the classics, serious dramas, or comedies; but more often audiences saw melodramas, minstrel shows, and musicals. Farces, like *State Secrets*, were local favorites.³⁶ The life of an American actress in the nineteenth century required constant touring under rigorous conditions and a wide and demanding repertoire of roles. These circumstances made it virtually impossible for the actress to have a family or normal home life. Few Utah women were willing to do this or had the national contacts to give them the option but instead contented themselves with amateur theatricals in their home towns.³⁷

The Salt Lake Theater established the popularity of local theater, and the Salt Lake Amateur Dramatic Company performed what seems to have been their first play in Cache Valley in November 1879. The title has not survived, but admission was 25 cents, the *Logan Leader* reported.³⁸ The following summer, *Foiled, or A Struggle for Life and Liberty* (apparently a melodrama) featured several Cache Valley actresses. Charlotte Evans was very effective in her role, according to the *Logan Leader*, and "Miss Neal as 'Becky' showed talent and self-possession."³⁹ Only two weeks later, the Logan Dramatic Club presented the "nautical" drama, *Ben Bolt*.⁴⁰ Right after Christmas, a "Mrs. Tout" gave



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Maude Adams and Ida May Savage, good friends and actresses, n.d. Maude Adams (1872–1953) was one of the premiere actresses of the early twentieth century. She was famous for her interpretation of James M. Barrie’s “Peter Pan.”

a recitation called *The Maniac Wife*, which the *Leader* considered “one of the best features of the entertainment.” It continued, “The lady possesses a fine voice and good delivery, and displayed both to advantage in this piece. The audience generally speaking, observed good order. All went off pleasantly and the performance may be considered a success.”⁴¹

Similar companies formed in Provo, Springville, Ogden, Brigham City, and St. George; but after 1869 and the coming of the railroad, home players in the major cities lost the stage to professional traveling companies. By the end of the nineteenth century, fewer amateurs acted or danced with professionals as more traveling stock companies brought their entire production, including sets and actors, into town for a few nights.

During the nineteenth century, neither the theater nor popular music was seen as a threat to morality but rather as signs of civilization and gentility as the territory’s cities grew in size and sophistication. This attitude was due in part, according to historian Howard R. Lamar, to the perception that the arts were “educational as well as entertaining.”⁴² Brigham Young spelled out what he saw as the ideal relationship between entertainment and instruction in the theater: “Upon the stage of a theater can be represented in character, evil and its consequences, good and its happy results and rewards; the weakness and the follies of man, the magnanimity of virtue and the greatness of truth. The stage

can be made to aid the pulpit in impressing upon the minds of a community an enlightened sense of a virtuous life, also a proper horror of the enormity of sin and a just dread of its consequences. The path of sin with its thorns and its pitfalls, its gins and snares can be revealed, and how to shun it.”⁴³ Moreover, while in some states, actresses were considered to be “loose” women, most Utahns did not share that censorious view. Utah actor John Lindsay, wrote in his memoirs in 1905 “Woman had long since demonstrated her equality with man in the arena of dramatic art,” and this equality included social standing and reputation as well as ability.⁴⁴ The widespread popularity of amateur theatricals meant that there was a pronounced community feeling for drama, enhanced by the fact that the plays selected for performance seldom had themes that offended public taste.

In the second decade of the twentieth century, Utah theater became linked to its universities. (See especially the discussion of Maud May Babcock’s sponsorship of theater at the University of Utah in the section below on “Dance.”) At the beginning of the twentieth century, the Salt Lake Theater was still attracting both nationally known players and the crowds to support them. However, when competition from motion picture studios began in the 1920s, attendance dropped to such a low point that, in 1928, the Salt Lake Theater was sold and razed.⁴⁵

As early as in 1915, the Theater Guild admitted women to membership. The Federal Theater Project of 1935 was created to provide relief for both unemployed men and women. At the same time, it expanded the national theater movement.

Theater in Utah from that point forward was almost exclusively based in the universities and colleges. In the 1980s, the Theater Department of the University of Utah was again headed by a woman—Marilyn Holt—a former Miss Utah and Phi Beta Kappa besides being a fine actress. She balanced both administrative duties and performances as an actress in her years at the University. Like more than fifteen professional theaters nationally associated with universities, Pioneer Memorial Theater was located on campus, and featured a mixed annual season which included plays, classics, and Broadway musicals.

In terms of local theater, the Salt Lake Acting Company operated out of a renovated historic LDS meetinghouse in Salt Lake City’s Marmalade district. Distinguished by the edginess of its performances, SLAC was the sixth largest performing arts company in the state, routinely featuring the original work of Aden Ross, former Utahn Wendy Hammond, and Nancy Borgenicht.

MUSIC

Women have always written and performed music; but the local social climate, while encouraging such proficiency as a “polite” or genteel achievement, conversely discouraged professionalism or public performance as unsuitable for

a lady. By the mid-nineteenth century, many families had pianos in their homes, and girls learned to play along with embroidery and flower arrangement. The occasional recital was acceptable, but not concertizing. Sarah Ann Cooke played the piano at the Salt Lake Theater professionally enough to support her family until she broke her arm.

Consequently, it is as teachers of music that Utah women were most visible. Music courses were first offered at universities in the 1860s.⁴⁶ Of the 38,799 women who lived in Utah in 1880, only a handful were professional musicians. Women rarely played in the orchestra at the Salt Lake Theater or in the popular brass bands that many communities supported in territorial Utah. Female musicians in the nineteenth century were primarily vocalists and amateurs.

After the turn of the century when artists like Emma Lucy Gates Bowen (a granddaughter of Brigham Young) and Lydia White Boothby left the state to study in Europe, the number of women musicians increased substantially; but according to one study, the state can boast no more than six hundred important women Utah musicians since 1900—a group still overwhelmingly amateur in its composition.⁴⁷

The most prominent exception was Emma Lucy Gates Bowen, (1880–1957) a woman whom many consider the finest woman singer to emerge in Utah before World War II. Lucy's career began at fourteen in 1894 when she won the Welsh Eisteddfod competition held in the Salt Lake Tabernacle, performing Gottshak's "Last Hope" on the piano. When she was eighteen, she went to Germany with her half-sister, Leah D. Widtsoe, and her brother-in-law, John A. Widtsoe, to study piano, but was encouraged by her professor to study voice instead.⁴⁸

Gates drew notice from the international press not only for her talent but also for her relationship to the notorious Brigham Young. After studying at the Berlin Royal Conservatory of Music under Blanche Corelli, she sang for Caruso in 1908 at the Royal Opera House in Berlin. During her career, she performed over fifty different roles as prima coloratura.⁴⁹ The threat of World War I dramatically curtailed Gates's career, and she returned to Utah in 1915. There, she and her brother, B. Cecil Gates, organized the Lucy Gates Opera Company. In 1916, she married LDS Apostle Albert E. Bowen and had a family but remained committed to fostering music in Utah—improving both the quality and the quantity of musical performance. From all reports, she was a charismatic woman who dominated Utah's vocal music scene for many years.⁵⁰

As members of choruses and vocal groups, Utah women have always been extremely active and, in numbers impossible to document, thousands of Utah women musicians contributed to amateur or semi-professional choruses and performing groups.

Teaching was considered an appropriate extension of the woman's traditional role and consequently attracted many women musicians. One male critic wrote:

Emma Lucy Gates Bowen (1882–1951), daughter of Jacob F. and Susa Young Gates, was a renowned opera singer, known for her beauty, stage presence and theatrical ability. The photograph depicts her in “The Jolly Musketeer,” n.d.



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When we come to the regular music-lessons of the children we see that it is nearly all done by women, and rightly so, because this is a woman's sphere. Probably if parents were asked why they engaged a lady teacher in preference to a man, the general answer would be that it was cheaper. Unfortunately, this is true, but it is not just. Work of equal merit should receive equal compensation, regardless of sex. But, in truth, pay is not the determining factor in this case. Women teach children because they are better fitted for the work than men. . . . They are in closer touch with childhood, and can therefore work along the line of child's sympathies.⁵¹

Beginning in the late nineteenth century, Utah successfully supported music education from both universities and private schools through the period. The high-minded objectives of one academy, the McCune School of Music and Art, were expressed in its handbook: “Its aim is to encourage the serious and fundamental study of music, and to establish such ideals, and to provide such courses as will establish such ideals, and to provide such courses as will insure its students becoming alike proficient in performance, sound in

knowledge, and ethical in conduct.”⁵² Music training at the school, which was also affiliated with the LDS University from 1917 to 1919, was both theoretical and technical, designed to make artists out of gifted students, to train teachers, and to “disseminate music education among the masses.”⁵³ The course listing offered a variety of classes from voice culture, sight-reading, orchestra, and harmony to history and art appreciation.

It has been through universities, schools, academies, and private classes that Utah women have had a significant impact on music in Utah in the twentieth century. In the first half of the twentieth century, three prominent women juggled successful careers in both teaching and music performance. Edna Evans Johnson, who headed the vocal department at the University of Utah, began as a soloist with the Tabernacle Choir. After earning a master’s degree at the University of Utah, she joined the faculty to teach many students—including her three daughters, who all became professional musicians.⁵⁴ Helen Budge Folland, a pianist, was the first Mormon woman to earn a Ph.D. in music from Columbia in 1942. She was also one of the first women in the United States to become a full professor on a university music faculty and one of an ever smaller group of women who taught music theory.⁵⁵ There has always been a pecking order in the universities which has unofficially held that women were acceptable instructors of voice or piano, but that men should handle the classes in conducting, composition, harmony, and theory.⁵⁶

During the nineteenth century, female instrumentalists were excluded from conventional orchestras. Official discrimination ended in 1903 when the Musicians Union, in order to join the American Federation of Labor, admitted its first female members. Between 1925 and 1945, several women’s orchestras worked either as professionals accompanying musical theater or as unpaid amateurs. Only since the 1960s, have women surfaced in permanent positions in professional orchestras.

Florence Jepperson Madsen was a versatile contralto soloist, conductor, composer, and music educator. Her husband, Franklyn Madsen, headed BYU’s music department during the 1920s and ’30s. What is even more remarkable, considering the times, was that Florence Madsen was a conductor. After making her debut with the New York Symphony Orchestra, Madsen studied at the New England Conservatory of Music. During her career more than a hundred of her compositions were published. One was performed by the full Boston Symphony with a women’s chorus of 165.⁵⁷ Mrs. Madsen, who was also a member of the Relief Society General Board, conducted women’s choruses in the Salt Lake Tabernacle, as well as orchestras and choruses around the nation, including a memorable one in southern California in 1929 when President Calvin Coolidge was in the audience and a Tour of Great Britain in the 1960s by combined British-American “Singing Mothers” recruited from the Relief Societies of both countries.⁵⁸



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Children in a class at the McCune School of Music, July 19, 1944.

Florence Madsen was the only important Utah female conductor until the rise of Barbara Scowcroft in the 1980s. Scowcroft conducted the Utah Symphony occasionally as well as the Nova Chamber Music Series. After leading the group for eighteen successful seasons, in 1982 Scowcroft left the group in the hands of Corbin Johnston. Scowcroft assumed her position with the series in 1985 after the exit of Russell Harlow, Utah Symphony clarinetist (who had founded the group in 1978). Longtime member of the Utah Symphony's first-violin section, Scowcroft also conducted the Utah Youth Symphony after 1986.⁵⁹

During the 1920s and 1930s, there were many female musicians who did not affiliate with the universities. During the 1910s the three Tout sisters left Utah to have successful national careers. Margaret Tout Browning was an opera singer who sang with the Metropolitan Opera Company. Grace and Hazel performed in light opera; Hazel Tout Dawn was known as the "Pink Lady" at the Ziegfeld Follies.

One contemporary musician who balanced a professional career with life as a full-time mother in the second half of the twentieth century was JoAnn Ottley, whose beautiful soprano voice highlighted performances with the Utah Symphony, the Utah Opera Company, and the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, which her husband, Jerold Ottley, conducted. JoAnn Ottley studied voice

under Josef Metternich while on a Fulbright in Cologne, Germany, and was known locally for her performances as Queen of the Night, Violetta, and Lucia. Moreover, as vocal coach of the Tabernacle Choir, JoAnn Ottley trained many other voices. The Mormon Tabernacle Choir, the official choir of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints since the 1860s, has, since 1929, presented a weekly broadcast on CBS. In addition, it has produced numerous recordings and maintained a vigorous international and national touring schedule. The choir consists of 400 voices—nearly half women—and is an important performing group in the state's history.

In 1940, a second major musical performing group was formed in Utah: the Utah Symphony. Under Maurice Abravanel's vigorous leadership, the symphony strengthened its repertoire and, in the 1970s, was recognized as one of the top twelve major symphony orchestras in the nation. Women have always been part of the Utah Symphony; and by the end of the twentieth century, there were many more women in musical professions and more opportunities to work locally on a professional basis.

Opera was first performed at the Salt Lake Theater. After 1947, Maurice Abravanel and the Utah Symphony performed opera each summer for twelve years in the university stadium under the night sky (1948–60). Under the leadership of Ardean Watts, the Opera Workshop (later named the University of Utah Opera Company), produced two or three operas yearly. The Utah Opera, directed by Glade Peterson, emerged from this company and presented between three and five operas yearly. After Peterson's death in 1990, the company hired Anne Ewers. Ewers was well known nationally as a stage director of opera in both Canada and the United States. She came to Utah after directing the Boston Lyric Opera. Conscious of the importance of educating the public about opera as well as building a repertoire, Utah Opera sponsors a young artists program, grooming a handful of young singers twice a year for professional voice work.

Another group of musicians might be best labeled pop artists, reflecting the unique periods that they worked in rather than the state of the art. In the 1940s, the King Sisters, a quartet of Utah Mormon women, sang nationally in the "bop" style of the Andrew Sisters. In the mid-1960s the King Sisters, their husbands, and children joined forces in a television variety show called *The King Family*.

Marie Osmond was only three years old when her brothers performed on the Andy Williams show in 1962 as a one-shot event. The boys were so popular they were invited back on a semi-regular basis, bringing with them both Marie and their younger brother Jimmy. In the 1970s when the Osmond Brothers were recording numerous gold records, Marie jumped into the act and recorded her own hit singles—"Painted Roses" and "I'm a Little Bit Country." Marie proved to be a remarkable phenomenon in her own right and starred for four years in her late teens, along with her brother Donny, on the *Donny and Marie Show*. At twenty-one, she branched out on her own and hosted her own

variety show, *Marie*, on NBC. At the same time, she maintained a vigorous recording schedule, performing in Las Vegas, before heads of state—including Queen Elizabeth and Ronald Reagan—and in other concerts around the world. Marie also starred in movies produced by Osmond Studios like *Going Coconuts* and *The Gift of the Magi*, followed by *The Sound of Music* in 1994–95. An outspoken advocate of the traditional values of home and family, she seemed to personify Mormon morals and values.⁶⁰

A locally popular LDS woman songwriter was Luacine Clark Fox, daughter of Mormon leader J. Reuben Clark. Fox composed Mormon musicals and dramas such as *Her Husband's Religion*, and *Hallowed Journey*. Her popular “As I Have Loved You” (1914), initially a song for LDS Church Primary children, was incorporated into the 1985 edition of the hymnal. During the 1940s and 1950s, she was also an actress, director, and playwright who worked on the daily KSL children’s program, *Storytelling Time*, as “Miss Anna.”

THE VISUAL ARTS

During the nineteenth century, the art of women most often graced the walls of their own homes. Paintings were exhibited and judged alongside prize sheep and turnips through the Deseret Agricultural and Manufacturing Society, organized in 1856. The general lack of formal exhibition space forced artists to show their work in shops, hotels, and recreation halls, which ultimately affected sales.

It was virtually impossible for a young woman to get a rigorous art education between 1800 and 1870 anywhere in the United States because she would have been officially excluded from professional art academies while ladies’ seminaries or private drawing classes gave only limited instruction. Many artists were the daughters of painters who were taught at home. Women were excluded from most professional art classes, particularly figure drawing classes that used nude models. Drawing, like music, was considered a polite accomplishment not a serious professional pursuit.

In light of these handicaps, which were built into nineteenth-century society, the success of women artists in pioneer Utah was all the more remarkable. In the nineteenth century, only a few female visual artists were active. These women, like Bathsheba Wilson Bigler Smith, had an interest in painting as an avocation, rather than as a profession.

However, during the late nineteenth century, hundreds of American artists traveled abroad to study at the prestigious art schools of Paris. The *École des Beaux Arts* did not admit women until 1896; but during the 1890s, the less prestigious academies, Julian and Colarossi, opened their doors to female students. In what art historian Robert C. Olpin called the “pioneer in reverse” syndrome,⁶¹ Mary Teasel studied with Utah pioneer artist J. T. Harwood in 1891, studied at the National Academy of Art in New York City in 1897, and then in 1898 went to Paris with Maye Jennings Farlow, another Utah artist, following the example of Utah artists John Hafen, John B. Fairbanks, and Lorus Pratt.⁶¹

Art patroness Alice Merrill Horne visited the women in Paris and described the school to Utah readers: "Have you a rosy picture of student life in Paris and of the art studios there? The studios are dirty and barren. No furniture embellishes them. There are plain bare stools from six inches to three feet high and a platform for the model—that is all. . . . The studios for women are a counterpart of those for men, but for women the tuition is double. The proprietors claim that the extra money is for keeping women's studios cleaner, but the fact remains they are just as dirty."⁶²

Teasdel was the first Utah woman and the second Utah artist to exhibit at the French Salon. When she returned to Utah, she opened a private studio and taught painting at West High School, influencing other artists in the tradition of academic purity that she learned at the Academie Julian, where draftsmanship and a strict adherence to form were emphasized. Governor Heber M. Wells appointed her to the board of the newly created Utah Art Institute, where she eventually served as its president. In 1908 two other Utah women went to the Academie Julian—Rose Hartwell and Myra Sawyer. Both of them, like Teasdel, spent the summers painting in Normandy countryside.⁶³

The strength of these women artists is that, in subjects, techniques, and achievement, they matched their male counterparts, thus making providing decisive evidence that women artists were "as good" as male artists. At the same time, however, because of this very strength, they did not make a unique or distinctive contribution as "female" artists. Although they walked through doors that were only reluctantly opened to them and worked as equals in the spaces beyond, at the same time, their work cannot be called radical, revolutionary, or purely original. The art world was not changed because they joined it. As Germaine Greer suggests, such women "seldom expressed their own creativity: they imitated the modes of self-expression first forged by integrated, self-regulating (male) genius, most often when they were already weakened by eclecticism and imitation."⁶⁴ Nevertheless, they were pioneering in their effort.

Seeking to stimulate the arts in general and women artists in particular, Alice Merrill Horne became a state legislator and sponsored a bill in 1899 to create the Utah Art Institute. The bill called for an annual art exhibit, an official state collection, a series of public lectures on art, and an annual purchase prize of \$300 for the best painting of the exhibition. Although the creation of the Utah Art Institute was related to the vigor of the suffrage movement in Utah and to the woman's rights movement generally, its direct and proximate cause was the energy and skill of Alice Merrill Horne.⁶⁴

Alice Merrill Horne was one of an elite group of American middle-class women driven by a vision of the potential for progress in their home states. Because it was still considered unsuitable for these women to earn money, they were very active volunteers in the cultural lives of their communities. They formed clubs, built schools, and founded museums. The Springville Art Museum, the Bertha Eccles Art Center in Ogden, and the Salt Lake Art Center

Mary Teasdel (1863–1937) was one of the first Utah women to go abroad (Paris) to study. A subtle colorist, she was proficient in several mediums (oils, watercolors and pastels), n.d.



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(the Art Barn) were founded and sustained by women whose voluntary services made such success possible.⁶⁴

Alice Merrill Horne served in the state legislature in 1898–99, openly pushing legislation that would help artists. Even after state support of what had become known as the “Alice Art Collection” was withdrawn in the 1920s, Mrs. Horne found other ways to keep alive her goal of making art accessible to all the communities of Utah. Her vigorous patronage of the arts, her voluminous writing on art topics, and her personal support of artists pushed the visual arts to the forefront of Utah culture. She devoted all her resources—financial, emotional, and intellectual—to the cause of art in Utah. Mrs. Horne told about her first years of work in the Utah Art Movement at the International Frauen (Women) Congress in Berlin in 1904. Among her many honors were the Medal of Honor from the Academy of Western Culture and election to the Utah Hall of Fame, nominated by the Utah Federation of Women’s Clubs.⁶⁷

A twentieth-century example of this same phenomenon is the story of the Salt Lake Art Center, founded in 1931 as the first public art gallery in Utah. Alta Rawlins Jensen led the movement to create an official home for the visual

arts in Salt Lake City. Working with a group of fifteen women friends, Mrs. Jensen held several fund-raising events, organized a literary association known as Barnacles, and held an annual Beaux Arts Ball. Jensen worked tirelessly during the cash-strapped days of the Depression to provide a “gathering place for poets, writers, musicians and artists of all mediums.”⁶⁸ In 1961, the Junior League of Utah took over partial responsibility for running the center—again on a volunteer basis.

The first significant generation of female artists born and raised in the state worked in the 1920s and '30s. Like their pioneer foremothers, they dealt primarily with figurative subject matter. Florals or landscapes were typical themes. For the first time, however, strong individuals emerged, often with eccentric personalities. Florence Truelson's work was less typically reflective and female in vision and more the expression of a unique personal aesthetic.

Relative compensation for art produced by women lagged behind rates paid to men. Most important, women failed to receive important commissions, public work that would have brought them more work and a measure of fame. The Federal Art Project administered under the auspices of the Works Projects Administration in the 1930s addressed this issue, and was in fact the first federal bill to include an equal opportunity clause. The FAP gave an unprecedented number of women artists the chance to work in their profession because of a stipulation embedded in the language of the legislation itself. These women created easel paintings, taught classes in community art centers, and painted a few large-scale murals for public buildings.

Despite the favorable atmosphere created by the New Deal WPA projects, however, few women actually worked as artists—perhaps fewer than eighty in a total female population of 161,750.⁶⁹ Still, approximately 40 percent of all artists on relief under the WPA were women.

The Utah co-chair of the Federal Arts Project in Utah was Helen Sheets, who assigned ten different artists to separate projects. The only woman of the ten Utah artists hired through the fund, Florence Ware, created a pictorial map of the early Salt Lake Valley and painted the double murals in the main chamber of Kingsbury Hall at the University of Utah. Still, thanks to the programs of the New Deal, the 1930s were a watershed for the arts in Utah. During that decade, new professional arts organizations provided unprecedented opportunities for artists to remain in the state rather than leaving to study and perform in the East.

Women artists required incredible independence and drive to defy societal attitudes and make their way in the largely male-dominated world of art. Florence Ware and her contemporary, Caroline Parry, were students of Utah artist Edwin Evans at the University of Utah in the 1910s and some of the first female artists to receive major commissions. In the twenties, Ware studied at the University of California at Berkeley, at Columbia University, with Mahonri Young at the American School of Sculpture, at the Art Students League, and

at Cooper Union in 1927 on a scholarship. Ware mastered a variety of artistic media through this diverse combination of art instruction. Ware and Parry became educators and taught a new generation of artists. At the same time, they created a body of work that was both impressive in its scope and which reflected considerable talent.

Mabel Frazier's influence was felt at the University of Utah from 1921 to 1953. She taught as an assistant professor for forty-two quarters before being promoted to the rank of associate professor. Frazer was a versatile teacher who taught painting, anatomy, art history, sculpture, and ceramics. Active off campus as well as on, Frazier was a vocal member of the local art scene and produced a number of works of exceptional strength, including one important work—*The Furrow* (1935).⁷⁰

She also secured major commissions, including refurbishing the murals in the Salt Lake Temple and painting murals in Salt Lake City's Thirty-third Ward Chapel. Unconventional and spirited, she said, "An artist must have something to say. Art is just another language and the would-be painter should at least learn the rudiments of that language—color, composing, drawing, etc." To George Dibble, Frazier was a demanding teacher who challenged her students to stretch beyond their limits. "She had a kind of easy, free watercolor approach, and encouraged this. . . . [She also] decried anybody's compulsion to hold to rigorous detail." Frazier continued to exhibit into her nineties.⁷¹

The flourishing of art during the Depression under the Federal Arts Project proved to be a false start. During the 1940s and 1950s, women exhibited in relatively few important shows across the country. Although at mid-century, some adventuresome Utah women began to paint in modernist styles that showed an awareness of national trends and avant-garde movements, as the American Art movement increased in strength and vigor, opportunities for women artists shrank. Abstract artists, both men and women, have always struggled for recognition in the conservative and traditional local art scene. It was not until the 1970s that new forms and images of women mirrored the changes in the social fabric of American society.

Lee Deffebach's (1928–present) talent, unique vision, and persistence brought her the respect of her peers and a loyal following. A peer of the second generation of the New York School (such figures as Kenneth Noland, Morris Louis, and Helen Frankenthaler), Deffebach found her voice as a painter by staining her canvases with thin washes, "glowing tones that melted and mingled with each other to create lyrical improvisations that evidenced her distinctively Western American aesthetic."⁷² In a June 1993 retrospective of her work, according to Mary Francey, Deffebach demonstrated her path from abstract expressionism to "strong visual statements that emerge from episodes and experiences in her life."⁷³

Anna Campbell Bliss studied mathematics and art at Wellesley College before deciding to attend architecture school at Yale. "Mathematics is pervasive,"



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Artist Florence Ware (1891–1971) at the Neighborhood House, December 11, 1962. Ware was known as a fine teacher, painter, and interior designer.

she said. “It’s part of our structure of thinking, and not something you isolate.”⁷⁴ This rich and diverse background is evident in work from every stage of her development. Bliss combined screen-print techniques with computer-generated designs, bringing her work “into the new scientific world of dynamical systems and fractals,” according to art historian Mary Francey. Bliss saw each new artist production as an experiment, a process she valued and learned from.⁷⁵ Much of this exploration was through color and the effect of colors on each other. She tried, according to one author, to “overcome ‘cliches of color’”—the idea that “red must always jump out and blue always recedes. ‘You can make color do anything,’” she said at a 2004 retrospective of her work at the Utah Museum of Fine Arts at the University of Utah.⁷⁶

Responding to the nation’s bicentennial, the Springville Art Museum staged a woman’s exhibit and commissioned a catalogue—“Out of the Land: Utah Women Then and Now” to document this historical event. Challenging local religious and moral values and perceptions, the exhibit included work produced by women, representing Utah’s women’s issues, contemporary concerns, attitudes, and range of experiences. Like exhibits from states throughout the nation, Utah’s exhibit traveled to Washington, D.C., where it was shown at the National Museum for Women in the Arts.⁷⁷

An art professor at the University of Utah, Maureen O’Hara-Ure continues the strong practitioner/educator tradition of Florence Ware and Mabel Frazier, educating a new generation of female artists in the

twentieth-first century. According to Mary Francey, O'Hara-Ure "translates ideas into complex constructions that defy classification but are rooted more strongly in cultural ethos than a singular aesthetic."⁷⁸

Dorothy Bearnson founded the University of Utah's ceramics program in 1948 and organized the Utah Designer Craftsman in 1960. Known as an innovator in her pottery techniques as well as in her teaching, Bearnson was active in national organizations including the American Crafts Council and National Council of Education in the Ceramic Arts. In April 1991, the NCECA awarded Bearnson an honorary membership, its most prestigious honor.⁷⁹

A long-time faculty member in the Graduate School of Architecture, photographer Barbara Richards taught a whole generation of young architects the art of photographic seeing. More important, Richards's own work, whether in soft, quiet landscapes composed with black and white film, or color explorations made possible by the computer, is bold and vibrant, sensitive and intuitive.

No single artist has dominated twentieth-century art in Utah in the same way that painter Mary Teasdel or singer Emma Lucy Gates Bowen did, although many more women work as full-time artists today. The departments of fine arts at the universities and colleges in the state have significant numbers of talented, dedicated female students. The rosters of faculty at the state's colleges and universities demonstrate that increasing numbers of women are teaching at the university level in art departments. More important, Utah women are showing their work in virtually every local gallery and museum in the state, and nationally as well.

It is, however, ironic that the best-known piece of public art in the state was produced by an outsider. Nancy Holt's *Sun Tunnels* in the northwestern desert, ten miles from Wendover, draws visitors from across the country and beyond who come to welcome the sunrise at the time of the solstices or equinoxes.

DANCE

Dance, as discussed above, was largely associated with dramatics in the nineteenth century; but it was becoming a cultural art in its own right as the twentieth century neared. A major incentive for dance in Utah came when Maud May Babcock arrived in 1892. Babcock had graduated from the Philadelphia National School of Oratory in 1886 and in 1890 from the Academy of Dramatic Arts. The summer before her arrival, Susa Young Gates, a daughter of Brigham Young, attended Babcock's physical culture class at Harvard University summer school. She invited Babcock; and Babcock, for a "salary" of \$500 a year, became the first woman to hold professorial rank at the University of Utah.⁸⁰ For almost four decades, she dominated theater and dance in Utah as an instructor of elocution in the Department of Speech and Drama. Her Delsarte training, credentials, and eloquent advocacy of the moral benefits of physical fitness shaped the public's acceptance of and participation in dance in Salt Lake City and Provo.

In 1893 Babcock organized the first university theater in the nation. The first performance was a demonstration of drills with dumb-bells, wands, Indian clubs, dances, and dramatic picturization that illustrated the combination of drama and dance movement that was central to both Babcock's philosophy and her method. Four years later, a group of students under her leadership formed the University Dramatic Club, again the first of its kind in the United States.⁸¹ In 1893, the group performed at the Salt Lake Theater—an exhibition of “fancy steps, attitudizing muscular poses, drills, dances, Swedish movement, and Indian club and dumbbell performances.” Two years later, more than one hundred of her students acted in the first play produced at a university in the United States: *Eleusinia*, which included “living statues of toga-ed figures in statuesque groups inspired by the Greek legends of Demeter and Persephone.”⁸¹

Babcock estimated that she directed over 800 plays involving thousands of students in her years at the university. She introduced such new curriculum as classes in oratory, speech, and physical education. Although she failed to establish a professional theater in Utah, she played a significant role in the national Little Theater movement and directed the first university Little Theater west of the Mississippi in the 1920s. Above all else, by precept and example, she openly encouraged young women to choose careers, enter public life, and develop their talents. A colleague who taught in the Communications Department at the University of Utah remembered that “this woman could frighten you to pieces; a woman of great dignity, [who] could also be the sweetest.”⁸³

At Brigham Young University in Provo, Algie Eggertsen Ballif included dance drama as part of her physical culture classes in the 1920s. In bare feet, considered an innovation during the time, girls and women expressed in dance themes from Greek mythology. Under Ballif's direction, the physical education department's uniform changed from wool serge gym suits to gingham dresses. Eleanor Roosevelt asked Algie to serve on the Education Subcommittee of the U.S. Commission on the Status of Women.⁸⁴ Throughout the 1920s, women's dance classes—as opposed to physical culture that included dancing—were offered at both universities and exhibited a movement towards the new aesthetic dancing of Isadora Duncan.

Dance classes were also taught at the McCune Mansion at the beginning of the twentieth century. “Esthetic Dancing” classes were offered for \$4 a term for children ages five to seven and on up to adults. This type of “expressive” movement was backed by a philosophy about the relationship between the mind and the body. “In this course the aim is to make the body the obedient and graceful servant of the mind. The student is led to see that a training which consists merely of freeing exercises results in lawlessness, leaving the body as free to do the wrong thing as the right. It is only when thought controls this freedom that the body becomes a truly expressive agent—a picture of a mind activity.”⁸⁵

A national ballet tradition had begun in such centers as New York City before the end of the nineteenth century which paved the way for this new type



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Art class at the University of Utah, ca. 1920.

of dancing. During the early years of the twentieth century, it established itself as the center of avant garde art. Ballet joined other dance forms such as jazz dancing, tap dancing, and finally, at the turn of the century, modern dance for professionals. Isadora Duncan (1878–1927), whose concerts nationally shocked and revolutionized traditional norms of respectability, felt that dance should break through traditional boundaries and dignified dance as a career. In the early twentieth century, Ruth St. Denis (1879–1968), Martha Graham (1894–1991), Mary Wigman (1886–1973), and Doris Humphrey (1895–1958) popularized modern dance, expanded its meaning and repertoire of movements, and turned it into a legitimate and serious form of art. Lagging behind by several decades, Utah dancers would not move toward modern dance until after World War II.

In the early 1940s, dancer Virginia Tanner was faced with the decision of staying in Utah to teach or leaving to dance professionally in New York City. She chose Utah and began teaching children in the ballroom of the McCune School of Music and Art at the same time she was choreographing theater productions at the University of Utah and performing in them. Her student performing group became known as the Children's Dance Theater. For the next several decades, Tanner made a career out of teaching and training children. Before her death in 1979, CDT became a local institution and gained respect for creative dance throughout the state.

In 1953, the Children's Dance Theater was invited to perform at Ted Shawn's famous Jacob's Pillow in Massachusetts, the Connecticut College School of Dance, and New York University's summer camp. *Life* magazine praised the visit of the Utah children's troupe in glowing terms: "From the first, there was beauty. The children were wonderfully disciplined yet gloriously free. They danced as if they had faith in themselves, had a love those of us who were seeing them, actively believed in their God and rejoiced in all of these."⁸⁶ Since that time the group has danced from Washington, D.C., to Hawaii. Simultaneously, Tanner was helping to develop a national program for dance education through the National Endowment Arts Program titled "Arts Impact," publishing textbooks on the arts for children, and training teachers on a national level.

Jose Limon described Virginia Tanner as the "world's greatest and foremost teacher of dance," and *Life* magazine's arts critic Walter Terry called Tanner a "philosopher of children." Limon added, "In the world of children's dance, she has been an explorer, an interpreter, a great explainer. Implicit in everything she does in children's dance is her awareness of the historical, social, psychological, and yes, moral forces, that along with aesthetics and techniques, go into a child's pure dance expression."⁸⁷ After Tanner's death, Mary Ann Lee headed CDT, building on Virginia's vision: "Roots and Wings." Each year as many as 800 children between the ages of three and eighteen take classes in creative dance at the University of Utah and are trained to get in "touch with their own creativity."⁸⁸

In 1966 with a \$370,000 grant, Virginia Tanner, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the University of Utah modern dance faculty and administration organized a repertory dance company, first known as the University of Utah Repertory Dance Theater. The idea of a full-time professional modern dance company outside of New York City was a bold idea. For the most part, modern dance was still unfamiliar in the West.

The idea worked so well that, forty years later, the Repertory Dance Theater had a comfortable national reputation, a performing repertoire of over 165 master works spanning the full range of American dance history, and performance experience in more than 300 cities and towns located in forty-one states and Canada. Perhaps the greatest significance of the RDT was that it was a company where Utah dancers could find continuing training and employment so that more could stay in-state for their professional careers. Under the leadership of Linda C. Smith, herself a former dancer for the company, RDT maintains a modern dance repertory of more than 200 works choreographed by more than 100 modern dancers, including the complete works of Doris Humphrey.

In 1954, another dance troupe formed through the partnership of Shirley Russon Ririe and Joan Jones Woodbury: the Ririe-Woodbury Dance Company. Under their leadership, five choreodancers joined together to perform and choreograph at the University of Utah. In the early years of the

company when there was no budget, no consistent predictable rehearsal space, and no salaries—just a modest touring schedule—the group persisted because of their dedication to the concept of a teaching-performing organization. This combination helped establish the group's reputation as a distinguished company of movement specialists with "choreographies off the beaten track and into the future by the co-directors and prominent guest choreographers."⁸⁹ Ririe-Woodbury performed in schools and communities in and outside of Utah. In fact, in one six-year period, over one-third of all Artists-in-the-Schools residencies in the entire United States were done by Ririe-Woodbury.⁹⁰ A publication for the 1979–80 season promoted the range of programs the company featured: "Extensive touring has built an enviable record—keeping us on the go and demanding that we give a great deal of attention to packing for a variety of performances. Our performances range from narrated concerts for uninitiated audiences to multi-media concerts for sophisticated dance tastes."⁹¹

Certainly the 1950s were years that witnessed a great flowering of dance in Utah. Along with the creation of Children's Dance Theater and Ririe-Woodbury, the first university ballet training school was created at the University of Utah by Willam Christensen, who also helped organize the Utah Civic Ballet in 1963. In 1968 the Federation of Rocky Mountain States made the Utah Civic Ballet its official regional company under the name of Ballet West.

Each year since 1955, Utah audiences have flocked to *The Nutcracker*, choreographed by Willam Christensen after he came to the University of Utah to start the first ballet department in the nation in a fine arts college. Known originally as the University Ballet, then Utah Civic Ballet, the company became Ballet West in 1966. Bolstered by the support of Glenn Walker Wallace, Ballet West moved into the Capitol Theater in 1978. Starting in the 1960s, Ballet West made several European tours and performed in New York City and at the John F. Kennedy Center in Washington D.C., receiving national and international recognition as a significant regional ballet company.

Ballet education at the University of Utah flourished under "Mr. C." as Christensen was known to local dancers, and eventually became a nationally respected and ranked department. In the late twentieth century, the Ballet West Conservatory, headed by John Hart and Sharee Lane, trained advanced students sent to the university from private studios throughout the area. Utah Ballet, is the university's own scholarship ballet group directed by Attila Ficzere in the 1990s who came to Utah from the San Francisco Ballet. In Utah County, Jacqueline Colledge directed the Utah Regional Ballet, which included *The Nutcracker* in its own repertoire.

In 1976 Bruce Marks joined Ballet West, and his wife, Toni Landers Marks, became its principal teacher. Landers had been a principal dancer with the Royal Danish Ballet for a few years and was renowned for her expertise in the Bournonville, a distinctive dance technique that combines mime with more traditional choreography. Other women worked in the administration

of the Ballet Company, including former dancer Sondra Sugai, who since 1980 has been associate artistic director, and Helen Douglas, who was resident choreographer in the 1980s.

What Alice Merrill Horne did for art in early twentieth century, Glenn Walker Wallace did for dance and music. Her personal vision and dedication to the arts made steady contributions to Utah from the 1920s to the 1970s. Best remembered for her part in the founding of the Utah Civic Ballet in 1963, she served as president of its board until her retirement in 1971. Mrs. Wallace was also involved in the organization of the Salt Lake Symphony Orchestra in 1924, the Civic Music Association in 1930, and the Utah Symphony Orchestra in 1939.

Other Utah universities and dance academies offered a range of dance training and performance opportunities. At the end of the twentieth century, co-directors Caroline Prohosky and Marilyn Berritt produced inventive programs and showcased the talents of local dancers in Utah County. At Utah State University, Dance West summer school's director, Maggi Moar, recruited visiting faculty to supplement the teaching already available at the university and in Logan itself for its students. Southwest Dance Theater led by Candy Fowler continues the traditions Virginia Tanner established to the north of Salt Lake Valley in Davis County.

ARTS AND CRAFTS

The Arts and Crafts movement at the turn of the century, as preached by William Morris and John Ruskin, was another international movement in art that impacted the work of Utah women. A reaction against the ugliness and misery of newly industrialized society in both America and Great Britain, the proponents of Arts and Crafts advocated a return to an earlier era of handicrafts and in handmade products like furniture, wallpaper, and textiles. Many Utah women, for whom hand-crafted goods held a special significance, enthusiastically responded to the ideas of the Arts and Crafts movement.

Just fifty years after the settlement of Salt Lake City, pioneer virtues were already celebrated and "remembered," most prominently at the Jubilee celebrations and exhibitions and at the Women's Pavilion at the Chicago Exposition in 1893 where Utah women displayed dresses made from home-produced silk. The traditional and artful pioneer needlecrafts of their grandmothers were raised to the level of "craft," as fewer women produced the cloth used by their families for clothing. Spinning, weaving, knitting, crocheting, tatting, and embroidery were rapidly replaced by mass-produced goods available in stores.

Nevertheless, the abundance of female production displayed in the Daughters of the Utah Pioneers Museum in Salt Lake City, indicate that crafts continued to be popular folk art forms, functioning as tangible physical links with the traditions of their ancestors down to the present. Periodic quilt exhibits in the Springville Art Museum and the Museum of (LDS) Church History and

Art always draw large crowds, as do the American West Heritage Center's Festival of the American West and displays by the Utah Quilters Guild. More important, craftwork perpetuates the values of home manufacturing and craftsmanship, heightening the value of personally produced goods for one's family and friends. Much of this work is still produced in domestic environments, does not require that women leave their children for work, and is a highly personal expression of self, exhibiting both what a woman can do and who she is.

The original curriculum of Brigham Young Academy in the 1880s and '90s included such "female arts" as watercolors, setting an elegant table, and crocheting.⁹² This line-up of classes, which included other housekeeping skills, reveals a sense of what constituted appropriate education, purpose in female education, and a discourse about women's proper role in society and in the Mormon church.

As the twentieth century began, Utah's high school curricula included classes in decorative and applied arts and crafts under the direction of Emma Francis Daft, Ruth Harwood (daughter of J. T. Harwood), and Margaret Merrill Fisher (sister of Alice Merrill Horne). Classes included jewelry, metallography, leather crafts, and lace making. Fisher taught students at West High School how to make the lace designs handed down to her from her mother, Bathsheba Smith Merrill, whose mother, Bathsheba Wilson Bigler Smith, had taken prizes in Nauvoo for her original lace designs and drawings for execution in hand-woven wool, linen, and cotton fabrics. Such a genealogy of traditional arts connects women through generations, perpetuates values and beliefs about women's roles, and produces a sense of competency and self-worth in the process.

One weaver who received national prominence for her work, Mary Meigs Atwater, moved to Utah at the end of the nineteenth century with her husband. Atwater was attracted to the tenets of the formal crafts movement and had attended the Chicago Art Institute and the Academie Julian in Paris at the same time as Rose Hartwell. Atwater authored several texts on weaving including *The Shuttle Craft Book of American Hand Weaving* that became nationally known.⁹³

In the twentieth century, like the Native American women who are this area's original inhabitants, Utah women express their personal truths through folk art which is both domestic and work related, made to decorate their homes or yards or to give as gifts to others. "Like their pioneer forebears, contemporary folk artists have learned to create beauty in their everyday lives by pairing group-held values and personal ingenuity with the materials and tools at hand."⁹⁴

Contemporary Utah women's folk art is characterized by a new diversity and variety in both subject matter and technique including weaving, fiber art, photography, and sculpture as well as painting. For example, Sharon Alderman's weavings reflect sensitivity to both materiality and texture. Her wall hangings, meticulously composed with cotton thread, create color compositions as subtle as the shifting light that moves across the valley at the end of the day.⁹⁵

CONCLUSION

Barbara Welter sees forces at work at the end of the nineteenth century that spelled the demise of “true womanhood” and, hence, of the romanticized version of the appropriate woman. Progressivism and its attitude toward social reform depended in large measure on the quasi-professionalized work of a new generation of educated women. Industrialism, urbanization, and even the expanded political role of the United States in the world arena all impacted the place of women in society and at home. These circumstances, Welter writes

called forth responses from women which differed from those she was trained to believe were hers by nature and divine decree. The very perfection of True Womanhood, moreover, carried within itself the seeds of its own destruction. For if woman was so very little less than the angels, she should surely take a more active part in running the world, especially since men were making such a hash of things. Real women often felt they did not live up to the ideal of True Womanhood: some of them blamed themselves, some challenged the standards, some tried to keep the virtues and enlarge the scope of womanhood.⁹⁶

In the nineteenth century, women were firmly tied to the home, whether the home was a productive unit or not, and regardless of its degree of separation from the public sphere. Women in the twentieth century moved increasingly into participation in the paid labor force and public world. This movement resulted in a growing contradiction between the daily reality of women’s lives and the dominant cultural ideologies that attached specific gender codes to each sphere and impacted women’s ability to succeed in their new life.

According to Linda J. Nicholson, “Beyond the practical contradictions generated by old expectations being added to new responsibilities, the participation of women outside the home meant the development, particularly for professional women, of a new sense of self.” She continues, “Such personality characteristics as being nurturant, self-sacrificing, and nonassertive were incompatible with at least a certain kind of nondomestic activity. Women’s activity outside the home both generated conflicts with traditionally assigned tasks and traits within the family and provided alternatives to that family.”⁹⁷

An equivalent shift reduced the family’s importance in material and economic production but assigned to women the role of guardians of the “inner life.” The domain of emotions thus became equivalent with the female sphere.⁹⁸ At the same time, there was decisive evidence of female creative power as women spoke these interior truths with the language of their arts.

The image of the artist in the nineteenth century is that of an exceptional individual who, at great personal sacrifice and risk, nearly always left the state for both professional training and a portion of her professional career. Little was available in the way of either education or cultural opportunities in the state. Even now, artists still leave in large numbers for training at superior academies

of music or art outside of the state but many choose to stay for instruction in the programs offered at every university. Art education in Utah has trained hundreds of teachers, helped promote art appreciation, and raised the level of local performances. Perhaps this is because art has always relied on an unique combination of talent, vision, and good fortune which cannot be produced by some academic formula. The same pattern holds true for dance, theater, and singing.

Although artistic creation suggests both individuality and interconnectedness, it is perhaps inevitable that issues of the “proper” role of women, the role of art in the life of the community, and the relationship between art and politics, economics, and family life continue to surface. The same problems that discouraged women from pursuing careers in art-related fields in the nineteenth century plague the contemporary artist—economic prohibitions, societal prejudices against women working in certain areas, and the problems of balancing a career with a family.

The LDS Church has encouraged cultural life through its auxiliary programs. For example, large numbers of women have participated in such activities as the LDS Church dance festivals, which began in the 1920s and ended in the 1960s, and the local ward road shows. Such experiences helped to create interest in those art forms. However, the church’s emphasis on mass participation over individual achievement has diffused interest in solo or professional careers. The heavy assignments to LDS women to fill executive and teaching positions in its auxiliary organizations serving women and children become an obstacle, leaving little room for work outside of the official church programs.

According to the 2000 U.S. census,⁹⁹ since the 1960s more women identify themselves as artists than ever before in the state’s history. This increase in numbers promises a great future for the arts in Utah as these women continued to work. As Utah’s population becomes more cosmopolitan and places a higher value on cultural activities, art will be supported on a grander scale—which will in turn encourage more women to pursue careers as professional artists. Through programs like the Salt Lake City Arts Council’s Percent for the Art, that sets aside 1 percent of the total cost of new public construction projects for art contributes to the quality of life in the community. Artists communicate essential human truths, interpret societal values and issues, and express the essence of culture. The diversity of women’s art enriches local culture, builds community, and expands the possibilities women consider as they live their lives in Utah.

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