

INTERVIEWEE: Professor Colin Slim
Professor of Music

INTERVIEWER: Samuel C. McCulloch
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SM: This is an interview with Professor Colin Slim at eleven o'clock, Thursday, May 25, 1989, in my office.

Okay, Colin, the first question is what did you know about the Fine Arts Program at UCI before you were interviewed?

CS: Well, Clayton and I had been in some kind of correspondence. I was at the University of Chicago then, and he asked me, in respect to music, to suggest what I would consider to be a feasible curriculum for an undergraduate program in music. And one, of course, which involved a considerable amount of performance because he felt, and I also feel, that above all other aspects in music, that if you wish to be successful in any aspect of music, you must be a fine performer. It doesn't mean, necessarily, that you have to have played in Carnegie Hall, but that you should be able to be an excellent performer.

That certainly was the attitude that was fostered in me as an undergraduate, and which I subscribed to. So, what we were trying to do, then . . . what I was suggesting in this program was that we prepare our undergraduates for a variety of possibilities at graduation, either professional performance--if they were indeed of that caliber--further

study in any graduate school because no graduate school--and I mean here schools of the caliber of Harvard and Chicago and Berkeley--will accept students in Music who are not musical, for obvious reasons. It really differs a little bit from the situation perhaps in Art History, where one does not need to be a painter to study art history. But if you wish to be a music historian, you have to be a musician. The worst thing that can happen is what the late Edward Lowinsky said, was so-called "paper musicology." That is, if you're talking about music and you don't know what it's sound is . . .

SM: Excuse me, Colin. Who was that you mentioned?

CS: Late Edward Lowinsky, who was professor at the University of Chicago.

SM: Is it L-E-O-N?

CS: L-O-W-I-N-S-K-Y.

SM: Thank you.

CS: So, then we had the interview, and he seemed to be interested in me, and then I came. So, in essence then, at least in the early years--and to a large degree--the undergraduate program represents suggestions that I put forth in that year.

SM: Well, Colin, since you have now answered (inaudible) . . .

CS: (laughter) Yes, I have.

SM: Which means that you and Clay basically drew up the Music Program, and three, that you felt, although you're a

musicologist, you should also know music, and even, in your case, conduct. I can recall that Haydn in the first commencement . . .

CS: Yes, but I think that it wasn't a commencement. I recall it was the Haydn Lord Nelson mass, which Maurice had prepared the chorus, and he (Maurice) sang the bass soloist.

SM: Yes, that's right.

CS: I cannot now remember all the other singers, but I conducted it. He asked me to conduct it. But I don't recall it as being at commencement. But the year, 1967, looks rather correct.

SM: I'll tell you what I'll do. You know, we have all those . . . your commencement programs, and so on. I check it out.

CS: Then you'll prove me wrong. (laughter)

SM: No. I wouldn't say that, but I think you may have a better memory than I.

CS: To go back to number two for a second, I should say that indeed, the earliest layer of the undergraduate Music Program, I am responsible for. But, certainly, since the arrival of people such as Bill Holmes and Margaret Murata, it has undergone modifications and changes, although perhaps its basic thrust is still there. But it has certainly been . . . it has evolved a good deal.

SM: Well, I am very fond of both Bill Holmes and also Margaret, who I got to know in the Education Abroad Program. She's very keen about that.

CS: Yes.

SM: And it's always been an exciting program in Fine Arts. I must say that I've already interviewed Jan Plastino.

CS: Yes.

SM: And I will get Clay. I've already interviewed Clay back in 1974, when he gave me what had been achieved up to that time. Of course, he's now just doing performances and teaching Drama.

CS: That's right. To return to number three, just for a second.

SM: Yes, yes.

CS: I would also, without wanting to boast, I am certainly a music historian, but I remember playing the Beethoven First Piano Concerto with the orchestra in 1970 when the Fine Arts complex opened. We also did the Ninth Symphony, and there were a number of performances there. Nineteen seventy, of course, being the two hundredth anniversary of the birth of Beethoven, so it was a double celebration.

SM: Right. I love the Beethoven's First. I don't remember going to that. I do remember a pianist you had, Arnold Juda.

CS: Yes, the late Arnold Juda, alas. He just died.

SM: A very fine pianist.

CS: Yes. He was a fabulous musician. He and I often played two pianos at faculty . . . the so-called faculty benefit concerts, which were benefitted for the students, of course.

SM: Now, the fourth question is, to me, an important one because you are quite famous for having been a member of the first Budget Committee, now called CAP, Committee on Academic Promotions, of course.

CS: Yes.

SM: And you did so well in explaining to my colleagues, speaking of the Humanities and the others in the Sciences. How do you appoint a person in Fine Arts? How do you promote him? What do you ask for? Do you ask for performances, or do you ask for scholarly articles, or how do you do it?

CS: Well, I was helped, I must say, by sensitive people who served on those early budget committees, who were themselves interested in the arts, and who . . . one of whom, Hazard [Adams], for example, was a fine writer, author, himself, and, therefore, knew something about creativity. Certainly, under the rubric of research, it was broadened. And I'm not certain whether it was, in fact, in the instructions to the Budget Committee at that time--it certainly is now--that under the rubric of research, there is with it, with equal importance, the rubric of creativity.

And it's under that rubric that one evaluates colleagues in the Fine Arts faculty--not only on our campus, of course.

But, indeed, you asked me how I educated. One continues to educate the Budget Committee. But then the Budget Committee (now the CAP), all of us are educated all the time by our colleagues. It's quite a remarkable experience.

SM: Yes, I was educated, too, on an evaluation, ad hoc committee for the promotion of one of the Fine Arts faculty to a professorship. And I learned a lot as to how one goes about that. It happened to be in Dance, and Eugene--and we all admit this, everybody admits--Eugene didn't really know how to set up a request for promotion, and so on, and Clay had to step in and help, you know.

CS: Yes, yes.

SM: But it was very interesting. You do get educated, don't you, all the time?

CS: Yes, we do.

SM: Now, tell me . . . I was so happy when you were the first faculty lecturer on the Senate . . . the Senate appointed you, or rather named you, the Research Lecturer.

CS: Right.

SM: And so you gave your talk. And I was happy that they printed it and they are printing everybody's as it has been done subsequently.

CS: That's true.

SM: Did they tell you they were going to do that then?

CS: Well, now, this is a very interesting little story. I was enormously surprised and flattered to be selected. That was 1976, if memory doesn't betray me. And the notion was, although it wasn't, I think, then quite clear in everybody's mind since this was the first, that following the research lecture, there would be a reception. In my case, there was no reception simply because I think that concept hadn't quite evolved. So Jim McGaugh, who was Vice Chancellor at that time, apparently felt a little apologetic for that and said to me, "We would like to print your talk." And I said, "Well, not before I revise it, and also, Jim, I should tell you that there will be a great number of plates in this." And he said, "Oh," thinking about the cost. "How many?" And I told him, and he said, "Well, I think we can handle that."

And so I had the feeling that that first publication was a rather special one. People feeling a little bit guilty that we hadn't had the normal--or what was then to become normal--the evening reception afterwards. And so that those dollars were put into this publication, which was a rather sumptuous one, perhaps the most sumptuous of them all, with rather pretty inner covers and handsome plates. So, I benefitted from that.

SM: That's an interesting story. You know, it's interesting, Colin, how things evolve, and so on. When I became Chair

of the Academic Senate in 1978, I felt this is the Academic Senate's award. And the Academic Senate is . . . so, therefore, the Academic Senate Chairman should introduce the person, awardee.

CS: Yes.

SM: And I raised this with Jim and Dan, and they agreed, so hard work was put to a minimum. Fred Reines was on this

CS: Yes, yes. I remember going to his lecture.

SM: And we had a game. I gave a Gilbert and Sullivan tag. (He and I are buffs of Gilbert and Sullivan.) So he knew the answer to that one. And then we did go on to have a nice reception, and so on.

CS: Yes, yes.

SM: Now, can you tell me, off the record . . . I better stop the machine here, if you . . .

(tape is turned off)

Going on, Colin, how did [Robert] Garfias get along? I preface this question because I heard him speak up at Berkeley at a Fulbright . . . all the Fulbrights were brought together on the west coast, and I've been a Fulbright twice. And he came down from Washington University, Seattle, where he was the Provost, and he gave a brilliant talk. And I just . . . in fact, I wrote him. I said, "Can I have a copy of your speech," and as a matter of fact, he published it, and so he sent me a reprint. But then I was really amazed--or surprised--because I thought,

well he's a musicologist and I wonder how much of a performer he is, and therefore, how is he going to get along? My question in my mind . . .

CS: Well, if you define "perform" meaning making music, I suppose that Bob is not a performer. I think he plays the guitar a little bit, but I've never heard him perform. As an administrator, he did not do well. He alienated large constituencies, women, other minority groups, including even his own minority group, both among faculty and especially among the staff. As far as one can understand, he did not represent the school at all powerfully in the matter of obtaining resources. In fact, although I have no direct knowledge of this, it was said that that committee that allots . . . what's it called? The CCG? Now what's it called, the CCG?

SM: I know the one.

CS: That allots resources.

SM: Yes.

CS: Simply that he was a laughing stock. Now, that's not very nice, but . . .

SM: Let me turn this off.

(tape is turned off)

Don't worry about the confidentiality and the discretion.

CS: I'm not going to worry. You are a very discreet man.

SM: I won't be writing this for three years.

CS: I'll be retired by then. (laughter)

*Sup. you had better
delete the R's
in my case for libel*

SM: Well, I'm retired now. But I'm interested now. You raised a question that . . . That's the bad thing because he could have got funds for you.

CS: Yes. He was also disappointing as a scholar. We were pleased to have him in the Music Department because he was an ethno-musicologist, or a fairly well-known one, and he has written some splendid articles in Groves on various non-Western musics. And we hoped that he would be able to--with this increasing diversity of population here on our campus even then--we had hoped that he would offer courses in our department for non-majors in ethno-musicology. We asked him several times and he never would do it, and he became disaffected with our department. And soon thereafter requested the Vice Chancellor, Mr. Lillyman, to join the Dance Department, where he wanted to work in ethnic dance.

SM: Is that right? I never knew that.

CS: Yes. The Music Department was astonished at this request, but, because he was not functioning as a useful faculty member in the Music Department, and, in fact, had already alienated several persons of minority descent, he was let go willingly. So, he remained, then, a Professor of Dance until his resignation as a dean. And my understanding is now that he is now a member of the Social Sciences in Anthropology.

SM: He is?

CS: He is not a member of our faculty.

SM: Well, I hope they gave you a new FTE. (laughter)

CS: No, they did not give us a new FTE, except in the person of the new dean, which leads us naturally to the next question.

SM: Yes. Right, right. Let's hear. I'm very, very interested. I've met your new dean, and I'm . . . just chatting, and so on, but he sounds like a very forceful fellow.

CS: He's both forceful and incredibly reasonable, and a person who listens very carefully to what people say, who has strong opinions himself, but who, so far--and he's only been here, after all, just a short time--I think every faculty member and every person on the staff is very comfortable with him.

SM: That's good news.

CS: He is a remarkably judicious man. Having just come from a rather difficult meeting with students and faculty and the dean, presently I am in a very strong position to make that statement.

SM: Thank you, Colin, that's very interesting. Now, we're moving into what changes have taken place, and what you're thinking of down the road in the Fine Arts Program, as we hit the student FTE of, say, 26,000, something like that. This year and one-half . . . and I have long since retired.

CS: Yes, right. Well, I suppose it has changed . . . Well, I'm

not certain that I'm the proper person to speak about the entire Fine Arts Program.

SM: Let's stick to Music, if you wish.

CS: It has changed . . . I can tell you some of it has changes [in Fine Arts.] There has been a, I think, a normal split in Art. Art has now split into Art History and Studio Performance Art. And the Art History Program itself, which up to now has been an undergraduate program, is now looking toward instituting a Master of Fine Arts Program.

SM: I'm glad to hear that, Colin. I know the Bauers quite well.

CS: Yes.

SM: And they're very good, first rate.

CS: The Department of Art History, if one looks in the catalog, one sees that the persons who have been recruited come from absolutely first-rate institutions, and indeed are first-rate scholars. So that the prognosis for a program in Art History at the undergraduate level, and indeed now at the graduate level, is excellent.

SM: Very good, very good. But what changes . . . let's just take your own department, Colin. Just take Music. How have things changed between all the notions that you came to bring about, say, four years down the pike, and here we are twenty-five years down the pike. And then my next question hooks into it--the eleventh question--how about your future?

CS: Well, they have changed to the extent that there has been some growth, perhaps not as much as we would like. Because of a built-in restriction with the University of California, namely, that incoming freshmen must have a certain G.P.A., grade point average, and we do not feel that there has been sufficient attention paid by the Registrar . . . ?

SM: Oh, the Director of Admissions.

CS: The Director of Admissions, right. There has certainly not been sufficient sensitivity by the Director of Admissions to those persons who are artistically gifted and whose G.P.A. is perhaps on the edge. So we haven't, therefore, grown quite the way that we would like.

Secondly, it has changed to the extent that we have more students, certainly, than what we started with, and it certainly changed in the degree of sophistication. Let me just give you an example. My first year here, Maurice Allard told me the following story, and since I knew the student in person in a theory class, I can believe it's so. Maurice said to this student--she wanted to be a singer, an older woman--he said to her, "Well, please bring something to me that you've prepared, and we'll work on it." And she brought to him a hymnal, which was the extent of her sophistication.

That is radically changed now. Those kinds of students are no longer applying, and we have a very sophisticated undergraduate program in singing, to take the same area. So

that in sophistication and in quantity, we have altered, certainly. In breadth, I think that is so too. Obviously, with the arrival of faculty members of the quality of, say, Margaret Murata, who is an extremely fine performer as well as a brilliant historian, to take one example. Nina Henson, who teaches voice and is a distinguished mezzo herself, who has turned around some students in singing. The degree of intensity and of quality is much enhanced.

So, now, about the future. Well, in my judgment, something will have to be done about funding. The School of Fine Arts has been the poor sister of all the other schools, quite obviously, from the beginning. And, in order to simply catch up, and I would invite anyone who doubts this to come look at the facilities. The buildings are primitive, the equipment is primitive, we have rooms that must serve multi-purposes, which simply won't serve multi-purposes. Unless an attitude is changed in the administration about the necessity and the importance of this School, it probably . . . it's future is its present. So, that has got to be changed.

SM: Well, Colin, that's a very concise and clear and well thought out answer to my question. I felt that, of course, from the beginning. I felt that Clay . . . I had nothing to do with it. The assignment was made by Ivan Hinderaker: "This is your FTE," and so forth. But, once you get started with a certain figure, you know, it builds on by

certain formuli. So if you get a bad start, you never seem to catch up. Now, something . . . Maybe your dean will be able to turn the administration around on this.

CS: Well, we hope so. For instance, one of the lacks in our program is the Ph.D. program, at least in musicology and history and theory. There have been attempts to do this through the back door, through a critical theory program. That is, an umbrella program of a Ph.D, but it has never flown with the administration. There is . . . we are one of the very few university campuses that has no Ph.D. in Music History or Art History. That has got to be changed because there is a crying need for it on this campus, but it cannot be done without enormous library resources.

The library here is a disaster as far as we're concerned. I don't mean the quality of the library, but the location. It is extremely expensive. Complete editions of music are available to everybody. If you look in any other system, you will find that they are restricted. So that, while we have quite a strong library, it's constantly being destroyed by careless use. And, moreover, it's location is such that it's extremely difficult to use. There has got to be--as there is at Santa Barbara--a fine arts library which is adjacent to the instruction area.

SM: Yes. All these are very much to the point. And I do think that you hit the nail on the head when you talked about the

graduate program because I didn't realize that Santa Cruz has . . .

CS: I can't speak about Santa Cruz, but you may be right.

SM: They're always behind us.

CS: Of course, they are a younger campus, or are they the same year? Same year, okay.

SM: No, they're the same age. They opened the same year.

CS: Right. But San Diego has, Santa Barbara, Berkeley, Los Angeles, et cetera, et cetera.

SM: Oh, yes. Everyone but them. So, a last question, Jack Peltason told me when I was appointed the UCI Historian, he said, "Now find out from these faculty, important faculty people, and the administrators that you're going to talk to . . ." And I'm going to talk to the wives, too, for instance, Mrs. Aldrich.

CS: Yes, yes. Oh, she has a wonderful memory.

SM: She has a marvelous memory, and already I've had Dan, a couple of weeks ago. I had two interviews of an hour and a quarter each.

CS: Yes. Well, Dan must be . . .

SM: Well, he's full of everything.

CS: He has a good memory, too.

SM: Very good memory, particularly on the Medical School, which I'm most interested in . . . But, Jack says, "Now, try and find out if there is something that has never gotten to the

record that's happened." And, to tell you the truth, I haven't had much luck.

CS: Is that right?

SM: I mean, people sit there and say, "Oh, gee, what's unrecorded?" So the question, is there anything that the record doesn't show that you think is important, Colin?

CS: Well, for instance, I mentioned to you what I thought was this important concert for the opening of the Fine Arts complex in 1970.

SM: Oh, yes, yes.

CS: . . . which, from a music point of view, was a very important concert, not because I played in it, but because for the first time, we were able to do a major work, the Irvine Symphony and (inaudible). I think that Irvine, in the area of Fine Arts, has an important record of major figures being here from time to time, and that is certainly one of the legacies that Clayton . . . Well, it was one of his principles and it's one of the legacies. For instance, just recently, we've been having for the past several years, an extremely distinguished woman from USC, Madame Gwendolyn Koldofsky, come to give master classes. Now, she worked with Lottie Lehmann, she worked with Horn. She's now eighty-two. She comes here and the students are enthralled by every word she says.

SM: That's interesting because I didn't know a thing about that. I watched, for instance, Schwartzkopf, on a taped

performance in her master class in Edinborough, and she had four singers, and she was explaining to them one aria of Mozart's "The Marriage of Figaro."

CS: Yes.

SM: And it was enthralling to me. Now, I knew her when she was at the top of everything, and I've heard her back east in New York, and in San Francisco. And she, of course, is, I don't know, she must be pushing eighty, but she was so interesting. Now, I didn't know about these master classes. Are you making tapes of them?

CS: No. I'm not sure if they're taped. I don't think so. This particular master class is directed toward singers and *Lieder* leader singers.

SM: Yes, please spell the name for the tape.

CS: K-O-L-D-O-F-S-K-Y.

SM: First name is?

CS: Gwendolyn. It so happens that I've known her for now some forty years, since I first met her in Vancouver when her husband was Concert Master of the Vancouver Symphony.

SM: How interesting. Well, that's interesting. Well, you've got something good.

CS: So there's an unrecorded event.

SM: I'd like to end the recording, but I'd like to know on the record, incidentally. I was a great follower of Maurice Allard. I used to go and hear his . . . all his work, including his Bach. You might not agree with me, I think

the greatest work ever done is Bach's "St. Matthew Passion," and he did very well. But I thought he was a good musician. What caused him to leave?

CS: Well, I don't think that any of us had the slightest reservation about Maurice's musical qualities. And I would only challenge your appreciation of "The St. Matthew Passion" with mine for his "B Minor Mass" that he did here, as well as the "Requiem" of Verdi, where all of us were in tears, it was so beautiful--including himself.

SM: Yes, yes.

CS: Maurice is a superb conductor; there's no question about it. And he also can make a stone sing. In the early years when he had very poor singer material to work with, he still was able to make them sing, even people who had hardly sung at all, he could make them sing. He has a magnificent gift. He left entirely because he wanted to go. He wanted to leave the academic environment and explore the larger professional one outside the academy, and all our hearts were broken. None of us wanted him to go, but he made that decision. Now, he's made a number of such decisions in the past, as you know. Recently he just left . . .

SM: Oh, I couldn't believe it, because I went and heard him with that other . . .

CS: He's the finest choral conductor in these parts.

SM: Because I must say, I appealed to him on a more materialistic ground. I said, "Look, you're mad. You've

got tenure. You've got tenure. You'd be silly to give this up."

CS: I find that that's a kind of artistic decision, which I, as a musician, have to support. I understand why he did it, although from the point of view of my own department, it's nothing but a major regret that he should have departed.

SM: Okay. Well, now, this has been a fine interview, Colin. It's always nice to talk with you.

CS: Sam, one of the virtues of joining the faculty here was being asked early in 1965 to join the Roger Wagner Chorale. Now, goodness knows, I'm no singer, but the Chorale--and Roger was our first conductor here until we got Maurice.

SM: I remember.

CS: Many of Roger's singers were on a tour and he needed some extra singers. This was for a concert that Stravinsky was conducting. So I dutifully sang as best I could in these works, but the bonus from this was sitting backstage during a performance of the Symphony in C. It was an all Stravinsky concert with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and Stravinsky was sitting as close to me as I am sitting to you. I had my little score of the Symphony in C and he had his large score. Craft was conducting. At the end of this performance, I looked over to Stravinsky, and I felt I wanted to say something, so I said to him, "Thank you, Maestro, for writing such a beautiful piece of music." And he turned to me and said, "You know, I like it myself."

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SM: (laughter) It's C-R-A-F-T, isn't it?

CS: Yes.

END OF INTERVIEW