
Lyric Opera. From 1910 to 1918, seven opera companies—several merely different names for the same recognized company—presented seasons at Chicago's Auditorium Theater and the Civic Opera House. All sunk in a sea of debt. From 1919 to 1925, the city had no resident opera company. Three opera companies were from 1925 to 1954. They presented their performances to the city to sit front ranks of opera companies by building a roster of European singers whom the Metropolitan and San Francisco operas had overlooked or ignored. On February 5, 1945, the Lyric Theater presented its "calling card," a starry performance of Mozart's Don Giovanni at the Civic Opera House. The success of that production made possible a three-week season in autumn of 1945 consisting of 16 performances of 8 operas; 11 of those performances sold out the 5,600-seat theater. The inaugural season brought the American debut of the fiery American-born Greek soprano Maria Callas, as the title role in Bellini's Norma. Callas went on to even more rapturous successes here as Violetta in Verdi's La Traviata, the title role in Donizetti's Lucia di Lammermoor, and Cio-Cio San in Puccini's Madama Butterfly, among the others. Italian singers and opera predominated in those early years. By 1956, when Fox took sole command of a rechristened Lyric Opera of Chicago, the company had been nicknamed "La Scala West."

By the late 1950s, Lyric boasted a greatly expanded repertoire, an improving roster of world-class singers (including Catherine Malbin, Renée Fleming, Donna Uppström, Jane Eaglin, Jerry Hadley, Bin Hopper, James Morris, and Bryn Terfel), and capacity houses for nearly every performance in seasons that extended from September to March. Artis Kranzlik, who succeeded Fox as general director upon the latter's retirement in 1982, earned a reputation as a tough businessman and shrewd arts executive. She also won wide respect for the Lyric as a theater that took its MacArthur Fellows Program, popularly known as the "genius" awards—large prizes given without application to people of outstand promise and performance in any field of endeavor. 


MacArthur Foundation. The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation was created in 1958 through the bequest of John D. MacArthur, a Pennsylvania native who amassed a great fortune in the insurance business and in real-estate investments in Florida. The bulk of his fortune, both company shares and real estate, was left to the foundation, whose endowment had surpassed $4 billion (with more than $150 million annual grant making) by 1996. At its inception, the MacArthur Foundation attracted attention because it was a new, general purpose, nationally focused foundation with an asset base that almost immediately made it among the country's largest. The MacArthur Foundation was unusual in that the donor left no specific instructions as to the purpose of his philanthropic legacy. He simply named a number of business associates, old friends and prominent academics as the board of trustees, whose job it has been to develop a systematic program of giving.

The MacArthur Foundation had become one of the largest and most important philanthropic foundations in the country by the end of its second decade. It focused on two major areas of giving: Human and Community Development (with special attention to Chicago and to Palm Beach County, Florida), and Global Security and Sustainability. But it was best-known to the general public for its MacArthur Fellows Program, popularly known as the "genius" awards—large prizes given without application to people of outstanding promise and performance in any field of endeavor. 


See also: Philanthropy

Macedonians. The most intense period of Macedonian immigration took place before World War I, and after a long lull, resumed in the decades after World War II. In the first stage, thousands of Macedonians left the Old Country in the wake of the bloody 1913 Balkan Openings against Ottoman control, which ended with the war and its aftermath. They sought to improve their families' grim economic fortunes by returning to their homes in cafes and factories. After World War I, with their home country divided between Bulgaria, Serbia, and Greece, the thousands of Chicago-area Macedonians recognized that they would not return to Europe. Reluctantly, wives and children joined their husbands and fathers, laying the groundwork for stable Macedonian communities in North America.

Prior to the creation of a Macedonian republic in 1944, most Macedonian immigrants viewed themselves as ethnically Bulgarian and often referred to themselves as Macedonians-Bulgarians or simply Bulgarians. While immigration records failed to list Macedonians as a separate category, approximately three-quarters of those listed as Bulgarians were from the regions of Kosova and Risika in Macedonia. These immigrants, and those from Bulgaria proper, typically settled together in the pre-war Balkan region, and established communities in Chicago and Gary as well as in Madison, Greenville, and Venise, Illinois. In 1909 Grace Abbott, writing about the desperate poverty in which hundreds of these immigrants lived, estimated that 1,600 Macedonians and Bulgarians were living in Chicago. Early in the century, Macedonians worked almost exclusively in heavy industry. Many found work in Chicago's rail yards or African factories worked in slaughterhouses, tanneries, fertilizer factories, and steel mills. Chicago served as a transfer point for Macedonians heading to St. Louis, or to the Western states to find railroad and mining work. Prior to the formation of Orthodox churches in the 1920s, Macedonian immigrants found solace in cafes near their boardinghouses, and in a number of mutual benefits societies, the first of which was founded in Chicago in 1902. Chicago Macedonians campaigned openly for the independence of their homeland. In 1912, several hundred members of the Bulgarian-Macedonian League paraded through the city's West Side and rallied at Bricklayer's Hall to protest Ottoman rule. In 1948 Chicago Macedonians held a "Great Macedonian Congress" to express hope that President Eisenhower's Four Points would guarantee Macedonia a free homeland. In 1922, Macedonians in North America formed the Macedonian Political Organization (MPO) to campaign for Macedonian independence. Since the 1920s, Chicago and Gary have hosted the MPO's
Machine Politics. Urban political machines, built largely on the votes of diverse immigrant populations, dispensed jobs and assorted welfare benefits while offering avenues of social mobility at a time when local governments provided a paucity of such services. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Chicago sustained a strong multiethnic political machine. Neoliberal and constitutional constraints on the operation of municipal governments. Second, he acquired additional financial resources from organized crime. By ignoring the operation of gambling, prostitution, and other forms of vice in the Windy City, Kelly obtained from illegal sources the “grease” necessary to keep the machine operating. Third, he actively cultivated African American voters, and his success paid huge dividends in later years when Chicago’s black population increased dramatically. Kelly won reelection in 1931, 1933, and 1943, but problems arose by 1947. Concerns about the number of scandals in municipal government (especially in the public school system) surfaced alongside a rising public outcry against the highly visible presence of organized crime in the city. But among the Democratic faithful, Kelly’s greatest liability proved to be his uncompromising stand in favor of public housing and desegregated public schools. The party leadership persuaded Kelly not to seek reelection in 1947 and replaced him with a figurehead, ecolo leader Martin H. Kennelly. The Democratic machine endorsed Kennelly’s presence in the mayor’s office for two terms but then replaced him with a party regular, Richard J. Daley, in 1955. During Daley’s prolonged tenure in city hall—he was reelected bringing representatives from the German, Polish, Czech, and Jewish communities into leadership positions. The life of the Democratic machine’s George Washington was cut short in 1935 when Cermak became the unintended victim of an attempted assassination of president-elect Franklin D. Roosevelt.

After Cermak’s death, the Irish seized control of the Democratic machine as party chairman Patrick A. Nash engineered the appointment of Edward J. Kelly as mayor. The Kelly-Nash machine followed Cermak’s lead, however, doling out patronage jobs, political appointments, and favors to a broad spectrum of ethnic groups. Kelly not only held the fledgling political machine together in its infancy but strengthened it by utilizing three important sources. First, he became a fervent supporter of Franklin D. Roosevelt’s New Deal and kept the city solvent through the liberal use of federal funds at a time when the Great Depression provided the most serious threat to the financial well-being of municipal governments. Second, he acquired additional financial resources from organized crime. By ignoring the operation of gambling, prostitution, and other forms of vice in the Windy City, Kelly obtained from illegal sources the “grease” necessary to keep the machine operating. Third, he actively cultivated African American voters, and his success paid huge dividends in later years when Chicago’s black population increased dramatically. Kelly wonreelection in 1931, 1933, and 1943, but problems arose by 1947. Concerns about the number of scandals in municipal government (especially in the public school system) surfaced alongside a rising public outcry against the highly visible presence of organized crime in the city. But among the Democratic faithful, Kelly’s greatest liability proved to be his uncompromising stand in favor of public housing and desegregated public schools. The party leadership persuaded Kelly not to seek reelection in 1947 and replaced him with a figurehead, ecolo leader Martin H. Kennelly. The Democratic machine endorsed Kennelly’s presence in the mayor’s office for two terms but then replaced him with a party regular, Richard J. Daley, in 1955. During Daley’s prolonged tenure in city hall—he was reelected bringing representatives from the German, Polish, Czech, and Jewish communities into leadership positions. The life of the Democratic machine’s George Washington was cut short in 1935 when Cermak became the unintended victim of an attempted assassination of president-elect Franklin D. Roosevelt.

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