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The Whitman Conservatory of Music:  
Engendering Morality at Whitman College

In *The Effective College*, a collection of papers from the *Bulletin* of the Association of American Colleges, Thomas Whitney Surette considers the role of music in the liberal arts college: “The study of the history of music obviously means the study of other forms of human expression during any given period; of philosophy, art, literature and the general social situation. It means a view of human life in the large” (174). While this reference may not position music as a field to develop and assert religious sentiment, it suggests that music plays a role in the overall development of the student. In the case of Whitman College, an institution that sought to strengthen and communicate the religious character of its students in the late twentieth century especially, it can be seen that music played a distinct role in developing Christian character and morality in its students.

The Whitman Conservatory of Music, in contributing to the religious climate on campus as well as in the greater Walla Walla community, can be seen to promote Christian morality. Indeed, after Whitman College refocused and redefined its approach to the liberal arts under the presidency of Stephen Penrose in the early 1900s, the role of music as a force that engenders morality became established. Julie A. Reuben in *The Making of the Modern University* sheds light on music’s position within the institution. With regard to the overarching didactic role of the humanities, within which music exists and operates, she interprets, “faculty helped establish

the humanities [including music] as a set of related disciplines with a common mission within the university” (Reuben 226). By strengthening connections among disciplines, Whitman College thus redirected the moral influence of music—one championed by the Whitman Conservatory of Music—as one intimately associated with the development of the student with regard to other departments, religion among them. This period of curricular and institutional development, then, can be seen as one that transformed Whitman College, in particular, from a distinctly Christian college touting a distinctly Christian influence to an institution that instead forwarded an increasing regard for general morality through music, among other departments and aspects of the its institutional operations. The life of the Whitman Conservatory of Music, from its foundation in 1887 to its eventual transformation to the Department of Music in 1965, thus can be viewed as an index to this change in curriculum as a proponent of morality. The Whitman Conservatory, then, can be seen to evidence and measure the transformation of the religious character of the institution as Whitman College underwent changes to accommodate the revival of a humanist tradition.

Before exploring how the Whitman Conservatory of Music served the interests of Whitman College, however, it first may prove useful to examine how music came to be regarded within the liberal arts tradition. In his discussion of the role of the liberal college as seen in *The Effective College*, Surette illuminates how music was seen to fit into this tradition as an expected component of the student’s instruction: “It would seem to be the plain duty of a liberal college to give all its students access to its [music]” (172). This statement aptly solidifies music as a necessary department in the liberal arts tradition. The word “duty,” moreover, implies that the academic community at the time regarded instruction in music as, intriguingly, a distinct moral obligation to the student and, by association, to humanity at large. Music was seen as a necessary

component of education that, as championed in the humanist tradition, helped formulate the intellectual and moral character of its students (Rueben 211). Ann Ostendorf, observing a similar relationship between music and morality in public schools in Milwaukee, remarks on the moral potential of musical instruction. In “Where Music is Not the Devil Enters,” she notes, “While much had changed in educational theory by the end of the nineteenth century, music’s ability to instill morality remained important to educators [...] well into the twentieth century” (11). In 1887, Whitman College latched onto this idea by establishing the Whitman Conservatory of Music. The conservatory, as a school catering to Whitman students as well as the greater Walla Walla community, not only addressed the institutional changes as seen through the resurgence of the liberal arts tradition but also came to play an essential role in the survival and continuation of the Whitman institution.

The history of the Whitman Conservatory of Music provides an index to how the college and conservatory adapted to a turbulent age defined by questioned curricular modifications and uncertain financial conditions. The saga of the Whitman institution (from the seminary to the college), one of what seems perpetual suffering and affliction, is an intriguing history to explore in relation to the conservatory. As an institution that was persistently beset by an array of problems ranging from lack of funding to lack of staffing, trustees and staff clearly doubted the future of Whitman. Stephen Penrose, who accepted the presidency of Whitman College amidst these dismal circumstances in 1894, was one such person (Edwards 141). Yet, despite this constant struggle to finance and staff the institution, Penrose was determined to ensure the survival of the institution; his plans to achieve this positioned the conservatory in a place of prominence within the Whitman institution.

In order to make his dreams a reality, Penrose resolved to make necessary curricular and institutional changes. He decided to pay particular attention to the conservatory stemmed from his interest in music as a source of morality and possibility. He also could not fathom the idea of a Whitman without some aspect of a musical culture. As Thomas Edwards observes, Penrose viewed education to be incomplete without tutelage in music (187). His plan to alter the Whitman Conservatory of Music to model that of the Oberlin Conservatory, hoping to garner “at least western recognition,” (Edwards 213) is one such change that Penrose hoped would help sustain Whitman College. Penrose’s approach to rework the conservatory, moreover, can be viewed as not only his proposal to ensure the future of Whitman College but also as a means to forward a decidedly religious and moral character in its students. Indeed, in order to examine this influence, Penrose’s religious convictions should be mentioned.

As a retired home missionary pastor and graduate of the Yale Divinity School, Penrose’s religious past and present suggest that religion perhaps underlined his institutional proposals at Whitman College. As a man driven by his “strong religious faith” (Edwards 148), moreover, his decision to model the Whitman Conservatory after the Oberlin Conservatory—a decidedly moralizing institution in its own right—if not unfounded. It is perhaps because of his religious inclinations that he sought to emulate the Oberlin Conservatory that operated alongside a religious liberal arts institution. A brief study of the establishment of the Oberlin Conservatory thus seems essential in order to hypothesize, extrapolate, and examine Penrose’s likely religious intentions.

Intriguingly, it has been suggested that the emergence and celebration of music at Oberlin was grounded in the religious character of the institution itself as well as the religious inclination of staff and students. “The musical life at Oberlin,” William Mathews observes in *A Hundred*

*Years of Music in America*, “had its beginning in a religious want. The earnest people who founded a college in the woods must needs utter their emotions in song. The idea which founded Oberlin was the training of Christian workers, and Christian workers must know how to sing” (516). This observation is noteworthy because it suggests that Oberlin’s founders required music in order to celebrate their religion (e.g. chapel services) when frontier life threatened to encroach upon their religion. Similarly, Christian workers founded Whitman and accordingly influenced the institution by contributing to it a distinct religious culture. Situated in similar frontier towns, both Oberlin and Whitman viewed music as a moralizing force that had the potential to celebrate religiosity, acculturate the west, and perhaps proselytize through song.

In fact, the religious character of Professor Rice, the first Director of the Oberlin Conservatory, can be seen to exemplify and illustrate the religiosity underlining the conservatory itself. A man who William Mathew describes as one “of high moral conceptions,” Professor Rice easily sympathized with “the characteristic moral and religious sentiment of [Oberlin],” (518) and accordingly sought to encourage a religious receptivity to foster spiritual growth in his students. As Mathews observes in his review of the Oberlin Conservatory, Rice desired that his conservatory emulate “schools in which this higher development could be coupled with a thorough Christian growth on the part of the student [...] and at the same time be surrounded with such an atmosphere as should foster the development of Christian character” (518). Penrose most likely would agree with Rice’s mission to promote the potential for Christian character and morality through music. As a man who was determined to encourage a decidedly Christian, religious character in his undergraduates, he would not have hesitated to find alternative outlets for similar Christian growth. It is possible, then, that Penrose sought to emulate Oberlin because

of its commitment to promote a religious and moral influence in its students and, by association, in the surrounding community as well.

The fact that the history of the Oberlin Conservatory of Music mirrors that of the Whitman Conservatory in many respects evidences that Penrose's plan to model his conservatory after Oberlin's was successful in part. A brief history of the Oberlin Conservatory in relation to Oberlin College, then, is necessary to measure these similarities and, by extension, to conjecture what exactly Penrose sought to emulate in the Oberlin Conservatory.

Oberlin Collegiate Institute was founded in 1833 by a Presbyterian minister and a missionary (Reverend John J. Shipherd and Philo P. Stewart, respectively) who "decided to establish a college and a colony based on their religious beliefs 'where they would train teachers and other Christian leaders from the boundless most desolate fields in the West'" ("Early History"). Like Oberlin, the establishment of the Whitman Seminary—which later became Whitman College—was associated with Christian missionary work. Both Oberlin and Whitman, then, were initially grounded in Christian morality. Both institutions, moreover, sought to rid the west of the immorality associated with unsophisticated frontier life. Whitman's founders, for example, hoped to provide Walla Walla with a reputable educational institution given that "few of its residents [had] formal education" (Edwards 23). Shipherd and Stewart, like Whitman's founders, thus endeavored to civilize the west, establishing a source of Christian morality and goodness to emulate. Penrose perhaps chose Oberlin because of the institution's religious character that it sought to circulate among its students as well as the local residents of Oberlin.

Oberlin Collegiate Institute, like the Whitman Seminary, eventually responded to a pressing shift in education policy and, in the year 1850, changed its name to Oberlin College.

This institutional change, paralleling that of the Whitman institution (from the Seminary to the College), is described in relation to this transformation in policy:

The name reflected a gradual shift in the curriculum and education focus, which transitioned the institution from a preparatory manual labor, and theology-based program to one that offered formal instruction and coursework in the classics, sciences, the fine arts, and music, among other disciplines. The Conservatory became part of the college in 1867, two years after its founding as a private school. (“Early History”)

The Whitman Seminary, too, was grounded in theology given its missionary roots as well as the pietism of its founders who birthed and nurtured the institution during its infancy. Whitman, like Oberlin, eventually catered to the educational dialogue of the time, accordingly adopting a more institutional approach to music. This perspective, moreover, is useful given that Penrose responded to this same educational shift by separating the conservatory (and the academy) from the college in order to accommodate his plans to build a “Greater Whitman” (Edwards 285).

The Oberlin Conservatory, like the Whitman Conservatory, operated separately from the college at first. While Oberlin Conservatory and Oberlin College eventually fused in a single entity, Whitman College and the Conservatory married as well (as seen through the adoption of the Department of Music). Oberlin, however, maintained its conservatory status—and still does to this day. Mathews explains this development:

At first the school of music had no organic connection with the college, though in relations of reciprocity with it. But the relations between the two were found to be necessarily so intimate, that in 1867 the conservatory became a department of the institution, though under the condition that it should be financially independent. This is perhaps the first, at any rate a typical instance, of a conservatory becoming an organic

part of a college [...] Music was simply asserting its right to form an integral part of education. (517)

The institutional development of music at Whitman College followed a similar path. Initially, the conservatory was considered a separate institution—seen through self-sufficiency, hiring its own staff, etc.—however it was ultimately subject to the regulations of the college. While the conservatory may have been administered separately during the “Greater Whitman” period, Whitman College eventually melded with the conservatory, transforming the music school into its own department.

Whitman College can be seen to impose its religious standards upon the conservatory through the hiring process. Although the conservatory was expected to be, as Stephen Penrose notes, a “self-supporting” (222) institution, it was subject to the jurisdiction of the school. While the conservatory was able to seek out its own staff, the college played a determining role in the hiring process. Penrose details the intricacies of this process: “The selection of conservatory teachers is made by the director and the president, subject to the approval of the Conservatory Committee and the Board of Trustees” (222). Given that Penrose sought candidates who expressed a distinctly “Christian faith and character,” (Edwards 234) religion can be seen as a highly influential factor that determined selection. Upon employment, this religious demand perhaps was observed and thus administered to students. In other words, it is perhaps probable that religious instructors proselytized students.

It can be argued that the Whitman Conservatory was at least partially influenced by religion given that the majority of instructors participated musically in local churches. These statistics do not merely illustrate how the conservatory influenced the campus in a religious way; they also, and perhaps more notably, demonstrate how the conservatory serviced and benefited

the community. In “Singing the Nation into Being,” a contributing article to *History of Education Quarterly*, Lynn Sargeant comments on this practice, observing that institutions like the Whitman Conservatory enhance the musical composition of their communities—most notably, by participating in church music programs. She explains, “Communities and congregations also viewed school music as a means to improve music in the churches at a time when ‘the church was an important societal institution, and church attendance formed an integral part of many people’s lives’” (309). This observation had a very recognizable presence in Walla Walla. The conservatory was quite obviously sympathetic to the local religious institutions that were employing its graduates and instructors. Regional churches sourced their musical talents—choir directors, organists, pianists, etc.—from the Whitman Conservatory.

Conservatory instructors looked upon these opportunities as a means to give back to their community, serve as models for their students, and, in the process, earn a meager salary. Multiple issues of the *Whitman College Quarterly*, for instance, index a number of conservatory professors who contributed to local churches. Professor Robert L. Scholfield, a professed Christian, worshiped at the Messiah Lutheran Church before becoming its choir director in 1883 (*Whitman College Quarterly* 10.3 (1903): 15). The same *Quarterly* notes that Archibald C. Jackson served as the choir director of Christ Church (*Whitman College Quarterly* 10.3 (1903): 16). It is highly probable—and even suggested in Whitman College publications—that professors solicited their students to participate in church choirs—at least those of which they directed; regardless of the validity of this supposition, however, their religious influence and presence both in the classroom and in the community is undeniable.

Conservatory students, seeking to emulate their professors, accordingly engaged with local churches. Louis F. Anderson, a professor of classics at Whitman College during the 1880s,

for example, acknowledges the truth of this statement. He attended “The Messiah,” a musical performance sponsored by the Whitman Conservatory Chorus and Orchestra at the Walla Walla Opera House (*Anderson Family Collection* 4). Although the performance was not located in a church, it illustrates that students gave back to their community, both secular and religious, because their professors advocated such local involvement. In the 1900s, the *Whitman College Pioneer* began to record conservatory happenings on campus and in the community, informing students, staff, and the community of weekly conservatory performances and updates. On April 28, 1922, for example, the *Pioneer* observed that several conservatory students performed at the Milton Christian Church of their own volition (*Whitman College Pioneer* 3). Students as well as instructors thus were enthusiastic to improve music culture in local churches, most likely prompting more churchgoers to attend Sunday service regularly.

While Whitman Conservatory instructors may have prompted their students to participate in local church choirs, they did not necessarily inculcate their students with religious doctrine. This is not to say that instruction at the conservatory did not have religious inclinations, however. The fact that multiple professors at the conservatory were religious and also participated in local churches suggests that their tutelage may not have been purely secular in intention. Thomas Edwards posits that, naturally, many encouraged students to examine their own religious convictions and morality in class and elsewhere. He describes, “Professors advocated Christian character in classes, chapel, advising, and activities” (254). By emulating and upholding “Christian character,” professors influenced their students’ moral development.

Primary sources and the greater debate surround the ideal college professor suggest that a possibility for spiritual and moral development indeed existed. Conservatory instructors not only

executed the function of their title but also served as mentors to their students. Thomas Surette, in “Music in the Liberal College,” comments on the latter function:

No instructor can teach reasoning or civic responsibility by precept. He can embody in his own character and manner of living a sense of truth and justice which may be reflected on his students [...] The teacher of art, or mathematics, of government and of religion can only build the staging. The student must lay the bricks of his spiritual structure by his own effort. (204-205)

Surette speaks to the role of the instructor as one who prompts the spiritual development of his or her student. Notably, he mentions “spiritual” structure as opposed to “religious” as a nod to the conviction that instruction in music—and humanities in general—generated an appreciation for all things beautiful that, in turn, benefited the human spirit. Julie Reuben, commenting on trends in musical instruction, notes, “Faculty in music and the visual arts increasingly championed their subjects as a form of cultural education [that] functions to develop students’ understanding and appreciation of great music as an expression of the highest values of civilization” (223). Music, however, did not only benefit the student who engaged in study. Music served as a form of cultural education for the everyday citizen, churchgoer, and concert fanatic. Whitman students and staff, for example, viewed the Whitman Conservatory as a fantastic resource for their own cultural edification.

Some music professors, however, maintained that instruction in music helped facilitate the student to commune with and develop their own religious character. For instance, Surette declares that music functioned to increase the resources of the mind, to edify, to facilitate the development of man by exalting the spirits (172). If applied to Whitman, an institution seeking to promote a distinctly religious character in its students, this can be seen to encourage religious

and spiritual development. Harrison Lovewell, a conservatory instructor and organist at the Methodist Church in Walla Walla during the 1890s, emulated this idea in his instruction (*Whitman College Quarterly*. 3.3. (1899): 31). A man who believed that “Music and piety are inseparable,” (3) Lovewell undoubtedly lauded the religious practice of music. While the aforementioned observation may simply suggest that Lovewell was contributing to the longstanding conviction that music generates morality, he later speaks of musical instruction and performance as a distinct religious experience. In his essay entitled, “Music and Musicians,” Lovewell writes:

Worthy is our art [music] to be the royal handmaid of Religion, actuating men to the noblest conception of their destiny [...] it has power over man, turning him resolutely toward the good; its soul is of purity and rises heavenward in strains enrapturing and entralling those who are imbued with its perfect spirit and know its divine language [...] Conservatories of music standing on solid foundations, having a real conception of the deep meaning of ethos in music, will bring to their students an influence that will gradually arouse the sluggish perceptions of entire communities. Institutions must stand as adamant against destructive popular influences. The voice of the unenlightened, and the musically uneducated, will disintegrate the deeper foundations of an institution. (5, 13)

It is remarkable that Lovewell proclaims music to be “the royal handmaid of Religion,” a “divine language,” among other religiously charged attributes. He notably positions music as a religious and moralizing force, its own type of religion. Lovewell goes on to speak of the conservatory as an institution capable of and expected to rid its students of immortalizing traits. Based off of the religious bent of his essay, Lovewell’s musical instruction was most likely influenced by religion

as well. If other professors at the Whitman Conservatory championed music in a similar manner, then it would not be an unlikely extrapolation to suggest that a religious culture influenced the conservatory.

The Whitman Conservatory of Music, then, can be viewed as an institution that not only observed but also supplemented the distinct religious character of Whitman College. This can be seen, in part, through the conservatory's position of reciprocity with the college itself. As an institution that was "fortunate in being intimately associated with Whitman College and in enjoying its intellectual, social, and religious advantages," the religious character of the college notably influenced the conservatory and its students; the conservatory, however, also "contribute[d] its own distinctive influence to the general culture" (*Whitman College Quarterly* 12.2 (1909): 8). In other words, Whitman supplied the conservatory with a religious and intellectual influence and the conservatory reciprocated, enhancing the college by offering its own unique musical and moral culture. In terms of its artistic contribution to the college, the conservatory provided its students with a variety of voluntary organizations such as the glee club, the chapel choir, the orchestra, and the band, all of which were directed by conservatory teachers (Penrose 206). As Penrose observes, the conservatory alone contributed to the musical culture on campus. "The artistic life of the College has largely depended upon music for expression and development," and the Conservatory of Music, he writes, "has contributed generously to the music life of the campus" (206). Although the musical contributions mentioned above seem, for the most part, wholly secular, the chapel choir can be seen as a distinctly religious influence.

The chapel choir enhanced the Christian character of the institution as well as its students by "furnish[ing] music at the daily chapel service of the College" (*Whitman College Catalogue:*

1903-07, 104). Reuben notes that the chapel choir at Harvard University helped to maintain and increase the general interest in the chapel services (122). The musical contributions of Whitman's chapel choir most likely had a similar effect—enhancing the service and increasing both physical and mental attendance. The religious potential of chapel, however, should not be measured solely through the service itself—the reading of the Scriptures, prayer, religious praise music, and the occasional address or public lecture, etc. (*Whitman College Catalogue: 1903-07*, 39). It can and should be measured by the attendance of religious persons who were unaffiliated with Whitman College as well. In this vein, President Penrose invited local and regional pastors (*Whitman College Catalogue (1903-07)* 39). Their presence opened up the possibility for religious proselytizing and discussion with students. Prompted by the religious spirit, pastors then encouraged students to attend local church services and, if capable, to participate in their respective church choirs. President Penrose and other staff members reiterated, inducing students to attend as well. Mandatory chapel, then, encouraged students to embrace their religious convictions in the community as well as within the institution.

One can measure the religious influence of the Whitman Conservatory on campus with regard to a specific chapter in its musical library—songs which were composed for sports matches, invocation, convocation, etc., that helped generate a sense of school pride. President Penrose himself scribed the “Whitman Hymn,” a song that not only engenders school pride but also hearkens to the institution's humble roots and distinct religious character: “Here's to the friends that love us! And our love shall ne'er grow cold – For friends and fields and mountains Under Heaven's kindly blue, -- And the College mid the fountains, Dear old Whitman! Here's to you!” (8). The “Founders' Day Hymn” also pays heed to Whitman's religious foundation: “Thy name, O Jesus, be forever blest” (*Songs of 40*). These songs deserve to be mentioned because

they should be considered in a category separate from the chapel service and worship songs. In other words, not all music was definitely religious nor was it chartered specifically for sacred purposes (e.g. chapel). The Oberlin Conservatory, the model Penrose sought to emulate in his conservatory, expressed a similar view with regard to a more holistic approach to music—both sacred and secular. “It must not be supposed that the idea was to create a school exclusively or mainly of sacred music,” Mathews writes of the Oberlin Conservatory, “the aim was not so much to cultivate religious music as to cultivate all noble music religiously” (520).

While the conservatory clearly contributed to the Whitman campus, it also came to benefit the Walla Walla area in a religious as well as a secular way. The music students that the conservatory catered to as well as the community performances sponsored by Whitman can be seen as evidence of these secular and altruistic interests. As Edwards notes, the conservatory catered to three distinct crowds: schoolchildren; adults seeking diplomas in piano, voice, or organ; and conservatory students (460). Young aspiring musicians as well as the everyday Walla Wallan, then, came to benefit from the conservatory. The conservatory also contributed an undeniable musical culture to the area. Edwards observes:

Whitman then as now did much for the city’s cultural and intellectual life. The school brought musicians, politicians, artists, and lecturers for both cultural and publicity reasons. Penrose realized that by sponsoring a variety of activities he enlightened his neighbors, who, in turn, became more appreciative of his school. (266)

The conservatory, then, became a vital community institution that enhanced life in Walla Walla. Edwards goes on to suggest that the conservatory serviced Walla Walla (through its musical program, performances, and church involvement) in order to establish financial and moral backing. Edwards speaks to the conservatory’s influence on the community in relation to his

ulterior motives, insisting that “[it] was one of the institution’s most popular components, winning friends for the college” (462). The conservatory did just that. In concordance with President Penrose’s vision, it eventually garnered national acclaim. As a result, the conservatory (and college) attracted both local and regional music students as well as potential college students to Walla Walla. The conservatory not only opened up the possibility for increased enrollment at Whitman, it also benefited the community through its artistic and musical contributions.

The Whitman Conservatory of Music contributed to Whitman College in another way, playing perhaps its most vital role as the purse financing the institution before and during a time of great turbulence and change—the Greater Whitman period. The conservatory was an especially important attribute of the Whitman institution during Penrose’s presidency, in particular. The conservatory enjoyed success and helped establish Whitman College financially through monetary contributions. It seems likely that President Penrose, given his religious character, appropriated the conservatory surpluses to the maintenance of religious culture on campus. The conservatory, then, can be seen to sustain the religious life of the college. Further, as the conservatory established itself nationally, Penrose utilized its acclaim for the purposes of his plan to expand the institution, hoping to incite further interest in Whitman College. During the Greater Whitman Period, in fact, Penrose used the conservatory “to advertise the college in order to build,” Edwards continues, explaining, “conservatory teachers and students toured eastern Washington to publicize Whitman” (267). The conservatory thus continued to play its role as the celebrity behind the institution, fueling the Greater Whitman Period, helping to develop a national interest in Whitman College.

The Greater Whitman Period, moreover, marked a significant change in the relationship between the conservatory and the college. As advised by President Pritchett, the college dropped the conservatory and administered it independently (Edwards 368). Penrose comments on this change, stating that it was a necessary step in order to better accommodate changes in the Whitman College curriculum. In *Whitman: an unfinished story*, Penrose notes the following institutional changes:

The Conservatory of Music likewise was omitted from the College Catalogue being henceforth regarded as an affiliated institution beneficial to the College in its artistic impulse and benefited by its close relationship to the College, but not administered by the college faculty nor under its discipline. (176)

The conservatory thus continued to contribute musically to the college and surrounding community. This change, moreover, emphasized yet again the conservatory's focus on developing morality in its students, as championed by the humanist tradition, through musical instruction. As Penrose later states, after the Greater Whitman Period, the conservatory remained "one of the institution's most popular components, winning friends for the college" (462). Even after its separation from the college, the conservatory still provided a musical and moral influence that continued to enhance student life on campus and in the community.

The history of the Whitman Conservatory can be seen as a measure of the religiosity of the Whitman institution as seen through multiple encounters—most notably, interactions with students and service to the Walla Walla community. It can be said that the conservatory supplemented the "distinctly religious" identity of the institution as well as that of the community through its musical contributions (e.g. chapel and church choirs). The conservatory, moreover, seemed to promote religion and Christian character in its students as seen through the

tutelage and religious character of its instructors. By the turn of the century, however, the institution's emphasis on religious morality was seemingly redirected. This new era ushered in a focus on music as an art form that generated morality, undoubtedly a consequence of the institutional changes of the time. In this way, the history of the Whitman Conservatory demonstrates how the college, and thus the conservatory, adapted to a turbulent age despite constantly struggling to finance the institution and alter curriculum to meet institutional trends. Although the conservatory did not by any means propel the secularization of Whitman College, it can be viewed as an index to the changes in the religious sentiment and character that the institution underwent during the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

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