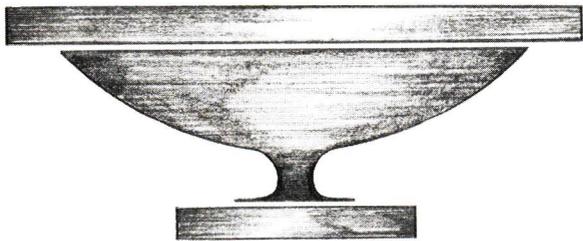
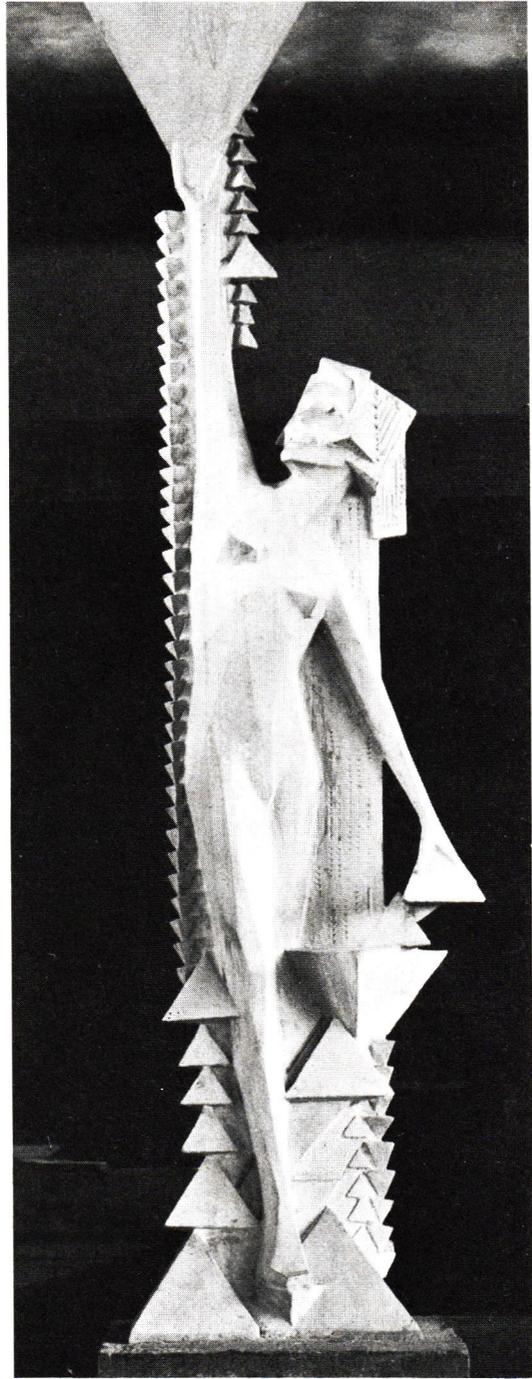


# ALFONSO IANNELLI



*The*  
**PRAIRIE  
SCHOOL**  
*Review*

Volume II, Number 4

Fourth Quarter, 1965

\$2.50 a copy



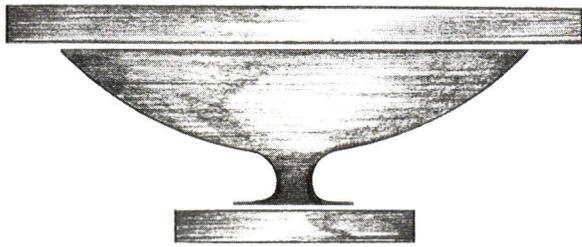
*LEFT and COVER: The evolution of one of the Midway Gardens Sprites is illustrated on these pages. The tiny sketch below, reproduced actual size, was dated March 25, 1914, three days earlier than the larger finished drawing shown here. The finished sprite, illustrated on the cover, was remarkably similar to this drawing. Mr. Iannelli's superb ability to move from two to three dimensions is clearly evident in this instance.*



*March 25<sup>th</sup> 1914  
A. Iannelli*

*March 28<sup>th</sup> 1914  
A. Iannelli*

THE PRAIRIE SCHOOL REVIEW is published four times a year by The Prairie School Press, 12509 South 89th Avenue, Palos Park, Illinois 60464. W. R. Hasbrouck, AIA, Editor and Publisher, Marilyn Whittlesey Hasbrouck, Assistant Editor. Manuscripts concerning the Prairie School of Architecture and related arts are solicited. Reasonable care will be used in handling manuscripts and such material will be returned if return postage is enclosed. Single copy price \$2.50, subscription \$10.00 per year in U.S. and Canada, \$12.00 elsewhere. Issues are mailed flat in envelopes. Address all change of address notices, subscription or back issue inquiries to the Editor at the above address. © Copyright 1972 by W. R. Hasbrouck.



*The*  
**PRAIRIE**  
**SCHOOL**  
*Review*

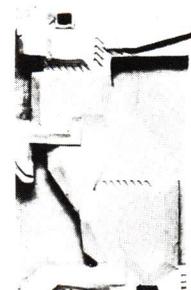
Volume II, Number 4

Fourth Quarter, 1965

CONTENTS

- 4 From the Editors
- 5 Alfonso Iannelli, *The Prairie Spirit in Sculpture*  
by Joseph Griggs
- 24 Book Reviews
- The Work of Purcell and Elmslie*, Gebhard  
Reviewed by Lloyd Henri Hobson
- The American Association of Architectural Bibliographers, Papers I*  
Reviewed by W. R. Hasbrouck
- Short Reviews
- Great American Mansions*, Folsom  
Frank Lloyd Wright, Jacobs  
*The Valley of the God-Almighty Joneses*, Barney  
*Architecture of Chicago and Vicinity*, Webster
- 26 Letter to the Editor
- 27 Selected Bibliography

*Unless otherwise noted, all photographs in this issue were supplied by the Iannelli Studios.*



## *From the EDITORS*

*In January of 1966 an exhibit will open in Chicago's new steel and glass Civic Center building. It is to be the first public showing of the Smithsonian Institution's traveling exhibit of Chicago buildings recorded by the Historic American Buildings Survey. It will include several Prairie School houses as well as many of the great Chicago commercial buildings. Upon leaving Chicago this show will be seen throughout the United States for the next three years.*

*The HABS catalog, Chicago and Nearby Illinois Areas, issued concurrently with this exhibit indicates that 307 historic buildings, represented by 243 measured drawings, 600 photographs, 612 data pages and 216 inventory forms have been recorded to date. Most of this work has been as a result of the work of Earl H. Reed, FAIA, dean of American Architectural Historians. Mr. Reed was the most recent recipient of the gold medal of the Chicago Chapter AIA for this and other accomplishments. He has been assisted by Mr. James Massey, Supervisory Architect of the National Park Service.*

*However, these 307 buildings are but a sample of the historic architecture of Chicago and the midwest that should be recorded. The majority have been recorded only on inventory forms, largely thru efforts of interested volunteers, but many should be photographed and measured without delay. Of note is the fact that 57 of these buildings have already been demolished.*

*The National Park Service has furnished a substantial portion of the funds necessary to perform such photography and measuring in the past. In 1966, however, they advise that no funds will be available. President Johnson's great society has not seen fit to support this important phase of the National Park Service's program. This is extremely unfortunate but does not present a hopeless case. It means that funds must be raised in the Chicago area from other sources.*

*As a beginning, the Prairie School Press has offered to donate any profits from the sale of the HABS catalog, a PSP publication, made at the Chicago exhibit mentioned above. It won't be a great sum, but we hope it will be the beginning of a fund to enable Mr. Reed to direct a Chicago HABS recording project in 1966.*

# ALFONSO IANNELLI



1888-1965

## *The Prairie Spirit in Sculpture*

By Joseph Griggs

*Mr. Joseph Griggs graduated from the School of Architecture at the University of Oregon before coming to Chicago. He presently is working in the office of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe while teaching at the Chicago Art Institute. He interviewed Mr. Iannelli several times for this article before his death March 23, 1965. Since that time, Mr. Griggs has worked closely with Miss Ruth Blackwell, Mr. Iannelli's artistic executor and partner for many years.*

Of the teachings of the Prairie School of Architecture, "integrity" and "unity" seem of foremost importance to organic design. To achieve these ideas required either that the complete design, including building, landscaping, ornament and sculpture, furniture and selection of furnishings, be done by one person, or that the coordination of these multiple elements be guided by the essential ideas basic to the overall design. For the architects of the Prairie School it was seldom easy to find art-

ists and craftsmen willing to discipline themselves within the Prairie School principles, or, indeed, any capable of understanding the aims of those principles. Of those few artists who were able to attune themselves to the radically new ideas being developed, the sculptor, Alfonso Iannelli, ranks high. His understanding of the artistic problems presented, his ideas regarding the primary importance of the integration of the arts with architecture, and his sensitivity to the inherent nature of

materials led to a long and highly successful series of collaborations with the architects of the Prairie School on some of their most important buildings.

Alfonso Iannelli was born in Andretta, Italy in 1888. His father, a shoemaker, left his young family to come to America, planning to send for them as soon as he could. During this time the Iannelli family inn was host to the artist who came each year to work on the renewal of the murals in the Andretta church. Alfonso and his brothers were enlisted as helpers, collecting bristles for brushes and pressing walnuts to produce the oil for the paint. Before he was ten years old, Alfonso Iannelli was attracted by this exposure toward an artistic career.

When he was ten, the family was finally called to Newark from Andretta. The change could not have been more profound. Andretta was a sunny, southern Italian town with an indigeneous architecture of simple, whitewashed buildings. Newark, in 1898, was a bustling industrial city with sooty, industrial architecture and gray, smoke-filled skies. It is a tribute to Iannelli's characteristic strength and adaptability that he did not succumb to the cultural and environmental shock.

*These are two early posters executed by Iannelli for the Orpheum Theater in Los Angeles. The long curved lines are reminiscent of the Art Nouveau. The evolution from this work to the later, more mature posters is one of continuous development.*



THE DANCE of the TEMPTRESS  
ALICE ELSWORTH &  
BERT FRENCH

Due to the rising industrialization of the shoe-making industry, the elder Iannelli's fortunes began to decline, and, at thirteen, Alfonso was forced to leave school and become an apprentice in a jewelry factory. Shortly after, perhaps because of some of his work as an apprentice, he received a scholarship to study at the Newark Technical School under William St. John Harper. His work as an apprentice during this time dealt primarily with the decoration of objects, and his ideas regarding simplification and use of untouched areas were regarded as highly unconventional. For nearly three years he continued his apprenticeship training, attending the Newark School at night. During his third year there he won a scholarship to the Art Student's League in New York. He was the first Newark student ever to be so honored, and although he had nearly completed his apprenticeship in the jewelry factory, he quit, and at the age of seventeen went to New York to study at the Art Student's League under George B. Bridgman and Gutzon Borglum.<sup>1</sup> Two months later he became an assistant in Borglum's studios, and by the end of the first year he had won the St. Gaudens prize for sculpture and Borglum's prize for general work in composition, design and sculpture. He worked about five months for Borglum on the sculpture for the Cathedral of St. John the Divine before establishing his own studio in New York.

<sup>1</sup> Gutson Borglum is best known for his sculpture of the presidents at Mount Rushmore Memorial in South Dakota.

