

Garvey Expresses Optimism That Partch Will Stay Here

By ROGER EBERT

A University music professor expressed "cautious optimism" Wednesday that controversial composer Harry Partch may be asked to remain at the University in a research position.

John Garvey, who directed the April 11 production of Partch's "Revelation in the Courthouse Park," said an official proposal to retain Partch is now under advisement by the Graduate College.

The future of the contemporary composer has been under quiet, searching debate in the School of Music since "Revelation" ended Partch's two-year research grant.

One faction apparently feels that Partch, who was asked to stay beyond the customary one-year research period, should not receive another grant.

But Garvey said he feels support by an "overwhelming majority" of students and faculty in music, drama, dance, physical education and industrial design departments will be enough to bring Partch a joint research appointment under the departments which his sweeping works include.

Partch said he will stay if asked, and appreciates the movement being led by Garvey.

Where will he go if the appointment is not offered?

"I've been outside looking in most of my life," the composer said. "It wouldn't be anything new."

Partch spent many years during the early part of his life touring the country — sometimes by

freight train — to give performances on some of his unique instruments.

Garvey explained that the Partch appointment will require validation by the departments involved in Partch's far-reaching productions. When Partch came to the campus in 1956 to supervise the production of "The Bewitched," his expenses were met by Chicago's Froom Music Foundation, which financed all musical facets of that year's Festival of Contemporary Arts.

After the Festival, Partch spent about a year teaching and traveling, before being asked back to begin the work which resulted in "Revelation." His research grant at that time was made by the University, upon request by Garvey and approval by Duane Branigan, professor of music and director of the School of Music.

The grants are customarily for one year, but "Revelation" required much longer to complete and produce. Garvey applied again on Partch's behalf a year ago, and the grant was extended.

But individual faculty members cannot indefinitely apply for research grants, Garvey pointed out, and at this time the approval of the various interested departments and the University graduate college is required to retain Partch.