

• THE MASTER •

A CREATIVE MASTERPIECE

Patrons and ardent believers in arts education, Louis and Nettie Horch financed the construction of the Master Building in 1929. It was named for The Master Institute of United Arts, established in 1921 by Mr. and Mrs. Horch, in collaboration with Russian artists Nicholas and Helena Roerich. The Art Deco skyscraper housed an international arts center, as well as The Roerich Museum, classrooms, a restaurant, library, and theater. It was also home to many full-time residents in the residential portion known as the Master Apartment Hotel. Most tenants lived in the affordable studio apartments.



Opening ceremony, October 17, 1929 (L-R) Maurice Lichtmann (Vice-President, Roerich Museum), Louis Horch (President, Roerich Museum), Harvey W. Corbett (Architect of the Master Building), Nicholas Roerich, George Roerich, Frances Grant (Vice-President, Roerich Museum).



By the mid 1930s the professional and personal relationships between the Horch and the Roerich families had dissolved. The museum and its collections moved out in 1938 when the Horch's Riverside Museum opened. Many of Roerich's paintings are housed in the Nicholas Roerich Museum, 319 West 107th Street. Together, Mr. and Mrs. Horch managed the building and the Riverside Museum. Later, their daughter Oriole Farb Feshbach ran the school and the museum. However, the museum closed in 1971 and, in 1988, the building converted to a residential cooperative.



Nettie and Louis Horch



Nicholas Roerich



Entrance to The Roerich Museum



The arts tradition continued throughout the years with artists, musicians, dancers, and actors living in the building. The Equity Library Theatre (ELT), a prominent showcase theater company, presented critically acclaimed plays and musicals in the theater from 1961 to 1989. Some of the actors who performed early in their careers included: Jason Robards, Jean Stapleton, James Earl Jones, Sidney Poitier, Rod Steiger, Martin Balsam, Lee Grant, Eartha Kitt, and Tony Randall.

