‘THE CELLIST’—adds a bright note to the Fondren Library’s Music Room. It was created by David Parsons of the Architecture Department. (Photo by Bob Warren.)

‘Cellist’ By Parsons Seeks Capture of Music’s Essence

By ROBERT ZELENKA

Visitors to the Music Room of Fondren Library will have noticed during the past few weeks, a beautiful and captivating piece of work. It is “The Cellist,” a statue in bronze by Mr. David Parsons, Professor of Fine Arts at Rice University.

“The Cellist,” on temporary loan to the Library, is owned by the artist. The statue was cast in 1949. Mishna Schneider, the cellist with the Budapest Quartet, is the subject of the bronze. In his creation, Mr. Parsons endeavored to capture the form of the cellist’s playing, the essence of his music.

THE ARTIST spent 1000 hours in creating the statue. The original form was cut in modeling wax, and from this a ninety-six piece plaster mold was made. Beeswax was poured into the mold, and the wax figure was girded with rods of wax.

Sand and plaster were placed around the model, and this was heated so that the wax ran out and vaporized. Bronze was poured into the final mold, and the artist finished the statue by hand.

Mr. Parsons had long been interested in the study of the string quartet as a symbol of unity. Since the 1930’s he had done work with the quartet and its members. Studies for the statue of Mishna Schneider began in 1948. Mr. Parsons continued his preparatory work into the next year, and in 1949 the final casting was made.

“The Cellist” has been in previous exhibits, both national and international. Mr. Parsons has been with Rice University since 1963. Some of his work is already known to members of the campus; Mr. Parsons is the artist responsible for the dynamic and beautiful mobiles in the Biology and Geology buildings. His sculpture of birds in flight graces the sanctuary of the First Unitarian Church.

The Freehand Studio, of which Mr. Parsons is the head, will be open on Wednesday afternoons from 1 to 5 p.m. for any interested member of the Rice student body or faculty.

STUDIO SPACE is available along with clay, a kiln, and stone. No instruction as such will be given; locker space is available. For drawing and painting the individual must supply his own material.

The Studio is located beneath Fondren Library. The Studio will be open on all weekday afternoons, and those with special interests and projects are welcome to come.