

Con Affetto ...
(With Affection ...)



by
Laven Sowell

FOR MY FRIENDS AND STUDENTS

Copyright © 2006 by Laven Sowell

Also by Laven Sowell

Tulsa Opera Chronicles
(Jack Williams, co-author)

My Music Notebook

On Love

*Love is God's creation, the whole
and every grain of sand in it.*

Love every leaf, every ray of God's light.

Love the animals, love the plants,

*Love everything. If you love everything,
you will perceive the divine mystery in things.*

*Once you perceive it, you will begin to
comprehend it better every day. And you
will come at last to love the whole world
with an all-embracing love.*

- Fyodor Dostoyevsky

*So faith, hope, love abide, these three;
but the greatest of these is love.*

- Saint Paul

Contents

<i>Foreword - Carol I. Crawford</i>	<i>i</i>
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<i>iii</i>
<i>About the Author - Phil Hammond</i>	<i>v</i>
<i>Introduction - Laven Sowell</i>	<i>ix</i>
<i>We All Need Music!</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Choral Singing is a Good Thing</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Listening to Recorded Music</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Do You Love Your Pet?</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Laughter is Essential</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>About Change</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Our Great Musical Heritage of Christmas</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Our Priceless Memories</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Democracy and the Natural Order</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>Making Our Time Beautiful</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>What Makes Music Really Good?</i>	<i>21</i>
<i>About Those Love Songs</i>	<i>23</i>
<i>Letting Go</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>Happiness Is</i>	<i>27</i>
<i>The Impulse to Make Music</i>	<i>29</i>
<i>Ten Simple Ideas for Enjoying Life</i>	<i>31</i>
<i>Christmas Memories</i>	<i>33</i>
<i>Looking Forward to Next Year</i>	<i>35</i>
<i>Music Is My Anchor!</i>	<i>37</i>
<i>Some Strange Behavior</i>	<i>39</i>
<i>April is Miraculous!</i>	<i>41</i>

<i>A Salute to Teachers</i>	43
<i>Celebrating the American Pop Song</i>	45
<i>What Matters Most?</i>	47
<i>Pike’s Peak or Bust!”</i>	49
<i>Tulsa Opera’s Exciting New Season</i>	51
<i>Serendipity Is Wonderful!</i>	53
<i>In Praise of Beverly Sills</i>	55
<i>The Intangibles of Conducting</i>	57
<i>Lucia, A Bel Canto Phenomenon</i>	61
<i>Mozart, the Enigmatic Composer</i>	63
<i>Massenet, the Quintessential Frenchman</i>	65
<i>Butterfly’s Contemptible Lover</i>	67
<i>Celebrating Oklahoma’s First Operatic Celebrity, Joseph Benton</i> ...	69
<i>The Greatest Gifts</i>	71
<i>And In Conclusion</i>	73
<i>Some Recent Snapshots from My Studio</i>	86
<i>Index</i>	89

FOREWORD — CAROL I. CRAWFORD



TULSA OPERA

Dear Reader,

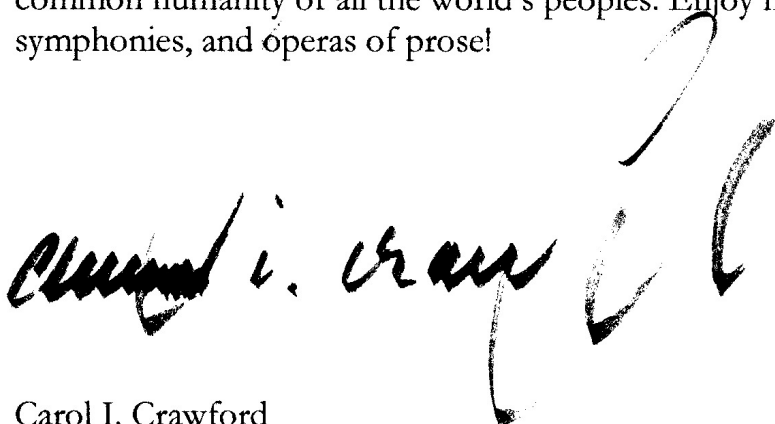
I am honored that Laven Sowell asked me to write a brief foreword to his new book, despite the fact that what Laven has meant and continues to mean to thousands and thousands of musicians and music-lovers throughout the United States cannot be expressed briefly.

Laven's first book, co-authored with the wonderful Jack Williams, is entitled *Tulsa Opera Chronicles*. Words cannot describe how valuable this book has grown as the most important archival document of Tulsa Opera; it recounts in vivid detail the development of one of the most important opera companies in the United States. The true health of the classical performing arts in the United States is manifested by a city like Tulsa – not by great, but very large cities like New York, Chicago, or Los Angeles. Laven Sowell helped lead Tulsa Opera to unbelievable heights throughout his four decades as the company's greatest servant to music, and the *Tulsa Opera Chronicles* secured his place as Tulsa Opera's greatest historian.

Laven's second book, entitled *My Music Notebook*, is a unique homage to everyone and everything that nurtured his musical soul. It is both inspiring and informative to read for so many reasons. Allow me to list just one. As Charles Burney's observations about musical life in 18th-century London are both fascinating and "readable", Laven's observations about his early years as a musician in Oklahoma and his subsequent studies with Martial Singher in Aspen and Nadia Boulanger in Fontainebleau are chock full of amazing facts. These lead to the unbelievable threads of connection among us classical musicians. For example, I knew of Carlos Moseley as the visionary Managing Director of the New York Philharmonic who boldly hired the young Leonard Bernstein in 1958 to serve as the first American Music Director of a major American orchestra. But I had *no idea* that Carlos Moseley had served as Director of the University of Oklahoma's School of Music immediately before he joined the NYP until I read *My Music Notebook*. Therefore, how proud I am to honor the distinguished OU alumnus Laven Sowell, Mr. Moseley, and one of my own teachers and mentors, Leonard Bernstein, as Tulsa Opera produces a great new opera based on *The Little Prince* in OU's newly and beautifully renovated Holmberg Hall. Thousands of opera lovers in the western part of our state will be served by the musical house that Laven built.

Given his incredible knowledge about so many things, his passion for music, his talent and integrity as a teacher and choir director, and his great wit, Laven Sowell could have left Oklahoma permanently and worked just about anywhere in the U.S. or abroad. But Laven returned to Oklahoma, and utilized his many gifts to nurture a vital classical music culture in his native state. Laven belongs in the Oklahoma Hall of Fame since he is the Sooner State's greatest *Mensch of Music*.

I can't wait to read Laven's third book. I will undoubtedly learn more about him and from him. Although a favorite adage of his is "the only permanent thing in life is change", one thing never seems to change with time, and that is Laven Sowell's never-ending capacity to share his passion for music along with his firm belief that the most important fact of life is the common humanity of all the world's peoples. Enjoy his overtures, concerti, symphonies, and operas of prose!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carol I. Crawford". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with some loops and flourishes.

Carol I. Crawford
General Director
Tulsa Opera
June 15, 2006

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There is no way I could have written this booklet without the support of Phil Hammond. Phil, from the beginning, has shown a keen interest in doing this project and has expeditiously helped to bring it to fruition. So I am deeply indebted to him. Working with Phil on a project of this nature involving the arts, and particularly music, involves a true partnership because Phil has an intrinsic interest in these things, too. Phil was my student in the Sixties and now we have been friends for several decades, and Phil knows my mind.

Phil has an awesome ability with the computer acquired during his first career, which concluded with his retirement a few years ago from British Petroleum. He is currently teaching mathematics at Edison High School. Phil has had amazing patience with my dictation over the telephone, usually late at night when his wife, Dr. Nancy Carpenter, and their teen-age son, Mark, have fallen to the whims of the Sandman. This autumn, Phil and Nancy will be the proud parents of an eager young man entering St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota as a freshman.

Just recently, I received a call from my longtime friend in Tucson, Arizona, David Hemphill, and also from Dr. Robert Cowan of Montevallo, Alabama, who has been my friend since I was a teen-ager. They gave me a big dose of encouragement for writing this book, and we all need to be bolstered from time to time.

Special thanks go to several people who have made living at Inverness Village a pleasurable experience. Vaughndean Fuller keeps me supplied with walnuts and peanut butter. She and her husband have been loyal and supportive friends over the course of many years. Mrs. Karen St. Clair (Ashley's mother) is the art teacher at Skiatook High School (lucky students!). She painted a beautiful crest celebrating music, which hangs just outside the door to my apartment. Also, Mrs. Debbie Seals (Joshua's mother) baked hundreds of delicious cookies for me. (But not all at once! These cookies came to me over a period of five years.) Mrs. Patricia Duncan, my former student at the University of Tulsa and mother of Lindsay and Blake, has been a helpful friend for years. She has been indispensable in many ways. Virginia Anderson Torres, my wonderful friend ever since my teen-age years, continues to be a friendly presence.

My good friend, Miriam Spindler Lynch, one of Tulsa's longtime excellent piano teachers, is ninety-five years old. This year she was elected President of Wednesday Morning Musicale. Miriam has always encouraged me to write, and she is an inspiration to all of us who are climbing the ladder of age. She has been President of the Hyeckka Club on two occasions, and President of Tulsa Accredited Music Teachers' Association (TAMTA) on three occasions. Miriam's mother, Nelle Garbutt Spindler, was one of the leading musicians responsible for creating all of these organizations.

It would be a mistake not to mention Mrs. Karen McCay (Bob's wife), who makes mouth-watering cookies, too. Karen and Bob live here at Inverness and they are charming people. The delightful couple, Betty and Levan Kelly, are often seen enjoying the fare in our dining room. Levan has a reputation for growing magnificent tomatoes in his garden plot. His tomatoes are definitely noteworthy. This list would not be complete without mentioning the mouth-watering pickles produced by Helen Marie Sisler. Those pickles are incredibly delicious!!

Dr. Robert Shepard occasionally brings me some great bread, and his wife Eleanor makes the very best fruitcake known to mankind, and she has a subtle sense of humor. Dr. Shepard was particularly helpful when I first moved to Inverness. He shopped for a badly-needed bookcase and desk for my apartment. Ultimately, he found two pieces of unfinished furniture and proceeded to stain them. He really fixed me up. He even put rollers on the legs of the desk. He was only eighty-seven at the time. He is definitely something else. He's indefatigable!

There are staff members here at Inverness for whom I have an enthusiastic appreciation. Connie Gregory, a wonderful and caring nurse, heads the health clinic here. She is an absolute doll. Alice Gay, who is one of our nutritionists, is a favorite of mine, and Sandra Garcia is my housekeeper. Sandra is humorous and works hard, and the result is outstanding. Also, I have a sincere appreciation for my personal physician here at Inverness, Dr. Jean Root. She has studied vocal music and just recently was asking me about a particular obscure Handelian aria.

I also wish to express gratitude to my friend Dick Horkey for assisting in the proofreading of portions of this book. Dick, who is enormously knowledgeable about a lot of things, gave some last-minute comments which were very helpful and are appreciated.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR – PHIL HAMMOND

IN THE SUMMER OF 1962 I walked down a corridor at Edison High School, past the Auditorium, towards Room 27, to audition for a place in the Edison Junior High Boys' Glee Club for the '62-'63 school year. My mood was not gleeful – even my mother's calming presence could not erase my anxiety. But as it turned out, Mr. Sowell put me at ease, taught me a little something about singing, and gave me encouragement. Since then he has served me, as he has so many others, as mentor, conductor, teacher, and friend. I spent six years in his choruses at Edison; later I would participate for many years in the Chancel Choir at First Presbyterian Church, and for a few productions in the Tulsa Opera Chorus. I would be a different person today without Laven's positive – in fact passionate – guidance and influence.

Likewise, Laven's presence on the Tulsa musical scene over several decades has been so forceful and constructive that the cultural inheritance of today's Tulsans would be diminished without it. You, the reader, will find many hints in the essays in these pages as to why this is so.



LAVEN SOWELL was born in Wewoka, Oklahoma on January 9, 1933. He grew up in Oklahoma City and was a member of the Classen High School Class of 1951.

Laven's first voice teacher was Clark Snell, a man who had a profound influence on his sense of purpose, discipline, and musical values. As Laven wrote in *My Music Notebook*: "Mr. Snell was a huge influence in my life." After graduating from Classen, Laven took a Bachelor's degree at the University of Oklahoma where he studied voice with the distinguished American tenor Joseph Benton. During this collegiate period he spent three summers at the Aspen Institute of Music, where he studied with the famous French baritone Martial Singher.

During his Senior year at O.U. Laven auditioned for the opera impresario Charles L. Wagner, and was selected to sing leading baritone roles with the Wagner touring company during the 1955-56 season. With this experience came the privilege of working with some operatic notables, including the world-renowned stage director Désiré Defrère and Ruth and Thomas Martin, world-famous for their English translations of operas.

After the tour Laven settled in New York City, where he continued his vocal study at the Manhattan School of Music with the distinguished Metropolitan Opera baritone John Brownlee, and received his Master of Arts degree at Columbia University. While at Columbia, Laven also studied voice privately with Samuel Margolis. The students of Mr. Margolis included the legendary baritone Robert Merrill and bass Jerome Hines.

Returning to Oklahoma, Laven began his teaching career at Edison High School, after a few years adding some private voice students as well. His Edison choirs quickly

established a regional reputation and were rewarded with many important engagements. In addition to several appearances as Honor Choir for the Oklahoma Music Educators Association, the Edison Concert Chorus was invited to sing *full concerts* for the national conventions of the Music Teachers National Association in St. Louis (1966) and the Music Educators National Conference in Chicago (1970). The group was also invited to sing at prestigious concert series in Houston, Texas (1966), Fort Wayne, Indiana (1969), and New York City's Riverside Church (1968) with a live radio broadcast.

During this period Laven spent another summer of "continuing education" studying with Nadia Boulanger at the renowned *Conservatoire Américain de Fontainebleau* in France.

Laven accepted an invitation to join the Music faculty at the University of Tulsa in the fall of 1970, and continued teaching there for more than twenty years. Starting out as Director of the Opera Theater program, he later became Director of Choral Activities and served for several years as Chairman of the Voice Department. His T.U. Modern Choir was celebrated for its excellence, appearing as Honor Choir at the Oklahoma Music Educators Association in 1975, and being invited to represent the State of Oklahoma with a thirty-minute pre-worship concert at the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C. in 1982.

Many Tulsans will realize that in addition to his "day job" as an educator, Laven occupied two challenging positions in the community during these years. First, he was engaged for an amazing thirty-four seasons as Chorus Master for Tulsa Opera, Inc. where he had the opportunity to work with some of the world's leading opera stars and prestigious conductors. Tulsa Opera patrons were also exposed to his resonant baritone voice and artistry on the stage as he performed twelve secondary roles.

Laven also served for seventeen years as Choirmaster at First Presbyterian Church. Under his direction the Chancel Choir made several recordings and appeared frequently on radio and television. In June 1979 the Choir presented a full concert for the Southwest Regional Convention of the American Guild of Organists.

Laven has been honored over the years with many awards and citations. A few of these stand out: the Distinguished Service Award from the Oklahoma Congress of Parents and Teachers (1970); the designation of the T.U. Modern Choir as "Official Ambassadors of Good Will" by Mayor James M. Inhofe (1982); a citation from the Oklahoma Arts and Humanities Council during Art Activities Week (1985); and the Governor's Arts Award for Excellence in the Arts (1991). Most recently the Tulsa Hyechka Club, Oklahoma's oldest music organization, honored Laven at its Silver Brunch in the Great Hall of the Bernsen Center at the First Presbyterian Church in Tulsa. As reported in *The Tulsa World*, Miriam Spindler Lynch gave a special reading "in honor of this exceptional Tulsa musician and his contribution to the arts."

Since his retirement from choral conducting, Laven has maintained a private voice studio, which gives him “fixity of purpose” as he prepares promising students for further study in voice. He has been active in Tulsa Accredited Music Teachers’ Association(TAMTA), where he has underwritten a scholarship for high school seniors. Many of his private students have gone on to become music majors in their universities. Laven has slowed down his pace to include more relaxation and visiting with friends at Inverness Village in Tulsa. He is thus enjoying the “best of both worlds” – the world of music and the world of friendship.

Laven has previously published *Tulsa Opera Chronicles* (with Jack Williams), *My Music Notebook*, and many essays, most of which are collected in these pages. Thus in retirement he continues to actively participate in the musical life of the city he calls home.

INTRODUCTION — LAVEN SOWELL

There was just one little problem in writing this little booklet. I wish I were a better writer. I love to write and express myself, and sometimes I almost make it. (Maybe in another lifetime.) So here I am in my seventies, with time on my hands and only a modest amount of talent for writing. However, I was raised with all the old-fashioned values, thank God, and I believe each one of us has a responsibility to make a difference in the world. Writing gives me an opportunity to try to do just that, and I can have a good time doing it. Of course, I haven't forgotten that at the time of this writing I teach twenty-one voice lessons per week here in my apartment at Inverness Village. This also provides an opportunity to make a difference – and *I love it!*

I wouldn't even begin a project of this nature without my former student's help at the computer. This, of course, is Phil Hammond – but more about him later.

I wrote several little essays for a wonderful Senior Citizens' magazine called *The Vintage Newsmagazine*. Many of the essays in this booklet were first published in that magazine. Susan Lively, the magazine's remarkable editor, was kind and often encouraged me. Also, I have chosen several articles of mine which were first published in *Intermission*, the Official Magazine of the Tulsa Performing Arts Center, to include in this booklet. This magazine is beautifully edited by Nancy C. Hermann. She is an excellent writer, too. I have learned that the joys of life are not always in the destination but in the unsought surprises along the way. I have tried to set down some of them in the pages that lie ahead.

Tulsa in my experience has been a great city. Tulsa has been good to me, and I have worked hard to be good to Tulsa and to the organizations that have employed me. Only one other city affects me with more excitement. Living and studying in Paris and Fontainebleau, France, was one of life's grand pleasures for me. Paris affects me like no other city in the world. I gasp at the beauty of the night – all lit up – and after a rain with the pavement glistening from the beautifully lit buildings and fountains. It is simply breathtaking. Paris always makes my heart beat faster. My students know my fondness for French music and for the language.

Success, to me, is getting things done and doing them well. It also means gaining the respect of a few sagacious people, and the respect – sometimes even the affection – of my students. I feel pretty good about how I've spent my life, and most of it in Tulsa. I have never applied for a job and I've never been fired. If Providence means that God is watching over mankind, I've been very fortunate. My Concert Chorus members at Edison High School during the Sixties often referred to me as the "Vince Lombardi of music." I suppose this was because I was a bit of a taskmaster, and always spouting Italian. Teaching can be such a gratifying profession because often one feels as if one has truly

made a difference in a student's life. The possibility to touch the lives of others gives real meaning to the teaching profession.

It's been great fun putting this little book together, taking down the files from the shelves, revisiting the good times and feeling renewed gratitude for whatever good fortune I've had along the way. A lot of projects, friends, and students I've poured my heart into are gone now. I read something amusing in the newspaper recently about a judge who asked a man why he stole one hundred television sets. The fellow frowned and said to the judge, "this is not a simple life, Your Honor, and there are no easy answers."

So onward and upward, I realize what an extraordinary privilege it was for me to have studied and to have had the opportunity to observe at close hand great teachers work, solving many problems of performance in a supreme way. Working with music is creating a kind of magic, and in my next life I still want to be a musician, but maybe a better writer.

The past, when you're in your seventies, expands. The things we've already done improve the view in retrospect. They create great concrete building blocks under us. Such as: all those people and places, summers and winters, concerts and recitals. This gives us a grand view of our world and some idea of what could happen tomorrow. I know that one of these early spring days those beautiful yellow daffodils and those early gorgeous blue irises will bloom and I won't be there to see them ever again. Now, that's the way life is.

So, if age brings experience and some satisfaction, and at least a modicum of wisdom, it does not, alas, deliver ideal happiness. But that's precisely what makes a creature of the arts strive for more.

I recognize that what may seem like a *cause célèbre* to me might only be a minor concern to others, or no concern at all. Therefore, none of the names of my friends mentioned in this book are meant to imply that any of them endorses opinions or judgments that are clearly my own.

Con affetto,

Laven

Con Affetto ...

WE ALL NEED MUSIC![†]

I have always believed in the power of music to make you healthy, happy, and wise. If you know the joy of dancing to the flowing rhythm of a waltz; if you find peace and respite in a soothing bit of Brahms; if your daily cares all melt away with a Gershwin melody – then you will delight in the discovery of a kinship with the great people and the wise people of every age, a relationship founded upon a love for music and an appreciation of its importance in the lives of all people.

Music is as old as the world itself, older perhaps, for all around us is evidence of its presence in nature. For example, the rhythmical changes in the seasons and the movements of the sun, the moon, and the stars. We must not forget the birds that sing and the murmur of a mountain stream.

Music is certainly woven into the very fabric of our lives in a glorious way, and it would be difficult to imagine what life would be like without it. I believe it is a fundamental need, actually, one of the vital sources of life itself. No one can deny the refreshing stimulus afforded by music in times of stress, and its powers of relaxation at the end of the day. In fact, doctors and psychologists all around the world are recommending music as a panacea, a solution for many of the ills that people invariably confront during our life on this planet.

No one can deny the need for music during our present troubled days, facing war and with the economy in its current depressed state. This makes the demise of the Tulsa Philharmonic an even greater loss to the community. The musicians who come to Tulsa to play in an orchestra are important to the well-being and balance of the arts in our educational system. The musicians teach our children and find many other opportunities for civic participation. I am eager to see a solution to this problem for our city. The people of Tulsa are too proud of the arts in our city to let this continue indefinitely. Tulsa Opera has a plan to save the orchestra (at least for now), and that organization's general manager, Carol I. Crawford, is an extraordinary conductor. Let's wait and see what develops.

Of course, the most exciting music of all is the live music in a concert hall. This music truly has an electricity that is difficult to match with a recording. However, I have found an absolute gold mine of great music on television. It is cable channel 24, and the program is entitled, "Classic Arts Showcase." It comes on at various times of the day and night, sometimes running for three or more hours at a time. It utilizes tapes and films that are rarely heard. The program makes use of the world's greatest artists from ballet, opera, and orchestral music. It is possible to hear and see Arturo Toscanini conducting, Richard Tucker and Roberta Peters singing, and Artur Schnabel playing the piano, all within a

[†] Published first in *The Vintage Newsmagazine*, April 2003.

30- or 40-minute period. This program is a treasure trove of wonderful music. Turn it on; you will love it! Check the cable television listing for air times.

Don't miss the exciting new Tulsa Opera production of Mozart's *Don Giovanni*. Mozart's comic drama deals with the escapades of the legendary lover, Don Giovanni. He is always searching for a woman who can bring him happiness (this sounds like some of my friends!). The opera has an outstanding cast and features the debut of baritone Christopher Schaldenbrand in the role of Don Giovanni. This promises to be a great production. Performances are scheduled for April 26, May 2, and May 4, at the Tulsa Performing Arts Center.

CHORAL SINGING IS A GOOD THING[†]

In this day of our highly developed choral groups, we sometimes lose sight of the fact that singing together has long been a joyful experience for people who wish to express themselves through music. The early Christians sang songs of faith at their meetings, and folk songs became a part of life in work and play by national groups. Organized worship of God saw the flowering of the best in early choral music.

People seek participation in these groups because of the values that such an activity has for them. These values may be recreational, social, cultural, spiritual, or aesthetic.

The perfection of musical performance seems to be the primary aim of most choral conductors. This aim should not be motivated principally by the desire to impress the audience. However, this aim is justifiable if the motivation is also derived from the desire to realize the effect that an artistic performance can have on the singers.

Aesthetic satisfaction is a subtle emotion and the aesthetic values are elusive. These values undoubtedly exist only where there is an artistic performance. They may be experienced through listening or participating. I have always thought that continuous aesthetic experiences can have a profound effect on a person's personality and character. This sensitivity to cultural things, refinement in taste, will develop an appreciation for a more artistic and creative manner of living.

Our community has several groups that confine their major efforts to the singing of great choral works, from earlier periods to the worthy music of the contemporary period. One has only to check the "Arts" section of the *Tulsa World* to find the listings of these outstanding choral organizations. They do inspiring performances throughout the year. Also, several churches and universities in our area maintain a high level of fine choral performance.

Sincerity is the mark of worthy music. Most music that has survived the ravages of time has evolved from the more beautiful and spiritual experiences of man. Consequently, the predominance of good choral music is sacred. It is not surprising that there are a great many people who sing in choral organizations because they regard the experience as an offering of worship to their Creator.

Choral music has one unique advantage over instrumental music, namely, its association with literature. Worthy texts contain the same qualities as worthy music, such as permanency, worthwhile associations, sincerity, and originality. Expressive words are very important to the composition of expressive choral music. Fine words seem to strengthen great music and trivial words have a tendency to weaken it.

It is not my intention to get too technical here. My purpose, stated simply, is to point to the joy and satisfaction one can have as a listener or as a singer. The choral experience

[†] Published first in *The Vintage Newsmagazine*, May 2003.

is a corporate event, and I believe the best choral ensemble possess a group psyche with their intellectual and emotional energies focused on a common goal. This can be a powerful force. The power to move the hearts of the choir and audience is the realization of the potential that is the essence of great choral music.

LISTENING TO RECORDED MUSIC[†]

Listening to music alone is a modern-day phenomenon. Making music as a family in the home has declined in recent years; but those who still engage in making music around the piano at home know that this is a wonderful way of achieving a special intimacy.

Listening to a recording is another matter entirely. A fine recorded performance has many positive aspects; however, before extolling the virtues of the recorded performance, I feel it is necessary to mention a couple of points regarding the live performance.

A recording will always sound the same no matter how many times one plays it. The element of uncertainty is the special quality in a live performance, and the collective personality of the audience can affect the performer in many different ways. I am aware that this special quality may seem academic to the listener (like myself) who enjoys listening to music in the comfort of one's home.

Incidentally, the great advances in recording technology have actually encouraged people to attend more concerts and introduced people to music who would otherwise never have become familiar with the music of the great composers. Therefore, I don't feel that one needs to suffer from a sense of guilt for enjoying an evening alone listening to a beautiful recording.

These new and wonderful technologies have made it possible to enjoy music in complete isolation, unaffected by the responses of others. Some musicians claim that listening to live performances is the only genuine way to experience music, and critics of recorded music are correct to point out that repeated hearings of a particular recorded performance may cause the listener to believe that the interpretation to which he has become accustomed is the only "true" interpretation.

Great music demands an emotional commitment from performers and listeners which is difficult to attain with a recording. However, the advantages of being able to listen to recorded music easily outweigh the disadvantages.

It is a well-known fact that a favorite recording can sometimes be a source of comfort for people who find themselves alone without wanting to be so. Listening to music by oneself or with others restores, refreshes, and heals.

Modern recordings have proved to be an invaluable resource for students and historians. Also, recordings have enabled listeners to come to terms with difficult music through repeated hearings. Listening at home is an advantage to those people who like to respond to music with physical movement and to "sound off" without disturbing others.

Imagine what fun it would be to do as the French writer Marcel Proust used to do. He hired a string quartet to play just for him when he was in a solitary mood. Very few

[†] Published first in *The Vintage Newsmagazine*, June 2003.

people can afford this kind of extravagant indulgence – although it is certainly a fascinating idea!!

Participating in music as a performer or as a listener brings us into contact with greatness. We sometimes take for granted our encounters with the great composers of the past. However, if music becomes a permanent part of our lives, it will enable us to live lives which are less trivial and more imbued with meaning.

So get out one of your favorite recordings, turn the lights down low, turn up the volume, and let the music speak to you. You may be thrilled with what it says.

DO YOU LOVE YOUR PET?[†]

Do you love your cat or dog? Do you share a special bond with one in particular? Imagine how great it would be if you could truly understand the mind of your pet. My cat, Cleo, has a rather complex personality; she is aloof and self-sufficient. However, it is surprising what human-like emotions she expresses. Her purring and meowing send distinct and meaningful messages.

Cleo offers a unique type of love and an invaluable kind of rapport that one can only experience with a cat. The love you give your pet is good for you and for the pet.

Over the many years that cats and people have shared relationships, millions of people from every country in the world have praised and loved their cats. The cat, of course, being the sophisticated and noble creature it is, has taken all of this in stride. Not everyone is a cat fancier, and that is a pity. However, if you love any animal, you pass the test with me. I think it helps human beings to love each other more effectively if they also have a place in their heart for animals.

When it comes to the fine art of manipulation, cats are natural-born experts. For example, when Cleo wants me to get up in the morning, she hops onto my bed and starts walking all over me. If I still haven't moved, she walks right up to my face and meows loudly. If she is hungry, she can be even more persuasive.

Cats appreciate regular routines. They are true creatures of habit. Providing them with a set schedule will definitely give them basic peace of mind. It is also possible that your cat will help you to keep on schedule, too.

You can tell if your cat feels anxious if it starts licking away at its fur in a nervous manner. This is the sort of behavior people exhibit when they bite their nails when they are upset. Cats are more like human beings than most pets because they can be fastidious, lazy, lustful, selfish, and loveable. Most cats seem to subscribe to the unfaltering belief in their divine right. Our pets sometimes awaken emotions, both good and bad, very near to our own behavioral patterns. They prompt us to think and act in new and unsettling ways – and that, of course, is why they make such interesting companions.

As you can easily see, I love my cat Cleo. I did not acquire Cleo until I was well into the “senior citizen” age and semi-retired. Loving your pet is much like loving wonderful music. You must free yourself, and permit yourself to be seduced. In other words, when you love at any time there is always some risk involved, and I would like to convince anybody who has thought of owning a pet to go out and take that risk! If you have the time and opportunity to adopt a cat or dog, it will bring you happiness and possibly add years to your life!

[†] Published first in *The Vintage Newsmagazine*, July 2003.

I would like to close this little dissertation on pets with a quotation from Dr. Albert Schweitzer – the great humanitarian, physician, authority on Bach, and 1952 Nobel Peace Prize winner: “There are two means of refuge from the miseries of life: music and cats.”

LAUGHTER IS ESSENTIAL[†]

Among the things I believe in most is laughter. This can be a sad world, and sad and tragic things can happen to one personally. Even in a dark moment, I have found that I am always saved if I can laugh. Laughter breaks spells, changes luck, and brings happiness. Laughter is definitely on God's side.

I suppose that my favorite composer is Mozart. I've always thought it was silly to have favorites. (Maybe it is.) Anyway, Mozart knew how to laugh, even though he had a rather tragic life in many ways. Many musicologists consider him to be one of the great talents of western civilization, maybe the greatest natural musical talent of all.

Although his music can be deeply moving, passionate, elevated, it does what many of his contemporaries – now fallen by the wayside – could not do. It laughs. Listen to it. His last opera was written while he was gravely ill; it was *The Magic Flute*, which is a comedy, and there is musical laughter sprinkled all through it.

I was once asked what characteristic I would most deeply wish for among my students, other than God-given talent. Without hesitation, I responded, "A sense of humor." I could have said "passion," because a passionate person is a living person. But passion also has its dangerous extremes; too often passion brings great sorrow instead of happiness. I could have said "happiness," but how could a person know that he was happy if he never knew sorrow? So I ask for the one quality which, added to any other qualities, would make it possible to live, expand, and enjoy life: a sense of humor.

My sense of humor is improved in a marvelous way when my young students come for their voice lessons. Then my house rings with laughter, and I hear the banter of light-hearted conversation in my waiting room. It is so important never to lose your sense of humor because it is a wonderful antidote for pomposity and smugness.

Recently, I read an interview given by the comedian Jonathan Winters. He was asked the question, "What are you most afraid of?" His answer was: "What really scares me to death is a man or a woman without a sense of humor." Winters is now 77 years old and is still a warm and friendly fellow whose beady eyes twinkle as he entertains.

Perhaps, simply stated, my code of living consists of three parts. One, try never to be unkind. Two, always seek beauty. Three, never lose your sense of humor. I believe when all the peoples of the world remember to laugh, particularly at themselves, there will be no more dictators and no more wars.

[†] Published first in *The Vintage Newsmagazine*, August 2003.

ABOUT CHANGE ...[†]

We have all heard the old adage: “The only thing that is permanent in our lives is change.” Change can bring sorrow and sadness. However, change can be a positive thing in our lives, and that is the aspect on which I wish to dwell during this little epistle to you.

Change affects each of us every day of our lives. We change our clothes daily, and we change what we eat for a meal so that our palates have some variety. Some changes are more significant, such as a change in lifestyle or a change in where we live.

As a music teacher, I know it is possible to change the way we teach, incorporating a new technique or a new way of communicating verbally with a student about a new piece of music. Some thrive on change in their lives; others approach change cautiously, with trepidation.

Change can be very healthy for us as individuals. The issue isn't whether or not there will be change, but how can we manage it? Since change is the only constant we face in life, it is necessary to face it with effectiveness. Otherwise, our ability to connect with the society in which we live and work will be diminished. So, we can either ignore it and hope it will go away, or we can embrace it and create a stronger and happier life!

Many live in dread of what is coming. Why should we? The unknown puts adventure into our life. It gives us something to sharpen our wits on. The unexpected around the corner gives a sense of anticipation and surprise. We should all thank God for the unknown future. If we saw all the good things which are coming to us, we would sit down and degenerate. If we saw all the *bad* things, we would be paralyzed with fear. It is wonderful to be able to lift the curtain on a new day *each and every day* of our lives. So meet today, *today!!*

* * * * *

Here is a hot tip for you. Barbara Cook will be doing a concert of songs from the Broadway theater, and when it comes to songs of the music theater, she is tops!! The tickets are on sale now for this concert on September 13 at the Performing Arts Center. This is going to be a memorable evening – Barbara Cook will thrill you as Tulsa Opera kicks off another exciting season.

[†] Published first in *The Vintage Newsmagazine*, September 2003.

OUR GREAT MUSICAL HERITAGE OF CHRISTMAS[†]

Carols, at first, were a very different breed from the hymns. They were derived from secular sources and were a popular part of village festivals, weddings, and birthdays. The word “carol” originally referred to a circle dance and the words were merely used as an accompaniment to the dance movements.

St. Francis of Assisi is credited with bringing carols into the formal worship of the church. In 1223 St. Francis was conducting Christmas services, and he borrowed some farm animals and placed a statue of the infant Christ in a manger filled with hay. He was allowed to conduct a midnight Mass using joyful carols to accompany the tableau. This opened the way for carols and the church to be reconciled. Now, manger scenes (sometimes known as a crèche) have become universally present in Christmas observances of the United States and of all the Mediterranean countries.

Among the oldest and most durable of carols are the French carols. These first carols were supposedly an amalgamation of the carols that were sung around St. Francis’s manger scene. They form an unbroken line of melody that has continued virtually unchanged to the present day.

The Protestant Reformation resulted in a sharp reduction in the secular-sounding carols. For instance, the German chorales of Luther and Bach brought the church music around to a type of music tied closely to religious texts. Joyful hymns and carols were rarely welcomed.

The rise of Puritanism brought the greatest opposition to carols and to the entire tradition of Christmas. The United States, closely allied in its early years with Puritanism, spurned most carols, and restricted itself to singing the serious-type hymns. Puritanism had many problems in the early days of our country. I’ve always felt that too much zeal was “not a good thing.”

Fortunately, recent years have seen an upsurge of interest in Christmas carols. Publications such as the *Oxford Book of Carols* have brought many of them back into favor. We are becoming more aware of the rich and varied musical heritage of Christmas. These beautiful carols add to the joy and brightness of Christmas, making it glow again with the imagination and fantasy that come from the hearts of folk offering their adoration and love to the Babe of Bethlehem.

In all of our Christian churches, Christ’s birthday is celebrated. The ways of celebration, the legends and folklore of the season, will vary. They have, however, much in common. The gifts, the foods, the carols, the sources of religious ceremonies, differ only in detail. Everywhere there is some form of giving, feasting and special Christmas

[†] Published first in *The Vintage Newsmagazine*, December 2003.

music. For at least this one day, peace and goodwill prevail among Christians everywhere.

On Christmas Eve, the City of Tulsa will be filled with beautiful Christmas music coming from many different churches and from television. You may hear choruses from Handel's *Messiah*, various Christmas cantatas, and many beautiful and joyous carols. If you do not have a favorite place to go on Christmas Eve, I would like to suggest to you my own church, which is the First Presbyterian in downtown Tulsa. Ron Pearson, organist/choirmaster, and his wonderful choir will provide a memorable Christmas Eve of traditional Christmas music. The service begins at eleven o'clock in the evening.

I would like to leave you with a few lines from one of my favorite carols; it is one of the traditional French carols from the nineteenth century:

*Angels we have heard on high,
Sweetly singing o'er the plains,
And the mountains in reply
Echoing their joyous strains.
Gloria in Excelsis Deo!
Gloria in Excelsis Deo*

OUR PRICELESS MEMORIES[†]

I couldn't understand, as a small boy, why my mother and my grandmother kept a box of old pictures and letters. The pictures were funny, too, with women wearing skirts that were really long, with high-button shoes. The men had beards, moustaches, and funny-looking hats. My mother always handled the pictures and letters with tenderness, as if they stirred something inside her to deep feeling.

I understand this now, because I have many memories myself in scrapbooks, boxes, and most of all in my mind. As I write this, it comes at a time in my own life when I am experiencing what is known as the "downsizing syndrome." I will be leaving my home of thirty-five years to take an apartment at Inverness Village here in Tulsa.

Inverness Village is a beautiful retirement community and I am looking forward to this transition. However, I still feel certain pangs of nostalgia. I have begun this downsizing process by giving many of my books to my voice students, and that part has been fun for me. We all have a mental attic full of people, places, events, and happy hours that are not important to anyone but ourselves; but to us, they are part of the fabric of our life. These memories have been woven into a part of the structure of our lives and we can't live without them.

As we travel back along the corridors of time we remember some of our teachers who shared with us their wisdom, and tried with patience (most of the time) to fashion our minds for thinking. Our memories are a resource for living today. Now and then they come alive and, with our eyes shut, we see old friends, long gone. I remember past students that I cherish, and other people who gave so much of themselves to help make me enjoy and experience the things that are so meaningful to me today.

There are other kinds of memories that we accumulate. Some of us, however, by force of circumstance or by deliberate choice, begin early in life to collect beautiful memories of sunsets, windswept plains, talking brooks, spring blossoms, autumn red-leafed maple trees, and the infinite sky. After the first ecstasy of discovery, these things gradually become the indispensable things of our lives. Oh, how I cherish the memory of some concerts, certain opera performances, the many beautiful voices both on a local level and those singers of international fame!!

Every spring these joys are reborn in us, and every autumn they return to us with the first sight of a red-leafed maple tree. Life is too good to waste. The older one grows the more one wants another bite of it – life, that is – another burst of laughter, another bit of learning and another view of beauty.

Here comes February again. Just imagine a pretty little girl with a red bow in her hair, with her first valentine in her hand. Don't you just love the memory of passing out those

[†] Published first in *The Vintage Newsmagazine*, February 2004.

Valentine cards in the second grade? February can't be taken too seriously for a long time. It starts with Ground-hog Day and ends, often as not, in a flurry of snow and sleet. February is the tag-end of winter, we hope. But in our hearts we know it isn't spring, not by several weeks and at least a dozen or so degrees. For me, the best part of February is Valentine's Day. Why not send someone a valentine this year?

DEMOCRACY AND THE NATURAL ORDER[†]

It seems to me that the universe is purposeful as the gradual evolution of man and his natural environment evolve. This implies the existence of God and/or a Central Force conscious of itself and its creation. It also suggests that man should seek to collaborate with nature rather than to dominate it.

When we think that man's conscious efforts to transcend himself are recorded for only five thousand years, this period represents but a small amount of time in comparison with the millions of years of instinctive striving toward the humanization of mankind which preceded it. If we see man's recorded history compared to this long primitive background, it seems obvious to me that we have only just begun to explore the latent capacities of human nature, and that it is man's highest duty to replace his deeply embedded heritage of fear and superstition. I must admit that the German poet G. E. Lessing seems to have it right when he says man's worth lies "not in the truth he possesses or that he believes he possesses, but in his sincere effort to win the truth."

This is the reason why liberty is man's greatest need, for without it he cannot freely pursue the truth and fulfill his moral imperative to grow in mental, emotional, and spiritual stature. Democracy is the highest form of government because it works with great zeal to establish a human society in which freedom can prevail, and encourages all its citizens to self-enhancement and the pursuit of truth.

The effects of disorderly societies are vividly illustrated in our world today. Order makes possible the highest human relationships which promotes man's opportunities for education. Disorder keeps people apart, creates antagonisms, and prevents the interchange of ideas so essential to human progress.

I think it is our duty to help establish an orderly society as the basis of security, free communication, and the sense of brotherhood without which democracy is meaningless. The orderly government will become the world over a means to freedom, to love and compassion, to international friendly and peaceful relations, and to the unrestrained pursuit of man's destiny here on earth. Then democracy will prove indestructible as long as it keeps the music of men's lives in harmony with the music of the spheres!!

[†] Published first in *The Vintage Newsmagazine*, March 2004.

MAKING OUR TIME BEAUTIFUL[†]

As the years go by, they leave their deposit of experiences in our minds, and in our memories, and in our bodies. I think many people find the greatest difficulty left by time is the adjustment to the time process and the ability to achieve happiness at each of the several stages in our lives.

Some people remain in their teen-age state for years and never really pass into the advancing maturity. To be happy at each stage one must accept the fact of change and make out of the particular period through which he/she is passing something very beautiful and effective. I believe each stage of life has something peculiar to itself in possibility and achievement. On the tree of life, each stage has its own fruit and has something distinctive in beauty and possibility. Maybe the secret for growing older gracefully is retaining your ability to create. There are so many ways to be creative!!

I'm not ashamed to be growing older. To me, it is sad when an older person resents growing older. For me, age is only bothersome when you stop to coddle it, or try to ignore it.

I've always been exhilarated by teaching, and I continue to teach privately to this day. I am often asked how I teach. One cannot generalize unless you teach everyone the same way. I try to understand the students, and try to improve their understanding of music and their singing technique. It is different with each pupil and you cannot compare the development of one with the other. In private lessons one can discuss the meaning of the music and how it relates to life. For me, life is moving in such a way that each hour brings something different.

I am so lucky in my personal life. I am doing what I have always wanted to do to the utmost of my ability, and always looking forward to the challenge of teaching. The art of music, I feel, is crucial to our automated age. It serves to illuminate and to counteract the push-button emptiness of our mechanized life.

My aim is to be as natural at my age now, as when I was twenty. I want to be honest about it: I believe that anyone would rather be young. However, we must all accept things as they are. Using an old expression – advanced age, if there is such a thing, isn't so bad when you consider the alternative. I'll quote a few lines from Mana-Zucca's famous old song: "I love life, for I want to live to drink of life's fullness, take all it can give. I love life, every moment must count, to glory in its sunshine and revel in its fount."

For several weeks now, I have been happily ensconced in my new apartment at Inverness Village. There is a high level of camaraderie and the food is excellent!! I would like to leave you this time with a wonderful thought from Ralph Waldo Emerson: "The sky is the daily bread of the eyes."

[†] Published first in *The Vintage Newsmagazine*, May 2004.

WHAT MAKES MUSIC *REALLY* GOOD?[†]

What is good music? What a fascinating question, not so much for the number of provocative possibilities it suggests as for the challenge it poses to one trying to bring these possibilities into a single unified answer. It has been said that “good” music must be timeless, with its virtues apparent to the listeners; also, that it must have the nobility that only “great” music is supposed to have. (Ain’t necessarily so!)

There is only some truth in all these assertions. Many works that were ill-received at their premiere performance have become compositions in the roster of masterworks today. Also, some compositions of our greatest composers were heard once or twice and never again, probably for good reason.

Though seriousness is no detriment to any creative work, we would be foolish to discard many treasures in the lighter vein (music that has gaiety and humor). Music which may fall deaf on our ears at one point in our lives can reach up with enormous impact at another period in our lifetime, and inspire us.

Having lived with music as a constant companion for most of my life, I have a certain reluctance to confine the meaning of good music within the narrow bounds of a rigid definition. To those who have found hearing music one of life’s great pleasures, I would say: Don’t be afraid to like or dislike music on the basis of your own reaction to it! Your opinions are just as valid for you as those of the authorities and critics. After all, their opinions are merely formal statements of their own listening experiences. Often these individuals have widely differing opinions.

Many people believe that Bach’s or Vivaldi’s music would be better if played on old instruments – the instruments of that age – and insist that the keyboard music of that period should be plucked out on the harpsichord for which it was written. Some of the string instruments of that day would barely stay in tune to finish a single movement of a sonata.

I do not share this attitude. I believe that today we have much improved string instruments, and the modern piano. There is no reason we shouldn’t use them to bring out the beauties that were sometimes dormant in the music written long ago. I feel certain the great composers of the past would approve the playing of their music on modern instruments. However, those who prefer to play or listen to Bach’s music as it was performed in his time have a valid viewpoint that is not without academic interest.

Nadia Boulanger, one of my teachers, was always quick to say that “good music is made and great music is *given*.” This sounds so simple, yet I think it is so profound. For instance, how do you explain the genius of Mozart? Here is an example of music which was definitely “given”!!

[†] Published first in *The Vintage Newsmagazine*, June 2004.

Music is music, and what we enjoy should have nothing to do with certain labels that are currently fashionable. For me, the most important thing about any composition – be it song, opera, or symphony – is whether it has the power to move me emotionally, and sticks in my subconscious. I cannot simply admire a piece of music; I must also *feel* it.

I believe that a piece of music should be the product of a mind disciplined through training in all areas of composition. However, I believe that the structure or the technique of the piece should not ever be allowed to be the most important element. For me, it is a priority to have the feeling of humanity in every work.

Somehow, I believe that the singing in the early hours of the morning of beautiful birds has much to do with providing inspiration for the day. Also listening with great interest to the beautiful singing of the birds is Cleo (my cat), and I wonder just what kind of thoughts she is having? (Maybe murder!?) Closeness to nature seems to give us strength and inspiration to re-create as best we can the heavenly works of music. Someone a lot smarter than I am once said: “Music is almost all we have of Heaven on Earth.”

ABOUT THOSE LOVE SONGS ...[†]

I never cease to be amazed at the variety of emotions that can be expressed through certain love songs. The basic ingredients of a great love song are the melody, meaningful rhythms, and – not to be forgotten – great lyrics. One type of song describes a girl as being “Younger Than Springtime.” Another serenades her “With A Song In My Heart.” And a girl may be “Bewitched, Bothered, and Bewildered” about love. Also some songs reveal sincere love with a firm denial, such as “This Can’t Be Love,” or musings about what would happen “If I Loved You.”

When Oscar Hammerstein wrote about love and nature, nothing was more important to him than expressing exactly how he felt about it. He loved the sight and smell and feel of nature. One gets the idea that he just had to share it with everyone. Remember “Oh, What a Beautiful Mornin’” (a great example)?

Most people think of a love song as always being written in a slow tempo, and many love songs are slow ballads. However, many songs of love reveal opportunities to use a variety of musical forms to express the many faces of love. Some even have rather frantic rhythms to match the frantic themes. How about “puppy love” and that adolescent love with a deep need to love and to be loved? A wonderful example of this would be the song from the movie “State Fair,” where Jeanne Crain sang “It Might as Well Be Spring.”

The phenomenon of a person convinced that he has known and loved someone before, even though they are meeting for the first time, is the theme of that beautiful song “Where or When.” These words were written by Lorenz Hart. Hart’s lyrics are continually probing all sorts of physiological, psychological, and philosophical aspects of love, and coupled with the incomparable musical writing of Richard Rogers, we have some of our very best love songs.

The generation that emerged during and after World War II raised the performance of the popular love song to the level of an art form. Remember some of those gifted singers like Frank Sinatra, Dick Haymes, Jo Stafford, and Sarah Vaughan? We are lucky today to have Tony Bennett and Barbra Streisand still turning out exciting renditions of many old standards. These performers come off as fully conscious artists, dedicated to their work. Those wonderful American love songs that seemed to promise an endless courtship with happiness and hope offered a kind of innocence that became passé in the raunchy age of Elvis Presley’s hip maneuvering, and then the love song began to change.

Among today’s fine composers of pop music is Stephen Sondheim, probably the most talented composer and lyricist at work today. He is clever with the use of our language. He is the best lyricist in the long tradition of American musical theater, along with Ira Gershwin, Lorenz Hart, Cole Porter – these shared a fondness for word-play, for brilliant turns of phrase, and Sondheim is clearly heir to their great talents. Sondheim has the

[†] Published first in *The Vintage Newsmagazine*, July 2004.

extraordinary ability to create a dramatic scene within a song. His songs tend to become musical speech. An example of this musical speech would be the popular ballad “Send In the Clowns.”

I think that love songs – of all themes and tempos – do something to dispel the conflicts and the tensions that are so much a part of our daily lives. My hope is that we will have a renaissance of beautiful melodies and intelligible lyrics that cater to our sense of beauty and sensuality.

LETTING GO ...[†]

I know that it is the height of summer and at this time of the year August seems to drone on and on lazily with a sense of deliberate ease. Acknowledging all of this, I would like to take this opportunity to mention Christmas.

I hope that you did not take Christmas up to the attic and put it away with the cartons of ornaments. Keep it with you all year long – the outgoingness, the giving, the loving impulse – these qualities are fundamental in “letting go.” The greatest gifts are love and understanding, and these are gifts which endure from December to December. Nothing you can buy in any shop in the world can ever match them in beauty and value.

It seems to me that, although people are all different from each other, there is another difference. I think this great difference is whether people are generous-hearted or not. This plays out whether they’ll take risks and be generous in ideas, in love, in defending their friends if they are attacked. Some people, although they seem very pleasant, are mean and greedy and they won’t have a generous view about anything. They really want to assert their power. They want to be safe and rich, and I think this is one of the real differences in human beings.

I have lived long enough to observe that it’s the generous-hearted who attack life with an indomitable spirit. These are the people who support the arts in our community, and other worthy projects. Many people spend their entire lives seeking security through their attachments. Attachments are usually possessions, and these things rarely bring either security or happiness. These people believe their problem is that they need more and more possessions.

Paradoxically, I find that my own happiness comes from surrendering to curiosity, acceptance, and even uncertainty. (Of course, all of this with good common sense and reason. Let’s not just get nutty!) I believe that this state of flexibility, in which you are able to embrace the unknown and detach from a particular outcome, makes you feel younger. I think it was J. C. Penney who said: “It pays to be unselfish, from a selfish point of view.” This certainly worked for him in the area of merchandising.

One more thing: forgiveness is the essence of letting go. It means clearing out resentments that cause you to be miserable at times. These emotional wounds only make you feel older and spent. Forgive and forget, and you will feel younger!!

[†] Published first in *The Vintage Newsmagazine*, August 2004.

HAPPINESS IS ...[†]

Happiness is a shifting, changing thing. Its pursuit requires a lifetime and you can never be sure you have grasped it. As you think you hold it, it slips away through your fingers, lost in time and in change.

Almost everything changes constantly. What we think today may not be what we think or believe five years from now, or we may not believe it with the same intensity of conviction. Experience and time alter us. Yet some things never change – some deep and private things such as religion and things which are yours alone.

Music, my profession, demands a sense of responsibility just as much in its own way as do the professions of law and medicine. Often people express surprise at the fact that I love what I do and it seems to be so fulfilling. I go on being a teacher of music because music is one of the world's greatest treasures. Music eases pain, tension, anger, and hate. Music helps us to forget our differences, and music is truly the universal language.

We each find happiness in different ways, sometimes unexpectedly in the midst of a trying day or a troublesome period, as perhaps when a stranger does you an unsolicited kindness. Sometimes it can be found most readily when you are alone and allow yourself the luxury of undirected thoughts, quiet thoughts, or perhaps listening to one of your favorite recordings of music.

As a music teacher, I am intensely proud of my profession. I get a great sense of pleasure and satisfaction from it. If my teaching were ever denied me, I really don't know just which way I would turn. Even worse, I don't think I'd know who I was. It brings me much happiness to work with a sincere and talented student. But happiness? How can anyone measure it? I doubt if there is anyone who is continuously happy. Maybe we all need a little sorrow and grief to gain a certain balance as a person.

I believe the secret of happiness is our work – either with the hands or the mind – and I believe that work is the only safe and sure ground for happiness. Human relationships can fall apart. However, when your work (job) falls apart, there is an enormous amount of confusion and unhappiness. The moment we have something to do with work (accomplishment) the world seems a lighter and brighter place.

I am grateful to a wise former teacher for reminding me that to collect happy memories as one walks one's road is to have something which remains forever. Remembering is like furnishing a picture gallery in which one may walk at any time. You don't need a safe or bank vault, and you need not carry insurance. This is your very own and it will last your lifetime.

Since music is my "thing," I'll leave you this time with this little suggestion: When you come to the end of a busy day, and you feel as though you've used up the last ounce

[†] Published first in *The Vintage Newsmagazine*, September 2004.

of energy you ever possessed, try a bit of music for refreshment and see how quickly cares and worries melt away. Your mind clears as if by magic; your whole being is invigorated with a certain euphoria (happiness). So next time when you come home dog-tired and out of sorts, try a dose of music!!

The Greek philosopher Plato says that “music is a tonic which accomplishes for the mind what the gymnasium does for the body.”

THE IMPULSE TO MAKE MUSIC[†]

With the ringing of school bells and the smell of Autumn in the air, I feel a bit like the proverbial workhorse heading toward the barn. As a former high school teacher and university professor, I know how exciting the beginning of the school year can be. I have not forgotten the heart-clutching feeling of meeting with my classes for the first time. The feeling of expectation is high and the serious music student knows the fascination of the difficult music, and knows there are results that can be achieved no other way except through a kind of dedication most people seldom know.

The impulse to make music is truly a *need* to make music – it is a fundamental condition of humankind. Our earliest ancestors made music with articles of bone, branches, reeds, stones and clay. They sang and played to express love, to mourn and to express pride. Music speaks of the human experience across boundaries of society, race and class.

The social and economic structures supporting serious music certainly will change in our time, as they always have changed. What Beethoven knew of concert life is entirely unlike what we know today. We can't expect circumstances to remain the same. Some things succeed more, some less. Students who make music with everything they've got emotionally, physically, intellectually, spiritually, will find a way to make it live and to live in it. What we can say with assurance is that serious music has endured through many changes of fortune and social meaning, because it has an enduring importance.

The summer mail has brought many beautiful brochures and performance schedules from our community's arts organizations, each promising a season of rich opportunities. It all looks wonderful! My advice is to attend as many events this season as it is right for you. Why not take a chance on something? It could be a really good opportunity to renew your frame of reference. The impulse to listen to music is extremely important. The impulse to make music and to listen to music walk side by side.

Since there have seldom been enough people in any community who are both able and willing to pay the admission prices necessary to support our arts organizations, some form of patronage is necessary – so attend and support our arts! Dramatic impulses are found in our choral concerts, orchestral concerts, opera performances and ballet performances. All aim to enrich and embellish our civilized way of life.

Recently, while reading for fun, I ran across a little paragraph that one of America's most successful businessmen had written about music. Here it is:

For a well-rounded life, one must have music. Furthermore, it offers the best way of using time. As leisure increases through shortening work hours, the use of music becomes more and

[†] Published first in *The Vintage Newsmagazine*, October 2004.

more necessary. There are no drawbacks to music. You can't have too much of it. There are no residual bad effects like overindulgence in other things.

— George Eastman, Eastman Kodak Company

TEN SIMPLE IDEAS FOR ENJOYING LIFE[†]

What do happy people do differently from unhappy people? Probably, the best observations appear in academic journals. However, you would find them written in scientific gobbledygook, not understandable in everyday English. There are many more ideas and suggestions for happy living than the ten I will be discussing in this little essay. These are just simple ideas (old bromides) that mean a lot to me. I wish I could report to you that I am a shining example of these ideas. The truth is: I work at these ideas trying to produce positive results daily. I will not present these ideas to you in any order of importance because I believe they are *all* important.

One: Enjoy ordinary things. We do countless things on the average days that can be labeled as chores or can be relabeled as enjoyable. Walking your dog is something that has to be done, but while you are walking the dog you get exercise and some time to think and a chance to see the neighborhood. Writing this makes me think that I should have a dog to get more exercise; however, I wouldn't trade Cleo (my cat) in for anything. I believe that a great life is not one of extremes but one of steady positive ordinary experiences. An occasional extraordinary experience is good, too.

Two: Be open to new ideas. Never stop learning and adapting. The world will always be changing. If you limit yourself to what you knew and what you were comfortable with earlier in your life, you will grow increasingly frustrated as you age. Think: what if you were not receptive one day, and that was the day your entire life might have changed?! Principles are valuable and should be cherished, but there is a difference between principle and stubborn practice.

Three: Laugh often. Don't spend your time evaluating humor and asking yourself, "Is it really funny?" Just react and enjoy it. Something that shakes us out of our routine helps to increase creativity. Those who enjoy silly humor are more likely to be happy.

Four: Accept yourself. You are not just the size of your bank account or the type of work you do. You are, just like everyone else, an almost inconceivably complicated mix of abilities and limitations. Instead of dwelling on the negative, try to acknowledge that, faults and all, you are a complete person. Accepting yourself does not mean that you should ignore your faults and never try to improve them.

Five: Love your pet. Animals have so much to teach us about love. The closer we get to animals, the more joy they give us. Pets offer unconditional love and that love energizes us. Interaction with animals supplies us with long-term positive feelings.

Six: Get a good night's sleep. This is a difficult one for me because I'm a night owl and I don't always sleep soundly. However, I do believe it is important to get a full night's rest. Rest is fuel for the following day. Rested people work better and are more

[†] Published first in *The Vintage Newsmagazine*, November 2004.

comfortable when the day is over. Don't skimp on sleep. Exercise is very important for good sleep, and this point tends to elude me. I promise to work on it; physical activity has many benefits! I wish I could tell you that I work out daily, but —

Seven: Eat some fruit every day. Fruit eaters feel good about what they eat and are less interested in eating junk food. This is a fact that I have learned later in life. There are physical benefits and emotional benefits, too. We all have an urge for sweets and in modern times, when sugary sweets have become available to us at every turn, our taste for sweets has begun to have negative consequences.

Eight: Does your life have purpose? I believe that we are all connected and we are affected by the decisions and even the existence of those around us. Studies of older Americans find that one of the best predictors of happiness is whether a person considers his or her life to have purpose.

Nine: Don't be a stereotype. Men who believe they must act “tough” and women who believe they must act “weak” are boxed into a set of expectations that have nothing to do with who they really are. These are the harmful stereotypes. Men have been taught to be “tough,” not to reveal their emotions. Women have been taught to be more open, more expressive. It is important to remember, though, that not all of us fit those expectations. Our generalizations about men and women are often false, and too often damaging.

Ten: Listen to good music. I have written about music so many times in my writing to you, so I know you know how important I believe music is in one's life. Music communicates to us on many different levels, and our favorite music tends to transport our mind to its favorite place. Music excites our mind, whether we are one, forty-one, or a hundred and one!

CHRISTMAS MEMORIES[†]

As a youngster, my favorite night was Christmas Eve. In some vague way I knew it was magic, the night for which one lived all year. Christmas Eve was a night that drew a circle around the members of your family and others, to hem them in and fasten them together. It was also a night of Christmas carols that wrapped the music of the carols around you like a warm shawl. But it warmed more than your body. It warmed your heart and filled it, too, with melodies that would last forever. Even when you grew up, you found that you could never quite bring back the magical feeling of this night, but the melodies and words of the Christmas carols would stay in your heart and memory always.

One of my favorite memories of Christmas Eve as an adult occurred during the time when I was Choirmaster for Tulsa's First Presbyterian Church. Every Christmas Eve at the eleven o'clock service, the lights would be lowered and, in the beauty of candlelight, Dr. William J. Wiseman, the Senior Minister at that time, would lead a filled-to-capacity church in two or three old traditional carols. This, I thought, was a dynamic way to bring everyone together in a warm and united way – and there was definitely Christmas magic in the air! This created the most intimate, loving, and warm feeling of compassion to last almost until the next Christmas Eve. The Church continues to have this eleven o'clock service every Christmas Eve.

Perhaps you have had this experience. Several years ago I read a story in a magazine that I liked very much, so I tore a few paragraphs out and stuck them in a book. Now, many years later, I would like to pass this beautiful and touching little cameo story on to you. Here it is:

At the close of World War II an American soldier was concluding sentry duty on Christmas morning at his post outside the city of London. It had been his custom in other years to attend worship in his home church on Christmas Day, but here in the outlying areas of London this privilege was not possible. And so with some of his buddies he walked down the crooked cobblestone road that led into the city, just as the fog was lifting and the sun was beginning to crimson the Eastern horizon.

Soon the soldiers came to an old gray stone building, over whose door was the caption, "Queen Anne's Orphanage." They decided to knock on the door to see what kind of celebration was taking place inside. A matron responded and explained that the orphans in the residence were war orphans whose parents had been killed in the bombings of London.

With the explanation ringing in their ears, the soldiers went inside just as the children were tumbling out of their bunks. There was no Christmas tree in the corner and no gifts, but the soldiers moved about the room, giving as gifts to the children whatever they

[†] Published first in *The Vintage Newsmagazine*, December 2004.

happened to have in their pockets – a piece of ribbon, a stick of gum, stubby pencils. The American soldier saw one little fellow standing alone in the corner. He looked very much like his nephew back home, so approaching the lad he asked this question, “And you, my little man, what do you want?” The boy turned his little face up to that of the soldier and replied, “Please, sir, I want to be loved.”

Happy Holidays, dear friends!!

LOOKING FORWARD TO NEXT YEAR[†]

The first half of the nineteenth century, says the great historian Will Durant, was one of the saddest periods in human history. People were looking backward rather than forward. There was no vision of the future with its possibilities. It was a despondent generation, looking to the past with regret. One can find this feeling in the dark writing of Keats, Shelley, Byron, and Pushkin.

There was a bit of wisdom in the story of Lot's wife, who could not resist a backward look as she fled from Sodom. She was changed into a pillar of salt. The popular mythological story of Orpheus leading Eurydice out of Hades also makes a point about looking back. When Orpheus looked backward, she disappeared before his eyes. Both the story of Lot's wife and the story of Orpheus suggest that if we cannot let go of the past we cannot grasp the future. If one is trapped by yesterday, one cannot grasp the possibilities of tomorrow.

Many sad things happen in our world, but rather than focusing on them, have hope for the future. It's exciting to think of the world's potential. Perhaps the future holds cures for many diseases, the end of violence, solutions for poverty and hunger. I think that older people are as happy as younger people; and while they must make accommodations for age, seniors also often have serene satisfaction with their lives and a curious interest in the future.

My sense of the future is stimulated by some of my friends here at Inverness. For example, occasionally I dine with Charles "Chuck" Klein, who is ninety-two years old. He says he faces the mirror every day to declare that today is going to be a great day. As far as I can tell, he is right on target! Everyone enjoys his cheerful nature and his wisdom. Another wonderful friend is the popular Dr. Robert Shepard, who practices the piano for two hours a day and then goes for a vigorous swim. Now, Bob is only eighty-five years old and doesn't miss a beat. His wife, Eleanor, who incidentally drinks only chicory coffee, is a dear, too. Relationships like these are meaningful factors in maintaining happiness for one of any age. Also, you can see that I have impressive role models here at Inverness Village. I'm grateful to my sagacious friends for sharing time with me!

There are times when looking back for a few moments can bring a warm feeling inside, and reminiscing with friends recalling happiness of the past has the powerful ability to bring us happiness in the present. Life, as always, is being reborn and revived. So you see, nostalgia, or looking back, is not always a blighted activity. However, don't get stuck there, and let's not give in to a satisfied sense of complacency.

I've never had any luck with New Year's resolutions. However, I'm extremely dedicated to the idea of positive thoughts for the future. I think that it is important to build your hopes around the things that are meaningful to you, and allow yourself to

[†] Published first in *The Vintage Newsmagazine*, January 2005.

benefit from the different things that contribute to your life, rather than allowing yourself to be devastated by a single bump in the road or a fall flat on your face in a public place.

Bernard Baruch, financial and elder statesman, who was advisor to seven Presidents of the United States, had this to say about the future: “I have known, as who has not, personal disappointments and despair. But always the thought of tomorrow has buoyed me up. I have looked to the future all my life, I still do. I still believe that with courage and intelligence we can make the future bright with fulfillment.”

MUSIC IS MY ANCHOR![†]

I believe in music: its spirituality, its ability to exalt, its humor, its power to penetrate to the basic fineness of every human being. I suppose you could say that I am a fanatic music lover. I can't seem to live one day without hearing music, playing it, studying it, or thinking about it, and all this is quite apart from my professional role as a musician.

I am a fan of certain popular music, too. Pop music is an area where there is to be found unabashed vitality, and fun of invention and the feeling of fresh air.

The greatest enemy of man, I believe, is fear. Not fear in battle, but the fear of moral and ethical issues of day-to-day life. Much of this fear is provided by man's unconscious mind, the deep spring from which comes his power to communicate and to love. For me, all art is a combination of these two – communication and love – so music can extend these ideas, magnifying them and carrying them to vastly larger numbers of people. Therefore, music is valid for the warmth and love it carries within it, whether it be a popular tune sung by Tony Bennett, or a brilliant symphony by Brahms, or a fantastic performance of opera.

I have a faith in the power of music to bring something beautiful and spiritual into the lives of people. Beautiful and spiritual things must be sought if they are to reveal themselves. In music this means participation. For example: can you imagine what Christmas would be like if music were totally absent? What would the glorious words of the Christmas story from St Matthew and St Luke be like without the great music of Handel's *Messiah* to enhance their meaning? There is an enormous body of wonderful Christmas music. However, I must admit that some of the commercial Christmas music makes me rush to press the MUTE button on the TV remote control.

There is a great heritage of religious choral music which has a real spiritual impact upon the participant, particularly at Christmas time. Performing here at Inverness Village this Christmas season was a remarkable group of young singers called the The Tulsa Youth Chorale. They sang with poise, good tone quality, and good diction. Much credit goes to their talented director, Ginny LeDoux.

Music has meant much to me during my life. Again and again it has refreshed me when I was dog-tired, and taken me out of myself and away from the problems of daily life. Speaking broadly, and knowing people as I do, I cannot help feeling that the average person would be benefited more than he dreams if he exposed himself to music.

There is a quotation by the German poet Goethe that I have always considered one of my favorites, so I would like to leave you this time with these beautiful thoughts. Here it is:

[†] Published first in *The Vintage Newsmagazine*, February 2005.

A man should hear a little music, read a little poetry, and see a fine picture every day of his life, in order that worldly cares may not obliterate the sense of the beautiful which God has implanted in the human soul.

SOME STRANGE BEHAVIOR . . .[†]

Everyone knows that I am not a great fan of certain athletic events. However, if one watches the television at all, one is bound to encounter the brawling and the fighting on the sports field as well as in the bleachers. I suppose it would be the understatement of the year to ask: “Whatever happened to sportsmanship?” Now some of these fellows are receiving salaries into the millions of dollars, and seem to find hero status among certain human beings.

Since we can’t seem to find the money to fund the Tulsa Philharmonic, would some of this behavior (if we were to fantasize) help to bring attention to the great music of the great composers? (I repeat: this is only a fantasy.)

What if, when someone in the audience coughs, sneezes, or the cell phones ring, just throw a chair at them? Perhaps, if the orchestra is not playing up to snuff, the audience could throw their programs and/or Coke bottles at the orchestra. Maybe when the conductor gets sassy in rehearsal, the orchestra members could get up and pound on him. Would this help ticket sales? Who knows, in today’s world. Athletes sometimes use drugs to enhance their performance, and I’m not even going to suggest what an audience of music lovers would do on drugs. Maybe the fan/athlete relationship is inherently hypocritical, since fans want sports heroes to be more admirable than the rest of us.

To be perfectly honest with you, I must tell you about a premiere performance of music in 1913 that produced some strange behavior. Igor Stravinsky had written *The Rite of Spring* for the Ballet Russe in Paris, and very soon after the rise of the curtain the audience began to whistle and make catcalls. Part of the audience considered the music to be blasphemous, an attempt to destroy music as an art form. Some ladies were slapping the faces of men who were hissing, and some were spitting on others. So you see, it could happen in music and even in Paris. However, I must also point out that this is the only event of this nature that comes to my mind in the history of music. Incidentally, today *The Rite of Spring* is considered one of the masterpieces of Twentieth-Century music.

Our performance enhancement of society doesn’t stop here. Just turn on the television and you will see women with breast implants and aging sportscasters with hairpieces. The elderly can augment their sex lives beyond what God and their grandchildren ever imagined thanks to modern chemistry and increased longevity. Adults are taking Ritalin these days to sharpen their brain power. There are Hollywood celebrities who get plastic surgery to extend their careers, and businessmen who get nipped and tucked to win promotions. Perhaps the power to transform ourselves is a good thing for some. I’m not sure.

When one turns on the television today, man’s inhumanity to man is all over the screen. There are wars, catastrophes of nature, and these gentlemen of the athletic teams

[†] Published first in *The Vintage Newsmagazine*, March 2005.

are screaming at each other and fighting in the locker room. It certainly seems to me that what the world needs is more love and more music!! My, oh my – where is the Tulsa Philharmonic when we need them? And where are our priorities?

APRIL IS MIRACULOUS![†]

April is still in its first week, but the silence is ended until November's frost again bites us deep. The sounds of life, life resurrected, have begun and their total effect will soon be more prominent than the winds of March. Although one must not overlook the beautiful brave daffodils in March, I always thank God that I survived January and February. These two months are problem children that definitely try the patience.

April promises us the countless, ubiquitous brown twig-tip buds that will bloom and reveal beauty. Man's most astonishing machine could not pack so much into so small a space. Who would believe the beauty of these blossoms? After these blossoms, sometimes we get a delicious fruit and always a beautiful green leaf that turns a radiant color in the autumn. Wow!! What a burst of glory contained in that little bud. As always, life is being reborn and being revived. Much of it is of a joyful nature and all of it is an expression of living. This is a fact of spring and happens every year. The silence ends and life sings its own songs.

April also brings us the birds. They haven't been entirely silent, but they had little conversation and few songs during the cold months. First, we have the robins and then the blackbirds, chickadees, and even the sparrows seem to remember last summer's songs. There is still no full chorus, but there is a tuning up, a beginning, a celebration of life and new beginnings. With April, the world seems right again, beautiful as it ought to be. What is more, the thrill of beautiful music seems to be even more appealing and more spectacular.

I have a hot tip for you, passed on to me by a friend. There is a new program on PBS Channel 11 every Sunday evening at 9:30 entitled "Concerto" which features wonderful new talent. Recently I heard the young Russian pianist Alexey Koltakov play the Beethoven *Piano Concerto #2*. This young artist plays with conviction and sensitivity; the total effect was sensational. This same pianist was a major part of the Hyechka Club's recent centennial celebration. The Hyechka Club deserves many accolades for the important things they have done for music through the years in our community. They have a long, impressive musical history as Oklahoma's oldest music club.

Recently, a significant member of our Tulsa music community departed this life. James "Jimmie" Saied, the founder of Saied Music Company, died at age 89. I know of no musician in Tulsa who did not admire Mr. Saied. Tulsa musicians have for decades looked to Mr. Saied with unaccustomed confidence and warmth. He was an excellent band director and a highly successful businessman. When I first came to Tulsa as a young choral director at Edison High School, Mr. Saied was a best friend, giving me advice in several areas, and I have always been grateful to him for his extraordinary wisdom,

[†] Published first in *The Vintage Newsmagazine*, April 2005.

insight, and encouragement. We all join, musicians and music lovers of whatever tastes or persuasions, in homage to our departed musical friend.

A SALUTE TO TEACHERS[†]

We don't always realize how important teachers are, in music or in anything else. Teaching is probably the noblest profession in the world – the unselfish, difficult, and honorable profession. It is also the most unappreciated, underrated, underpaid, and underpraised profession in the world.

The best way I can think of for me to pay tribute to the teaching profession is to pay tribute to two of my own teachers, both Oklahomans. I grew up in Oklahoma City and my first teacher of real importance was a man whose name was Clark Snell. He was one of the strongest influences in my life, teaching me great vocal repertoire and also teaching me the important values of being a worthwhile human being.

You see, teaching is not just a dry business of facts and exercises (although these are important); a great teacher is one who can light a spark in you. This spark can set you on fire with enthusiasm for music or for whatever you happen to be studying. For instance, you can study the history of the Civil War until you are blue in the face, memorizing battles and generals and dates and places; but if you don't care about the Civil War you'll wind up not knowing a thing about it.

My Voice Professor at the University of Oklahoma was Joseph Benton. He was Oklahoma's first opera celebrity, having sung at the Metropolitan Opera and the Chicago Opera in the 1930s. Anyone who ever had the good fortune to study with Mr. Benton could never forget the deep understanding of music he was able to communicate, or the deep belly-laughter that went with our voice lessons. He was certainly one of the wittiest minds I have ever known. Also, he was a marvelous tenor and an inspired teacher.

You know, every grown-up can look back and remember two or three of his teachers with special affection. But the moment he thinks about it more deeply he is bound to realize that there are many more who have had a real lasting influence on his life. I remember fondly several teachers at Eugene Field Elementary School in Oklahoma City – unmarried ladies who seemed to have a profound sense of dedication to their students and subject material. I have the distinct feeling that their students were the children they never had. I believe that these teachers really cared if you learned their lessons.

I have mentioned only the teachers with whom I have studied in Oklahoma, and there are others but not enough space for all of them today. If you have been lucky enough to have had a teacher who makes history, English, math, or (in my case) music a part of your life, then you can drink in gallons of dates, names, and places and never forget them because you learned them out of enthusiasm!! Let's face it: if teachers do not love people, and if they do not love their area of expertise, the chances for them to become outstanding teachers are slim to none. The longer I live and the more I write these little

[†] Published first in *The Vintage Newsmagazine*, May 2005.

essays, the more I realize that the most important ingredient in life is love!! I have come to believe that it's all about LOVE!

A teacher affects eternity: he can never tell where his influence stops. – Henry Adams, grandson of John Quincy Adams

It is the supreme art of the teacher to awaken joy in creative expression and knowledge. – Albert Einstein

CELEBRATING THE AMERICAN POP SONG[†]

Every so often, I hear recordings of pop artists of yesteryear, and I'm absolutely knocked out by the glowing sophistication of the music and the lyrics. The lyrics were actually beautiful little poems which communicated love, unrequited love, sadness, and with such elegance that the American popular song is elevated to the level of an art song. These days most of the great songs are consigned to the narrow stratum of the cabaret. However, these tunes were playing on the jukeboxes and whirling around in the heads of the American people in the Thirties and Forties. Although these enchanting songs could be considered unconventional standards today, there are still some pop artists who keep these songs marvelously vital.

Just recently, Bobby Short, who played the piano and sang at the Café Carlisle on the Upper East Side of Manhattan for many years playing his high-society gig, died at the age of eighty. No one was more elegant in a dinner jacket with his carefree sophisticated style, singing Cole Porter. His unsurpassable grace and giant musicality made him a dazzling performer.

There are others who have contributed to the preservation of the American pop song. Frankly, I have not completely recovered from the exciting concert that Frank Sinatra gave a few years ago in Tulsa's Mabee Center, when he was seventy-eight years old. Many of you will remember the unforgettable remark Sinatra made at the end of his concert; he said, "I hope you will all live to be 100 years old, and that the last voice you hear will be mine." He touched the lives of so many people. At least three generations loved him. He could, with a simple love song, make you feel romance and warmth in your soul.

Marilyn Maye is a singer with whom Tulsans are very familiar. She is an internationally acclaimed singer who totally captivates me. She was heard a few years ago with the Tulsa Philharmonic, and Peter Nero conducting. She takes advantage of every dramatic nuance, and her audience hangs onto every soaring phrase. Cut in this same mold is the young Michael Feinstein. He sings, accompanying himself on the piano, many of the great songs of earlier years. He has many recordings currently available and for sale at the local record shops. I'll wager that you will find him completely beguiling.

Popular songs represent beliefs and emotions that are shared by the great majority of people. No matter how many scholarly panels are convened, it is obvious that certain composers of popular songs remain right at the top of our cultural landscape. Remember the irresistible songs of Duke Ellington, Cole Porter, George Gershwin, Johnny Mercer, and so many others? These wonderful American popular songs, for me, are absolutely timeless and intoxicating!!

[†] Published first in *The Vintage Newsmagazine*, June 2005.

WHAT MATTERS MOST?[†]

There may be some things that some people know for certain, but I believe that those knowable things are not what matters most to any human being. A good mathematician may know the truth about numbers, and a good engineer may know how to make physical forces serve his purposes. However, the mathematician and engineer are human beings first – so for them, as well as for me, a musician, what matters most is not one knowledge or one skill, but one’s relations with other people.

We all have to deal with other people, and these relationships of ours are really the most important things in life. These relations are particularly difficult because it is here that the question of right and wrong comes in. Often we have no certain knowledge of what is right and wrong; and, even if we had, it could be difficult to do something or to make a choice in the face of our own personal interests and inclinations. Actually, we have to make the best judgment we can about what is right, and then we have to make ourselves act on it. Sometimes it is difficult to combine effectiveness with humility and charity in trying to do what is right.

Always looking on the brighter side of things – in the ability of right somehow always ultimately to prevail, and taking life philosophically and in stride – I believe that right is an essential instinct implanted in each human being. I have faith in people, in their collective and essential goodness and good sense; granted that there will be individual mavericks on every human level.

All this I feel comes from my lifelong exposure to the Christian tradition and my conviction that love is what gives life its meaning and purpose. Injustice will raise its head in the best of all possible worlds. Evil will invade some men’s hearts and intolerance will twist some men’s minds, but decency is a far more common human attribute and it can be made to prevail in our daily lives as we face decisions of right or wrong. There are so many shades of right and wrong that our United States Supreme Court has a problem deciding an issue from time to time.

I believe all this because I believe above all else in reason. Since I place my trust in reason, I place it in the individual. There is a madness in crowds to which even the wisest, caught up in their organizations, are not immune. I have known personal disappointments and despair. But always the thought of tomorrow brightened my spirits. I have looked to the future all my life. I still do!!

[†] Published first in *The Vintage Newsmagazine*, July 2005.

“PIKE’S PEAK OR BUST!”[†]

When I was a teen-ager I looked forward to the moment every summer when I would go to Green Mountain Falls, Colorado, where I would work in my voice teacher’s summer lodge. Green Mountain Falls is just a hop-and-skip from Colorado Springs. I carried suitcases, made beds, washed dishes, and served tables, etc. There were two big events for me each summer. One was to ride the cog up to the top of Pike’s Peak, and the other was to have lunch at the Tavern Room at the Broadmoor Hotel. The waiters at the Broadmoor all wore red jackets and there was stylish live music – a wonderful combo playing all the big hits of the day.

At 14,110 feet, Pike’s Peak was not the tallest of the Rockies, but what made it so exciting was its location: smack on the edge of the Great Plains. It took its name from Zebulon Pike, the young Army officer who sighted it in 1806, and the view has been forever etched in the American mind.

In 1893 a very special lady, who was a Professor of English at Wellesley College, came to Colorado Springs to teach for the summer at Colorado College. (Incidentally, Virginia Anderson Torres – a soprano from Tulsa – and I had a fifteen-minute weekly radio broadcast one summer, originating from the radio station at this College. My, oh my, these were the days when we sang with heart and soul and thought that we had the world on a string!) The Wellesley Professor was staying at the old Antlers Hotel and it was there she joined friends to take an ox-cart to the top of Pike’s Peak. This lady’s name was Katharine Lee Bates, and it was this brief encounter with the view from Pike’s Peak which would immortalize her place in history. From this view she wrote the stirring words of “America the Beautiful.”

This poem was first published on July 4, 1895 in *The Congregationalist*, a weekly church publication in Boston. The poem spread like wildfire and was embraced by Americans far beyond the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Marvin Hamlisch, one of our fine American composers, has said that he feels the song “America the Beautiful” is much better suited for the American voice than the more intricate “Star-spangled Banner.” Many musicians feel this way also. However, I believe “The Star-spangled Banner” is here to stay. We all get goose-pimples when we hear “The Star-spangled Banner” and no other patriotic song has that power. “America the Beautiful” has long been known as the “unofficial” National Anthem, and it is this song that people often turned to to express patriotism and to rekindle their love for the American experience during trying times.

“America the Beautiful” has, after many years, become a part of our national psyche, and the author a genuine celebrity. Bates once told a reporter that the song’s success,

[†] Published first in *The Vintage Newsmagazine*, August 2005.

which was so accidental and so simple, was due to the American people, not to herself. She said, "I have come to see that I was its scribe, rather than its author."

At the risk of using a hackneyed euphemism the words of this song make me feel warm all over. Here are the words to the first verse:

*O beautiful for spacious skies,
For amber waves of grain,
For purple mountain majesties
Above the fruited plain!
America! America!
God shed his grace on thee,
And crown thy good with brotherhood
From sea to shining sea.*

TULSA OPERA'S EXCITING NEW SEASON[†]

If you had strolled the halls of Tulsa Opera's office building today, you would have felt a palpable buzz of excitement. It's that exhilarating time of the year again when the company is preparing for the new season. Of course, as you probably know, this level of excitement is evident throughout the year. Simply put, Tulsa Opera provides a wonderful environment in which to make and hear great performances of opera.

I believe in opera. In my youth, I think it was the kaleidoscopic splendor of opera that fascinated me – from the hot sensuality of Carmen's habanera to the mystic depths of a night evoked by the bewitching *Tales of Hoffmann*. After all these years, the fourth act of *La Bohème* still brings tears to my eyes. This is all a magical musical wonderland.

Tulsa Opera's first production of the 2005-2006 season is Charles Gounod's *Faust* on October 8, 14, and 16. *Faust* tells us the story of an ultimate "deal with the devil," a story inspired by a dramatic play by the German poet Goethe. *Faust* is one of the most popular French operas, and was chosen to open the original Metropolitan Opera House in 1883.

The tenor John Matz will be heard as Faust and Kyle Pfortmiller will sing the baritone role of Valentin. These two excellent singers will be remembered for their outstanding performances in past productions. Carol I. Crawford will conduct. She brings to Tulsa Opera a balance of solid artistic instincts and a feel for sound financial management – significant reasons for Tulsa Opera's sustained success.

Ariadne auf Naxos by Richard Strauss will be the second production of the season, February 25, March 3 and 5, 2006. This will be a Tulsa Opera premiere. The opera will be sung in German, but you'll be able to understand every word with the English translation projected above the stage. This opera is a masterpiece of exquisite sound and innovative theater.

To celebrate Mozart's 250th birthday, the Opera will present as its third offering of the season, *The Marriage of Figaro*, on April 22, 28, and 30. Mozart did three operas with Lorenzo da Ponte as his librettist, and this opera is the most popular. It is interesting to note that da Ponte came to the United States after Mozart's death to teach Italian at Columbia University in New York City.

The Marriage of Figaro is a hilarious story of love and forgiveness. You will love it, as audiences have loved it for more than 200 years. This opera will be conducted by the talented young conductor Kostis Protopapas.

Season tickets are still available. Prices start at \$54 for three productions. You may purchase individual tickets to *Faust* beginning September 1. For more information and a brochure about the entire 2005-2006 season, call Tulsa Opera at (918) 582-4035.



[†] Published first in *The Vintage Newsmagazine*, September 2005.

In an effort to give you current information about Tulsa Opera's coming season I would like to offer this listing of the operas to be performed in the 2006-2007 season:

The Little Prince will be performed at the University of Oklahoma in Holmberg Hall on September 22-23-24, 2006, and at the Tulsa Performing Arts Center on October 7, 13, 15, 2006.

Carmen will be performed February 24 and March 2, 4, 2007 at the Performing Arts Center.

Porgy and Bess will be performed April 14, 20, 22, 2007 at the Performing Arts Center.

SERENDIPITY IS WONDERFUL![†]

It is surprising how much serendipity enters into our lives. While visiting with Dick Horkey at dinner one evening here at Inverness Village recently, he told me a story of being in New York City with his wife Barbara. They were invited to dinner at a place on East 53rd Street which was a little cubby-hole restaurant just off the street and down three steps in a brownstone building. The name of this eatery was “Serendipity” and that started me to think about the concept of *serendipity*. What a wonderful name for a restaurant. Isn’t it a serendipitous affair each time we go into a different restaurant?

Regardless of how much we plan a creative project, surprise encounters with friends or strangers will inevitably shake things up. But more often than not, those shake-ups will be to our benefit, if we can learn to receive and absorb them in the most constructive way.

For example, an unexpected proposal for a trip to some exotic land may introduce completely new concepts and people that completely change the way we look at the world; or we may unexpectedly run into old friends who once again enrich our lives; or perhaps we’ll encounter interesting strangers who will provide fresh perspectives on our work or relationships.

This quality of being able to discover and benefit from unexpected things in life is known as serendipity! But for these surprises to work in our lives, we can’t automatically be turned off or frightened by them. Instead we must have the capacity to receive, absorb, and enjoy.

I have learned from experience that unexpected treasures lie around practically every corner. Have you ever shared your innermost thoughts with a perfect stranger at a concert? It is possible to find happy, colorful, and uplifting opinions of the music, which can often – but not always – be an affirmation of your own opinion. Sometimes you are connected for just a brief time with this stranger, and it contributes something meaningful to your own experience.

I have found myself energized and filled with a renewed sense of purpose by just having a serendipitous meeting with a “Charlie Rose” interview on the educational channel. Even though a particular day was still unfolding, I knew at the end of the day I would be satisfied because my day had been filled to overflowing with serendipity.

Our most powerful creative impulses are those that are firmly rooted in our own personal histories. Or to put it another way, creativity doesn’t grow in a vacuum; rather, it blooms in a broader context of experience and heritage. Our capacity to be creative, I believe, is directly related to our good luck with serendipity. Just think for a moment on how good things seem to happen to you when you least expect it.

[†] Published first in *The Vintage Newsmagazine*, October 2005.

I'm convinced that each of us experiences serendipity, but few of us know how to reap its optimum benefits. To sharpen and sensitize these special unsought things in life, you might begin by doing something completely different. Try a new restaurant, or invite a new acquaintance over. If you allow for the possibility of some surprises in your life, I bet you'll begin to discover the excitement of serendipity!

IN PRAISE OF BEVERLY SILLS[†]

Beverly Sills turned seventy-five years old this year, and announced that she was retiring from all public life. I can't think of anybody who has done more to popularize opera and the art of good singing than this wonderful lady. As a top-flight singing artist, she appeared on all the important talk shows of the day, and this includes Johnny Carson, David Letterman, and Jay Leno.

At the end of her sensational singing career, she served as the influential administrator of the New York City Opera, and later as Chairwoman of Lincoln Center. Finally, she used her exuberant personality to raise funds and proselytize for the performing arts. She was the host of "Live From Lincoln Center" many times. I was thrilled when she interviewed my former student James Robinson on this same PBS program. On this occasion his production of *La Bohème* was presented. James is a highly successful young stage director, originally from Claremore, Oklahoma.

Ms. Sills sang on four different occasions in Tulsa. Each time, it was under the auspices of Tulsa Opera, Inc. She sang the leading soprano roles in *La Traviata*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, and *I Puritani*, and she sang one fundraising concert at the old Brady Theater.

The fundraising concert came off in high style except for the biggest snowstorm that I have ever seen in Tulsa – a real blizzard. The city was blanketed in a deep, beautiful white snow and not a creature could be seen moving anywhere. The tickets were completely sold out, and I had trained the Tulsa Opera Chorus to sing choruses from three operas with her. Every member of the chorus trudged through the snow and the orchestra appeared in the pit with Carlo Moresco ready to conduct. We were all wondering when, and if, Ms. Sills would arrive.

Guess what? When it was time for the curtain to go up, it did and there she was, standing in the center of the stage, dressed in a beautiful, completely white evening dress, which matched the scene outside. It was truly a rare and beautiful evening in white. The music was magnificent and appreciated by the rather small audience that had had the courage to brave the weather.

Recently, Ms. Sills placed her ailing husband in a nursing home. Both of her children were born with disabilities. Her daughter is deaf and her son is severely retarded. He has been cared for in an institution since he was six years old. Ms. Sills has been an inspiration to many who have struggled with similar problems. Her down-to-earth, outgoing, and friendly manner helped her to humanize opera. There was something refreshing and stereotypically American about her performances.

[†] Published first in *The Vintage Newsmagazine*, November 2005.

It is difficult for me to think of the performing arts in America without Beverly Sills! No one in recent decades has had an influence on the cultural climate in the United States to match that of this immensely gifted singer. She was classy, appealing, and loved by everyone!!

THE INTANGIBLES OF CONDUCTING[†]

When I was quite young, barely settled into my twenties, I attended the Aspen Institute of Music for three summers. After a concert one afternoon, as I walked through the crowd in the tent, I heard a fragment of a conversation that has been difficult for me to forget.

“Beautiful concert,” murmured a pleasant-looking lady. “Bah,” said a disagreeable-sounding man whose conviction struck me right to the heart. He continued, “The orchestra is fine, but I wonder why we must always have a conductor in front of it.”

I could scarcely contain my mad desire to tell the disagreeable gentleman a thing or two. Now at last I can respond at length and without fear of interruption. How many hundreds of things about conducting I would have liked to tell this man.

The conductor scrupulously and conscientiously works to breathe life into music, to bestow on it the intangibles of conducting that make the music sing. These instincts cannot be taught, but, as the conductor matures, increase and deepen. The conductor must communicate to his musicians through his arms, face, eyes, fingers, and through the vibrations that flow through him. It is true that certain emotions produce physical reflexes. If we are pleased, certain muscles move, and we smile. It is the same when I conduct. The feelings evoked by the music cause certain reactions, and these, given back to the singers through conducting, can evoke the same feelings in the singers. Of course, there are emotions that cannot be communicated by gesture alone.

The conductor must not only make his group sing, but he also must make them want to sing. He must make their adrenaline flow, by cajoling or demanding. He must make the choir love the music as he loves it. The entire choir must share the conductor’s feelings, responding as one to each rise and fall of the music, to each inner pulse. On this current of human emotion, the conductor can communicate at the deepest levels with his singers and, ultimately, with his audience.

All of this should be executed with great humility for the composer’s work; the conductor doesn’t ever want to come between the music and the audience. However strenuous or glamorous he (or she) may be, all his efforts should serve only to interpret the composer’s meaning. The composer’s work, after all, is the reason for the conductor’s existence. The extent to which a conductor may properly use his own imagery to recreate a composer’s music is an interesting point for debate. Fidelity to a composer’s intentions, as far as they may be discerned, is the cornerstone of music ethics.

[†] Published first in *The University of Tulsa Annual*, 1985-1986. This publication is printed for the Board of Trustees and contributors to the University.

In all well-written music, the aesthetic concepts of the composer will be obvious to the conductor. Although the conductor has many obligations and prerogatives when preparing a composition, his chief responsibility is to remain true to the music.

The conductor must also be aware of the varied benefits of music to the individual singers in his chorus. The choral experience offers academic and basic musicianship training, such as sight reading, and an understanding of the musical structure and meaning. Many people participate in choral singing for cultural and aesthetic pleasure and personal growth. Some are attracted by the literature itself, and others sing for the emotional fulfillment that comes through contact with basic human emotions. One of the exciting things about vocal music is that it touches our entire life. From birth to death, we are vocal, rhythmic beings. Our rhythms are synonymous with nature's rhythms: the heartbeat, the seasons, the tides, even the weather. With our voices, we celebrate life; we laugh, cry, shout, speak, sing.

It is not difficult to understand why these intangibles are important to the conductor and the singers. A satisfying musical experience is one in which a conductor and a group of singers create beauty in a musical performance. Very few activities offer the same liberation of human spirit enjoyed by the conductor and his singers. Beauty must be sought if it is to reveal itself. In music, that means participation. A person who joins a choir seeks primarily to satisfy a need or longing for something beautiful and, sometimes, for something spiritual.

Every year the choir grows from a nebulous collection of voices to a mature performing group. Along the way, members of the choir draw closer in their love for music. Through these experiences, or "intangibles," the conductor can bring to his singers joy and a greater appreciation for music.

Every conductor acquires a vocabulary of conducting gestures that works for him, that seems to explain to the musicians what is going on inside of him. If he truly feels the music inside and, through concentration and will, has command of the music, then everything will fall into place. The music is fixed in his mind so firmly that his gestures seem to spring forth effortlessly. The spark that must emanate from the conductor makes a performance memorable, or forgettable. It has been said, "You must play what is written." But it has also been said, "What is most important is between the notes." Both statements are correct and are not contradictory. It is impossible to play what is between the notes without playing what is written.

The question invariably arises as to the tempo of a piece with regard to the original intentions of the composer. Even composers as their own interpreters may be at times of questionable authority. Several conductors who worked with Stravinsky on his early ballet scores were perplexed when he changed his own markings. It is certainly true that Mahler the conductor found much to change in the scores of Mahler the composer.

As I grow more mature as a musician and as a conductor, I find it quite unmusical to be too literal and too rigid with the music. I have learned that the conductor must use a

certain amount of imagination because the symbols that serve the composer were never intended to be explicit. An example is the use of the word *poco*, meaning “little” or “somewhat.” From the full exploration of such a small symbol, many new musical discoveries can result. The conductor should also consider the sense of the words and the skill of the singers. This is especially important in the fast music of the Baroque period. He must consider the acoustic properties of the concert hall which have distinct influence on his choice of tempo.

At last, at the actual concert, all of the long rehearsal hours will bear fruit. Excitement prevails; nerves are on edge. How will the concert go? Will we have a good audience? We perform the music, interpreting for the audience our sense of what is between the notes and communicating to them our love for the music. Then the performance is over, and we wonder how we did. Evaluation is a part of learning, so an appraisal of the concert is a valuable part of the experience. At the next rehearsal after the performance, the conductor offers some praise and some criticism. Then he introduces a new work, and the choir embarks on yet another musical adventure.

LUCIA, A BEL CANTO PHENOMENON[†]

In Italian, *bel canto* means, literally, “beautiful singing.” This term has been used loosely and has been given a variety of interpretations. However, *bel canto* is generally understood as indicating the elegant Italian vocal style of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The three great *bel canto* composers were Rossini, Bellini, and Donizetti. These composers excel at melody, and they continue the Italian tradition of placing the voice before any other consideration. More specifically, Bellini and Donizetti changed opera forever when they eliminated much *secco recitativo* (non-orchestral) from their scores. They composed more for full orchestra in recitatives, and worked to make them melodically and dramatically interesting. Bellini and Donizetti understood the possibilities of the human voice and wrote melodious arias for beautiful voices, understanding that melody was the soul of music. No matter what contemporary music fans may think, these composers knew that there could be no opera without sung melody. Musical analysts have long described the *bel canto* arias as “neurotic ecstasy,” and some describe the long melodic passages as a display of vocal fireworks.

Often the operas of this period have a sad, melancholy quality with those beautiful soaring phrases and the effective dramatic elegiac singing line. This brings a much enhanced new quality to this musical period.

One of the best examples of this *bel canto* period is the great Donizetti opera, *Lucia di Lammermoor*. *Lucia* was a big hit at its 1835 première at Teatro San Carlore of *Lucia di Lammermoor* in Naples, and remains a popular success today. *Lucia* has much distinguished music, but the mad scene is a wonderful *tour de force* for *prima donnas* and an outstanding example of *bel canto* writing. The scene also is a vehicle for a superstar *prima donna* to display her virtuosity. In addition, the great sextet remains one of the finest ensembles in all opera. It is splendid music, and very effective.

Of all the *bel canto* composers Donizetti had the best dramatic instinct, especially for the serious drama. *Lucia* captivates audiences, and audiences are eager to hear the soprano sing because the title role demands tremendous agility and vocal flexibility along with dramatic intensity. Tulsa Opera has engaged a soprano, Olga Kondina, to sing this role who has a gorgeous voice with a beautiful consistency from the top to the bottom of her vocal range. While this opera is not a *verismo* work, its dramatic content is potent and Donizetti, the last of the great *bel canto* masters, has given us a masterpiece. I have every confidence that Olga Kondina will give us a superb performance that will stand in our memory for years to come.

[†] Published first in *Intermission*, the official magazine of the Tulsa Performing Arts Center, 1998.

MOZART, THE ENIGMATIC COMPOSER[†]

Mozart as a genius cannot be properly analyzed. Everything about him is so enigmatic: the enormous range of expression which includes all human feelings, his awesome perfection in opera and other musical forms. His versatility, and the apparent facility with which he composed make it impossible to fathom how he could have written so much beautiful music during a life span of only thirty-five years. Perhaps Mozart is the most prolific composer who ever lived.

Among opera composers, Mozart is the greatest master of illuminating life through the prism of classical musical style. He understood life's complexities, the combination of tragedy and comedy. It's all there! It's all there in his music and Mozart's music is the very paradox of life. He remains to this day the most timeless and the most modern composer of all. Every generation sees and hears him differently, always finding in him what it needs: love and irony, truth and duplicity, and always timeless beauty.

Mozart was also one of the first composers to use pairs of contrasting characters to represent conflicts within human nature. A wonderful example of this exists in *The Magic Flute*. Tamino, the tenor, is a noble aristocrat, willing to submit to tests of fire and water to prove himself worthy of the woman he loves. Papageno, the baritone, on the other hand, is merely a bird-catcher and chicken-plucker who yearns for a warm house, a full stomach, lots of wine, and an attractive wife. Here the contrasts and conflicts between idealistic and noble on the one hand, and the human and realistic on the other, elicit from Mozart some of his most intense drama and most beautiful music. Of course such conflicts exist in us all, and the audience becomes fascinated with the human contrast between what we would like to be and what we know we really are.

I recently had a conversation with Carol I. Crawford, Tulsa Opera's General Director, in which she extolled the virtue and trust that can persist in a marriage between two people as idealized by Mozart in this opera. This ideal is as relevant today as it was more than two centuries ago. Mozart sought the ideal in his own life; the compatibility, the longevity, and the acceptance of two partners growing in a marriage. Mozart's *Magic Flute* is better than a session with Dr. Laura, Dr. Ruth, or Freud himself on the subject of marriage.

For some reason known only to Mozart, he did not write much for the chorus in his operas. *The Magic Flute* is the one opera which contains some very impressive choral work. For instance, the Chorus of the Priests in Act II is a magnificent piece of choral writing utilizing all-but-unbelievable techniques of composition. Also, at the end of the opera the entire ensemble breaks out into a mighty chorus. As the voices rise to a glorious climax, the curtain falls.

[†] Published first in *Intermission*, the official magazine of the Tulsa Performing Arts Center, 1999.

MASSENET, THE QUINTESSENTIAL FRENCHMAN[†]

The outstanding French opera composer of the late Nineteenth Century was Massenet. His music is marked by French traits that have become famous in French music. His sense of melody determines the whole texture of his music. The harmonic background is sketched with delicacy and smooth craftsmanship which is the hallmark of music during this period. His phrases are tender, penetrating, often melancholy, and always charming.

Massenet was often compared to Puccini. They were both at the top of their profession in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Their styles were decidedly different; Massenet was French to the core, elegant and graceful. Massenet's music seems to obtain the maximum effect with the smallest apparent effort, while Puccini's work contains dramatic touches of realism, with naked emotion crying out, and persuading the listener's feeling by its very urgency. In Puccini the melodic lines have a perpetual pregnancy in the melody, and the musical utterance is kept at high tension. Massenet's melody is of a highly personal sort. His melodic line was never violent, sometimes sentimental, and always sketched with delicacy and a fine sense of instrumental color. Massenet excelled in musical depiction of passionate love.

The principal ingredient in Massenet's success, besides his enormous talent, was compulsive hard work. If one waited for inspiration, he contended, it would never come. The only musical form Massenet avoided was the symphony. However, he succeeded in thrilling concert audiences with orchestral suites, ballets, choral works, and more than two hundred songs.

In recent years, Massenet's image has undergone a considerable transformation in the minds of music lovers. At first his most famous works – *Manon*, *Werther*, and *Thaïs* – were somewhat slighted. Currently performers and critics alike have come to recognize the qualities in these works which are common to all masterpieces. The music does hold up and is richer and more varied than some had once believed.

Manon is both one of the most popular French operas and one of the most characteristic. It is filled with lyricism of such grace and refinement that only a Frenchman could have written it. Well, a hundred years or more have passed since Massenet wrote *Manon* and, if he's looking down from heaven, he must know that *Manon* is alive and well. The Opéra-Comique alone has had more than two thousand performances and on the world's stages it still keeps company with the greatest masterpieces.

As a music lover, I revel in the operas of Massenet, particularly *Manon*. It has intimacy, elegance, and instantaneous charm. Some might call strong attraction to this

[†] Published first in *Intermission*, the official magazine of the Tulsa Performing Arts Center, 2000.

music a superficiality. I am frankly enamored of Massenet, but the charge of superficiality is a false one. No other opera composer has come forth in our time to match the deceptive simplicity of Massenet.

Manon was first heard in New York at the Academy of Music (sung in Italian) on December 23, 1884. Eleven years later, on January 16, 1895, New York heard it in French at the Metropolitan Opera with the American soprano Sybil Sanderson as Manon and tenor Jean de Reszke as De Grieux.

Massenet had some idiosyncratic behavior that I find interesting. For example: he made it a practice to leave Paris when there was a première performance of one of his operas. He said it was not because of nervousness; rather he tried to avoid people rushing up to him and asking “Are you happy?” or “Are you satisfied?”

I find the descriptions of his writing habits to be poignant and touching. It is reported that he composed in a passionate and tragic mood, becoming the characters he wrote about. This meant merging himself totally with the persons he was bringing to life. When it was all finished, he had to tear himself away from them, experiencing a grief and heartfelt intimacy that one feels when experiencing a divorce or losing a child. Most performers experience somewhat this same emotion when finishing a production. They have worked together for weeks and maybe months with emotional intensity and as a family. Therefore, at the completion of the production they experience a “lights out” and they all go their different directions. This sometimes leads to a feeling of emptiness.

Toward the end of Massenet’s life he became Professor of Composition at the Paris Conservatory, holding this post until his death. He died in Paris on August 13, 1912. His influence extended to an entire generation of French composers. His most famous student was Gustave Charpentier, whose most well-known work was the opera *Louise*. He was also the teacher of Reynaldo Hahn, whose beautiful French songs are known the world over. Massenet’s writing brought forth two important French qualities: eroticism and religious exultation. These two qualities in the hands of Massenet were perhaps the most moving encountered in the French lyric theater.

BUTTERFLY'S CONTEMPTIBLE LOVER[†]

Would you believe that *Madama Butterfly* was booed at its première? Puccini hid in a backstage dressing room so that he could shut out the hostile noise of the audience.

After this dreadful experience, Puccini made many changes in the score. The most substantial modifications were made in Paris by the director Albert Carré. Most of these alterations were initiated to soften the harsh and crude character of Pinkerton. Pinkerton is openly contemptuous of Japanese people and customs. *Madama Butterfly*, a Nagasaki maiden, is married to Lieutenant Pinkerton in a “Japanese” ceremony, which is good only in Japan, and only so long as the husband chooses to recognize it. This crass young American Naval officer has arranged through a Japanese “marriage-broker” (Goro) a marriage which can be terminated with one month’s notice.

This opera is set in the year 1904, in a time when “mixed marriages” between occidental and oriental people were strictly taboo. Even a half-century later, in the period after World War II, the opera was banished because it casts an unfavorable light on an American Naval officer. However, the American consul (Sharpless) is sympathetically portrayed.

Puccini diligently incorporated an “American” character in the first part of the opera. The music between Sharpless and Pinkerton is rationalized as “Westernized” and the mood is breathing masculine righteousness and national superiority. This tenor character, with too much testosterone, does seem to smack of the “Ugly American.” Pinkerton does reappear at the end in an unsuccessful attempt to absolve himself of the charge of being the most immature lover in all of opera.

Society today is well aware of the unpalatable elements of colonial history, and the evil in ideas of racial supremacy. The alterations made to *Butterfly* after its première, especially those made by Carré in Paris, watered down the opera’s strong message. Puccini’s original message points up, in an unflinching characterization, Pinkerton’s contempt for Cio Cio San’s race and customs. One can hardly pass up the urge to think: Puccini may have been one of the first composers to deal with race relations. Surely the strength of the original concept of Puccini and his librettist would compel respect today.

This opera is a gift. From the strike of the first chord, excitement begins to build. As singers enter the stage, we are drawn into a world filled with emotions like our own. Deep within each of us, a response is felt. This exemplifies the power of opera to touch individuals in such a way that they are lifted by the experience. May the beauty of *Madama Butterfly* bring to life a meaningful experience for you.

[†] Published first in *Intermission*, the official magazine of the Tulsa Performing Arts Center, 2004.

CELEBRATING OKLAHOMA'S FIRST OPERATIC CELEBRITY, JOSEPH BENTON

ADAPTATION BY ORPHA HARNISH[†]

Our own Laven Sowell is an illustrious member of the Tulsa Opera family. He is also one of the vast array of artists coming out of Oklahoma, a part of the Oklahoma school system, who have had or are now having fine careers as professional musicians. Luckily, Laven, as we affectionately know him, has elected to stay with us in Oklahoma and for many years with Tulsa Opera as Chorus Master.

In talking with him recently, he reminded me of the importance of early musical training and was very enthusiastic about his former teachers as well. Full tribute is given to them in his second book, *My Music Notebook*, starting with his first teacher – Clark Snell of Oklahoma City, then Joseph Benton at OU, and John Brownlee at the Manhattan School of Music while in his Master's study and others.

Sowell's account of his respect and gratitude for the vocal coaching he received from Joseph Benton (Bentonelli ... his Italian version) is described as follows:

My first meeting with Joseph Benton came while I was attending a senior recital at the University of Oklahoma in Holmberg Hall. I was with my first voice teacher, Mr. Snell, and since he and Mr. Benton had been longtime friends, they were engaged in conversation.... Mr. Snell introduced me to Mr. Benton. Right then and there I was told that he wanted me to study with Joseph Benton at the University when I attended next year. Mr. Snell was pleased because he had great confidence in Mr. Benton's ability to teach voice. I have always been pleased that I followed his advice.

The next autumn (1951) I went to the University of Oklahoma.... Mr. Benton was proud of his Oklahoma heritage, and he shared with his students his art blended with human values. He had been a world-famous tenor and Oklahoma's first operatic celebrity. He sang in Italy, France, Sicily, Belgium, Holland, Egypt, Yugoslavia, and South Africa. He sang as well across the United States and Canada, from the Metropolitan Opera to the Chicago Opera and the Hollywood Bowl. Millions of others heard his performances over network radio. NBC's "Opera in English" radio hour was a series of twenty-six radio broadcasts which featured Wilfred Pelletier conducting the NBC Symphony Orchestra and a group of wonderful artists. Others joining Mr. Benton in leading roles were John

[†] Published first in *Take Note*, a newsletter of the Guild of Tulsa Opera, Inc., Fall 2005.

Charles Thomas, Elizabeth Rethberg, Lucrezia Bori, and Lawrence Tibbett.

As Giuseppe Bentonelli, he was the first major American artist to reach the high point of success in Europe, where, by adopting the Italian version of his name, he was accepted as one of their own. He spoke Italian impeccably. The use of Italianized names became a common practice for singers in this period and the Italians loved it!

Mr. Benton was chosen as one of the four most popular operatic tenors singing in Italy.... In 1934, he then returned to the United States where he made his American debut at the Chicago Opera in Puccini's *Tosca* ... and was warmly received ... evidenced by the fact that he sang forty-nine performances of seventeen different operas there. He made his debut with the Metropolitan Opera in a performance of Massenet's *Manon*. He did extensive concert tours across the United States and appeared on many of the popular radio programs of that time period.

Mr. Benton returned to his alma mater, The University of Oklahoma, to teach in 1944. Laven studied with him there from 1951 through 1955, at which time Laven Sowell received the Bachelor of Music in Voice degree.

Laven has been Chorus Master of Tulsa Opera for 34 seasons and has given many programs and opera previews for guild meetings through the years. He now does private teaching in his home, which he says "gives me fixity of purpose and keeps me looking forward to each day." His book [*My Music Notebook*] is filled with so much of interest to anyone loving music and the making of music. Unequivocally, I recommend it to you; unfortunately it is sold out but you may be able to borrow it from a friend. Sowell's first book *Tulsa Opera Chronicles* is still available at Tulsa Opera.

THE GREATEST GIFTS

May we break boundaries, tear down walls, and build on the foundation of goodness inside each of us.

May we look past differences, gain understanding, and embrace acceptance.

May we reach out to each other, rather than resist.

May we be better stewards of the earth, protecting, nurturing and replenishing the beauties of nature.

May we practice gratitude for all we have, rather than complain about our needs.

May we seek cures for the sick, help for the hungry, and love for the lonely.

May we share our talents, give our time, and teach our children.

May we hold hope for the future very tenderly in our hearts and do all we can to build for bright tomorrows.

And may we love with our whole hearts, for that's the only way to love.

(from a Christmas greeting card I received from Dick Horkey in 2005. A Kathy Davis design ©Recycled Paper Greetings)

AND IN CONCLUSION . . .

SINCE MOVING TO INVERNESS VILLAGE in 2004, I have had a marvelous adventure meeting new people and enjoying life in a different manner. At first, I was a little reluctant to come out of my apartment. However, I must confess to the rescue of Garvin Berry. He and Marge (his lovely wife) invited me to dinner one evening with an offer I just couldn't refuse. I am grateful to Garvin for taking this initiative. Also, I always thoroughly enjoy their two beautiful daughters Diane and Charlene when they visit here at Inverness. Soon after moving to Inverness, my friend Vaughndean Fuller suggested that I should employ her decorator, David Weigand, to help put everything in place. He is the very best and it was a good decision. Vaughndean and her husband Dr. Munson Fuller have been dear friends for years.

There are so many fascinating people living here. These people help to give personality, warmth, and a feeling of conviviality to our dining room each evening. Some of my frequent dining partners are: Dr. and Mrs. Robert Shepard, Dr. and Mrs. Jerry Sisler, Mr. and Mrs. Neal Watt, Charles Klein, Dick Horkey, and Mr. and Mrs. Eddie Hudson, just to mention a few. I know I am forgetting so many good friends. Oh yes; I must also mention Mr. and Mrs. Rod Reppe, Helen Saied, Doris Moser, and Mary Jane Erickson. Mary Lee Franz and I have something very special in common: we both love the voice of Metropolitan Opera Soprano Renée Fleming.

It is always good to visit with Beverly and Sid Patterson here at Inverness. I became acquainted with Sid, a mighty fine fellow, during my tenure as interim Director of Music at John Knox Presbyterian Church in 1991. All of these are wonderful and congenial people – and there are more!! The youthful, attractive, and gracious young ladies and gentlemen who serve our tables in our two dining rooms every evening are a joy and often bring a special “lift” to the day.

In the beautifully-lighted and acoustically well-designed recital hall here at Inverness, there have been many concerts and recitals. Among these were two appearances by the Tulsa Children's Chorus directed by Ginny LeDoux, who does outstanding work with this group. This group sings with musical discipline, good tone quality, and excellent diction. Ginny was a student of mine at Edison High School, and these performances bring back fond memories of those wonderful days. Ginny's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Sam Aubrey, are residents here at Inverness.



SINCE LEAVING THE UNIVERSITY OF TULSA as Director of Choral Activities, I have continued to teach private voice lessons in my home and now in my apartment at Inverness Village. This gives me fixity of purpose in life, and an opportunity to work with many talented singers. Currently, I am enjoying my work with two people from Inverness Village. Dixie Reppe is really a good soprano and a good student, and she intrigues me with her intelligence, savvy, and moxie with people.

She really knows how to charm the dining-room crowd. Also, Dr. Thomas Allen has been studying with me for quite a time. He has surprised himself and me with his progress. His conscientiousness has paid off! He plans to sing in public sometime soon (I think?). His wife is a dear person, and I am lucky to occasionally enjoy their splendid company at dinner time. Of course, these two students are just a part of my current teaching schedule each week.

The bulk of my students these days are high school and college students. I have been fortunate recently to have excellent students. Robby Humble from Collinsville, Oklahoma, has just graduated this spring *magna cum laude* from Washington University in St. Louis, where he studied voice with fine results. Bravo, Robby! — Lindsay Duncan and Jana Schubert both possess beautiful voices and enjoy their vocal study at the University of Tulsa with Linda Roark-Strummer! — Lindsay's brother, Blake, a baritone, is now studying with me and shows much potential.

Joshua Seals, my talented baritone student from Skiatook, Oklahoma, began his study this Autumn at the Juilliard School in New York City. He was one of only ten freshman vocal students, worldwide, accepted at Juilliard this year. What a wonderful gift he has been given for singing! Joshua performed a full-length voice recital in Skiatook in August before leaving for New York City. He was assisted at the piano by Casey Cantwell, the distinguished Organist and Choirmaster at Tulsa's Trinity Episcopal Church. — David Brooks, baritone, also from Skiatook, has this year decided to major in Music Education at Oklahoma State University. David will be a success! — Carol Hamilton and Chris Green, both highly talented young singers, are studying at the University of Central Oklahoma in Edmond. — Sean Bergstrom, tenor, is in his first year at the University of Oklahoma in Norman, and — Stephen Clark, bass-baritone, is in his first year at Northeastern State University in Tahlequah. Both Sean and Stephen are good singers and demonstrate much potential!

These students are not listed in any particular order. I mention these students only because they are all recent students majoring in music at their respective schools.



CHORAL CONDUCTING AND TEACHING VOICE have been for me a sacred privilege; to perform and participate in a real human service. My credo is simply: People who sing become better people. Musical experiences affect people's inner selves and their relationship to their friends and family. Music brings fresh air and sunlight into our lives. There is always the possibility that some students may become successful and exciting singers. However, I do believe everyone has the right to sing.

Teaching is more than imparting knowledge; it is more than systematized training: teaching is a sharing of one's self with others. In this case the teacher shares his person-

ality, his character, his philosophy of life, his musical knowledge, and his technical proficiency with his students.

It has been my good fortune to spend my life doing the thing I love most: being a musician and teacher. After teaching and sharing music for more than forty years, for some reason I thought I had retired. The emotionally difficult task of selling my home, and many of my possessions, the packing, the downsizing, and the estate sale just about did me in! (However, I loved being able to give my books to students and friends – that part was a genuine pleasure.) Finally, being in my new and beautiful apartment at Inverness Village, it dawned on me: Once a teacher – always a teacher! I realized that teaching has always been an essential part of my life. So I continue to teach. Slowing down, perhaps, but total retirement? No way!!

I have rejoiced in many masterpieces of Western musical literature, and I continually draw from these experiences. Today, the trends in music are at the mercy of a commercial society by whom all tastes and trends are used and abused for the sake of profit. Inexorably, since my boyhood in Oklahoma City, I have seen the dislocation of the natural and instinctive flair and taste for the genuine twisted to the acceptance of the appalling distortion of pure sound when something called “music” pours through various mechanical devices in one long wail of electronic mumbo-jumbo, where sounds and words are difficult to define or understand. Also, the level of sound is so loud and so intense that it is destructive to our ears. This stuff (or garbage), at least for me, is depressing and bit maddening. Have you ever noticed how these people who sing hard rock or heavy metal, etc. look when they are singing? Doesn’t it look like someone giving birth to a rhinoceros? Maybe I’m missing something!

How does one distinguish the beautiful from the ugly in music?? You know what they say: Beauty is in the eye of the beholder – or in this case, in the ear of the listener. Music, in all its forms, is our oldest form of self-expression, and it awakens us to the emotional and psychological riches of life itself.

I have seen the music world from the vantage point of the greatest opera houses and recital halls, and I have worked with some of the world’s great singing artists. It always thrills me to hear a great voice at a time of national conflict, grief, or triumph. A trained voice has a kind of innate authority that transmits a sense of strength. A really fine singer usually needs no microphone because he/she sings with the entire body. The voice of such a singer emanates not just from the head, but from the whole heart and soul and, most importantly, the gut, and one can’t help but admire an excellent singer who has survived all those early auditions, stage fright, rejections, difficult rehearsals, and difficult people to become a successful singer. How glorious it is for us to hear a great singer open their mouth and have magnificent, beautiful sound pour out!!

♪

THE FIRST INFLUENTIAL FIGURE in my life was my first voice teacher, Clark Snell, in Oklahoma City. He was my mentor. I began my vocal study with him when I was in the ninth grade at Roosevelt Junior High School in Oklahoma City. I was young but eager to learn.

Mr. Snell instilled in me a respect for fine singing and for really quality music. Also, he made me want to listen to people. Over the years, I found that it is only by listening to others that you can leave yourself open to learning. My strong relationship to him gave me a strong sense of self-esteem. He believed in my talent, which gave me an optimistic view of the future. His passion for music was not that much different from his approach to everything else in life.

I learned so much great vocal repertoire while very young and developed my first intense interest in French music under Mr. Snell's guidance. His sister, Ruth, was a French teacher at Central High School in Oklahoma City, and she would occasionally participate in our discussion of translation and pronunciation. This would prove highly beneficial when at the age of nineteen I went to the Aspen Institute of Music to study with the famous French baritone Martial Singher. I studied with him there for three summers. Aspen, Colorado is a wonderful musical climate where students mingle with the great artists of their time. Mr. Snell taught me so much in those early days of my music study that it really cemented my desire to be a musician for the rest of my life. He was my major inspiration and I will always give him credit. He gave me the greatest gifts that a teacher can give to a student: confidence and passion. It was from these wonderful experiences that I began my college career at the University of Oklahoma with Joseph Benton, also a strong early influence in my musical life.



TULSA OPERA, INC. CONTINUES TO BRING to the City of Tulsa the best possibilities of orchestra and magnificent voices. It's really the best intellectual excitement of the theater. One of the chief reasons for this success is the incomparable Carol I. Crawford. Opera as an entertainment has truly become a popular international art form, and opera can touch the soul as few arts can. Ms. Crawford skillfully builds each season with different styles, well-matched casts, and occasionally with a rarely performed opera. I believe an opera company owes it to the community to perform something out of the ordinary occasionally. Ms. Crawford does an excellent job keeping the financial support from the community alive and healthy with the help of her staff, the Board, the many opera patrons, the many volunteers, and particularly the Guild of Tulsa Opera, Inc.

Tulsa Opera is fortunate to have a General Director and Conductor with Ms. Crawford's talent for dramatic expression. She finds a happy outlet in opera, and she is never dull. Her chemistry is always changing, depending on the cast, the work at hand, and her own creative moods. She conducts performances that come off astonishingly alive and exciting.

For health reasons, I rarely attend the opera these days. However, I do continue to support the opera with my check once a year. Not only do I believe that the art form stands on its own as a tribute to human truths, but I am firmly convinced that the opera company is a great asset and beneficial to the City of Tulsa. Opera is very expensive to produce, and the financial support of the community is crucial. Support for the opera doesn't always come in the form of dollars and cents. Having a well-qualified music critic like James D. Watts, Jr. working for the *Tulsa World* newspaper has its far-reaching advantages. He does a terrific job helping to build an audience for Tulsa Opera.

One wonders what Ione and Ralph Sassano would think today of the opera company they began in 1948 with that first production of *La Traviata*! I wager they would be as proud of Tulsa Opera, Inc. as is the whole State of Oklahoma.

When I telephone the Tulsa Opera offices and get the voice of Charlotte Curry, I am so pleased. Charlotte does a wonderful public relations job for Tulsa Opera by just answering the telephone. She has music in her voice. Kostis Protopapas, the current Chorus Master, does outstanding work with the Tulsa Opera Chorus. Every member of the chorus receives a stipend these days. I have always thought that this was a needed consideration for these hard-working choristers. It helps to pay for baby-sitting and to buy gasoline. These are not inexpensive things in this day and age.

What a sad day for music lovers and the City of Tulsa when the Tulsa Philharmonic ceased to play. Tulsa simply can't be content to not have a major orchestra. Tulsa has a rich legacy of orchestral music. Not only is the orchestra important for concerts playing the great masterpieces for the symphony orchestra but having a first-class orchestra available is a chief consideration for Tulsa Opera when planning future seasons. Ms. Crawford deserves high praise for having been able to assemble a wonderful group of musicians in the interim. Of course, a group of fine musicians playing under the direction of Ms. Crawford, will always be superior. She is highly respected and well-known for her interpretive skills.

When I first came to Tulsa in 1961, the Tulsa Philharmonic was going full throttle with the dynamic Franco Autori, and in later years we had the outstanding conductor Bernard Rubenstein. He was able to relate beautifully to the community and seemed to enjoy doing it. (Very important!) Dr. Frank Letcher deserves a heap of accolades and our gratitude for his vision and efforts to form a new orchestra for Tulsa. This group will be called "Tulsa Symphony Orchestra." Certainly, this orchestra deserves our support!! The orchestra is already scheduled to play a concert. (Exciting!)

At the risk of sounding "over the top" with psychological implications, I would like to tell you why I love opera and other great music. I love the way it captures essential human conflicts: love or hate, compassion or vengeance, redemption or condemnation. It seems to me that all of life's deepest struggles are reflected in opera and other great music. It helps us take a journey into the deep places of our hearts, where we struggle

with hurt and forgiveness, with guilt for our failings and the need for redemption. So there you have it!!



A FEW POINTS CONCERNING OPERA APPRECIATION! First, accept some limitations on realism in terms of time and situations. Accept the fact that commonplace statements are sung and that the stage action differs from the routine of ordinary events. An opera is not intended to be a slice of real life; it's bigger than life in its concept and its impact.

A good story helps to make a better opera, but the plot in itself does not guarantee a successful opera. Accept the fact that the characterizations will not receive the subtle development found in a great drama. It's really impossible to dwell on such nuances and still devote proper attention to the music. By concentrating first on the music, the drama provides composers with situations that are ripe for musical expression. This emotional impact at the right place in the drama accounts for much of opera's appeal.

A person who hears opera without seeing the action on stage is missing a vital part of the opera experience. It would be like listening to a radio broadcast of a football game; the sense of involvement is lessened. Sincere people are often puzzled because they are bored at the opera. However, these people simply have not bothered to acquire a little knowledge about it. It takes a little effort to understand and become familiar with the plot and music. This is a small price to pay for the pleasure they seek.

Opera includes several artistic elements in addition to music. Opera takes place on a stage; therefore, it is a form of theater, requiring eye appeal and action. The success of the opera depends to a large extent on its staging. I am so very excited with the success of James Robinson from Claremore, Oklahoma. He is currently one of America's most successful young stage directors. I was thoroughly impressed when I saw Beverly Sills interview "Jim" at intermission time on "Live from Lincoln Center" during a New York City Opera production of *La Bohème* which he had staged. He was a music student at the University of Tulsa, and it was obvious to me that he would be a winner in some form of music. He had a good voice, too!

Opera involves many things: literature, drama, vocal and instrumental music, staging and dancing. (Let's not forget those operas that have magnificent choral music: *Boris Godunov*, *Aida*, *Don Carlo*, and *Turandot*, to mention only a few.) For that very reason, opera presents the composer and the performer with more opportunities and difficulties than any other type of music. Opera is the one great art form that brings all of the arts together.

Opera in the future will differ to a degree from opera of the past. The creative mind is restless and forever unsatisfied with previous accomplishments. The truly creative mind is simply unable to make imitations or to be content with the efforts of others. At least, this is the way I see it. Opera, when it is the product of an imaginative and skilled musi-

cian, will always be a fascination to hear and a joy to understand. I still believe that all great music sings! This is referred to in music scores as “cantabile.”

There are ominous signals about the future of recorded opera and other serious music. The record companies are facing threats from piracy and unauthorized downloading. It is very important for artists who have achieved success to come to the rescue of choristers, instrumentalists, and other serious artists who won't have any work at all if this piracy continues. I think it is highly dishonest, and steals money right out of the pockets of the performers. Operas, possibly in the future, would be available only on live recordings or will be streamed live via the internet around the world. The solution to this problem appears to be, strangely enough, the internet. The devil, of course, is in the details. Much resourceful thinking must be done by those who realize and understand the injustice of piracy.



THE UNITED STATES IS EXPERIENCING MORE INTEREST IN MUSIC than ever before, especially by adults. More households currently have at least one musical instrument. Further, many more households have members who play and sing!

More people take private lessons and research continues to show that the benefits of music are substantial. It is now quite obvious that music promotes intelligence and wellness. The reduction of stress is no small matter.

There is, I must admit, a downside to all of this. Today corporate, private, and governmental philanthropy continue to decline. So, now we are trying to put serious music in competition where we never intended to compete at all. Serious music competes with sports, with popular music, and with all the so-called phenomena of our “culture of abundance.” Sometimes, when given too many choices, or even too much of a good thing, we are overwhelmed and often paralyzed into inaction. Unfortunately, I've never believed serious music was intended to be put into competition. So competing in a popular culture is quite a challenge. The famed writer Norman Mailer once said: “The artist is like a weed; it will grow despite adversity.” The artistic spirit is irrepressible and despite the circumstances, positive or negative, there will always be music and the arts.



MY RELIGIOUS BELIEFS HAVE BEEN SHAPED in part by my parents, who were beautiful, sweet, and simple people. They were selfless Christian people who served their Nazarene Church dutifully. My mother was a Sunday School recruiter. For many years she won the big prize for getting the most kids out on Sunday morning to attend Sunday School. My dad was an usher and often selected to be on various Church committees.

It is not easy to follow the actions and words of Jesus Christ today. As a Christian, I am deeply concerned about many divisive arguments that have driven deep wedges between us. These wedges involve social issues that have been moved to the forefront of

even Presidential elections. Most all Protestants now condone divorce as acceptable, and rarely emphasize fornication or adultery, although these sexual acts were repeatedly condemned by Jesus. And yet Jesus admonished us in Matthew 7:1, “Judge not, that ye be not judged.” In my opinion, it is much easier and more convenient to focus on sins of which we are not known to be guilty.

I believe we should handle people who are different from us and reach out to others with care, generosity, forgiveness, compassion, and unselfish love. It is a natural human inclination to encapsulate ourselves in a superior fashion with people who are just like us – and to assume that loving our own family is enough. I believe that breaking through this barrier and reaching out to others is what Christians should do. It seems to me that this is the example that Jesus Christ set for us.

Religion should provide the way to heal the differences that separate people, based on the law that Jesus taught: to love our neighbors as ourselves. This places a heavy emphasis on peace, the restraint of children, justice, and compassion for the poor and the vulnerable. The safeguarding of human rights is of profound interest to me.

My membership through the years at the First Presbyterian Church has been a thoroughly heartwarming experience. I loved my seventeen years there as Choirmaster, and my work with Dr. W. J. Wiseman was a happy collaboration. Dr. Wiseman has not been well lately and Mavis has been at his side constantly. She is a wonderful lady and an absolute saint. Everyone loves her!

Even now one of the highlights of my year is to attend Ron Pearson’s yearly organ recital. Hearing a great performance on a great pipe organ has always been, for me, one of the most exciting experiences music has to offer. Also, Ron does an excellent job with the superior choir at the church. Recently, I heard their men’s choir and it was sensational! It was good to see my friend Allan Edwards, singing with this group. He has those wonderful low notes. Also seen in this group were Dr. Jack Williams and Professor Jerry Langenkamp, both excellent singers.

Recently, Rev. Warren Muller from the First Presbyterian Church visited me here at Inverness Village and we had dinner together in the Cherokee Dining Room. He is a dynamic conversationalist – and a very fine gentleman as well.

Because of health concerns, I do not get out in the mornings these days. However, I do watch our church service when possible. (It is not available here at Inverness Village on Sunday mornings.) I am always very pleased to hear Dr. Mouzon Biggs from the Boston Avenue Methodist Church at eleven o’clock on Sunday mornings on Channel 8. His sermons are always inspirational and frequently thought-provoking. The music program at Boston Avenue is under new direction, and I am never disappointed by their fine performance.



AM A FIRM BELIEVER IN THE SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE. There is no place for religion in the science classroom. There will always be people who insist on one aspect of knowledge to the exclusion of the others, and we are plagued with the realization that religion and science cannot prove each other right or wrong. This is no problem to me, because we are all born with a free will. We can accept or reject whatever we choose. Also, we have no right to deprive other people of the freedom to accept or reject propositions that are put forward as truths.

When science discovers a theory that is confirmed by the observation and testing of facts, it only shows how fallible human beings have been in the past. As scientists reveal new information about the natural world, it is additional proof of distant galaxies and the evolution of species. This cannot be rejected simply because it is not described in the Bible. God gives us the exciting opportunity for study and for exploration. I don't believe an understanding of the entire physical world is necessary as a foundation for our Christian faith. After all, the ancient writers of the Holy Bible were not experts on sciences such as biology and geology, or the many dimensions of our modern understanding of the mind. They were not blessed with the use of electron microscopes, carbon dating techniques, or the Hubble telescope. It wouldn't bother me if the Bible stated that the earth was literally flat or that it had four corners. There is still an enormous amount of wisdom in the Bible, without spending too much mental energy concentrating on what we know today as outdated factual material.



CLEO (MY CAT) IS ALMOST FOURTEEN YEARS OLD NOW.... There is a tremendous love that flows abundantly between pets and their owners. In return for our care, these pets provide unconditional love, limitless affection, and loyalty. I, like many pet owners, consider Cleo to be a family member. Believe me, the pet bond is a truly powerful one!

Cleo actually gives me a reason to get up in the morning. For one thing, at about eight o'clock in the morning she starts walking all over me and talking to me. I think pets satisfy, to a degree, our timeless and tangible need as humans to love and be loved. Also, to need and be needed. The evidence is overwhelming: pets are good for our hearts, bodies, and souls.

Over the years, I've marveled at the acute senses cats possess. Their hearing, sight, and sense of smell are all superior to those of humans. Sadly, their life span is short in comparison. I'm not young any more and I know it would be difficult to say good-bye to Cleo. Only God knows who will be the first to go.

I love cats because I enjoy my home; and little by little, they become its visible soul.
– Jean Cocteau

By having reverence for life, we enter into a spiritual relation with the world.
– Albert Schweitzer

Franciscan Blessing of the Animals

Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi

Blessed are you, Lord God,
maker of all living creatures.
You inspired St. Francis to call all animals
his brothers and sisters.
We ask you to bless this animal.
By the power of your love,
enable it to live according to your plan.
May we always praise you
for all your beauty in creation.
Blessed are you Lord our God,
in all your creatures!
Amen.



THERE ARE THOSE OF YOU WHO ARE ASKING: Why this presumption that your thinking is worth writing about? The truth is, *every* life is worth writing about. How else would one learn if not from the experiences and mistakes of others?

Life has been surprisingly generous to me. I have been most fortunate in my friendships, surrounded by people I admire and love, whom I respect and who return the same affection to me. They have made my life enjoyable and pleasant. Further, I have been blessed with some students, from time to time, who enriched my life through their warmth and devotion.

People often remark on how well I look. As compared to what? Every day when I see myself in the mirror, I can't help saying: "Who is that old man?" In my mind's eye, I still see myself as that not-so-bad-looking young man – and I have pictures to prove it!

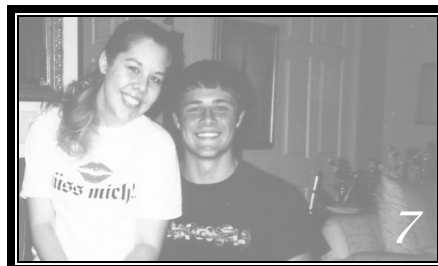
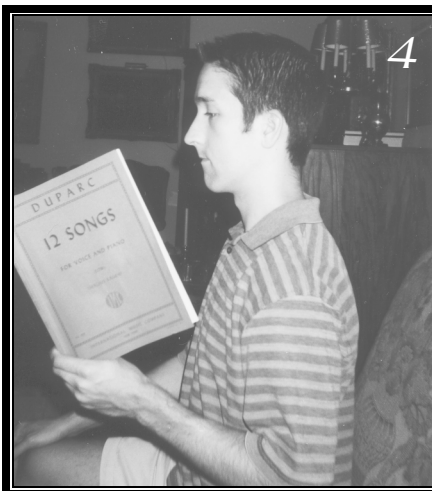
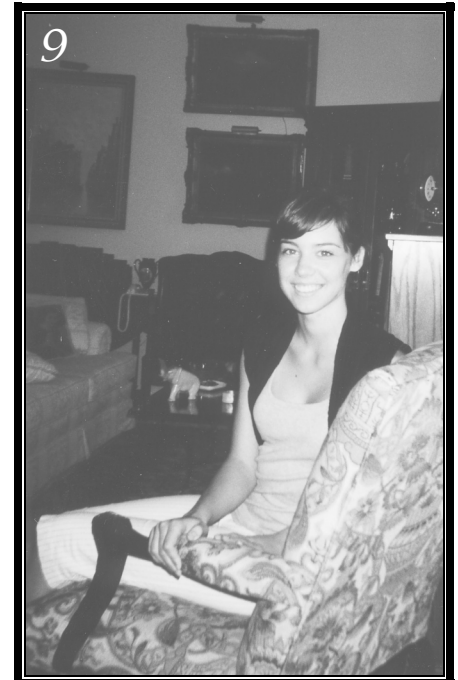
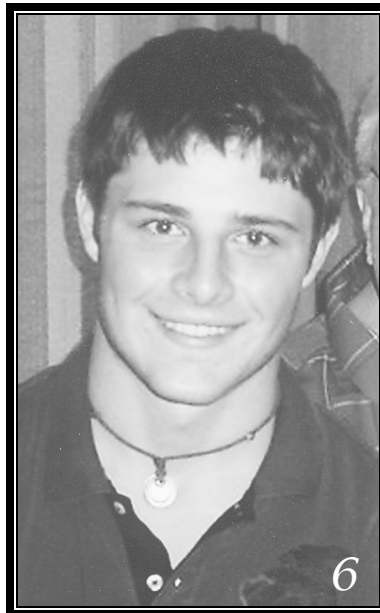
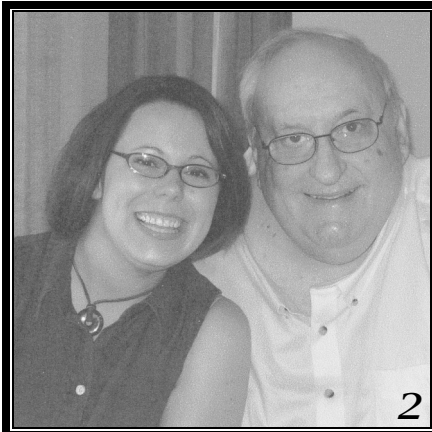
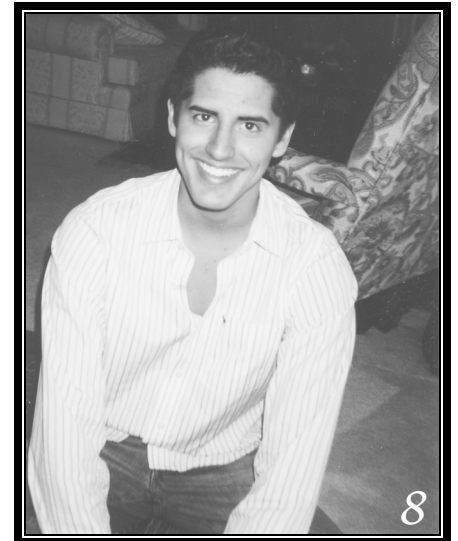
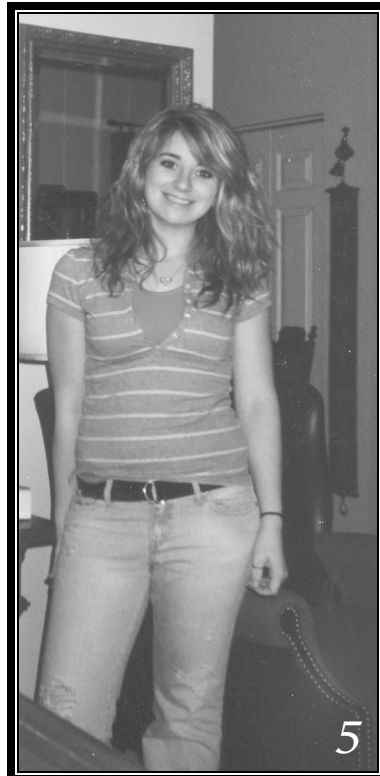
Strangely enough, my greatest fear is one of living – not dying. It's not a pleasant thing, living in this world of daily terrorism, with a government that seems intent on scrapping whatever environmental progress we've made and doing very little to curb the escalating medical costs. I'm also troubled by some churches that seem to condone the murder of doctors who perform abortions, or the teaching of hatred of homosexuals. The Catholic religion has elected a Pope who assures us he knows exactly what God wants. Certain well-financed Islamic extremists encourage mere boys and young girls to become suicide bombers and gain their heavenly delights. They also treat women as second-class citizens, stoning them to death if they commit adultery, while the men who may have raped them go free.

Through the years, I have received letters from former students, and this is always a heartwarming occasion. Just recently I was thrilled to hear from several of my former

Edison High School students after more than forty years. Dr. Clark Parrish practices medicine in Washington State. Clark sings in his community chorus and sends me programs and recordings. They are really good, too! Seth Tidwell lives with his wife and family in Texas. Seth's son is currently attending the University of Tulsa. Just this week, I heard from Dr. Chris Thompson, who is a surgeon in California. He is still active in the field of music and he sent me one of his terrific CDs. (He has made nine CDs at this point in time.) Most recently I have heard from Robert Johnson, an attorney for Public Service Company of Oklahoma, and Ken Schmidt, who is into the computer age in a big way. He is even putting together a collection of memorabilia from his days in the Edison Concert Chorus! In December of 2006, Tom Rodman and I enjoyed an evening (*chez moi*) reminiscing about our times with the Edison Concert Chorus. Tom lives in Denver and continues to use his fine tenor voice in opera, church, and karaoke. What a heady experience for me, knowing that I have made some difference in the lives of my students.

Summing up: I feel that I have had a remarkable life. I wouldn't really wish to have been born earlier or later; my time was the best time. The music, the big bands, the singers, the writers, and the pop composers were truly the Golden Age for me. I must admit that for the most part, opera is really better today!! I thank my lucky stars that my life has been beautiful. Meanwhile, I still teach voice in my apartment and enjoy my friends at Inverness Village. Also, I enjoy my apartment with a wonderful view from my balcony and with Cleo (my cat) at my side. One of my very thoughtful students purchased a bird feeder for my balcony and it attracts beautiful birds. What a joy nature can provide!! I have loved the exciting variety and talent of students, and the wonderful areas of music that I have been privileged to deal with during my music career. Passion, spontaneity, and loving relationships are what the Good Life is all about. To quote one of Ira Gershwin's great lines: "Who could ask for anything more?"

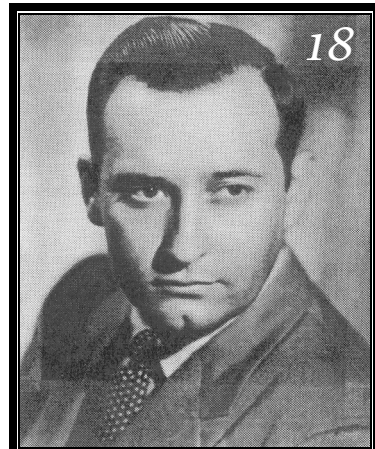
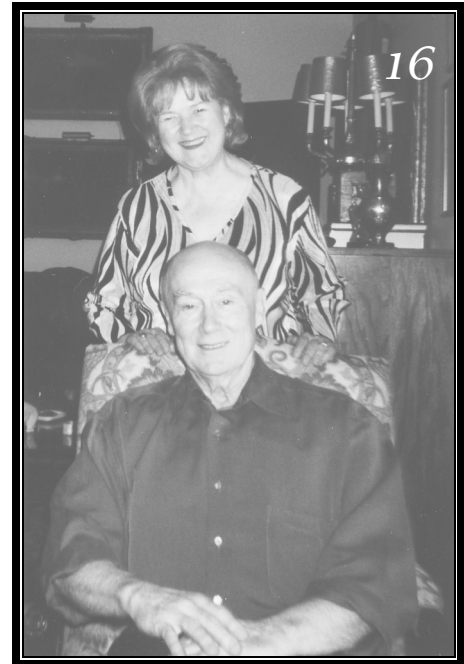
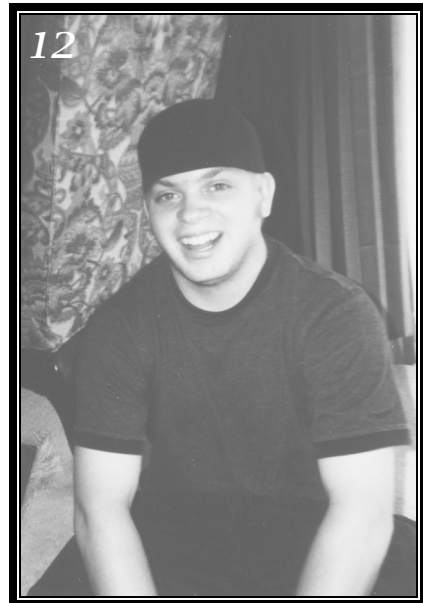
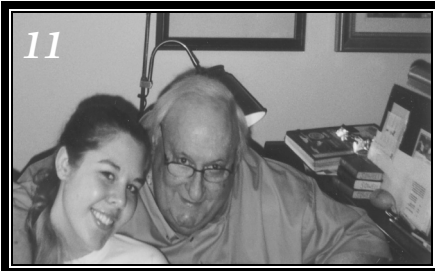
SOME RECENT SNAPSHOTS FROM MY STUDIO ...



*Photos by Laven
(mostly...)*

1. *Stephen Clark*
2. *Julie Knepper
O'Connor and Laven*
3. *Ashley St. Clair*
4. *Matthew Hunt*
5. *Stephanie Lockhart*
6. *Blake Duncan*
7. *Lindsay and Blake
Duncan*
8. *Joshua Michael Seals*
9. *Holly Richmond*

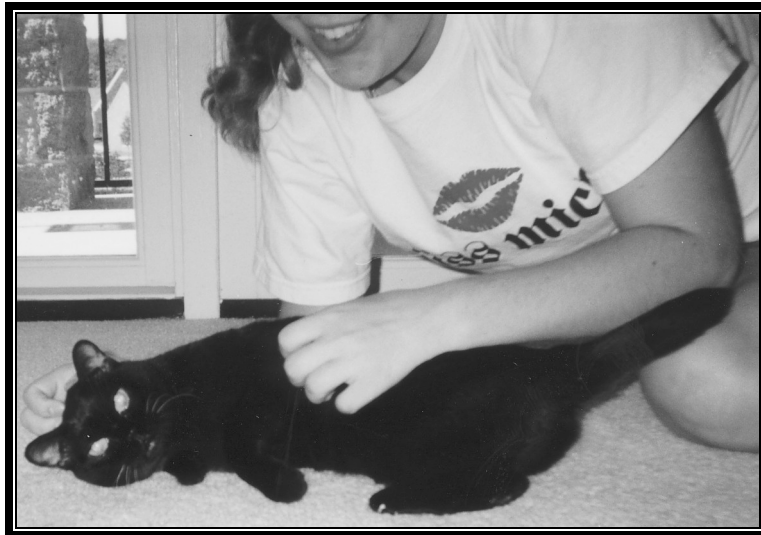
MORE RECENT SNAPSHOTS FROM MY STUDIO ...



*Photos by Laven
(mostly...)*

- 10. *Blake Duncan*
- 11. *Lindsay Duncan and Laven*
- 12. *David Brooks*
- 13. *Stephanie Lockhart*
- 14. *Joshua Michael Seals*
- 15. *David Marshall*
- 16. *Dixie Reppe and Dr. Thomas Allen*
- 17. *Ashley St. Clair*
- 18. *Guess Who??!!*

ONE MORE RECENT SNAPSHOT FROM MY STUDIO ...



Lindsay Duncan and Cleo

Index

A

Academy of Music (New York City): 66
Adams, Henry: 44
Adams, John Quincy: 44
aging: 19
Allen, Dr. Thomas: 74, 86
America the Beautiful: 49
American Guild of Organists
 Southwest Regional Convention, 1979: vi
Antlers Hotel (Colorado Springs, CO): 49
Aspen Institute of Music: v, 57, 76
Aspen, Colorado: 76
Aubrey, Mr. and Mrs. Sam: 73
Autori, Franco: 77

B

Bach, Johann Sebastian: 8, 13, 21
Ballet Russe (Paris, France): 39
Baroque period: 59
Baruch, Bernard: 36
Bates, Katharine Lee: 49
Beethoven, Ludwig van: 29
 Piano Concerto #2: 41
bel canto: 61
Bellini, Vincenzo: 61
 I Puritani: 55
Bennett, Tony: 23, 37
Benton, Joseph: v, 43, 69, 76
 as Giuseppe Bentonelli: 70
Bergstrom, Sean: 74
Bernstein, Leonard: i
Berry, Garvin and Marge: 73
 daughters Diane and Charlene: 73
Biggs, Dr. Mouzon: 80
Bizet, Georges
 Carmen: 51, 52
Bori, Lucrezia: 70
Boston (Massachusetts): 49
Boston Avenue Methodist Church: 80
Boulanger, Nadia: i, vi, 21
Brady Theater (Tulsa, OK): 55
Brahms, Johannes: 1, 37
British Petroleum: iii

Broadmoor Hotel (Colorado Springs, CO)
 Tavern Room: 49
Brooks, David: 74, 86
Brownlee, John: v, 69
Burney, Charles: i
Byron, George, Lord: 35

C

Café Carlisle (New York City): 45
Cantwell, Casey: 74
Carpenter, Dr. Nancy: iii
Carré, Albert: 67
Carson, Johnny: 55
Central High School (Oklahoma City, OK): 76
change: 11
Charlie Rose interview: 53
Charpentier, Gustave: 66
 Louise: 66
Chicago Opera: 43, 69
choral music, great: 4
Christmas Eve during childhood: 33
Christmas Eve in Tulsa: 14
Cio Cio San: 67
Claremore, Oklahoma: 55, 78
Clark, Stephen: 74, 85
Classen High School (Oklahoma City, OK): v
Classic Arts Showcase, cable TV show: 1
Cleo (my cat): 7, 22, 81, 83, 87
Cocteau, Jean: 81
Collinsville, Oklahoma: 74
Colorado College (Colorado Springs, CO): 49
Colorado Springs (Colorado): 49
 Antlers Hotel: 49
Columbia University (New York City): v, 51
Concerto (PBS program): 41
conducting: 74
 intangibles of: 57
Congregationalist, The: 49
Conservatoire Américain de Fontainebleau
 (France): vi
Cook, Barbara: 11
Cowan, Dr. Robert: iii
Crain, Jeanne: 23
Crawford, Carol I.: i, 51, 63, 76
Curry, Charlotte: 77

Index

- D**
- da Ponte, Lorenzo: 51
de Reszke, Jean: 66
Defrère, Désiré: v
Democracy: 17
Donizetti, Gaetano: 61
 Lucia di Lammermoor: 55, 61
Dostoyevsky, Fyodor: 3
downsizing syndrome: 15
Dr. Laura: 63
Dr. Ruth: 63
Duncan, Blake: 74, 85, 86
Duncan, Lindsay: 74, 85, 86, 87
Duncan, Mrs. Patricia: iii
- E**
- Eastman, George (Eastman Kodak Company):
 30
Edison High School (Tulsa, OK): iii, v, 41, 73,
 83
 Concert Chorus: ix
Edison Junior High Boys' Glee Club: v
Edwards, Allan: 80
Einstein, Albert: 44
elegiac singing line: 61
Ellington, Duke: 45
Emerson, Ralph Waldo: 19
Erickson, Mary Jane: 73
Eugene Field Elementary School (Oklahoma
 City, OK): 43
Eurydice: 35
- F**
- Feinstein, Michael: 45
First Presbyterian Church (Tulsa, OK): 14, 33,
 80
 Bernsen Center: vi
 Chancel Choir: v, vi
Fleming, Renée: 73
Fontainebleau, France: i, ix
Fort Wayne, Indiana: vi
Franz, Mary Lee: 73
French carols: 13
Freud, Sigmund: 63
Fuller, Dr. Munson: 73
Fuller, Vaughndean: iii, 73
- G**
- Garcia, Sandra: iv
Gay, Alice: iv
Gershwin, George: 1, 45
 Porgy and Bess: 52
Gershwin, Ira: 23, 83
Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von: 37
 Faust: 51
Gounod, Charles
 Faust: 51
Governor's Arts Award for Excellence in the
 Arts (1991): vi
Green Mountain Falls, Colorado: 49
Green, Chris: 74
Gregory, Connie: iv
Guild of Tulsa Opera, Inc.: 69, 70, 76
- H**
- Hahn, Reynaldo: 66
Hamilton, Carol: 74
Hamlisch, Marvin: 49
Hammerstein, Oscar: 23
Hammond, Mark: iii
Hammond, Phil: iii, v, ix
Handel, Georg Friederich: iv
 Messiah: 14, 37
Harnish, Orpha: 69
Hart, Lorenz: 23
Haymes, Dick: 23
Hemphill, David: iii
Hermann, Nancy C.: ix
Hines, Jerome: v
Hollywood Bowl: 69
Holmberg Hall: *See* University of Oklahoma
Horkey, Barbara: 53
Horkey, Dick: iv, 53, 71, 73
Houston, Texas: vi
Hudson, Mr. and Mrs. Eddie: 73
Humble, Robby: 74
Hunt, Matthew: 85
Hyeckka Club: iii, vi, 41
- I**
- Inhofe, James M.: vi
Intermission, official magazine of Tulsa
 Performing Arts Center: ix

Index

Inverness Village: iii, iv, vii, ix, 15, 19, 35, 37,
53, 73, 75, 80, 83
Cherokee Dining Room: 80

J

Jesus Christ: 79
John Knox Presbyterian Church (Tulsa, OK): 73
Johnson, Robert: 83
Juilliard School, (New York City): 74

K

Keats, John: 35
Kelly, Betty and Levan: iv
Klein, Charles "Chuck": 35, 73
Koltakov, Alexey: 41
Kondina, Olga: 61

L

Langenkamp, Jerry: 80
laughter: 9
LeDoux, Ginny: 37, 73
Leno, Jay: 55
Lessing, G. E.: 17
Letcher, Dr. Frank: 77
Letterman, David: 55
Lincoln Center: 55
Little Prince, The: i
Live From Lincoln Center PBS program: 55, 78
Lively, Susan: ix
Lockhart, Stephanie: 85, 86
Lombardi, Vince: ix
London: 33
18th-century: i
Luther, Martin: 13
Lynch, Miriam Spindler: iii, vi

M

Mabee Center (Tulsa, OK ORU campus): 45
Mahler, Gustav: 58
Mailer, Norman: 79
Manhattan School of Music: v
Margolis, Samuel: v
Marshall, David: 86
Martin, Ruth and Thomas: v
Massachusetts, Commonwealth of: 49

Massenet, Jules: 65
deceptive simplicity of: 66
Manon: 65
Thais: 65
Werther: 65
Matthew 7:1: 80
maturity, advancing: 19
Matz, John: 51
Maye, Marilyn: 45
McCay, Bob and Karen: iv
memories, beautiful: 15
Mercer, Johnny: 45
Merrill, Robert: v
Metropolitan Opera: 43, 66, 69, 73
1883 opening: 51
Montevallo, Alabama: iii
Moresco, Carlo: 55
Moseley, Carlos: i
Moser, Doris: 73
Mozart, Wolfgang Amadeus: 9, 21, 63
250th birthday: 51
Don Giovanni: 2
Magic Flute, The: 9, 63
Chorus of the Priests, Act II: 63
Marriage of Figaro, The: 51
Muller, Rev. Warren: 80
Music Educators National Conference, national
convention: vi
Music Teachers National Association, national
convention: vi
music, What is good?: 21
Mussorgsky, Modest
Boris Godunov: 78
My Music Notebook: i, v, vii, 70

N

National Anthem: 49
National Cathedral (Washington, D.C.): vi
Nazarene Church: 79
NBC Symphony Orchestra: 69
NBC's "Opera in English" radio hour: 69
Nero, Peter: 45
neurotic ecstasy, *bel canto* arias: 61
New York City: v, vi, 51, 53, 55, 74, 78
New York City Opera: 55, 78
New York Philharmonic: i

Index

Nobel Peace Prize (1952) – Dr. Albert Schweitzer: 8
Northeastern State University (Tahlequah, OK): 74

O

O'Connor, Julie Knepper: 85
Offenbach, Jacques
 Tales of Hoffmann: 51
Oklahoma Arts and Humanities Council: vi
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma: v, 43, 75
Oklahoma Congress of Parents and Teachers Distinguished Service Award (1970): vi
Oklahoma Music Educators Association, Honor Choir: vi
Oklahoma State University: 74
opera appreciation: 78
Opéra-Comique (Paris, France): 65
Orpheus: 35
Oxford Book of Carols: 13

P

Paris Conservatory: 66
Paris, France: ix, 39, 66
Parrish, Dr. Clark: 83
Patterson, Beverly and Sid: 73
Paul, Saint: 4
PBS Channel 11: 41
Pearson, Ron: 14, 80
Pelletier, Wilfred: 69
Penney, J. C.: 25
Peters, Roberta: 1
Pfortmiller, Kyle: 51
Pike, Zebulon: 49
Pike's Peak, Colorado: 49
Pinkerton, Lieutenant: 67
Plato: 28
Pop music: 37
Porter, Cole: 23, 45
Presley, Elvis: 23
prima donna: 61
Protopapas, Kostis: 51, 77
Proust, Marcel: 5
Puccini, Giacomo: 65
 La Bohème: 51, 55, 78
 Madama Butterfly: 67
 Turandot: 78

Puritanism: 13
Pushkin, Alexander: 35

Q

Queen Anne's Orphanage: 33

R

Reformation, Protestant: 13
Reppe, Dixie: 86
Reppe, Mr. Rod and Mrs. Dixie: 73
Rethberg, Elizabeth: 70
Richmond, Holly: 86
Riverside Church (New York City): vi
Roark-Strummer, Linda: 74
Robinson, James: 55, 78
Rodman, Tom: 83
Rogers, Richard: 23
Roosevelt Junior High School (Oklahoma City, OK): 76
Root, Dr. Jean: iv
Rossini, Gioacchino: 61
Rubenstein, Bernard: 77
Rubinstein, Artur: 1

S

Saied Music Company: 41
Saied, Helen: 73
Saied, James G. "Jimmy": 41
Sanderson, Sybil: 66
Schaldenbrand, Christopher: 2
Schmidt, Ken: 83
Schubert, Jana: 74
Schweitzer, Dr. Albert: iii, 8, 81
Seals, Joshua: 74
Seals, Joshua Michael: 85, 86
Seals, Mrs. Debbie: iii
secco recitativo: 61
serendipity: 53
Shelley, Percy Bysshe: 35
Shepard, Dr. Robert and Mrs. Eleanor: iv, 35, 73
Short, Bobby: 45
Sills, Beverly: 55, 78
Sinatra, Frank: 23, 45
Singher, Martial: i, v, 76
Sisler, Dr. and Mrs. Jerry: 73
Sisler, Helen Marie: iv

Index

- Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi: 82
Skiatook High School: iii
Skiatook, Oklahoma: 74
Snell, Clark: v, 43, 76
Snell, Ruth: 76
Sondheim, Stephen: 23
Sowell, Laven: 69
 first influential figure: v, 43, 76
 honors: vi
 on conducting and teaching voice: 74
 religious beliefs of: 79
 separation of church and state, views on: 81
 thoughts on Tulsa Opera, Inc.: 76
 thoughts regarding Cleo (his cat): 81
Spindler, Nelle Garbutt: iii
Spindler Lynch, Miriam: iii, vi
St. Clair, Ashley: 85, 86
St. Clair, Mrs. Karen: iii
St. Francis of Assisi: 13
St. Olaf College: iii
Stafford, Jo: 23
Star-spangled Banner, The: 49
State Fair: 23
Strauss, Richard
 Ariadne auf Naxos: 51
Stravinsky, Igor: 39, 58
 Rite of Spring, The: 39
Streisand, Barbra: 23
- T
- Teatro San Carlo (Naples), première of *Lucia di Lammermoor*: 61
Thomas, John Charles: 70
Thompson, Dr. Chris: 83
Tibbett, Lawrence: 70
Tidwell, Seth: 83
Torres, Virginia Anderson: iii, 49
Toscanini, Arturo: 1
Trinity Episcopal Church (Tulsa, OK): 74
Tucker, Richard: 1
Tucson, Arizona: iii
Tulsa Accredited Music Teachers' Association (TAMTA): iii, vi
Tulsa Children's Chorus: 73
Tulsa Opera Chorus: v, 55, 77
Tulsa Opera Chronicles: i, vii, 70
Tulsa Opera, Inc.: vi, 2, 51, 61, 76
Tulsa Performing Arts Center: ix, 2
Tulsa Philharmonic: 1, 39, 40, 45, 77
Tulsa Symphony Orchestra: 77
Tulsa World: vi, 3, 77
Tulsa Youth Chorale, The: 37
- U
- Ugly American: 67
University of Central Oklahoma (Edmond): 74
University of Oklahoma: v, 43, 52, 69, 70, 74, 76
 Holmberg Hall: i, 52, 69
University of Tulsa: vi, 57, 74, 83
 LS Director of Choral Activities: 73
 Modern Choir "Official Ambassadors of Good Will (1982)": vi
- V
- Valentine's Day: 16
Vaughan, Sarah: 23
Verdi, Giuseppe
 Aida: 78
 Don Carlo: 78
 La Traviata: 55
Vintage Newsmagazine: ix
Vivaldi, Antonio: 21
- W
- Wagner, Charles, L.: v
Washington University (St. Louis, MO): 74
Washington, D.C.: vi
Watt, Mr. and Mrs. Neal: 73
Watts, James D., Jr.: 77
Wednesday Morning Musicale: iii
Weigand, David: 73
Wellesley College: 49
Wewoka, Oklahoma: v
Williams, Jack: i, vii, 80
Winters, Jonathan: 9
Wiseman, Dr. William J.: 33, 80
Wiseman, Mavis: 80
World War II: 33