

MY
MUSIC
NOTEBOOK



BY
LAVEN SOWELL

DURING MY TIME AS A TEACHER I HAVE
RECEIVED GUIDANCE, ENCOURAGEMENT,
KINDNESS, AND HOSPITALITY FROM MANY
PEOPLE. THIS BOOK IS FOR ALL OF THEM AND
MY STUDENTS.

Copyright © 2000 by Laven Sowell



Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 00-104137

Published by Hammondo Press in The United States of America
City of Publication: Tulsa, Oklahoma
First Edition: July, 2000

*Nothing is better than music.
When it takes us out of time, it
has done more than we have the
right to hope for. It has broadened
the limits of our sorrowful lives, it
has lit up the sweetness of our
hours of happiness by effacing the
pettinesses that diminish us,
bringing us back pure and new to
what was, what will be, and what
music has created for us.*

— Nadia Boulanger

Contents

FOREWORD, by Tulsa Mayor M. Susan Savage.....	I
PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS, by Laven.....	II
INTRODUCTION, by Phil Hammond	IV
MY TEACHERS — AND THEIR TEACHERS	1
ERNESTINE SCHUMANN-HEINK	26
CHARLES L. WAGNER’S <i>LA BOHÈME</i> TOUR	29
EDISON HIGH SCHOOL — AND THE SIXTIES.....	38
NADIA BOULANGER AND FONTAINEBLEAU, FRANCE.....	56
THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.....	66
THE UNIVERSITY OF TULSA — AND THE SEVENTIES AND EIGHTIES	82
SOME THOUGHTS FOR FUTURE VOICE/MUSIC MAJORS	131
THE EVERGREEN CONFERENCE ON CHURCH MUSIC.....	135
TULSA ACCREDITED MUSIC TEACHERS ASSOCIATION	139
THOUGHTS ON OPERA.....	142
TULSA OPERA, INC. — AND THE NINETIES	160
TULSA OPERA ANNALS 1992 - 2000.....	185
A SMATTERING OF SNAPSHOTS FROM MY SCRAPBOOKS.....	192
POPULAR MUSIC	200
SOME FAVORITE QUOTATIONS	205
WHAT IS MUSIC?	211
CLEO (MY CAT)	214
A THOUGHT (OR TWO) FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY.....	216
INDEX	218

FOREWORD



M. SUSAN SAVAGE
MAYOR

Dear Reader:

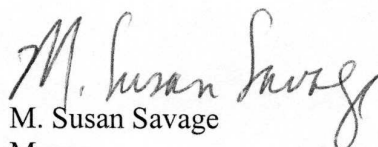
Laven Sowell has touched the lives of thousand of Tulsans. His fascinating stories are collected in this informative and entertaining volume. My first encounter with Chorus Master Sowell was as a student at Edison High School. At that time, his leadership took our school choir to national prominence.

Mr. Sowell has served Tulsa through four decades, training local choral groups to perform magnificently. His skill enabled each singer to create a sound more beautiful than he or she ever thought possible.

While Mr. Sowell taught high school students during the day, he joined the staff of the Tulsa Opera as Chorus Master. He prepared the Opera chorus for thirty-four spectacular seasons. In 1972 he joined the faculty of the University of Tulsa and added the duties of choirmaster for the First Presbyterian Church to further enrich the musical life of our city.

Thank you Mr. Sowell for your tremendous contribution to the arts in Tulsa.

Sincerely,


M. Susan Savage
Mayor

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First things first: this book is the result of my former student, Phil Hammond, saying to me about two years ago that I should write down my stories and experiences for my friends and students. Then he made the most important statement of all by suggesting that he would help by recording these thoughts on his computer. Everyone who knows Phil knows that he is a brilliant fellow with a marvelous education. He has a BA in American Studies from Amherst College in Amherst, Massachusetts. During his junior year at Amherst he became a Phi Beta Kappa, and he graduated *summa cum laude*. Phil later attended Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, earning a Master's Degree from the Kellogg Graduate School of Management, where he was a recipient of one of the prestigious F.C. Austin Scholarships. Phil's encouragement, and his assistance with editing and refining my manuscript, have been invaluable. Without Phil, this book simply would not have happened. Currently, Phil is employed in Tulsa as a technology consultant for BP Amoco — and he is enjoying life with his wife, Dr. Nancy Carpenter Hammond, and their twelve-year-old son, Mark.

Writing this book has given me the opportunity to express, once again, my gratitude to many people who have been important in my life. This book is not to be regarded as an autobiography; frankly, I don't feel that I deserve to be commemorated in an autobiography. I have had a wonderful life with modest success. Through the years, the opportunities for my teaching and choral conducting just seemed to occur. I've never applied for a job — therefore I must have a guardian angel! Serendipity has obviously played a role, and there is something to be said for being prepared and being in the right place at the right time.

Looking backward, in the late afternoon of my life, I wouldn't change too much; however, I would do some things differently. One thing that I certainly would not change would be the pursuit of excellence. The emotions that accompany this pursuit are energizing, and give us the sense that we can always do better. These traits pay dividends for your students for a lifetime.

The purpose of this book is to reminisce about things I did with others. It was together that we made music, and those memories are dear to me. My perception and memory of these events come from my scrapbooks, which I kept steadfastly through the years. I always thought that, one day, these scrapbooks would be useful, and this seems to be the occasion. But above all, I would hope that this book is a certain kind of love story. It records, unashamedly, my love for music and my admiration for certain human beings who were influential during my time.

There arrives a time in a person's life when he really feels that he has something to say. There will be people whom I love and admire who will read this book and not agree with some of my thinking, and that is the way life is. Good friends sometimes disagree.

Preface and Acknowledgments

In a book which attempts to relate the events of many years of the past, it is impossible to do justice to all who have brought warmth, color, and stimulus. This book, I hope, will in some small way pay tribute to the instrumentalists, singers, students, and friends who have given so much of themselves through the years to create beauty in one way or another.

This is not a “how-to-do” kind of book. I have stayed away from giving any advice about vocal technique because I don’t believe that one can learn to sing from a book. Particularly, young students should listen only to their teachers, because reading about voice production can be very confusing.

We can only be what we are; we can’t change what has been given to us. However, we can do our best to develop our gifts, and it is the striving that brings happiness and fulfillment. Music has been my life, and I owe so much to music and to the musicians I have known. What really matters is that there is an abundance of wonderful music to be heard, and this will always be so because wonderful new talent is constantly emerging.

I owe special appreciation to a group of people who lent me research material, and for their efforts in obtaining cast lists, for encouragement, and the like. My deep gratitude and thanks to the following: Frank Bottom, Dr. Robert Cowan, Charlotte Curry, Edward Dumit, Jay Exon, Ellis Gibson, Mary Jane Gibson, Hilary Kitz, Dr. Frank Letcher, Miriam Spindler Lynch, Mrs. Thomas Matthews, Ronald Pearson, Richard Steel Ruprecht, W. H. Shambaugh, Harry Todd, Carrie Vesely, and Dr. Jack A. Williams.

L. S.
June, 2000

INTRODUCTION

I imagine that no educated person ever realizes how much he owes to his teachers, though he may recognize that the debts are large and impossible to repay. It has been my privilege to be able to give a little bit back to one of my very best teachers, Laven, by helping to bring this book into existence.

I first met Laven thirty-eight years ago when, as a new seventh grade student, I auditioned for his Edison Junior High Boys' Glee Club. I attended his choral classes all through my six years at Edison. In the High School I had the particular honor and privilege of being a member of the celebrated Edison Concert Chorus. The trip this chorus took in the spring of my senior year to perform the Sunday afternoon concert at the Riverside Church in New York City — which was, as usual, broadcast live on the radio — remains a “peak” experience, vivid in my memory to this day.

Laven has the gift of making work fun. During those years at Edison my friends and I learned to perform, with authenticity and artistic integrity, choral music of many different styles and periods. I also learned that the pursuit of excellence can be, as we would have said back in the sixties, “a blast.” I think the ability not just to convey but to exemplify this message is something which all great teachers have in common.

Looking back, I can imagine that Laven felt at home in the Edison High School of that period. His enthusiasms are of the sort that are infectious, and they could be found in abundance among Edison faculty and students in all areas of study. One indication that this was a kind of “golden age” for the school is the number of National Merit Semifinalists produced. In one year Edison had more of these students than all the other Tulsa schools combined. Laven, in fact, at one time had four in his Concert Chorus — ten percent of the choristers. (Unhappily I was not one of them!)

My friendship with Laven entered a new phase in 1977 when I returned to work in Tulsa and began singing in two of Laven's organizations: the Tulsa Opera Chorus and the First Presbyterian Church Chancel Choir. In fact it was in the choir room at First Presbyterian that I became acquainted with my wife, Nancy.

In those days Laven and I developed a custom of occasionally winding down at his home in the evening simply by starting a conversation and then letting it take us wherever it would — from music to psychology, education, and current events — even including politics and religion! Over a period of some twenty years and at least a few score of these meetings, I have learned many new and wonderful things about Laven, two of which account to some degree for this book. First, Laven's life has intersected with the lives of many very interesting characters, including not a few “giants” of music in the twentieth century, sometimes in unusual and serendipitous ways. Second, Laven is, if not the best, then at least the most *thorough* scrapbook-keeper on the planet. Although his volumes of memorabilia are both numerous and

Introduction

in most cases very thick, I am convinced that there is not a photo, newspaper clipping, letter, or concert program that he cannot retrieve from this library, on demand, in about thirty seconds! Thanks to this unusual feature of Laven's personality, his is an extraordinarily well-documented life, and consequently there is a lot of accurate history in these pages.

It has been, as always, fun to work with Laven on this book. The task of producing the final product has been made easier by the fact that the text is entirely Laven's: he wrote the book in longhand and dictated it to me. You will discover as you read his book that Laven is a very good writer. Little was required in the way of editing, and even this was a collaborative effort.

So — enjoy Laven's book!

Phil Hammond
Tulsa, Oklahoma
June, 2000

MY MUSIC NOTEBOOK

MY TEACHERS — AND THEIR TEACHERS

It is difficult to imagine a professional musician who doesn't owe a lot to his teachers. Teachers help to make us into the human beings and musicians that we have become. Our primary teachers, and their teachers, constitute the major package of influence in our musical life. This is our musical heritage. I believe that it is important to recognize the need to preserve and interpret our heritage. Our students have a right to know. It is not only thoroughly appropriate to be curious about these matters, but important to connect our students with a feeling for *their* history.

As I have grown older, I have come to believe that teaching is probably one of the noblest professions of all. It is unselfish and honorable. My mother always taught me that hard work was honorable, whether it was glamorous or otherwise. Teaching is hard work, and one of the most unappreciated, underrated, underpaid professions in the world. I am now almost retired, and approaching seventy at the time of this writing.

The private teaching I do in my home gives me fixity of purpose and keeps me looking forward to each day. It is a means to keep giving. Everyone needs a reason to get up every day and pursue life with purpose. Also, writing this book and other pieces has helped satisfy my need to remain productive. Obviously, I am a genuine product of the American work ethic. You see, teaching voice is not just the routine and dry business of singing scales; a really fine teacher is one who can, with luck and the right student, light a spark. This spark will bring enthusiasm for whatever you are studying. Actually, here is where learning occurs: it occurs when you have a genuine desire to know. My teachers caused those sparks to occur; learning out of the desire to know and intellectual curiosity is a beautiful experience. All of this, combined with the indefinable *need* to make music, is the lifeblood of musical study.

All of the teachers who are mentioned in the following paragraphs have been the strongest influences in my life. This is a way for me to pay tribute to these people who have given so much joy and inspiration to me through the years, and it is a way for me to introduce my former and current students to their musical family members.

CLARK E. SNELL and Oklahoma City

The first major influence in my young musical life had a special ability, both as a human being and as a musician. This was a man who needed assistance getting dressed, getting up and down the stairs, getting into an auto, and all the things one needs when he is paralyzed from the waist down. He was sheer inspiration, and you could recognize his bright countenance upon entering his presence. Now, we are talking about the man who was more responsible for molding my life, in general and musically, than anybody else. When I was in the ninth grade at Roosevelt Junior High School in Oklahoma City, my voice had become settled in the baritone range. One of my teachers at the school suggested that I call Mr. Clark E. Snell for voice

lessons, and I did. This opened up a new world to me, particularly as he began to introduce me to the real principles of good singing. Ultimately, he invited me to sing in the church choir which he directed. This was also an enormous eye-opener, because I had come from a “fundamentalist” church experience where the music was helter-skelter at best. Mr. Snell had a choir that sang fine anthems that were carefully rehearsed and he utilized many singers who had been thoughtfully trained. The result was dynamite in my young, thirsty musical mind. This church was Crown Heights Methodist



With Clark Snell, my first voice teacher, in Colorado. Mr. Snell was a huge influence in my life.

Church, which had two recent Governors as members. When, on Sunday morning, I could see Governor Johnston Murray and Governor Roy J. Turner seated in the congregation of the church, as a young high school boy I was impressed! However, it was the experience of an orderly, disciplined, and artistic approach to the music in the worship service that truly moved me.



In my last year as a voice student of Mr. Snell, and as a graduating senior at Classen High School, I entered the Young Artists Contest sponsored by the Ladies’ Music Club. Fortunately for me, I won the vocal competition and received an invitation from the President of the Club, Willi Emerson Murray, the Governor’s wife — herself a fine pianist — to sing in the home of Mrs. Frank Buttram. The Buttram family have been major supporters of the arts in Oklahoma City for decades. The winners of the piano and string divisions were also invited to perform. This was an exciting event, because the winners of the competition were always invited to swim in the Buttram swimming pool. In those days very few people had their own swimming pool. Believe me, it was a BIG DEAL for me to sing in their home and swim in their pool! After all, I came from meager means, or shall we say, I was an impecunious youth. Now, looking back, I am aware that having a little more money than is necessary is a happier way to live!

Since I was a hard-working voice student, Mr. Snell decided that I could give a full-length recital as a high school senior. This was definitely a challenge to me, and I worked on this recital with sincere enthusiasm. Looking back on the repertoire I

sang at that time, I am amazed because it was all great stuff, but some of it was material that I would not allow a high school student of mine to sing because it was material that was too mature for the young voice. I don't blame this on Mr. Snell because I am certain that I was difficult to tame. I was ambitious, and loved those big arias that Robert Merrill sang. Incidentally, this recital program was done in the beautiful little recital hall in the State Historical Society Building on the State Capitol grounds. Also, my accompanist was an excellent young pianist (my age) who has had an extraordinary career as a choral director. His name was Ronald Shirey.



As a high school student, I not only worked intensely on my music; I had a job as a stock boy at a downtown Main Street clothing store, Rothschild's. Rothschild's was one of Oklahoma City's most prestigious clothing stores at that time. I made sixty cents an hour at the start, and before too long I was making sixty-five cents. I not only made money, but I learned much about human nature. I have two vivid memories from this job. The first is running out to Main Street to see President Harry S. Truman standing up in a convertible and waving his hat to the crowd. Mr. Truman was running for reelection at this time.

My second memory is of William H. ("Alfalfa Bill") Murray, probably Oklahoma's most colorful political figure. He was an early-day Governor and the President of the Oklahoma Constitutional Convention in 1906. Governor Murray, as a very old man, could usually be found sitting on the concrete wall that surrounded the Post Office in Oklahoma City. He was a fixture there, invariably talking politics. He wore dirty, baggy pants, and his beard was always saturated with tobacco juice.

One day the manager of my department at Rothschild's sent me to the Post Office on an errand, and on the inside Governor Murray was trying to put coins into a vending machine. The old man's hands trembled and shook uncontrollably. Seeing his predicament, I said to him: "Governor Murray, could I help you?" and he told me what he needed. Finally, he asked me my name and thanked me for the help, saying "You're a fine young man." This made me feel so good inside, because I had spoken with someone who had helped to bring about our statehood. I have always been proud to be an Oklahoman.

It is interesting for me to recall that as a teenager I grew up seeing political signs that read "Elect Ross Rizley to the U.S. Senate." (This was the same campaign in which President Truman was running against Thomas E. Dewey.) Ross Rizley was at this time a congressman from the Eighth District living in Guymon, Oklahoma. He was influential in state politics for years, and I was pleasantly surprised, after meeting opera enthusiast Robert Rizley several years later in Tulsa, to learn that he is Ross Rizley's son.



Mr. Snell was a wonderful man who brought many things into my life. He was a longtime friend of Joseph Benton at the University of Oklahoma, and on his recommendation I went to O.U. for the express purpose of studying with Mr. Benton. Mr. Snell was an independent/private voice teacher during most of his career. However, he did teach in the early days at Oklahoma City University, at a time when he and pianist Dr. Clarence Burg practically ran the entire music department of this young school. He also was, for a period of time, Visiting Professor of Voice at the University of Oklahoma, immediately after the departure of Professor Barre Hill, a well-known baritone, and before the renowned British soprano Eva Turner was appointed to the School of Music voice faculty. She remained at O.U. for ten years, and taught with exuberance. Everyone had great respect for her past achievements in opera and her effective teaching.



Before I leave Mr. Snell as a subject, I would like to discuss his musical background because I feel that all of this has contributed to my own musical heritage which in turn becomes part of my students' heritage.

Mr. Snell's principal teacher was the American bass, **HERBERT WITHERSPOON**. Mr. Witherspoon was one of the first American singers to be engaged by the Metropolitan Opera's new manager, Giulio Gatti-Casazza. He made his debut in 1908, and in 1925 he became President of Chicago Musical College. Interestingly, he was named to succeed Gatti-Casazza as General Manager of the Met, but unfortunately died of a heart attack six weeks after taking office. Mr. Witherspoon was a distinguished voice teacher and wrote a

Herbert Witherspoon. The inscription reads: "To Clark Snell who is doing fine work & [we were unable to decipher the rest!!!] Herbert Witherspoon, 1927" Mr. Witherspoon was Mr. Snell's primary voice teacher. During the 1920s, Mr. Witherspoon was a highly regarded voice teacher throughout the United States, traveling around the country giving master classes. He was also a renowned opera and concert singer.



book on singing: *A Treatise for Teachers and Singers*. He was well known enough to Tulsans in the 1920s to have been engaged in 1927 and 1928 by Tulsa's Hyechka Club, as a singer and lecturer. The Hyechka Club is Oklahoma's oldest music club. Hyechka is the Creek Indian word for "music." In the early days of Tulsa, the Hyechka Club played a large role in bringing culture to the young City of Tulsa, and continues to be very active to the present day.

Mr. Witherspoon's recorded legacy is an important one, and includes many fine recordings of arias and songs on the old RCA Victor "Red Seal" label. Mr. Snell not only studied with Mr. Witherspoon in his New York studio, but also served for three summers as Mr. Witherspoon's accompanist in his voice studio at the Chicago Musical College.

Another teacher in Mr. Snell's background was **LOUIS GRAVEURE**, who was a concert singer and did oratorio work throughout the United States and Europe. He was born in London in 1888 and died in San Francisco in 1968. He came to great prominence as a baritone, and then in 1928 he started singing as a tenor, making many high-quality recordings during that time period. The strength and clarity of his warm tone quality and his dramatic involvement were especially impressive in those old recordings.

Two other famous names round out the list of teachers in Mr. Snell's musical history. One, **FRANK LAFORGE**, was one of the most popular vocal coaches in the '30s and '40s. He achieved much of his reputation from his early work as accompanist for Marcella Sembrich. He coached Lily Pons, Lawrence Tibbett, Richard Crooks, and many other leading singers of that day. As an accompanist he frequently toured with these singers, and he was in great demand for his master classes of vocal repertoire. Mr. LaForge's piano technique was very much admired; he had been a student of the eminent piano teacher Theodor Leschetizky. Mr. LaForge died at the piano playing for a singer in recital in New York City. Maybe it's a good way to depart this world, doing what you love to do. The other influence on Mr. Snell was a Metropolitan Opera conductor, **RICHARD HAGEMAN** (who incidentally, late in his career, appeared as the conductor in Mario Lanza's Hollywood films). Many people today would know Richard Hageman from his famous songs, most notably "Do Not Go, My Love." I remember an interesting story from Mr. Snell about Mr. Hageman: he was a "no-nonsense" person, and a bit severe, and when a student sang in his master class and appeared to be unprepared, he would simply say: "Please return to your seat. Next?"

As a part of my heritage from Mr. Snell: he was the most instinctive musician in my memory. Everything he did was completely natural in music. This was all validated with the most solid musical training.

JOSEPH BENTON (BENTONELLI) and the University of Oklahoma

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. Benton had briefly been a student of Mr. Snell's before going to Europe. (Mr. Benton's teacher at O.U. in the early days had been William Schmidt.) At some point in this social discourse, 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 and it was necessary to audition for the entire voice faculty at the beginning of the semester. This audition turned out to be a frightful but memorable occasion. For one thing, I was young and nervous and everything seemed like a matter of life or death. I auditioned with a small aria by Monteverdi, and stood near the piano so I could see the music if I needed it. Bang!! All of a sudden somebody screamed at me, saying in a loud, resonant voice: "My deah, do you wahnt to be a singah?" I almost fainted, but I answered meekly, "Yes, I do," and Eva Turner (famous British soprano) continued, saying: "Do you know what you are singing about, my deah?" I did survive this audition and my time at O.U. was often energized and charmed by this unique and wonderful woman from England.

Opposite: Joseph Benton at the height of his career as a singer. This photo-portrait was printed in Italy but the inscription is down-to-earth: "Laven: You have progressed as man as well as singer. May you continue to rise to ever higher levels, is the wish of yore pore ole teacher, Joseph Benton. O.U. April 1955."



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



Lauen:
you have progressed as man as well as singer.
May you continue to rise to ever higher levels, is the
wish of your pore ole teacher, Joseph Benton
L. A. B. April 1955-

PEACE
CATANIA

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!

In 1934, Mr. Benton was chosen as one of the four most popular operatic tenors singing in Italy. He created leading tenor roles in two operas at their world premieres: A. Smareglia's *The Vassal* at Trieste (1930) and L. Refice's *Cecilia* at the Royal Opera House in Rome (1934). In 1935 he sang the leading tenor role at the American premiere of Ottorino Respighi's *The Flame* at the Chicago Opera, along with a cast which included Rosa Raisa and with Richard Hageman (remember him?) conducting.

In 1934, Mr. Benton returned to the United States where he made his American debut at the Chicago Opera in Puccini's *Tosca*, with Maria Jeritza and Pasquale Amato. He was warmly received in Chicago and this is 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*. The soprano singing *Manon* on that evening was Lucrezia Bori. He did extensive concert tours across the United States and appeared on many of the popular radio programs of that time period.



Mr. Benton loved to tell stories about his illustrious career and he was a remarkable raconteur. One of his favorite stories was about the two times he sang for the Roosevelts in the White House in 1938. The first time was in the form of a joint recital with soprano Rose Bampton. This was following the annual Diplomatic Dinner in the East Room. For his second appearance he sang an entire program of eleven songs honoring Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt.

Another of his favorite stories concerned Will Rogers. Shortly after the fatal plane crash in 1935, the State of Oklahoma chose Will Rogers to represent the state in the Rotunda of the National Capitol, and in 1939 a bronze statue was dedicated. Mr. Benton sang and the Marine Band played for the ceremony in the Rotunda. Each state is allowed by law to have two representatives in the National Hall of Fame in the Rotunda of the Capitol. Sequoyah, the Cherokee Indian who had invented the Cherokee alphabet, was the first; Will Rogers was the second, and Rogers was part Cherokee. Oklahoma is thus represented by two Cherokees, and that seems highly appropriate. These stories always fascinated me because they are not only interesting, but give us a real sense of history.

Mr. Benton was highly acclaimed by the press throughout the United States during his concertizing career. Here are a few examples from the American press:

The voice has lyric beauty and warmth of color ... he moved the audience by the sincerity and emotion of his interpretation.

Olin Downes, *The New York Times*

... he matches Tibbett in his English diction.

New York Daily News

... as beautiful vocalism as we have ever heard ... can cope with the highest tenor tessitura yet still maintain a sensitive and poetic style ... warm, even timbre ... romantic sincerity and personable appearance.

John Rosenfield, Jr., *Dallas Morning News*



Mr. Benton returned to his alma mater, the University of Oklahoma, to teach in 1944. I studied with him there from 1951 through 1955, at which time I received the Bachelor of Music in Voice degree. These four years were eye-opening years for me. My first two years at the University, I commuted every day from Oklahoma City because I could not afford to live on the campus. This made studying difficult, and some of my grades from those two years reflect this. However, my voice study did not seem to suffer because I gave my best in that area. At the beginning of my junior year I moved to Norman, where I lived in Whitehand Hall, which was just “cattywhampus” from Holmberg Hall, where all the music students spent their time “hanging out” and practicing. I loved living on campus because one develops enduring friendships, musical and otherwise, in those circumstances, and one gets a real feel for living independent of the family.

Toward the end of that year, it was necessary for me to give a junior recital. I had become fast friends with George Chaney, pianist, who was the first African-American student in the School of Music. He was extremely talented and a sensitive accompanist. The result of our recital was an outstanding collaboration. Since African-Americans had only recently been admitted to the University, our work together was acknowledged by the thundering applause we received when we walked on the stage of Holmberg Hall that day. So we not only did a fine recital; we made a little bit of history as well. After two or three years I was still in touch with George, who had gone on to teach piano at Langston University. At one point he invited me to come to Langston to sing a recital, and this experience afforded me many fond memories. I still remember that, at the reception following the recital, all of George’s students lined up, single file, to meet me and to welcome me to the University. I have tried desperately in recent years to find someone who knows him, or to track him down, but without success. I often wonder if he has gone on to fulfill the great promise he showed in those early years when I knew him.

This junior recital brings a twinge of nostalgia when I recall that it was the last time Mr. Snell, my first voice teacher, heard me sing. He died in August of 1954. This was an enormous loss for me, because he had been my anchor.



During my senior year, I shared an apartment near the campus and McFarlin Methodist Church with David Hemphill. David is a retired music teacher, living in Arizona now. He spends much of his time traveling around the United States attending opera performances. I understand that Mr. Hemphill celebrated the new year (2000) and the new millennium in Rome, Italy. Seems highly appropriate to be in the Eternal City of Rome for these events. What a life!

My big senior music project was my senior voice recital. On this occasion I was most fortunate in having Lloyd Alan Walser to accompany me. Lloyd was a freshman at the University at the time, and extremely talented. Later, he had a wonderful career in New York City as a vocal coach and as Chorus Master for the New York City Opera, and just before his untimely death he had become the Assistant Chorus Master at the Metropolitan Opera, serving under David Stivender. Lloyd's major at O.U. was piano/organ, although his chief interests were opera, singing, and singers. Therefore, it is not surprising that his big success career-wise was in operatic music.

An interesting point concerning this recital, and memorable at the same time, was that when we walked on and off the stage the curtain was parted by Carlos Moseley, who was at the time the Director of the School of Music. The thing that makes this so memorable was that he was leaving O.U. after five years to become the Managing Director of the New York Philharmonic. This was a post he held for many years. He was a charming man with a decided Southern drawl, and on him it sounded very debonair.



An amazing gentleman who taught music history at O.U. during this time was Professor Spencer Norton. (He was my piano teacher, too.) Professor Norton came into the classroom spewing music history, without any books or notes. He was an absolute storehouse of information. I often wondered what the result would be if he really became excited, because he was always so "cool" and "laid-back." This was not an attitude that he acquired, it was simply the way he was. He was an outstanding professor who will be remembered for his brilliance and quiet manner.

During my time at O.U. I lived and breathed singing. My fantasy and aspirations centered in the area of Opera and I continually thought of being a leading baritone. Looking back, I think it is important to have dreams and to aspire to great things, because it invigorates and energizes us. Little did I know at that time that my happiest and most productive years would be spent teaching voice and conducting choral music. Frankly, I feel that teaching is a high calling, and I'm grateful that fate led me to teaching, because teaching has provided me with the best moments of my life.

I had a music education course at O.U. that was taught by Professor Ernest J. Schultz, and this was my first exposure to choral conducting. Professor Schultz was



A photo from my freshman year at the University of Oklahoma, 1951.

Oh, how I loved those days at OU! I particularly wanted to include this photo because it gives my students an image of me before age took its toll!

a dapper and jaunty little man who could really get your attention. This class provided me with a lot of practical stuff which is pertinent and germane to today's choral situations. Professor Schultz's grandson has been the first chair French horn player in the Tulsa Philharmonic for many years. His name is J. Bruce Schultz, and he enjoys a fine reputation as a horn player and as a lawyer, too.

Another interesting person was the Dean of Fine Arts, Dr. Harrison Kerr. He was regarded as a fine composer, and he was one of the first students to attend the

Conservatoire de Fontainebleau that first summer (1921), studying with Nadia Boulanger along with his friend Aaron Copland. He was the quintessential dean, staying in his office most of the time and smoking a pipe rather ceremoniously. However, he did sign my degree and was a highly respected musician.

Speaking of pipe smokers, Dr. George L. Cross comes to mind — the President of the University. He was loved by everyone and in the music school we even felt a special camaraderie because his daughter, Mary Lynn Cross, was a voice major and a student of Eva Turner. President Cross often attended the programs offered by the music school.



Two concerts that made an indelible impression on my young mind while a student at O.U. were given by Jennie Tourel and Eleanor Steber. Tourel, a mezzo-soprano, was a great artist and before the evening was finished she had revealed many sides of her artistry. She came at us with an abundance of languages, rhythms, styles, complexities and simplicities. In her wonderful, engaging way she transported us through a myriad of emotions communicated through her art. When she stood to sing, she gave the illusion of being at least a High Priestess in the realm of music. I also remember a magnificent recital given by Eleanor Steber. She had a beautiful soprano voice and a high degree of spontaneity, with enormous musical instinct. Instinct is an intangible quality, that natural musical instinct that great artists always seem to have. (But it must be said that natural musical instinct without solid musicianship and the technique that comes from good training is worthless.) Miss Steber was an exciting operatic personality, having sung many leading roles at the Metropolitan and on many of the popular radio programs of that day. She created the title role in Samuel Barber's opera *Vanessa*. Miss Steber was the quintessential American prima donna, and everyone loved her for it.



The major influence in Mr. Benton's singing career would have been his study with **JEAN DE RESZKE**. De Reszke was born in Poland and made his American debut in Chicago in 1891. He sang for the first time at the Metropolitan as Romeo in Gounod's popular *Romeo and Juliet*. His beautiful voice, fine musicianship, and handsome appearance made him unsurpassed as a leading tenor all over the world. The Met's first *Otello*, on January 11, 1892, was in fact Jean de Reszke. Not everything about him was perfect. He was accused of being eccentric and easygoing. An example of this was his refusal to sing the aria "*Celeste Aida*" because it was too difficult to sing before he was properly warmed up. This aria comes at the beginning of the Opera in Act I. He sang Radames nineteen times at the Metropolitan, and sang "*Celeste Aida*" only four times — and they permitted him to make this decision. That was a different age, and that kind of behavior from

an artist would not be tolerated today. However, David Bispham wrote of de Reszke: “Taking him for all in all, he was the finest artist of his generation, a vocal and physical adornment of the stage he elevated by his presence.” (David Bispham, *A Quaker’s Recollections*; New York, Macmillan: 1920) De Reszke retired from the stage in 1902 to become a voice teacher in Paris and Nice, France. He would soon become world-famous and develop a substantial reputation as a pedagogue. His lessons were very expensive for that day: he charged the grand sum of \$40 per hour, and we are talking about the economy at the turn of the century!

The year before his death, de Reszke’s students produced Mozart’s *Don Giovanni*, conducted by Reynaldo Hahn, famous for his beautiful French songs and for his longtime friendship with the French writer, Marcel Proust. Monsieur Hahn was an integral part of the musical life of Paris, and a student of Jules Massenet. His most famous song, “*L’Heure exquise*”, is sung frequently today in recitals. In a recent volume of *The Opera Quarterly* (Volume 12, Number 1) this was written about Mr. Benton’s participation in that Mozart production: “The Ottavio of that 1924 *Don Giovanni* was a tenor from Oklahoma, Joseph Horace Benton, born in 1898, of whom Jean was quite fond.”

Maggie Teyte, who studied with de Reszke for several years, gives some wonderful insights into his teaching methods in her autobiography, entitled *The Pursuit of Perfection* (Atheneum, 1979). She explains that de Reszke was not an easy taskmaster, and to break the voice of bad habits he would say contrary things, for which time and perseverance were needed to spot the connections and see the larger design of what he was doing. The wiser ones would hang on and benefit. He also taught by exaggeration and emphasized a feature which is often overlooked: he insisted, above all, that the singer sing in tune. He said it was the first consideration of any singer. De Reszke stressed that singers are taught by feeling their voice and not by listening to their own sound. Singers have only their own sensations of sound issuing from their vocal instrument to go by, to judge the quality of what they are doing. When we talk or sing, we do not hear ourselves as others do. He urged his students to “strive ever to move your hearers, not to astonish them.” He was also the teacher of Bidú Sayão, the vocally captivating Brazilian soprano.

Mr. Benton was studying with de Reszke at the time of de Reszke’s death. Benton was one of the students who was asked to sit with the body during the night before the funeral. Flowers were sent from all over the world: from the King and Queen of England, Winston Churchill, the President of France, pianist Ignace Jan Paderewski (de Reszke’s fellow countryman), President Woodrow Wilson, and many others. Mr. Benton has this to say about de Reszke in his autobiography, *Oklahoma Tenor* (University of Oklahoma Press, 1973):

Jean de Reszke was a great man personally and taught us, his pupils, much more than just singing. He was the true internationalist and citizen of the world. He gave when it was required, but when not required, it was

his counsel that usually avoided a complication. He touched our lives and each one of us, his pupils, have been stronger therefor.



When I was in my senior year and last semester, a significant audition occurred which had a major impact on my life. I auditioned in Oklahoma City for Charles L. Wagner, the famous impresario, for a part in his touring opera company. I was chosen to sing with them the next season. I'll give all the details of this wonderful event and tell you all about Charles L. Wagner and others in a separate chapter in this book. Finally, to end my discussion on the University of Oklahoma, I would like everyone to feel the affection and warmth I have in my heart for this institution. When I think of my growing-up days at O.U. — it was a fantastic beginning for a rather naïve kid with stars in his eyes.

After I had begun to teach at the University of Tulsa, I received a curious little package in the mail one day from Mr. Benton in Norman, Oklahoma. Inside was a small Sterling silver vest-pocket cough drop container. It had a little memorandum in it, explaining how it had come into Mr. Benton's possession. The memo was dated April 7, 1971, and Mr. Benton related the story of how, in 1937, it had been given to him by his "benefactress" in Chicago. Her name was Kate Buckingham, and she had carried this little pill-box in her evening purse for years. Miss Buckingham was (and still is) well-known as a philanthropist in Chicago, and had presented to the City of Chicago the famous Buckingham Fountain, which is the centerpiece of Grant Park — the great landmark in downtown Chicago. Of course, I still have this little silver box, and it is only one among many memories I have of a teacher who was very important to my development and life in music.

MARTIAL SINGHER and Aspen, Colorado

Immediately upon my graduation from high school, I decided to reach out and touch a fresh musical base. Mr. Snell and I together decided that the best place to do this was the Aspen Institute of Music in Aspen, Colorado. So I applied and, luckily at my young age, I was admitted. I chose as my private teacher the French baritone Martial Singher.

Mr. Singher was at the height of his career as a leading French baritone, singing at all the great opera houses of Europe, South America, and the Metropolitan Opera. He is the only baritone in the history of the Met to have sung both male leading roles in Debussy's *Pelléas and Mélisande*. In 1944 he sang Pelléas and in 1954 he sang Golaud. He was a baritone without a glorious top (high notes) and he did not have an exciting sound on the whole. However, he certainly made a name for himself with his instinctive communication skills and *bel canto* poise. His voice projected well in concert halls, and his ability to project intimate emotional content was



With Martial Singher at the Aspen School of Music, Aspen, Colorado. This picture was taken during the summer of 1953. These were marvelous days of making music and believing that you “had the world on a string.”

rare. His ability to be gracefully clever and to transmit verbal shading made him one of the greatest artists of his day.

Needless to say, my first summer with Mr. Singher was an awesome encounter. Mr. Singher could be intimidating, arrogant, charming, urbane, and demanding. He was not always an easy person. However, his students respected, admired, and even loved him. When he spoke he sounded a bit like Maurice Chevalier or Charles

Boyer. He could be rather seductive and enticing with the subject at hand. However, I've seen him throw a young man out of his master class for drinking a Coca-Cola and slouching in his seat. As the fellow was leaving the master class, Singher said: "I don't want anyone that relaxed in my class" — and he meant it. His sensitivity and temperament were always close to the surface. He knew exactly how to woo the class back and he did it with grace and a courtly manner. As one could imagine, for the balance of that term it was possible to hear a pin drop.

Mr. Singher was a great inspiration as a teacher. I had two private lessons a week with him at the Aspen School of Music for three nine-week sessions (1951, 1952, 1953). Of course, I continued to study with Mr. Benton during the winters at the University of Oklahoma. I'll never forget that first summer when Mr. Singher in his elegant French accent said to me, "You are such a baby vocally, but I think you will be a singer." (I was nineteen.)

Mr. Singher at this point in his career was still a well-loved artist at the Metropolitan and the Paris Opera companies. He was also serving on the faculty of the Curtis Institute of Music. His wife was Margareta Busch, daughter of the great conductor, Fritz Busch. Mr. Singher's oldest son, just a small child during my time at Aspen, became an operatic stage director and was married for a short time to soprano Judith Blegen. They had one child, and unfortunately the marriage did not last.

The knowledge imparted to me during my study with this master teacher is still a constant inspiration and motivation in my teaching today. I can still hear him say, "You must know what you are and why you sing what you sing." Although he was quick to admonish his students to learn all the music values first — pitches, rhythms, and language — all of this essential and basic work must be done before trying to find the psychological motivation. Only then can you successfully move on to the changes of pace which include shaping the phrase, the inflection of the words, and the true nuance. Mr. Singher's main goal, in the final analysis, was for the singer to be expressive. His final admonition would be: Read the text aloud, know your music, and mark in your score everything that is germane to the ultimate success of your interpretation.

While perusing Paul Jackson's book, *Sign-off for the Old Met: The Metropolitan Opera Broadcasts, 1950-66* (Amadeus Press), I came upon this very telling remark by Jackson:

Singher, in his person as in his art, can never completely dispel the aura of classical elegance which is his right by both birth and cultivation.... His declamation is a model, a standard which seldom is heard on international stages today.



Aspen began as a dream of the Chicago industrialist Walter Paepcke. The first summer, 1949, was absolutely sensational. The Aspen Festival was off to a grand beginning with the likes of Lauritz Melchior, Helen Traubel (both the top Wagnerian singers of the day), and the legendary pianist Artur Schnabel — and, to add even more excitement to this list, they engaged Albert Schweitzer, the Nobel Peace Prize Winner and authority on J. S. Bach, as a lecturer. This would be an auspicious beginning for any music festival, anywhere in the world.



With the famous Czech pianist Rudolf Firkušny in the mountains near Aspen, 1951. Mr. Firkušny made many recordings for RCA Victor and Columbia, and was a frequent guest soloist with major orchestras throughout the world.

The total package of the Aspen School of Music is nine weeks of lectures, forums, concerts, and special events. We students were also offered private lessons and master classes with these world-renowned artists. Aspen is a kind of paradise for musicians, and everyone tends to work themselves to a frazzle. One of my most treasured memories from my three summers is singing in the festival chorus under Maestro Joseph Rosenstock, who directed the festival orchestra and chorus in a magical performance of the Mozart *Requiem*. It was my first encounter with this glorious work and I love it even more today. The soloists for this event were Phyllis Curtin, who was Soprano in Residence during that particular summer; Herta Glaz, mezzo-soprano; Leslie Chabay, tenor; and Mack Harrell, bass-baritone. I can't help but recall that Mack Harrell's little son was running around all that summer during rehearsals — he looked just like his father. His name was Lynn Harrell, and he has become one of the leading cellists in the music world today, known for his artistry and his many recordings with the world's leading orchestras.

Our Italian diction coach was the best. English-speaking singers tend to think that Italian is easy to sing. The phonetic principles underlying Italian are often diametrically opposed to those of English, and to master them, concentrated study and practice are required. There is no question but that Italian is conducive to good singing, and young singers should sing Italian frequently. Our diction coach during my three summers at Aspen was a dear little lady named Evelina Colorni. She was loved by her students and I remember her fondly. She was on the faculty of the Juilliard School, and also served as diction coach for the young singers involved in the San Francisco Opera Merola Program. Ms. Colorni made learning Italian so much fun, and she was a lovely person.

As a voice student at the Aspen Institute, one has the opportunity for much musical growth just listening to the wonderful artists in the other areas of musical discipline. In the time span of three summers I heard the magnificent talents of Vitja Vronsky and Victor Babin, duo pianists; Claudio Arrau, pianist; Rudolf Firkusny, pianist; William Primrose, violist; and Raya Garbousova, cellist. The one indispensable person in Aspen was the accompanist, Brooks Smith. He never failed to bring artistic satisfaction with his virtuosic playing. He was for many years the only accompanist for the violinist Jascha Heifetz.



JOHN BROWNLEE and the Manhattan School of Music

During the 1956-57 school year I returned to New York City to the Manhattan School of Music to study voice with the highly-regarded John Brownlee, known for his Mozartean elegance and style. This, of course, afforded me the opportunity to work on my Master's Degree. The Manhattan School has become a prestigious institution, and has moved into the old Juilliard School of Music facilities near Columbia University. When I attended the School it was located on East 105th Street, and the facilities were utilitarian but not really "up to snuff" in every way. It was obvious that with the School's increasing popularity and persistent growth, a new facility would soon be necessary. The small and cramped conditions of the lunchroom were a godsend because this permitted us to get elbow-to-elbow with some of the faculty members. I always looked forward to sitting near Vittorio Giannini, who taught composition at the School. His sister, Dusolina Giannini, had been a leading soprano at the Metropolitan Opera. He has written many highly successful songs which are a part of the permanent vocal repertoire today. He had many stories to tell, and was amiable and genial.

Mr. Brownlee was a great artist with a formidable reputation. For example, his 1937 RCA Victor Red Seal Recording of the title role of *Don Giovanni* at the Glyndebourne Festival in England, which was conducted by Fritz Busch, is considered to this day the definitive recording of this opera. By 1923 Dame Nellie Melba

had taken a vested interest in Mr. Brownlee and gave him some important advice. She suggested that he go to Paris and study voice with Dinh Gilly. Monsieur Gilly had been a leading baritone at the Met from 1909 through 1914. He was heard mainly in the French repertoire. After his career waned, he became a distinguished voice teacher until his death in 1940.

When Dame Nellie Melba gave her farewell performance at Covent Garden in London, she chose to sing excerpts from three operas. At the turn of the century, Dame Melba was one of the great stars of the so-called “golden age” of Grand Opera. She had been one of the great singing legends along with Luisa Tetrazzini, Marcella Sembrich, and Emma Calvé. She was Australian-born and she had come to know John Brownlee who was an unknown Australian-born baritone. She had become quite fond of Mr. Brownlee and one of the excerpts in her farewell performance was to be a scene from *La Bohème*. She insisted to the Managing Director of Covent Garden that she intended to have Brownlee sing Marcello, and that was that! This event occurred on June 8, 1926 and at that time Mr. Brownlee was only twenty-six years old. The next morning, London’s *Daily Telegraph* reported that Covent Garden had heard “a glorious exhibition of the noble art of singing as singing should be.” All this, of course, was a tremendous boost to the career of the young baritone, John Brownlee. On a lighter note, part of the legacy that Dame Melba left to the world are two items that appear on almost every fine menu: Melba Toast and the rich dessert Peach Melba.

Having said all this about Mr. Brownlee’s illustrious beginnings and his career, I must confess that I was not wholly satisfied with my voice lessons. Mr. Brownlee was very busy that year with his twenty-second (and last) year with the Metropolitan, being President of the American Guild of Musical Artists (the musicians’ union), and beginning his first year as President of the Manhattan School of Music. So it is easy to understand that he was preoccupied and distracted. He only accepted six voice students that year, and at first I felt like one of the chosen few. He had other problems with teaching, such as his inability to play the piano even a little bit. He could almost play some of the five-tone scales, but not well. So when the accompanist for the voice lesson was late, we were in real trouble!

Stuart Ross was the pianist/accompanist and he was outstanding. I was able to do an excellent recital at the end of the year with him at the piano. He was also a super coach. My first memory of Stuart Ross was as a senior in high school when Mr. Ross was touring with the young soprano Patrice Munsel. One of their concert engagements was in Oklahoma City, and I attended — and I remember to this day that Patrice Munsel wore a beautiful pink evening dress. As a teenager I thought she was a super singer and a very pretty girl, and I played her 78 rpm recordings over and over. She had a very early success, and even sang at the Metropolitan at an inordinately young age. It was interesting to reminisce with Mr. Ross several years later about that tour and about his work with Miss Munsel. It was his opinion that

too much early success can be hazardous to one's vocal health. She sang *Lakmé* and *Lucia* in her early years with the Met, but later she sang very little of the coloratura material, preferring roles where the coloratura high notes were not so important.

Mr. Brownlee was a terrific asset when it came to learning the role of Guglielmo in Mozart's *Così Fan Tutte*. The school's Opera Theatre presented a production of this opera staged by Rose Landver and conducted by Hugh Ross. Mr. Ross was a wonderful musician and conductor with an impressive reputation as the Choral Director at the Berkshire Music Center in Tanglewood, Massachusetts. He was chosen by Serge Koussevitsky, the founder of the Festival, and Mr. Ross prepared his choruses for many years. He was also the Director of the Schola Cantorum in New York City. This group served as the choral ensemble on many of the magnificent recordings made by the big orchestras in Carnegie Hall. It is important to give credit where credit is due, and working on this production was the highlight of my study there. Mr. Brownlee was eager to be helpful, and he was at his best coaching the recitatives and arias of this opera.

A good-natured friendship developed between Graziella Polacco and me. She was the Fiordiligi in our production. She had illustrious parents. Her mother was the famous American soprano Edith Mason, and her father was Giorgio Polacco, a legendary conductor. He made his debut at the Metropolitan in 1912 and had replaced Arturo Toscanini as the Principal Conductor of the Italian operas when Toscanini left the Met in 1915. He was also Chief Conductor for the old Chicago Opera. Maestro Polacco was truly a legend, and in 1957, as an old man in his eighties, he came to hear our performance of *Così*. He seemed very pleased and was complimentary to us; however keep in mind it was his daughter and he loved her very much! Graziella had a beautiful voice and a typically Italian zest for life. She invited me on several occasions to sit in her family's box at Carnegie Hall. I have completely lost track of her, and for that I am sorry. When Nicola Rescigno conducted for Tulsa Opera several years ago, he mentioned to me that Maestro Polacco had been his mentor and teacher.

Another participant on this same program was a tenor from Michigan named Robert McGrath, who has become very well known because of his many years as a principal player on the children's television program *Sesame Street*. He has been seen on many national television shows as a special guest representing *Sesame Street*.



The evening of December 11, 1956 I decided to treat myself to a recital in Brooklyn; so I got into the subway and rode out to Brooklyn, where I was fortunate to be able to purchase a ticket for that evening's recital at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. I took my seat and waited with great anticipation because this was a tenor the whole world admired. Back home in Oklahoma, I had played his recordings over

and over. Finally, he walked onto the stage in a three-piece suit, looking every bit like a businessman — maybe a banker. There was very little excitement in his face or demeanor, and when he bowed it was more like a nod. I felt privileged just to sit in that auditorium, and I could hardly wait for his first sounds. Any second now he would begin, and the auditorium was as quiet as an empty room.

The first few phrases he sang would tell a music-lover why the whole world was at his feet. There was not an unbeautiful tone heard anywhere. His singing was utterly satisfying and beautiful beyond description. The singing was masterfully sure and flexible. The phrases were shaped with consummate good taste and musicianship. Above all this was a magnificent outpouring of ringing, bronzed tone that was matchless.

At the end of the recital, it sounded like a touchdown at a football game. People threw flowers and pieces of paper onto the stage and in the air. I've never seen anything quite like it for a singer. He sang encore after encore and finally I had to leave because the last subway back into Manhattan would be leaving soon. As I walked down the street and disappeared into the subway opening, I could still hear the cheering for Jussi Björling.



Another happy memory of that year is my landlady Nelli Pochintesta. She was a native-born Italian and a lovely lady. I rented a room in her brownstone building which was almost next door to the School. I found her and her Italian family to be almost like my own family, from the standpoint of warmth and caring. My ability to speak conversational Italian became remarkably good during this period. Occasionally I would say something wrong, and they would laugh like crazy! It is easy to make really strange mistakes in Italian if one doesn't double the consonants when it is appropriate. When I gave my recital at the end of the school year, Nelli was able to get all of her Italian friends to attend. This was particularly good for me, since I didn't know many people in New York City. Well, if you know Italians, you know that if they like you and like what you are singing, they respond with heart and soul. Actually, at the end of some of the songs the audience responded as only Italians would. As for me, I had an absolute time of my life that evening. Nelli had everyone applaud so enthusiastically at the end that it was necessary to do an encore. That's a heartwarming memory of an evening (recital) and a dear lady.



Everyone has a collection of memories, and two of my favorite memories materialized during this year. I had a job singing for David Pizzaro at the Church of the Resurrection (Episcopal) just off Fifth Avenue on East 74th Street. I only made \$10 per service; during the holidays there were many services so I made a bit more. This came as helpful additional financial support — I needed it. This church was “High

Church” and on festive occasions, they used so much incense that it literally choked the singers in the divided choir loft. Mr. Pizzaro was an excellent musician but a rather grim fellow, not at all interested in levity. He loved old music, such as music from the Renaissance (pre-Baroque), and made every effort to make us sound like a group of monks. Being in my middle twenties, and wishing to become an operatic baritone, I did not fit into Mr. Pizzaro’s concept of ascetic monks in self-denial and seclusion. However it is important to adjust, and I did my best. In temperament, I am closer to the monk today than I was then! At any rate, it was a positive experience, and educational too.

My other favorite memory from this year involves my extra work during the school year. I worked in the library of the Manhattan School of Music and I loved this experience. I can’t remember the name of the librarian, although my involvement with him and the library was both good for me and profitable. (Profitable, if making \$1 an hour — the minimum wage in 1956 — is profitable!) This was good money for me at that particular time. I did not go home during the Christmas holidays that year for financial reasons, so I worked at the library and sang at the church. The camaraderie at the library was chummy and affable, and I thrived on it at that time in my life. We all need something to warm our spirits when we are away from home. This was the longest period of time for me to be away from my family and my friends at home.



In recent years, the Manhattan School of Music has undergone a transition from the Music School on East 105th Street to the largest private conservatory in the nation, offering both classical and jazz training. Mrs. Marta Casals Istomin is currently the President. She is the widow of Pablo Casals, and is now the wife of the pianist Eugene Istomin.

The School was founded by Janet Schenck in 1917. It began as a neighborhood school to provide music lessons to children and young people in the community. Mrs. Schenck had been a piano student of Harold Bauer, and she taught piano. In the fall of 1956 Mrs. Schenck retired as the Director of the School. This was the same time that I arrived there. During her first year of retirement she often was seen at the School and in the halls visiting with students. On a couple of occasions I enjoyed talking to her and she was very curious to hear all about Oklahoma and my aspirations. She was a unique and highly esteemed lady. Her challenge to the institution is summed up in her words as follows:

The study and performance of music needs exacting attention. It involves not only an intricate skill for which hours of concentrated practice are needed, but also a definite awareness of the dignity of the art of music, of

its intimate association with human living, and its potential usefulness in the field of human relationship.

— Janet Schenck



SAMUEL MARGOLIS and Columbia University

It had always been my ambition to study with Samuel Margolis. Robert Merrill was my idol as a young baritone, and his *only* teacher was Samuel Margolis. I found just the right opportunity to study with Mr. Margolis when I was working on my Master's degree at Columbia University. Since my work at the University occurred during the summertime, I naturally thought of contacting Mr. Margolis for lessons, and I studied with him for three summers: 1962, 1963, and 1964. I applied to Tulsa Opera for scholarship assistance, and they paid for my lessons with Mr. Margolis. Tulsa Opera has been good to me on many levels.

Mr. Margolis maintained a voice studio right next door to Carnegie Hall. He was a very effective voice teacher for some voices; however, his reputation and fame as a voice teacher rested on his work with Robert Merrill. Later, many Metropolitan Opera singers flocked to his studio, and for years Mr. Margolis took out a full-page ad in the famous old *Musical America* magazine. This ad contained not only his picture, but also a list of ten to twelve big names from the Met roster identified as "Metropolitan Opera singers currently studying with Mr. Margolis." One name always appearing on this list was that of the American bass Jerome Hines.

Several years later, in Tulsa, I had the opportunity to visit with Hines about Mr. Margolis. He enjoyed the opportunity to give credit to the Mr. Margolis's teaching — he felt that this teaching had helped to keep his voice on track through the many years of his career. It was obvious to me that Hines had great admiration for Samuel Margolis. Hines holds the record for the most seasons performing at the Met by any singer — forty-one seasons. He was in Tulsa singing in Tulsa Opera's production of Verdi's *Don Carlo*, and this provided me with a chance to visit with him on many occasions in the "green room." He was a congenial gentleman and a religious man, and he had many interesting stories to tell about his lengthy career. It was apparent that he was his own man while attending social gatherings involving cast members and others; while many were drinking Scotch and Bourbon, Hines was proud to display his large glass of milk. And he was certainly no "Goody-goody Two-shoes!"

Margolis's wife was an excellent accompanist. She often taught the music to his students. It just so happened that I had a voice lesson just before José Ferrer, who at the time was a very popular Broadway and movie star — not to mention the fact that he was Rosemary Clooney's husband. Mr. Margolis had a smart setup in that the regular students, like myself, would come into his little waiting room, where his

secretary sat, and wait to be invited into Mr. Margolis's studio. If a "celebrity" student was in a lesson he/she would be ushered out through a side door, or go into a coaching session with Mrs. Margolis to learn music. So while I knew it was José Ferrer, I never saw him!



Studying at Teachers College, Columbia University was one of the exhilarating experiences of my education. I was a young teacher at the time and the down-to-earth approach of Dr. Harry Robert Wilson (the Choral Director) was just right for me. He was not an elitist nor was he pretentious. Professor Wilson truly believed in the power of choral music to bring something beautiful and spiritual into the lives of people. He also believed that people in choral groups seek participation because of the values that such an activity has for them. The values may be recreational, social, cultural, spiritual, or aesthetic. Working as a choral director with these values as worthwhile possibilities gives high purpose to the teacher or choral director.

The preponderance of choral singing in this country is done by amateurs. In the choral organizations, the directors must guard zealously these values while striving and driving for a more perfect performance. Professor Wilson had helped hundreds of young choral directors during his tenure by sharing his ability to engender a quality of intensity and a heightened emotion so necessary for fine choral singing and audience response.



It was refreshing to find the open and frank discussions on campus at Columbia. Columbia's student body is quite liberal. They get high marks in ethnic diversity and openness to a broad palette of ideas and individualism. I must say that if one is looking for the typical sleepy and conservative college on the hill, this would not be the place. I was almost thirty years old when I started my five summers of study there. Therefore, I was old enough to make decisions and choices.

I loved my time at Columbia for several reasons, and being right in the middle of New York City was a major reason. Residing in John Jay Hall was a delight because of the cafeteria, which was excellent and the cost reasonable. Also this was an easy way to meet the other students for group discussions and for planning an excursion to a Broadway show on Saturday evening, et cetera. We also heard some wonderful concerts in Lewisohn Stadium. On one occasion I heard a concert version of *Tosca* there which was sensational! I distinctly remember Barry Morrell, the tenor who sang Cavaradossi in that performance. We have heard him in Tulsa on several occasions. He was always exciting vocally and a favorite of the opera chorus for his ingratiating personality.

The alumni of Teachers College have taken what they learned and literally changed the world. This division of Columbia University has for more than one

hundred years been creating new fields of study and defining and re-defining old disciplines to meet the needs of our changing times. One major focus of the College has been the development of a multi-cultural sensibility in the Departments of Education throughout our country. The professors are themselves a diverse group, and have much to share from their research; and the school's "progressive" approach to education is reflected in its teaching.

ERNESTINE SCHUMANN-HEINK

As a teenager studying with Clark Snell in Oklahoma City, I became accustomed to seeing the face of Madame Schumann-Heink prominently displayed in an autographed picture on top of his Steinway piano. This remains a fixture in my memory to this day. Incidentally, the picture at the end of this chapter is the very picture of which I am speaking. On one occasion I inquired about the significance of this ever-present picture, and asked Mr. Snell if he would explain his relationship with Madame Schumann-Heink. She was a celebrated singer during her long career, making her debut at the Metropolitan on January 9, 1899 and singing there until 1932. She became a beloved popular figure singing in musical comedy, radio, and the early-day films. Here is Mr. Snell's story.

You will remember that Mr. Snell had to walk with the assistance of crutches. He had been attending a performance at the old Metropolitan Opera House at 39th and Broadway. He was standing on the curb waiting for his driver. Madame Schumann-Heink caught eye of him, and approached him and struck up a conversation. She had an affinity for young men with disabilities: she had had three husbands and seven children, and during the First World War two of her sons fought on the side of Germany and two of her sons fought on the American side. She had become a naturalized citizen of the United States in 1905. One of her sons on the German side was lost in battle aboard a submarine. She sang generously for soldiers, at war rallies and for Liberty Bond drives, and subsequently for disabled veterans. All of this added to her fame and eased the grief and anguish that she experienced having sons serving on both sides. I don't want to get involved in too much amateur psychoanalysis here, but this in a small way explains her first meeting with Mr. Snell. She was in contact with Mr. Snell until her death in Hollywood on November 17, 1936.

In her conversation with him she discovered that he was a young man studying singing, and at the same time discussed his physical disabilities which seemed to endear him to her. She later arranged an opportunity for him to sing for her, and she continued to encourage his study — in communication to him from that time on she referred to him as her "artist son" and signed her communications "Mother." It is important to understand that she did this with many of the soldier boys. I can't resist telling you this poignant story which occurred for several years on Christmas Eve in the early days of radio: Madame Schumann-Heink would go to the front lines, the fighting would cease, and she would sing "Silent Night, Holy Night" (in German, "*Stille Nacht, Heilige Nacht*") to the troops via the radio waves. She became, as a result, an American institution on Christmas Eve for her singing to the nation as well as to the front lines. It is touching to imagine the warm and beautiful quality of her voice as she sang this simple and beautiful sentiment, knowing that her family was



My voice teacher, Clark Snell, had a sister who gave me this photograph of Madame Schumann-Heink after his death. It is inscribed: To my beloved "Artist Son" Clark Snell with all my heart - "Good luck" - Mother. Coronado, Calif. Mai [May] 1929.

divided while she was very much an American citizen. For me, this is one of the great human interest stories.

Madame Schumann-Heink had a brilliant operatic career. She even created the role of Klytämnestra in Richard Strauss's *Elektra*. However, she preferred the more intimate contact of the concert hall. This is where she gained the affection of an enormous public. She loved the opportunities it afforded her for offstage acquaintance. She sang her way into the hearts of her new friends in the United States by singing songs they liked to hear. Maybe the songs were a bit corny at times, but there is no question that she rejoiced in the consciousness of having made her listeners happy and their lives a bit richer. For a moment, stop and think: most great singing artists are rewarded with the knowledge that they have made their audience happy, even with a simple song. This memory comes to mind — Marilyn Horne singing “Danny Boy” (the Londonderry Air) and everyone in the audience is misty-eyed. Leontyne Price can do this same type of thing with a spiritual.

CHARLES L. WAGNER'S *LA BOHÈME* TOUR

During my senior year at the University of Oklahoma the Charles L. Wagner Opera Company of New York was performing in Oklahoma City, and Mr. Wagner had generated a lot of publicity with his idea of finding an Oklahoman to join his Company. He felt that he had a special connection with the State of Oklahoma because he had taken Will Rogers from the Ziegfeld Follies and presented him on the concert-lecture platform. This actually was the beginning of Will Rogers as a "single" act. Mr. Wagner also had brought the famous tenor John McCormack to Oklahoma to sing in concert. Incidentally, Mr. Benton, my teacher at O.U., had been an usher at this concert as a young student. This would have been about 1920, or earlier.

Mr. Wagner was one of the all-time great impresarios, who launched the careers of many great artists. Amelita Galli Curci, soprano, was one of his first great successes. He discovered her and promoted her career for years. He also managed many of the great luminaries such as Mary Garden, John Charles Thomas, Jussi Björling, and Jeannette MacDonald to name only a few. He had at one time been a Broadway producer and had given the first starring roles to Claudette Colbert,



Here is a popular picture of Mr. Wagner, one of the all-time great impresarios. He signed this picture for me in his Fifth Avenue office. In his eighties he was still "sharp as a tack."

Walter Houston, and Helen Hayes. He also brought to Oklahoma in the early days a Chautauqua attraction featuring the famous speaker William Jennings Bryan. Mr. Bryan ran for the presidency of the United States on three occasions and did not win, and maybe that's a "good thing."

It was obvious that Mr. Wagner was no "spring chicken." I sang for him in November of 1954 and he was then in his eighties. This was a man who had been involved in almost all of show business in the first half of the twentieth century.



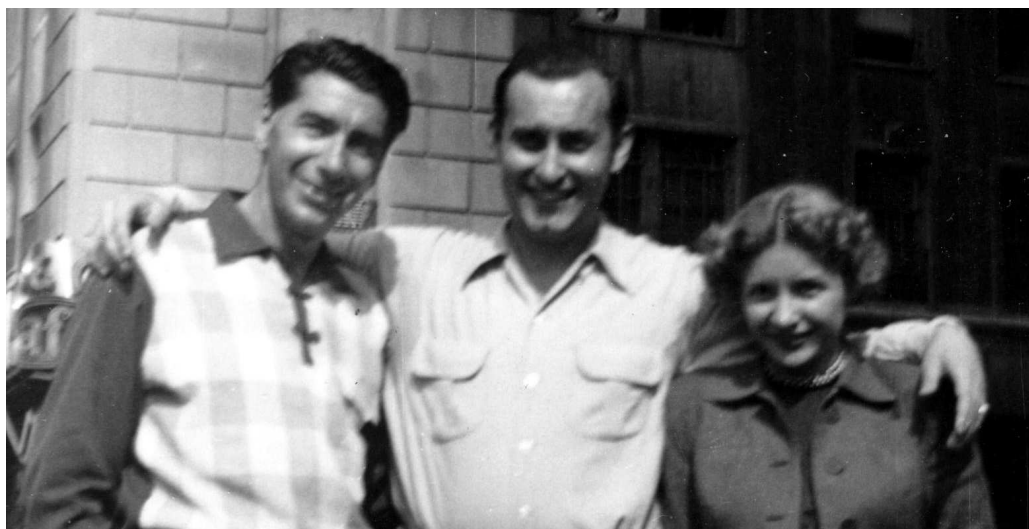
Auditions were scheduled in Oklahoma City's Skirvin Hotel Ballroom. I had not been particularly interested because I was giving all of my time and energy to my senior recital. For this senior recital, I needed fifty minutes of memorized music in four different languages, and that takes much preparation and rehearsal time. These auditions required three letters of recommendation and Ruth Snell, the sister of Clark Snell (my first voice teacher) proceeded to get those recommendations together and sent them to the proper place. Thanks to Ruth's ingenuity I did do the audition. The thing that Mr. Wagner liked most in my audition was the aria "*O vin, dissippe la tristesse*" from *Hamlet*, by Ambroise Thomas. He called me over to talk to me and of course I was thrilled that he seemed to be interested. However, we did not know who (if any) had been chosen until about two weeks later. Both my teacher (Mr. Benton) and I received a letter from his office in New York City.

I signed my contract and began the arduous task of learning both Marcello and Schaunard in *La Bohème*, and Mr. Wagner talked me into singing both roles on tour. I was to alternate the roles with the other baritone. To make this even more complicated, I had to learn these two roles in both English and Italian. Sometimes we did a matinée in English and the evening performance in Italian. Mr. Wagner assured us it was good training to do both roles, and we would be the better for all the hard work. Frankly, I think he was saving money! The other baritone and I alternated the roles in different cities and never had even a slight respite. Believe it or not, we survived although the voice did get very tired and ultimately I used my voice only in performance; I didn't talk during the day. We sang in fifty-eight different cities and sang twice in the cities where we did a matinée. This is a grueling schedule for the voice, any way you approach it!



In August of 1955 I went to New York City to rehearse, and to be staged by Désiré Defrère. Mr. Defrère was a legend in his own time. He was for almost thirty years the top Stage Director at the Metropolitan Opera. In his early career as a singer (baritone) he had sung Schaunard with Arturo Toscanini conducting and Giacomo Puccini in the audience. Now, that's going right to the source! He was a jolly sort, but could be brooding and temperamental.

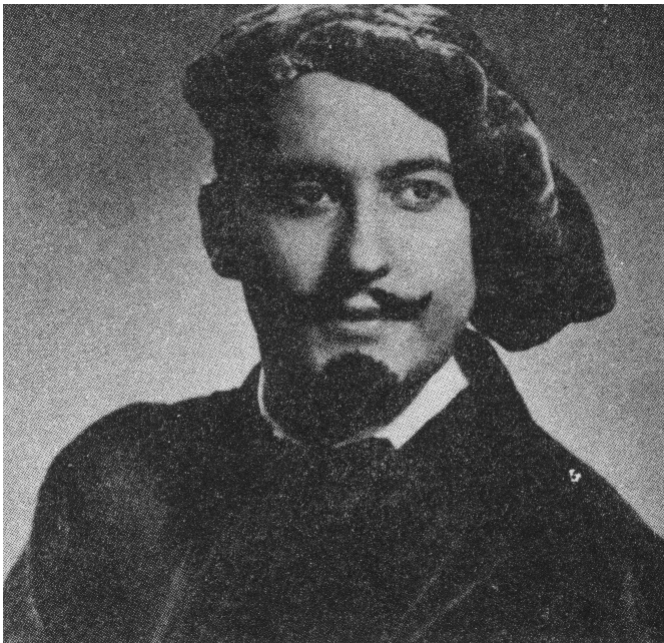
Our conductor was Thomas Martin, and his wife was with us on tour. Ruth and Thomas Martin had been for many years the best translators of opera into English. The Martins' first success in this area came in 1941 when conductor Bruno Walter asked them to do a new English translation for the Metropolitan Opera's new production of Mozart's *The Magic Flute*. This was the beginning of their time-honored career in opera translation. Of course it was the Martins' translation of *La Bohème* that we sang on tour. The translation was wonderful because it was so natural and agreeable to the voice.



*With Ruth and
Thomas Martin*

Every afternoon at 1:00 PM we met for rehearsals at the Metropolitan Opera House — and I mean the “old Met” at 39th and Broadway. Since it was August the actual proceedings of the home company there had not begun for the season, and Mr. Wagner had managed to get the Metropolitan roof stage for us to use in rehearsal. This is a rehearsal space just above the actual Met stage. These rehearsals were not like anything that I had encountered before. Maestro Martin was conducting the musical part of the rehearsal, and he was a “no-nonsense” sort of person. Looking back, I can see that this is the only way to be at the beginning of a production, because it is very important to get it just right at first. With his precise approach, performances were tight throughout the tour. However, when any carelessness or sloppy moments occurred, he was knocking at our dressing-room door immediately after that act (during Intermission). Mr. Defrère created a beautifully realistic production. For this opera, his approach began with a strong desire to make the production beautiful, theatrical, yet basically realistic. Mr. Defrère was your best friend one moment, but when a mistake occurred he would come railing at you in a severe manner. We all came to know that he was a warm person underneath, but sometimes he exhibited a frosty exterior. Always sitting on the sidelines was Ruth Martin, who was guarding the translation zealously. Diction was also extremely important to her. What a lovely lady she was!

At first, I was almost paralyzed with fear, and with intimidation. I was twenty-two years old and had only dreamed that one day I might actually *attend* a performance at the Met! It didn't take long for me to get my "sea legs" and I was coaching privately with Alberta Masiello on the side. She was also playing for our daily rehearsals on the roof stage. She was out of this world as an operatic pianist. Ms. Masiello sounded like an entire orchestra, and I don't mean a loud orchestra; she simply played all the parts that the orchestra would play, which creates an orchestral "feel." As a coach, she was a true disciplinarian. She had a low, deep voice, and would bark at you when you messed up! It was always fun to go to the coaching sessions with her, because she lived in the famous Ansonia Hotel. Everyone who lived at the Ansonia was a musician, and you could hear music emerging from every apartment. This has a tendency to make you think that the whole world is full of music. (Not a bad idea!)



As Marcello in La Bohème

The first performance of the tour was at State Teachers College in West Chester, Pennsylvania. Once the ice was broken and the reviews started coming in, I began to feel like a real trouper. At the age of twenty-two I was doing a reasonably good job.

We sang in some beautiful theaters and one that stands out in my memory is the Hershey Community Theatre in Hershey, Pennsylvania. This theater resembled the opera houses of Europe, with gold leaf and marble. The little town of Hershey is mainly populated by

people who work for the Hershey Chocolate Company, and the Company had built this theater for their own people. It's really an elegant and sumptuous theater where no expense was spared. This is an example of what lots of money combined with good taste can create.



Wagner's touring company was the only one of its kind in the United States at that time. We toured in two big buses; one for the orchestra, and the other for the singers. Mr. Defrère, who was with us every moment, was the only one who had a

double seat to himself, and he sat right up in front with his beret, making witty remarks to us all. Even Ruth and Thomas Martin had to share a seat! Mr. Defrère was really quite a personality; he was a bit like an automobile needing gasoline and for him, the gasoline was getting attention from a pretty girl. Pretty girls definitely energized him, and there were times when the girls had to remove his hand when he



*Enjoying the sunshine
at a rest stop with
Désiré Defrère, who is
inspecting the review of
our performance in the
morning paper*

seemed to be getting too intimate. After all, he was in his seventies! I later had an opportunity to discuss Mr. Defrère's personality with Beverly Sills, who was to sing three operas and one concert for Tulsa Opera. Miss Sills had toured with the Wagner company in *Carmen* and *Traviata* and was thoroughly aware that Mr. Defrère was a jokester at heart and that this "dirty old man" routine of his was primarily a piece of role-playing. This did not surprise me; Mr. Defrère was amusing and charming, and everyone respected his remarkable career. He had known everyone from the beginning of the twentieth century, and had either sung with or staged every great name you can imagine. He had had a respectable career as a baritone early on, although his ultimate fame and celebrity were the result of his reputation as a Metropolitan Opera Stage Director.

Occasionally, on tour and during a performance, Mr. Defrère joined us onstage, playing the part of a French waiter. When he was in the mood, he could almost take over the Second Act. This is the Café Momus scene, and he would sometimes wrap a white towel around his rather ample middle and become a clever caricature of a French waiter. He had all the moves down pat! He was a born scene-stealer; these occasions delighted us, and we always looked forward to them.



LA BOHEME

Glorious Melodies
Comedy — Tragedy — Love
The Gaiety of Student Days in Paris

IN ENGLISH

MUSIC HALL — MUNICIPAL AUDITORIUM

MONDAY EVENING, OCTOBER 31, at 8:20

Single Admissions: \$1.50, \$2.00, \$2.50, \$3.00, \$3.50

PRESENTED BY THE KANSAS CITY TOWN HALL

Telephone for Reservations VI 0636 — Office: 1016 Baltimore



Robert Barry



Marguerite Lamb



Norris Greer



Louise Alexander



Irene Cummings



Laven Sowell



Gloria Curran



Richard Gordon

Music lovers in communities large and small have come to rely on the Charles L. Wagner Opera Productions for an annual operatic treat. This season the veteran impresario will present LA BOHEME, which has always been considered one of the most appealing and best loved of all operas. Puccini poured some of his greatest melodies and richest orchestration into this work, and it has ranked as one of the most popular operas of all time. • Last season critics and audiences alike responded so enthusiastically to the fine English translation given MADAME BUTTERFLY by Ruth and Thomas Martin that Mr. Wagner arranged for the new Martin version of LA BOHEME in English, published by Schirmer's. He feels that this new translation is the finest of any Grand Opera, and it is with great pride that he introduces it to his audiences on tour this Fall. In those towns where Opera in English is still felt to be too radical a change, LA BOHEME will be given in the original Italian. • A brilliant cast of gifted young Americans will act and sing LA BOHEME's comic and tragic moments. A splendid orchestra and select chorus complete the ensemble and new, colorful and authentic costumes have been made for this production. Desire Defrere is the Artistic Director and Maestro Thomas Martin will be the Musical Director. Ruth Martin will travel with the company to see that when the English version is sung, every word is crystal clear. • It is Charles L. Wagner's intention that this, his 16th Opera Season, will mark a new highlight in the musical world.



Josephine Guido



Josephine Asaro

CHARLES L. WAGNER MANAGEMENT, Inc.

511 FIFTH AVENUE

NEW YORK 17, N. Y.

PRINTED IN U.S.

Brochure for La Bohème in Kansas City. Note the difference in ticket prices in those days!

With his enormous background, he had so many wonderful stories to tell, and often I would go and sit with him on the pretext of needing to know something about my staging, or that evening's performance. This would inevitably lead to his story-telling.

The first few days of the tour I talked too much, and Thomas Martin told me to "cool it." He said, "If you want to finish the tour with a voice, save your voice during the day." So during the day, I read books and studied music. I was the youngest singer on the tour, so everyone was telling me what to read and giving me some timeless advice. I learned a lot about music, voice, and life on this tour.



We sang two times in Oklahoma, and on November 6, 1955 my homecoming performance in Oklahoma City was quite an event for me. There was a sizable audience, but not a sellout. The Municipal Auditorium in Oklahoma City is a huge place, and we sang there before it was remodeled. When we did *La Bohème* there the seating capacity was six thousand, and now it seats approximately forty-five hundred. Either way, in my opinion it is still too big. The review in the *Daily Oklahoman* was excellent:

Bohème Is Bright, Spirited

Gaieties and griefs of Bohemia were played out in drama and music, laughter and tears, on Municipal Auditorium stage Sunday afternoon.... This was a Charles Wagner production [of *La Bohème*], and handsome....

Warm, ringing, well schooled voices filled the principal roles and balanced one another in ensemble. Acting was full of movement and gesture, and dramatic continuity was sustained....

It must be permissible to say that an Oklahoma City baritone was singing the next-to-leading male part, and he made everyone proud. If this had been said first, it might have laid the reviewer open to charge of pre-meditated bias.

Laven Sowell, who was auditioned by Mr. Wagner when the company was here last year, romped through the part of Marcello, which is a close second to that of the leading man, Rodolfo, with assurance and style....

Again risking charge of bias, the reviewer must report that Sowell as Marcello, and Irene Cummings as Musetta, forming the romantic-comedy love team, outshone Robert Barry as Rodolfo and Louise Alexander as Mimi, in their romantic-pathos teamwork....

Charles Wagner himself, the old impresario, was present.... No other person has done so much to give young American opera singers a chance to sing professionally....

Aline Jean Treanor, *The Daily Oklahoman*, November 7, 1955

One memory that stands out brightly even to this day was being dragged out, at the conclusion of the performance, for a solo curtain call by Désiré Defrère, leading the way, and Thomas Martin on the other side. They were trying to be generous, for this was my homecoming performance in the city where I had grown up. Immediately following the performance, the public was invited to come backstage for a reception and to meet the Oklahoma baritone, my teacher (Mr. Benton), Mr. Defrère, Ruth and Thomas Martin, and Charles L. Wagner, who was very frail at this time. When Mr. Wagner finally made it backstage, he received big applause. I couldn't believe that Mr. Wagner had really come all the way from New York City to Oklahoma City to hear us. Also coming to the performance with Mr. Benton from Norman were Eva Turner, Wilda Griffin, and Spencer Norton.

The next engagement in Oklahoma took place at the Oklahoma College for Women in Chickasha, Oklahoma on November 17. There was a ten-day interval between the Oklahoma City engagement and the Chickasha engagement, so the tour took a dip to the south into Texas. We sang at Baylor University, El Paso, Ft. Worth, and Houston. Then we returned to Oklahoma for the performance in Chickasha. The thing that stands out in my mind about Chickasha was the "talk fest" and reunion had by old friends Eva Turner, Joseph Benton, and Mr. Defrère. Both Miss Turner and Mr. Benton had been staged by Mr. Defrère in opera performances during their careers. It was a thrill and an honor for me to have Eva Turner and Mr. Benton come to both of these Oklahoma performances.



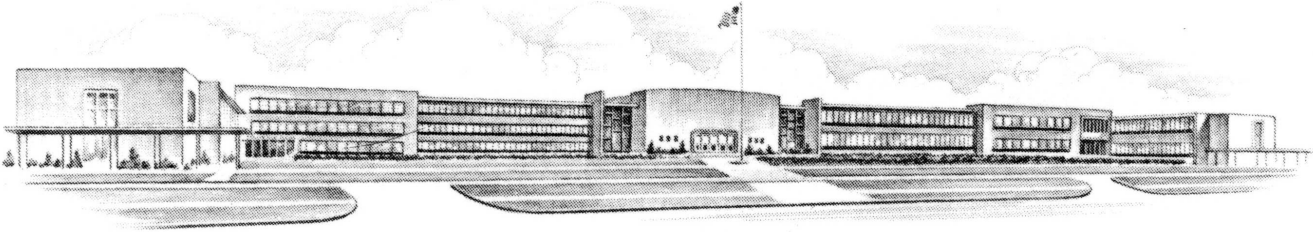
After this we headed west, and an interesting thing happened in Denver. We sang two performances there, and at the matinée the Masetta and I (Marcello) noticed that someone in the audience was really rooting for us. The Masetta had been a student of John Charles Thomas, who had a cattle ranch near Denver. Much to our surprise he was in town and had attended this matinée performance, and it was he who was doing the rooting. As a young baritone, I had always admired the great baritone voice of John Charles Thomas, and had many of his recordings at home, so having him in the audience caused my heart to skip a beat. He came backstage after the performance mostly to see his former student; however, he was gracious to me and I was elated when he agreed to sign my program. What a thrill....

On the day after the Denver engagement we went to Boulder, Colorado for a performance at the University of Colorado, in Macky Auditorium. It was there that I received a rather sour review. On the way to Boulder, I had a rather bad nosebleed. I was singing Marcello in the performance that evening, and to keep the nosebleed from recurring, I suppose I was a bit too careful on the stage. The following day, the music critic said my portrayal of Marcello was a bit stuffy. (I'm sure that it was.)



On the tour, we would travel two or three hundred miles a day on the bus, arrive at a town, rush through dinner, and get into costume in a dressing room. The exciting part was waiting in the dressing room for your call to the stage. Marcello sings the first line in the opera, and all of this was absolutely thrilling for me. I learned so much and I feel privileged to have had this opportunity so early in my life. After this tour, I was more mature and felt that I could survive anything. Our last engagement was in Trenton, New Jersey, where we sang a matinée and an evening performance on the same day. Trenton was not far from New York City, and after the evening performance the bus took us into Times Square and we dispersed in different directions. It is always difficult to leave friends who have become almost like family members. I returned, after the tour, to my home in Oklahoma City and immediately made plans to return to New York City to attend the Manhattan School of Music.

EDISON HIGH SCHOOL — AND THE SIXTIES



While attending a party in Tulsa in the Spring of 1961, I met Gerald Whitney, the Supervisor of Music Education in the Tulsa Public Schools. Mr. Whitney had an intense interest in opera, having been Conductor for Tulsa Opera during its first ten years. This gave us common ground for friendship and discussion. He knew my voice teacher at the Manhattan School of Music in New York, John Brownlee, because Mr. Brownlee sang Sharpless in Tulsa Opera's 1953 production of *Madama Butterfly*, which Mr. Whitney conducted. I told Mr. Whitney of my musical experience and of my desire to teach choral music at some point in the future. So it happened that my attendance at this party given by my longtime friend, Virginia Lee Anderson, resulted in connections that would change the course of my life.

A few days after returning to my home in Oklahoma City, I received a telegram from Dr. Charles Mason, Superintendent of the Tulsa Public Schools, inviting me to come back to Tulsa to discuss a job opportunity. My guess is that Dr. Mason didn't send the telegram at all; rather, his Executive Secretary, Ella Whitman, most likely sent it at the suggestion of Mr. Whitney. I returned to Tulsa, met with Mrs. Whitman and Mr. Whitney, and was offered the job of Vocal Music Director at Edison High School, a post which Ronald Shirey was leaving to teach at the college level. My starting salary was to be \$4100 per year, which doesn't sound like much today but I was comfortable in my \$95-a-month apartment, and I can truthfully report that I never felt destitute.

I had just finished my first year of teaching choral music in Okemah, Oklahoma. I was just beginning to adjust to the idea of myself as a choral director and I liked the idea a lot, so I accepted the job at Edison with much excitement but with mixed emotions. I have always wanted to do well in any endeavor, and I wondered if my choral experience would be "up to speed" for this job. My keen interest in choral music was a relatively new development. I had had the very best of musical training but my study had been in the area of solo singing and operatic training. At the same time, deep within myself I knew that I was fully capable of being a success in this new adventure. My predecessor, Ronald Shirey, had been a big success and I knew that the school and the community would be expecting me to measure up. Therefore, I set out immediately to grow as a choral director, taking advantage of every opportunity to learn more about the art of choral conducting.



Dr. Charles Mason was most impressive as Superintendent of the Tulsa Public Schools. The first teachers' meeting of the 1961-62 school year made an indelible impression on me. Dr. Mason walked out on the stage of the auditorium and said "Welcome to the finest school system in America." All the teachers stood and applauded wildly. In those days the Tulsa Public School system was right at the top of the list, and the teachers were proud to be teaching.

That first year went surprisingly well, and was an encouragement for me. I worked hard and the students responded with hard work. We often had extra rehearsals. However, I had the enthusiastic support of Mr. Lewis Cleveland (my Principal) and several faculty members. Mr. Cleveland was a fine gentleman and was eager to see me succeed. Ms. Barbara Burket, who was the head of the speech/drama department, was in charge of the weekly assembly programs. Mr. David Crowell, who taught stagecraft, worked with Ms. Burket to produce these high-quality programs. Since the Concert Chorus sang concerts in the auditorium and participated often in the assembly programs, I worked frequently with Ms. Burket and Mr. Crowell. These two teachers were thoroughly professional and also congenial. It was a decided advantage for me to be able to work with these two fine teachers, and their support was invaluable.

Every first-year teacher had a "buddy" teacher. My "buddy" teacher was Richard Cox, the band director. In my first year, he offered advice and encouragement that was particularly helpful. He was an excellent musician and had the best high-school stage band that I have heard anywhere. They played jazz, and big band arrangements that sounded like the big bands of Tommy Dorsey, Benny Goodman, and Harry James. Believe me, they were good!

During my first year, I was pleased to be invited by Mr. Cox to be the guest soloist with his school orchestra for their annual Spring Concert. I sang the arias "*Non piu andrai*" and "*Se vuol ballare*" from Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*. The quality of this high-school orchestra was superior and this was a grand group of gifted young musicians.



During my first years at Edison, I attended choral workshops and seminars as often as possible to build my skills as a choral conductor. Among the choral directors with whom I worked were Robert Shaw, Norman Luboff, Hugh Ross, Roger Wagner, and Julius Herford. Also during these early years I went to Columbia University for five summers and earned a Master's degree, continuing to study choral conducting with Dr. H.R. Wilson. Frankly, I was almost disappointed when the degree process was completed, because I loved going to New York City every summer. Those summers were not only filled with study, but with trips to Broadway

and various concerts that were offered in the New York City area during the summer season.

My first few years in Tulsa were enhanced by my participation as a singer in the choir at Trinity Episcopal Church. This was a prudent choice and well-suited to my personal needs at that time. I needed a church home and the music-making of Dr. Thomas Matthews was a deciding factor. As an organist he was exceptional and his playing of the Sunday morning service was exciting. I always looked forward to his postlude, which was improvised and truly beautiful. He and his wife, Mary, became good friends and their daughter, Sarah, sang in the Concert Chorus at Edison. In 1966 Dr. Matthews dedicated an anthem to my choruses at the school, and helped us make a recording by playing for us on that wonderful Moeller pipe organ at Trinity. This was a terrific recording, and a noteworthy and memorable accomplishment for the students. We sold hundreds of these recordings at the end of the school year.

A few of my Edison students took private voice lessons from Mrs. Frances Wellmon Anderson, Mrs. Werton Dee Moore, and others in the community. This was a “good thing.” The Tulsa Public Schools had a policy that teachers would not teach privately or take remuneration from students enrolled in their classes. As a result, I did not teach private voice lessons to any of my own choir members, and I think this is a proper policy because it avoids the appearance of any preferential treatment of a student. It is important to be ethical and to offer everyone equal opportunity.



Now with the first year behind us, we (when I say “we” I mean the students and myself) launched into another school year. We worked very hard that second year to build a fine choir, and I do firmly believe that each year we achieved greater artistic success. As our reputation grew over the years, we were invited numerous times to sing for the Oklahoma Music Educators Association, whose annual convention was always held in Oklahoma City. One year, I was extremely pleased that they had asked my voice teacher, Joseph Benton from the University of Oklahoma, to introduce me and the choir at the Skirvin Hotel. Allen Clinkscapes was the President of the Vocal Division that year, 1969. Following this particular performance I received this warm and encouraging letter from Professor Max Mitchell, head of the Music Department at Oklahoma State University, addressed to me and the chorus:

Oklahoma State University
Department of Music

January 29, 1969

Dear friends,

Yours was a thoroughly enjoyable and inspiring concert in Oklahoma City for the Oklahoma Music Educators Association Convention in the Skirvin Hotel

last Saturday. Your presentation was truly on the highest level of communication in the art of music. The personality and individual animation of the students contributed greatly as did their musicianship in all dimensions. Included are plaudits for the director, his musicianship and his thorough preparation of the Chorus.

Thank you and congratulations,
Sincerely yours,
Max A. Mitchell



Something occurred during my second year at Edison that was a lot of fun, and also provides me with fond memories to this day. Gerald Whitney invited Virginia Anderson and me to sing with orchestra for the opening ceremonies of the annual statewide convention of the Oklahoma Education Association, whose membership consists of all teachers in the State, from every discipline. This was held in Oklahoma City's Municipal Auditorium. We sang on October 26, 1962, and the auditorium was filled to capacity. This means that 6,000 teachers were in that auditorium. However, there were more than 18,000 teachers registered at the meeting, and one wonders where the others were!

Virginia and I decided, with Mr. Whitney's help and approval, to sing the Second Act duet for soprano and baritone from Verdi's *La Traviata*. We were thrilled to get to do it, and I think it came off very well. The small orchestra was made up of eighteen members and all were teachers in the Tulsa Public Schools. Of course, Mr. Whitney was the conductor. Mr. Whitney could pull this off because he was highly respected and well-liked by the local musicians. I can recall several players from the orchestra on that occasion, namely Tosca Kramer, violin; Charles Hill, violin; Jerrold Lawless, viola; Walter Kessler, oboe; Don Linde, oboe; Roger Fenn, trumpet; Bill Shellenbarger, trumpet. These were all outstanding musicians and teachers — a big part of Tulsa's musical heritage.



April of 1963 found me engaged in an extracurricular activity which was time-consuming and worthwhile and provided a stream of memories. The Tulsa Little Theater did a production of *Little Mary Sunshine*. This was a musical spoof on the musicals of Jeannette MacDonald and Nelson Eddy. Dorothy McCormick was an unforgettable Little Mary, and I did the role of Captain Big Jim which was the Nelson Eddy parody. In addition to singing this role, I was asked to do the musical preparation for the entire show, and I did it. This was genuine good fun, and the show was charming. Howard Orms was the Stage Director. As fate seems to regulate and control our lives, I became intensely involved with Tulsa Opera and became too busy to work with the Little Theater again. I was very pleased to have had the opportunity to work with them.



Early in 1965, we were invited to come to the beautiful, newly-constructed First Presbyterian Church in Oklahoma City. We were invited by my friend John Kemp, their longtime Minister of Music. I had known Mr. Kemp from an earlier engagement: I had sung the baritone solos in William Walton's *Belshazzar's Feast* with Mr. Kemp conducting the chorus and the Oklahoma City Symphony in 1959. Walton's work is one of the outstanding landmarks in twentieth century English music. After the 1965 concert at the new First Presbyterian Church, the Edison Concert Chorus and I received this kind and thoughtful letter from the Senior Minister at the church:

The First Presbyterian Church
1001 Northwest 25th Street
Oklahoma City, OK

April 26, 1965

Dear Mr. Sowell,

The pleasant memory of our association last night remains very clear in my mind. While it is I want to send you this note of congratulation. In my time I have heard a great number of high school choirs; some of them were very good. Without hesitation I would say that the group that sang at First Church yesterday was the finest that I have had the privilege of hearing.

The contrasting moods of the two presentations testified eloquently to the completeness of your training. I thought Cherubini's "Requiem Mass" was presented most admirably with the spirit of the various lyrics communicated in a splendid way despite the language barrier. I thought the flow of the Latin text was not only smooth and intelligent but the pronunciation was exceptionally good.

The singing of the more popular numbers in Watchorn Hall was equally helpful. The particular selections were different from the common run of the programs of this sort and the physical arrangement of your singers, their intent concentration upon you and the lovely tonal quality all made the entire evening perfect.

I am sure that such an excursion as you took over here is not without sacrifice and I hope you will convey to the young people, their parents and your principal at Edison High School our very real appreciation of all the efforts made. We hope before too long we will have another opportunity to hear this splendid group of young Americans.

Yours sincerely,
C. Ralston Smith



That same year (1965) we were invited to sing the chorus parts for Tulsa Opera's production of *Hänsel and Gretel*, to be performed at Tulsa's Municipal

Theater. This was a wonderful experience for the students, and was definitely an enchanting production, with the sets and costumes especially designed and built for Tulsa Opera by Peter Harvey. These sets and costumes were a gift of the Martha Baird Rockefeller Fund for Music. Carlo Moresco conducted and Nathaniel Merrill, from the Metropolitan Opera, was the Stage Director.



At five o'clock in the evening on June 8, 1965, the First United Methodist Church hosted a concert of the Edison High School Concert Chorus as part of the Southwest Regional Convention of the American Guild of Organists. We sang the *Requiem Mass in C minor* by Luigi Cherubini, several Renaissance motets, and an extended piece by Howard Hanson. We were accompanied on this occasion by Lois Watkins, an excellent musician from the community. That evening at the convention banquet, which was held in the Tulsa Club on East Fifth Street, Alec Wyton was the guest after-dinner speaker, and he made several complimentary remarks about the Edison chorus which made me feel as if I were floating on a cloud. He also sent me the following letter soon afterwards:

The Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine
Cathedral Heights, New York

June 14, 1965

Dear Mr. Sowell:

I wish that you would tell the members of your choir how thoroughly impressed I was with their singing at the Regional Convention last Tuesday. I am not easily impressed, and I have heard many choirs of differing sizes, ages, and degrees of accomplishment. I thought that your people were, from every point of view, remarkable. Not only was the music absolutely first class of its kind, but it was sung with a degree of finesse which made listening a sheer joy. Inasmuch as about 70 percent of our repertoire here is Renaissance in origin, and we sing six times a week, I have every reason to know how good your singing of these things was.

In these days when one hears so much about the problems and faults of young people, it is thoroughly refreshing to meet a group that cares to take the trouble to learn and perform beautifully such complicated music as that. You may rest assured that I shall talk about your choir in my travels, and I would like to assure them that they are doing a tremendous work not only for the art of music, but for the image of young American people. I shall look forward to hearing you all again before long.

With warm greetings and many thanks,

Yours most sincerely,
Alec Wyton

Other musicians participating in this A.G.O. convention were Lloyd Pfautsch, from Southern Methodist University in Dallas; Mildred Andrews, from the Univer-

sity of Oklahoma; and Wilma Jensen, from the First Presbyterian Church in Oklahoma City.



In February of 1966, Lois Watkins, pianist, and I appeared in recital at the Aaronson Auditorium of the Central Library under the sponsorship of Trinity Episcopal Church. I believe this was the first recital to occur in this new auditorium. Maurice de Vinna wrote a rather short but good review in the *Tulsa Daily World*:

Baritone, Pianist Impressive

A recital refreshing in programming and impressive in performance was presented in the Central Library Tuesday night by Laven Sowell, baritone, and Lois Watkins at the harpsichord and piano.

The singer's program included a group of French drinking songs of the 16th-18th centuries, songs by the 20th century French composers Maurice Ravel and Reynaldo Hahn, the German Richard Strauss, and two arias of Mozart.

Though Sowell's rich baritone has been heard in minor roles in Tulsa Opera productions this was our first opportunity to hear him in recital. He gave a very polished performance and his diction in the three languages was perfect.

Mrs. Watkins accompanied Sowell at the harpsichord for his French drinking songs and at the piano for his other selections.

She also played on the harpsichord a group of compositions by William Byrd, Bach, Cimarosa, Corelli, and Domenico Scarlatti.

The recital was the final program of a series sponsored by the Trinity Episcopal Church.

Maurice de Vinna, *Tulsa Daily World*, February 16, 1966



In March of 1966 the Concert Chorus and I boarded the bus again at 7 o'clock in the morning and traveled to Houston, Texas where we sang a concert at the Church of St. John the Divine (Episcopal). We received this invitation from G. Alex Kevan, the Organist/Choirmaster, as a result of his having heard us sing at the big American Guild of Organists convention in 1965. He was impressed enough to get his congregation to raise the money to cover our expenses for this Houston trip. The church had planned some exciting entertainment on Saturday evening for all of us, and they were most gracious during the entire visit. After the concert on Sunday, they provided a sumptuous reception. Teen-agers can always manage to eat! A memorable weekend!



Mrs. Watkins and I once again joined forces to do a concert of French music for the Alliance Française in February of 1967. This was an interesting program featuring music of the French Baroque. Mrs. Watkins and her husband, Jim, had built a harpsichord which was used frequently throughout the city, and we utilized it on this occasion. The French Baroque was represented by Mrs. Watkins' playing Lully and Couperin, and I sang Rameau. The harpsichord added an uncommon authenticity. We also performed art songs of Fauré, Debussy, and Bizet. The recital was open to the public and presented in the Student Activities Building at The University of Tulsa. The reception afterwards was a treat for the taste buds since, due to the love of the members of Alliance Française for all things French, there was a variety of French pastries! *Oo-la-la — C'était très délicieux!*



The Tulsa Chapter of the American Guild of Organists presented, on Tuesday evening, April 11, 1967, a memorable program of Duruflé's *Requiem*, and a short recital by Frederick Swann from New York City. Mr. Swann also accompanied the *Requiem*, conducted by Dr. Thomas Matthews. Maurice Duruflé was, at the time of this concert, the organist at the Church of St-Étienne du Mont, Paris. Monsieur Duruflé builds the entire structure of the *Requiem* upon the authentic plainsong. At the same time he employs the art of a modern composer to develop rich and imaginative harmonizations and rhythmic variations more characteristic of contemporary music. The end result is a *Requiem* of incredible beauty.

This concert was performed at the First United Methodist Church; Linda Boyd was the mezzo-soprano soloist, I was the baritone soloist, and Charles Westgate was the timpanist. This review by Maurice de Vinna appeared in the *Tulsa Daily World* the next morning:

Concert Here By Organist Well Received

The program presented by the Tulsa Chapter of the American Guild of Organists at the First Methodist Church Tuesday night was a musical event of the first importance.

The Requiem, which was the feature of the concert, is a work of great beauty and power and was admirably sung by a choir of members of the guild under the direction of Dr. Thomas Matthews.

The contralto and baritone solo parts were sung by Linda Boyd and Laven Sowell, both well known Tulsa singers.

The New York organist Frederick Swann played the accompaniment for the Requiem.

As an introduction to the program, he played a Prelude and Fugue on the Name A-L-A-I-N by Maurice Duruflé and the composer's reconstruction of a choral-improvisation on "Victimae Paschal" by Charles Tournemaire.

Maurice de Vinna, *Tulsa Daily World*, April 12, 1967



On April 20, 1967 the Concert Chorus presented a concert in St. Louis at the biennial convention of the Music Teachers National Association (MTNA). This was definitely a feather in our musical cap for several reasons. We were the only high school group there, and this was a signal honor just to be invited to a national convention of this magnitude. In the chapter on Tulsa Accredited Music Teachers Association, there is a more detailed description of this concert.



A wonderful thing happened during the summers of '68, '69, and '70: the Federal Government funded a project entitled "Destination Discovery." They provided top-notch instructors in every field drawing from the Tulsa Public Schools and surrounding Universities. Jimmy Reeder was chosen to be the Supervisor and Don Linde was appointed coordinator of the programming from week to week. These two gentlemen were outstanding leaders and presided over a well-coordinated program.

The objectives of this project were to interest and expose the participants to the disciplines of music theater, orchestra, drama, and dance. Each summer, the project attracted more than two hundred students. Donn Mills, from the University of Oklahoma; Dwight Dailey and Ron Predl, from the University of Tulsa; and Don Linde, from the Tulsa Public Schools, were chosen to teach in the area of instrumental music. Francis Jones from Oral Roberts University coached strings. Dr. Steve Farish from North Texas State University and I made up the vocal department. Wes Howell, Betty Moses, and Bob Lees were the pianists. Moscelyne Larkin and Roman Jasinski of Tulsa Civic Ballet were engaged to work with the students in movement on a daily basis. It was interesting for me to watch Moscelyne Larkin work with students with no dance training whatsoever (and I mean football player types!) and achieve in just a few days a level of grace in movement that one would have found hard to imagine. It was a joy to watch these master teachers at work.

This was a rare occurrence for the Federal Government to fund a project of this sort, and to my knowledge this rather unique type of project has not been done again. Too bad! From time to time I still see some of the participants from this three-summer artistic adventure, and they still remember enthusiastically their work in this marvelous undertaking. Two students in this project come to mind right away. They were Kathy Griffith and Dan Call, who are now Mr. and Mrs. Dan Call. Both are currently teaching music and are excellent teachers.



On Sunday afternoon, April 28, 1968 we fulfilled an engagement that came to us as the result of an invitation from Frederick Swann, the organist/choirmaster at the famous Riverside Church in New York City. This church is famous for many reasons. It was built by John D. Rockefeller Sr. for his favorite preacher, Harry Emerson Fosdick. The outside of the church is beautiful and impressive; the inside nave is a duplicate of the nave of the Cathedral in Chartres, France. I have always found the inside of the church to be utterly breathtaking, and when I was a student in New York I sang in the church choir. I sang first under Richard Wagley, with Virgil Fox at the organ. This was a thrilling experience in church music. In later years, when I was a student at Columbia University, I sang in the choir during the summers after Frederick Swann had become organist/choirmaster. Mr. Swann, one of the finest organists in America, had been a student of Tulsa's Thomas Matthews at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois. After many years at Riverside, Frederick Swann was lured by Robert Schuller to the Crystal Cathedral in California. This church has a grand and glorious organ, and Mr. Swann also had an impressive choral program.

This engagement involved a whirlwind excursion from Tulsa to New York City and back in a 41-seat Greyhound Bus. If you have never had the experience of spending this many hours on a bus with excited teen-agers, you have never lived! (Actually, I loved it!) Fortunately, we had Dr. and Mrs. Harry Martin along as volunteer chaperones. This is just one instance among many where Ann and Harry Martin actively supported activities in the community.

We were extremely pleased to be part of Riverside Church's five o'clock recital hour, a New York institution which through the years has featured some of the most illustrious names in church music. Also, the hour-long program was broadcast over a New York City FM radio station. It was also a thrill of sorts to see an advertisement for our concert in the *New York Times*.

The Concert Chorus sang a program of Renaissance motets and a beautiful *Missa Brevis* of Palestrina. This was followed by a setting of Psalm 146 written expressly for the Edison chorus by Ross Hastings and published by H. W. Gray Company. Mr. Hastings was in the audience and came to the reception afterwards, greeting the students warmly. The chorus concluded the concert singing a group of anthems written by Dr. Thomas Matthews and we were accompanied at the organ by Frederick Swann. The concert was well-received and drew a good-sized audience to hear us. Many people in New York City are in the habit of attending these five o'clock concerts. We received an extraordinary review from Seth Bingham, a Professor at Union Theological Seminary and composer of many well-known compositions for the organ. His review reads as follows:

High School choirs may be a dime a dozen. Not this one. We gladly confess never having listened to a finer group of young singers. We did not count them; they may have numbered 60 at the most. But they filled the recesses of Riverside Church with beautiful clear, pure tone expressing every nuance of feeling at their leader's slightest gesture, diminishing to a clear *pianissimo* or swelling as one great voice to a triumphant *fortissimo* with never a faltering pitch.

From where we sat it was difficult to see whether the singers used the score; they appeared to be singing from memory.

Perfection? Their leader proved that these youngsters can achieve it. Professional? Singers twice their age could hardly excel them. Clear enunciation, beautiful blending and sure tone-control that older singers might envy. We hardly need add that Frederick Swann's solo numbers fitted in nicely and were expertly performed.

Seth Bingham, *The American Organist*, June 1968

A more personal response to our concert came several days later from Mr. Swann himself, addressed to me at Edison High School. You can imagine how pleased we were to receive this kind of praise from such a distinguished musician:

The Riverside Church
Riverside Drive at 122nd Street
New York, N.Y. 10027

May 1, 1968

Dear Laven:

I hope that you had a safe trip home, and that you were able to float at least part of the way on the cloud of a most successful New York debut with your choir!

As I mentioned to you after the service, it was one of the finest afternoons of music that we have ever had in this church, and everyone I have seen has been full of the highest praise for the choir. The tone, blend, vocal development, and general musicianship which you have drawn from them as a group is without any doubt the finest I have ever heard in their age bracket, and far, far superior to the vast majority of college choirs. It was a real joy to hear them, and to have you here at Riverside.

I would also like to commend you for the excellent behavior of the group. They were ladies and gentlemen at all times, and not only excellent ambassadors for your school and for Tulsa, but for the teen-age population everywhere.

Again, my heartiest congratulations on the choir, the concert, and the charming young people themselves. Please know that you have a standing invitation to sing at The Riverside Church at any time in the future.

Sincerely yours,

Frederick Swann
Director of Music and Organist



In May of 1968 Dean Albert Lukken, an eminent Tulsa musician, attended our end-of-the-year concert at Edison. He was a legend in the early days of Tulsa's music scene. He and his wife were vital forces for organizing the School of Music at the University of Tulsa. He also directed the choirs at the First Presbyterian Church, a position that I subsequently held for seventeen years. He was considerate and kind-hearted enough to send this wonderful letter. Somehow, I never had the opportunity to meet him face to face, and I regret it:

3576 South Winston
Tulsa, Oklahoma
May 21, 1968

Dear Mr. Sowell:

Mrs. Lukken and I attended your choral performance at the Edison High School Friday, May 10. We were tremendously impressed with the high quality of your choral groups. In fact, we honestly believe that was one of the finest performances we have ever heard. Not only was the performance of a high order, but it also revealed a deep understanding of all the facets of choral music. It takes my memory back, searching for comparison, and I must admit that your rendition, without question, surpassed them all.

The youngsters, under your direction, are indeed fortunate in having such a competent director! I would hope that I may have the pleasure of meeting you and telling you these things in person.

With deep appreciation,

Cordially yours,

Albert Lukken
Dean Emeritus
University of Tulsa
School of Music



In Fort Wayne, Indiana, the First Presbyterian Church of that city presents a prestigious music series which has provided high quality concerts of nationally known artists to the Fort Wayne and surrounding area for years. It is reminiscent of the civic music series that occurred in most cities before the advent of television. The church has also created a highly acclaimed competition for organists. The National Organ Competition has provided encouragement to many young organists throughout the country. The Edison Concert Chorus was invited to be a part of the 1968-69 music series and we were honored and flattered to be asked to fill a spot on this series. It was a "first" for the music series to include a high school choral group. Also appearing on their list of attractions for that same year were Virgil Fox, organist, and The Roger Wagner Chorale.

Immediately following this concert there was a lovely reception in McKay Hall at the church, given for the students and me. It is always a “good thing” when this kind of reception is provided, because the students are able to receive accolades and, more importantly, develop their social skills. I was delighted to encounter Mrs. Dorothy Shambaugh there. She was most gracious and introduced me to several of her good friends. Mrs. Shambaugh’s son Bill (who lives in Tulsa) had been in large measure responsible for our invitation to the music series in Fort Wayne. Lloyd Pinkerton was the choral director at the church, and Jack Ruhl was the organist. These two outstanding musicians presided over one of the most successful church music programs in the nation for many years.



In February of 1970 a prestigious engagement came our way. Here is how it happened. I had known Hugh Ross, choral conductor, from my student days at the Manhattan School of Music in the 1950s. Now, it was 1970 and Hugh Ross was in charge of a rather large amount of Ford Foundation money. He came to Tulsa to try to persuade the Tulsa Opera to do some new opera by an unknown composer with the financial support of the Ford Foundation. This did not come to fruition; Tulsa Opera somehow decided that it was not for them. However, while he was here I was invited to have lunch at Southern Hills Country Club with Mr. Ross and others. Naturally, I told him about my Edison High School Chorus. That very afternoon he came to Edison and we sang for him. As fate would have it, he was going to be the conference director for the Southeastern Choral Conductors’ Conference in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. This was on the campus of Louisiana State University. As a result of our having auditioned for him, he invited our chorus to perform at the conference.

We sang a morning concert of Palestrina and Poulenc, with a discussion and demonstration at the end of our performance by Hugh Ross. Then there was a coffee break for fifteen minutes, and then the University of Texas A Cappella Choir, conducted by Dr. Morris Beachy, sang a program of Brahms and William Walton. This was an exhilarating experience for us and was made possible by a grant from the Ford Foundation. An added attraction to this conference was Gunther Schuller as guest composer. He was an interesting speaker and ingratiated himself to the students. He was at that time the President of the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston.

Dallas Draper, the Choral Director at Louisiana State University and Local Chairman of the Southeastern Choral Conductors Conference, was thoughtful in sending this complimentary note to us:

Louisiana State University
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70803
School of Music

February 26, 1970

Dear Laven:

It was a great pleasure to hear your excellent choir during the Southeastern Choral Conductors Conference. I meant it when I told you that I thought it was the finest high school choir I had ever heard. Your appearance on the conference program was one of the conference highlights.

Sincerely yours,
Dallas Draper
Professor of Music

I am always so pleased when someone takes the time to compliment my students in this way because it serves as a motivator. I always took the opportunity to read these letters in class to my students, because this is a mighty boost to their confidence and overall enthusiasm.



We sang many concerts and made many appearances in Tulsa and throughout the State. We were invited by Dr. Bruce Benward to sing a concert for the School of Music at the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville. Dr. Benward, who was Chairman of the School of Music, was a fine gentleman who offered us gracious hospitality and took us on a guided tour of their very attractive campus. Through the years we sang many times for civic organizations such as the Rotary Club, the Kiwanis Club, and the Lions Club. These were frequent engagements and most gratifying because they gave us exposure to community leaders. It is always extremely satisfying to be validated by your own friends and the community.



It was particularly pleasing and rewarding for my choir to be invited on three occasions by my first alma mater, the University of Oklahoma, to sing concerts for the students and faculty in Holmberg Hall. We received many complimentary letters from faculty and others, and one of the most memorable was written to my Principal, Mr. Lewis Cleveland, by the Director of the School of Music, Dr. C. M. Stookey:

The University of Oklahoma
Norman, Oklahoma 73069

March 10, 1967

Dear Mr. Cleveland:

Once again it has been the pleasure of the School of Music to present to University of Oklahoma music majors, faculty, staff, and visitors your Edison High School Choir under the direction of Mr. Laven Sowell, an alumnus from our own University.

We have had the Edison group on our campus three times in the past several years and all of us look forward with great enthusiasm to their return.

The choir, a fine musical organization in its own right, is recognized as one of the finest of its kind in the Southwest, and possibly the United States. The performance of the group is without question an exceptional one. The general musicianship of the group is indeed first rate and their artistry in performance is a reflection of their musical talent and that of their conductor as well as an expression of their tremendous enthusiasm and conscientious effort to present excellent musical programs.

Certainly the choir and its director, Mr. Sowell, bring much credit to Edison High School and to the public schools of Tulsa for the fine music education provided the youth of your city.

I know they will have an outstanding performance when they go to the MTNA Convention in St. Louis next month. All of us from Oklahoma will be equally as proud in having them represent us, as we know you will be.

Please accept the sincere thanks of all of us for making it possible to have this group on our campus again.

Sincerely yours,

C. M. Stookey, Director
School of Music

cc: Mr. Laven Sowell



One gentleman who invited us on many occasions to sing was James G. Saied, the founder of Saied Music Company and an enthusiastic Rotarian with almost religious zeal. He is one terrific person, and I always looked forward to visiting with him, and to receiving his advice and encouragement while in his music store to peruse and buy music. His son, Robert, is now running the business and is carrying on his father's tradition in high style. He has remodeled the store, and has made other important innovative decisions. Saied Music Company is the best! Jimmy Saied continues to impersonate John Philip Sousa all around the country with amazing success.



Perhaps one of the greatest thrills of my Edison teaching period came in March of 1970. We were invited by Dr. Wiley Housewright, the President of Music Educators' National Conference, to sing a full-length program for the twenty-second biennial convention to be held in Chicago at the Conrad Hilton Hotel. We had sent an audition tape several weeks prior to the invitation, and needless to say, we were eager to hear from the audition committee. When the letter arrived from Dr. Housewright, it was cause for a happy celebration among the students and their teacher!

At four o'clock in the afternoon on March 9, 1970, we presented our concert in the Grand Ballroom of the Hilton to an audience of approximately two thousand music teachers. We were introduced by Dr. Warner Imig, from the University of Colorado and a past President of MENC. The ballroom was packed, and much to our amazement, we received a standing ovation from this large audience of music teachers. A memory for a lifetime!

We were asked in advance to do a premiere performance of a new choral piece written under the MENC-Ford Foundation Contemporary Music Project. The composition was entitled "Hosanna" and was written by Martin Mailman from the faculty of North Texas State University in Denton. This was an exciting composition about three minutes in length. Doing this very special piece was a memorable moment — we were highly complimented to be asked to do Dr. Mailman's composition, and especially pleased to receive this very kind letter from him:

North Texas State University

Denton, Texas

School of Music

March 12, 1970

Dear Mr. Sowell:

What a thrilling concert you and the chorus presented in Chicago. It was a real pleasure and honor to be a small part of your excellent program. The high level of musicianship, sophistication, and excitement you all generated was entirely unexpected by me but thoroughly appreciated.

If the Edison High School Chorus has a fan club, please accept my application for membership. Thank you for a wonderful performance.

Cordially,

Martin Mailman

Professor of Music



As the school year was winding down, I received a telephone call from Mrs. Robert E. Jones, the President of the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) requesting me to attend the April meeting of PTA. She was, as I recall, friendly and business-like, explaining that they would like to express their appreciation for the choir's outstanding year. I did attend the meeting and, much to my surprise, she presented Mr.

The Twenty Second National Biennial Convention
of
Music Educators National Conference

presents the

Edison High School Concert Chorus

Tulsa, Oklahoma

Laven Sowell, conductor

Patricia Greene, accompanist

Scott Musick, drummer

Program

Orlando DiLasso ----- Domine Convertere
(1532-1594)

Giuseppe Corsi ----- Adoramus Te
(1560-1604)

Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina ----- Three Motets
(1524? -1594)

- I O Vos Omnes
- II O Crux Ave
- III O Sacrum Convivium

Francis Poulenc ----- Four Motets For a Time of Penitence
(1899-1963) (English version by Hugh Ross)

- I Great Fear and Trembling
 - II Vine That I Have Loved As My Own
 - III Darkness Fell Upon the Earth
 - IV Sad Is My Soul and Sorrowful
- Phyllis Murray, Soprano Soloist

Martin Mailman ----- Hosanna

Donn Mills ----- Teach Me, O Lord

Paul Sergio Valle ----- So Nice
arr. Anita Kerr

Antonio Carlos Jobim ----- How Insensitive
arr. Anita Kerr

Jerry Herman ----- Hello, Dolly
arr. Clay Warnick

Four o'clock
Monday Afternoon
March 9, 1970

Grand Ballroom
Conrad Hilton Hotel
Chicago, Illinois

*The program for the Concert Chorus's March 9, 1970 concert in the
Grand Ballroom of the Conrad Hilton Hotel in Chicago*

Donald Hoopert — the Principal at that time — and me the Distinguished Service Award from the Oklahoma Congress of Parents and Teachers. The certificate was dated April 28, 1970, and signed by Mrs. Jones and the State President. At this point in time, no one knew that I would be going to the University of Tulsa for the next school year — and neither did I! Needless to say, I was deeply appreciative of this honor.

My choirs finished the school year in great shape and we were looking forward to doing a concert the following school year at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City. We had been invited by Alec Wyton to be part of his concert series and we were jubilant with the prospect of doing another concert in New York City. However, this was not to be.



In June of 1970 I received a phone call from Dr. William E. McKee, the Director of the School of Music at the University of Tulsa. He asked me to come to his office for a meeting to discuss the possibility of my joining the Music Faculty at T.U.. This was an exciting offer, and I had begun to think of doing work at the college level. Honestly, I must admit that it was also a time of serious mixed emotions. Being at Edison for nine years had been a time of personal growth and achievement. However, it had also been an enormous love affair with teaching choral music to high school students. Going to school to teach was a pleasure every day of my tenure there. The day that I decided to accept the offer at T.U. and write my letter of resignation to the Principal at Edison was a gigantic soul-stirring occasion. I wrote the letter of resignation and took it to the Post Office. I can't begin to describe my feelings at the moment of dropping that letter into the mail chute. I really felt a big lump in my throat and a knot in my stomach. We all have to make painful decisions and once a decision is finalized we must move on, and I did.

NADIA BOULANGER AND FONTAINEBLEAU, FRANCE

In June of 1921 the Franco-American Conservatory opened its doors in the Louis XV wing of the Palace of Fontainebleau. The school was in part the brain-child of conductor Walter Damrosch, and was established for American students. The opening ceremony was a monumental occasion. The three miles of road from the train station to the Palace were decked out with French and American flags. The Americans had worked with incredible zeal to funnel money and aid into the reconstruction of France after the First World War. Therefore America occupied an exalted position in the hearts and minds of the French. Many distinguished people contributed their time and energy to the reconstruction effort, and as a result the French people were eager to show their appreciation. It was in this psychological climate that Walter Damrosch and the American war hero, General John Pershing, succeeded in convincing the French government that a school for American musicians would be a great way for the French to show their gratitude to their American friends.

With the summer of 1921 finally came the long-awaited opening of the *Conservatoire Américain*. The opening event was followed by ceremonies worthy of the Kings of France. (Léonie Rosenstiel, *Nadia Boulanger: A Life in Music*, W. W. Norton & Co.) Camille Saint-Saëns began the morning festivities with a welcoming address. The celebration lasted all day, and the culminating event in the evening was a program presented by the Harvard Men's Glee Club under the direction of Dr. Archibald T. Davison.

The list of faculty members at Fontainebleau that first summer read like a Who's Who in French Music. In addition to Nadia Boulanger there were Alfred Cortot, pianist; Wanda Landowska, harpsichordist; Marcel Grandjany, harpist; Camille Saint-Saëns, composer; and Charles-Marie Widor, organist.



As the years passed after the First World War, political tensions were running high in France. Dissatisfaction with the new government was rampant in 1934, and Paris was paralyzed. However, Mlle. Boulanger made her long-awaited debut as an orchestral conductor anyway. On the program was the Bach Cantata *Christ lag in Todesbanden*. The critics and audience applauded wildly because the funereal context was so appropriate to the prevailing mood in Paris. That same year in June, Maurice Ravel replaced the ailing Charles-Marie Widor as General Director of the *Conservatoire Américain*.

The musical life of Manhattan during the early part of the Second World War up through the early 1950s was influenced largely by Aaron Copland and Virgil Thomson. Both had studied in France with Nadia Boulanger. Aaron Copland was the first American student to enroll in the music school at Fontainebleau during that

first summer of 1921. Copland wrote in later years, “Nadia Boulanger knew everything there was to know about music; she knew the oldest and the latest music, pre-Bach and post-Stravinsky, and knew it cold.” As if that were not praise enough, Copland continued with a description of the incredible technical skills at Mlle. Boulanger’s command. “All technical know-how was at her fingertips: harmonic transposition, the figured bass, score reading, organ registration, instrumental techniques, structural analysis,” and on and on.

In the years that followed, young composers who have become some of the world’s finest and best-known found their way to Mlle. Boulanger’s studio. They came from all over the world. It is said that Boulanger’s influence became the greatest of all twentieth-century teachers of music.



Standing in front of the Palais de Fontainebleau in 1966. In the background is the horseshoe staircase that Napoleon Bonaparte made famous....

The summer of 1966 brought an enormous opportunity for fresh thinking, fresh musical study, and a way of seeing the world as I had never thought of it before. My arrival into the city of Fontainebleau thrust a whole new, vivid landscape upon my senses. First of all, there are gigantic historical significances in this city. Almost everyone knows much of this history, and the Palace of Fontainebleau is an endless string of richly decorated rooms, each more palatial than its predecessor, and also offers a fleeting glimpse of the glory of Napoleon. One cannot forget the great horseshoe-style staircase in the courtyard, where Napoleon said good-bye to his old guard (soldiers) as he went into exile. Also, there is that imperial bed; this bed was made for Napoleon’s measurements, and almost looks like a child’s bed because he was so short.

The first views of the Palace gardens are breathtaking. One can see the violet, deep blue, and lemon-yellow flowers fresh from the June planting. It is almost possible to decide that the solitary swan floating on the carp-pond is surely the enchanted princess from *Swan Lake*. Near the Palace the streets look as if the Impressionist painters had painted them. No doubt they did, because the members of the Barbizon School painted what they saw. I had a cozy little room about two blocks from the Palace, and one could not avoid feeling a sense of collaboration with those magnificent nineteenth-century artists — particularly when dusk fell. The twilight in Fontainebleau is lovely as the thickening mauve-gray veils or wraps itself around the town.



After my digression into these picturesque memories of Fontainebleau, I must return to the subject of my study at the *Conservatoire*. Mlle. Boulanger's musical associations were by no means confined to composers and composition. Throughout her long career she worked with musicians of every ilk. I had the opportunity to sing in a recital at Fontainebleau; and before I could be scheduled to sing on the program, it was necessary to pass muster by auditioning first for Mlle. Boulanger. My accompanist and I met with her for a coaching session and it was thoroughly amazing to be the recipient of her insight, and her knowledge of the literature. I sang "Hymn au soleil" from *Les Indes Galantes* by Jean-Philippe Rameau. We had a rather taxing session with Mlle. Boulanger stopping me often to make suggestions. Finally, at the end of the session I was thrilled when she said, "Monsieur Sowell, it will be a pleasure for me to hear you sing on next week's program." This was a thrill for me because I felt that Mlle. Boulanger genuinely approved of my French diction and my handling of the Rameau.

It was also fun to know that these programs were always listed in the famous Paris newspaper *Le Monde*. These recital programs were always held in the Palace, in the *Salle du Jeu de Paume*, and were always held in the late afternoon because there was no electricity for lighting in the evening. These recitals in the old *Jeu de Paume* were quite a departure from the early days of the Palace, when this room was mainly accustomed to hearing the dull thunk of tennis balls and the shrieks of peacocks with hormone problems! My accompanist was Mme. Gilberte Lecompte, who was a dream. She had played every summer there for years, and was much admired for her many skills as an accompanist. Paul Derenne, a former tenor with the Paris Opéra, was my voice coach and Mme. Lecompte accompanied my lessons with Monsieur Derenne. What a slice of musical heaven this was!

We not only worked on Rameau; we also worked on several songs by Fauré. Singing Fauré songs was an exhilarating experience that summer because Gabriel Fauré had been Mlle. Boulanger's composition teacher and mentor at the Paris *Conservatoire*, and this made Fauré's name a household word at Fontainebleau. During

the summer, one could often hear Fauré songs coming out of the voice studios and practice rooms. This makes eminent good sense to me because Fauré is wonderful for the voice and there is not a more authentic source in the world where one can study Fauré. These songs can be sensual, mysterious, delicate and subtle. Fauré always tried to be faithful to the prosody of the literary text, always trying to express the emotions contained in the poem. Another thing that is extremely important when interpreting the songs of Fauré is to maintain a precision of the rhythms. There is rarely any *rubato* in his music because everything is simply built into the construction of the music.



*With Nadia Boulanger in 1966
in the Jeu de Paume [court
tennis] room in the Palais de
Fontainebleau. This picture is
dark because the room is still
without electricity! This palace
was built long before Thomas
Edison invented the light bulb.*

It has been said that Fauré is the French Schumann. Actually, a certain Schumannesque romanticism may be found in his earliest songs. In my opinion, he lacks the universality of Schumann and is the embodiment of the fastidious nature of the French. This does not make him a less great composer; it simply points to his being very French. Our musicologist friends would probably say that Fauré was more “nationalistic.” An important work in his time, and one cherished to the pres-

ent day, is his touchingly beautiful *Requiem*. It was first performed in Paris at the Madeleine church in 1888. This is a work that I have conducted many times, and I am always thrilled with the long, sinuous and supple phrases. It is an exquisitely beautiful and hauntingly memorable work.



Returning to the subject of Mlle. Boulanger, it seems highly unlikely that the world will see again anything like an equivalent, or even a near parallel, to this astonishing musician. In recognition of this Georges Pompidou, President of France, pinned on her the government's highest civilian honor: that of the *Grand Officier* of the *Légion d'Honneur*. She was the first woman to conduct the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra of London, the Boston Symphony Orchestra, the Philadelphia Orchestra, and the New York Philharmonic. All of this conducting was accomplished in the years from 1937 to 1939, when the mere thought of a woman conducting a symphony orchestra brought open ridicule and rudeness from many orchestral musicians. This established a valuable precedent for future outstanding women conductors like Judith Somogi and Carol I. Crawford.

She was an indefatigable teacher, and often taught from 7:00 AM until late in the evening. Music came before all else, and certainly before eating. She could be found taking a few bites of something while visiting on the phone. In her final years, she was almost sightless, toothless, half-deaf, hands curled with arthritis. She kept the routine of teaching constant. It was important to her to hold on even with all these frailties. Mlle. Boulanger had accepted her frailties fatalistically. She often told her friends and students, "I came into this world with no teeth, and I shall go out of it with no teeth." She was eighty when I studied with her, and at that time she had two or three teeth left! This is not to make light of her appearance, because she definitely had a dignified bearing and could be formidable. In spite of all this, there was something beautiful and radiant about her face.



In Léonie Rosenstiel's book *Nadia Boulanger*, on page 381, is a fascinating little story: "The Palace at Monaco was Nadia's home every spring during the annual Prince Pierre Competition (as it became known after its founder's death). While staying with the family of Prince Rainier, Nadia was often their guest at dinners, both formal and intimate. On one formal occasion, Princess Grace had invited both movie star Elizabeth Taylor and her new husband, actor Richard Burton, to dinner. 'If I had put a pretty girl next to Richard, Elizabeth would have been very upset,' the Princess recalled, 'and if I put anyone too [uninteresting or ugly], well, it's hard to say. Richard can be very naughty when he wants to be... so I put Mlle. next to him.'

“The Princess hoped that the exotic Burton would behave himself seated next to an ‘older woman’ and besides, ‘if he’s smart, he’s going to really enjoy her.’ Burton soon discovered that Nadia had a fierce passion for Shakespeare. ‘Richard never spoke to another person all evening,’ Princess Grace remembers: ‘He just adored her!’”



She could be sincere, with a touch of harshness on occasion, but it was not long until she was wrapped up in tenderness and humor. When she inspected a new composition, “Mademoiselle” often would admonish the young composer with a three-word criticism: “Too many notes.” This was, of course, said in her baritone Tallulah-like voice. (By the way, she liked being called “Mademoiselle.”) Her severity left no trace of ill-feeling, only a sense of the justice of her reproaches pointing the student in the right direction. Yes, she was a demanding teacher, but those reproaches were refined and softened by the powerful reality of a person who unflinchingly obeyed the most rigorous principles of music as if it were a religion.

One thing that I found very touching was her feeling that the basis of learning music was the heartfelt love for it. She said that this love for music was “unteachable” and the innate instinct for music was more important to her than all the academic theories. She had learned from Fauré that without a thorough technique and first-class musicianship you cannot even express what you feel most intensely. Now, here’s where the teacher comes in!

Remembering my days as a student during the summer of 1966, many things stand out in my mind — particularly the first class we had with Mlle. Boulanger. She entered the room speaking German (she spoke six languages). Immediately, she remembered that this was the summer class for Americans, and she said “Excu-u-u-z me! And be seated” — everyone was standing because it was the custom to stand when she entered the room. Of course we were all eager to know what her first remarks would entail, and, believe it or not, she went to the piano and struck an A 440 (“concert pitch”) and said: “This is ‘la’. If you do not have ‘la’, you must get one” — meaning that if you do not have perfect pitch, develop it. In a sense, we were all taken aback because very few people have perfect pitch, and more musicians than not believe that it is not an asset. However, most of us had a lot of fun throughout the summer session trying to develop our “la”, and it is possible to develop a physical feel for sounding this pitch. That summer I almost had it, but don’t ask me to sound an A for you today! Keep in mind that A in the “fixed do” system is “la.”

This “la” business was important because in Europe, and particularly in France, the *solfège* system, which has a “fixed do”, is used, and “do” is C. According to Mlle. Boulanger, this necessitates having an A at your command — in order to sight-read effectively you *must* use the “fixed do” system. We Americans, of course,

do not use this system, so we struggled valiantly in the *sofège* classes of Annette Dieudonné, working diligently from our book of exercises prepared by Paul Hindemith. (Mlle. Dieudonné was a saintly little lady who was an assistant to Mlle. Boulanger, and had lived her entire life only to please “Mademoiselle” all day and every day!)

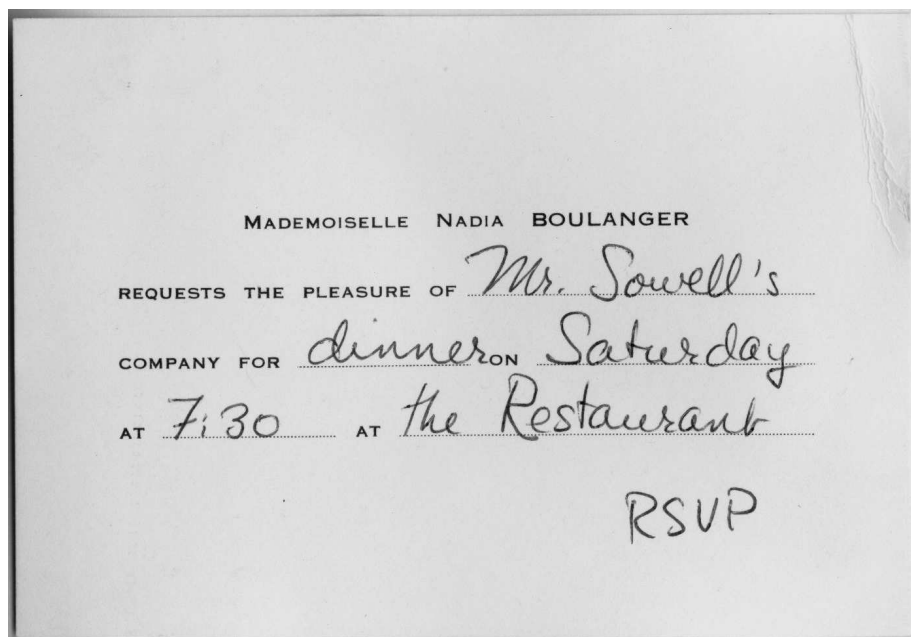


The gracious and rather beguiling Professor of Phonetics and the French Language was Germaine Arosa. I first met Mme. Arosa at the airport in New York, as she was booked on the same charter flight as I. This gave us an opportunity to visit, and I learned several interesting things about her. She taught at a private academy at Andover, Massachusetts, and had been coming to Fontainebleau to teach French for many years. Her mother, a prominent member of the Roosevelt family (on the “Teddy” Roosevelt side), had been an important supporter of the Fontainebleau school from the beginning. Mme. Arosa had a remarkable genuineness about her teaching. She loved French, and she was eager for us to get just the right emphasis and accent. Actually, she could be uncompromising and we appreciated her conscientiousness. She was so pleased with my French diction in the recitative and aria by Rameau that I had sung in recital that she asked me to make a cassette tape for her so that she could show her students back in Andover that even an “Okie” could sing good French!



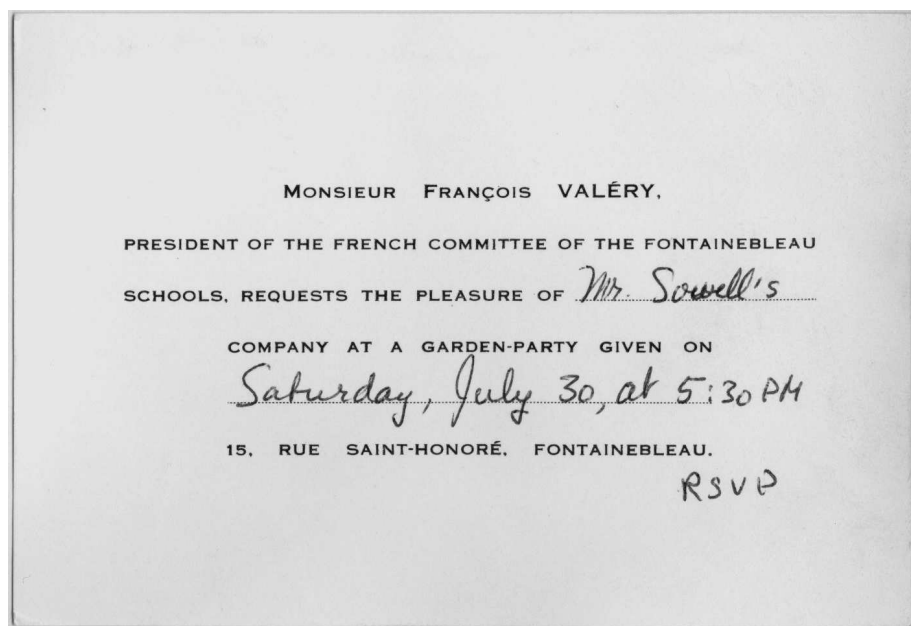
During the summer, we had the opportunity to hear some fantastic recitals and master classes given by visiting artists. The master class given by Robert Casadesus on French piano music was memorable, and I was also pleased to be invited to sing some Ravel songs for the Gérard Souzay master class. One moment that has stood out in my mind over a period of many years was the moment, after I had begun singing, when Monsieur Souzay recognized that I was nervous. (After all, the entire faculty was seated in front of me.) He stopped me from singing and stood directly in front of me, blocking my face from the audience and with his back to the audience, and whispered to me: “I like your voice; don’t be nervous.” At that point I resumed singing with more confidence, and I have always remembered his kindness to me. Monsieur Souzay had achieved worldwide recognition as an interpreter of French art songs.

Immediately following the master class Mlle. Boulanger offered one of her command-performance receptions, and only a chosen few were invited by engraved invitations. When a student was lucky enough to receive an invitation, it was expected that he/she was to respond to the RSVP in writing. These receptions offered an opportunity to meet some patrons of the arts, other talented students, and sometimes famous musicians who might be there to visit Mlle. Boulanger. This



A couple of favorite invitations from my Fontainebleau scrap-book. François Valéry, son of the famous French poet Paul Valéry, was fascinated by Nadia Boulanger's intensity for music, and remained her friend throughout her life.

François became a distinguished career diplomat and remained a very active member of the Board of Directors of the Conservatoire Américain.



brings to mind the famous "Boulanger party punch." This punch, served at these receptions, had gained a world-wide reputation. It was a vile-tasting, fruity, and spiked concoction which had been a conversational "hot topic" for years and years among the students. Oddly enough, the recipe was never changed.



Another unforgettable recital was given by André Marchal, organist, who performed on the small organ in the *Salle du Jeu de Paume*; and, even with the inadequate organ, he managed to move and engage the sophisticated audience. The thing I remember most about Monsieur Marchal as a person was his angelic face; he was

blind and had an impressive shock of white hair, and his lovely daughter assisted him in getting on and off the stage. The other major recital of the summer was a concert in the *Salle des Colonnes* by Sviatoslav Richter, pianist. This was one of the most exciting piano concerts I have ever heard, for two reasons. The playing was truly remarkable, and the *Salle des Colonnes* was a room of extreme beauty. I am not sure that I gave all my attention to Mr. Richter's playing, I was so distracted by the sheer beauty of the hall! He was, as anyone who has ever heard him would know, a great artist and unquestionably one of the great masters of the twentieth century. It is easy to understand why so many pianists, even today, look upon him with reverential awe.



While I was a student at Fontainebleau, an activity that we students loved to indulge in on weekends was to make a trip into Paris (only about 40 minutes away by train) to have supper at *Le Drugstorien* on the *Boulevard de St. Germain des Prés*. This was Paris's idea of the American "drugstore," and they tried to mimic the American lunch counter. I particularly enjoyed the jukebox, which was filled with pop tunes by the French singers of that day including Charles Trenet, Edith Piaf, and Jean Sablon. Oh yes, we mustn't forget Charles Aznavour, who was the rage at the time. This place was across the street from *Les Deux Magots*, the coffee house frequented by Ernest Hemingway, Gertrude Stein, and Alice B. Toklas in an earlier time. Paris has a magnetic quality and has influenced artists from all over the world. There is a sense of excited intellectualism that prevails in all the arts. Just being in Paris is exhilarating and evokes a wealth of new ideas and fresh thinking.



Another social event that I remember vividly was the occasion when my Edison student Chris Thompson and the two sons of Mr. and Mrs. Burch Mayo came to visit me in Fontainebleau. I was delighted when they extended an invitation from Mr. and Mrs. Mayo to return with the boys to Paris for the evening, and this involved staying overnight at the famous Ritz Hotel on the *Place Vendôme*! This was a serendipitous opportunity for me because the evening included dinner with the Mayos and a former conductor of the Tulsa Philharmonic, Vladimir Golschmann, and his wife. Mr. Mayo entertained us all with dinner at the Crazy Horse Saloon, which included a floor show featuring a lovely young lady who ceremoniously appeared in a bathtub covered with mountains of soapsuds and, to elegant background music, skillfully scraped the soapsuds from her curvaceous body.

We returned to the Ritz for a nightcap, and I remember that after I finally returned to my room the bed was so fancy and the bedspread was so elegant that I was reluctant to mess the bed up by getting into it. (After all, the Ritz is rated one of the five most elegant hotels in the world.) The next morning Paris was gorgeous,

with a little fog, and Chris Thompson and I went to Notre-Dame for Mass. To make the experience of Notre-Dame even more exciting Pierre Côtchereau was at the organ. What an incredible weekend! I have always been deeply appreciative of the Mayos for their hospitality and generosity on this occasion.



“Mademoiselle” was to live to the age of ninety-two. Leonard Bernstein was visiting her near the end of her life. She was by this time in and out of a coma. Bernstein asked her: “*Vous entendez la musique dans la tête?*” (“Do you hear music in your head?”) She instantly replied, “*Tout le temps, tout le temps.*” (“All the time, all the time.”) Bernstein, wondering to which of her preferred composers — Bach, Monteverdi, Stravinsky — she was listening, asked her what music she heard. She answered him, “*Une musique ... ni commencement ni fin...*” (“One music ... neither beginning nor end.”) Bernstein writes, “She was already there, on the other side.” (Bernstein, *Findings*, Simon and Schuster)



As I left Fontainebleau, I returned to Paris to spend three days waiting for my charter flight to depart. On Sunday morning I attended services at St.-Sulpice, the church where the renowned Marcel Dupré had been organist for many years. As it happened, this was his last year at the organ console; he died a few months later. This was without question one of the great moments in a lifetime. Monsieur Dupré was famous for his improvisations and as a composer of some of the world’s great music for organ. He always improvised the morning services and, knowing this, I sat through two full services to hear him play. This occasion was, as always, inspirational and magnificent. At this point in his life, Monsieur Dupré’s hands were gnarled with arthritis. It didn’t seem to matter. This was a wonderful way to conclude an unforgettable summer of music.

THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



In August of 1969, my telephone rang one evening and it was Dr. William J. Wiseman calling from Massanetta Springs, Virginia. Dr. Wiseman frequently participated in events at the Presbyterian Conference Center there, and he and his wife, Mavis, had an A-frame summer cottage nearby.

Nyle and Roy Hallman had decided to leave Tulsa and move to Hawaii to continue their music ministry. Nyle had been the Organist at the First Presbyterian Church for several years, while her husband Roy served as the Minister of Music. The telephone call from Dr. Wiseman centered around the subject of my serving as Interim Music Director until a replacement could be found for the Hallmans. I reluctantly agreed to take on this extra responsibility, thinking I was so busy at this time. I was still teaching at Edison High School, and my choir there was scheduled to sing at the National Convention of Music Educators National Conference in Chicago. That seemed to occupy most of my mind. Little did I realize as the years would advance that I would become busier and busier, and love it all with a passion!!



One whole year went by, and I was still called “Interim Music Director.” Actually I believe it was more like two years of this “interim” thing. When Dr. Wiseman asked me one day, “What would you like to be called?” I suggested Choirmaster, and he informed Jane Neubauer in the church’s print shop to put “Choirmaster” on the bulletin the next Sunday. So this is the way it all started. I grew to absolutely love doing the music for the church, and obviously they liked me too, because I was never asked to leave. Almost seventeen years later I did decide to move on, but I will talk about that in good time.



A humorous story would be a “good thing” now, and I really believe that a sense of humor is so important. Humor is the Vitamin C in your mental diet. Laughter breaks up gloom-and-doom attitudes and changes your luck. Laughter is definitely on the side of God!

Here’s the story: The choir always sang the introit from the Narthex each Sunday, and it was a lovely effect. We always got our pitch from the organist. One Sunday when we had a guest bagpiper — a church tradition on Reformation Sunday in October — as well as a guest minister from Scotland, we received the pitch from the organist as usual. At that moment the bagpiper started playing rambunctiously, completely destroying everyone’s sense of the proper pitch. All of a sudden terror struck at my heart because I knew we could have a musical “train-wreck” without the proper pitch. Everyone was trying to be helpful, and of course everyone had a different starting pitch. Finally, an unsolicited usher came over and gave us a pitch which was way out in left field. As my mentor Joseph Benton would have said, this fellow probably didn’t know as much about pitch “as a pig knows about Sunday” — but you do have to give him credit for identifying and offering help to a human being in distress! The choir could see the terror on my face, and I desperately looked for Jim Stevenson, who had “perfect pitch”—but to no avail. Would you believe that actually, we tried to go ahead and sing the Introit and had a colossal “train wreck!” Everybody was singing in a different key. The organist immediately began the introduction to the Processional Hymn, which we proceeded to sing in a state of shock. It is these moments that make a musician’s life colorful, and give one an opportunity to use one’s sense of humor.



The first five years, I directed the high school choir (Sanctuary Choir) in addition to the adult choir (Chancel Choir) and I enjoyed the high school group very much. I appreciate the energy, the emotion, and the commitment high school kids are capable of giving. By this time, I had become a full-time member of the Faculty

of Music at the University of Tulsa and the demands on my time were increasing. I must also mention that I was Chorus Master for Tulsa Opera and by this time they had increased their season from two to three operas.

Feeling much strain and anxiety over this total picture, I decided the only thing to do was resign my position at the church. So, late one evening after a rehearsal, when I was totally exhausted, I wrote Dr. Wiseman a letter and slipped it under his office door. Looking back, I am so happy that the situation was resolved. The next day before I was even out of bed, my doorbell rang at home and it was Dr. Wiseman with his dog (a HUGE dog). The dog, which he tied up outside, was more like a horse than not! Dr. Wiseman and I discussed the situation and I was thrilled when he suggested giving me a lighter responsibility. I did not want to leave the church, and this would make it possible for me to continue with only the Chancel Choir to direct. I was thoroughly immersed in my work at the church, and dearly loved the people and the music-making in the services. This was the arrangement that worked for me until 1985. This transition was possible because Linda McKechnie agreed to take the Sanctuary Choir. Linda is a highly talented musician and did a remarkable job working with the youth choirs. She and her husband, David, continue to be very successful in their work in the Presbyterian Church. I always enjoyed David's sermons and his engaging personality. He was an outstanding minister and together they were a dynamic couple.

Fortunately there were several other very capable and talented youth choir directors during my time. Elizabeth Geer and Carolyn McCright are two other musicians with fine training in this area who served in this capacity early in my tenure at First Presbyterian. They were both very successful, and super colleagues, too. The area of dealing with youth choirs in the setting of a church is somewhat different from the public school situation. The youth choir director must have an array of basic skills, including psychological skills, and be capable of dealing with a variety of learning styles and personalities in the complex setting of contemporary society. It's a challenge, and with the right director it can bring excitement and a sense of purpose. The directors I have mentioned had all of these skills.

Loretta Teter served ably in the position of Youth Choir Director, and also as Ron Pearson's Assistant Organist for nearly the last nine years of my tenure at the church. Knowing that the balance of the music program of the church was in good hands allowed us to focus more intently on our music-making and music leadership, which is a great luxury in that type of position.



My first Christmas Concert at the church remains vivid in my memory. I had grown up in Oklahoma City, and so had Robert Glasgow. He was by this time Professor of Organ at the University of Michigan, and one of the finest organists in America. My thoughts immediately turned to him, and he agreed to come and play

part of the program as a recitalist, and to accompany the choir's performance of Bach *Cantata No. 142*. This concert occurred on Sunday afternoon, December 14, 1969. This was a beautiful concert, and we included the Bach Cantata, with Professor Glasgow at the organ, on our first twelve-inch long-play album. During my time at the church we produced three albums of recorded music, and these recordings were popular with the congregation. Sometimes, in a fit of nostalgia, I play them for friends and on really high-quality sound equipment they still sound unbelievably good. Looking back, I am so pleased we had all the energy, motivation, and commitment to do these recordings. It takes a lot of extra time in rehearsal to do them well. We did it! I feel they were done with love and musical integrity.

When I first began my tenure at First Presbyterian Church, Norma Helen Hampton was the Interim Organist. She had served as Organist in an earlier era for a period of time when Paul Schultz was the Director of Music. She continued to play for more than a year, and I was disappointed when she felt that she needed more free time. She was a superb musician and organist. Kenton Stellwagen was the next Organist, and he had been a student of Marcel Dupré. His improvisations were exciting. Barbara Elder followed Mr. Stellwagen, and we thoroughly enjoyed our two-year association with her. She was an excellent organist and colleague.



When it became necessary to replace Mrs. Elder, I once again thought of my friend Robert Glasgow in Michigan. I asked Dr. Wiseman if it would be permissible for me to call Professor Glasgow and discuss this matter. I did call him, and I described the kind of organist and person we would like to hire here in Tulsa. He said to me enthusiastically, "I have just the right person for you." He then proceeded to tell me all about Ronald Pearson. That same evening, after talking to Professor Glasgow and at his suggestion, I called Ron Pearson. This was my first visit with Ron. I was delighted with our first conversation. However, he did mention to me that he was considering another job offer. Happily he came to us and dropped the other offer after coming to Tulsa for his audition. A wonderful stroke of good luck for all concerned!

The day after my telephone conversation with Ron I called Dr. Wiseman immediately and told him the exciting news; he then arranged to have Ron fly to Tulsa for an audition. This was in June of 1974, and Ron's only misgiving about flying to Tulsa was the tornado season — he had read in the newspaper in Michigan that Tulsa had just had a big and destructive tornado in the Brookside District. This would give anybody who doesn't understand Oklahoma weather a case of the jitters! He had a genuine concern and this, of course, was mostly conversation because he did come to Tulsa and conquer!

Ron's audition was absolutely stellar in nature. He played the Reubke "Sonata" and Bach's "Toccatina and Fugue in D minor," both from memory. Julius Reubke was

a promising student of Franz Liszt, but unfortunately he died at the early age of twenty-four. His “Sonata” is a milestone in nineteenth-century organ literature. One wonders what his output as a composer would have been had he lived longer. We asked Ron to play several hymns, and he also played several modulations and improvisations. We were extremely impressed, and Dr. Wiseman arranged for us to have dinner at the Tulsa Club. Mr. J. Littleton Daniel and Mr. Jerry Feroe were the representatives from the Music Committee of the church. These two wonderful men were greatly admired, not only by the church membership but the whole Tulsa Community. Of course, it was these men along with Dr. Wiseman who did the hiring of Ron Pearson. However, I was very enthusiastic about Ron’s abilities, so maybe they did listen to me a little bit! Mr. Daniel was the Chairman of the Music Committee and I always thought that he was an extraordinary Chairman because he knew so much about good music and had a genuine appreciation for it. We all went to the Tulsa Club for dinner and, much to our surprise, it was closed. One of the gentlemen suggested we go to the Summit Club. Ron told me later that he was especially impressed with the lights of Tulsa from the Summit Club at night. It is a beautiful view from thirty-two floors up and it impresses me, too!

Working with Ron Pearson through the years was an exhilarating collaboration. He has technical skills galore, a sense of drama, and the ability to be creative. These abilities enabled him to do whatever was needed to make our two anthems each Sunday morning work beautifully and produce great musical results. Some Sundays, the anthems performed by the choir with Ron’s accompaniment were simply exquisite. It wasn’t always an anthem of great difficulty; it could be a simple arrangement of a well-known melody that expresses the high integrity of human nature. For example, we had an arrangement of “Amazing Grace” that was well-written with an ethereal effect. Dr. Wiseman loved this arrangement and would request it frequently. On the other side of the spectrum, we performed some grand and glorious anthems that were truly inspirational. The choir, with Ron at the organ — let’s not forget that magnificent Austin organ — were a majestic force for beauty and sensitivity in our worship services week after week. Special commendation goes to Mr. and Mrs. Robert C. Sharp for the gift of this organ “To the Glory of God.”



Until now I have spoken only of anthems, and this is not the total picture. However, I did feel that the anthems for Sunday mornings were extremely important. The Sunday morning congregation, Sunday after Sunday, was by far the largest number of people we touched with music. Frankly, I treated every Sunday morning like an opening night at the opera. The Chancel Choir did a concert at Christmas time, and also at the Lenten season, every year. We did a number of extended works at these concerts and it would be tedious to list them all; however, I do want to mention some of the more exciting concert programs.

For two different Christmas Concerts we did Parts I and II of the *Christmas Oratorio* by J.S. Bach; these two parts together make a full evening of music. Soloists for these evenings were: Mary Michal Earl, soprano; Wayne Hardy, tenor; and Jack Williams, bass. Ms. Earl had a beautifully trained voice and had been a student of Eleanor Steber. Mr. Hardy's outstanding tenor was excellent for Baroque music, and his ability to sing those *coloratura* passages was the best. Dr. Jack Williams had a fine bass-baritone and was a mainstay in our choir. Also, a beautiful work for the Lenten season comes to mind: *The Seven Words of Christ* (The Passion) by Joseph Haydn. We sang this early on in my tenure and I recall the sensitive and subtle work of Barbara Elder at the organ. We presented the Christmas and Easter portions of Händel's *Messiah* on several occasions; when *Messiah* is programmed it is a drawing-card because everyone loves this monumental piece of music.

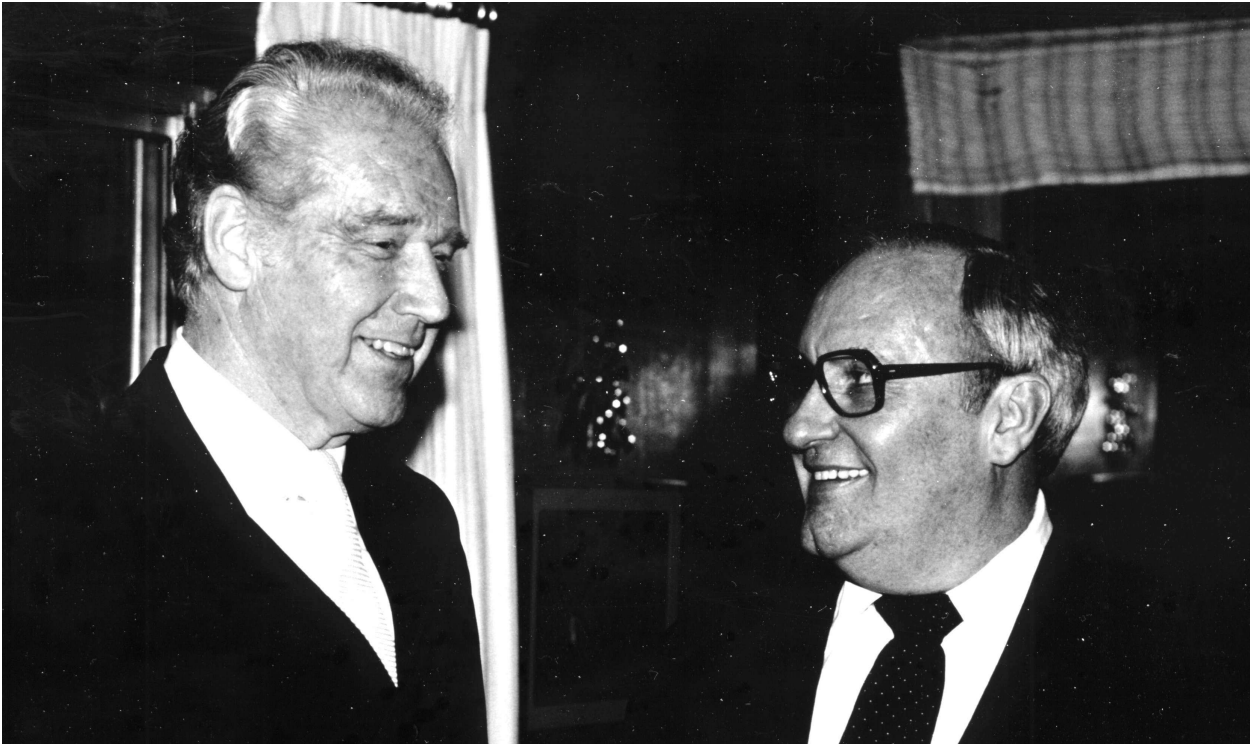
A favorite for the Lenten season was *Psalm of Peace* by Norman Dello Joio, which made wonderful use of the trumpet and French horn. I was partial to the *Requiem* by Gabriel Fauré; I had studied this music with Nadia Boulanger in France, and she had been a favorite student of Fauré himself at the Paris Conservatoire. It was inspirational and revealing to work with her on this delicate and beautiful piece. Aileen Todd did the "Pie Jesu" beautifully. She was a favorite of Dr. Wiseman, and he could never hear often enough her rendition of "There is a Balm in Gilead." She had an affinity for this kind of song, and it was done artistically with feeling and the congregation loved it. A similar situation existed with Jane Sneed. I always appreciated the way she sang "*Laudate Dominum*" from Mozart's *Solemn Vespers* and I asked her to sing it as often as it was feasible. I thought she sang the melismatic passages beautifully.

There are other extended works we performed with a high degree of success, and the *Christmas Oratorio* by Camille Saint-Saëns comes to mind immediately. The soprano soloists for our performance on December 7, 1975 were Linda Roark, Jane Sneed, and Aileen Todd. Jean Wallace was our mezzo-soprano soloist. Wayne Hardy, Jack Williams, and Stan Lockhart were the male soloists. Linda Roark had been home for only a week since making her successful debut with the San Francisco Opera. She sang roles in three different operas during that autumn season.

One of the most successful Christmas programs was *A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols*. We did this program several times using different people to read the lessons from the Bible. Hearing Edward Dumit read the Scriptures with his mellifluous speaking voice was a genuine pleasure. The *Festival of Lessons and Carols* is an adaptation of the one held at King's College Chapel in Cambridge, England.



When I learned that Dr. Wiseman was retiring, the thought occurred to me to dedicate the upcoming Lenten concert to him. We wanted to show our grateful appreciation to Dr. Wiseman for his high-spirited support of the Music Department.



With Dr. William J. Wiseman in April, 1984. Dr. Wiseman and I worked together for almost seventeen years. This photo was taken at a reception for the Chancel Choir after one of our concerts. Dr. Wiseman is currently Pastor Emeritus at First Presbyterian Church.

It was a privilege and a real pleasure to serve with Dr. Wiseman because here was a minister who loved quality music and encouraged us with his memos, which gave us confidence and reassurance. The compositions that I chose for this concert were two dramatic choral works by the English composer Edward Elgar: *Te Deum laudamus* (opus 34, no. 1) and *Benedictus in F* (opus 34, no. 2). Both of these works demonstrate this composer's uninhibited dramatic style. These compositions exhibit his creative handling of chromaticism and his imaginative part-writing. Among British composers, he ranks at the top of the list during his time period.



When I first came upon the musical scene at First Presbyterian, I thought that it would be proper to have at least one well-known organist per year play a recital — particularly considering the existence of that wonderful, 110-rank Austin organ. It seems to me to be appropriate for the church to promote these concerts, not only for the members of the church but for the entire community. Since the early days of the “hydraulis” — an organ that used water for power to thrust the air through the pipes of the instrument — the organ has been enormously important in the worship service of most churches in Christendom.

During my tenure, the first big-name artist we invited was Robert Glasgow. Mr. Glasgow is famous for making those grandiose nineteenth-century pieces sound as if

they were being played by a great orchestra. He is an extremely exciting artist and a highly respected teacher. He is an authentic example of an organ virtuoso. We also invited Catharine Crozier; she is the epitome of elegance and polish, and commands the respect of organists everywhere. Frederick Swann, who played the dedicatory recital of our new organ on January 12, 1969, played for us again in the seventies. When he played he was overwhelmingly effective with his artistry, and with the joy of music which he easily communicated. Other great organists during this time were Wilma Jensen and Marilyn Mason, who embraced all the fine qualities of a major performing artist. All of these organists have inspired generations of young American musicians. These days, we are blessed with an occasional guest artist and with the yearly recital of our own Ron Pearson, who is always thrilling and leaves his large audiences clamoring for more. I would say without equivocation that the music program of First Presbyterian Church does benefit the entire music community of our city. Often there is the opportunity for musical collaboration when instrumentalists are invited to participate in the music program of the church. This stimulates new programs and performance venues for both professional and student musicians.

Here is a story about the celebrated organist, Virgil Fox. Mr. Fox played a recital at the First Presbyterian Church on our rather new Austin organ on Sunday afternoon, November 1, 1970. It must be stated that credit for this recital goes to the Tulsa Chapter of the American Guild of Organists, who sponsored it. Virgil Fox was a charismatic and colorful person, and I had known him just slightly as a result of my having been a choir member at New York's Riverside Church during my student days at Columbia University. Subsequently, Frederick Swann would replace Mr. Fox at Riverside.

But on with the story.... Mr. Fox preferred to practice late at night, so he received permission to practice in the early morning hours at the church. It was Sunday morning, almost 3 A.M. and he had the organ console pulled out from its normal position into full view of the entire church. Little did he know that Dr. Wiseman had been in his study preparing his sermon for Sunday morning. Dr. Wiseman decided to take a short break from his work and walked out into the dark of the balcony (way up at the top) and Virgil Fox was practicing everything. He would jump up from the organ bench at the completion of a selection, and bow to the imagined audience. He would also rehearse his remarks to the imagined audience.

All of this obviously brought about tremendous results because the recital was an immense success. The audience at the recital gave him four separate standing ovations, and it sounded like a football game at the end. The audience was *crazy* for him! Now, I'm aware that he receives much criticism from many organists relating to his "showbiz" tactics and his histrionic nature. The purists feel that he distorts some of the masterpieces, and this may be a point well taken. However, during his lifetime he did much to make the organ accessible to the public, and I can say from

personal experience that his service playing at the Riverside Church was exciting and inspirational. Perhaps he would respond in this way to the purists: “Purists are the barnacles on the ship of music.”



Nineteen seventy-nine brought the Chancel Choir an invitation that made all of us proud. We were invited to sing a full-length concert for the Southwest Regional Convention of the American Guild of Organists. We were honored and extremely pleased to be invited, and we worked long hours to rise to the occasion. This was a “double-whammy” for Ron Pearson, because he not only played for us, but he also played an organ concert at Trinity Episcopal Church at the beginning of the convention. One could truthfully say that Mr. Pearson’s first notes on the Trinity organ constituted the opening salvo for the convention.

Finally, the evening of June 19, 1979 arrived and the Chancel Choir sang the concert — and I feel the concert went commendably. Fred Elder, who was the Program Chairman for the convention, wrote the choir this amicable and generous letter a few days later:

The Boston Avenue Church (United Methodist)

D. Frederick Elder, Organist

June 22, 1979

Dear Laven,

You did it again! The choir sounded marvelous and the program was stunning. Thanks for including the anthems; I think it is an inspiration for all of us to hear that kind of music performed so well.

... I surely have appreciated your help and encouragement with the Convention.

Cordially,

Fred

Other musicians and organists who participated in this convention were Fred Elder, Susan Ingrid Ferré, Gerald Frank, Robert Glasgow, Gerre Hancock, Thomas Matthews, Ronald Pearson, and Arthur Poister.

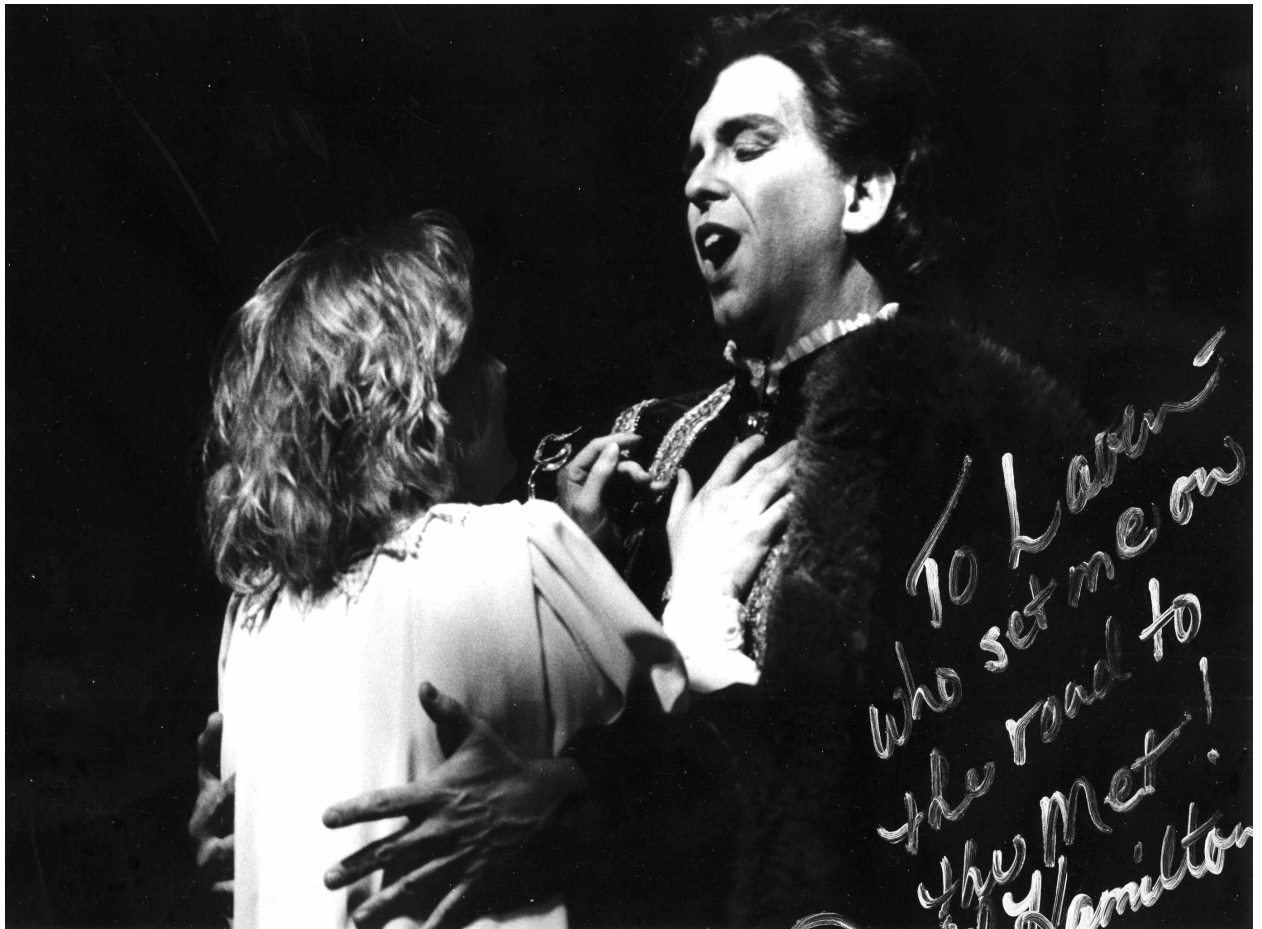
The September issue of the *American Organist*, the national publication of the American Guild of Organists, offered a review of the entire convention and said this about our performance:

The only choral program of the convention was presented by the Chancel Choir of First Presbyterian, conducted by Laven Sowell of Tulsa University, and accompanied by Ronald Pearson. The concert displayed the wide range of dynamics and the precision of ensemble of Sowell’s large choir. Verdi’s *Stabat Mater* was performed with an appropriate operatic, emotional expression. Pearson’s accompaniment was always in balance with the choir, with excellent orchestral registration and rhythmic vitality.

Calvert Johnson, *The American Organist*, September 1979



Several important musical careers have developed among the young people who grew up in our church. I have two singers in mind who blossomed during my time at First Presbyterian. One of them, Linda Roark-Strummer, has had a remarkable and fascinating career; however, I will discuss her career thoroughly in the chapter about the University of Tulsa because she graduated from T.U. and this seems appropriate.



*David Hamilton, a member of the First Presbyterian Church, was very active during his youth in the music program of the church, and was my private voice student during high school. David's picture is inscribed:
"To Laven – who set me on the road to the Met! – David Hamilton"*

The other singer is David Hamilton, who sang in my high school choir at the church. I still remember so well his youthful voice and his obvious outstanding talent. When he was a senior in high school he was studying voice privately with me, and I invited him to sing in the Tulsa Opera Chorus. I think this exposure to opera did the trick. His voice began to develop and it was clear to me, and later to his teachers at Juilliard School of Music, that this was a young man with a high potential and a promising future.

I clearly remember his audition at Juilliard because he related the story to me. He had been studying some Fauré songs with me privately, and the committee at Juilliard were impressed with his French and his sense of style. Needless to say, I was extremely pleased.

David has had an illustrious career. His distinctive and elegant tenor voice has been heard at opera companies such as the Metropolitan, New York City Opera, Opera Company of Philadelphia, Washington, Vancouver, and the Opera Theater of St. Louis. He has been an orchestral soloist with the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, the Mostly Mozart Festival Orchestra in New York City, and Baltimore, Pittsburgh, and Indianapolis Orchestras. David has also appeared at the Spoleto Festivals in Italy and South Carolina.

Highlights from recent concerts include tenor solos in *Messiah*, performed at Carnegie Hall; Liszt's *Faust Symphony* in Madrid; and Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9* in Vancouver with Sergiu Comissiona conducting. David has an impressive list of works that he has premiered and here are a few. A song cycle by Hugo Weisgall was premiered at the Library of Congress and at New York's Carnegie Hall. The New York premiere of *Casanova's Homecoming*, an opera by Dominick Argento, was produced at the New York City Opera, where David sang the role of Lorenzo da Ponte. He also sang premiere performances at the Berkshire Music Center at Tanglewood, and with the Baltimore Symphony.

Early in David's impressive career, he was the recipient of several prestigious awards. In 1984, he won the First Prize in the Paris International Voice Competition. He won the coveted Eleanor Steber Award, and a grant from the Puccini Foundation. And there are more, too!

Currently, David lives in Minnesota with his wife and two children, where he is a Music Professor at Concordia College. The school releases him periodically to sing opera with some of the leading regional companies throughout the United States. He is also an accomplished recitalist, and is in demand for community concerts throughout the country.

His parents, Estelle and Bill Hamilton, still attend the First Presbyterian Church, and David comes home from time to time to visit. He is a fine gentleman and we are proud of his success!



Through the years, I was fortunate to have several really dear friends in the congregation. Ella Parker quickly comes to mind. She had been the Organist at First Presbyterian for twenty-two years during the music leadership of Dean Albert Lukken. On Sunday mornings after her retirement, she would sit near the railing in the balcony and lean out enthusiastically to hear the music. Often, she would run into the choir room at the conclusion of the service and give us high compliments. She was a warm, sincere, and generous lady with good words of approval. Also,

Mary Stuart Wood was a wonderful lady and highly respected in the community. She had been a Tulsa School Board Member when I first came to Tulsa. She appreciated our choir and frequently told us as much! When I was leaving the church in 1985, she wrote this warm and very kind letter:

Mary Stuart Wood
2607 South Boston Place
Tulsa, Oklahoma 74114

October 5, 1985

My dear Laven:-

For years I've been telling you that your superbly trained and executed music in our church has repeatedly "sent me into orbit" — Well, this "paper and pen vehicle" cannot begin to tell you how much I'll miss you when you leave us in your leadership capacity.

I've been a member here at First Presbyterian for 59 years — since 1926 (let's say that I came here a "child bride"!) — and I can sincerely say that your years have provided the best music we've ever had. What a wonderful contribution you've made to our worship experiences!

Thanks so much for all you've done for us and I'm so grateful that you'll still be in Tulsa, "making music sing"!

Love and wishes all good.
Mary Stuart Wood

There were many dear friends in the church and I have a very big scrapbook filled with the letters that were written to me when I departed. I have looked at those letters more than once during the past years. They mean a lot to me. Many of these friendships have continued through the years; for example, when I see Mary Carolyn and David Mitchell it is as if we had never parted. Also, to see Mrs. J. Littleton (Janice) Daniel is a heartwarming experience. In addition to being a delightful lady, she has been both a stalwart member of the church and an enthusiastic supporter of its music programs for decades. And who could forget Betty Payne, who for years has worked with the Senior Citizens and Meals on Wheels and who was, for me, an important behind-the-scenes presence in my early years at the church.

When I first came to the church on a permanent basis, there was a lovely lady who sang in the choir whose name was Mildred Rhodes. Mildred was gregarious and gracious, and her ringing endorsement of me was a "good thing" for me. She frequently had chili suppers and other parties for the choir, which were an enormous help to me in developing a group *esprit de corps* and a rapport with the choir members. Mildred played the piano and accompanied herself as she sang in the style of the elegant nightclub singer Hildegard, and she also had a couple of numbers in the

style of Pearl Bailey. Everyone loved her unique musical qualities which in these situations promoted camaraderie. She was a generous and kind lady.



The First Presbyterian Church has a long, rich heritage and has played an important and dynamic role in the history of our City, particularly since it was Tulsa's "First Church" and was also responsible for helping to give birth to the University of Tulsa. I'm so pleased to have been just a tiny part of that history. I feel fortunate to have still been in place as Choirmaster during the church's Centennial. That Sunday, October 6, 1985, was a stimulating experience for the whole church membership.

At 9:30 in the morning the Centennial festivities began at Fourth and Boston. We all gathered on that corner to celebrate the history of the church. This was the location of the very first church building. We had a brass fanfare and speeches by Dr. Ernest Lewis and The Honorable Terry Young, Mayor of Tulsa. We all sang the hymn "The Church's One Foundation" with the brass playing along with us for support, and I remember conducting some prayer responses. The weather was sunny and delightful, which made our big procession back to the present church, at Seventh and Boston, an impressive sight. The *Tulsa World* newspaper ran a color picture of our choir, with their red robes prominent in the picture, processing back to the church. This rather large picture appeared on the front page of the Monday morning edition, with a big story by Beth Macklin. Ms. Macklin, longtime Religion Editor for the *World*, made the observation in this article that the celebration was a bittersweet experience for Choirmaster Laven Sowell because this month would be his last in that position.

The main Service that morning began at 10:30 instead of the usual 11:00, and it was glorious. It was World-Wide Communion Sunday and I think our music was spectacular. We sang an anthem that had been written for, and dedicated to, our choir by John Ness Beck and set to the hymn tune "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name." It is truly a powerful setting, and skillfully arranged. I also recall that Dr. Ernest Lewis, Dr. William J. Wiseman, and Dr. Bryant Kirkland all officiated in this Service. This was a red-letter day for the First Presbyterian Church and an occasion for happy reflections for years to come.



By 1985, I had been involved with a full-time responsibility at the University of Tulsa, Choirmaster for the church, and Chorus Master for Tulsa Opera for almost seventeen years. While I loved all of this more than I can say, I was beginning to get really weary. All of these years I had literally been working seven days a week. Even on my vacation time at the church, I usually came to work with the octet on Sunday mornings in August. (I couldn't stay away.) There can only be one reason

for all this, and it was because I loved what I was doing. I had to make the difficult decision to give up the church choir, and this freed up my weekends. It was a very difficult thing for me to do, because the choir had become like my family and to sever that relationship was painful. I've never really talked about all of this until now. For years, I simply kept a stiff upper lip and moved forward. After all, nobody is irreplaceable, and the choral music is in excellent hands with Ron Pearson. I hear the choir often on television and they sound terrific. I think Ron is doing a remarkable job!

I attended Ron's most recent annual organ recital in October of 1999 and as always, he was exciting and demonstrated a high degree of artistry, communicating his genuine love for music. I didn't see Dr. Wiseman there, but he saw me from his seat in the balcony and sent me a wonderful letter that I would like to share with you:

First Presbyterian Church
709 South Boston Avenue
Tulsa, Oklahoma 74119-1629

William Johnston Wiseman, S.T.D., D.D., Pastor Emeritus

Dictated October 10, 1999

Dear Laven,

I was delighted to see your handsome head in the center section at the time of Ron's recital today. He did a magnificent job as always.

Thinking back over the years I have given thanks to God many times for the seventeen years we had an association in ministry. The music ministry at First Presbyterian — organ and choir — outshone any of the choirs in my experience as I preached in many of our leading churches. You brought the best in music to the church....

God bless and guide-
William J. Wiseman

What a wonderful evening at the Marriott-Southern Hills recently to honor Ron Pearson for his twenty-five years of service to the church. All this occurred on Friday evening, October 15, 1999 and I was so pleased to be invited to sit at the head table where I had a long-overdue conversation with Mavis and Dr. Wiseman. They are really two of my favorite people in all the world. Mavis is such a wonderful lady, and I must tell you this little story concerning Mavis. When she taught elementary school in the Tulsa Public Schools several years ago, her son Bill, Jr., came to visit her at the school one day and she introduced him to her class. She had a classroom that was highly diverse, with a variety of racial and ethnic groups represented. A bit later, one little boy of African-American descent came up to her and said, "Mrs. Wiseman, your son is white!" The little boy obviously thought of Mavis

as “family.” I think this is a touching story, and it is a poignant illustration of Mavis’s ability to relate to others.

Ron’s evening was a total success. The program was filled with nostalgia and reminiscences. Mr. Edward Dumit was the Master of Ceremonies and moved the proceedings forward with savoir-faire and with poise. There was a large group of people there to celebrate this special event. Several days later, I received this great letter from Ron and his remarks were so positive and kind that it made his former colleague a bit misty-eyed and, most of all, grateful. Here is his letter:

First Presbyterian Church
709 South Boston Avenue
Tulsa, Oklahoma 74119-1629

October 29, 1999

Dear Laven:

I was very pleased that you were able to participate on the program at the dinner on October 15, held in recognition of my twenty-five years of service to First Presbyterian Church. It seemed especially fitting that you were present, given the many years we worked together, not only with the Chancel Choir at First Presbyterian Church, but also the University of Tulsa Chorale, and the Tulsa Opera Chorus.

Your rehearsals were always interesting and enjoyable, and I always felt that I had a front-row seat at a choral workshop. I learned many things from you: choral discipline, vocal techniques, correct pronunciation of Latin, rehearsal and performance decorum, to name a few. Perhaps the most useful and important lesson, however, was your insistence that music be taken seriously and sung with *energy* and *passion*, two of your favorite words! I thank you for teaching such valuable lessons, which have served me well in my own work.

I have enjoyed and appreciated your friendship over these many years, and I wish you continued success and happiness in the years ahead.

Sincerely,

Ronald J. Pearson
Organist and Music Director



I have expressed many times, both publicly and privately, my high regard for the members of the choir and my colleagues. I learned to admire them for their personal qualities and have appreciated the splendid fashion in which they helped me in the performance of my tasks.

Sunday, October 27, 1985 was my last Sunday as Choirmaster. Many people had planned a little going-away coffee in the basement of the church, in the space now renovated and named Wiseman Hall. As a very generous token of appreciation and “farewell,” I was presented some highly-sophisticated sound equipment and an original hand-made pewter bowl fashioned by William Derrevere. This bowl, which

is one of my most prized possessions, has the following inscription on the inside: "To Laven with gratitude and affection — from the First Presbyterian Church Choirs." Harriet and Bill Derrevere are both extraordinarily talented individuals, and they were enthusiastic members of the Chancel Choir during my time.

This going-away coffee was a heartwarming affair, and with my heart in my throat I managed to mumble something in response. It was an emotional day for me. However, I found it necessary to pull myself together and move forward because at 2:00 PM that very day at the Performing Arts Center I had an opera rehearsal for Tulsa Opera, Inc. Frankly, I'm glad I had that rehearsal because this was one Sunday I would not have wanted to go home after church to be alone.



The Chancel Choir

Sally Adams
Ardis Baumann
Majorie Berry
Ron Bilyeu
Ernest R. Buck
Linda Campbell
Carol Carlson
Gordon R. Carlson
Janette Curry
Loyce Dahlem
Harriet Derrevere
William R. Derrevere
Edward S. Dumit
Mary Michal Earl
Virginia Erbert
Nancy Foland
Robert B. Funk
Patricia Hall
J. Phil Hammond
Nancy Hammond
Wayne Hardy
Arthur L. Horn

Pauline Horn
Arthur W. Johnson
Jan Keene
Marie Keene
Carolyn Lamberth
Jessie Marchant
Carolyn McCright
Lester M. McCright
Dorothy McFadden
Margaret McShane
Mary Carolyn Mitchell
Diane Morrow
J. D. Moore
Donald P. Moyers
Mary Moyers
Anne Spencer Nickel
David Oates
Steve Raiford
John R. Raveill
Sarah Rizley
Michael B. Roark
Trinket Roark
T. V. Robertson, Jr.

Barbara Shallenberger
William H. Shambaugh
Jane Sneed
James F. Stevenson
Sally Stewart
William V. Stoskopf
Jeanne Studenmund
Mark Sumner
Aileen Todd
Marion Vaccaro
Jean Wallace
James E. Weeks
Sue Weeks
F. Noel Wightman
Martha Wightman
Jack Williams
Janetta Williamson
Richard B. Williamson
Ginny Wood
Hal S. Wood
Carolyn Woodard
John R. Woodard III

Laven Sowell, *Choirmaster*
Ronald Pearson, *Organist*

Pastors

William Johnston Wiseman, S.T.D., D.D.
James I. Logan, Jr., M.Div. Douglas K. Fletcher, Ph.D.
Roger J. Newell, Ph.D. Kenneth G. McCollough, D.D.
Shirl P. Butler, M.Div., (*Volunteer*)

Choir roster, taken from a Lenten Concert program from 1984.

THE UNIVERSITY OF TULSA — AND THE SEVENTIES AND EIGHTIES

In the fall of 1970 I began my twenty-year teaching tenure at the University of Tulsa as an Assistant Professor in the School of Music. This was a happy time for me, moving into my private studio and adjusting to the pace of a university campus. Also, getting to know so many provocative and gifted people was exciting. The first thing that seemed to create a bit of anxiety for me was the lack of pressure where scheduling was concerned. I was accustomed to signing in at 8:10 in the morning five days a week. My T.U. classes, on the other hand, were in the afternoon, and private voice lessons were scheduled whenever it was convenient for the student and me. It took me a while to adjust to that freedom in the mornings. (It goes without saying that my attitude toward the mornings is quite different today.)

One of my favorite activities in the morning hours for a long time at the University was going for coffee and sweet rolls at the Faculty Lounge in the Student Activities Building. This was an entertaining venture because I discovered that University professors love to express their views in a dogmatic and authoritarian manner. At first this was very entertaining and I particularly enjoyed Dr. Bela Rozsa from the School of Music. He was a brilliant man and fascinating when expressing his views, although he was a bit of a contrarian which sometimes heightened the electricity in the air and definitely added interest. I was new and rather on the young side, so I didn't join in on the hot topics much because these gentlemen could cut your legs off before you knew it! I learned a lot about human nature from these sessions.

When Dr. William E. McKee asked me in June to consider joining the faculty, I was thrilled; and I am indebted to Dr. McKee for his advice and assistance during my first months and years at T.U. Dr. McKee was a consummate musician and commanded the respect of everyone as the Director of the School of Music. Also, he was one of the finest French horn players in the Southwest. It is my opinion that he deserves special commendation for his ability to deal so expertly with a music faculty. Dealing with a group of talented musicians, one needs at times to take on the characteristics of a lion tamer. With a group of talented musicians you have an abundance of ego and temperament, often in a hyperstimulated frame of mind. These same people can also be inspiring and energizing at times, and this is reflected in their music-making.

Monday evening, March 8, 1971 was an evening of high excitement at the University because Dr. McKee was guest conducting the Tulsa Philharmonic at the Tulsa Municipal Theater. This concert was called the "University of Tulsa Showcase Concert" and featured T.U. Faculty members exclusively as soloists. The instrumental soloists for the evening were Robert McNally, violin; Dwight Dailey,

clarinet; and Aldo Mancinelli, piano. These soloists filled the first half of the program with magnificently calibrated performances. After the intermission, the Cantata *Dona Nobis Pacem* by Ralph Vaughan Williams, written for soprano and baritone soloists, mixed chorus, and orchestra, was presented. John Toms had prepared the Civic Chorus for this performance, and Aileen Todd sang the soprano solos with beauty of tone and impeccable phrasing. I sang the baritone solo lines. Dr. McKee's conducting brought with it a sense of depth and intelligence, and Mr. Toms's preparation of the chorus was thorough and effective.

My first year at T.U. was Dr. McKee's last year as Director of the School of Music. He served for eight years in that position and decided to return to full-time teaching. The first semester of the 1971-72 school year brought with it a new Director. This well-liked gentleman was Professor Ronald Predl. Professor Predl had been extremely successful with the jazz band and the marching band. He had earned the admiration of the entire University for his remarkable achievements. His capacity for leadership was such that he remained as Director of the School of Music for eighteen years. This was an extraordinary accomplishment because with this position comes much difficult decision-making and sensitive dealings in the area of human relations. He was the right man!



During my first four years at T.U. I served as the Director of the Opera Theater. Dr. McKee was the Conductor of the Orchestra and Music Director, and I was the Artistic Director. Sometimes my duties involved staging and the overall success of the production was my responsibility. Dr. McKee was a great colleague and I could not have pulled off the fine productions we did without his help. We did several productions that were of high quality and outstanding for the college level. We did a production of Mozart's *Così Fan Tutte* which featured Aileen Todd, Linda Roark, Jack Williams, and David Howell. Aileen and Linda were absolutely of the highest order. Mary Michal Earl did the lion's share of the stage direction. This was an excellent production and one of the last events in the old Hall. Actually, my Operatic Excerpts program in the Spring of 1972 was the absolute final event in the old Kendall Hall; the next event was the wrecking ball.

Each semester we presented one of these programs of operatic excerpts which I staged myself with student assistance. For the full-length productions, I was able to engage faculty members from the Theater and Communication Departments to assist with the staging. These faculty members were Edward Dumit, Frederick Graves, and Nancy Vunovich. These dedicated and gifted faculty members were highly regarded by all of us and I continue to feel indebted to them for sharing their expertise.

The full orchestra was used for a production of a complete opera. However, for the programs of operatic excerpts we used pianists, and there were three pianists of

phenomenal talent that come to mind immediately. They were David D'Ambrosio, Joseph Ries, and Wayne Smith. These young men were extraordinary pianists and conscientious with every musical detail. I must mention the fact that Mr. Ries played the entire third act of *La Bohème* from memory on one of the "excerpts" programs.

One of the full operas that we produced during my four years as Director was Humperdinck's *Hänsel and Gretel*. This production of *Hänsel and Gretel* occurred in December of 1971 and was very popular with the community. We used the Edison High School Auditorium for performances, and filled the auditorium three times. Betsy Beard was Hänsel and Susan Baker was Gretel. Betsy, in later years, became a skilled Broadway performer. She was seen on Broadway with Richard Burton in *Equus*. The Mother and Father were sung by Linda Roark and Arno Wald. Both Roark and Wald were experienced singers with ringing voices. Jean Wallace was the wicked Witch, which she sang with good voice and with high energy; Sandra Herring was the Sandman, and Mary Grace Crussell was the Dew Fairy. Herring and Crussell were young singers that sparkled in their roles. We used the wonderful scenery that had been built in New York City expressly for Tulsa Opera, using money from a Martha Baird Rockefeller Foundation Grant. This was a lucky stroke for us, because this scenery was absolutely first-class. We were also fortunate to engage Roman Jasinski from the Tulsa Civic Ballet to do the choreography. Mr. Jasinski's choreography, which depicted the angels descending from heaven to guard Hänsel and Gretel who are asleep in the forest, was breathtakingly beautiful.

Amelia Goes to the Ball by Gian Carlo Menotti was a terrific challenge for us. We were fortunate to have Linda Roark, who could carry the title role easily, and she sang the role with aplomb. This opera was performed at the Civic Center Assembly Hall in downtown Tulsa. The production was done in cooperation with Tulsa's "Jubilee '73 Celebration" and was promoted by the Junior League of Tulsa. The Junior League helped us to sell tickets and promote our opera. They made a substantial contribution of time and effort towards the success of our production.

The next year was my last as Director of the Opera Theater before becoming Director of Choral Activities the following year. In November of 1973 we did a program of operatic excerpts entitled "Opera Potpourri" in the Tyrrell Hall Auditorium. The major thrust of the spring semester was a program consisting of two one-act operas with text and music by Thomas Pasatieri. This was performed at the Philbrook Art Center — before the elegant new Patti Johnson Wilson Auditorium. Thomas Pasatieri was at this time a very popular young composer of contemporary opera. He composed in a neo-Romantic style, and his music was extremely singable and kind to the voice. It was interesting to sing "off-campus" for these performances, even though we were really forced to do so because the new Kendall Hall was under construction at this time.



One student, Linda Roark, who sang often in our productions during this period has had an astounding career as an opera singer. She sang in our production of *Così Fan Tutte* and sang the Mother in *Hänsel and Gretel* and the title role in Menotti's *Amelia Goes to the Ball*, in addition to her signal performances in our programs of operatic excerpts.

Linda Roark-Strummer has made everyone in Tulsa proud of her, particularly her friends and teachers at T.U. Since leaving Tulsa she has been heard at the Vienna State Opera and at La Scala in Milan. In the Arena di Verona she was awarded the Zenatello D'Argento Award as the debutante of the year. She sang in the Arena for two summers getting sensational reviews, and was compared by the critics to the great Maria Caniglia.

Tulsa Opera brought Linda back to Tulsa to sing the title role in Puccini's *Girl of the Golden West* in November of 1991. Linda was a grand success, while as Chorus Master I was having conniptions over the difficult, tricky rhythms and fragmented choral parts. This is a "bear" of a chorus to learn and memorize. The Opera Chorus loved working with Linda; she was congenial and often dispensed a few good words of approval.

This has truly been an outstanding career, taking her to New York City where she sang in Carnegie Hall with the Philadelphia Orchestra under Riccardo Muti. She has sung numerous times with the New York City Opera in four different leading roles. In London she was heard as the soprano soloist in Verdi's *Requiem* conducted by Carlo Maria Giulini with the London Philharmonic. Unfortunately, I cannot list all of her exciting accomplishments because the list would go on and on.

This is unquestionably a rare voice that comes along only infrequently. I can't help thinking of the times Linda sang for us at church and at school to fill in for someone with a helpful, accommodating spirit. Of course, there were those times when she just sang because it was her turn, and she always thrilled us. She has a wonderful attitude and a great God-given vocal instrument. She made it happen! (Her career, that is.)

Linda's husband, Peter Strummer, is a dynamite performer. He is a *basso buffo* and is known throughout the operatic world for his well-etched and intelligent characterizations. Linda and Peter have moved to Tulsa but continue to be in demand all over the world for engagements. They are rarely at home and sometimes one is coming home just as the other is departing for another engagement. In September of 1998 Linda joined the music faculty of the University of Tulsa as a Feigen Scholar; she serves as the Director of the Opera Theater and teaches studio voice.

Recently I attended a happy celebration in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Michael Roark — Mrs. Ivan Roark's ninetieth birthday party. (I must add that Mrs. Roark, the mother of Linda and Mike, remains sharp as a tack!) At the party I learned that



Linda Roark-Strummer as Abigaille in Nabucco, Montréal Opera. This is a role that Linda has sung many times all over Europe and North and South America.

Linda had just been signed to sing the role of Fata Morgana in *The Love for Three Oranges* by Serge Prokofiev in the fall 2000 season at New York City Opera.



My agreement with the University was that I would manage the Opera Theater until Professor Arthur Hestwood retired, and then I was to succeed him as Director of Choral Activities. This was exactly what occurred. After my four years with Opera Theater, Professor Hestwood retired. He was a fine gentleman and loved by his students. He was well known as an advocate of the Fred Waring style of choral music and was highly successful with it. He had earlier in his career been a tenor with the Waring Choir.



My first concert at T.U. as Choral Director was the Mozart *Requiem*. This concert was performed in Sharp Chapel on November 20, 1974. The soloists were: Ineta Bebb, soprano; Sharon Babbitt, mezzo-soprano; David Howell, tenor; and Joseph Shore, baritone. Mozart's incomparable masterpiece was a dramatic way to begin my tenure as Director of Choral Activities. This was particularly gratifying because I have loved the Mozart *Requiem* since first encountering it as a nineteen-year-old in Aspen, Colorado. This was a highly successful performance, with the Chapel packed with standing room only.

Equally dramatic was the conspicuous misspelling of "Sharp" as "Sharpe" on the front cover of the program for this concert. As luck would have it President Twyman attended this concert as the guest of Mr. and Mrs. Larry Simmons. (This was one of the rare occasions that Dr. Twyman attended a musical performance at the University.) Of course he noticed the error on the program right away. The next morning Professor Ron Predl, the department chairman, received a swift telephone call from President Twyman who, as a master fundraiser, was not thrilled at this apparent slight to one of the University's most generous benefactors. When I saw Dr. Twyman a few days later on the campus, I took the opportunity to apologize for the mistake and to assure him that Professor Predl was in no way responsible.



Just before presenting our final concert for the school year on campus, we joined with the Oral Roberts University Concert Choir and the Tulsa Philharmonic, which was conducted by Thomas Lewis, to sing the *Requiem* by Duruflé. The concert was concluded with two big choruses from Verdi operas. The concert ended with the rousing and popular Anvil Chorus from *Il Trovatore* (in Italian of course). Maestro Lewis conducted in Tulsa for only three years. He had a fine baton technique and conducted with grace and precision. The conductor of the Oral Roberts University Concert Choir at this time was Raffaele Catanzariti. Mr. Catanzariti, an

excellent choral director, was for a short time in charge of Oral Roberts's television choral music.



The spring of 1975 was an active time for the T.U. Modern Choir. In addition to our regular appearances with civic organizations, we were chosen as Honor Choir at the Oklahoma Music Education State Convention in Oklahoma City. These activities took place in the stately old Skirvin Hotel Ballroom. This hotel at one time was one of Oklahoma's finest. Several weeks later, we were also invited to perform for the Oklahoma Arts and Humanities Council State Convention at the State Capitol. After singing in the Rotunda for this occasion, we were invited to the celebrated Blue Room to sing for Governor Boren. He gave us in return this noteworthy letter of appreciation:

State of Oklahoma
Office of the Governor
Oklahoma City

April 16, 1975

GREETINGS TO THE UNIVERSITY OF TULSA MODERN CHOIR:

You have my appreciation and sincere thanks for the beautiful music you have provided the Capitol employees and guests today.

Your quest for excellence is evidenced by the quality and beauty of your music. May you continue to enrich and inspire others as you share your talents with your listening audiences.

As Governor of Oklahoma you have my warmest best wishes for continued success in your endeavors.

Sincerely yours,
DAVID L. BOREN



A rare and lovely evening occurred on April 20, 1975 in the home of Mr. and Mrs. James L. Sneed. Phyllis Curtin, a Metropolitan Opera soprano, was in Tulsa to sing with the Tulsa Philharmonic. Jim was at that time serving as the Attorney for the Philharmonic. Jane and Jim hosted a dinner party with a few guests including Maestro Lewis and his wife Renata; Isabel and Larry Simmons; Trudy Oliphant; Phyllis Curtin; and me. I distinctly remember the Sneeds' young children because they enjoyed playing with Ms. Curtin's jewelry. Jane's beautiful décor and delicious food remain fresh in my memory even today. Jane has a keen knack for décor and entertaining.

Of course the center of attention that evening was Ms. Curtin. She is the quintessential American soprano, and had created the role of Susanna in Carlisle Floyd's opera by the same name. Her performances in opera were characterized by her out-

standing acting ability and her way of making diction count for the dramatic effect. She also possessed a beautiful and expressive voice. I remember Ms. Curtin from my early student days at the Aspen Institute of Music in Colorado. She was the Soprano in Residence during one of my summers there, and often sang in the concerts that summer.

After the dinner, I took Ms. Curtin to her hotel (the Mayo) and on the way there she asked me why she had never been invited to sing with Tulsa Opera. I did not have a good answer; however, those were the days that Carlo Moresco was conducting everything for Tulsa Opera and he was responsible for the great number of Italian singers we heard in those days. I'm not complaining, because I love those Italians!! But I also like to see American singers get an opportunity to sing. We get more Americans today, and that's a "good thing."



The Modern Choir sang its end-of-the-year concert in the Leta M. Chapman Theater in the new Kendall Hall on the campus on May 23, 1975. The concert was well received and I was pleased to have had an effective first year as Choral Director. Linda Camp was the talented pianist that year, and also the next year. She played beautifully and could sight-read anything.

Incidentally, the acoustics in the new Kendall Hall Auditorium were indescribably bad. The auditorium had carpet on the walls and the floors, and this sucked up the sound in a major way. We had to use the auditorium often, but when possible we sang in other halls. I heard someone give an interesting name to the Kendall Hall Auditorium recently: they called it "the Auditorium from Hell." I agree!!

This auditorium is far better when used for the spoken word, and with amplification. The Modern Choir participated in the dedication of the new Kendall Hall on February 7, 1975, and this was an impressive ceremony. Dr. J. Paschal Twyman welcomed the guests and introduced the Honored Guests. The Dedicatory Address was given by a former T.U. student, John Doremus, who had become a distinguished radio personality in Chicago. The exciting Celebrity Guest on this occasion was Tony Randall, and he was presented by Mr. E. R. Albert, Jr. Mr. Randall, a native Tulsan, is an actor with enormous success in television, movies, and Broadway. Dr. Twyman conferred the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Humanities on Mr. Randall. Our choir sang at the beginning and at the end of the ceremony. This was a happy day for the Department of Communications and the Department of Theater. The new facilities included new studios for TV, multi-media theater, new equipment for broadcasting, and much-needed studio space for KWGS, the University's FM radio station. The new Kendall Hall Theater facilities were enhanced considerably. Plays are presented from Greek times to the present. Dr. Nancy Vunovich was the Chairperson of the Theater Department at this time; she must have been thrilled to finally get this urgently-needed new facility.



Often we were asked to sing for civic affairs which were of real importance to the University and to Tulsa. One such event was the dedication ceremony for the “First Place Plaza Park.” The First National Bank had built a little downtown park so that all people could live and work and enjoy the beauty of the park for generations to come. Speakers on the program included Dr. Harriet Barclay, Professor Emeritus from T.U., and The Honorable Robert J. LaFortune, Mayor, City of Tulsa.

Another such event occurred in October of 1975, when we sang for a fundraising event at Southern Hills Country Club and Robert L. Parker, the Chairman of the Board of Trustees at the University was thoughtful to send us this gracious letter:

PARKER DRILLING COMPANY

Robert L. Parker, President

October 31, 1975

Dear Mr. Sowell and Members of The Modern Choir:

The Board of Trustees and The University of Tulsa are proud of our Modern Choir and its fine contribution toward the success of last Wednesday evening at Southern Hills Country Club.

Your renditions were beautifully executed. The many compliments which followed your performance attest to the excellence of your group. The Modern Choir is an increasingly appreciated asset to this University. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Robert L. Parker

Later that same semester we performed for the annual convention of the Oklahoma State Chamber of Commerce. This warm-hearted letter of encouragement came from Joseph H. Williams:

THE WILLIAMS COMPANIES

Joseph H. Williams, President

November 18, 1975

Dear Laven:

The performance given by the TU Modern Choir under your direction last Thursday night at the Annual Convention of the Oklahoma State Chamber of Commerce was truly outstanding. Not only was it an enjoyable, fun-filled presentation, but it also did great credit to the University and, indeed, for the entire Tulsa community in the eyes of the business leaders from across the state. I continued to hear warm compliments all through the luncheon the following day, which was a great tribute to you and your choir.

I know what a tight schedule you all have and we deeply appreciate your having fitted this performance into your schedule.

Very truly yours,

Joseph H. Williams



The University Chorale (my other choral organization) during the next week presented an almost two-hour concert of excerpts from Bach's *Mass in B minor*. Bach himself never heard this work in its entirety. The entire mass in one evening is a monumental undertaking for the performers and particularly the audience. It is like being asked to assimilate a great work of literature in one evening in the public library. Bach's *Mass in B minor* is one of the most colossal musical masterpieces in history, and probably the outcome of Bach's Protestant piety which lay at the root of his nature.

On this occasion, we had the good fortune to use the facilities at the First Presbyterian Church. This meant great acoustics and the use of that magnificent pipe organ. Soloists were: Ineta Bebb and Aileen Todd, sopranos; Andrea Baker, mezzo-soprano; David Howell, tenor; and Stan Lockhart, bass. Instrumentalists were: Dwight Dailey, oboe d'amore; and William McKee, horn. Ronald Pearson was the organist. Ronald Pearson had just come to Tulsa from the University of Michigan with his new Master's degree, and has through the years made a remarkable contribution to music in our community. I have discussed Mr. Pearson's many accomplishments more fully in the chapter on the First Presbyterian Church.

In the audience that evening for the Bach were two good friends. Mr. and Mrs. John Woodard have been enthusiastic supporters for years, and I have always thought that Carolyn and John were a dynamic couple. I have several of John's good letters in my scrapbook and here is one that I particularly appreciated:

GREEN, FELDMAN & HALL
Tulsa, Oklahoma 74103

December 4, 1975

Re: Mass in B minor by Bach

Dear Mr. Sowell:

On Friday evening, November 21st, my wife and I had the pleasure of attending the University of Tulsa Chorale's presentation of Bach's B minor Mass, which you conducted at the First Presbyterian Church. The powerful performance of the Chorale, its individual soloists, Ronald Pearson, the organist, and Dwight Dailey and William McKee, instrumentalists ably demonstrated your capability to mold a musical masterpiece.

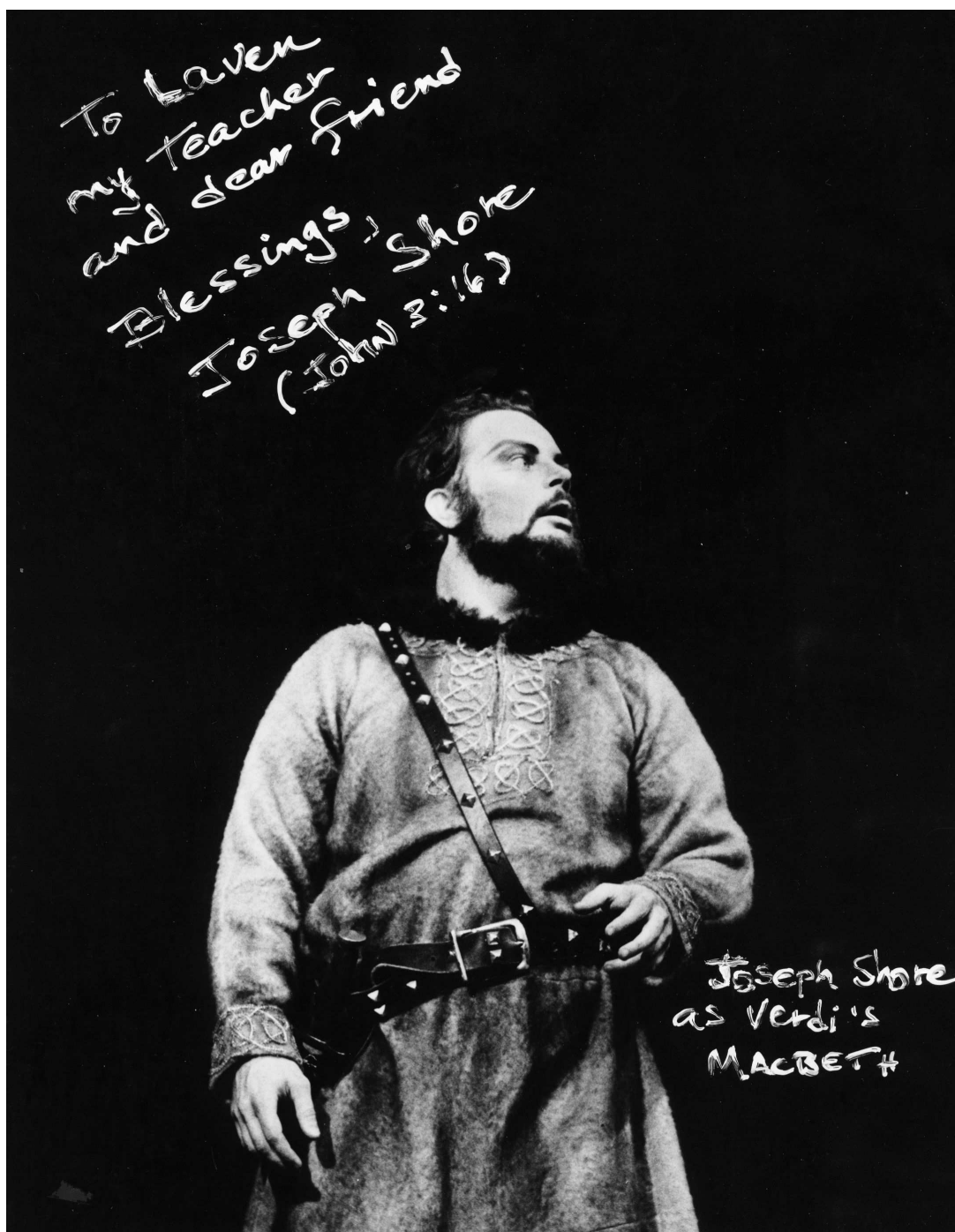
The City of Tulsa is richer for its University and the many fine performances that are shared with Tulsa by its faculty and students.

I think I speak for the some 900-1000 persons present when I say "bravo!".

Very truly yours,
John R. Woodard III



The Metropolitan Opera Auditions of 1975 were a *tour de force* for the voice students of the University of Tulsa. I had two students competing, and they were both extraordinary students. Soprano Sharon Babbitt had been a finalist in the auditions in 1973, and baritone Joseph Shore had won the regionals in previous years. This was Joseph Shore's big year with these auditions because he won the district and regional auditions. His really big success would come in New York when he became one of the ten finalists in the national competition. This meant that he would sing his final audition in the Metropolitan Opera House. I wasn't there in New York



Joseph Shore in Verdi's Macbeth, Arizona Opera Company – one of his finest roles.

City to hear him; everyone said he was sensational. Milton Wallace was the local district director of the Met auditions at that time, and in a recent conversation with Mr. Wallace he said to me, “Joseph Shore was one of the most highly gifted singers, with remarkable potential, to ever go through our Tulsa district.” Even though he was not the top winner, he was in our minds, and everyone was thrilled for him.

As the years have come and gone Joseph has carved a niche for himself as one of the finest Verdi baritones anywhere. He has given memorable performances of his Verdi roles for regional opera houses across America. He sang five performances of *Rigoletto* with the Houston Grand Opera. Several Tulsans went to Houston to hear him and returned to Tulsa singing his praises. His performance of *Rigoletto* with the historic Belfast Grand Opera was broadcast by the BBC. Recently Mr. Shore has added debuts with the Canadian Broadcasting Company, the Edmonton Opera, and the Youngstown Symphony where he added Renato in *Un Ballo in Maschera* to his Verdi roles. One of his biggest successes was as Salieri in the New York premiere and revival of Rimsky-Korsakov’s opera *Mozart and Salieri*.

He has won numerous awards, including the coveted Bruce Yarnell Memorial Award for Baritone, the WGN - Illinois Opera Guild National Award, and as a national winner of the Metropolitan Opera Auditions, the Gladys Axman-Taylor Memorial Award from the Metropolitan Opera National Council.

Joseph has in recent years held University appointments in voice at the University of North Carolina and the University of British Columbia. Along with his highly successful teaching, he continues to sing as many engagements as time will allow.



Among the giant composers of music, few hold the stage as strongly as Mozart. I am a confirmed Mozart-worshiper and I believe that to study his vocal music is an inescapable necessity for the serious voice student. (Händel is also great for vocal training.)

Our Spring Concert for the Modern Choir in 1976 brought us the opportunity to again utilize a Mozart work. We sang a Mozart Litany (K. 109) which had sparkling rhythms and lovely vocal graces. Mozart’s litanies were designed to be concert works as well as for church performance. This music has expressive melodies and is infused with a true religious spirit. Even the smaller choral works of Mozart have beautiful “Mozartean” melody lines which have a certain nobility, and young voices are particularly well suited for these works. The fine young solo voices for this Litany were Susan Baker, Janie Sanditen, Andrea Baker, Clydia Deaton, David Howell, Mike Honaker, and Keith Jemison.

Also included on this concert were some wonderful *Slovak Folk Songs* arranged by Béla Bartók. The concert was concluded with some beautifully crafted pop tune arrangements by Harry Simeone, Norman Luboff, John Cacavas, and Roy Ring-

wald. Solos for this section of popular music were expertly handled by Andrea Baker and Jack Brady.

These are such exhilarating memories; if I were to begin my life again, I would again choose music as a profession. Speaking broadly, it is my strong belief that music has the most powerful sway over human beings. Devoting one's life to music is one way of obtaining indescribable beauty and perhaps the best bond where friendship is concerned. Music is possibly the greatest unifier in the world.



Long and diligent hours were spent in rehearsal by the University Chorale to achieve a highly effective and appealing Christmas program offered on December 3, 1976. This was one of the most successful programs in my memory. It was a program of Christmas music performed with all the favorable acoustics of the First Presbyterian Church and the glorious pipe organ there. This instrument was a gift to the church from Mr. and Mrs. Robert C. Sharp — the same wonderful people who made possible the construction of the beautiful Sharp Chapel on the T.U. campus.

The concert began with J.S. Bach's *Magnificat in D Major*. This *Magnificat* is without question one of Bach's greatest choral works. It was composed soon after Bach went to St. Thomas Church in Leipzig to become their Organist/Choirmaster, and he seems to have made a particular effort to make it as brilliant as possible, no doubt to impress his new employers. Soloists on this evening were Ineta Bebb, Aileen Todd, Andrea Baker, Wayne Hardy, and Joseph Shore.

Also on this program was a lovely work by Daniel Pinkham for chorus, brass quartet, and organ. The composition is entitled *Christmas Cantata*. Pinkham, an American composer, was at that time a member of the faculty at the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston. Some of Pinkham's compositions are really "far out" and dissonant, but this work was basically homophonic and idiomatic to the voice. Once again, we were privileged to have Ronald Pearson at the organ.



Starting in 1976 I acted as musical host for three trips to Europe. Ellis Gibson and his wife Mary Jane were the force behind this endeavor. Their travel agency, Travel Designs, and their staff are, for me, by far the finest in the Tulsa area. They are absolute professionals and everyone returns home after the tour with a happy smile on their faces. The first tour was to Vienna, Salzburg, and Amsterdam.

Vienna is a city of great splendor. The aristocratic look of the city as it is today is due mainly to the Habsburg family who made it the center of a powerful empire. The greatest composers lived and worked in Vienna; to mention a few: Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, and Schubert. Vienna is an international center of music and art. We heard a magnificent performance of Mozart's *Don Giovanni* at the Staatsoper. This was an incredible production staged by Franco Zeffirelli and conducted

by the distinguished European conductor Horst Stein. *Don Giovanni* has been called by many the greatest opera ever composed because of its clever mixture of comedy and tragedy. There are controversial elements in the libretto. For instance, Don Giovanni questions the nature of God, Catholicism, male sexuality, and the justice of the social class system in eighteenth-century Europe.



*Ron Pearson and I
sample the famous torte
at the Sacher Hotel in
Vienna; January, 1976.
That Viennese coffee is
pretty good stuff also!*

What governs Zeffirelli's approach to opera is a strong desire to make opera fantastic, beautiful, theatrical yet basically realistic. I feel that Zeffirelli treats the theater as a place of enjoyment, of spectacle, of dramatic excitement, where one goes not for religious enlightenment but for an evening's entertainment. I particularly appreciate this quote by Zeffirelli regarding his staging: "We have no guarantee for the present or the future. Therefore the only choice is to go back to the past and respect traditions. I have been a pioneer in this line of thinking, and the results have proven me right. The reason I am box-office everywhere is that I am an enlightened conservative, continuing the discourse of our grandfathers and fathers, renovating the texts but never betraying them." (Special publication of the Metropolitan Opera Guild for "Live at the Met" — January 1983.)

The Staatsoper Auditorium has been completely restored after the destruction of World War II. They now have a front curtain made of solid sheet-steel which helps to prevent fire. After the performance that evening several of us — including Harriet Hickman, Jane and Jim Sneed, Janie Sanditen, Mary Jane Gibson, Aileen and Harry Todd, Ron Pearson and I — went into the Sacher Hotel to experience their famous Sacher Torte. Some thought it was delicious and some of us, including me, thought it was highly overrated. For my taste the chocolate was too bitter. They use that

dark “pure” unsweetened chocolate. Obviously many people like it because it has a popularity that has been sustained for decades.

Since Salzburg was the birthplace of Mozart, the entire city is dominated by the Mozart mystique. It was our good fortune to be in Salzburg on January 27, and this is Mozart’s birthday. All the museums and locations that celebrate the life and art of Mozart day in and day out are open to the public free of charge on Mozart’s birthday. Unfortunately this does not include free food and free drinks! There is a marvelous spirit of celebration in the air. Speaking of the air, it was colder than the North Pole while we were there. Somehow this didn’t seem to dampen the spirits in the pubs and restaurants that had friendly fires blazing. It is hard to say which season is best for Salzburg. I have been in Salzburg during the summer on two other occasions, and the city is beautiful then also — but in a different way. The Salzburg Festival in the summer is one of the most significant in all of Europe. When I was there for the summer Festival, Herbert Von Karajan was conducting. (Whoops! I must stop luxuriating in that memory because that was another trip, and not this one.)

Salzburg is a quaint and beautiful little city with its churches, monasteries, palaces, ample squares, and gorgeous fountains and statues. January 27 brought many exuberant activities to the students at the Mozarteum. The large concert hall in the Mozarteum is exemplary. It would be great to have a recital hall of this caliber at the University of Tulsa. Why not? It only takes money! — Now, off to Amsterdam.

Amsterdam was a colossal thrill for our group because of the Concertgebouw Orchestra. To hear this orchestra in its own hall, which is one of the most acoustically perfect in the world, is a major opportunity. The orchestra produces tones that are rich and lush. You would be amazed at the beautiful sound that is generated in a hall with almost unobstructed space, where every seat commands an equal view. It was an intoxicating musical experience. Our conductor was Seiji Ozawa and it is a memory to last a lifetime.

For losing your inhibitions, ridding yourself of aggressions, and generally immersing yourself in noise and music, there are many outstanding night clubs in Amsterdam. Sometimes the entertainment is a bit “naughty.” The night-club industry in Amsterdam is one of the most unusual in the world, and not very expensive. This sort of night life was not really what our entourage was looking for. Our group was more interested in a picturesque, candle-lit restaurant, and I remember dining at De Groene Lantaerne (The Green Lantern). The food was delicious and the ambiance was charming. The waitresses were costumed and the décor had an elegant seventeenth-century appearance. The Dutch restaurants are economical, and one enjoys flowers and candles everywhere, bowing waiters, stained glass windows, and an exciting atmosphere. I recommend it highly.

There are so many fond memories from these tours that I can only touch on a few because of time and space. In 1977, on our second trip, we toured to Paris and

London. We landed in Paris first, and proceeded to go that same evening to the Paris Opéra to see and hear Gian Carlo Menotti's production of *La Bohème*. Rodolfo was sung by the celebrated tenor Plácido Domingo, and the marvelous soprano Mirella Freni was cast as Mimi. This was a match made in heaven, because they were truly sensational that evening and the whole production was dynamite. The sets, lighting, costumes, chorus, and singers were the most impressive I have



*Aileen and Harry Todd in Amsterdam.
(Background: Sint Nikolaaskerk, or Church of St.
Nicholas.) It was so cold that big chunks of ice
were floating in the canal. Amsterdam was a fun
city and we all loved it.*

ever seen anywhere. All this coupled with the beauty of the Paris Opera House was just too much for me, and I was in tears time and again. Sitting near me were Edward Dumit and Mildred Rhodes; they were misty-eyed too. We wondered if the jet-lag had played tricks with our emotions. Frankly, I don't think so because when *La Bohème* is done well, it rips at your heart-strings like very few operas do.

At the conclusion of the opera that evening, a point of interest for me was the fact that Kurt Herbert Adler, the General Director of the San Francisco Opera, was sitting in front of me (a little to my left). He was with his new wife, who was in her late twenties, and he was in his late seventies. Our Tulsa soprano, Linda Roark, had just finished singing several roles under his direction with the San Francisco Opera, and I was eager to hear what he had to report. He made complimentary remarks but was in a rush to get out of the opera house.

I would later work with Maestro Adler here in Tulsa when he conducted Verdi's *Il Trovatore* in 1982. He will be remembered here for his slow tempos. The singers were dying on the stage because his tempos were so slow. It takes a lot more breath to sing those long phrases from Verdi operas. At one point soprano Leona Mitchell and tenor William Johns, both highly successful singers from Oklahoma, walked off the stage in the final dress rehearsal to protest the slow tempos. This seemed to send a message to Maestro Adler and he moved the music a little faster after that. In reality he was beginning to feel the effects of old age, and he became very fatigued after conducting a lot of energetic and fast passages. Putting all of this aside, he was truly a legend as the General Director of the San Francisco Opera. He began his career as a Chorus Master and seemed to have a simpatico for me and my work. The bottom line on this story is: I liked him!

We arrived in London just in time for high tea at the May Fair Hotel. When traveling, the high tea is a welcome sight. Everyone is a bit exhausted, and the sweets and hors d'oeuvres are extensive at the afternoon high tea.

The evening came too soon and it was off to Royal Festival Hall, where we heard the London Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Aram Khatchaturian. He is known primarily as a composer. The program consisted entirely of Khatchaturian's compositions, and that was a bit much for me. He was a leading Soviet composer with Armenian and nationalistic characteristics. His music is rich with Armenian dance rhythms and has vivid tunes from his own country. This is a grand orchestra and André Previn was the Principal Conductor during this time period; I would have enjoyed hearing them play under his baton. While this concert was worthwhile and definitely unique, I would have preferred a traditional symphonic concert. However, that type concert was not available at a time that would meld into our schedule.

The following evening was a night to remember forever. We attended a performance of Prokofiev's ballet *Romeo and Juliet*. This was presented at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, and the magnificent dancing of Rudolf Nureyev was unforgettable. He was, in every sense of the word, a true "superstar." Naturally, he danced the role of Romeo, and Juliet was danced by the lovely Lynn Seymour. Ashley Lawrence was the conductor. Serge Prokofiev will be known to posterity largely through his compositions for the theater, among which is his ballet score, *Romeo and Juliet*. It seems this score holds a particular place of honor among his scores, and the music is unlike much of the ballet music of that day. The music's

sweeping symphonic treatment marks a significant advance in Russian ballet music. It was an unqualified triumph for Prokofiev. I'll remember that performance for as long as I live!!

Our last evening in London was marked by a charming and sparkling revival of the musical, *Irene*. The musical was first produced in New York in 1919, and ran for 670 performances; this record was unbroken until *Oklahoma!* was produced in 1943. The big hit tune from this show was "Alice Blue Gown" (remember that one?). The historic old Adelphi Theater was our theater for this production and it has been completely rebuilt since it was first opened in 1806.

A memory that stands out in my mind was generated by a curious happenstance meeting with Mildred Rhodes in the lobby of our hotel one afternoon. When I discovered that Mildred was free, I suggested that we go to Vespers at St. Paul's Cathedral. We didn't have time to waste, so we jumped into one of those well-known black London cabs and headed out for the Cathedral. The cab ride was also "one of a kind" in my memory because the cab driver took us careening through the streets of London. He knew we were in a hurry to get to the Cathedral.

When we reached our destination, we were amazed to see only about six other people in that huge Cathedral. As it happened, the men and boys' choir sang as if it were Christmas Eve with a packed house! The organ there is so exciting and majestic, and during the postlude Mildred and I stood under the dome where the sound is more intense. What a thrill!

The third tour I did to Europe with Travel Designs was to Monte Carlo, Florence, and Milan in 1978. What a beautiful experience this was. This excursion was a highlight of a lifetime, although I must mention what I consider to be a great paradox. Florence is the city where opera was born. Yes, in 1597 the first work now known as "opera" was performed. The first opera was *Dafne* with music by Giacomo Peri and none of the music has survived with the exception of four tiny fragments. The thing that I regard to be paradoxical is that side by side with the exquisite Renaissance art in Florence is an opera house that resembles an ugly high school auditorium. Their earlier opera house had been burned in a disastrous fire. To make bad matters worse, we heard a performance there of Verdi's *Rigoletto* which was indescribably substandard. The singers were amateurs from the community, or gave that impression. That performance in that opera house that evening was a hoot! A strange happening in the city where opera began. There are so many places and things in Florence that are beautiful and breathtaking, and it would be worth the trip to Florence just to see the art of Michelangelo.

Arriving in Monte Carlo was an awesome experience for me, a kid who grew up in Oklahoma and remembering that as a teenager in Oklahoma City thirty-five cents would provide a wonderful evening of entertainment — twenty-five cents to go to the movies and ten cents for a big orange drink. We went straight-away to our hotel, which was the famous Hôtel de Paris. The hotel was inaugurated in 1864, and today

it is still the most elegant, most refined, most prestigious, most luxurious hotel in Europe and perhaps the world. The world's greatest personalities meet in the lobby, and the beautiful dining room seems to welcome everyone with a lordly style. At one time, Sir Winston Churchill had taken up fixed residence in the hotel, and stories still circulate about his enormous cigar, very bright eyes, and ready and ferociously witty remarks. The hotel is filled with memories from its glorious past.

From my hotel room, I could see the Mediterranean and the ships passing by. One night, during the early hours of the morning, I got up to go to the beautiful bathroom (everything was beautiful) and I pulled a chain that I thought would turn on the lights. Actually it was the emergency call chain and within seconds my room was filled with maids and elevator boys. At that time of night my ability to speak French was not too good either. Needless to say that chain was never again pulled by me!

We heard an exciting *Concert Symphonique* by the Orchestre Nationale de L'Opéra de Monte Carlo in the *Salle Garnier*. This is an exquisite room which is gilded and historically famous. Charles Garnier is the same man who designed the Paris Opera House. The orchestra that evening played a program of Mozart, Liszt, and Bartók conducted by Philippe Bender.

When touring with Ellis "Gib" Gibson of Travel Designs, it is smart to listen to his suggestions about where to eat. He has had the experience and his advice is usually right on the mark. In Monte Carlo, I enjoyed "Le Grille" which was located in the Hôtel de Paris. For my taste, *c'est le meilleur endroit de Monaco*.

The world famous Monte Carlo gambling casino is directly across the street from the Hôtel de Paris. The fabulous Main Hall of the casino was as elegant as I have ever seen — beyond description. I spent very little money there, and when I contemplate my spending any money at all standing next to all those high rollers it amazes me that I had the courage to go into the Main Hall! Frankly, my reason for going into the casino was that I had promised Ron Predl, the Director of the T.U. School of Music, that I would bring him a souvenir poker chip with Monte Carlo inscribed in the center. This I did.

The big moment in Milan for me was the performance of Verdi's *Don Carlo*. José Carreras was singing the role of Don Carlo and Claudio Abbado was the conductor. The tenor Carreras was absolutely at the top of his career and he sang magnificently. This all occurred at La Scala, the famous opera house where the great Italian composers first staged many of their operas. La Scala is rich with history. Unfortunately, La Scala from time to time falls victim to Italian political chicanery and its artists sometimes work under conditions which push the art of opera into second place. As I recall, Mildred Rhodes Wolff, Mary Jane and Ellis Gibson, Marge and Garvin Berry, Jack Williams and his father C. A. Williams (a fine gentleman) were the opera enthusiasts attending on that evening of January 18, 1978.

Every opera lover romanticizes about how wonderful it would be to sit in a box at La Scala and hear opera. Well, guess what? I got to do this and I sat with my

back to the stage facing the back of the house and in order to see the stage I had to crane my neck around and lean out, which I was happy to do but, as you know, *Don Carlo* is almost four hours long and after four hours of these gymnastics one is worn to a frazzle. Before we leave the subject of La Scala's *Don Carlo* I would like to mention the incredible and magnificent chorus that is in residence at the opera house. *Don Carlo* has some very exciting sections for chorus and they were sung by this chorus in such a manner as to leave you reeling. The chorus had basses that sounded like distant thunder on the low notes, and the tenors were "to die for." This made an old chorus master like me sit up and take notice!

Before leaving the subject of these three tours, it is important to stress that Mary Jane and Ellis Gibson made these trips happen, and they were responsible for the ultimate success.



The new school year of 1977-78 brought many engaging opportunities. The new Performing Arts Center had just been built in downtown Tulsa. The Gala Grand Opening of the PAC occurred on Saturday evening, March 19, 1977. This was a celebration of major proportions for the cultural community. Everyone felt a great sense of civic pride and the evening was filled with expectancy and electricity. The first half of the program that evening was the Tulsa Philharmonic conducted by Thomas Lewis; after intermission Ella Fitzgerald sang for the balance of the evening. She was the "Queen of Jazz" and was in rare form, thrilling everyone with her wonderful creativity. She sang those songs loved by millions and composed by Duke Ellington, George Gershwin, Cole Porter, Irving Berlin and others.



The opening of the new Performing Arts Center was an exciting development for the arts in the city of Tulsa. Tulsa Opera had chosen for their first production in the new theater Verdi's *Aida*. This opera requires an immense chorus, and my choirs at the University of Tulsa were invited to participate. There are many positive reasons for our participation and one that comes to mind immediately is the music. The choral music of *Aida* almost equals that of the Verdi *Requiem*. It is extensive and truly magnificent in its choral scope and musical effect.

It is also a thrill to watch these singers with a great reputation and world-class talent work in rehearsal. The *Aida* was Metropolitan soprano Gilda Cruz-Romo. Amneris was sung by Mignon Dunn, also from the Met. Ermanno Mauro was the Radames. Mauro enjoys a fine reputation in Tulsa because he is an excellent tenor and definitely is a "people person." He has sung in Tulsa in several operas and is always a big success. Emerson Buckley and Bliss Hebert were the conductor and stage director, respectively.

Verdi wrote *Aida* on a commission from the Khedive (Viceroy) of Egypt. The opera was meant for performance at a new theater in Cairo as part of the celebration of the opening of the Suez Canal. The premiere was delayed for various reasons and one very important reason was that Verdi finished composing the opera almost two years late. The premiere did finally happen, and I am certain that the Egyptian society felt it was well worth the wait. This was Verdi's most ambitious work to this point in time, and this opera is filled with glorious music for the chorus.

This Tulsa production remains fresh in the minds of many people. The Tulsa Opera Chorus and the T.U. Chorus numbered almost two hundred, and the new area for dressing rooms in the PAC and backstage space was happily utilized. The new facility was so much easier for the chorus because the Brady Theater (Tulsa Municipal Theater) was cramped for space — backstage was as ugly as home-made soap and ill-equipped for dealing with a large chorus. But I must confess that I have many fond recollections of some great singing in that old theater, and the acoustics in that auditorium were sensational. Obviously, that old theater brings a twinge of nostalgia to my ever-increasing capacity for nostalgia.



December 3, 1977 was a joyful occasion as the Modern Choir assisted in the dedication of the West Wing and Ancillary South at St. Francis Hospital. The ceremony was conducted by Bishop Bernard J. Ganter with the Invocation given by Bishop Patrick V. Ahern from New York. The Dedicatory Prayers were offered by Dr. John Russell from Boston Avenue Church. The choir sang an arrangement of “Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace” which prompted Mr. W. K. Warren to respond with this thank-you note:

W. K. Warren
P.O. Box 45372
Tulsa, Oklahoma 74145
December 8, 1977

Dear Mr. Sowell:

I want to express my congratulations on a job ‘well done’ by you and the members of the Tulsa University Modern Choir. The dedication program of Saint Francis Hospital’s west wing on Saturday, December 3, was greatly enhanced by the blending of such splendid voices.

Your singing of “Lord Make Me an Instrument” at the mass was of particular satisfaction to me since St. Francis is my patron saint.

Thank you and each member of your choir for making our dedication more meaningful.

Sincerely,
W. K. Warren



The First United Methodist Church was the location of a concert vivid in my memory. We were invited to do a rerun of the annual Spring Concert presented by the University Chorale. Don Ford, the Director of Music at the church, extended the invitation. This was a large undertaking because it utilized not only the Chorale which numbered about eighty members, but we used the University Orchestra too. The program included *Missa Sancti Nicolai* by Joseph Haydn, with soloists: Elizabeth Dodd, soprano; Julia Stickle, mezzo-soprano; Mark Watkins, tenor; and Keith Jemison, bass. The mass was accompanied by the University Orchestra. Following the presentation of the mass came a dramatic modern piece for four-part chorus, narrator, and organ entitled *Saul* and composed by Egil Hovland. Edward Dumit was the effective narrator and Ronald Pearson was, as always, the brilliant organist. The program was concluded with an exciting *Te Deum* by Ake Malmfors. This concert was worth every ounce of extra effort given by so many. Performing in the beautiful gothic nave of the First United Methodist Church was a wonderful experience for the singers and the orchestral musicians as well.



It was possible, on occasion, to get enough of my choir members who were still in town during the early part of the summer to sing an engagement together. The June 1978 Tulsa Opera Board meeting was the scene for one such engagement. The June meeting is always the “end-of-the-year” meeting for the Board, so it is usually a celebration of sorts. This kind of occasion usually calls for some rollicking popular tunes and two or three patriotic arrangements. There is one arrangement by Roy Ringwald of “God Bless America” that I love dearly. It is a wonderful arrangement and audiences are invariably moved by it, and so am I. After all, what is more breath-taking than thirty-six beautiful, sparkling young faces singing about how much they love their country?

Marvin Millard was a wonderful gentleman, and a man that I knew slightly because of his involvement with Tulsa Opera. He was a former President of the Tulsa Opera Board of Directors and President of the University of Tulsa Board of Trustees. It was kind of him to take the time to write this enthusiastic letter to Dr. J. Paschal Twyman:

[handwritten at upper right by President Twyman: “copy to Laven”]

Marvin Millard
Room 410, National Bank of Tulsa Bldg.
Tulsa, Oklahoma 74103

June 26, 1978

Dear Paschal:

For more years than I like to recall, I have been a Member of the Board of Tulsa Opera Inc. The annual open meeting of the Board was held in May. At that time, the Board members, their wives and many other supporters were

privileged to hear The University Of Tulsa Modern Choir directed by Laven Sowell. This group provided a good half hour of refreshing entertainment.

I just wanted you to know how much the Opera organization appreciates the Modern Choir, but in particular the dedication of its Director, Laven Sowell. Laven does such an excellent job of directing the Opera Chorus without which most of the productions would be mediocre rather than top-flight. These are just a couple of observations from a T.U. supporter.

Hope to see you soon,

Sincerely,

Marvin

PS My sometimes Secretary is on vacation. Hence the sloppy typing.



The school year of 1978-79 brings several memorable occasions to mind. The University Chorale presented as its Autumn Concert excerpts from *The Passion According to Saint John* by J. S. Bach. Bach is often described as “a musician’s musician.” This is an uncomfortable phrase for me, as it can only seem to imply that he was a composer so lofty, so subtle, and so abstract that only the most gifted musicians can ever hope to appreciate him. Bach wrote music he wished to be enjoyed by everybody. It is true that he was a musical genius, but he was in the business of communicating with his public and pleasing his patrons. It is a fact that one must study his fugues and inventions to become a fine musician. Also, his counterpoint and harmonic vocabulary is a required study for those who are professionally concerned with mastering the theory of music.

The Passion music of Bach sprang from a German background — it was the custom to sing the story of the Passion at the Vespers on Good Friday afternoon. Bach’s *Saint John Passion* at first was met with the feeling of scandal from the conservatives in Germany. They felt it was too operatic for something so sacred. It was first performed in Leipzig in 1723. Today we consider the music of Bach’s Passions to be a noble art form that has provided dignified and appropriate music for the religious service. However, it must be said that in this day and age, we perceive Bach as “dateless” and his art is perennial. The religious aspect is only a part of the gift Bach gave to the world. He has become universal in appeal. Although he is Baroque, he belongs really to no age. His music has influenced the music of every generation of musicians that have come after him.

The soloists for this stirring evening were: Wayne Hardy, tenor, who sang the part of St. John the Evangelist; Kalyn Arndt, soprano; Marilyn Catrett, soprano; Brenda Trammell, mezzo-soprano; Mark Watkins, tenor; Keith Jemison, baritone; and James Weeks, baritone. Ronald Pearson was the organist.

A few words about the tenor soloist, Mark Watkins: Mark continues to live in Tulsa and has been a remarkable success at Christ the King Catholic Church, where

he has served as organist/choirmaster for more than fifteen years. He also conducts the Hyechka Chorus, and at his church he manages and stages a musical extravaganza every summer called “Opera by the Slice,” to raise money for charities. He does all of this with style and panache.



Once again I pulled together a choir in June of 1979 after school had been out for some time — this time, for the dedication of the Dewey Bartlett Square in downtown Tulsa. We sang two times on the program. The Master of Ceremonies was Mr. John Rooney; the Dedication and Proclamation were delivered by Mayor James M. Inhofe and former Mayor Robert J. LaFortune. Some extra moments were given to the remarks of U. S. Senator Henry Bellmon. At the end of the program, we sang a stirring rendition of “Oklahoma!” The choir and I were more than pleased to be a part of this impressive ceremony.



The autumn of 1979 brought romance to our administration. Our Dean of Arts and Sciences was Dr. Edwin Strong, and a fine Dean he was. He was congenial and highly respected by the faculty. It was announced that he would be married to Sherry Criswell, a truly lovely person, and all of their friends on campus were elated to hear the happy news. They asked me to provide some choral music for the wedding which was held in Sharp Chapel on September 7, 1979. This was a moving ceremony with touches of majestic beauty. The choir sang “Let all mortal flesh keep silence,” by Gustav Holst, in an exciting manner from the back of the chapel in the balcony. The acoustics in Sharp Chapel are very bright and this gave extra brilliance and credibility to the English Cathedral style anthem by Holst. Thomas Matthews was the organist for this occasion. It is interesting to note that the minister who officiated at this ceremony was Dean Strong’s father, Rev. Edwin Strong Sr.

I received an inter-office memorandum through the school mail from Professor Edward Dumit which describes our anthem in a telling way. It reads:

Inter-office Memorandum

From : Edward Dumit
To : Laven Sowell
Date : 9/10/79
Subject : Strong/Criswell Wedding

Just a word of appreciation for the Modern Choir’s rendering of “Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence” — the performance was glorious, and the organ-choir antiphonal juxtaposition was perfectly synchronized and thrillingly effective!

Dr. and Mrs. Edwin Strong continued to live in Tulsa and he continued to serve as Dean. Since leaving T.U. he has, for many years, been the President of Culver-Stockton College in Missouri. It was their gain and our loss.



February of 1980 brought us another opportunity to sing for the Rotarians. This was a very special evening because it was an occasion for the men to bring their wives (the “Rotary Anns”). Actually, it was their annual Valentine party, and that’s a fantastic situation for a high-spirited program of love songs. We all had a light-hearted evening singing romantic music appropriate for the time and season. George E. Norvell, a wonderful gentleman and a former Mayor of the City of Tulsa, was the program chairman. He sent this kind letter:

The Rotary Club of Tulsa
1814 First National Building
Tulsa, Oklahoma 74103

February 15, 1980

Dear Mr. Sowell:

The Modern Choir under your direction richly deserved the standing ovation accorded them by the Rotarians and Rotary Anns attending the Valentine Party at the First United Methodist Church last evening.

The appearance of these talented students from the University of Tulsa set the tone for a happy and long to be remembered evening.

Please convey to Dr. Twyman and to Dean Strong our sincere appreciation for sharing the wonderful music so encouraged by your enthusiastic leadership.

Sincerely,

George E. Norvell, Chairman
Rotary’s Valentine Party 1980



On Saturday evening, March 1, 1980 the Tulsa Philharmonic invited the Modern Choir to join them and three guest soloists in a “pops” concert featuring the music of Rodgers and Hammerstein. Joel Lazar was the conductor. These concerts featuring “lighter” music always seem to fill every seat in the house, and that evening in the Chapman Music Hall of the Performing Arts Center was no exception. Singing with the orchestra was a positive affair and a unique learning opportunity for my students. Singing the music of Rodgers and Hammerstein is an exhilarating American musical experience. I think it is good for students to have an eclectic musical exposure. God save us from the musicians who turn up their noses at the lighter music of our country! The music and lyrics of Rodgers and Hammerstein are accessible and speak to the emotions of everyday Americans.



Much excitement was generated in the autumn of 1980 for the choruses at T.U. The project that consumed almost the entire semester for the University Chorale was learning the extensive chorus part in Mussorgsky's *Boris Godunov*. A huge chorus is required for this opera and Tulsa Opera invited the students of our University Chorale to join forces with the Tulsa Opera Chorus in this enormous undertaking. This, I think, is an unlimited learning opportunity for the students. The students have the chance to observe a "work in progress" involving artists with international reputations. James Morris, the phenomenal bass-baritone of the Metropolitan Opera, sang Boris with great authority. The production was conducted by Emerson Buckley, and Bliss Hebert was the Stage Director. One of our students from T.U., Jaxie Abernathy, was selected to sing the role of Xenia, Boris's daughter. Another student prominent in our activities during this period was my astute and highly-qualified Graduate Assistant, James Weeks.

Boris Godunov is based on seventeenth-century Russian history, and tells the story of Boris, a Regent of the Russian throne who murders Dmitri, the child heir to the throne, and becomes the Czar in 1598. It is a complex and demanding score in which the chorus has a major role. In fact, it would be accurate to call the chorus a "protagonist" (leading role) in this opera. There is much spectacular and glorious music for the chorus, and John Toms — Music Critic of the *Tulsa Tribune* — had this to say about the chorus in his review:

Tulsa Opera's production of *Boris Godunov* Saturday boasted the elements needed to meet Modest Mussorgsky's huge concept. It was spectacular....

The orchestra handled the complex and demanding score with aplomb.

The chorus was equally good. Attacks, releases, exclamations were accomplished with utmost precision. Laven Sowell's opera choruses have performed well on previous occasions, but this one topped all others....

John Toms, *The Tulsa Tribune*, November 3, 1980

Edward Purrington, the General Director of Tulsa Opera at this time, was responsible for putting together this magnificent production. He was a great friend of education in Tulsa, and by involving my T.U. University Chorale in this important event he gave the students a rare opportunity to acquire a certain type of musical sophistication not otherwise available. I was Chorus Master for Tulsa Opera and combining my T.U. group with the Tulsa Opera Chorus gave us the massive choral force necessary to do justice to the Mussorgsky work. Mr. Purrington was always a thoughtful letter-writer, and here is one of his best:

Tulsa Opera, Inc.
1610 South Boulder
Tulsa, Oklahoma 74119

November 15, 1980

Dear Laven:

I want to take this opportunity to express my deep appreciation to you and the “revolutionary forces” from the Tulsa University Chorale for the fabulous work that made BORIS GODUNOV Tulsa Opera’s most memorable production to date.

The participation of your outstanding group of students at Tulsa University was a major factor in the musical and theatrical success of this huge undertaking. Under your leadership, they are a superbly responsive unit, and it was a pleasure to have them work with our Tulsa Opera Chorus “regulars.” We are fortunate, indeed, to have such a fine University Chorus in this community.

Last, but far from least, I want to commend you personally for the exceptional leadership that you have brought to the Tulsa Opera Chorus. This was seen to special advantage in BORIS, but it has been evident in each production for which you have prepared the Chorus. Your musicianship, sense of style and knowledge of the languages make you a most valuable asset. On top of that, your manner of inspiring the Chorus is exemplary: in addition to all the hard work (and it is that!), it becomes a joyous commitment for all concerned.

It is a pleasure to have you as a colleague in the professional music community in Tulsa! Keep up the wonderful work!

Kindest personal regards.

Sincerely,

Edward C. Purrington
General Director



The following fall I was, *finally*, to have an opportunity to work with Franco Autori. During his tenure as Conductor of the Tulsa Philharmonic I was the Choral Director at Edison High School and of course most choral music that is written with orchestral accompaniment is written for older voices with more maturity in the sound. Therefore, the opportunity to work with Maestro Autori did not present itself until 1981 when he agreed to conduct Menotti’s *Death of the Bishop of Brindisi*. The T.U. School of Music had organized a Fall Festival of Music and this concert was a part of that series. I remember that Mrs. Betty Bradstreet effectively coordinated the publicity for this concert. Dr. James Snowden from the Music faculty at T.U. prepared the orchestra, and I prepared the chorus. Gene Roads trained the children’s choir. This was a spellbinding, cohesive performance with dynamic phrases and rhythms. The part of the Bishop was sung by Richard Sutliff, baritone,

and the part of the Nun was sung by Judith Auer, mezzo-soprano. In John Toms's *Tulsa Tribune* review, he had this to say about our chorus:

Autori's 'Brindisi' is superb

[...] it fell to the Chorale, trained by Laven Sowell, to produce the powerful vocal moments in Brindisi. Ringing sound, defined rhythms and eloquent dynamic shadings resulted from their high-voltage energy....

John Toms, *The Tulsa Tribune*, October 20, 1981

On the invitations sent to the patrons of music in our city was written "a gala performance and a rare appearance by Franco Autori" — and this was precisely what it was. It was definitely his evening. When he entered the stage of the Chapman Music Hall that evening, he received a standing ovation with much applause and cheers. Maestro Autori had been an Associate Conductor with the New York Philharmonic and had an impressive career. He was Conductor of the Tulsa Philharmonic for ten years and could be tough in rehearsals; however, he was highly respected by the orchestral musicians for his ability to achieve extraordinary musical results. Interestingly, Maestro Autori conducted this intricate score from memory. He often conducted without a score.



At the beginning of every school year the President of the University, Dr. J. Paschal Twyman, always invited the Modern Choir to sing for "Parents' Day" which — since it was always on a Saturday morning very early in the year — always caused us to hustle to be prepared. We always sang on the early program where Dr. Twyman was scheduled to speak to the parents. It was fun to work with Dr. Twyman because he had a touch of "show business" in him. He bristled with adrenaline and his eyes seemed to sparkle. The choir always appreciated him too, because they were thoroughly aware of the need to project energy and sparkle!! The Dean of Students, James R. Vander Lind, and his Associate Dean, Jane Brechin, both were kind to send encouraging letters. Here are two letters that I would like to share with you:

The University of Tulsa
Office of Student Affairs
600 South College Avenue
Tulsa, Oklahoma 74104-3189

November 5, 1986

Dear Laven and Members of the Modern Choir:

Your performance at the President's Program for Parents Weekend was superb, and the audience thoroughly enjoyed your presentation. It is always a pleasure to "show off" the Modern Choir! Your stage presence, enthusiasm, and singing quality are so very, very apparent and for these reasons the Modern

110 *The University of Tulsa — and the Seventies and Eighties*

Choir always thoroughly entertains. Again, our many thanks and we wish you a successful year.

Cordially,

James R. Vander Lind
Dean of Students

The University of Tulsa
Office of Student Affairs
600 South College Avenue
Tulsa, Oklahoma 74104-3189

November 17, 1986

Dear Laven and members of the chorus:

You make such a special contribution to the Parents Weekend Program. You lift our spirits, charm us with your exuberance and impress us with your artistic skill.

It should gratify you to know you are appreciated and applauded. I see the pleased expressions on the faces of the audience and I feel a great pride that these are “our” students.

As stellar performers, I know you hear much applause, but none louder and stronger than mine.

Thank you for sharing the gift of your talent with us.

Sincerely,

Jane D. Brechin
Associate Dean of Students



The year 1981 brought a flurry of engagements for the choir and for me. In February of 1981 I went to the Claremore High School to rehearse and conduct their choir in a mid-winter concert. Buddy Watson was their excellent teacher and Rick Fortner from T.U. was my accompanist. Rick has an outstanding baritone voice and is an excellent pianist. (Plays jazz piano, too.) This was a happy homecoming for Rick because he had graduated from Claremore High School, and Mr. Watson had been his teacher. Today, Rick is the highly successful Director of Music at Tulsa’s All Souls Unitarian Church, and he has become a super choral director.

The Modern Choir sang for many civic organizations during that school year and the appearance at the Williams Plaza Hotel for the Corporate Planning Conference of the Planning Executive Institute was a huge success. We were received in an enthusiastic manner by the audience with a standing ovation. We sang at 7:00 P.M. and immediately following our performance a speech was given by Frosty Troy, the Editor of the *Oklahoma Observer* and a Pulitzer Prize nominee. His views on politics and on the times in which we live have always rather fascinated me. One would have to say that he is never dull!



The Tulsa Trio (later to be known as “Trio Tulsa”) has been for many years one of the most exciting and distinguished ensembles to be presented by the T.U. School of Music. This ensemble made its debut in December of 1980 and on the evening of April 11, 1981, I attended a concert offered by the Trio. I recall vividly a most delightful evening of serious and sincere music making. Chamber music is considered by many to be the most personal and the purest form of music and I believe that you can’t have too much of it. Overindulgence has no residual bad effects.

Andrew Galos was the violinist, demonstrating his impressive technique, and Kari Padgett was the cellist, playing as always with musical sensitivity and technical skill. Anna Norberg, pianist, played the intricate passages so clearly, so delicately, so powerfully, and with such beauty of tone that her playing was thoroughly irresistible. Ms. Norberg is a first-class pianist and musician — a true artist.

The Trio was most impressive on this occasion, playing with musical taste and providing good ensemble work. For me, the most notable achievements of the evening were the trios by Dmitri Shostakovitch and Felix Mendelssohn. The Mendelssohn *Trio* with its beautiful and beguiling melodies always brings the audience to its feet, and that was especially true on this memorable evening.



In July of 1981 I escorted a tour of opera enthusiasts to San Francisco to hear three operas on the 1981 Summer Festival Series offered by the San Francisco Opera. We heard and saw a visually dazzling production of *Rigoletto* staged by Jean-Pierre Ponnelle. The title role was sung by Matteo Manuguerra, who gave a distinguished performance. Ponnelle, one of the world’s most noted directors, scored a huge success with his almost surreal staging; it was a new staging and captured the imagination of all with his crafty handling of this intriguing story line. The staging did not distort the original intent.

I particularly enjoyed *L’Incoronazione di Poppea* by Monteverdi. *Poppea* was Monteverdi’s last work, written in 1642 when he was seventy-five years old. He was the first composer to create music that could evoke the same vivid emotions which he himself felt. Monteverdi was the first operatic composer to create a combination of nuance, chilling harmonies, and melodic effects that move the audience. His *dramma per musica* (opera) *L’Incoronazione di Poppea* continues today to be one of his most popular. It is not done often because it doesn’t have wide appeal and therefore has a limited box-office potential. I enjoyed seeing and hearing it once. The role of Poppea was sung by Tatiana Troyanos. Maureen Forrester and Erie Mills were singers that stood out in other roles for their beautiful singing. David Agler was the conductor, and it was a Günther Rennett production.

The third and last opera we encountered was *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* by Richard Wagner. I was eager to hear our Oklahoma tenor William Johns who sang the role of Walther, and he did not disappoint. He does these dramatic tenor roles with ease and beauty. I had known him since he was a student at Oklahoma City University in the fifties, studying voice with Mrs. James Neilson. Even then he sang well, and people loved to hear him sing. The conductor for *Die Meistersinger* was Kurt Herbert Adler. It is an interesting fact that the Chorus Master in San Francisco at that time was Richard Bradshaw; Maestro Bradshaw later would conduct in Tulsa for our production of Rossini's *Armida*. I was Chorus Master for the Tulsa production and my memory brings only the very best thoughts of our work together. He was a dynamic conductor. Maestro Bradshaw is now the General Director of the Canadian Opera Company.

Our aggregation on this five-day trip was a group of longtime friends who enjoyed being together. In addition to these three operas at the War Memorial Opera House, we took a trip to Sausalito and visited the giant redwood trees of the Muir Woods. Sue and Bill Baden were hosts for an elegant little cocktail party the first evening of our stay. Attending that party were the Badens, Edward Purrington, Mrs. F. B. Parriott, Maxine Holleman, Mrs. Rex Evans, Catherine Chapman, Annelle Chandler McAdams, Bernice Coyle, Marilyn Strange and I.



On July 28, 1981 at the Central State University Music Building in Edmond, Oklahoma I was invited by Dr. Charles Chapman, the President of Oklahoma American Choral Directors Association, to discuss liturgical Latin in a session at 1:30 P.M. for the summer convention of that organization. Dr. Chapman, a former student of Joseph Benton at the University of Oklahoma, has given valuable service to the cause of music education in our state for many years. He is currently the Chairman of the Department of Music at Southwestern Oklahoma State University in Weatherford, Oklahoma.



At the beginning of the 1981-82 school year, we sent an audition tape to Richard Dirksen. Mr. Dirksen was the Organist/Choirmaster at the Washington Cathedral in Washington, D.C. After a few weeks passed, we did hear from him. I had mentioned to him that we could possibly come to sing during the spring break of 1982 and he offered us the date of Sunday, March 21, 1982. Fortunately for us everyone at the University approved this trip. These approvals are necessary because it takes a bundle of money to pull a trip of this magnitude off, and it involves many people. The anticipation of the trip to Washington was an enormous thrill for all of us, and I believe the trip was also an important public relations venture for the University. The appearance of our choir was advertised in the *Wash-*

ington Post newspaper on Saturday before our Sunday appearance. Also, Mayor James Inhofe issued a proclamation on March 16, 1982 designating the University of Tulsa Modern Choir as “Official Ambassadors of Good Will” of the City of Tulsa. The Mayor requested that we sing for a City Council meeting at City Hall, and he formally presented the Proclamation Certificate to us on that occasion.

Mayor Inhofe was extremely kind to us in writing to his friend Robert J. Thompson in Washington, who was at that time Executive Assistant to the Vice President. This, of course, was George Bush during the Reagan years. As a result of the Mayor’s thoughtfulness the choir was invited to take a special tour of The White House. We actually saw the Oval Office just after some sort of meeting, and we knew this because the air was still filled with smoke.

Mr. Dirksen suggested that we sing for thirty minutes as a prelude to the Sunday morning service, and we performed from 10:30 to 11:00. During the course of the year almost two million people attend services at the Cathedral, and this means that the church was filled to capacity. A wonderful thing happened at the end of our all *a cappella* program, when the organist picked up the key we were singing at the same sound level (which was *pianissimo*), used a theme from our music, and built it into a mighty *crescendo* sounding beautifully throughout that magnificent church. This brought us immediately into the Processional Hymn, *Hyfrydol*, which is “Come, Thou Long-expected Jesus.” The beauty and color of the pageantry of this church’s Processional is inspiring. I must admit that I have a fondness for the liturgy of the Episcopal service. A place like the Washington National Cathedral makes us proud to be human. It makes us want to stand tall and hold our heads high. To think that over a period of many years creative human beings could conceive and create something so beautiful is a powerful testimony for humanity. It is said that this Episcopal Cathedral is the last purely Gothic building to be constructed, and is the sixth-largest cathedral in the world.

The anthem at the Offertory was Leo Sowerby’s setting of Psalm 122, sung by the Cathedral’s outstanding professional choir. Leo Sowerby, one of the finest composers of church music, is always a sure bet for a musical thrill.

The following day we arranged for the choir to have a free day in Washington, and one cannot scratch the surface in one day but it’s possible to try! There are so many awe-inspiring things to do and see there. Returning to Tulsa in high spirits and with great memories made all the long rehearsals seem like a “good thing.”



Mayor James Inhofe was an enthusiastic supporter of our Modern Choir and in late November of 1981 we sang for a signing ceremony for Tulsa’s new Taiwanese Sister City, Kaohsiung. This was a different experience for us, to observe all the pageantry involved in this type of ceremony. Mayor Inhofe was very generous with his much-appreciated thank-you letter:

City of Tulsa, Oklahoma
Office of the Mayor

December 3, 1981

Dear Laven,

I can't thank you and your outstanding choir members enough for participating in our Sister City signing ceremony last week. To say your performance was "marvelous" would be an understatement. Stupendous is closer to the truth.

I received numerous compliments on your portion of the ceremony. Most importantly, from our honored visitors (please see enclosure) from Kaohsiung.

Again. Thank you for adding to the pageantry of our Sister City signing ceremony.

Sincerely,
James M. Inhofe

The "enclosure" referred to by the Mayor was a mailgram from Mr. Wu Chung-Ling, the Speaker of the Kaohsiung City Council who led the Taiwanese delegation at the ceremony, in which he described the performance as "marvelous."



Beverly Sills came back to Tulsa on November 11, 1983 to speak to Tulsa Town Hall. She was presented in a program entitled "A Morning with Beverly Sills." She spoke at 10:30 AM at the Performing Arts Center. Since I had worked with Miss Sills on four occasions when she appeared with Tulsa Opera, the Tulsa Town Hall Society invited me to attend as their guest. Miss Sills had retired from singing in 1980 and had become the General Director of the New York City Opera. Her speech was followed by a luncheon at the Williams Plaza Hotel, and joining Miss Sills at the head table were William Baden, Edward Purrington, Mrs. Vincel Sundgren, Mrs. John H. Williams, and I. I was fortunate to be placed on her right at the table. I have always been such a fan of hers that I felt all "twittery" like a high school kid! After lunch she went to the podium and took questions at random from the people attending the luncheon. She was extremely clever with her answers; sometimes humorous and other times right to the point. As luck would have it the Town Hall Committee was gracious to invite me once again to attend the luncheon for Beverly Sills when she returned to the city in the early nineties — the only differences on this occasion being that we were all about ten years older, and the luncheon took place on the fiftieth floor of the Bank of Oklahoma Building.



The major choral works that were sung in the autumn of 1984 by the University Chorale were *Vesperae solennes de confessore*, K. 339 by W.A. Mozart, and *Te Deum*, opus 93 by Vincent Persichetti. The Mozart was conducted by my talented

student conductor, Steven Raiford. The soprano soloist, Stacy Blevins, sang the “*Laudate Dominum*” with a lovely quality. Incidentally, Steve is also an excellent tenor soloist. I have always had an affinity for Persichetti. He is a highly successful composer of both instrumental and vocal music. He is fun to conduct, and a joy to sing. Organist Ronald Pearson provided the appropriate classic restraint for the intimate Mozart work, and dramatic intensity for the Persichetti.

Francis Poulenc was another twentieth-century composer who was popular and enjoyed by my students. We sang his *Gloria*, which is an extended work, on two separate occasions. The first time was in 1977, with Elizabeth Dodd as the soprano soloist; and the second time was in 1982, with Jaxie Abernathy as the soloist. In my opinion, the bulk of Poulenc’s finest work was in the field of vocal composition. His choral works and songs are sensuous and poignant. He had an exceptional feeling for the French declamatory style, and a great gift for beautiful melody. Poulenc claimed that musical resolution of problems should be settled with the heart and with instinct. He felt that this resolution was more reliable than mere intelligence.



On April 4, 1984 Sharp Chapel at T.U. was alive with activity because at eight o’clock in the evening Dr. William Johnston Wiseman would be recognized as the new Dean of the Chapel. I used the Chancel Choir of the First Presbyterian Church, and we performed the Sanctus from *Messe Solonnelle* by Charles Gounod, with Wayne Hardy singing the tenor solo lines. This was a beautiful service with several well-known gentlemen participating. The Old Testament lesson was read by Provost Thomas Staley. Monsignor James Halpine, from Holy Family Cathedral in downtown Tulsa, read the Epistle and President J. Paschal Twyman read the Gospel lesson. Ronald Pearson was the organist and he played music by Max Reger and Richard Purvis on this occasion. It was gratifying, particularly for those of us associated with the First Presbyterian Church, to see Dr. Wiseman thus become an integral part of our University.



One of the most innovative architectural developments in downtown Tulsa was celebrated with a grand Open House on May 24, 1984. This was the official opening of the Mid-Continent Tower. Reading & Bates had given to the city an exquisite new building which would beautify the city for years to come. Architecturally, the tower matches and incorporates a thirty-six-story addition to the existing Mid-Continent Building. It is a modern, efficient building for the future with an important past.

C. E. “Charlie” Thornton and Jack Bates had asked me to do some music for this Open House. Actually, we did three small concerts that evening. There is an elegant and appealing little auditorium on the fifteenth floor, and we performed there

at three different times, spaced out during the evening. There was music all through the building, and in the Lobby the Tulsa Philharmonic String Orchestra was playing, directed by Marc Gottlieb. The flamenco guitarist Ronald Radford was playing at the top of the building (thirty-sixth floor). It was satisfying to me to have my students be a part of a glamorous and dazzling evening like this Open House, because far too often in our day-to-day existence our experiences are commonplace and banal. With the completion of this Mid-Continent Building, Reading & Bates had given to the City of Tulsa an incomparable addition to its skyline.



With Rodger Randle, Betty Price, and Vaughndean Fuller in the Blue Room at the State Capitol in Oklahoma City.

Another opportunity to sing at the State Capitol presented itself when we were invited to be a part of “Art Activities Week.” This concert was sponsored by Senate President *Pro Tempore* Rodger Randle and the Tulsa County Legislators on February 20, 1985. A reception was sponsored by the State Arts Council of Oklahoma, which was also honoring the Black Heritage Center at Langston University. February is Black Heritage Month at the Capitol. Vaughndean Fuller, who was at that time a member of the State Humanities Council, is currently serving on the Executive Board of Directors of the Oklahoma Heritage Association. Vaughndean, along with Betty Price, the Managing Director of the State Arts Council, arranged to have a wonderful citation presented to the choir and me. The citation was signed by Henry Bellmon, Governor; Robert S. Kerr III, Lieutenant Governor; and Rodger Randle, Senate President *Pro Tempore*. This citation hangs on the wall in my den today.

After our concert, Senator Randle was so pleased with our performance that he decided that we should sing at least two of our patriotic numbers in the Senate Chamber. So they transported the piano into the Senate and we sang a fancy arrangement of Sousa's "Stars and Stripes Forever" — and following this rouser, we sang the original version of "Oklahoma!". This version is straight from the original score of the musical, and it is by far the most exciting. This brought us a thrilling standing ovation which seemed to go on and on.



The Tulsa Chapter of Young Presidents' Organization invited the Modern Choir in 1985 and 1986 to sing for them. Mr. George Dotson, who represented Helmerich & Payne, was the Program Chairman for each event. These programs took place at Southern Hills Country Club. The second program was different from the first because it took place in December, and was designed to fit the holiday season. After the first event, we were elated to receive this generous letter from Dr. Twyman:

The University of Tulsa
J. Paschal Twyman, President
600 South College Avenue
Tulsa, Oklahoma 74104

April 19, 1985

Dear Laven:

The performance of the Modern Choir at last night's YPO meeting was spectacular. I can't think of a better group of representatives for our institution. The crowd was impressed with the selection of songs, the presentation and the overall enthusiasm of the group. We are very proud of our choir and want you to share my thanks and gratitude with all the members.

Thanks again for upholding the theme that The University of Tulsa is a special place.

Cordially,
J. Paschal Twyman



Nineteen eighty-five brought an opportunity to participate in a type of music which is diametrically opposed to anything that I taught in choir. However, I thought it would have educational value, so I agreed to do something with the T.U. Choir that I had never done. We were invited to do some back-up vocals with the world-famous rock 'n' roll band called "Foreigner." This concert was a sold-out event at the Convention Center — probably about 10,000 fans. There were hundreds of stage lights, a few lasers, and enough suspended "woofers" and "tweeters" to recreate the near-meltdown at Three Mile Island! The T.U. Choir thoroughly enjoyed this opportunity to see how the "other half" lives. It was an education for everyone,

including their teacher. I've never heard so much sound, and my ears rang for days! Libby Jenkins of the *Tulsa World* staff had this to say about us in her review:

Joe Walsh, Foreigner 'Outstanding'

[...] **The highlight of the concert came when the band brought the Tulsa University Choir on stage to provide back-up vocals for their successful song, 'I Want To Know What Love Is.' It was an excellent number and beautifully performed with the choir adding the perfect touch....**

Libby Jenkins , *The Tulsa World*, September 20, 1985

Brad Phelps, a *Tulsa Tribune* entertainment writer, had this to say about us in his review:

Foreigner, Walsh play no-frills rock 'n' roll

[...] **In a brilliant move — as well as a nice public relations touch — a 30-voice choir from the University of Tulsa joined Foreigner for the beatific 'I Want to Know What Love Is'**

Brad Phelps, *The Tulsa Tribune*, September 20, 1985

We were engaged to do a similar type concert with Barry Manilow when he did a sell-out performance at the Mabee Center on the campus of Oral Roberts University. The Modern Choir did backup numbers for two of his big hits. It is hard to imagine the amount of electricity in the air at one of these pop concerts when 12,000 people are screaming as if there's no tomorrow! Actually, Barry Manilow had more appeal for me than the rock 'n' roll concert of "Foreigner."

At the rehearsal, I heard Barry Manilow ask the choir: "What is your teacher's name?" They told him, and he then turned around as if to look for me. I was so far in the back of the arena that he couldn't see, because it was dark. I thought it would be "neat" to have an autographed picture of him for the choir room, so I spoke to a fellow who appeared to be in charge of his entourage and he promised that he would have it sent to me right away. I am still waiting for it....



I traveled to Kansas City in 1987 to judge the Metropolitan Opera Auditions. The District Director at that time was Robert B. Sharp. I enjoyed working with the other judges who were Elizabeth Volkman from Western Kentucky University, and Harry Morrison from the University of Missouri. I remember being impressed by a young baritone voice that belonged to Kenn Woodward, who would later sing several times with our Tulsa Opera. He was accompanied by Mark Farrell, who has also worked with Tulsa Opera and is an outstanding coach and pianist. Incidentally, Kenn Woodward won the top award on this occasion.



Sigma Alpha Iota began in Ann Arbor, Michigan at the University of Michigan on June 12, 1903. This is a marvelous success story for an organization. Today there are 187 college chapters and 111 Alumnae Chapters throughout the United States. Since 1903 more than 92,500 women have been initiated into membership in Sigma Alpha Iota. One of the most distinctive goals of this organization is to raise the standards of musical work among the women students of colleges, conservatories, and universities in America — and they certainly accomplish this! The local chapter of Sigma Alpha Iota had its beginnings on the University of Tulsa campus on April 23, 1924 when Dean Albert Lukken and his wife Florence sponsored the chapter now known as the Sigma Gamma Chapter.

The Tulsa Alumnae Chapter of Sigma Alpha Iota was chartered on November 9, 1943, and forty-nine members were installed at that time. Through the years, Tulsa Alumnae has initiated many projects and activities including projects important to the community, scholarships, and support and assistance to the Sigma Gamma Chapter at T.U. Sigma Alpha Iota has other important national objectives, which include the support of contemporary American composers by performances of their works. This organization has significant collective financial support through their Philanthropies, Inc.

The third division of this organization is their Patroness Chapter. They assist in many ways that include benefit projects, raising money for scholarships and providing homes for musical activities. All of this is an important part of the cultural life of our community.

It was a genuine pleasure for me to bring the University of Tulsa Modern Choir to sing for the Alumnae Chapter's buffet dinner at the First Christian Church on Tuesday evening, February 24, 1987. For this particular meeting the members (all women) were invited to bring their husbands. Since it was only a few days after Valentine's Day, we sang a program of mostly love songs. These meetings are always such a source of delight and satisfaction because they afford one the opportunity to see so many friends from the past and even from the present. Speaking of friends from the past, I was pleased to see a former colleague from my teaching days at Edison High School, John C. Butts, who was one of Edison's excellent English teachers when I taught there. John was there with his wife, Ava, who was for a long time a highly-regarded elementary-school music teacher. She is also one of the great culinary artists in this part of the country. Mr. Butts wrote this very expressive letter:

John C. Butts
2736 South Gary Drive
Tulsa, Oklahoma 74114

February 25, 1987

Dear Laven,

How easy it is to permit the mundane and everyday mechanics to dominate our outlook and perspective. This is one of the most eloquent voices for the vital infusion of the arts into our lives, and those who do not know the enrichment of beautiful music are very poor indeed. Your young people suspended time for a few minutes at the SAI dinner last evening, and this battered and tired spirit was resuscitated by their lovely singing. I don't hear these kinds of sounds anymore, and I had forgotten what noble thoughts materialize when one's senses are genuinely engulfed in so much beauty....

Tell your young people what an elevating experience they provided!

With profound appreciation.

Sincerely,
John

The Program Chairman for that evening was Catherine Nixon. I have known of her outstanding work in music for years. Mrs. Nixon was for several years a member of the musical staff at the Boston Avenue Church, and is currently a busy piano teacher in our community. She is an excellent organist and musician, and was thoughtful to send this gracious thank-you note:

Sigma Alpha Iota
International Music Fraternity

February 26, 1987

Dear Laven,

The Tulsa Alumnae Chapter of Sigma Alpha Iota wishes to thank you and the University of Tulsa Modern Choir under your direction for the beautiful and exceptionally well performed program given at our February 24th Sweetheart Buffet Dinner. Our husbands and friends always look forward to an enjoyable program, however, yours was of such excellence and inspiration that we want you to know you are indeed a wonderful credit not only to the University of Tulsa, but to the whole community....

Thank you, Laven. Looking forward to hearing your Choir again.

Sincerely,

Catherine Nixon
SAI Program Chairman

It was an immense honor for me to be named "Friend of the Arts" in 1990. This was presented to me by the Tulsa Alumnae Chapter and signed by Elsie W. Sterrenberg, the National President. Since Sigma Alpha Iota is an organization for women

only, they use this method to honor various men in music. I was thoroughly pleased to receive this recognition. Mary Sue Linde was the President of the Alumnae Chapter at this time. She and her husband, Donald, have diligently served the cause of music in Tulsa for years.



The Bicentennial of the U.S. Constitution was celebrated by the Tulsa Philharmonic with a concert on September 17, 1987. This concert was sponsored by the *Tulsa World* and featured all American composers, including William Schuman, Morton Gould, Charles Ives, Roy Harris, and Howard Hanson. We were conducted by Maestro Bernard Rubenstein, who was the popular and highly productive Conductor of the Tulsa Philharmonic for twelve years. This was a jubilant and festive program with many local choirs participating, and I had brought our University Chorale at T.U. to join forces with the other choirs. The soloist for this concert was my student from T.U., baritone Keith Jemison. Keith sang a traditional spiritual with orchestral accompaniment, and U.S. Senator David Boren was the narrator for Aaron Copland's *Lincoln Portrait*.

This was an exciting concert and beautifully conducted by Maestro Rubenstein. In my opinion, this conductor related to the community and did more for music education in our area than any other conductor engaged by the Tulsa Philharmonic Board. I had the opportunity to work as his Chorus Master on two operas produced by Tulsa Opera. The first opera he conducted was Verdi's *Rigoletto* in 1987, and the second was *Samson et Dalila* by Saint-Säens in February of 1989. *Samson et Dalila* was done on this occasion in a concert-style performance. The orchestra was on the stage and the singers stood in front. This opera is almost an oratorio by nature, and this type of presentation works extremely well for this opera. William Johns sang Samson and Florence Quivar sang Dalila; both were well-cast in these roles and exciting to hear. The chorus by Saint-Säens was formidable. There was much difficult choral music to learn, and all in French. After our work together in 1987 I very much appreciated Maestro Rubenstein taking the time to send me this fine letter:

The Tulsa Philharmonic
Bernard Rubenstein, Music Director
Harwelden
2210 South Main
Tulsa, Oklahoma 74114
November 9, 1987
Dear Laven:

Please accept my deepest thanks for your excellent conducting work in our recent performances. Your preparation of the Tulsa Opera Chorus for the production of RIGOLETTO was first rate. The ensemble was responsive, and

musically alert, and well-prepared for the performances from the first rehearsal we had together.

I was also extremely pleased that you were able to prepare the University of Tulsa chorus to join with the Tulsa Philharmonic for our opening concert in celebration of the bi-centennial of the U.S. Constitution. The students added a strong musical voice to our concert, and were, as to be expected with your work, very well prepared. I know how difficult this must have been, coming so soon into the academic year.

Tulsa is fortunate to have such a fine choral leader, and I am grateful to have the opportunity to share musically in the fruits of your fine conducting.

With all best wishes,
Bernard Rubenstein



At the request of Paula Unruh the Modern Choir sang for a banquet for the major industrialists in our area — the Operation Breakthrough Banquet. Ms. Unruh has always been a terrific force in promoting the City of Tulsa. She was at this time the Executive Vice President of the Tulsa Global Trade Foundation. At this banquet in 1987 many businessmen from China were here in Tulsa to make business connections with our leading businessmen. This was an important event and Dr. J. Paschal Twyman was in attendance, afterwards sending us this kind letter of appreciation and support:

The University of Tulsa
J. Paschal Twyman, President
600 South College Avenue
Tulsa, Oklahoma 74104

November 11, 1987

Dear Laven:

How proud I was of you and the Modern Choir at the Tulsa Global Trade Foundation Operation Breakthrough Banquet on Monday evening. I am sure our Chinese visitors returned to China with pleasant memories of the beautiful and inspiring music you provided.

Everyone involved with this Conference worked hard to make it a success — and we thank you for your part in adding to this success. I do appreciate being able to call on you for such occasions.

Best wishes to you all.

Cordially,
J. Paschal Twyman



Everyone in the Modern Choir on March 20, 1988 will remember the beautiful concert we did in Ponca City, Oklahoma at the Marland Mansion. This is a vivid

memory for me because I thought this three-story mansion, modeled after a palace in Florence, Italy, was such an elegant setting for a concert. We sang in the ballroom where the ceiling featured \$80,000 (1928 price!) worth of gold leaf, and the room was illuminated with magnificent Waterford Crystal chandeliers. Rich tapestries decorated the walls, and the floors were marble; this created a fantastic place to sing. The acoustics were exceptional.

E. W. Marland was a multimillionaire oilman, a philanthropist, and the tenth Governor of the State of Oklahoma. He was a man who enjoyed his wealth and shared it with others. The famous Pioneer Woman Statue, which is located in Ponca City, was another one of his gifts to the people of Oklahoma.

Our concert had a happy musical outcome; a truly memorable occasion. One of our soprano soloists that day was Amy Horst, and Ponca City was her home. She sang well and was a voice student of Judith Auer. Always lending a helping hand was Emily Bullock, my gifted and sagacious Graduate Assistant. Our concert consisted of a Mass by Franz Schubert, *Six Chansons* by Paul Hindemith, and some contemporary pieces at the end of the program. At the piano was our highly gifted accompanist, James Gregory.

Eventually the City of Ponca City, with help from Continental Oil Company, purchased the Marland Estate to preserve the heritage of the Marland era, and it is open to the public. Go and see it — you will enjoy it!



The Tulsa Philharmonic presented, for the Christmas holiday season, a “sing-a-long” version of Händel’s famed *Messiah* in Chapman Music Hall of the Performing Arts Center on Sunday afternoon, December 4, 1988. Maestro Bernard Rubenstein conducted the Overture and the Pastoral Symphony. The Pastoral Symphony is a brief instrumental piece that separates the first and second sections of the oratorio. Each chorus of the piece was led by a different conductor. I conducted “And the glory, the glory of the Lord”, and I am going to make a confession: I “screwed up” the final cadence! So I said to the body of singers, “Could we do that final cadence one more time?” — everybody chuckled, the cadence was repeated and the second time it was just right!

There were ten choruses performing in this sing-a-long, and the choir to be conducted, of course, was the large aggregation of singers from all around the area. Everybody was invited to come and join in this happy holiday event. This sort of thing is something of a tradition in many of the large cities throughout the United States. This was the Philharmonic’s Christmas gift to the City of Tulsa, and a sizable group turned out to participate. Some of the other conductors were Ron Wheeler, David Rollo, Larry Dean, Edward Pierce, and Jerry Dillon. Jerry conducted the Hallelujah Chorus with high energy and authority (just the way it should be).



Dr. J. Paschal Twyman, President of the University of Tulsa for twenty-one years, died at his Lake Hudson ranch home on May 21, 1989. He was only fifty-five years old. He was well-liked and respected as a scholar and an administrator by the entire faculty. His death was a huge loss to the Tulsa community. He was active right up until the last day. I had conducted some choral music at the Baccalaureate Service and he appeared very well, and on May 6 he presented 1,058 diplomas at the T.U. Commencement ceremony. Everyone was stunned at the announcement of his death, because he had looked so good. Although we were aware that about eighteen months prior to his death he was diagnosed with lung cancer, it all seemed to be under control.

Dr. William J. Wiseman, who was the Dean of the Chapel at T.U. during this time, asked me to assist with the music for his service, which was held in the First Presbyterian Church. I gathered together some T.U. alumni and vocal students to form a small vocal ensemble. We sang “Draw Us in the Spirit’s Tether” by Harold Friedell. Ron Pearson was at the organ. Among the honorary pallbearers were John Dowgray, John Hayes, Burt Holmes, Guy Logsdon, Darcy O’Brien, Brad Place, and Eugene Swearingen. The church was filled to overflowing. The sudden passing of Dr. Twyman was a great shock to those who knew him. He possessed great personal charm and people were drawn to him. His passing left a void in the T.U. Administration, and the entire Tulsa community, that was difficult to fill.



The last concert of the school year 1988-89 occurred in the Great Hall of the Chapman Activities Center on the campus. We sang several twentieth-century motets by Igor Stravinsky and Alan Hovhaness. Also *Mariazeller Messe* in C Major by Joseph Haydn. The second half of the program included standard pop tunes which have become “classics.” All of these tunes boasted new arrangements. James Gregory was the extraordinary accompanist, and Eric Graber was the skillful graduate assistant for that semester. It was a happy musical experience working on Mr. Graber’s Master’s Recital in Voice. Mr. Graber’s super baritone voice was coupled with the exquisite piano skills of Paul Sahlman. Mr. Sahlman is definitely the “Gerald Moore” in these parts.



The John Knox Presbyterian Church of Tulsa presented in the autumn of 1989 a Festival entitled “Spirituality in the Arts.” Dr. John Gammie was the Honorary Chairman of the Festival. Dr. Gammie was a Presbyterian Minister and a Professor of Biblical Literature at T.U. Mrs. Frankie McKinnon, a graduate of T.U., was the Director of Music at John Knox Presbyterian, and she invited me to bring our Uni-

versity Chorale to join with her Sanctuary Choir at the church to do a choral work. We decided to do the *Te Deum* Opus 57 by Flor Peeters, a work with dramatic immediacy and special intensity. Mrs. McKinnon was an excellent organist; she played the church's organ and I conducted the two combined choirs for this event. This particular *Te Deum* is one of my favorites because it has a terrific "punch" and is just the right length to be one-third of a program. It is also created by the composer with an awareness and sensitivity for this great text.

Flor Peeters wrote exciting choral music with a dramatic modern harmonic flair. However, he actually maintained a rather close adherence to the classical style and form. He was clearly influenced by Marcel Dupré, the Flemish Renaissance, and Gregorian Chant. He was a Belgian composer and his music sometimes reflects the folk music of his country. This was a memorable performance and it was a genuine pleasure to work with Mrs. McKinnon and her choir.

Also on this same program, the University of Tulsa Symphony Orchestra gave us an outstanding performance of *Kindertotenlieder* by Gustav Mahler. Emily Bullock, mezzo-soprano, sang the solo passages beautifully. She was a voice student of Elizabeth Dodd. The conductor of the orchestra at this time was Dr. Frank Ryan, a graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music with a Ph.D. from Florida State University. He has been highly successful at T.U. as a Music Professor and is currently Director of the School of Music. Dr. Ryan is also active as a trombone player with the Tulsa Philharmonic.

During my last year at the University, Dr. Ryan was the faculty sponsor for the Society of Phi Kappa Lambda, the local chapter being Beta Nu. I was very appreciative of his generous gesture when he invited me to attend one of their special dinners, and they presented me with an honorary membership certificate signed by the National Secretary and the National President of the society. I also received a gold pen with the society's insignia.



There were many activities during the 1989-90 school year, which was my final year at the University. The last concert in 1989 of the University Chorale was presented in Sharp Chapel on December 1, 1989. We sang a beautiful *Magnificat* by Vivaldi. Soloists were Melinda Moon, Kim Mooney, Anisa Boomer, Sharilyn MacMahan-Munroe, Jimmy Lawbaugh, and Mark Frie. The second piece on the program was *Cantata* Opus 105 by Alan Hovhaness, with Jimmy Lawbaugh and Eric Graber singing the solo passages. The program was concluded with the *Te Deum* Opus 57 by Flor Peeters (the same piece I described in the preceding section). Ronald Pearson was our indispensable organist.

The final Modern Choir Concert occurred April 13, 1990 in the Great Hall of the Allen Chapman Activities Center. This was a keenly balanced program beginning with the *Missa Brevis* in C, K. 258 by Mozart. The soloists for the Mozart

were Kim Mooney, Melinda Moon, Diane Strong, Anisa Boomer, Jimmy Lawbaugh, Mark Frie, and Eric Graber.

This was followed by three “Choral Nocturnes” by Hildor Lundvik. I was partial to these three little pieces. They were delicate and sensitive, and I remember that the choir performed them in an exquisite manner. (Do you suppose that I am a bit prejudiced?) This was followed by an extended composition by Norman Dello Joio, and it was a blockbuster. James Gregory was, again, the excellent pianist. This piece was almost a piano concerto with choral accompaniment, and Mr. Gregory was sensational. The text of this composition was also by Norman Dello Joio. It was entitled “Sing a Song Universal” and the text is a powerful message to the youth and adults of our time — really, very powerful!!

I chose only three wonderful American pop classics for the conclusion of this concert. Once again, I loved these texts and the music, too. These three choral arrangements were “Can’t Help Singing” by Jerome Kern; “Sometimes” by Henry Mancini; and “Great Day” by Vincent Youmans.

There was a delightful reception at the end of the concert, and I distinctly remember receiving a beautiful bouquet of flowers at the end of the concert presented by Elizabeth Dodd, a member of the T.U. Voice Faculty. This was a lovely evening, with fond memories remaining to this day.



There were many memorable engagements and concerts during my time at T.U. that are not discussed in this chapter. I’m afraid more would have been too much, and would have a sameness that would be tedious for some. I think I have given you an idea of our time together there. However, I should mention just in passing that we also did seven tours (on a bus) to Chicago; two tours to the Kansas City area; and one trip to St. Louis. Of course there was that great trip to Washington, D. C. too.

There are some University of Tulsa graduates from my time at the University who have gone on to achieve much prominence in music. These graduates that I have chosen to update in this instance are chosen because they no longer live in Tulsa. So here is the latest news about these talented former students of the Music School:

Andrea Baker, who graduated from T.U. in 1977, is successful on several levels. She and her talented husband Steve Wilkerson (who also attended T.U.) live in California. Steve, a saxophonist, is in constant demand for jazz concerts and clinics. They have a teen-age son and Andrea says he is very talented, too. Andrea’s most recent CD recording, “Table for One” on Dane Records, is causing quite a stir on the West Coast and has been getting rave reviews across the country. She has been a featured artist at many jazz festivals and has been a featured singer with the Stan Kenton Orchestra, Ray Anthony, Billy May, and others. Andrea has in recent years emerged as one of the top Los Angeles-based jazz singers. In Chicago, her fans

dubbed her “the white Ella Fitzgerald” because of her ability to scat. She has been a big success and there is more to come in the years ahead. I have her recent CD recording and this is amazing stuff; just right for the jazz connoisseur.

Emily Bullock received her Master’s Degree at T.U. and was my Graduate Assistant in the Choral Department for one year. Emily has recently received her D.M.A. (Doctor of Musical Arts) from the University of Colorado. She taught voice for the University there for a period of time. However, she has just recently accepted a full-time teaching position at Belmont University in Nashville, Tennessee. Emily has been active as a singer and has sung with various regional opera companies to glowing reviews. She was recently married and she deserves the best of everything.

Eric Graber has almost finished his Doctorate at the University of Colorado in Boulder. He was my graduate assistant for two years, and received his Master’s Degree at T.U. Eric now lives in Denver and is a much sought-after singer in that area. He is often in demand as an oratorio soloist and as a soloist in church concerts. He sings with several of the regional companies in that part of the country, and has established a good, and well-earned, reputation. He sends me his newspaper clippings from time to time and his reviews are exciting.

William Murta was the pianist for the Modern Choir for two years. He is a multi-talented musician and an extraordinary pianist. Bill now lives in Germany and spends his time conducting in German opera houses. He is also extremely successful as a *répétiteur* — that is, as a coach and rehearsal pianist. He speaks German fluently and his dossier is very impressive. I wish for him the very best, and continued success.

Steven Raiford is living in New York City with his wife, Judy, and their two children. Steve received his Master’s Degree at T.U. and served as my Graduate Assistant for two years. He has been for several years the tenor soloist at Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church in New York City. I am pleased to report that he has added a new dimension to that responsibility: he has recently become the Assistant Director of the choir, assisting their longtime Director of Music, Richard Westenburg.

Steve is still active as a tenor soloist and recently sang the role of Abdallo in Verdi’s *Nabucco*. He sang this in Carnegie Hall with the New York Grand Opera Company, and repeated this role with the same company in a concert version in Central Park. Steve has been a member of the Music Faculty at the prominent Berkshire Choral Festival in Sheffield, Massachusetts for the past two summers. In addition to these musical responsibilities, Steve sings in Richard Westenburg’s “Musica Sacra.” This group is the “Cadillac” of the New York choral scene.

James Robinson, from Claremore, received his Bachelor of Music Degree from T.U. and sang in my choirs there. Jim ultimately received his Master’s Degree in Music at the University of Minnesota, where he was a student of Dominick Argento. Jim has completely changed his career stripes, and with much success. He is now

engaged all around the United States as a Stage Director for opera. I often read reviews of his work and see his name in prominent music journals and magazines. Jim's parents still live in Claremore, and he comes home when time permits.

Jim recently staged a production of *Hänsel and Gretel* at the New York City Opera in Lincoln Center. As it happened, in this same production Linda Roark-Strummer sang the role of the witch. I read the reviews of this production and they were absolutely sensational. Jim staged this production, soon after the New York triumph, at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion in Los Angeles. Jim has had an impressive list of productions with leading opera companies throughout the United States, and in other countries such as Australia and Sweden, where he staged a production for the Royal Swedish Opera Company. Jim was recently named Artistic Director of Opera Colorado in Denver, taking over the position once held by the Company's founder, Nathaniel Merrill. This is a marvelous success story and Jim has our very best thoughts for continued achievement.

Wayne Schroder received his Bachelor's of Music Degree at T.U. and sang in my choirs for five years. He has almost finished his Doctorate at the University of Texas and has appeared in New York City singing a part in the Musical, *A Christmas Carol*. This is produced each year during the holiday season at The Theater at Madison Square Garden. Wayne has appeared in this production the last three seasons, and he has also sung many roles with Casa Mañana Musicals, Inc. in Fort Worth, Texas. He recently sent me a program — he was in Las Vegas, Nevada doing a role in a production of *Camelot* starring Robert Goulet. Wayne has appeared in several musical productions throughout the United States. He also has been very successful in summer stock. Wayne has a wonderful ability to step into unusual characterizations, which makes him highly adaptable, and an invaluable asset in any musical production. These qualities are rare in a singer and account for Wayne's being in great demand. He has our sincere best wishes for continued success.



My departure from the University after twenty years was a difficult decision for me. I wrestled with the idea for a long period of time before finally going into the office of Professor Predl to tell him of my decision. In reality, I left the University because I was simply worn out. I'm the type who can never give less than one hundred percent, and this often takes a toll. Looking back, I can see that I was experiencing some of the symptoms of "burnout." This often brings with it a certain feeling of depression. I continued to do my duties with as much eagerness and conscientiousness as always. I don't believe that anybody felt what I was experiencing inside. However, some of my love and joy for music had for a time diminished.

I'm extremely pleased to report that this feeling disappeared soon after my retirement. I needed some "down time" and "space" as they say. For the first time, I

really feel free enough to discuss these feelings. I love life now, and look back with warm and positive feelings about the past — even the difficult time with my mother in a local nursing home, and her inability to even recognize me for nine years. I dealt with this situation all through the eighties, and I dealt with it alone. She passed away in 1989 on a Monday, and I had a concert to do with the University Chorale on the following Friday evening, so I requested the funeral home to hold her until after my concert. I know that she would have wanted me to honor my commitment to my students. My mother was a dear and kind lady. She and my father always wanted the best for me, and I loved and respected them very much. This is all history now, and the decade of the nineties has been wonderful.

Professor Ronald Predl, who was the Director of the School of Music at this time, sent me a letter that was most gratifying at the time of my departure. He is an intuitive man who made many sound judgments during his eighteen years of leadership in that position. His letter reads:

The University of Tulsa
Henry Kendall College of Arts and Sciences
Faculty of Music
600 South College Avenue
Tulsa, Oklahoma 74104-3189

April 16, 1990

Dear Laven:

Listening to your final performance with the Modern Choir last Friday evening, I found myself reflecting upon the many such magnificent musical moments you have given us.

You have provided a legacy of artistic integrity and excellence for your students that they will appreciate and perpetuate throughout their lives.

As a colleague, I have always appreciated and valued your professionalism, high artistic standards and friendship.

In a conversation with Judith [Auer] this weekend concerning vocal activities at the University of Colorado, Boulder, she remarked that the choral concerts she has heard in the last two years on that campus pale in comparison to your presentations here.

How fortunate we have been to have shared the last twenty years together.

I well understand and respect your decision to pursue new experiences and challenges away from the University. I am delighted that your base of activities will be Tulsa, and that our community will continue to be enriched by your presence, talents and contributions.

Best regards,

Ron Predl, Chair
Faculty of Music

The cornerstone of a University of Tulsa education is its distinguished faculty. The University attracts some of the best students from high schools across the nation. At the University of Tulsa you receive more than training for your chosen career: you receive a solid foundation of knowledge that will serve as a basis for making important decisions throughout your life. It is my belief that a liberal arts education gives you an edge in advancing in life and in your career.

I have great respect for the University of Tulsa and I am proud to have spent twenty of the best years of my life on that campus.

SOME THOUGHTS FOR FUTURE VOICE/MUSIC MAJORS

PLANNING YOUR AUDITION

Choose songs which show off your abilities. Remember, an audition is an opportunity to showcase yourself. Don't select songs which, though technically flashy, are beyond your ability. It is better to sing an easier song well than to sing a more difficult song in a sloppy manner. Young voice students often make the mistake of trying to sing material which is too mature for their early stage of development.

Prepare the best, most polished performance you can give. The audition is the single most important factor admissions committees look at when considering an application to a music school. A good audition can convince a university to admit a "borderline" applicant, and a poor audition can cause a music school to deny entrance to a very bright and talented student. Perform your audition material as often as possible. You could sing for your friends, at church, in contests or anyplace you can find an audience. It's good to get used to singing in front of people. Remember that preparation is also the best defense against stress. Be prepared technically, musically, and linguistically to the best of your ability. Auditions are competitive by nature, so become a "winner" in your own mind. Develop this mindset by focusing only on what *you* can do, never mind anyone else. Do your thing!!

During the audition, let your personality come through both in your singing and in your conversation with the committee. You can make a good first impression, from the way you dress and from the way you interact with the committee members. Don't be upset if you receive advice or criticism. Many professors do this to see how a student reacts to criticism, and to determine how quickly a student can adapt and learn. You see, there is much more to an audition than just singing.

Your audition is an opportunity for you to evaluate the school. See how you feel about the atmosphere and the character of the school. Try to determine whether it is right for you. Some students thrive in large schools; others prefer smaller, more personable places. Don't go to a school merely because you were told that it is "the place to go." Attending the most prestigious music school in the world means nothing if you will not be happy there. Unhappiness will be reflected in your attitude, your grades, and your ability to learn and grow.

While in-person auditions are superior to taped auditions, if considerations of time or money make it necessary to submit a taped audition, prepare the best tape possible. A personal visit is really the best way for you to evaluate the school and for them to evaluate you.

CONSERVATORY OR SCHOOL OF MUSIC: WHICH IS RIGHT FOR YOU?

The conservatory focuses on performance and provides rigorous musical training. You will be expected to immerse yourself in an environment of practice and performance. Because conservatories focus on performance, course offerings are limited primarily to musical subjects. Most conservatories are small in size; and although they will likely have very good performance space, they may often lack other supporting facilities such as dormitories. A conservatory is a proper setting for a talented student who knows that he or she wants to pursue only a performing career.

The school of music provides the most flexibility in a musical education. As a part of a university, schools of music not only offer a full range of musical classes, but also offer general education classes through the university. A school of music offers the support and the facilities of the university including dormitories and extracurricular activities. Since the school of music offers a variety of degrees in music, it is ideal for the student who desires a wide variety of career options.

Some universities have a department of music rather than a school of music. There is a difference. The department of music is usually a small music program with limited faculty and resources. Since departments of music tend to be small, they often do not have a variety of course offerings. Also, performance opportunities may be limited. The department of music is best for the student who wants to get a general education or to study music as a minor subject.

Believe it or not, there are those people who would say to a talented and gifted student: “A conservatory or college education is not a necessity.” I have a feeling that nobody in the performing world cares where you went to school, or even if you went to school at all. Music theater administrators are interested in whether your working voice has beauty and strength for projection and whether you have the ability to move onstage and take direction. You must also be reliable, learn fast, and be a good colleague. When you show up for an audition in a theater or at an agency, they may not even be interested in your degree or your school; but if you sing like a god (goddess) you will have their undivided attention.

This approach is definitely playing the roulette wheel and I would never suggest it for anybody. It’s true that many opera singers do not have a degree. They took a gamble and won — at least for the moment. Now let’s consider the ones who gambled and didn’t make it. New York City has many would-be opera singers working as waiters, carpenters, janitors, sales clerks, *et cetera*.

Getting your college education involves a commitment of time, money, and energy, and may help you to achieve your performance goals. It’s good to think of education as a means to continue your training and develop complementary skills for the future. Even if you become a big success as a singer, a degree helps you get a teaching job later on. Most successful singers teach when their career begins to slow

down. However, the world does not need more teachers without a passion to teach. We always need teachers who are dedicated to sharing in the studio what they have been privileged to learn.

It's a good idea for the singer to learn critical thinking and an awareness of the history of the art form, and develop his or her musicianship. As singers, we bring our life experiences to the stage, and going to college for musical training can be an excellent place to increase these experiences. My recommendation is: go to a conservatory or college for your training! The road to success without it is treacherous and lonely!!

CHOOSING YOUR MUSIC PROFESSOR

The **voice professor** who teaches you will be one of the most important persons in your life throughout your college years. This is the faculty member with whom you will likely develop the closest relationship because you will see each other in one-on-one lessons every week for four years. Be sure your professor teaches all his or her own lessons. (Sometimes a graduate student teaches the underclassmen.) It is not necessary that you and your teacher become best friends, but you must share a good, healthy respect for each other. Be aware of teachers who flatter you too much. From time to time, a school will be trying to build its enrollment and give you a heavy-duty enticement to attend that school. It's your life and you must always be vigilant.

Even if you've been accepted by your "top-pick" school, getting the "right" teacher is sometimes a game of chance. If you do not end up with your first-choice teacher, my advice would be: go with it anyway. A motivated student can learn from any good teacher. An indicator of success is the attitude and the work ethic you (the student) bring into the teacher's studio. Give that teacher at least a year and then, if it's not working out, talk to the head of your department. Try to keep your explanation on a high level, never a personal attack.

Students who wish to become teachers and major in **music education** must be aware that because different states have different requirements for certification, the curricula in music education can differ significantly from school to school. A school which focuses on music education might not be the best place for a student interested in a performance degree. However, a school which emphasizes performance might not offer enough support to the student interested in music education, music history, or music theory.

Music schools teach much more than just music skills. A musician must have the ability to manage time effectively. It has been estimated that musicians are second only to medical doctors in the amount of time that they spend training for their careers. In addition to a full course load of academic classes, the music student must also budget time for ensembles such as choir and opera workshop. Also, it is important to have some leisure. Music students tend to be among the busiest on the

campus. Singers should seek out opportunities to attend concerts, recitals, and master classes. Music students learn early in their college careers that effective time management is necessary to make good grades and to achieve.

SETTING GOALS FOR IMPROVEMENT

The young singer must be a self-motivator, willing to push himself or herself to learn and to improve daily. Most learning in school takes place outside of the classroom or the private lesson. It occurs during rehearsal or practice. It is best if a student learns to set goals for improvement and to work toward the achievement of those goals. I have found that short-term goals are by far the best. Long-term goals are never quite realized, and as a result you don't ever really have the feeling of gain or success. It is important to experience success occasionally. It takes success to make success. Do your very best to make every day count, and the future will be brighter and things will fall into position for greater achievement. You may even win big!! The bottom line is: "one day at a time."

Young musicians must learn to interact with other musicians. There are few jobs in music in which some form of interaction and communication with others is not required. The skills you learn in music school transfer easily to a wide range of employments and allow you to present your talents more effectively in a variety of work environments. Many people believe that it is difficult to achieve success in music, and certainly few achieve "star" status. However, high praise must be given to the thousands of fine musicians who are productive and creative, who provide the music world with orchestras, choruses, and music teachers. These people may not be stars, but what would our musical life be like without them? I wager that the vast majority of these musicians would not trade places with the "stars."

Most successful musicians maintain that the hard work that they put into their career preparation was worth it. Most find the happiness and satisfaction they receive from doing what they love to do more than compensate for the sacrifices along the way.

THE EVERGREEN CONFERENCE ON CHURCH MUSIC

Arriving is one of the pleasures of Evergreen. There is scarcely a village in Colorado whose mountainous surroundings afford one a better or more gracious reception as one arrives. This beautiful little town came into existence with the opening of the West. This means gold panning, fur, and lumber were the primary motivating influences. Evergreen is about twenty-five miles west of Denver. Early on, the Church of the Transfiguration was established by the Episcopal Church in Evergreen.

In 1907, Canon Winfred Douglas established the first Evergreen Conference on Church Music. Today the new Church of the Transfiguration, with its graceful bell tower, continues to serve as an integral part of the Conference. The words of Canon Douglas were a powerhouse for the early summers in Evergreen. He said, "Music, the most humane of the arts, directly expresses personality. True music is a collective voice of mankind that unites men on a higher level than could be attained without it. Such music ought to be characterized by simplicity, reticence, and awe."



Douglas's original plans have been broadened, and some of the fine musicians and composers of our time have come to this summer gathering in the Rocky Mountains. One of the most prominent participants over the life of the Conference was Leo Sowerby, who was Director of the College of Church Musicians at the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C. He won a Pulitzer Prize in 1946 for his oratorio *Canticle of the Sun*, and his other compositions have been played by the Boston and Chicago Symphony Orchestras.

Another major figure who was responsible for the early development of the Conference was David McK. Williams, who was Choirmaster at St. Bartholomew's in New York City. He was head of the organ department at Juilliard School of Music and on the staff of the Union Theological Seminary. He composed many wonderful anthems, and my choir members will remember singing his "In the Year that King Uzziah Died."



In 1955 Dr. Thomas Matthews became Dean of the Evergreen Schools of Church Music. During this same period, Bishop Chilton Powell, who was the Chairman of the Standing Liturgical Commission of the Episcopal Church, was for many years Chaplain of the Conference. His daily lecturing at the summer sessions made him a central figure in promoting the growth of the Conference. Always at his side was his dear wife, Betty. She was a congenial lady and admired by all. My good friend Dr. Matthews, one of the most highly respected organists in the country who is also a well known composer of church music, was one of the stalwarts in the

survival of the Conference. He was their Dean for many years, and he developed a practice of rotating the faculty of the school of music. By attracting a different group of outstanding individuals in the field of church music each year, he reinvigorated and reorganized the Conference and its course offerings, which included techniques and approaches to service playing and other aspects of church music.

Dr. Matthews was engaged at the age of sixteen by his teacher Norman Coke-Jephcott to become his assistant at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City. He remained in this position for four years; as an adult he taught at Northwestern University in Evanston, served as organist and choirmaster for St. Luke's Church in Evanston, and became Director of Music at Seabury-Western Theological Seminary. After 1960 Dr. Matthews lived in Tulsa where he was choirmaster and organist at Trinity Episcopal Church and taught organ and music theory at the University of Tulsa. He composed anthems for the church choir that were beautiful and distinctive, and these anthems were sung all over the United States by the finest choirs. Incidentally, his ability to improvise put him in a category occupied by very few organists. Dr. Matthews passed on in 1999 and was active almost to the end.

In the passing of Dr. Matthews many of us have lost a good friend whose encouragement, counsel, and wisdom have meant so much to us over the years. He was gentlemanly, scholarly, and kindly. His sterling qualities and his inspiring compositions live on. Recently, I had a short but warm and friendly visit with Mary Matthews. She was cheery and charming as ever. Actually, she is a class act in her own right, as you would expect from a Bryn Mawr College graduate.



It was my good fortune to be invited to teach in Evergreen for two summers. I taught courses in choral techniques and vocal production. The summer of 1972 my piano assistant was Christopher Cook from the University of Tulsa, and the summer of 1974 my piano assistant was Wayne Smith, also from T.U. Wayne played an exceptional recital one evening for the session which was laudably received. During the 1972 summer I carefully rehearsed a program of anthems, all composed by Dr. Matthews, for a concert given at the end of the summer with all the members of the session singing in the choir. We were accompanied on the organ by Dr. Wilbur Held. The programming was colorful because Dr. Matthews's anthems are so varied in musical disposition and content. Some are quiet and reflective, and others are exciting, with thrilling vocal peaks and riveting rhythms. As the conductor, I was elated to see Dr. Matthews so pleased; and Dr. Held, the organist, deserves high praise for making the rather small organ in the Church of the Transfiguration sound so ample and rich.



That same summer, the special lecturer was Dr. Lee H. Bristol, Jr., a former President of Westminster Choir College. Dr. Bristol was a brilliant man, and extremely entertaining. His lectures were stimulating; and on two occasions after dinner, he entertained all of us by playing the piano and singing humorous songs. He was charming and well liked by everyone.

During the two summers of my participation, some of the other faculty members were Lester Groom, from Seattle Pacific College; Paul Lindsley Thomas, Director of Music and Organist at St. Michael and All Angels Church in Dallas; and Dr. Wilbur Held from Ohio State University. Of course Dr. Matthews was active teaching improvisation and organ repertoire. Everyone enjoyed the theology classes of Reverend William Malottke from Jacksonville, Illinois. He and his wife were warm, friendly people who brought an intellectual wit and energy which enlivened the whole Conference.



It was my good fortune to have three of Dr. Matthews's anthems written for my choirs over a period of several years. The first was "Alleluia, Praise Ye the Lord" — dedicated to L.S. and the Edison High School choruses; the second, "Sing We Merrily" — dedicated to the First Presbyterian Choir and L.S.; and the third was, "Sing a Song of Praise" — dedicated to the Chancel Choir of the First Presbyterian Church and to L.S., Director and Ronald Pearson, Organist. It goes without saying that my choirs loved these anthems and we were full of gratitude to be honored in this way. We performed these anthems often on concerts and for Sunday morning services. These compositions are published by H. T. FitzSimons Company, Music Publishers of Chicago, Illinois.



One of my most cherished memories of Evergreen is the little one-room cottage I called home for a few weeks each summer. This little white frame cottage, with a tiny bathroom, was built by Leo Sowerby way back when! Yes, he built it with his own hands, and in the daytime one could see from the inside the daylight coming through the boards of the wall. This is what we call rustic, and that's okay with me. But remember how cold it gets at night in Colorado? Well, if you needed to get up at night to visit the "boys' room," it was an unspeakably chilly experience! I loved my time in that cottage because I thought that by osmosis some of Leo Sowerby's spirit and talent might somehow transfer into my musical system. I don't think the process of osmosis worked on this occasion!



The Conference enthusiasm continues to be maintained at a high peak. In 1994, the Conference was held in Evergreen for the last time. It was decided that a change

was in order and the Conference was moved to the Iron Horse Retreat in Winter Park, Colorado. This location provides a beautiful resort area with breathtaking mountain vistas. This church music summer school is the oldest of its kind in the nation and continues to be a perfect place for enriching the mind and the soul.



With Dr. Thomas Matthews and Bishop Chilton Powell at the Evergreen Conference in Colorado (1972 photo). I taught at this Conference on church music for two summers. It was an inspiration to be in those mountains and to work with those excellent musicians.

TULSA ACCREDITED MUSIC TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Tulsa Accredited Music Teachers Association is an organization for private, independent music teachers and is affiliated with the national organization known as Music Teachers National Association (MTNA). Music Teachers National Association has existed to support music teaching and the art of music since 1876, when Theodore Presser and others founded the oldest American professional music organization. MTNA has grown to include thousands of independent and collegiate music teachers throughout the United States.

The high purpose of MTNA as it appears in the Preamble to the MTNA Constitution is:

to further the art of music and to promote the professional development of its members by providing programs that encourage and support teaching, performance, composition and research.



It was my good fortune, while teaching at Edison High School, to be invited to bring my Edison High School Concert Chorus to the MTNA National Convention in St. Louis, Missouri. On April 20, 1967, after an introduction by the presiding Chairman, Dr. Russell Mathis of the University of Oklahoma, we presented a full-length concert including Bach's *Cantata No. 150*, sung in German with harpsichord accompaniment. This concert was offered in the Gold Room of the Sheraton Jefferson Hotel for the General Session. It was a thrill for me and my students to be able to represent our state at this national event.



The Tulsa organization began in October 1919 in the home of Nelle Garbutt Spindler. John Knowles Weaver was also involved in that first meeting. Mr. Weaver was the Dean of Music at the Kendall College, now known as the University of Tulsa. He became the first President of this teachers' organization.

Much interest was created in the spring of 1920 when Dean Frederick Holmberg from the University of Oklahoma, in cooperation with the State Board of Education, made it possible for high school students to receive credit for their outside private music study with members of this association. In 1937, the Tulsa association recommended that all private music teachers be certified. It was at this time that the State MTNA affiliate elected Dr. Clarence Burg from Oklahoma City University to become the first State President of the Oklahoma Music Teachers Association (OMTA), and at the same time authorized Dean Lewis S. Salter from the University of Oklahoma to draft plans for certification by the OMTA. It was this action that

motivated the Tulsa organization to identify itself as Associated Music Teachers of Tulsa.

In April 1943, Nelle Garbutt Spindler proposed an amendment to the local organization's Constitution which, when passed, changed the name once again, to Tulsa Accredited Music Teachers Association (TAMTA). This name remains in effect today.



I joined TAMTA after retiring from the University of Tulsa, and I find its members to be congenial and eager to be helpful to other teachers. Tulsa has a rich heritage of fine teachers, and I particularly enjoy the camaraderie at our monthly luncheon meetings. I always find the company of dedicated and committed musicians to be stimulating.

When I joined TAMTA I knew many of its members by reputation: Gloria Johnson, Karen Harrington, Janet Flynn, Elwyn Ratliff, Robert Heckman, Georgann Gasaway, and Miriam Spindler Lynch — to name only a few. My good friends Betty Moses and Anna Norberg Kestner were my TAMTA sponsors, signing my application for membership.



In the early days of TAMTA, its membership was predominantly piano teachers. Much to the credit of this organization, many other areas of musical discipline are now included. As I look at the wide-ranging accomplishments of TAMTA, it gives me a special feeling of pride, knowing that the organization is dedicated to the responsibility of providing their students with the best musical instruction possible. Today, its expanded membership includes teachers of harp, strings, music theory, composition, and several new voice teachers. This musical diversity makes us a stronger and more viable organization. It is also a basis for continued growth and success into the twenty-first century.

I have found my experience and association with this organization to be most positive, and I believe that TAMTA has a remarkable impact on the musical life of our city. This is achieved by the interaction of our teachers in the community, and the educationally-oriented approach to competitions. It was my pleasure in 1994 during the presidency of Dolores Duke to help establish a vocal award for High School seniors. The Treasurer of our local organization, Phillelle McBrayer, having served several years in this post, is also President of the State organization (OMTA) at the time of this writing. Ms. McBrayer deserves special commendation for this signal honor. Also Roberta Lewis, who is a former TAMTA President, deserves special mention for her service as Editor of the *Oklahoma Music Teacher*, a publi-

cation of the State organization. Our President at the time of this writing, Mary Cooper, is very much a part of this fine tradition of leadership.

The art of music brings us together as a family because it is an expression of the universal human experience. It comes from the part of us that knows no fear, prejudice, or any of the other things that tend to divide us. More power to you, MTNA and TAMTA!!!

THOUGHTS ON OPERA

The overhead lights dim, and go out. For one long moment, the vast auditorium of the beautiful opera house (or PAC) is transformed into a magic cavern. The sounds of a thousand or more chattering and muttering voices have died down. The excitement in the air is distilled into an electric silence, and the air is filled with anticipation. Every opera lover holds dear this moment. There are vibrations in the air, and perhaps this is one secret that makes opera the most fascinating and complex of all musical art forms.

The evening's performance is the result of synchronized effects of hundreds of people. For the performance to come off well is something of a miracle. An especially "good" audience can give the performance that special lift that makes an enormous difference between an ordinary performance and a performance with a touch of magic. If the conductor is inspired and the singers are in top form, a chain reaction can develop and create a phenomenon that makes the music theater (opera) an unpredictable entertainment. I believe I have made a wonderful case here for the "live" performance.



Words and music, set together, can do what neither can do alone. This unique combination creates both dramatic insight and musical splendor. The power of music is exemplified in the movies. Did you ever see a wonderful movie that didn't have a great sound track? You see, the simultaneous marriage of love and hatred is possible with words and music, and creates a powerful and complex emotion. Puccini is one of the most successful in creating this human complexity with both text and music. Also, Puccini with his dramatically appropriate treatment brings to life his captivating and bewitching characters for the audience.

No less successful are Verdi and Wagner. Verdi was a highly successful orchestrator, and it is often possible to hear the characters of his operas emerge in the overture. Wagner was describing complex emotions in his music at least fifty years before Sigmund Freud began to write about it. What could be more intoxicating than the duet between Tristan and Isolde when they sing of their love and their fateful union? This dramatic situation is effective because it is reinforced by powerful conflicting emotions and bolstered by the power of music. Remember how that duet weaves from melody to melody and key to key in a way that is dramatically meaningful? It inherited its basic nature from the theater and has evolved through centuries of musical and theatrical development.



There are an amazing variety of opera fans. For example, there are the voice fans who attend live performance only to hear a particular soprano or tenor. They do

this (on occasion) to compare and contrast the voice of the evening to their favorite soprano or tenor. Another kind of opera buff goes only for the production, and insists that opera, to be valid, must be workable musical theater. There are those people who only want to hear the “standard repertory” and usually only by one composer, or maybe two. There are those who only want to hear obscure operas from the past, and those who are interested in the newest operas, the most contemporary. These fans rarely attend a performance of *Madama Butterfly* or *La Traviata*. Let us not forget to mention the opera fans who go to the opera to exploit its social status, to be seen, rather than to hear and enjoy the production as a compelling art form. However, these same people are eager to mention to their friends the following day what a wonderful evening they experienced at the opera. I think it is important to be aware that these same people are not hopeless because many of them, with the proper encouragement and enlightenment, can truly become enthusiastic opera lovers.

To really enjoy an opera, I think one needs to do some homework and develop an awareness of the opera’s rich legacy. It helps to buy a recording and study the libretto. Most opera recordings come with a libretto with the original language on one side of the page and an English translation on the other side. This homework will pay dividends during the opera production. You will be well rewarded for your preparation. Actually, the preparation can be fun if you have the right mental approach.

The text of the opera, in most opera houses today, is projected over the proscenium for the audience to read as the opera progresses. This is an enormous help and is becoming very popular. In the beginning, some opera producers resisted this innovation but they have recently come to know that this auxiliary is a big step forward in creating new opera lovers. Even today some fans find the “surtitles” an immense pleasure, and there are those who find it a distraction during the performance. I like it!



The audience for opera in America has changed over the years. We no longer have a plutocracy trying to pass for a European aristocracy. This type behavior went the way of the “diamond horseshoe” culture. However, opening night is still a chance to really dress up and be “spiffy”! I rather appreciate this because we have become so casual most of the time. I think it’s good to get into evening attire occasionally, because it seems to do something for the spirit. At the same time I can understand students (or others) wanting to come to the opera in casual clothes because times have changed and we certainly don’t want to think of an evening at the opera as rigid and bound by societal traditions. Remember the old adage that “the only thing permanent in our lives is change”?



There seems to have been a real blossoming in the appreciation of all music in America. Perhaps television, movies, and our important advances in recording technology deserve much credit. This is definitely a “good thing.” Inside the theater itself, technical advances have also affected the performance of opera in a positive way. The computer has played a significant role in providing more sophisticated control of the lighting board. On the stage, new plastic-based paints have made painting sets easier, with brighter, longer-lasting colors that dry quickly. Latex rubber molds and fiberglass can make properties (“props”) easier to handle. Now designers use more plastics so that the final production is lighter, more durable, and even looks better on the stage. Also, modern projectors can reproduce onstage some very realistic effects. Contemporary opera production has been called “opera’s age of cinematic production.” Combinations of stage, film, and screen techniques have influenced opera production enormously and will, I think, continue to do so. I have mentioned only some of the important new aspects of modern advancement.

Opera could not have gone on much longer in the theatrical vacuum that prevailed in the leading opera houses only a few decades ago. Many opera-goers are startled with the plush mounting of standard masterpieces being staged by new stage directors who have shown a striking ability to mount impressive productions that display distinctive new visions. In my opinion, the most successful stage directors are the ones who create exciting new productions that are designed to be theatrical, colorful, and at the same time helpful to the singer. Only when the voice projects into the house and reaches the audience can we begin to achieve some of the rich possibilities for today’s current opera productions.

In this day and age of opera production, the stage director has risen to preeminence in the opera house. But is this really “the age of the stage director”? The bottom line in opera is voice! An artist with a lovely timbre, sufficient volume, flexibility, and control can use the operatic voice, which is opera’s unique language, to create both beauty and drama on stage. When you listen to singers like Renée Fleming or Kiri Te Kanawa, you cannot help thinking that the human voice has everything needed to create an expressive operatic image, and that all the theatrical trappings are no more than a delicate setting for a precious stone, or a tasteful frame for a fine painting. There are many very talented stage directors working in opera today. Men and women with interesting visions of what opera should be, visions of how to make us see the operas in a new way. Sometimes the changes and the additions take the work so far from the original that it ceases to be a matter of interpretation and becomes a re-writing. It is almost as though the director was embarrassed by the opera for having been written in the nineteenth century, and wants to disguise it so that we won’t recognize it. Sometimes, too, these directors don’t really want to present Mozart or Verdi, they want to present themselves.

The stage director Luchino Visconti has been especially successful in America at the Met, and in Italy at La Scala. His great intuitive ability to handle characterizations and dramatic intensity is legendary. For example, he changed historical periods for his famous production of *La Traviata* with Maria Callas because she looked more beautiful in gowns of the *belle époque*. He feels that subtle, realistic gestures best reveal a character. He became famous with his work with Callas and she became famous for what she could do with a single look or movement of the hand or arm. Callas could simply walk upstage and make an elegant statement.

There is no reason for opera to look ridiculous, or for opera singers to be dull and clumsy on the stage. With today's enlarged concern for artistry and better production values, stage direction has made an important and positive difference. Opera companies today are producing operas with rich possibilities and our audiences have become more sensitive to these new directions.

Some stage directors have wanted to expand opera onto film, thinking that this would create a new exposure for the art form. Several major film directors have tried to turn opera into a cinematic experience — with limited success. If opera's artificiality is placed side by side with the realism of the other medium, it can very easily make the singers look ridiculous on film. If opera is filmed in the opera house as a theater piece, the possibility for artistic success is greater. There have been some noteworthy exceptions. For example, in Franco Zeffirelli's lovely film version of Verdi's *La Traviata*, there were some beautiful visual effects that would not have been possible in the opera house. In the hands of some highly creative directors, we may have discovered a new production potential for operatic expression.

Through videocassettes and films, I can see the possibility for intense dramatic portrayals which would grab the audience where it hurts the most. I can also see significant uses for the chorus. I am most intrigued when the stage director treats the chorus like important characters on the stage — when the use of the chorus emphasizes the individuality of its members rather than just a part of a mob or crowd. This, of course, takes more time in production, which means more overhead expense. Our increasing concern for production values and the popularity of some contemporary operas have changed our productions. These productions have become more intelligent and clever and our audiences more sophisticated. Part of the fascination of this whole process comes from watching new approaches to opera grow and mature. As a teacher, I know that nothing is really more rewarding than to observe the maturation of new talent and of new ideas.



Opera is continually evolving. What was shocking thirty years ago has become quite acceptable in the 1990s; what was a good metaphor for human expression in 1607, the year of Monteverdi's *Orfeo*, would be utterly meaningless in our time. Although opera is a remarkably complex array of human metaphors, the power of

music is one of its greatest strengths. Sometimes, we as weak and foolish human beings have emotions that we are reluctant to express, but we find in our hearts and souls the capacity to deal with these feelings in opera. These operatic characters cause us to ponder our relations to those around us, and through opera our hearts and souls can soar as we struggle with the concepts of good and evil.



The text of an opera almost always gives birth to the music: words inspire, music fulfills. Words create and define meaning; music expresses and enriches it. For example, a grocery list set to great music would work; however, *Othello* set to trivial and weak music would be a gigantic flop.

Opera on the dark side can be irrational, petty, and destructive. This is in large measure only in the private world surrounding opera. Singers and agents can be deceitful and conniving, dealing with false pride, stiff-necked divas, and egotistical and preening tenors. (Of course, a baritone or bass would never fall into this category!) Then why does this, the most artificial of the art forms, continue to attract a growing audience?

I like very much the thinking of Leon Botstein, who alleges that the modern media (television and cinema) are “notoriously stained with inaccuracy, unfairness, hidden agendas, and out-and-out falsification.... While opera, because it recognizes its inherent artificiality and because it does not even pretend to be real, is more real to us because it never attempts to deceive.... It has become the most trustworthy, honest, effective and magical of any of the art forms with the potential for a mass audience. It possesses an unimpeachable integrity and a real connection to life.” (Leon Botstein, “The Opera Revival” in *The Musical Quarterly* 78, No. 1 [Spring 1994]:5).

Opera is beautiful (in my opinion) if its music speaks to me and if I find that the harmonies, textures, colors, forms, and melodies seem to be fresh and inventive no matter how many times I have heard them. For example, I have been involved in one way or another in the production of over eighty performances of *La Bohème*, and this opera can still bring tears to my eyes. Everything we experience as performers or listeners on the stage is conditioned by who we are and what has happened to us through the years.

Opera captures the imagination and drags us through many human emotions that are real-life and are just too complicated and dangerous to deal with all by ourselves. These moments in opera can reach us and touch us deeply. One must in these dramatic situations permit oneself to be utterly seduced. If you put up a barrier of some sort of psychological and sane rationalization, it ruins the effectiveness of the moment. We must be free enough to permit the dramatic text and the sublime operatic music to persuade us to believe in the dramatic situation. This seduction is

very important: un-harness your imagination, remove your inhibitions, and let the opera work its magic on you!



Discussing Opera in English brings a sincere ambivalence to my consciousness because I have sung English translations and also opera in the original language. Another factor is that Ruth and Thomas Martin were dear friends of mine, and they were arguably the finest translators of opera into English during the twentieth century. Personally, I like opera in the original language because I love languages and have studied languages all my life. However, I have experienced opera in English with good feelings about its effectiveness. For example, the tour of *La Bohème* with the Charles L. Wagner Opera Company gave me a lasting memory of how effective the English translation was with the audience. In the following paragraphs, I will try to make a case for both the translation and the original language.

There are those who dislike opera in English and insist that the operatic vocal lines lose their authentic sound unless sung in the original language. Sometimes the champions of “authenticity” will argue that the poor enunciation of opera singers makes it impossible to understand their words in *any* language; that all operatic texts are silly and that English is unsuitable for singing opera. This, in my opinion, is an outrageous claim. These operatic controversies, with their intensity and passionate feelings, are not all bad though. People learn by expressing their own views and listening to others express their views. Another reason for translating opera derives from the fact that our own emotional reactions to the English language are bound to be more intense and more immediate than our reactions to a foreign language. For example, we know that *non ancora* means “not again,” or *si, per sempre* means “yes, forever.” The English words in a dramatic situation have a far more potent meaning than the Italian words for the majority of opera fans. (This applies only if your native language is English.)

Many opera lovers are not concerned with the exact verbal meaning of the vocal line. A general understanding of the situation seems to be sufficient for these types. In this case, the foreign language does offer many advantages. For instance, and most importantly, the theatrical weaknesses of the performance are much less noticeable. When the words are incomprehensible, the shallow meaning and action are not too disturbing. Those who enjoy the total package of opera as a theatrical and musical work may possibly discover that the full meaning of the opera can only be derived from singers who have an intimate and immediate understanding of the text. Today’s performances are assisted by the “surtitles” projected above the stage. This invention has been a boon to opera-lovers. It is not obtrusive and does not bother the listeners who do not need the assistance.

Of course, singing in English does not automatically guarantee a good opera. Opera can be just as stilted, vague, and meaningless in English. Singing in English

only makes good opera a real possibility. While there are wonderful opportunities singing opera in English, there are also many dangers. When opera in English is done poorly, it is a sorry spectacle. The defects suddenly become very noticeable, and this probably accounts for much of the antagonism to opera in English. You see, many unattractive details of a production can be hidden behind a veil of incomprehensibility. Foreign singers should not be encouraged to sing in English unless they have mastered the intricacies of its meaning and pronunciation.

Opera produces its most potent effects through vocal intensity. Vocal and orchestral splendor are not dependent exclusively on words in grand opera; however, works written to be more intimate and mature require more subtle nuances of meaning, and can often benefit from a good English translation. Often it is difficult to find reputable singers who will take the necessary time from their schedules to learn a new English translation that most likely will never be used again. Because of this, mounting a production of an opera in English can be very difficult, and often involves making regrettable artistic compromises.

Quite frankly, I enjoy opera in the original language, and some operas in a good translation. Not all operas lend themselves to translation. Operas that have a lot of *parlando* (speaking style) usually translate more effectively. It is easy for me to see the positive advantages on both sides of this question.



Often the discussion of singing opera, as it differs from recital singing, is debated. This is a topic that all singers must confront. As an art form, recital singing is entirely different from performing opera. The lone singer on the concert platform enjoys none of the traditional dramatic aids that the opera singer uses. The recitalist has no costumes, scenery, or orchestra, and no other voices to lend variety to the evening in duets or soaring ensembles. A solitary, vulnerable figure, the vocal recitalist stands almost motionless in the curve of the piano, and within the space of perhaps three minutes must establish the mood of each song, create the emotion called for, and tell a complete story. He/she then moves to another story, another mood which must be created anew.

All these effects must be accomplished by nuances of the singing voice, exemplary diction, and, to a certain extent, subtle facial expressions. A successful recital is the result of the highest artistry and can be a profound experience. The only other participant in a traditional vocal recital is the accompanist, with whom it is vital that the singer have the closest rapport. Although the accompanist can sometimes surreptitiously help the solo artist along, the singer is absolutely in control of the situation. The singer and the accompanist form a simple unit, led by the soloist, whereas opera involves highly complex teamwork by a veritable army of participants.

Little music, with the exception of marching band and dance band music, is ever performed in strict rhythm. A slavish adherence to the metronomical beat is inhu-

man. It brings a stiffness and not elasticity to the vocal line — which ought to be lyrical — and often deprives the phrases of eloquence. This is one of the key qualities that sets great artists and great accompanists apart. Rhythm is the life-blood of music, and great artists are not bound by the mechanical “tick” of the metronome. Great accompanists dance with their partners. In this day of instant gratification, some students are simply not psychologically equipped to handle the rigorous discipline required to achieve this kind of artistry.

An attractive personality is a great advantage in competitions and public performance. No matter how wonderful the voice, if the singer does not reflect the moods of the text and music, it clearly shows that he/she is not “living in the song.” “Living” the song can be tricky business, because when singing recital repertoire almost any gesticulation is suspect. When standing in the bend of the piano the singer must use facial expressions and not too much gesticulation. Too many hand gestures is usually in poor taste, and can appear to be “hammy.” It is the voice, enunciation, mastery of languages, and facial expressions that count. Recital singing is a great art form and brings genuine pleasure to the audience. Regrettably, the United States does not have as many recitals as it once did. Television and movies make a huge difference in this matter, but that is a story for another day.



Opera presents its characters and their human deeds and feelings primarily through vocal and instrumental sound. The big difference between opera and other forms of music theater is the nature of the singing. The Broadway Musical more often than not has shied away from anything resembling the vibrant resonance of the operatic voice. The operatic voice in general is too artificial and resembles the “upper classes” too much to be appropriate for the characters of most Broadway Musicals. Composers of musicals tend to write tunes that lie in the speaking range or on the low side. Opera singers develop their upper voices and tend to make their high notes an exciting part of their delivery.

Operatic diction relies on carefully produced vowels, and singers in musicals often relate their diction to the speaking pattern of their character. Operatic singing demands a seamless transition from one vocal register to another. In the musical, singers often extend the chest voice into the higher ranges. This type of singing is referred to as “belting.”

Operatic singers are expected to show nuance, flexibility, and the ability to project over the orchestra into the house (auditorium) without amplification. There are some well-known exceptions in the Broadway Musicals — for instance, the baritone roles of Tony in *The Most Happy Fella* and Billy Bigelow in *Carousel*. Let’s not forget about the role Émile in *South Pacific* which was created by the Metropolitan Opera bass Ezio Pinza; also, the dramatic soprano role of the Mother Superior in

The Sound of Music. Stephen Sondheim and Kurt Weill write musicals that use entire casts of operatic voices.

Musicals depend on a believability of appearance. In opera, this unfortunately doesn't always happen. Operatic singers must sound terrific and as a rule, if there is a choice between a singer who looks good and doesn't sing too well, and a singer who doesn't look too good but sings beautifully, a smart opera director will choose the second one over the first one. Broadway Musicals are often, though not always, composed of a few tunes cleverly orchestrated; operatic music is generally harmonically, melodically, and rhythmically much more demanding. This means that in opera, the music may not be immediately understandable and likable as a popular tune can be.

My contrasting of opera and the musical is not to diminish the theatrical worth and tradition of the musical. The musical is a rich American tradition and some of the texts and music are sublime and memorable. These musicals attract large audiences and have established a tradition that is uniquely American. Frankly, I love Rodgers and Hart's *Pal Joey* and Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Carousel* and *South Pacific* (and others). This is wonderful stuff!!



The players in the opera orchestra share a certain special camaraderie. There is almost a fraternal spirit among them because of their common interests. They have to learn to cope with each other in that sometimes smelly pit, and they also share, collectively, the experience of different conductors, some of whom can be demanding and insensitive. However, when an operatic masterpiece is brought to life, it is an exhilarating experience in the pit as well as on the stage. I never feel that the orchestra gets its fair share of the applause. Maybe it's the location of the pit.

Today's orchestra musicians are better trained, more accomplished, better paid, and more widely appreciated than ever before. Then they must be very happy, right? Wrong! I'm told by visiting conductors that many orchestra musicians are embittered, disgruntled, bored, and some have lost their love for music.

What has gone wrong? Some parcel out the blame in three directions. The musicians' union, or at least the "union mentality" of the players, has fostered a grudging, clock-watching approach to rehearsing and performing. Managements and boards of directors have run the show with box-office uppermost in their minds. Out of sheer ignorance or arrogance, many boards have time and again made lamentable decisions. Musicians, management, and boards need to develop serious, substantive dialogue rather than digging in their heels and yelling at each other from entrenched positions.

The life of an orchestra musician is not an easy one, and the thing that makes it all possible is the fact that there is an overall love of music. Every musician can remember when, as a child, he/she began practicing and working diligently to mas-

ter his/her instrument. This practice over a period of time develops, for most musicians, into a genuine love affair with music. I believe this love is never far beneath the surface. Otherwise, why would they put up with this hectic existence?

The orchestra is the greatest instrument in the world — with the possible exception of the human voice — with probably the greatest repertoire available. Musicians can be stubborn, argumentative, opinionated, unpredictable, but most of all there is the reward of the music. All that I have just written cannot be possible if these musicians are not paid a fair and equitable salary!!

I have always felt that little is done to make the splendid orchestra players feel their distinction within the community. These players are, after all, part of the musical backbone of our city. They teach private lessons to young people in the schools, and many of them join the music faculties of the surrounding universities.

The American conservatories subject many of their gifted instrumental students to such intensive training that only the virtuoso career can satisfy and justify this effort of many years. Instead of this, the vast majority land, at best, in fine ensembles and frequently just scrape by. My years as a professional musician have convinced me that music is a fundamentally honest profession. This is not wide-eyed naiveté, nor the glib assumption of a Pollyanna. I find it an honest profession because all long-range decisions are made by the public. If the public continues to buy tickets and keeps returning to the seats in the opera house or concert hall, this sends a potent message.

The men and women of an orchestra respect a conductor who knows his/her own mind and how to get what he/she wants. A conductor who drives them like a tough-cop sergeant causes them to gripe, to resent, and to act out. A conductor who patronizes them becomes an enemy. A conductor who is pretentious amuses them, and a conductor who does not know his stuff becomes the butt of their jokes. During my long tenure with Tulsa Opera as Chorus Master, I encountered conductors who were neurotic, selfish, sometimes (not often) noble, emotionally undisciplined, sarcastic, unpleasant, and most of the time these conductors were musical geniuses. Seasoned orchestra players have become accustomed to some antics by conductors, and more often than not take all of this in stride and with good nature. I can remember times when Carlo Moresco (whom I admired very much for his good qualities) had to be pampered like a child. If he didn't get things he wanted, he would threaten to go home (back to New York). More often than not, the best conductors command the respect of the orchestra and the singing and playing of the orchestra is clean, accurate, elastic, and vital. The thing that marks a fine operatic conductor is his/her ability to conduct with authority and energy. It is these qualities that propel the performance along. Lackluster and lazy rhythms are a death-knell for a performance.

Yet it is an inescapable fact that when the conductor, the singers, and the orchestra are psychologically in sync, that is to say when a spirit of collegiality exists, an unequivocal dramatic and musical triumph is a distinct possibility.

It is a wonderful thing when an orchestra player can have an occasional solo to play. It would seem to me that players deserve some self-expression, probably because they spend so much time expressing the conductor's wishes. Maybe this is why the players find some extra pleasure playing chamber music; it is very important to find opportunities for self-expression, and this often affords an opportunity for the player to pick up some extra money as well.

When an orchestra and a conductor are at their best, that is to say skillful and sensitive to the composer's wishes, nothing is more powerful. If we add a fine ensemble of distinguished singers to a well-rehearsed production, the final result is irresistible. Most musicians would find it difficult not to feel pride in their sheer hard work.

We live in an era in which American talent is being nurtured, and stress is being given to fine singing by Tulsa Opera's successful Carol I. Crawford. (Of course, Ms. Crawford has a receptive ear for performers from other countries, too.) A recent example of this coming together of orchestra and singers with sensitivity and skill was Tulsa Opera's recent production of *Les Dialogues des Carmélites* by Francis Poulenc. This is a mid-twentieth-century work which, I believe, will take an honored place in the total history of French opera. Carol I. Crawford and her forces pulled this production through with a high degree of musical honesty and histrionic success. She often achieves these results.



The conductor controls much of what the audience hears. The conductor is responsible for tempo, balance, and possible changes in the music. A good conductor can make a mediocre opera sound interesting, while a mediocre conductor can make a great opera sound boring and mechanical. Some conductors are notorious for drowning the singers out. When this happens usually the orchestra sounds wonderful and there is a lot of excitement coming from the pit, but the singers have to almost yell to be heard. Then there is the opera conductor who merely accompanies the singers and keeps things moving in a pedestrian manner. This is not too exciting either.

Now, there is the conductor who is exciting and creates a lot of dramatic intensity. This is the result of intense tempos. Then, there is the conductor who gives the singers more leeway so that they can create more lovely phrasing and subtle vocal interpretations. A really fine conductor does not just move from aria to aria; rather, he/she conducts the opera as a unified whole and makes an effort to present the total piece as a unified work of art. Only the conductor can be responsible for a valid interpretation. The entire opera must have a point of view and finally add up to something.

The conductor has another duty which involves an awareness of a composer's style. For example, Mozart's musical style involves a lovely tone, avoiding extremes

in volume, and Verdi's early style demands rousing rhythms and an immediate dramatic intensity. Verdi's late style is more subtle where rhythm is concerned, and the dramatic intensity has a more complex nature. I have mentioned only a few stylistic characteristics just to give you an idea of the enormous responsibility of the conductor. The conductor has to be part musicologist, particularly where the older scores are concerned, because these scores have fewer directions given by the composer (e.g. Händel and Monteverdi).

I would like to relate a bizarre story about a seventeenth-century conductor at the Court of Louis XIV in Paris. In those early days, the conductor conducted with a large wooden staff that he pounded on the floor to create an audible beat. The conductor on this occasion was Jean-Baptiste Lully; during a performance he pounded on his foot instead of the floor, injuring his foot. The foot became infected with gangrene and the accident led to his early death. Interestingly, the baton that conductors use today is still referred to as a "stick." (The French word *baton* means "stick.") Shortly after this unfortunate incident conductors began to discover a more artful and refined manner of keeping the beat. This was definitely a "good thing."



Would you believe that the conductor did not always reign supreme? Not until about 1815, when Ludwig Spohr and Carl Maria von Weber instituted modern methods of orchestral direction, did centralized command enter the opera house. Throughout the eighteenth century, authority over the performance had been divided between the Concertmaster guiding the orchestra with his bow, and the composer seated at the cembalo (a keyboard instrument) cueing and reinforcing the singers.

With this new set-up came many conductors that little more than beat time. These plodding time-beaters were eager to placate the prima donna or other celebrated singers. Actually, during this time period the famous singers made most of the musical decisions. The final establishment of the conductor's authority was soon to arrive on several fronts. In Germany, philosophical insistence brought it about, particularly in a new concept of the "total art work" which was invading the repertoire. Examples of this were the music dramas of Richard Wagner, where music, drama, and the physical production were all on the same level of importance. Now the control became centralized and passed into the hands of a single person. Conductors were becoming consummate technicians, sovereigns of the music theater; and by this time the conductor was the artistic conscience of the performance.

The conductor needs to rehearse the opera chorus even when the opera company has a good chorus master. It is important for the chorus to rehearse with the conductor to get a feel for the conductor's musical intentions. Also, each conductor has a somewhat different baton technique, and it is important for the chorus to experience this several times before going into performance. It is very easy for a chorus to be too loud, and singing unaccompanied is very difficult on the stage. Singing

difficult music from memory in a foreign language, remembering cues for entrances, and trying to act at the same time demand a lot from a chorus. I always found, working with the Tulsa Opera Chorus, that this challenge to achieve great results on all these fronts was part of the “fun.”

Ultimately, the conductor calls for on-stage rehearsals, which lead to the final dress rehearsal. Opening night is charged with electricity in the dressing rooms, in the orchestra pit, and on the stage. Finally, to have a great audience who appreciates the performance is such an exhilarating experience, particularly when the audience bellows like fans at a rock concert. This enthusiasm is good for the performers and the fans.

Sometimes the general public is a bit naïve. They think that opera is a dignified affair and promoted by a group of elitists. It is possible for the “elitist” factor to rear its ugly head. When this factor enters into the equation it is an unfortunate situation. Opera is very sensitive to changes in political, economic, social, and other cultural conditions. The fact that opera is largely dependent on official patronage and private subsidy makes it especially vulnerable to political dictates and the whims of private benefactors.

The opera fan who loves opera as a total art form is, in my opinion, fortunate. This glorious and passionate art form offers a combination of rewards like no other, and it is a renewable set of new sensations with every new performance. The opera fan that tends to amuse me most is the bigoted, intolerant opera buff, the self-appointed authority who attempts, with strident voice, to impose his/her special taste on others — most often having to do with his/her favorite singer. On the other side of the coin is the euphoric opera buff who thinks everything is so exciting, and hurls adjectives into the air like confetti. It takes all kinds and sorts, and maybe this is part of what makes opera stimulating; however, I do wish we had more opera lovers who have a romance with the total production of opera itself.

Opera fans who have ever attended a really successful performance of opera anywhere in the world (particularly in Tulsa) know that opera can be a wonderfully noisy event. It is the conductor who is responsible for much of the thunderous applause, though he/she does not always get the credit he/she deserves — you might say that the conductor is often the “unsung hero” of a performance. Often the public thinks only of the leading soprano and/or the leading tenor. (And this is not a bad thing.) However, it is the conductor who has the ultimate responsibility for the success of the show. The creative conductor who demands precision and clarity can breathe life into the written score, thereby presenting an exciting musical and dramatic experience for the opera fans in the audience.

This adulation of leading singers is not surprising, and completely understandable, because there has been a serious love affair between the opera-loving public and singing since the beginning of opera. Styles and principles revolving around the human voice have changed, but the Voice itself remains human and tantalizing.

National differences bring diversity and contrast, and we tend to enjoy the singers who maintain the color and sound of their homeland but have adapted to international tastes.



There are singers whom I have cherished who merged word, tone, and action, and created great artistry. However, this sometimes leads to certain vocal sacrifices. There are those artists whose outlook is primarily vocal, and these singers can also bring enormous joy. When celebrated singers reach high levels of performance, bringing fresh emotion to their characterization, it is truly marvelous. It seems to me that we will always have those singers who concentrate on theatrical detail and are dramatically compelling, and there are those singers whose careers are built upon their gorgeous voices. These latter singers have a great refinement of singing, diction, first-class musicianship, and the ability to simply command the stage with brilliant singing.

We opera lovers tend to be flexible and love an artist for what he/she does best. It must be said that some of these “stand-and-deliver” types are often singers who lack a strong identification with the role, and tend to be a bit narcissistic. If narcissism can have a good side, maybe this is narcissism at its best; often we tend to enjoy it vicariously. I say, if you dig it, go for it! Let’s face it: there is something for everyone in opera. The beginning listener and the experienced connoisseur will find something of interest in opera’s ability to illuminate our inner being, and opera’s ability to depict a variety of human characteristics.



My friend, Carrie Vesely, who is Director of Development at Tulsa Opera, sent me some interesting facts from the organization known as “OPERA America.” This organization serves and strengthens the field of opera by providing a variety of informational, technical, and administrative resources to the greater opera community. Its fundamental mission is to promote opera as exciting and accessible to individuals from all walks of life.

OPERA America reports that in many cities, opera is the hottest ticket in town. You’ll see the requisite sophisticated adults, but you’ll also see college kids, yuppies, high-school kids, and men who look as if they actually want to be there. A night at the opera can actually reveal to the casual observer just how diverse our arts-loving culture is. It just so happens that this generation is coming to the opera in precedent-setting numbers.

The National Endowment for the Arts reports that the total attendance in all North American opera performances reached 16.5 million in 1998. In North America there are 111 professional opera companies in forty-three states, and sixteen professional companies in five provinces in its Canadian membership.

OPERA America points out in its audience demographics that opera is the only art form in which the median age has decreased. Also, a recent survey shows that eighteen- to twenty-four-year-olds represent the greatest increase in opera attendance among all age groups. This is an exciting new phenomenon. OPERA America reports that virtually all American opera companies offer education and enrichment programs. Speaking of enrichment, Texaco Oil Company deserves much credit for underwriting the Saturday afternoon broadcasts live from the stage of the Metropolitan Opera. Texaco also presents from time to time "Live From the Met" on Public Television. These broadcasts have, without question, helped to develop opera lovers for many years.

OPERA America reveals that these opera companies in North America posted over \$246,000,000 in ticket sales in a recent year, and these companies also added well over half a billion dollars to the United States and Canadian economies in the fiscal year 1997. Opera is good for each one of us, and it is good for our city. American cities, in recent years, have called upon the arts to express civic pride and, even more, civic renewal. The New York City Opera has estimated that nine percent of its audience is made up of blue-collar workers. "The 'common man' ... was an uncommon attender at professional entertainment in the performing arts." (*Opera in America: A Cultural History* by John Dizikes, Yale University Press, p. 525) I believe a new day is dawning in America for opera. We are seeing a remarkable growth of opera companies throughout our country, and there is an unprecedented cornucopia of talent available all over the world.



On the local scene we have the highly energized Guild of Tulsa Opera. This group has lately made a tremendous difference in helping to ensure the future of quality opera in Tulsa. Elizabeth Geer is their enterprising and effective new President. She is a former music teacher and was active as a leader in the Oklahoma Music Educators Association.

The Guild supports not only our young artists, but also the music education programs in our public schools which have been a huge success recently. They have broadened their membership to include men. A gentleman by the name of Frank Bottom even served for two years as President. Mr. Bottom continues to host "opera listening programs." He serves as commentator, and the programs are always interesting and informative.

The continued support of these Guild members is essential to maintaining the artistic excellence synonymous with Tulsa Opera. In addition to the extensive community outreach program, the Guild also provides social and hospitality events for its members and for Tulsa Opera's visiting artists.

On the evening of January 28, 2000 I attended a smashing event at the Greenwood Cultural Center sponsored by the Guild of Tulsa Opera. This evening was a

huge success, with well over three hundred reservations, and it appeared nobody stayed at home although the ground was covered with deep snow and the streets were covered with ice. The Cultural Center was packed. The event was entitled "Taste of Elegance" and it was presented by the Oklahoma Pork Council; they provided all the pork one could possibly eat, and there were seven major participating chefs. To say it was really delicious would be the understatement of the year! There was live music which was smooth and rhythmic, created by a combo with Donald Ryan at the piano. This gave a wonderful "night-clubby" atmosphere. The news anchor Carole Lambert, from KTUL (Channel 8) was the emcee. She is always outstanding and an absolute favorite of mine. I have given all these details of this lovely evening to demonstrate and reveal the great work of the Guild of Tulsa Opera!



Also on the local front, Tulsa's musical public has the great advantage of the sensible, erudite, and beautifully crafted reviews of James D. Watts, Jr. from the *Tulsa World* newspaper. Like it or not, the music critic has a real function. The public reads his interviews with the visiting artists and he can be influential in helping to form public opinion. Everyone loves the critic when he writes what they agree with; however, the critic whom we most admire is the critic with the courage to write opposing views, too. The press performs a useful function and the community is well served when the critic is a perceptive person with a genuine concern. Mr. Watts has been with the *World* for several years and has acquitted himself with a high degree of consistently good writing. He is a gifted critic who can stay on the decent side of his craft.

Let's be honest; we all know people who seem to be nourished by listening to criticism of others, and dote on sarcasm. There are music critics tailored for these persons' needs on the East coast. Some critics build their reputation by appealing to readers who expect sheer carnage in the review. Actually, some opera fans love this and seem to get some kind of sadistic satisfaction from reading this kind of diatribe. In my opinion, after forty years of reading the *Tulsa World* religiously, Mr. Watts is by far the most qualified and undeviating with his real criticism, and also with his praise when it is merited. This kind of coverage and critiquing is an enormous asset to our community.

Another valuable *Tulsa World* writer is Danna Sue Walker, who writes the column "People and Places." She covers all the fundraising events for the arts in the Tulsa area, and does so eloquently. This gives a tremendous boost to the fundraising, and she has helped to etch in our memory many unforgettable evenings.



Fortunately, Tulsa Opera has been blessed through the years with a supply of good singers for the chorus. One of the most important responsibilities of a first-rate

opera company is to provide a chorus. These singers have been, for the most part, volunteers. However, as time goes by, it may be important to give certain choristers an honorarium — and I'm thinking mostly of university students. Often these students are living and going to school on a tight budget.

An excellent chorister has much serious work to do before opening night of the production. Special attention must be given to the music, to the true sonority of the language — whether it be French, Italian, German, or English. Having a firm grip on the musical and language aspects of the opera is the bedrock on which interpretation and insight are ultimately based. Without these main ingredients, a perfunctory and insipid chorus would surely be the result.

Over the many years of Tulsa Opera's history, the Tulsa Opera Chorus has remained a group of dedicated, talented, and civic-minded singers who give freely of their time and energy. This is a major commitment of time and caring. These wonderful choristers help to make each performance a success, and without their commitment, Tulsa Opera would not be the success that it is today!!



Tulsa Opera's Youth Opera is an organization which is currently doing outstanding work in the field of "opera education." Just this past winter (1999-2000), the group took two excursions around our State and eventually brought musical enlightenment to more than twenty thousand school children. Malcolm Fox's Children's Opera *Sid the Serpent Who Wanted to Sing* was presented, and this is a masterpiece of skillful writing for children. What a wonderful way to introduce opera to children, because it utilizes various musical styles and also promotes good singing. Eric Gibson is the Director of this group, and he deserves a standing ovation for his effective work with children.

Before leaving the subject of the Tulsa Youth Opera, I would like to mention that in summertime a summer camp is offered. This is a clever and intelligent way to encourage appreciation for the arts, involving a touch or smattering (I like that word!) of music history, art, dance, and music. The Tulsa Youth Opera's newest adventure is the development of a choral ensemble. Nothing is more important than the musical education of the young. Starting children at an early age to recognize beauty and to be sensitive to the arts brings many rewards in later years to the community and, most of all, to the person the child becomes.



No discussion of our local resources would be complete without mentioning the Tulsa Opera Board of Directors. These are people who, when all is said and done, really make opera possible in Tulsa. When every seat in the auditorium is sold for a performance, this income represents only one-third of the money needed to make the opera a reality. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the Board to raise the bal-

ance of the funds needed. The Company has benefited immeasurably from individual, corporate, and foundation funds to meet the needs of the Company. The National Endowment for the Arts also contributes to the Oklahoma Arts Council, which gives annual assistance to Tulsa Opera. I cannot urge you strongly enough to support the continued funding of the Endowment. The Arts can transform a student environment into a creative atmosphere, and engender enthusiasm and motivation for learning. The Arts also teach discipline, the value of sustained effort to achieve excellence, and offer concrete rewards for hard work. This country spends less on the Arts than any other democracy in the world. Today, in our government, the current right-wing extremists want to eliminate even that!

The Tulsa Opera Board is a group of opera-loving citizens who believe in opera for Tulsa and are willing to give their time, energy, and money to see that this happens in Tulsa. These generous Tulsans — our Board of Directors — would, I believe, support the thinking of two of our recent popular Presidents who said the following:

I am convinced that after the dust of centuries has passed over our cities, we, too, will be remembered not for our victories or defeats in battle or in politics, but for our contributions to the human spirit.

— John F. Kennedy

Artists stretch the limits of understanding. They express ideas that are sometimes unpopular. In an atmosphere of liberty, artists and patrons are free to think the unthinkable and create the audacious ... when there's liberty, art succeeds. In societies that are not free, art dies.

— Ronald Reagan

The generosity of these Board members has nurtured Tulsa Opera from the outset. Looking back over the impressive history of Tulsa Opera, one is astounded by the extraordinary list of civic leaders who have supported Tulsa Opera with money and with their time. It is interesting to note that Tulsa Opera is the nation's sixteenth-oldest professional company out of more than one hundred in the United States. The relationship between the opera-loving public and our Board of Directors has developed into a unique partnership. Our Board of Directors is currently in the capable hands of President Scott Filstrup, who succeeded Ron Petrikin, who had served ably for one year. Jono Helmerich continues his excellent work as Chairman of the Board. These men deserve special commendation for their highly effective leadership. Each season we enjoy the visible results of our joint fundraising, knowing that our efforts will enrich the quality of life in Tulsa.

TULSA OPERA, INC. — AND THE NINETIES

Having so many fond memories of Tulsa Opera causes me a certain amount of ambivalence in where to begin. I'm going to take the most natural approach, which is start from the beginning of my association with the Company, and I'll endeavor not to repeat too much of the material that was covered in *Tulsa Opera Chronicles*, the book that Jack Williams and I published in 1992.

Initially, I came to Tulsa to teach at Edison High School in 1961, and the existence of Tulsa Opera was an added bonus for me. Without a doubt, regional opera companies like Tulsa Opera have saved opera from becoming a totally elitist art relegated to two or three major opera companies in our country. There is a large and appreciative audience scattered throughout our United States which continues to grow and develop decade after decade. Believe it or not, one of the chief operatic individuals to influence the production of opera in the early days for the regional companies was Tony Stivenello. Here was an Italian man born in Venice, Italy who could provide almost a total production for an opera company. He could produce an opera in less than a week, and this was a highly desirable thing when an opera company had a very limited budget and most new regional companies needed all the financial help possible. Stivenello furnished all the costumes, props, sets, staging, *et cetera*.

As a stage director Stivenello was more like a traffic cop, moving (or shoving) the chorus from place to place on the stage. His costumes were actually a "one size fits all" type of thing. You might have a drawstring to make them fit, and some kind of cape or jacket to cover any excess material. Chorus members would be expected to provide their own shoes. Stivenello worked fast (which saves money) and, depending on the cast and how good the singers were, a company could actually have some terrific performances. Many of our regional opera companies would not even exist today without the early help of Stivenello's budget-sized productions. He became known throughout the country as "Mr. Instant Opera."



During these early days Tulsa Opera also brought in, from time to time, stage directors with a high artistic profile. My first participation with Tulsa Opera was with the *Barber of Seville* production in 1962. The stage director for this occasion was Dino Yannopoulos from the Metropolitan Opera. He was a fastidious director and the entire production reflected his careful preparation. I was so thrilled to sing the small role of Fiorello for several reasons. It was exciting for me to be back singing opera again, and the cast was stellar in every way. These were some of the most famous singers in the world: Roberta Peters and Cesare Valletti were the leading soprano and tenor. Frank Guarrera sang Figaro and Salvatore Baccaloni, the

celebrated basso buffo, sang Dr. Bartolo. This would be considered a glamorous cast for any opera company.

My second experience with Tulsa Opera was a stimulating and thrilling occasion. After all, I was still in my twenties and a famous name like Richard Tucker was a big thrill for me. The opera was *Carmen*, and tenor Richard Tucker was singing Don José, and I had been selected to sing the part of Morales. A few years later, Richard Tucker returned to Tulsa to sing Radames in *Aida*, and Gabriella Tucci sang the title role. By this time I was Chorus Master and I was able to observe Mr. Tucker as a human being. He was not only a fabulous tenor, but an extraordinary person! He had lots of ego (the constructive type) but he also had a genuine interest in others.



With Richard Tucker on the set of Tulsa Opera's Aida – November 8, 1969. This was Tucker's second appearance with Tulsa Opera.

Mr. Tucker was a passionate singer from the world of cantorial singing, which relies on strong emotion for its successful communication. He carried over into opera this style, which rang with ardor of personal commitment. He definitely had an Italian temperament, and he was not averse to a certain amount of “gallery pleasing.” He enjoyed singing in English and there are many excellent recordings of operetta and musical comedy favorites to prove it.

I’ll never forget when he was here in Tulsa; it was very cold, and he and his wife Sara had matching mink coats. These coats made quite an impression in the Crystal Ballroom at the Mayo during the cast party. Shortly after Mr. Tucker’s death, the Richard Tucker Foundation was formed and shaped by his son, Barry Tucker. With a group of executive officers which includes many well-known people from the field of opera, as well as his wife, the Foundation has funded the continued studies of many gifted American singers. A recent first place winner was Tulsa Opera’s singer for the title role of *Carmen* in 1999. She was Stephanie Blythe, and Ms. Blythe has a fabulous voice! The Foundation has also given sizable awards to opera training programs throughout the United States.



One thing is for sure — Tulsa Opera does not need to be ashamed of its rather humble beginnings. Many of these shoestring productions, interestingly enough, came off very well and were exciting to our ever-developing opera public here in Tulsa. Sometimes a performance would leave a lot to be desired, but more often than not the performances had exciting moments and were respectable. Many people worked unselfishly for the opera to succeed, with very little budget; and most of the small staff were volunteers. This was during a time when the national love of opera was not as great as it is today, and the financial support was even more difficult to find. It is also astounding to realize that Tulsa was supporting an opera company in those early days when one stops to consider that Oklahoma did not even become a state until 1907. For many years Tulsa was the only city of its size in the United States to support an independent opera company. Some people even continue to think of Oklahoma as a cultural wasteland. In my opinion, Tulsa Opera deserves much credit for perseverance, courage, and for striving to bring culture to our state. Did they succeed? The answer is a resounding “Yes!” Tulsa can be proud of our company, as can many devoted opera fans in the surrounding states. Tulsa Opera draws enthusiastic audiences from a wide area. The production values of our Tulsa Opera productions today reflect, onstage and in general, a high level of artistic development. These hard-working pioneers from the past deserve credit for laying the groundwork for our current successes.

These first years are indelibly stamped in my memory because they were important years for Tulsa Opera and I was learning so much from my association with Carlo Moresco, our conductor for sixteen consecutive years. His hero was

Arturo Toscanini, and as a result Maestro Moresco could be explosive and volatile in the style of Toscanini. This kind of temperament for conductors today is not considered acceptable behavior. Nevertheless, Maestro Moresco was a tremendous asset for Tulsa Opera. He knew all of the great singers of that period and helped to persuade singers to come to Tulsa to perform. One reason that he was so effective in Tulsa was because of Jeannette Turner. Mrs. Turner does not get the amount of credit that she deserves, in my opinion. For almost twenty years, Mrs. Turner worked almost single-handedly to promote opera in Tulsa. I must hasten to add that for the most part she had a supportive Board of Directors and a troupe of enthusiastic and hard-working volunteers. Mrs. Turner started out as a Board member and soon graduated to a managerial position with the Opera. She became extremely successful and competent when dealing with the singers' agents in New York City, and an expert when dealing with contracts. To top all this, she developed a wonderful sense of what was right and wrong with singers. This, of course, is very important when putting a cast together. Having this kind of moxie can make or break an opera manager. There was no question but that Mrs. Turner wanted only the best for Tulsa Opera, never sought any kind of personal publicity, and always made an effort to put others forward. All in all, she was highly successful.



With Jeannette Turner and Maestro Carlo Moresco. This picture was taken just before the curtain went up on Jeannette's last evening as Manager of Tulsa Opera (1974).

Mrs. Turner was able to get wonderful opera-loving people on the Board, and when William A. Baden became President of the Board and joined forces with Mrs. Turner, it proved to be a wonderful period of growth, financially and artistically, for Tulsa Opera. Mr. Baden had an attractive personality and was dynamite in the community when it came to a discussion of opera. Also, he made being on the Opera Board fun, and everyone enjoyed his style of presiding over the monthly meetings. In my opinion, he brought a real sense of prestige and a heightened sense of community involvement to the conscientious Board members. Working with Mrs. Turner to secure the participation of Mr. Baden on Tulsa Opera's Board was the popular Board President Robert Rizley.



Although I had sung roles with Tulsa Opera, my first adventure into the duties of Chorus Master occurred in March of 1963. Tulsa Opera produced Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro* in a wonderful English translation by Ruth and Thomas Martin. We had a first-class cast and I particularly remember Donald Gramm as Figaro, Mildred Miller as Cherubino, and Chester Ludgin as the Count. I had known Donald Gramm from my student days at Aspen, Colorado, where he was also a student of Martial Singher. While he was in Tulsa performing, he came out to Edison High School where I was teaching at that time, and gave generously of his time visiting with my students about music as a career.

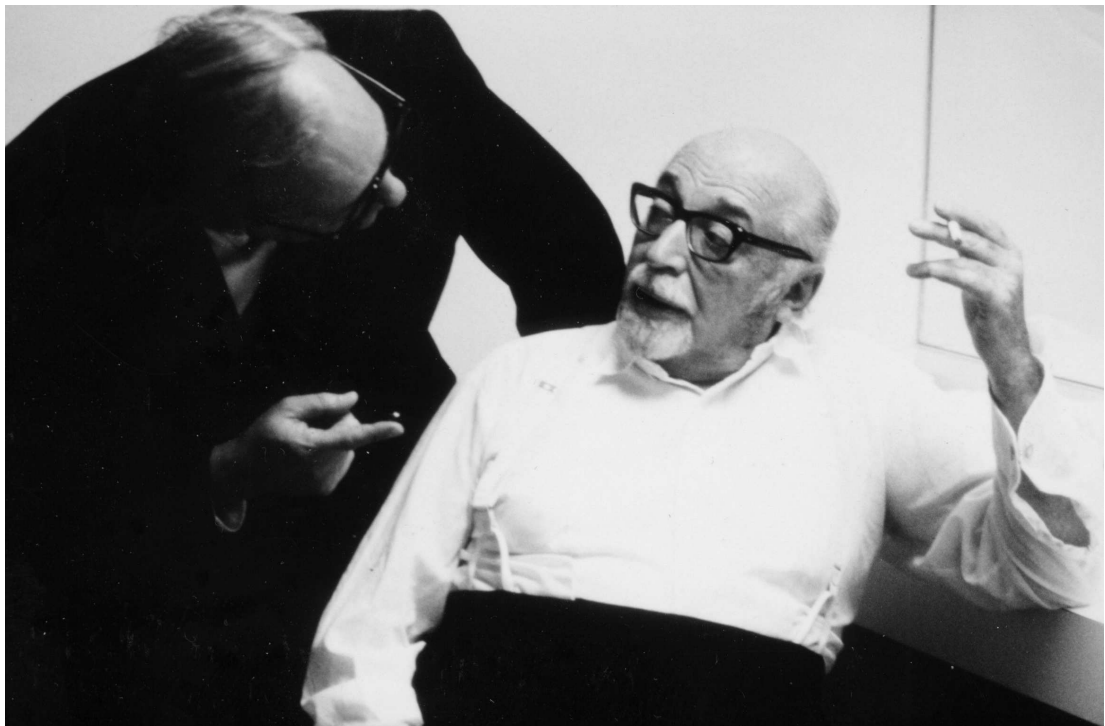
The Marriage of Figaro has a small chorus; however, I remember working on it with high energy. Unfortunately, Mozart did not provide a great deal of choral music in his operas. *The Magic Flute* contains Mozart's most exciting music for the opera chorus. Mozart, arguably the greatest natural musical genius in all of music, somehow shortchanged the opera chorus. Be that as it may, the chorus members in this production were excellent singers, and I experienced my first thrill preparing an opera chorus. Incidentally, my pay for this labor of love was seventy-five dollars, and I would have gladly paid *them* for this opportunity which opened up a new potential for musical involvement for me. Being Chorus Master for so many years was a rich musical experience; also, working with so many world-class stage directors and conductors was a training school that one ordinarily can only dream about. Maybe this is one of the reasons why I have, since retiring from the Opera, given back in contributions almost all of the money they ever paid me.



The one thing about being Chorus Master that I hated was conducting backstage choruses. Many operas have these backstage choruses, and trying to keep the chorus with the conductor in the pit can be a horrifying experience. If the chorus gets just a little behind the beat, or a little ahead of the beat, all hell breaks loose!! Of

course, the conductor in the pit must have it right or it makes him look bad, and the audience can also feel a tremendous discomfort knowing that something has gone awry. So when the chorus is not in synch with the orchestra in rehearsal, the conductor yells “Maestro Sowell” in a way that suggests he is not pleased — and this is always an embarrassing moment. It is definitely a situation that must be fixed. Perhaps it is these high-tension moments that make it interesting.

One story that springs to mind immediately concerning these backstage choruses involves an incident that occurred in an opera in which Emerson Buckley was conducting. Maestro Buckley had brought with him a musical assistant to play the piano for rehearsals, and this young fellow was also conducting the backstage chorus. At the final dress rehearsal there were about 1600 invited guests observing the rehearsal. At one point the chorus and orchestra were what seemed to be miles apart, and Maestro Buckley, who could be very boisterous and noisy, started yelling. I stuck my head through the curtain to see if there was anything I could do to help, and Maestro Buckley immediately started yelling at *me*, forgetting that I was not doing the conducting! His first sentence was: “S-O-O-O-H THERE YOU ARE!!” I tried to explain the situation to him while the guest audience laughed and twittered, wondering what was going on. I must have looked frightened, standing in the glare of the lights and facing these verbal explosions from the pit. This situation was quickly ameliorated, and the rehearsal continued with very little additional discussion. In reality, Maestro Buckley was a colorful conductor with tremendous skills.



With Maestro Emerson Buckley. He was a gruff taskmaster but achieved wonderful results.



In the latter part of the sixties, I was serving as Chorus Master and I continued to sing some of the comprimario (supporting) roles. When I went to teach at the University of Tulsa in 1970, I continued to be Chorus Master and I stopped singing any small roles because I had students who could do this very well. I wanted the students to have the opportunities; I had had my chance. I remember vividly that in 1967, Renata Scotto sang *Madama Butterfly* and tenor John Alexander sang Pinkerton. In this production, I was Chorus Master and sang two comprimario roles: the Imperial Commissioner and Prince Yamadori. During those early days of her career, Renata Scotto had beauty of sound and she always gave a strong performance. As Cio-Cio-San, she created theatrical magic.

Another opera production for which I have fond memories is the 1968 *Rigoletto* with Sesto Bruscantini, a wonderful Italian baritone. He sang with a rich, vital tone and obviously had made an intense scrutiny of the role. Also in this cast was the Austrian-Spanish tenor, Alfredo Kraus. Kraus was a great artist and highly respected by his peers. He would only sing roles which he considered to be right for his essentially lyric instrument. This sane approach served him well and he sang for many years as a result. His voice was beautiful, and his portrayal of the Duke was compelling. Roberta Peters, who had sung for Tulsa Opera on several occasions, sang her vocally opulent portrayal of Gilda. She has always been a great favorite of the Tulsa audience. By the way, I sang Marullo and served as Chorus Master in this production.



In 1975, Edward Purrington arrived in Tulsa to be our new General Manager. He had been associated with the Santa Fe Opera, and brought with him some fresh thinking and inspirational new ideas that were welcomed by all. Tulsa Opera had been growing and developing an enthusiastic opera public, and when Mrs. Turner decided to retire after many years of conscientious, dedicated, and effective service, Mr. Purrington was chosen to replace her. He was without question the right man, because during his twelve years of leadership Tulsa Opera grew artistically and the list of supporters grew considerably. Under his guidance, Tulsa Opera became one of the most highly respected regional opera companies in the United States. The company mounted many outstanding operas. *Die Walküre*, *Boris Godunov*, *Attila*, *Der Rosenkavalier*, *The Flying Dutchman* were all productions that won thunderous approval from the audiences. These were productions that a sophisticated and aware opera audience would appreciate in any opera house in our country.

Not to be forgotten, *Andrea Chenier* (1981) and *The Merry Widow* (1985) were memorable productions, and both of these operas were staged by the distinguished

Lotfi Mansouri. Mr. Mansouri's productions are always impressive and he generates great excitement among the principals and chorus. He is simply one of the best to ever work in Tulsa. He considered each opera a separate entity, and his interpretation was dictated by the music. Mr. Mansouri was particularly interested in the psychological inter-relationships of the characters. He was truly an inspiration.



Now, I would like to give you a bird's-eye view of three other productions during the Purrington era. First on this list would be the 1979 *La Traviata*. This was a gorgeous and colorful production staged by James de Blasis. The Violetta of Diana Soviero was memorable, and her presence on the stage was remarkable. Soviero is one of the great American sopranos, with charm and beauty to offer in addition to her beautiful singing. Judith Somogi was the conductor whose interpretation of the music score made the most of the dramatic scenes. Everyone enjoyed and admired Judith Somogi.

On the evening of March 13, 1979 this *La Traviata* was taken to Oklahoma City for one performance. We performed in the Civic Center Music Hall (previously called the Municipal Auditorium) with The Oklahoma City Symphony Orchestra in the pit. At that time the orchestra in Oklahoma City was absolutely first-class. From an artistic point of view the evening was an exciting success. However, the box-office receipts were disappointing and this has not been done again. I particularly enjoyed this event because I grew up in Oklahoma City and this was an instance of "going home again" for me, and an opportunity to see friends from my earlier years.

The second on my list would be: George Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess* of 1986. This was the first and only time this opera has ever been produced in the State of Oklahoma. The Gershwin estate is very strict about the performing rights of the opera. Mr. Purrington had chosen a magnificent cast and I have strong memories of Marquita Lister, who sang Clara; Damon Evans was an outstanding Sportin' Life; Bruce Hubbard turned in a very strong performance of Jake; Gregg Baker was the exciting Crown; Sarah Reese was unforgettable as Bess. A baritone from Tulsa, Keith Jemison, sang the role of Jim with resonant voice and good expression. Simon Estes, who had established a reputation as Porgy at the Metropolitan Opera, gave his well-known interpretation of the role.

The chorus for *Porgy* was composed of local choristers and a few singers from New York City who had sung the chorus parts on previous occasions. These were all terrific choristers, and among that group was Denyce Graves. She has in recent years become a leading singer at the Metropolitan Opera and is having a sensational career. To be straightforward with my feelings toward this production is easy, because I loved every moment working with the chorus and the principal singers. The music has irrepressible high spirits and the buoyant and tuneful syncopation of the Negro spiritual. It also has a musical calm that lends a quality of tenderness and

sincerity. I love those jazzy dissonances; I believe this is one of America's finest operas, and it has taken a long time to gain full acceptance. Gershwin is now widely recognized as one of the true authentic geniuses that American music has produced. Time and history may even show him to be the most authentic composer of his time and place.

The third production that was for me monumental in scope was the 1987 offering of Verdi's *Don Carlo*. This is certainly one of Verdi's most ambitious operas. It was originally composed in French for the Paris Opéra, and the Italian version came later. It is more often performed in the Italian version and it was this version that Tulsa Opera produced. Once again, Mr. Purrington assembled a blue-ribbon cast. An article about this production in the *Wall Street Journal* called it "a cast that even La Scala would be envious of." One cannot forget the powerful performance of Tatiana Troyanos as Princess of Eboli; Rosalind Plowright was magnificent as Elizabeth of Valois. I had heard Ms. Plowright sing at the Buxton International Festival in Buxton, England in 1984. She was singing *Medea* by Luigi Cherubini, and she possesses a voice of beauty and sympathetic warmth. It must also be said that she has an attractive and dignified stage presence. Also performing in this *Don Carlo* were Samuel Ramey as Philip II and Jerome Hines as the Grand Inquisitor. Here we have two of the greatest bass voices in the world singing in the same opera. All this means an electric performance filled with beauty of sound. The chorus work in this opera is enormous and the Tulsa Opera Chorus sang with a palpable vocal presence. **Kudos to the Tulsa Opera Chorus!!**

Two other people complete the *Don Carlo* team: Conductor Edoardo Müller from the Metropolitan Opera, and Stage Director Sonja Frisell. Maestro Müller brought all the forces together with sensitivity and a breadth of dramatic excitement. Maestro Müller was not only a great conductor and musician, but was, at the same time, a fine gentleman. The whole cast admired his personal integrity. Ms. Frisell had established an international reputation for her striking productions in Europe and America. The audience is well served by Ms. Frisell's work because it brings together the dramatic, the exciting, and the spectacular upon the stage in a realistic way that is visually impressive and dramatically exciting. She and Maestro Müller were a "dream team."



The end of the 1986-87 season also brought to a close Mr. Purrington's association with Tulsa Opera. He accepted the position of Administrative Director with the Washington Opera in Washington, D.C. Our next General Manager was Bernard Uzan, and his time in Tulsa was cut short because of his severe disagreements with the Board of Directors. Monsieur Uzan was French, although he spoke English very well and communicated with ease with the chorus and others. His productions were always theatrical successes, and his ability to bring to opera a new intimacy and

humanity was a central function in his staging. His approach was to turn the characters into real people rather than treating them like puppets. He always seemed to focus our attention on the important human elements of the opera's plot. At the end of one season, he accepted a similar position with L'Opéra de Montréal. He remains a major figure in opera's group of highly talented directors.



In 1988, Myrna Smart Ruffner was named General Manager of Tulsa Opera. Ms. Ruffner had worked in the arts for many years and was extremely successful. She was a “people person” from start to finish and had a spontaneity, good nature, and a general attractiveness. In my view, Ms. Ruffner was a most efficient person in her managerial position and a real asset for Tulsa Opera. I personally felt very comfortable discussing any tricky situation with her; she always seemed to have the appropriate solution. The chorus was very fond of her and she had a special ability to mediate problems and bring difficult situations to an amicable resolution. This is a wonderful quality to have in the business of opera, because in opera there are some excessively temperamental people. After all, Dr. Samuel Johnson of the eighteenth century said that opera was an “exotic and irrational entertainment.”



December 4, 1991 was a happy day for me because at four o'clock in the afternoon on the second floor of the Rotunda at the Oklahoma State Capitol, a group of Oklahomans were presented the Governor's Arts Awards. Three Tulsans were presented awards: Linda Frazier, Maurice de Vinna, and I. We were presented the award by former Governor George Nigh, who performed this duty in the absence of Governor David Walters. We were all pleased that Governor Nigh was there because he had been a popular Governor and knew how to carry this sort of thing off with panache. Governor Walters was in Hawaii to attend the ceremony commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. The Master of Ceremonies at the State Capitol on that day was the eloquent George Singer, also from Tulsa. There was some wonderful pre-ceremony music provided by the Oklahoma Arts Quintet. This ensemble also played for the reception following the ceremony in the Supreme Court Wing.

I attended this ceremony with a group from Tulsa Opera. We traveled to this affair in a sporty little bus and we had a jolly good time going and returning. Included in this entourage were Charlotte Schuman, Myrna Ruffner, Dr. Joseph Kestner, Martha Elsberry, and others from the Opera staff. To make this an even more memorable occasion, Charlotte Schuman treated all of us that evening to dinner at the Oklahoma City Golf and Country Club in Nichols Hills. Ms. Schuman was at that time the effective and personable President of the Tulsa Opera Board. A

few days after returning to Tulsa I was pleased to receive this letter from Dr. Hans Brisch, the longtime Chancellor of Higher Education in Oklahoma:

OKLAHOMA STATE REGENTS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION
500 Education Building
State Capitol Complex
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
73105-4503

January 7, 1992

Dear Mr. Sowell:

Congratulations on receiving the Community Service Award for your outstanding and enduring contributions to the arts in Tulsa. More than an honor, this award is testament to the many ways in which you have given of yourself to enrich the quality of life for so many in your community.

In a world increasingly dominated by technology and scientific progress, it is crucial that we continue to nurture the creative and artistic aspects of ourselves and our communities. Whether through your work as Chorus Master of Tulsa Opera or your distinguished teaching career, you have demonstrated a strong commitment to ensuring that others have opportunities to savor the beauty, power, and spirit of the arts.

Again, congratulations on this most distinguished honor, and please accept my best wishes for a happy and successful new year.

Sincerely,

Hans Brisch
Chancellor



Joining Ms. Ruffner on the administrative staff at the Opera in 1990 was Nicholas Muni, a new Artistic Director. Mr. Muni's productions were very provocative, highly original, and often successful. I believe that Mr. Muni felt that if opera was to be of interest to a contemporary audience, it must reflect the concerns and problems of contemporary life. Not everyone agrees; many feel that it is a wonderful respite to retreat into the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and escape the problems of today. Mr. Muni accomplished some really excellent moments when one could feel a palpable reality that seemed to grab the audience by the throat. He insisted on a forceful, realistic drama, and that intensity of character was evident in much of his work. (Sometimes tiring the singers unduly.) I do believe that if Mr. Muni had been more concerned about what would have been appropriate for Tulsa audiences, and less concerned about his own agenda, his time in Tulsa would have met with more success at the box office, and generated more friends for opera. It is so important to be creating new audiences for opera. He is currently very successful in Cincinnati, where he is the General Director of Cincinnati Opera. In the *Cincinnati Enquirer*, Janelle Gelfand wrote: "One artistic success after another unfolded in

Mr. Muni's first full season as artistic director." I believe that Cincinnati is the right venue for Mr. Muni's bold contemporary style.

Tulsa Opera presented the North American premiere of Gioacchino Rossini's *Armida* in early 1992. This was a big success for Mr. Muni. The combination of cutting-edge technology and music of the nineteenth century's Rossini created a free-from-predictability type theater. This production utilized slide projections on an enormous screen, and the effect in this instance was highly successful. The staging was inventive and Mr. Muni scored a big hit. Richard Bradshaw was the excellent conductor from the Canadian Opera Company. This was a noteworthy production because the music world was celebrating the bicentenary of Rossini's birth and our entire performance was chosen to be broadcast on National Public Radio. This was an honor for Tulsa Opera and brought national attention to Tulsa.

Another signal demonstration in Tulsa of Mr. Muni's special talent was the wonderfully clever 1992-93 season called "The Spanish Trilogy." This was a concept involving three operas spanning the entire forty-fifth season. The three operas were *Carmen*, *Fidelio*, and *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*. All of these operas had an intrinsic Spanish theme and were set in Seville, Spain.



My favorite opera in this Spanish Trilogy was Beethoven's *Fidelio*, done in early 1993 — a great work that should not be missing from the repertory of any major opera house. Although Beethoven was essentially an instrumental composer, he was a musician of highly dramatic imagination. The musical realization of *Fidelio* is, in my opinion, magnificent! This opera is a *singspiel* and this sort of stop-and-go music probably did not suit Beethoven's sense of continuity. However, there is plenty of excellent music and this operatic writing is imaginatively worked out. I had always rather passed over *Fidelio* in my own life, thinking that Beethoven was a piano and symphonic composer. I had sung Beethoven's song cycle *An die Ferne Geliebte* on my senior voice recital and even this had not convinced me that Beethoven was a great composer for the voice. It was not until my experience with Nicholas Muni's *Fidelio* that I became deeply intrigued with this opera. Beethoven provided some moments of full-throated music for the chorus, and this is choral music which is satisfying and a joy to sing. The Prisoners' Chorus (an all-male chorus) is one of the opera's most beautiful moments. Since I appreciate it when the opera ends on a happy note, I am particularly grateful for the thrilling choral Finale. This final scene becomes a kind of cantata of jubilation to end the opera. Once again, the Tulsa Opera Chorus (with Beethoven's assistance) was magnificent. If you are unfamiliar with *Fidelio*, I heartily suggest that you give it a chance.

The casting for *Fidelio* was excellent and I particularly enjoyed working with David Efron, who was the conductor. Maestro Efron is a consummate professional and his baton technique is clear and graceful. He is a superb musician who can go

quickly to the “problem spots” and work them out. In other words, his conducting is exemplary. Maestro Effron has been for many years in charge of the orchestra program at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York. In addition to this opera, I had the opportunity to work with him on Puccini’s *Girl of the Golden West* and Rossini’s *Barber of Seville*. These three productions had outstanding casts, and Maestro Effron worked well with the principals and the chorus, achieving some very effective variants of dynamics and tone color. He was a conductor who could turn the composer’s written score into a sublime musical and dramatic experience for everyone.



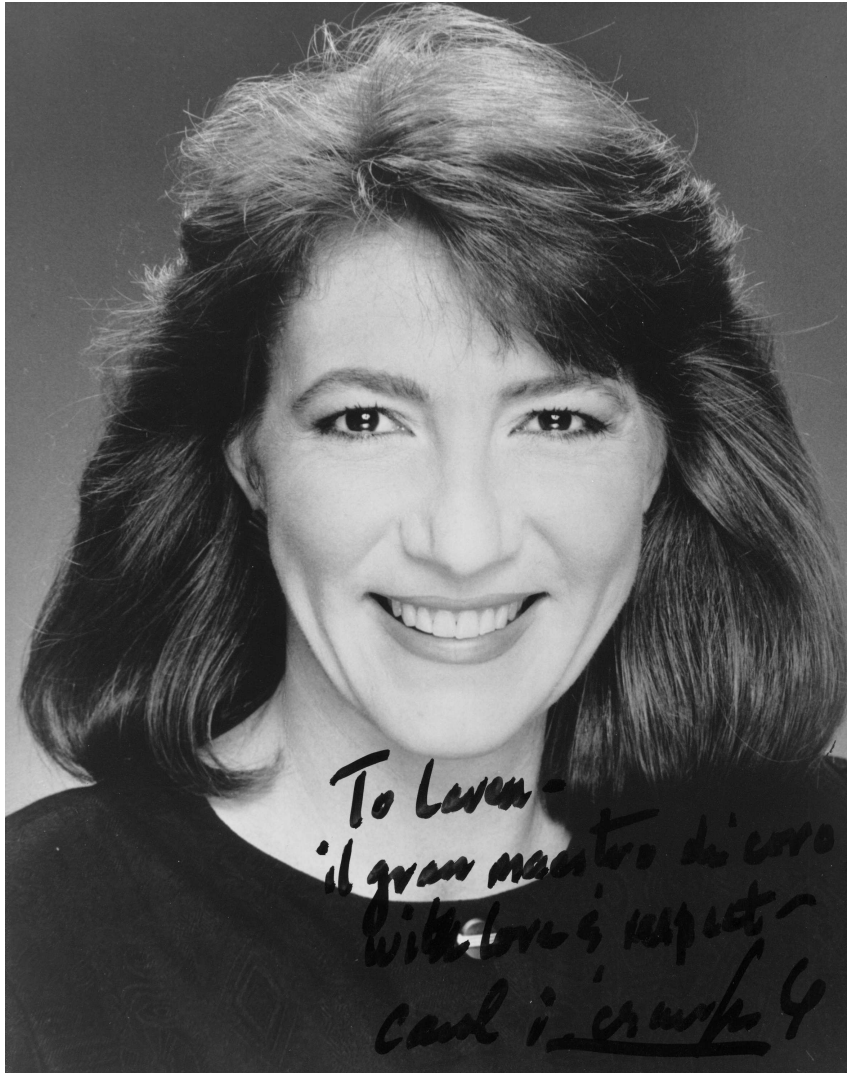
After the departure of Nicholas Muni Tulsa Opera forged forward with a remarkable woman. Carol I. Crawford was chosen by the Board of Directors to replace Muni as Artistic Director. She has an inordinate amount of enthusiasm and dedication, and a vitality that radiates wherever she speaks or lectures to civic organizations. She has a unique talent for speaking to all age groups; I’ve heard her discuss opera with small children with great effectiveness.

The management of Tulsa Opera can point with pride to the figures that show an even higher proportion of opera-attending public than at any time in the past. As a rule, each production is given three times and is often sold out for all three performances. This renaissance of popularity and attendance is due in large measure to Ms. Crawford, who has generated a lot of operatic electricity with her leadership.

As a conductor, Carol I. Crawford is alert, incisive, energetic, and conducts with brisk metric efficiency. Ms. Crawford has an awareness that opera is a joint venture of many artists, and she collaborates with others to achieve appropriate musical and vocal styles apropos to the opera being staged and to the singers available for the roles. She has created an atmosphere where the singers have found it easy to give their best. Clearly, the results are almost always dynamic and subtle, and her interpretations create an artistic experience for the audience.



There is an old saying which relates leadership to an eagle. “Leaders are like eagles: they don’t flock; you find them one at a time.” Carol I. Crawford as General Director is unique and has the courage to stand for her convictions. I believe she is doing a remarkable job as General Director. It is a huge responsibility serving as Artistic Director *and* General Director, while also conducting some of the operas. This may not be an ideal work load for the average person; however, Ms. Crawford deserves high marks for her ability to make it happen and she seems to have a wonderful grasp of future trends in opera. She is also a popular speaker, and speaks all around the state advancing the cause of opera. Ms. Crawford is by far the best extemporaneous speaker that I have ever heard. She can be utterly fascinating! For



Carol I. Crawford, General Director of Tulsa Opera. The photo is inscribed: "To Laven – il gran maestro di coro – with love and respect – Carol I. Crawford."

example, she was chosen to be principal speaker at the commencement exercises for the University of Tulsa Class of 2000.

The task of the General Director is a colossal undertaking. She is charged with administering equitable treatment not only to the near-perfect, which is a rarity in any generation, but to the imperfect. There is more: the competent and the incompetent, the tolerable and the all-but-intolerable. To excel in opera, as in anything else, the wish must be the father of the thought: in the Boardroom as well as in the General Director's office. Ms. Crawford is ambitious and has set Tulsa Opera on a high road to new, uncharted ground. There is no possibility for an opera company to flourish adhering to the status quo; we must feel the momentum of forward motion. Ms. Crawford has induced an euphoria in the opera community, and the soundness of her judgment of putting first things first cannot be doubted at the time of this writing. She has grown in wisdom and has become a formidable opera director, and a thoroughgoing conductor who achieves immediate results. Tulsa Opera is fortunate to have this meticulous and conscientious musician at the helm.



As my thirty-four seasons working for Tulsa Opera were finally drawing to a close, I freely admit to having had feelings of sentimentality and nostalgia. Through the years, I had made friends and contacts that were close to my heart. I have never been a person to hold onto a job tenaciously. My rehearsals with the chorus were never a problem for me, but the final series of rehearsals prior to opening night, which lasted until 10:30 or 11:00 night after night consecutively for two weeks or more, were beginning to cause fatigue. I was taking some medication for high blood pressure (a diuretic) and trying to find an unlocked “john” in the P.A.C. became a real challenge! The P.A.C. had begun locking doors all over the building because people from the street were coming in. Frankly, I thought it was time to let someone else have an opportunity.



My final opera was *Faust*, and I chose this opera as my last one because it has many beautiful sections for the chorus. A memory that stands out regarding the principal singers was the beautiful singing of Mark Oswald, a young baritone from the Metropolitan Opera. Mr. Oswald was singing the role of Valentin for the first time, and he sang with poetic intensity and a grandeur of delivery. Here is a young baritone (about twenty-seven at the time) who sang with a ringing tone (*squillo*) and impeccable focus, reminding me of an earlier vocal hero, Robert Merrill.

For my farewell evening, Myrna Ruffner and Carol I. Crawford had planned some things that flabbergasted me. At the conclusion of the last performance of *Faust*, Ms. Ruffner had talked Edward Purrington from Washington, D.C. into returning to Tulsa to present me with a letter from Hillary Rodham Clinton. He brought with him his wife, and many Tulsans had the opportunity to meet her. She is a lovely lady, and quite attractive.

I was dumbfounded to see Mr. Purrington walk out onto the stage that evening. I had no idea that he was even in Tulsa. He and I had a friendly handshake and a big hug right there on the stage. He made a few remarks, and then proceeded to read to the audience this thoughtful letter from our First Lady. Also, I was totally unaware that Ms. Crawford had trained the chorus to sing the beautiful chorus, “*Va, pensiero*” from Verdi’s *Nabucco*. This even involved holding the orchestra, and, knowing that the members of the orchestra already had a full evening of music-making behind them, I hope that this final bit was not too much of a stretch! I’ll never understand how Ms. Crawford pulled this off without my knowing. All of this was such a surprise, and it was so kind of everyone concerned to honor me in this way. I was also presented a beautiful bouquet of white roses, which remained on my piano at home for days because I couldn’t bring myself to toss them out.

Believe it or not, there is more! After all this on the main stage, there was a party in Studio II. There was a table filled to overflowing with all kinds of cheese, fruit, nuts, fancy little finger sandwiches, and Italian table wine. The chorus once again sang some words to me to the tune of “Hello, Dolly” and the chorus presented some gifts. Chorus President Ken Miles gave a little speech and made a point of thanking Dick Ruprecht for his help with the party. Both Ken and Dick are longtime valuable chorus members. I fondly remember all these wonderful moments and I am grateful to the hundreds of choristers through the years, and others, who helped to make my tenure with Tulsa Opera effective and memorable. This appreciation also extends to the expert pianists that have been a vital part of my rehearsals, particularly Betty Moses, who was for many years my skillful and reliable colleague at Tulsa Opera. Betty is often requested to accompany singers in recital, and she is a superior accompanist, dealing expertly and sensitively with *lieder* and with the French art song. It is rare to find an accompanist who actually breathes along with the singer. (This is *so* important!)



With Edward Purrington (my boss for twelve years) at the reception following my last Tulsa Opera performance in 1994. What a total (and very pleasant) surprise it was to see him that evening!

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

October 5, 1994

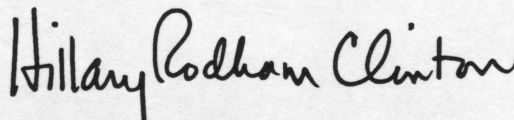
Dear Friends:

I am pleased to have this opportunity to send greetings to each of you attending the retirement celebration of J. Laven Sowell.

As the Honorary Chair of the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities, I commend you for creating this forum to honor artistic achievements. By paying tribute to the outstanding artistic career of J. Laven Sowell, you recognize the positive influence a single individual can have on his or her community.

Please accept my best wishes for a wonderful event.

Sincerely yours,


Hillary Rodham Clinton

*The letter which was read by Edward Purrington to the audience
on my last evening with Tulsa Opera as Chorus Master*

Monday morning, after the curtain came down on my final evening as Chorus Master, I received this kind-hearted and thoughtful letter from Carol I. Crawford:

Tulsa Opera, Inc.
1610 South Boulder
Tulsa, Oklahoma
74119-4479

October 5, 1994

Dear Laven,

One of the greatest things I learned from my teacher, Otto-Werner Mueller, was to observe his deference and respect toward one of his musical elders — Max Rudolf. It is in this spirit that I humbly express my appreciation for everything you have built during your remarkable 34 seasons with Tulsa Opera as the company's Chorus Master. As my teacher deferred to Max Rudolf, I defer to you. I hope I can give this opera company half as much of my soul and passion for music as you have given Tulsa Opera for so many years.

In an era of fleeting loyalty toward cherished musical ideals and institutions, I am so proud to recognize all you have built and all you symbolize for the marvelous Tulsa Opera. This is a great company, and it is with a great sense of responsibility and humility that I undertake to serve as this company's Artistic Director. My very first day and experience with Tulsa Opera involved observing you with your beloved Tulsa Opera Chorus. In short, I was inspired and I could have had no better introduction to everything this company represents. Music performance is a sublime combination of the intellect, the heart, and musical gifts from God. It takes a gifted leader to coax all those three elements to converge in order to present beauty to the public. God gave you that talent, and I admire your gift beyond words.

Congratulations on this special day when Tulsa Opera duly recognizes you for your superb musicianship and leadership. One of your teachers was the great Nadia Boulanger, and I'm sure she smiles approvingly on everything you have accomplished. You have touched generations of musicians in Oklahoma when you could have ventured elsewhere. Tulsa Opera and Oklahoma are indeed fortunate that you chose to serve your native state. On behalf of the people of this great state, thank you for demonstrating to so many people for so many years the true meaning of the word "virtuoso." Opera has never had a greater friend than Laven Sowell.

Sincerely,

Carol I. Crawford
Artistic Director



Carol I. Crawford has had some milestone productions, and I'll mention some that were for me remarkable. In February of 1995 she produced the American operatic classic, *The Crucible*. This opera is based on the hysteria of the Salem witch trials of 1692. These were electrifying performances with the Tony Award-winning

director Arvin Brown, and sets by Michael Yeargan. Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Robert Ward was in Tulsa to hear his work performed.

Another production that I thought was stellar in nature was Bizet's *Les Pêcheurs des Perles* (*The Pearl Fishers*). This exotic opera is rarely performed, and Ms. Crawford assembled a wonderful cast except for Stefan Szkafarowsky, whose characterization was very good although his French was the worst that I have ever heard sung in a professional opera company. (And he sings at the Met, too!) He also sang Mephistophélès in the 1994 *Faust*. His French in this opera was equally bad. Cynthia Haymon was the exciting soprano voice, who sang with a bold, free, and beautiful tone. She can project a *pianissimo* that is perfectly audible to the highest balcony. This *Les Pêcheurs des Perles* was first-rate and the chorus prepared by Richard Sutliff deserves special mention for their excellent work. This opera was composed twelve years before *Carmen* and displays Bizet's exquisite sense of melody and orchestral color. All in all, it was a production that brings opera into a positive view for opera-lovers, and any opera company in America would have been pleased to present this handsomely-designed production.



As Tulsa Opera was gearing up to celebrate its Golden Anniversary in the autumn of 1997, the City of Tulsa was planning a major celebration of its first one hundred years. As part of this festivity, Channel 6 (KOTV) kicked off their own celebration with a program entitled "The Spirit of Tulsa: The First 100 Years." This was an hour-long special chock-full of familiar and surprising tidbits. The first showing of this program occurred on January 18, 1997. The program skillfully wove words and pictures into a series of stories that touched the high and low spots of Tulsa's heritage. The debonair Clayton Vaughn introduced the stories, and various Channel 6 personalities handled the interviews. Everything from the 1921 Race Riot to the relationship of Tulsa to the Five Civilized Tribes was discussed.

Glenda Silvey, one of the very best at Channel 6, interviewed people relating to the Arts in Tulsa. Various people discussed the enormous contributions of Jane Heard Clinton (the first and longtime President of The Hyeckka Club), Maud Lorton Myers, Thomas Gilcrease, Waite Phillips, and several others. No story would be complete without a recounting of the Bob Wills Orchestra and Cain's Ballroom, and the contribution of Country Music to our City's musical life. This program also contained many vintage still photos and film which were provided by the Tulsa County Historical Society and Beryl Ford. Ms. Silvey also did interviews with Moscelyne Larkin representing Tulsa Ballet, and I was chosen to represent Tulsa Opera. Ms. Silvey and her crew came out to my house for this interview. She is thoroughly professional, and has a warm and gracious personality which puts one immediately at ease. My spot on the program was only two or three minutes in length; but the total hour-long program was interesting, educational, and extremely

well-produced. It was made into a videotape available for purchase by the public — a real collector's item.



It would be impossible to mention Tulsa Opera's Fiftieth Anniversary without referring to the "Gala Concert" entitled "Carol and Friends." This was a highly-entertaining evening with many exciting guest singers, and the orchestra was conducted by Carol I. Crawford. There were memorable performances by Marilyn Horne, Pablo Elvira, Gregg Baker, Olga Kondina, and Eugenie Grunewald. Also included on this program were Tulsans David Hamilton, Linda Roark-Strummer, and Peter Strummer. There were other prominent singers, too. There was literally a cornucopia of talent. This was an extravaganza definitely for one's memory book. Everyone's favorite aria and ensemble was sung, and sung very well. The Tulsa Opera Chorus, prepared by Patrick Hansen, sang several exuberant and dramatic choruses. Mr. Hansen was only in Tulsa for one season; he was well-liked and was an excellent musician. This fantastic "Gala Concert" was preceded by cocktails in the lower lobby of the Bank of Oklahoma and a "Gala Dinner" in the Summit Tower of the BOK Building at six-thirty P.M. Following the concert, dessert and champagne were offered, once again in the lower lobby of the BOK. This was one sparkling evening that defies credulity, and a grand way to celebrate Tulsa Opera's Golden Anniversary.



In 1998 Ms. Crawford displayed her courage and advocacy for the future of American opera when she presented David Carlson's *Dreamkeepers*. The story of this opera relates to Native American culture. The most important ideas of the opera are contained in the final chorus. It relates: "Celebrate each day of the wise earth's turning, and keep the world safe for dreaming. In that way, we will all walk in beauty, and in balance, and in love." This was an extraordinarily intimate opera, and the results were surprisingly theatrical. For me, this was a proud moment for Tulsa Opera to produce this intriguing story about America's indigenous people. Carol I. Crawford and Stage Director Albert Takazanckas deserve high marks for this collaboration.



Also among the highly successful productions during Ms. Crawford's tenure would be the awesome and mind-boggling production of *Les Dialogues des Carmélites* by Francis Poulenc. Jee Hyun Lim as Blanche and Rosalind Elias as the Old Prioress were outstanding in their roles. Charlotte Curry as Mother Gerald, and Elizabeth Kragas as Sister Alice were among the several chorus members who were selected for comprimario roles. Johnathon Pape was the highly effective Stage

Director. An interesting thing happened the evening of the final performance. Teresa Stratas, the eminent Metropolitan Opera soprano, came to Tulsa to surprise her close friend Rosalind Elias on her birthday. After the performance, Ms. Stratas went backstage to greet her friend, and was introduced to everyone. The cast and chorus sang “Happy Birthday” to Ms. Elias, and everyone was elated to hear Teresa Stratas say that Tulsa’s production was “better than the Met.” The chorus for *Dialogues* was beautifully trained by Constantina Tsolainou. (This is the production of *Dialogues* that I discussed at some length in the previous chapter.)



Rosalind Elias performed in Carol I. Crawford’s terrific production of Poulenc’s Les Dialogues des Carmélites, mentioned in the text. In an earlier production (1990) Miss Elias staged Rossini’s La Cenerentola for Tulsa Opera and inscribed this photograph: “To Laven – Your ‘Cenerentola’ chorus was wonderful!”



Olga Kondina. The Russian inscription, translated by Dr. Frank Letcher, reads: "To Dear Laven Sowell, with love to the Tulsa Opera and with wishes for goodness and inspiration! -- Olga Kondina." (Photograph by John McCormack)

Ms. Crawford has been responsible for bringing to Tulsa some fine young voices with a high potential for success. She has also engaged some more-mature singers who are not known to the American public. One such voice is the lyric-coloratura soprano Olga Kondina from Russia. Here is a beautiful voice of exquisite timbre, impeccable intonation, and a fantastic vocal technique. Dr. Frank Letcher, a Tulsa neurosurgeon and longtime supporter of Tulsa Opera, heard Miss Kondina sing in Russia one evening while attending a medical conference. When Dr. Letcher returned to Tulsa, he showed a videotape of her performance to Carol I. Crawford, and Ms. Crawford was sufficiently impressed to cast her as Violetta in the *La Traviata* of 1996. In addition to this role, she has sung *Lucia* and *Manon* in Tulsa since making an enormous success of her debut.

Ms. Kondina's recent portrayal of the title role in *Manon* (March 2000) was an enormous success. It is difficult for me to imagine anything so lovely as her voice in this role. Massenet was a cultivated musician, but what endears him to the operatic public is his ability to achieve these passionate phrases of perfumed melody. Massenet loved the repentant sinner, and *Manon* is an opera where we find these

beautiful lavender-scented melodies. At the same time, Massenet's music is capable of great dramatic intensity. Ms. Kondina's sensitive singing of the little aria "*Adieu, notre petite table*" in the Second Act was wonderfully poignant. Singing with Ms. Kondina as Des Grieux was the young tenor Gregory Schmidt. His singing was captivating in the Act III aria "*Ah! Fuyez douce image.*" Mr. Schmidt has a ringing and beautiful lyric voice. Patryk Wroblewski was outstanding as the decadent Lescaut. Effectively utilizing his resonant and distinctive baritone voice, Mr. Wroblewski's characterization was convincing. Chorus Master James Shrader deserves special commendation for the preparation of the chorus. This was a beautifully balanced cast with a high degree of artistic integrity, and Ms. Crawford deserves acknowledgment for bringing us these great voices and an outstanding production.

This production was staged by the world-renowned Stage Director Fabrizio Melano. Mr. Melano has worked in the great opera houses of the world and is highly respected for his excellent work. He has staged in Tulsa several times for Ms. Crawford and is always appreciated by the cast and crew. His work is first class by any measure.

Devotees of French opera were particularly enchanted by Massenet's ability to immerse himself in the psychological intimacy of his characters. Musicologists have long been preoccupied with Massenet's ability to infuse seductiveness into his music, and some have thought his music had true aphrodisiac qualities. This production of *Manon* will provide glorious memories for Tulsa Opera patrons for many years to come.



Since retiring from the Opera, I am serving on the Board of Directors of Tulsa Opera and trying to support the activities of our current successful management. Dr. Joseph Kestner, the Chairman of Tulsa Opera's Production Committee, invited me to become a member of this group. These are people who care deeply about opera, and it is always a heartwarming experience to be among them. For example, it is so exciting to hear the remarks of Committee members such as Mrs. John Steele Zink and her sister, Ms. Etta May Avery, expressing their views and concerns about various productions. Listening to them, it is obvious that they have a genuine affection for opera as an art form. The John Steele Zink Foundation was a major underwriter of our recent *Manon* (2000) production which was highly successful.

During the year following my retirement as Chorus Master, the Board passed a resolution declaring that I was "The Honorary Lifetime Chairman of the Chorus." This was a gracious gesture. I continue to teach voice lessons in my home, and this continues to be a pleasure for me. It also gives me a certain happy feeling knowing that I have made at least a little contribution to the human race each day.

The nineties have brought opportunities to serve as an adjudicator for several contests. I was pleased to serve as a judge for the Stewart Awards in Oklahoma City. This is a national competition designed to reward outstanding American vocalists from age twenty through thirty-two. These awards are sponsored by the Oklahoma City Orchestra League. Theresa Treadway Lloyd, from New York City, and I were the “video jurors.” We watched and listened to well over one hundred video tapes from all over the United States, eventually paring the number down to twenty finalists. Several months later, three other jurors adjudicated these twenty singers. Those jurors were Edward Purrington, the Administrative Director of the Washington Opera; Evelyn Lear, celebrated opera singer; and John Stewart, a former tenor from the Metropolitan Opera.



For many of us in the Tulsa community, the decade of the nineties would begin with an incident which left us all with a sense of profound loss when, during the summer of 1990, the inexorable laws of fate would take Mrs. Frankie McKinnon. In a tragic automobile accident, she was taken from us. I received a call to temporarily fill in for Mrs. McKinnon at the John Knox Presbyterian Church as Director of Music until a suitable person could be found. She was dearly loved by her choir, and the choir members deserve special mention for their ability to persevere, and for their generous spirit. There were many wonderful people in the choir, and I particularly enjoyed seeing my former colleague from Edison, Mrs. Marjorie Ashcraft, among the members of the choir. Mrs. Ashcraft was a hard-working and excellent music teacher in the Edison Junior High School.

I did very much enjoy my six-month stay at John Knox, and I especially enjoyed the sermons of the Rev. Lonnie Lee. His sermons were delivered entirely from memory, and they were engaging. My one unhappy memory from this time was the time I fell on the ice after church one Sunday. I broke my left wrist and it is easy to lose your dignity while writhing around on the ice — and with a group of spectators, too! Incidentally, I continue to enjoy the attractive silver tray that the choir gave me at the end of my time at John Knox.



As we turn to the twenty-first century Tulsans cannot be heard declaring that when they want to hear good opera they must go to New York City or Chicago. Tulsa is coming-of-age and it is a “good thing” to get addicted to excellence. However, excellence is not easy to achieve. It is only attained by hours of unadulterated hard work, determination, talent, and sheer grit.

Opera is the ultimate theater; it is theater in which the intensity of the words, supported and magnified by the intensity of the music, lifts you to levels unmatched

anywhere else in the world of the performing arts. Once you learn what opera can bring you, you're hooked for life.

“Perfection” is not a word that musicians use very often when speaking of opera, because genuine perfection is, understandably, the rarest quality to be defined in a musical performance. This is a “good thing” because perfection suggests the end of growth, and no serious musician would consider this desirable. The need to grow, and the need to get better and better, are important ingredients in the life of a conscientious musician.

Opera has its own way of doing things, and that requires its audience to deal with it on its own terms. The acceptance or rejection of a work is personal, not absolute. The perception of value depends intensely on knowledge and understanding. Once again, I remind you to do your homework! You can have a marvelous experience with a fine production if you do some preparation.

TULSA OPERA ANNALS

1992 - 2000

In 1992, Jack Williams and I included a listing of the casts of all Tulsa Opera productions from 1948 through the 1991–1992 season in our book, *Tulsa Opera Chronicles*. This chapter brings that record forward through the 1999–2000 season.

(cast members listed in order of appearance)

1992-1993

November 7, 12 and 14, 1992

CARMEN

GEORGES BIZET

In French

Zuniga Eric Johnson
Morales Travis Lewis
Don Jose Andre Clouthier
Micaela Gwynne Geyer
Carmen Luretta Bybee
Escamillo Gerald Dolter
Frasquita Danielle Strauss
Mercedes Jennifer Wallace
El Remendado Jerome Hatley
Lillas Pastia John Clegg
A mountain guide Lucas Boudet

Conductor Carol I. Crawford
Stage Director Nicholas Muni
Chorus Master Laven Sowell
Children's Chorus Director Gene Roads
Set Design John Conklin
Costume Design Catherine Zuber
Lighting Design Christopher Akerlind

February 27, March 4 and 6, 1993

FIDELIO

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

In German

Don Florestan Andre Clouthier
Leonore Kathryn Day
Rocco William Rhodes
Marzelline Rebecca Caine
Jacquino Carroll Freeman
Don Pizarro Gerald Dolter
First Prisoner Doug Blakely
Don Fernando Dale Travis

Conductor David Effron
Stage Director Nicholas Muni
Chorus Master Laven Sowell
Set Design John Conklin

Costume Design Catherine Zuber
Lighting Design Christopher Akerlind

May 1, 6 and 8, 1993

IL BARBIERE DI SIVIGLIA

GIOACCHINO ROSSINI

In Italian

Fiorello Travis Lewis
Count Almaviva Carroll Freeman
Figaro Mark Oswald
Rosina Rebecca Caine
Dr. Bartolo Dale Travis
Berta Julia Fischer
Ambrogio John Clegg
Don Basilio William Rhodes
A Notary Fred Kraushaar

Conductor David Effron
Stage Director Ken Kazan
Chorus Master Laven Sowell
Set Design John Conklin
Costume Design Catherine Zuber
David Burdick
Lighting Design Christopher Akerlind

1993-1994

November 6, 11 and 13, 1993

TOSCA

GIACOMO PUCCINI

In Italian

Floria Tosca Edith Davis
Mario Cavaradossi Cesar Hernandez
Baron Scarpia Richard Cowan
Sacristan Richard Sutliff
Angelotti Travis Lewis
Spoletta Joseph Hu
Sciarrone Keith Jemison
A jailer Jack Williams
A shepherd boy William Buthod
(Nov. 11) Danny Percefull

Conductor Stephen Lord

Stage Director Matthew Lata
Chorus Master Laven Sowell
Children's Chorus Director Gene Roads
Set Design Allen Moyer
Costume Design David Burdick
Lighting Design Todd Hensley

February 26, March 3 and 5, 1994

RIGOLETTO

GIUSEPPE VERDI

In Italian

Rigoletto Gerald Dolter
The Duke of Mantua Don Bernardini
Count Ceprano Craig Grayson
Countess Ceprano Willow Johnson
Count Monterone Richard Sutliff
Borsa Charles King
Marullo Travis Lewis
Sparafucile Mark Doss
Maddalena Jean Stilwell
Gilda Lisa Saffer
Giovanna Willow Johnson
The Court Page Robin Leigh Massie

Conductor David Lawton
Stage Director Nicholas Muni
Chorus Master Laven Sowell
Set Design George Tsypin
Costume Design Martin Pakledinaz
Lighting Design Mimi Jordon Sherin
 Rita Ann Kogler

April 30, May 5 and 7, 1994

THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

In English

Figaro Richard Paul Fink
Susanna Christine Abraham
Dr. Bartolo William Walker
Marcellina Darci Bultema
Cherubino Mari Opatz
Count Almaviva Gerald Dolter
Don Basilio Jerome Hatley
Countess Wendy Nielsen
Antonio Brett J. Barnes
Don Curzio David Ronis
Barbarina Susan Mello

Conductor Ward Holmquist
Stage Director Tim Ocel
Chorus Master Laven Sowell
Set Design Susan Benson

Costume Design Susan Benson
Lighting Design Michael Baumgarten

1994-1995

October 15, 20 and 22, 1994

FAUST

CHARLES GOUNOD

In French

Faust Stephen Smith
Mephistopheles Stefan Szkafarowsky
Valentin Mark Oswald
Wagner Raemond Martin
Marguerite Stephanie Friede
Siebel Kim Kodes
Martha Kim Cheeseman

Conductor Carol I. Crawford
Stage Director Michael Ehrman
Chorus Master Laven Sowell
Set Design Earl Staley
Costume Design Michael Hite
Lighting Design Ken Billington

February 25, March 2 and 4, 1995

THE CRUCIBLE

ROBERT WARD

In English

John Proctor James Maddalena
Elizabeth Proctor Kathryn Cowdrick
Abigail Williams Elizabeth Byrne
Tituba Pamela Dillard
Reverend John Hale Gregory Stapp
Judge Danforth Craig Schulman
Giles Corey Melvin Lowery
Rebecca Nurse Janet Ellis
Reverend Samuel Parris Matthew Lord
Mary Warren Jill Blalock
Ezekiel Cheever David Ronis
Thomas Putnam Richard Sutliff
Ann Putnam Donna Sadlicka
Betty Parris Leslie Valentine
Francis Nurse Timothy Truschel
Sarah Good Laura Pederson
Ruth Putnam Nancy Curtis
Susanna Walcott Sally Sullivan
Mercy Lewis Elizabeth Haley
Martha Sheldon Samantha McLemore
Bridget Booth Karen Parker
Elizabeth Hubbard Brooke Callery

Conductor Carol I. Crawford
Stage Director Arvin Brown

Chorus Master Macon Delavan
 Set Design Michael Yeargan
 Lighting Design Mark Stanley

April 22, 27 and 29, 1995
DON PASQUALE
 GAETANO DONIZETTI
In Italian

Don Pasquale Thomas Hammons
Ernesto Joseph Wolverton
Malatesta David Evitts
Norina Corliss Uecker
Notary Charles King

Conductor Hal France
Stage Director Johnathon Pape
Chorus Master Charles King
Set Design Zack Brown
Costume Design Zack Brown
Lighting Design Marie Barrett

1995-1996

October 7, 12 and 14, 1995
TROUBLE IN TAHITI
 LEONARD BERNSTEIN
In English

Dinah Luretta Bybee
Sam Matthew Lau
Trio Girl Joy Hermalyn
Trio Boy 1 Roland Burks
Trio Boy 2 Thomas Devaney

and

CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA
 PIETRO MASCAGNI
In Italian

Santuzza Eugenie Grunewald
Turiddu Timothy Mussard
Mamma Lucia Janet Ellis
Alfio Elias Mokole
Lola Joy Hermalyn

Conductor Carol I. Crawford
Stage Director Johnathon Pape
Chorus Master Richard Sutliff
Set Design Karen TenEyck
Costume Design Barbara Bush
Lighting Design Geoff Korf

November 11, 16 and 18, 1995

DON GIOVANNI
 WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART
In Italian

Don Giovanni Gregg Baker
Donna Anna Brenda Harris
Donna Elvira Wendy Nielsen
Leporello Peter Strummer
Don Ottavio David Hamilton
Zerlina Elizabeth Koch
Masetto Derrick Lawrence
Commendatore Ashley Howard Wilkinson

Conductor Carol I. Crawford
Stage Director Albert Takazauckas
Chorus Master Marilyn Carver
Set Design John Pascoe
Lighting Design Kurt Landisman

May 4, 9, 11 and 12, 1996

LA BOHÈME
 GIACOMO PUCCINI
In Italian

Mimi Stella Zambalis
 (Matinée) Jee Hyun Lim
Rodolfo Raymond Very
 (Matinée) Philip Webb
Marcello Patryk Wroblewski
Musetta Carmen Balthrop
Schaunard Daniel Smith
Colline Alvy Powell
Benoit/Alcindoro Burr Cochran Phillips
Parpignol Charles King

Conductor Robert Spano
Stage Director Francis J. Cullinan
Chorus Master Richard Sutliff
Children's Chorus Director
 Virginia LeDoux
Set Design Peter Dean Beck
Lighting Design Todd Hensley

1996-1997

November 2, 7 and 9, 1996

LA TRAVIATA
 GIUSEPPE VERDI
In Italian

Violetta Valéry Olga Kondina
Flora Bervoix Janine Hawley
Marquis d'Obigny Shawn Roy
Baron Douphol William Andrew Stuckey

Doctor Grenvil Jeffrey Stevens
Gastone Thomas Devaney
Alfredo Germont Andre Clouthier
Annina Madeline Bender
Giuseppe Chuck King
Giorgio Germont Richard Sutliff
Messenger Doug Ruffner
Flora's Friend Carmen Sanders
Solo Dancers Irina Ushakova
 Aleksandr Lunev

Conductor Carol I. Crawford
Stage Director Stanley M. Garner
Chorus Master Richard Sutliff
Choreographer Marcello Angelini
Set Design Claude Girard
 Bernard Uzan
Costume Design Claude Girard
Lighting Design Amy Appleyard

March 1, 6 and 8, 1997

THE PEARL FISHERS

GEORGES BIZET

In French

Zurga Brian Montgomery
Nadir Patrick Power
Leila Cynthia Haymon
Nourabad Stefan Szkafarowsky

Conductor Carol I. Crawford
Stage Director Linda Brovsky
Chorus Master Richard Sutliff
Choreographer Daryl Bjoza
Set Design Darren Scott Maynard
Costume Design Marjorie McCown
Lighting Design Marie Barrett

April 26, May 1 and 3, 1997

THE MERRY WIDOW

FRANZ LEHAR

In English

Baron Zeta Peter Strummer
Valencienne Abbie Furmansky
Hanna Glawari Brenda Harris
Count Danilo Danilovitch David Malis
Cascada David Gately
Camille de Rosillon Barton Green
Vicomte Cascada David Gately
Raoul de St. Brioche William Saetre
Njegus Darren Keith Woods
Kromov Doug Jones
Olga Sarah Long

Bogdanovitch Shawn Roy
Sylviane Elizabeth Koch
Pritchchitch David Cox
Praskovia Aija Jirgensons Shrader
Major Domo John Everitt

Conductor Christopher Larkin
Stage Director David Gately
Chorus Master Richard Sutliff
Choreographer Mike Phillips
Set Design Zack Brown
Costume Design Zack Brown
Lighting Design Nicholas Cavallaro

1997-1998

September 9, 1997

CAROL AND FRIENDS: GREAT MOMENTS IN GRAND OPERA

50th ANNIVERSARY GALA CONCERT

Featuring

Marilyn Horne and Pablo Elvira

With

Gregg Baker	Eilana Lappalainen
Carmen Balthrop	Matthew Lau
Stephen Guggenheim	Peter Lindscoog
Eugenie Grunewald	Peter Strummer
David Hamilton	Linda Roark-Strummer
Meridith Harrison	Richard Sutliff
Alexandra Hughes	Eduardo Villa
Mary Jane Kania	Patryk Wroblewski
Charles King	Janice Yoes
Elizabeth Ann Koch	Jianyi Zhang
Olga Kondina	Maria Teresa Zifchak

Conductor Carol I. Crawford
Director Garnett Bruce
Chorus Master Patrick Hansen
Lighting Design Thaddeus Strassberger

November 8, 13 and 15, 1997

AIDA

GIUSEPPE VERDI

In Italian

Aida Priscilla Baskerville
Radames John Keyes
Amneris Tichina Vaughn
Amonasro Gordon Hawkins
Ramfis Vaclovas Daunoras
King of Egypt Stefan Szkafarowsky
High Priestess Nancy Curtis
Messenger Charles King

Conductor Carol I. Crawford
Stage Director Stanley M. Garner
Assistant Music Director/Chorus Master .
 Patrick Hansen
Choreographer Molly Rose
Set Design Claude Girard
 Bernard Uzan
Costume Design Claude Girard
Lighting Design Ken Yunker

March 7, 12 and 14, 1998

DREAMKEEPERS

DAVID CARLSON

In English

Ela Ashley Putnam
Grandmother Rosalind Elias
Adam Wade Antonio Nagore
Sloane Jake Gardner

Conductor Carol I. Crawford
Stage Director Albert Takazanckas
Chorus Master Patrick Hansen
Choreographer Zack Morris
Set Design Michael Downs
Lighting Design Mark Stanley

May 2, 7 and 9, 1998

MADAMA BUTTERFLY

GIACOMO PUCCINI

In Italian

Cio-Cio-San Maryanne Telese
Lt. B.F. Pinkerton Alfredo Portilla
Suzuki Kathleen Hegierski
Sharpless Richard Stilwell
Goro Joel Sorensen
Bonze Richard Sutliff
Prince Yamadori Peter Lindskoog
Kate Pinkerton Madeline Bender

Trouble Michael Lunn
 Blake Gerow
Imperial Commissioner Doug Ruffner
Uncle Yakuside Mark Wright
Butterfly's Mother Charlotte Curry
Butterfly's Cousin Kristin Steveson
Butterfly's Aunt Meridith Harrison
Registrar Bob Wise

Conductor Carol I. Crawford
Stage Director William Farlow
Chorus Master Patrick Hansen
Set Design Roberto Oswald
Costume Design Anibal Lapiz
Lighting Design Marie Barrett

1998-1999

September 19, 1998

BANK OF OKLAHOMA and TULSA OPERA
 PRESENT

CAROL AND FRIENDS

Featuring

Harold S. Brock	Elizabeth Koch
Joyce DiDonato	Johnny Maldonado
Mary Dunleavy	Phyllis Pancella
John Everitt	Valentin Peitchinoff
Gordon Hawkins	Cassandra Riddle
Cynthia Haymon	Eduardo Villa
Nancy Fabiola Herrera	Jiany Zhang
Tulsa Opera Chorus	Tulsa Philharmonic

Conductor Carol I. Crawford
Director Eric Gibson
Lighting Designer .. Thaddeus Strassberger

October 17, 22 and 24, 1998

LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR

GAETANO DONIZETTI

In Italian

Lucia Olga Kondina
Edgardo Eduardo Villa
Enrico Patryk Wroblewski
Raimondo Eduardo Chama
Arturo Gregory Schmidt
Normanno Harold S. Brock
Alisa Carolyn Gronlund

Conductor Carol I. Crawford
Stage Director Fabrizio Melano
Set Design Thomas Umfrid
Lighting Design Christine Solger-Binder

March 6, 11 and 13, 1999

LES DIALOGUES DES CARMÉLITES

FRANCIS POULENC
In French

Blanche de la Force Jee Hyun Lim
The Old Prioress Rosalind Elias
Mother Marie Josepha Gayer
Madame Lidoine Caroline Whisnant
Sister Constance Cheryl Parrish
Chevalier de la Force Gregory Schmidt
Marquis de la Force David Evitts
Mother Jeanne Susan Nicely
Sister Mathilde Susan Yankee
Mother Gerald Charlotte Curry
Sister Claire Marjorie McClean
Sister Antoine Nancy Dean
Sister Catherine Lisa Williamson
Sister Felicity Anne Hunt
Sister Gertrude Nancy Balach
Sister Alice Elizabeth Kragas
Sister Valentine Meredith Harrison
Sister Anne Courtenay Budd
Sister Martha Kristin Steveson
Sister St. Charles Lisa Sutliff
Father Confessor Richard Crawley
1st Commissioner Harold Brock
2nd Commissioner Chuck King
Jailer Allan Naplan
1st Officer Richard Sutliff
Thierry Kenneth Miles
M. Javelinot Bradd Gillespie

Conductor Carol I. Crawford
Stage Director Johnathon Pape
Chorus Master Constantina Tsolainou
Set Design Gunther Schnieder-Siemssen
Lighting Design Marie Barrett

May 1, 6 and 8, 1999

THE MAGIC FLUTE

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART
Sung in German
Spoken Dialogue in English

Tamino Martin Thompson
Pamina Jee Hyun Lim
Papageno Jeff Mattsey
Queen of the Night Helen Todd
Sarastro Matthew Lau
First Lady Elizabeth Koch

Second Lady Mary Phillips
Third Lady Jill Grove
Papagena Nancy Curtis
Monostatos Howard Bender
Temple Speaker James Kleyla
First Man in Armor Harold Brock
Second Man in Armor Peter Lindskoog
Slaves David Curry
Joachim Kowol
Paul McCain
Jerry Langenkamp
James Kerr
E.G. Marshall
Three Spirits Tulsa Youth Opera Soloists

Conductor Carol I. Crawford
Stage Director Paula Suozzi
Chorus Master Constantina Tsolainou
Set & Costume Design Zack Brown
Lighting Design Michael Deegan

1999-2000

October 16, 22 and 24, 1999

CARMEN

GEORGES BIZET
In French

Don José John Keyes
Micaëla Stella Zambalis
Escamillo Guido LeBrón
Frasquita Suzanne Donald
Mercédès Susan Yankee
Zuniga Israel Pessoa
El Dancaïro Andre Clouthier
Annina Michael Lofton
El Remendado César Ulloa
Morales Peter Lindskoog
Lillas Pastia Peter Lindskoog

Conductor Carol I. Crawford
Stage Director Garnett Bruce
Chorus Master James Shrader
Children's Chorus Master Eric Gibson
Choreographer Paquita Dawson

March 4, 10 and 12, 2000

MANON

JULES MASSENET
In French

Manon Lescaut Olga Kondina
The Chevalier Des Grieux Gregory Schmidt
Lescaut Patryk Wroblewski
Count Des Grieux Sean Barker
De Brétigny Peter Lindskoog

Guillot Morfontaine David Ronis
Pousette Suzanne Donald
Javotte Carolyn Gronlund
Rosette Kirsten Gunlogson
Guardsmen Scott LaGraff
 Nathan Granner
Sergeant Kyle Pfortmiller
Maid Laura Pfortmiller
Porter of the Seminary David Curry

Conductor Carol I. Crawford
Stage Director Fabrizio Melano
Chorus Master James Shrader
Set Designer Peter Dean Beck
Lighting Designer Mark Stanley
Costume Designer Zack Brown

April 29, May 5 and 7, 2000

TOSCA

GIACOMO PUCCINI

In Italian

Floria Tosca Victoria Litherland
Mario Cavaradossi Antonio Nagore
Baron Scarpia Mark Delavan
Cesare Angelotti Emil Cristescu
Sacristan Michael O'Hearn
Spoletta Peter Lindskoog
Sciarrone Sean Barker
Jailer Mark Wright
A Shepherd Boy

Conductor Barbara Yahr
Stage Director Saskia Kuhlmann
Chorus Master James Shrader
Children's Chorus Director Eric Gibson
Lighting Designer Chris Solger-Binder
Wig/make-up Supervisor Ruth Mitchell

**TULSA OPERA
ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF**

(as of March, 2000)

General Director Carol I. Crawford
Managing Director Julie A. Richard
Director of Production Amanda Foust
Director of Individual Giving Carrie Vesely
Director of Corporate Giving Kate Bryant
Director of Marketing Gustavo Gomide
Director of Education Eric Gibson
Communications Manager Thomas Golden
Ticket Office Manager Lisa Miller
Production Coordinator Elise Sandell
Operations Accountant Kathryn DeJong
Assistant to the General Director Lisa Davis
Reception/Office Manager Charlotte Curry
Boutique Manager Susie Love

A SMATTERING OF SNAPSHOTS FROM MY SCRAPBOOKS



With Lija Kreslins in the driveway of Clark Snell's home in Oklahoma City. Lija, a soprano from Latvia, was also a student of Mr. Snell. This picture was taken in 1952.



This is Jeannette Turner, who was so important early on in establishing Tulsa Opera in our City.



With Virginia Torres, an enthusiastic Tulsa Opera Chorister since 1956! Virginia, you're a great trouper!! This picture was taken in 1997.



*With Joseph Benton at his home in Norman.
This was the last time I saw him....*

With Alfredo Kraus on the set of Tulsa Opera's Rigoletto; November, 1968. Mr. Kraus was a great tenor and a celebrated artist. I was thrilled to sing Marullo in this production. This cast also included Roberta Peters as Gilda and Sesto Bruscantini as Rigoletto.



Enjoying the hospitality of Jeannette Turner and Jane Sneed! This was taken during the sixties at an Opera Chorus get-together.

Beverly Sills backstage at "The Old Lady On Brady" – December 9, 1972. Miss Sills was in Tulsa to do a scholarship benefit concert for Tulsa Opera with the Tulsa Opera Orchestra and Chorus. See the fountain pen in her hand? She was signing autographs in her dressing room.



With Diana Soviero – always a favorite with Tulsa Opera audiences. Diana was in her Mimi costume for this 1981 photo.



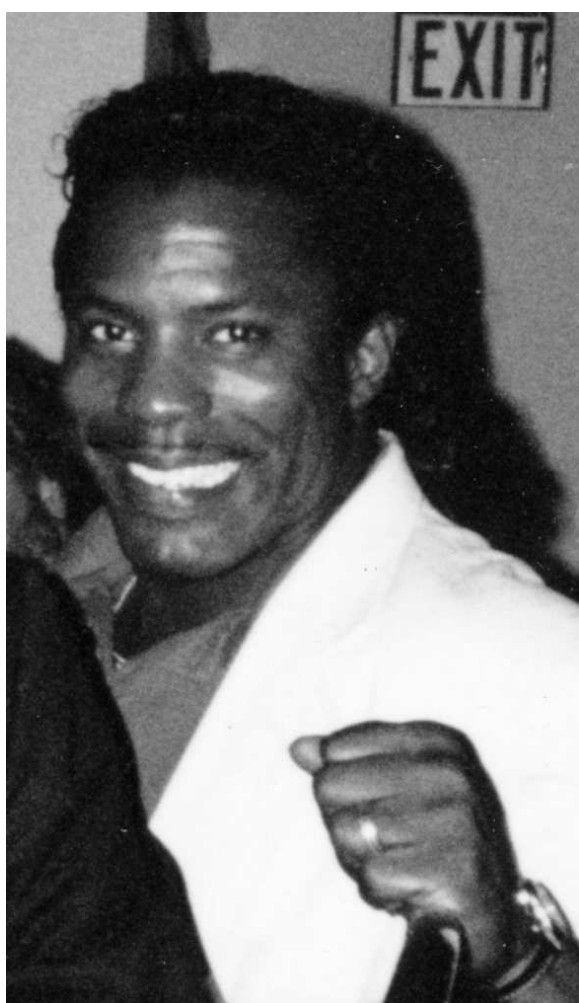
With James Weeks and Giorgio Tozzi, taken on opening night during our 1981 production of Donizetti's Daughter of the Regiment.



Gian Carlo Menotti with David Hamilton at the Spoleto Festival in Italy, 1983. David also was Guest Artist at the Spoleto Festival in South Carolina.



With "Nancy" – Tulsa Opera's 1977 Aida. I can't remember her last name! She was a beautiful girl who sang in the chorus.



Gregg Baker was Crown in Tulsa Opera's 1986 Porgy and Bess, following that performance in later years with the title role in the Don Giovanni of 1995.



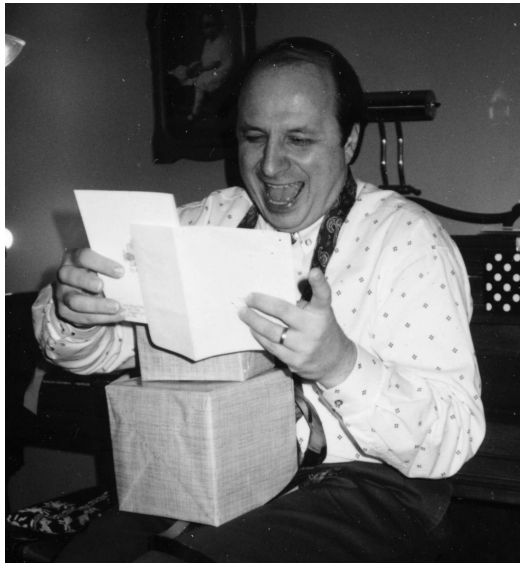
With the legendary conductor, Nicola Rescigno. This picture was taken at a cast party after the 1982 production of The Barber of Seville.



With Maestro Kurt Herbert Adler. He was the distinguished General Manager of the San Francisco Opera, and he conducted Tulsa Opera's Il Trovatore in 1982.



Bruce Hubbard and Sarah Reese – as Jake and Bess, respectively – for Tulsa Opera's 1986 Porgy and Bess. This was a wonderful production and a history-making affair because it was the first and only time for Porgy and Bess to be heard in its entirety in Oklahoma.



Nicholas Muni opening his gifts at his fortieth birthday party – May, 1992. He is definitely amused by something!



Undaunted Tulsa Opera Choristers with many operas to their credit: David Curry, Ken Miles, and Jack Williams.



*Craig Sirianni, tenor, and Donnie Ray Albert, baritone, had leading roles alongside Tulsa's Linda Roark-Strummer, soprano, who sang the title role in Tulsa Opera's production of Puccini's *La Fanciulla del West*, 1991.*



With Anna Norberg Kestner and her husband, Dr. Joseph Kestner, right after my last performance as Chorus Master of Tulsa Opera, in 1994.



With Nicholas Muni in the Green Room at the Tulsa Performing Arts Center, just before a 1992 performance of Carmen.



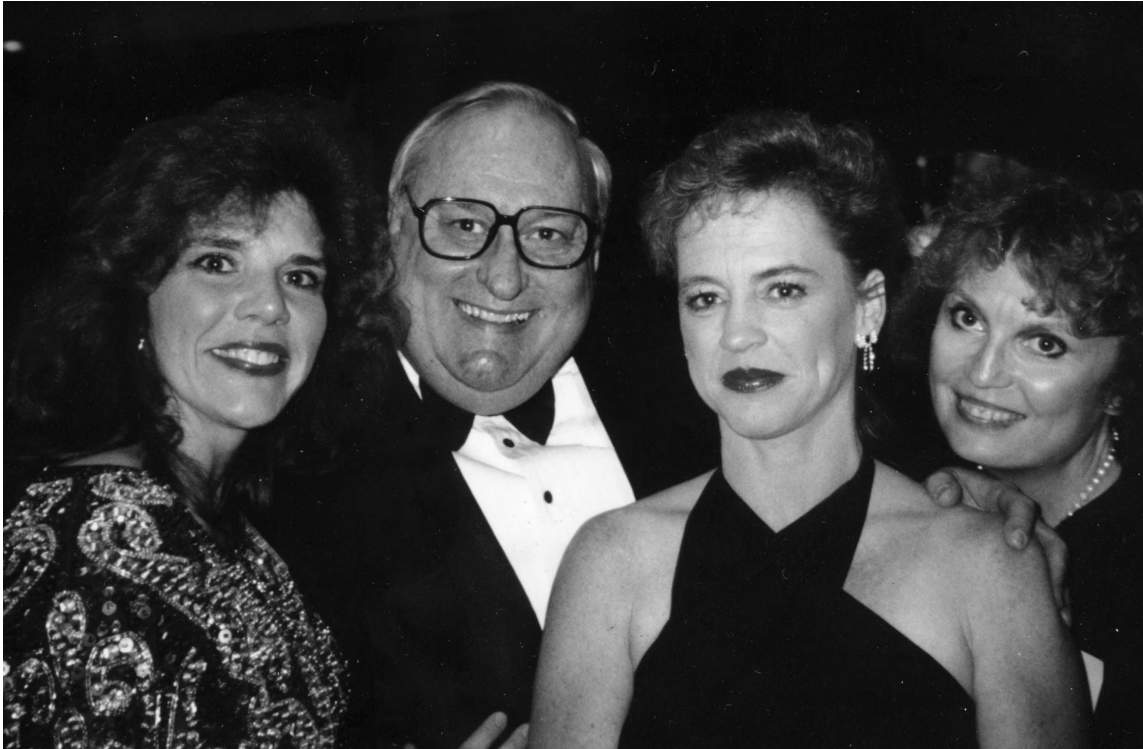
Myrna Smart Ruffner was for seven years the "chief" at Tulsa Opera. She was very effective in her duties, and especially loved by the chorus. Her bright and positive personality was appreciated.

Carol I. Crawford with soprano Wendy Nielsen, who sang Donna Elvira in Tulsa Opera's 1995 Don Giovanni. I chose this picture because it shows Ms. Crawford's expressive hands.

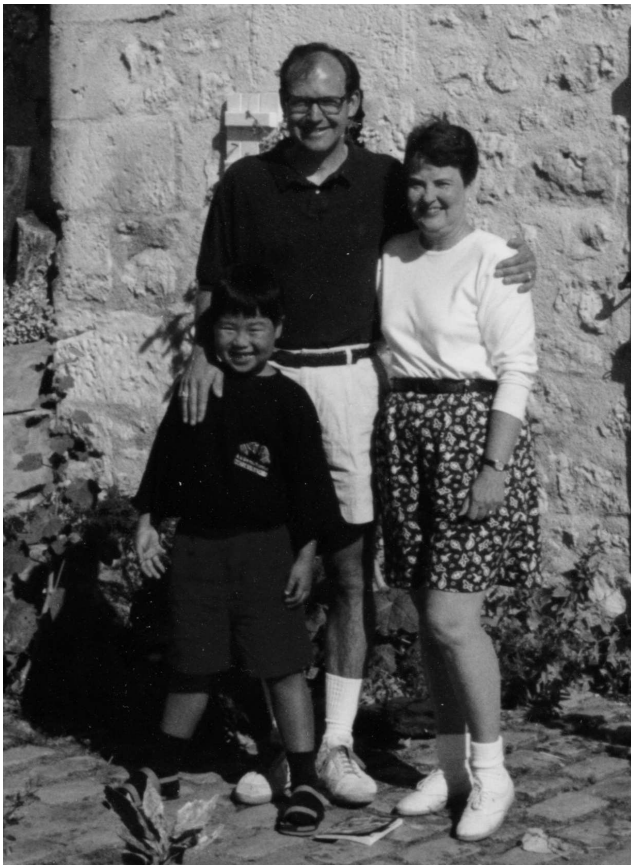


With Mark Oswald, who sang the role of Valentin in Tulsa Opera's 1994 Faust. Mark has one of the most beautiful baritone voices at the Met!





With Patti Duncan (Hale High School's longtime, excellent choral director), Mary Neff Hurst, and Judy Langdon taken at a chorus party not too long ago (about 1996). These ladies are loyal and enthusiastic members of the Opera Chorus.



Nancy, Mark, and Phil Hammond on vacation near Tours, France in summer 1995. Phil is the astute guy who helped me so much with this book!

Right: Front page of Tulsa World, July 31, 1994, when they ran a story in the Arts Section about my retirement from the Opera.

SPORTS LINE: TLB: Jackson 3, Tulsa 2 • MLB: Detroit 14, Oakland 2 • New York 6, Cleveland 5 • Philadelphia 5, Atlanta 2 • San Francisco 10, Los Angeles 7

BUSINESS 1

Is the Boom About to Bust?
Development Continues on 71st Street Corridor

ENTERTAINMENT 1

Music Man
Laven Sowell May Be Piped Piper of Opera Chorus

Oct. 29 for the 17th Tulsa Run

TULSA WORLD

89th Year - No. 319 • Tulsa, Oklahoma, Sunday, July 31, 1994 • Entire Contents © 1994 World Publishing Company

★★ FINAL HOME EDITION

POPULAR MUSIC

Sometimes I think Louis Armstrong had it right when he said, “There are only two kinds of music, good and bad.” As the one hundredth anniversary of Duke Ellington’s birth spawns tributes all over the music communities of the world, we begin to realize what a distinctive and skillful writer Ellington was. Billy Strayhorn, Ellington’s chief collaborator, helped to ingeniously fashion some of our greatest American songs. No matter how many scholarly panels are convened, it is obvious that Ellington reigns right at the top of our cultural landscape. Remember those exquisite songs such as “Sophisticated Lady,” “Lush Life,” and “Satin Doll”? You would have to be living in a catatonic state not to appreciate this music. I’ve never understood the so-called “serious musician” who turns up his nose at this wonderful stuff. However, we do have stuffed shirts in the music business.

Pop music seems more pretentious these days. It seems less joyful and more limited in melodic appeal. However, I understand that good jazz (honest jazz) can still be found here and there. As American pop music keeps “dumbing down” into bewildering new rock-bottom levels of monotony and vulgarity, it leaves no place at all for any would-be emulators of George Gershwin or Johnny Mercer to develop.

The thirties and forties provided a luxury of riches in popular music; there was an abundance of uniquely American songs. The vocal pop music had lovely arch-shaped lines, and names like Kern, Gershwin, Porter, Berlin, Rodgers were on everybody’s lips. It seemed that everything these composers wrote was nothing less than irresistible. The life-span of a pop tune may encompass a number of generations; but music, being a reflection of society, is subject, like any other art, to social obsolescence. It may endure, metaphorically speaking, in libraries or on records, but it will not satisfy forever a changing society’s changing musical requirements.

While the symphony orchestra and opera subscription audiences may continue to prefer programming which is uniformly European in style, the same does not hold true for the enormous public that buys and collects recordings. Their tastes are less tradition-bound, their choices more eclectic and more universal. Their listening habits are likely to embrace both worlds, and many varieties of each. Would you believe that the places where popular music is heard today are places where the audiences chew gum, smoke, pat their feet, pop their fingers and applaud in the middle of a number, just as the audience used to do in Mozart’s time? In Mozart’s time it was not uncommon for a member of the audience to eat a smelly hunk of cheese and sip some wine and generally make merry during a performance!

When I begin to think about the beautiful songs of the thirties and forties, I know that those songs still live independently and continue to be part of our nostalgic history. However, I do wonder what has happened to the impulse that created this period. Melody and lyric combined to uplift, to distract us from the humdrum, to comfort and to amuse. Of course, there have been great songs written since then, but

what I miss in much of today's popular music is that poetic dimension that can remind us of what is best in ourselves and the world.

Once a song leaves the composer's nest, nobody can control the course of its flight. It becomes part of a music in the air, soaring on invisible currents and finding a life of its own. A pop tune in the hands of a Tony Bennett would receive a different kind of musical treatment from a Sarah Vaughan, although both renditions could be equally good if stylized by an excellent pop artist such as Bennett or Vaughan.

Popular songs represent beliefs and emotions that are shared by the great majority of people. The expressions may be commonplace, obvious, and even uninspired, but the basic ideas are completely honest. There is no denying the enormous importance of love as a human experience, and love has always been the most absorbing topic of the song-writer. One might say that all this popular music is intimately involved in our history as a nation. This reminds me of an old story, which may be apocryphal, concerning General Ulysses S. Grant. It is reported that he said "I only know two popular tunes; one is 'Yankee Doodle' and the other is not."



There have been performers in the field of popular music who definitely have been a real part of our lives. For instance, Frank Sinatra has touched the lives of so many people. He could be thoughtful, boozy, amoral, stylish, classy, brash, and unforgettable. His emotional songs, particularly in the later years, were directed to men and women with a universal appeal. At least three generations loved him. He could, with a simple song, make you feel romance and warmth in your soul. Today when I hear Sinatra, he makes me feel at least forty years younger. He could instinctively lock wit and heartbreak into a lyric. He made everything he sang matter so much, and he passed his songs along like pieces of shared life. You could get this intimate one-on-one experience all alone or in a stadium. I heard Sinatra when he was seventy-eight years old in a concert at the Oral Roberts University's Mabee Center. He was aging, but he was still dynamite. Even in a stadium, you got the feeling that he was singing only to you. On that evening, when Sinatra walked down the steps and disappeared into the tunnel that led from the arena, I was consumed with feelings of melancholy. The thought struck me hard that this might well be the last time that I would see or hear Sinatra in a live performance. I love what he said at the end of the concert: "May each of you live to be a hundred and fifty years old, and may the last voice you hear be mine."

What Sinatra's legacy will be in years to come we cannot know. But for a time, for a very long time, Frank Sinatra turned the singing of the American popular song into an art form, and his collected output must be considered a national treasure.



Another singer/entertainer whom I love dearly is Barbra Streisand. After loving Barbra Streisand for four decades, it gives me an enormous thrill to write some words about her. When I taught at Edison High School during the sixties, I often played Streisand on the sound system during the changing of classes. All my students knew that I was hung up on Streisand! After all, no-one could handle the words of a text better than she, and her English diction was exemplary. She has an unerring instinct, and she seems to always make the right choices instinctively. She has been able to adapt her style with unprecedented success to the changing musical taste, and to reflect the changes in social values.

Popularity itself is no guarantee of legend. There have been hundreds of performers who have created a sensation for a short period of time, then faded into oblivion. They did not possess the substance to prevail. Streisand has prevailed for more than four decades. Her voice would have set her apart no matter what her personal style. However, it was what she did with that voice that made her fans realize that they were in the presence of someone very special. Her delivery was impassioned, and sometimes bordering on frenetic. She sang a love song in a way that summoned up personal memories.

The inherent contrast in delivery, and the stylizing of a song, not only made her interesting but inspired a cultish adulation among many of her fans. After her extraordinary success on Broadway in *Funny Girl*, it was clear that Streisand was not only a popular performer, but a *cause célèbre*, a symbol of hope to millions. She had risen from a deprived childhood in Brooklyn to the height of success. Like all of us, Barbra Streisand cannot be defined with one- or two-word platitudes. She can be difficult and demanding, and she is a “perfectionist.” She has spent most of her years of stardom avoiding her fans, the press, and the public. On the other hand, she is willing to extend herself in philanthropic ways and she speaks out on issues that she believes in. Although she does seem to be insulated in her own rarefied world, she can be at times a really effective, articulate, powerful figure. As a singer, she is in a class all by herself; however, as a person, she is definitely a work in progress. I don't think that people realize that she is one of the major introverts of our time.

Last evening (January 23, 2000) Barbra Streisand won the Cecil B. DeMille Award for outstanding contributions to the entertainment field. She has won more Golden Globe trophies than any other entertainer, and her acceptance speech had integrity, which is not often the case in those award shows. She gave some sage advice, which I think all young performers should consider. Here is part of her speech: “Someone asked me recently if they should be an actor, and I said, ‘If you have to ask, then the answer is No, because the only reason to choose that life for yourself is because you feel passionate about it, because you have no other choice.’”





Marilyn Maye inscribed this photograph: "To my friend Laven – Tulsa's Music Man. Cheers & Love, Marilyn Maye." She could have said: "To my biggest fan, Laven" — and it would have been the truth!

The internationally-acclaimed singer Marilyn Maye is another artist who totally captivates me. Her singing presents a style of musical entertainment which emphasizes a certain communication between the audience and performer. Her performances are renowned for her deep respect for excellence, taste, and imagination.

Luckily for me, I have heard her in person several times, and I was introduced to her in the seventies by C. E. Bunkley, who was at that time Manager of the Mayo Hotel. Mr. Bunkley sang in the choir at the First Presbyterian Church where I was the Choirmaster. Marilyn Maye had been engaged to sing a series of programs at the Hotel in the well-known Crystal Ballroom. (I have so many fond memories of that ballroom.) Mr. Bunkley invited a group of us from the church choir to be his guests one evening at the Mayo to hear one of her shows. That did it for me; I've been an ardent and fanatic fan of hers for many years! She sang in Tulsa recently at the Performing Arts Center in a tribute to Frank Sinatra. The program was entitled "Her Way." Prior to that her last performance in Tulsa was with the Tulsa Philharmonic, with Peter Nero conducting. She is always received with great audience reaction and critical acclaim. Marilyn Maye is absolutely a brilliant singer, taking advantage of every dramatic nuance, and her audience hangs onto every phrase.

Miss Maye has been "generation-proof" for so many years and she remains a singer with an iron constitution. She can do shows night after night for several consecutive evenings and never show the slightest hint of fatigue. I love to hear her sing something like "More Than You Know" because she has a fondness for the long vocal line, which she produces with immaculate sounds. It is almost as if she never takes a breath. The musicians in her instrumental ensemble are always great players who know instinctively how to build long crescendos and how to let loose without losing control. Over the years, she has mellowed and matured, and is at the peak of her creative powers.

Marilyn Maye has recorded seven albums and thirty-four singles on the RCA label, and one of her recordings has been officially documented by the Smithsonian Institution. The Smithsonian selected her recording of "Too Late Now" as one of the best interpretations of an American popular song. Additional confirmation of her contribution to the entertainment industry came when she received the coveted Jazz Heritage Award for 1987-88. Miss Maye is also known for her generous spirit, often performing for charitable causes. Johnny Carson nicknamed her "Super Singer" and invited her back to *The Tonight Show* a record seventy-six times! Her singing of the wonderful American popular songs is, for me, intoxicating!

SOME FAVORITE QUOTATIONS

(in no particular order)

We ask ourselves, who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, and fabulous? Actually, who are you not to be? ... There's nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you.... As we are liberated from our own fears, our presence automatically liberates others.

— Nelson Mandela

Musical training is a more potent instrument than any other, because rhythm and harmony find their way into the inward places of the soul.

— Plato

What a divine calling is music! Though everything else may appear shallow and repulsive, even the smallest task in music is so absorbing, and carries us so far away from town, country and earth and all worldly things, that it is truly a blessed gift of God.

— Felix Mendelssohn

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.

— Goethe

Music is the universal language of cheer and good fellowship. It unquestionably aids in inculcating the spirit of good will now so greatly needed among all the peoples of the earth.

Music, because of its ennobling influence, should be encouraged as a controlling force in the lives of men. Discord vanishes with music; hence, music-loving people are among the happiest people in the world. With the brighter outlook which comes from a happy spirit, we can keep a saner view of life and its problems and see values more nearly in their true perspective.

— Franklin D. Roosevelt

Lenny [Leonard Bernstein] believed that it was his duty as a musician to start with what was on the page, to fully comprehend and to fully honour what was on the page. But he also believed that because he was an individual with his own history and his own feelings and his own hopes, that it was his duty to meld those things with what the composer had written, and to bring the music to life in a way that was more than just the right notes in the right place at the right time. In the hands of somebody who is undisciplined, that approach can pull music out of shape and make it a self-indulgent exercise. I think the reason that most of the time it worked for Lenny was because he *was* disciplined. If he chose to do something differently, he knew why he was doing it. I think that his intellect and his training and his impeccable preparation on anything he did, allowed him to be spontaneous and, sometimes, serendipitous.

— Jerry Hadley, tenor
from *Conversations About Bernstein*
(Oxford, 1995) pp. 125-126.

There is no truer truth obtainable
By man than comes of Music.

— Robert Browning

Yea, Music is the Prophet's art,
Among the gifts that God hath sent,
One of the most magnificent.

— Henry W. Longfellow

Without music, life would be a mistake.

— Friedrich Nietzsche

The time will come when men such as I will look upon the murder
of animals as they now look upon the murder of men.

— Leonardo da Vinci

The hottest places in Hell are reserved for those who in time of
moral crisis preserve their neutrality.

— Dante

I believe in democracy, because it releases the energy of every human being.

— Woodrow Wilson

You use a glass mirror to see your face; you use works of art to see your soul.

— George Bernard Shaw

**Ah, what shall I be at fifty,
should nature keep me alive,
if I find the world so bitter
when I am but twenty-five?**

— Alfred, Lord Tennyson

A democratic form of government, a democratic way of life, presupposes free public education over a long period; it presupposes also an education for personal responsibility that too often is neglected.

— Eleanor Roosevelt

Jazz is the most astounding spontaneous musical event to take place anywhere since the Reformation.

— Virgil Thomson

A smile is the shortest distance between people.

— Victor Borge

Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in the right. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

— I Corinthians 13:4–7

Every individual matters, human and non-human alike. Every individual can make a difference. Together, if we care, we can heal the world.

— Jane Goodall

The worst sin towards our fellow creatures is not to hate them, but to be indifferent to them: that's the essence of inhumanity.

— George Bernard Shaw

We can easily forgive a child who is afraid of the dark. The real tragedy of life is when adults are afraid of the light.

— Plato

I take Beethoven twice a week; Haydn four times, Mozart every day. ... Your Beethoven is a colossus who often gives me a mighty thump in the ribs, but Mozart is always adorable. He was lucky enough to go to Italy when he was very young, at a time, too, when they still knew how to sing.

— Gioacchino Rossini

(Reported in a letter from Rossini's son.)

**If I can stop one Heart from breaking
I shall not live in vain
If I can ease one Life the Aching
Or cool one Pain
Or help one fainting Robin
Unto his nest again
I shall not live in vain.**

— Emily Dickinson

The greatest sins of our time have not been by those that have created great devastation, but rather those that have sat idly by and watched.

— Martin Luther King

For the past eighty years I have started each day in the same manner. It is not a mechanical routine but something essential to my daily life. I go to the piano, and I play two preludes and fugues of Bach. I cannot think of doing otherwise. It is a sort of benediction on the house. But that is not its only meaning for me. It is a rediscovery of the world of which I have the joy of being a part. It fills me with awareness of the wonder of life, with a feeling of the incredible marvel of being a human being. The music is never the same for me, never. Each day it is something new, fantastic and unbelievable. That is Bach, like nature, a miracle!

— **Pablo Casals**

from *Joys and Sorrows* (Simon and Schuster, 1970) p. 17.

A season is set for everything, a time for every experience under heaven:

A time for being born and a time for dying, A time for planting and a time for uprooting the planted;

A time for wrecking and a time for repairing, A time for tearing down and a time for building up;

A time for weeping and a time for laughing, A time for wailing and a time for dancing;

A time for throwing stones and a time for gathering stones, A time for embracing and a time for shunning embraces;

A time for seeking and a time for losing, A time for keeping and a time for discarding;

A time for ripping and a time for sewing, A time for silence and a time for speaking;

A time for loving and a time for hating; A time for war and a time for peace.

— **Ecclesiastes 3:1–8**

(Jewish Publication Society translation, 1985, from the original Hebrew text)

**Life without music is unthinkable,
Music without life is academic.
That is why my contact with music is a total embrace.**

— **Leonard Bernstein**
from *Findings* (Simon and Schuster,
1982) p. 266.

Which of the two powers, love or music, is able to lift man to the sublimest heights? It is a great question, but it seems to me that one might answer it thus: love cannot express the idea of music, while music may give an idea of love. Why separate the one from the other? They are the two wings of the soul.

— **Hector Berlioz**
from *Memoirs* (1870).

While composing music is not the time to recall the rules which might hold our genius in bondage; we must have recourse to the rules only when our genius and our ear seem to deny what we are seeking.

— **Jean-Philippe Rameau**
*Le nouveau système de musique
théorique* (1726).

There are wonderful musical uses of words, such as Franz Liszt's *Oh quand je dors*, which I also sing. During the course of a performance, I find it hard to imagine anything lovelier. The poetic melody to which Liszt sets Victor Hugo's words is out of this world. If you just heard the words spoken, you might say: 'nice words.' The music makes them dreamy and haunting, yet you have to have the words to express the music, and vice versa. The combination of the two is the whole point of a beautiful song.

— **Kiri Te Kanawa**
from *Opera for Lovers* (Headline
Book Publishing, London, 1996)
p. 76.

WHAT IS MUSIC?

When I hear music, I fear no danger, I am invulnerable, I see no foe, I am related to the earliest times and the latest.

Henry David Thoreau

Music is a kind of inarticulate, unfathomable speech, which leads us to the edge of the infinite, and impels us for a moment to gaze into it.

Thomas Carlyle

Music is the fine art which, more than any other, ministers to human welfare. Where there is beautiful music, it is difficult for discontent to live.

Herbert Spencer

Music starts from nothing and ends in nothing, and in this sense it resembles the life of a person, an animal, or a plant. This “nothing” is silence, and once music is set into motion, it follows its own natural course: it lasts for as long as it takes to perform the composition. This element of time does not exist in quite the same way in the other arts. I think that music is the most significant experience in life for many people, and those who feel this way about it include ordinary listeners as well as professional musicians. The best music promulgates no doctrine, preaches no gospel, is often entirely dissociated from verbal meaning, and yet can be experienced as making sense of life. The patterns of mathematics and the patterns of music both engage our intellect, but only music affects our emotions. The composer Roger Sessions says that “music is significant for us human beings principally because it embodies movement of a specifically human type that goes to the roots of our being and takes shape in the inner gestures which embody our deepest and most intimate responses.” (Roger Sessions, *The Musical Experience of Composer, Performer, Listener*; New York: Atheneum, 1965; pp. 18-19.)

Music not only expresses emotions which exist between human beings, but it is itself a human creation which aims to imitate nature. Music, especially music theater, often deals with human emotions such as love and hatred. But in absolute music — that is, music without a text or programmatic material (a story) — music possesses the capacity to go beyond or even to have nothing to do with human emotional relationships. This absolute music provides a sort of parallel to human relationships and as such has a transcendental quality.

Music is an essential part of life for me. In some way, it gives me constant consolation. There is nothing fixed or frozen about music. A performance is valid only for the time and for the place in which it happens. A recording can document a given performance, but it has no eternal validity. The fact is, while you’re recording, you can stop and start at will. It is possible to record tiny sections without the necessity

of having a full understanding of the whole piece, or the physical endurance for it. This automatically falsifies the performance. Even with these negative aspects, recorded performances make a colossal contribution to our society. Nowadays, millions of people appreciate music. Before the invention of the phonograph record, music lovers had to content themselves with only an occasional concert. It is important to give credit where credit is due, and while a performance on a recording or on television is less than perfect, it has provided the public immediate access to great music. We are now in the age of television and we have seen its enormous influence on music. We have also seen how public opinion can be influenced by the appearance or the charisma of a great artist. In reality, nothing could be better for the arts. I think of the sensational telecasts "Live from the Met." These exhilarating performances are wonderful to help expose opera to the people in general. That's what all opera companies need: new opera lovers, and especially opera lovers with the jingle of money in their pockets!

It is easy in this age of VCRs, DVDs and CDs to think that these marvelous electronic devices can replace a live performance of choral music, orchestral music, or opera. But as any live-wire music lover knows, there is nothing that can replicate the intimacy and power of a live performance, no matter how sophisticated the device. One listens to a recording of music in a laid-back frame of mind, allowing the music to wash over you.

When you are attending a live performance, there is a sense of leaning forward to join into the music-making. It is in essence a vicarious experience of almost making music yourself. A person sharing his or her feelings with those of others gets caught up in the intoxicating excitement of creating a grand crescendo in unison. It's so obvious at the end of a glorious performance when the audience jumps to its feet applauding. One can feel the electricity in the concert hall.

Music lifts us above daily life. It makes us more open, more human, more refined, and even more intelligent. Through music a force constantly clears a path to our hearts. Music creates within us a mental environment in which our spirits can breathe and expand.

Although music is not a belief system such as a religion, I think much of the appeal of music rests upon its being a way of ordering our human experience. Great music arouses our emotions, exalts life, enhances life, gives it meaning. Great music outlives the individual who created it. It is both personal and beyond the personal. For those who love music, it remains a fixed point of reference in an unpredictable world. Let me state that for me, as for the German philosopher Nietzsche, music has "something for the sake of which it is worthwhile to live on earth." Furthermore, music has enriched my life and it has been an irreplaceable, undeserved transcendental blessing.

When we take part in music, or listen to an absorbing performance, we are temporarily protected from the day-to-day problems of our existence. We can enter into a special and secluded world in which order prevails and from which the unpleasant is excluded; paradoxically, even in opera at its bloodiest and most gruesome, the fact that it is sheer art protects our delicate sensibilities. This kind of experience provides a healthy escape which we all need at times.

Some philosophers have thought that music enables the listener to escape the pains of existence by temporarily entering a realm of peace. Some music is undoubtedly concerned with other “worlds” into which the listener can imagine himself being transported. I am thinking particularly of Henri Duparc’s marvelous setting of Charles Baudelaire’s poem, “*L’Invitation au Voyage*.” Baudelaire’s journey ends in that wonderful country we all imagine but never enter:

*Là, tout n’est qu’ordre et beauté,
Luxe, calme, et volupté.*

**There, all is order and beauty,
Luxuriousness, calm, and sensuous delight.**

-- translation Pierre Bernac

Music began centuries ago as a way of enhancing and coordinating group feelings. For example: choral music in the church is a corporate event. A choral ensemble possesses a group psyche, all bending their intellectual and emotional energies toward a common goal. For me, it seems that worship and praise through music belong together. This is a method that has been used through the centuries to communicate with God. Today, music is often used as a means of recovering personal feelings from which we have become alienated; it is also used as a therapy to treat mental illness. Music can bring to those who, for whatever reason, are cut off from life, a new perspective. Music has a capacity which can ultimately make life colorful, interesting, and exciting. Listening to music can restore, refresh, and heal.

This quote from Heinrich Heine has always been a favorite of mine, and meaningful to me:

Music is a strange thing. I would almost say it is a miracle. For it stands halfway between thought and phenomenon, between spirit and matter, a sort of nebulous mediator.

CLEO (MY CAT)

Not to hurt our humble brethren is our first duty to them, but to stop there is not enough.

Francis of Assisi

The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated.

Mahatma Gandhi

Have a compassionate heart toward all creatures.

Confucius

The love for all creatures is the most noble attribute of man.

Charles Darwin

I wish no living creature to suffer pain.

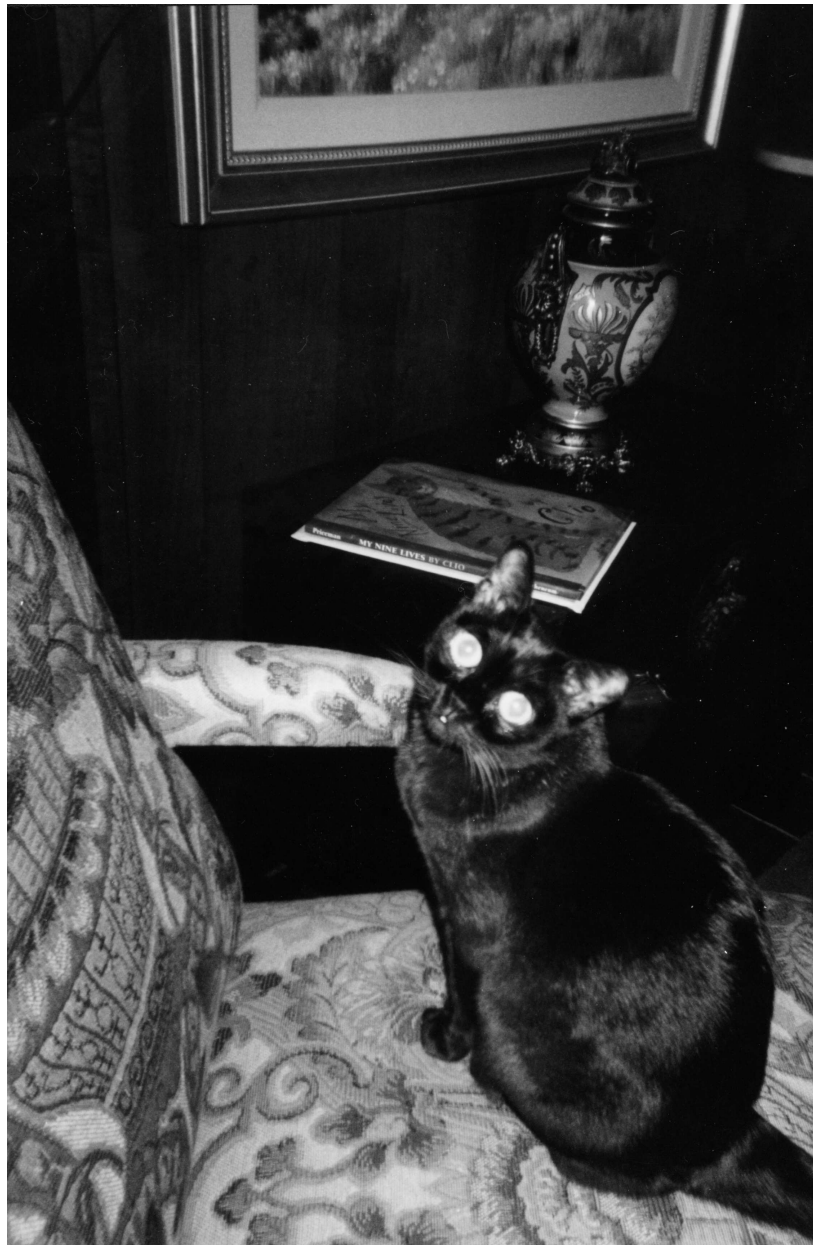
Percy Bysshe Shelley

Cleo and I came together when I thought semi-retirement would provide the extra time to have a pet. For many years I was so busy that having a pet would have been out of the question. After visiting with Fred Kraushaar, a veteran Tulsa Opera Chorus member who has provided many people in the Tulsa area with Burmese kittens, I decided to adopt a Burmese kitten. When Fred brought her to my home in January of 1994, Cleo was three months old and it was love at first sight — at least for me! However, that first evening Cleo disappeared for hours and it was absolutely impossible to find her. Very late that evening I found her hiding behind some books in a bookcase. That was the last time for that type of behavior, because now we are great friends and she talks to me often and beguiles me with her outstanding personality. Honestly, she is a persistent talker and expresses her need for affection freely. She also has mastered the silent Miaow, and of course those little sounds speak louder than words!

The Burmese, with its beautiful sable coat and golden eyes, is a gentle and sweet pet. They are also intelligent and their love and trust, once given, is boundless. Do I sound carried away??? I am.

Cats and people have lived together for only about five thousand years, and cats are the most recent arrivals of domesticated animals. It could be said that cats and people are still just getting acquainted. One of the main reasons we find cats so fascinating is that they seem to remind us of our better self, the cool, collected, confident and coordinated person we wish we could be. Who doesn't envy the cat's ability to sit calmly, casually washing herself one leg at a time, while all hell breaks loose around her! Cats awaken emotions very near the center of our thinking. They

also prompt us to think and act in new and surprising ways. This, of course, is one of the reasons they make such interesting companions. At times during the existence of man, cats have been worshipped as gods on earth. (Remember the Egyptians?) My cat, Cleo, has some of this royal blood (she thinks) and it causes her to be very aloof at times — and sometimes even a bit haughty!



Cleo loves to pose for the camera!

Cats have been popular with many famous figures. Louis Pasteur, Albert Einstein, and Albert Schweitzer were devoted to their feline friends, finding them a pleasant diversion from the pressures and frustrations of their work. Various Presidents have shared the White House with cats over the course of our two-hundred-year history. Tad Lincoln had a pet named Tabby, and Theodore Roosevelt had two cats: one a gray cat named Slippers, and the other a rambunctious kitten called Tom

Quartz. In the Kennedy White House, young Caroline and John-John played with their cat, whose name was Tom-Kitten. When Tom-Kitten died, he was eulogized in the Washington area newspapers. Most recently, a short-hair black-and-white cat whose name is Socks moved into the White House in January of 1993 with the Clintons. Other famous people who sought out feline companionship were Ernest Hemingway, Pablo Picasso, Mark Twain, and Dr. Samuel Johnson. Dr. Johnson's pet's name was Hodge.

Why do you suppose I'm telling you all about these famous people with cat connections? Maybe I'm just trying to justify my feelings for Cleo. Some may think it is a bit strange for a grown man to be crazy about his cat. Should I care??

The cat is a philosophical, methodical, quiet animal, tenacious of its own habits, fond of order and cleanliness, and does not lightly confer its friendship. I cannot, at this point in my life, imagine my life without Cleo. I cannot recommend highly enough to my friends, the Cat. Cats have my highest recommendation.

Only cat people will share my total enthusiasm for Cleo. Cat people are not always your garden variety of people, and they are generally not conformists. How could they be, with a cat running their lives? Was it the sixteenth-century French philosopher Descartes who said: "I think, therefore I am"? Well, Cleo says "I purr, therefore I am."

It's really quite simple: Cleo loves me, without conditions, without limits, and without questions. And guess what? I love Cleo, too! Just stop for a second and think: How many things in life are that plain, and that pure?

Before I leave the subject of Cleo I would like to submit this beautiful little prayer offered by Dr. Albert Schweitzer. Dr. Schweitzer was a great humanitarian, physician, and organist, and an authority on Bach, and in 1952 was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

A PRAYER FOR ANIMALS

Hear our humble prayer, O God, for our friends, the animals.

Especially for animals who are suffering; for any that are hunted or lost
or deserted or frightened or hungry; for all that must be put to death.

We entreat for them all thy mercy and pity, and for those who deal with
them, we ask a heart of compassion and gentle hands and kindly
words. Make us, ourselves, to be true friends to animals and so to
share the blessings of the merciful.

— Dr. Albert Schweitzer

A THOUGHT (OR TWO) FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

The millennium is too imposing and daunting a subject to write about, particularly since the obsession with the year 2000 has nothing to do with the logic of history but really with superstition and free-floating cultural anxiety. The turn of the century, however, is another matter. Heightened historical re-evaluation of basic issues regarding our culture has played a significant role in the evolution of culture.

My hopes for the Twenty-first Century include the hope that love and respect for all people and the planet will motivate our actions. Also, I'm hoping that human beings will admit that we are not the only creatures on earth, and we must protect the dirt, trees, water, animals, air, and other people.

The world today can be an unspeakably violent place where greed and ambition rip the fragile lives of many human beings. If humanity is to better itself in the next century, we must learn to embrace and respect human diversity. We must celebrate our spiritual differences and create an atmosphere where bias and color are non-issues. So my final thought for the future is that in the next century the motto *E Pluribus Unum* (of many, one) will become a reality for the people of the United States and the world.

In his final State of the Union Message, delivered in January of 2000, President William Jefferson Clinton said:

This fall, at the White House, one of America's leading scientists said something we should all remember. He said all human beings, genetically, are 99.9 percent the same. So modern science affirms what ancient faith has always taught: the most important fact of life is our common humanity. Therefore, we must do more than tolerate diversity --- we must honor it and celebrate it.

As we approach the twenty-first century, it is important for America not to lose its national memory. In short, America is based on ideas, and the knowledge of those ideas is exactly what we must not lose. In this world, a strong and coherent America must know what it is historically. America never was made up of bloodlines, like most countries. It is a country based upon the common ideas of personal liberty and responsibility.

Music is so gloriously woven into the very fabric of our existence that it would be difficult to imagine what life would be without it, for it is a fundamental need. It is one of the vital sources of life, health, strength and happiness. It is as natural for us to sing and to make music as it is for us to breathe. Music is such a perfect expression of human emotions that if, in the next century, we continue to listen to the music in our hearts, how can we fail to make a better world?

It is through the arts that we realize that we are all really one!

INDEX

Extended discussion indicated by **bold** page numbers.

Photographs indicated by *italicized* page numbers.

A

Aaronson Auditorium (Tulsa Central Library), 44
Abbado, Claudio, 100
Abernathy, Jaxie, 107, 115
accompanists, importance of, 5, 9, 18, 19, 23, 58,
123, 124, 148, 149, 175
Adelphi Theater (London), 99
Adler, Kurt Herbert, 98, 112, 196
Agler, David, 111
AGO. *See* American Guild of Organists
Ahern, Bishop Patrick V., 102
Aida, 12, 101, 102, 161, 189
Albert, Donnie Ray, 197
Albert, E. R., Jr., 89
Alexander, John, 166
Alice Blue Gown (from *Irene*), 99
Allen Chapman Activities Center
Great Hall, 124, 125
Alliance Française, 45
Alliance Française de Tulsa, 45
Amato, Pasquale, 8
Amazing Grace, 70
Amelia Goes to the Ball, 84, 85
American Choral Directors Association, Oklahoma
Chapter, 112
American Guild of Musical Artists, 19
American Guild of Organists, 43, 74
Southwest Regional Convention, 1965, 43, 44
Southwest Regional Convention, 1979, 74
Tulsa Chapter, 45, 73
American Organist, The (national AGO publication),
48, 74
Amsterdam, 94, 96, 97
Anderson, Mrs. Frances Wellmon, 40
Anderson, Virginia Lee, 38, 41
Andover, Massachusetts, 62
Andrews, Mildred, 43
Ansonia Hotel (New York City), 32
Anthony, Ray, 126
Arena di Verona. *See* Verona, Arena di
Argento, Dominick, 76, 127
Armida (Rossini), 112
North American premiere in Tulsa, 1992, 171
Armstrong, Louis, 200
Arndt, Kalyn, 104
Arosa, Germaine, 62
Arrau, Claudio, 18
Ashcraft, Marjorie, 183
Aspen Institute of Music (Aspen, Colorado), 87, 89,
164

Auer, Judith, 109, 123, 129

Autori, Franco, 108, 109

Avery, Etta May, 182

Aznavour, Charles, 64

B

Babbitt, Sharon, 87, 92

Babin, Victor, 18

Baccaloni, Salvatore, 160

Bach, J. S., 17, 44, 56, 57, 65, 69, 71, 91, 94, 104,
139, 209, 216

backstage choruses in operas, 164

Baden, William A., 112, 114, 164

Bailey, Pearl, 78

Baker, Andrea, 91, 93, 94, 126

Baker, Gregg, 167, 179, 187, 188, 195

Baker, Susan, 84, 93

Baltimore Symphony, 76

Bampton, Rose, 8

Barber of Seville, 160, 171, 172, 185, 195

Barber, Samuel, 12

Barbizon School, 58

Barclay, Harriet, 90

Bartók, Béla, 93, 100

Bates, Jack, 115

Baton Rouge, Louisiana, 50, 51

Baudelaire, Charles (poem), 213

Baylor University, 36

BBC, 93

Beachy, Morris, 50

Beard, Betsy, 84

Bebb, Ineta, 87, 91, 94

Beck, John Ness, 78

Beethoven, Ludwig van, 76, 94, 123, 171, 185, 208

Belfast Grand Opera, 93

belle époque, 145

Bellmon, Henry, 105, 116

Belmont University (Nashville, Tennessee), 127

Belshazzar's Feast (Walton), 42

Bender, Philippe, 100

Benedictus in F (Elgar), 72

Bennett, Tony, 201

Benton (Bentonelli), Joseph, 4, **6–14**, 16, 29, 30, 36,
40, 67, 112, 193

Benward, Bruce, 51

Berkshire Choral Festival (Sheffield, Massachusetts),
127

Berkshire Music Center (Tanglewood,
Massachusetts), 20, 76

Berlin, Irving, 101, 200

- Berlioz, Hector
 quotation, 210
- Bernac, Pierre, 213
- Bernstein, Leonard, 65, 187, 206
 quotation, 210
- Berry, Mr. and Mrs. Garvin, 100
- Bicentennial of the U.S. Constitution, 121
- Bingham, Seth, 47, 48
- Bispham, David, 13
- Bizet, Georges, 45, 178, 185, 188, 190
- Björling, Jussi, 21, 29
- Black Heritage Month, 116
- Blegen, Judith, 16
- Blevins, Stacy, 115
- Blythe, Stephanie, 162
- Bob Wills Orchestra, 178
- Boomer, Anisa, 125, 126
- Boren, David L., 88, 121
- Borge, Victor
 quotation, 207
- Bori, Lucrezia, 6, 8
- Boris Godunov*, 107, 108, 166
- Boston Avenue Church, 102, 120
- Boston Symphony Orchestra, 60, 135
- Botstein, Leon, 146
- Bottom, Frank, 156
- Boulanger party punch, 63
- Boulanger, Nadia, 12, **56–65**, 71, 177
- Boulder, Colorado, 36, 127, 129
- Boyd, Linda, 45
- Boyer, Charles, 16
- Bradshaw, Richard, 112, 171
- Bradstreet, Betty, 108
- Brady Theater (Tulsa), 102, 194
- Brady, Jack, 94
- Brechin, Jane, 109, 110
- Brisch, Hans, 170
- Bristol, Lee H., Jr., 137
- Broadway Musical, 23, 24, 29, 39, 84, 89, 149, 150, 202
- Brooklyn Academy of Music, 20
- Brown, Arvin, 178, 186
- Browning, Robert
 quotation, 206
- Brownlee, John, **18–23**, 38
- Bruce Yarnell Memorial Award for Baritone. *See* Shore, Joseph
- Bruscantini, Sesto, 166, 193
- Bryan, William Jennings, 30
- Bryn Mawr College, 136
- Buckingham Fountain (Chicago), 14
- Buckingham, Kate, 14
- Buckley, Emerson, 101, 107, 165
- Bullock, Emily, 123, 125, 127
- Bunkley, C. E., 204
- Burg, Clarence, 4, 139
- Burket, Barbara, 39
- Burton, Richard, 60, 61, 84
- Busch, Fritz, 16, 18
- Busch, Margareta, 16
- Bush, George, 113
- Buttram, Mrs. Frank and family, 2
- Butts, Ava (Mrs. John C.), 119
- Butts, John C., 119, 120
- Buxton International Festival (Buxton, England), 168
- C**
- Cacavas, John, 93
- Cain's Ballroom, 178
- Call, Mr. and Mrs. Dan, 46
- Callas, Maria, 145
- Calvé, Emma, 19
- Camp, Linda, 89
- Canadian Broadcasting Company, 93
- Canadian Opera Company, 112, 171
- Caniglia, Maria, 85
- Cantata No. 142* (Bach), 69
- Carlson, David, 179, 189
- Carlyle, Thomas
 quotation, 211
- Carmen*, 33, 161, 162, 171, 178, 185, 190, 198
- Carnegie Hall, 20, 23, 76, 85, 127
- Carousel*, 149, 150
- Carreras, José, 100
- Carson, Johnny, 204
- Casadesus, Robert, 62
- Casals, Pablo, 22
 quotation, 209
- Cat, Laven's. *See* Cleo
- Catanzariti, Raffaele, 87
- Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine. *See* St. John the Divine, Cathedral Church of
- Catrett, Marilyn, 104
- Cecil B. DeMille Award, 202
- Central Park (New York City), 127
- Central State University (Edmond, Oklahoma), 112
- Chabay, Leslie, 17
- Chancellor of Higher Education (Oklahoma), 170
- Chaney, George, 9
- Chapman, Catherine, 112
- Chapman, Charles, 112
- Charles L. Wagner Opera Company, **29–37**, 147
- Chartres Cathedral (France), 47
- Chautauqua (series of lecture programs), 30
- Cherubini, Luigi, 42, 43, 168
- Chevalier, Maurice, 15
- Chicago Musical College, 4
- Chicago Opera, 6, 8, 20
- Chicago Symphony Orchestra, 135
- Chickasha, Oklahoma, 36

- Choosing Your Music Professor. *See* Thoughts for Future Voice/Music Majors
- Christmas Cantata* (Pinkham), 94
- Christmas Oratorio* (Bach), 71
- Christmas Oratorio, The* (Saint-Saëns), 71
- Church of St. John the Divine (Episcopal) (Houston, Texas), 44
- Organist/Choirmaster. *See* Kevan, G. Alex
- Church of St-Étienne du Mont (Paris), 45
- Church of the Resurrection (New York City), 21
- Church of the Transfiguration (Evergreen, Colorado), 135, 136
- Churchill, Sir Winston, 13, 100
- Cincinnati Enquirer*, 170
- cinematic production* (term applied to contemporary opera), 144, 145
- Civic Center Assembly Hall (Tulsa), 84
- Claremore High School, 110
- Classen High School (Oklahoma City), 2
- Cleo (Laven's cat), 215, 216
- Cleveland, Lewis, 39, 51
- Clinkscapes, Allen, 40
- Clinton, Hillary Rodham, 174
- Clinton, Jane Heard, 178
- Clinton, Socks, 216
- Clinton, William Jefferson, 217
- Clooney, Rosemary, 23
- Côchereau, Pierre, 65
- Coke-Jepthcott, Norman, 136
- Colbert, Claudette, 29
- College of Church Musicians (National Cathedral, Washington, D.C.), 135
- Colorni, Evelina, 18
- Columbia University, 18, **23–25**, 39, 47, 73
- Comissiona, Sergiu, 76
- Concert Chorus. *See* Edison High School
- Concertgebouw Orchestra, 96
- Concordia College, 76
- Confucius
- quotation, 214
- Conrad Hilton Hotel (Chicago), 53
- Conservatoire Américain de Fontainebleau*, 12, **56–65**
- Conservatory or School of Music
- Which is Right for You?. *See* Thoughts for Future Voice/Music Majors
- conservatory, vs. school of music, 133
- Continental Oil Company, 123
- Cook, Christopher, 136
- Cooper, Mary, 141
- Copland, Aaron, 12, 56, 57, 121
- Cortot, Alfred, 56
- Così Fan Tutte* (Mozart), 20, 83, 85
- Couperin, François, 45
- Covent Garden (London), 19, 98
- Cox, Richard, 39
- Coyle, Bernice, 112
- Crawford, Carol I., 60, 152, **172–73**, 174, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 198
- letter to LS from, 177
- Crazy Horse Saloon (Paris), 64
- Criswell, Sherry, 105
- Crooks, Richard, 5
- Cross, George L., 12
- Cross, Mary Lynn, 12
- Crowell, David, 39
- Crown Heights Methodist Church (Oklahoma City), 2
- Crozier, Catharine, 73
- Crucible, The* (Ward), 177, 186
- Crussell, Mary Grace, 84
- Cruz-Romo, Gilda, 101
- Crystal Cathedral (California), 47
- Culver-Stockton College (Missouri), 106
- Curci, Amelita Galli, 29
- Curry, Charlotte, 179, 189, 190, 191
- Curry, David, 197
- Curtin, Phyllis, 17, 88, 89
- Curtis Institute of Music (Philadelphia), 16, 125
- D**
- D'Ambrosio, David, 84
- da Vinci, Leonardo
- quotation, 206
- Dafne* (Peri), 99
- Dailey, Dwight, 46, 82, 91
- Daily Oklahoman, The*, 35
- Damrosch, Walter, 56
- Daniel, J. Littleton, 70
- Daniel, Janice (Mrs. J. Littleton), 77
- Dante Alighieri
- quotation, 206
- Darwin, Charles
- quotation, 214
- Davison, Archibald T., 56
- de Blasis, James, 167
- de Reszke, Jean, **12–14**
- de Vinna, Maurice, 44, 45, 46, 169
- Dean, Larry, 123
- Death of the Bishop of Brindisi, The* (Menotti), 108, 109
- Deaton, Clydia, 93
- Debussy, Claude, 14, 45
- Defrère, Désiré, 30, 31, 32, 33, 36
- Dello Joio, Norman, 71, 126
- Denver, Colorado, 36, 127, 128, 135
- Derenne, Paul, 58
- Derrevere, Harriet, 81
- Derrevere, William, 80, 81
- Descartes
- quotation, 216
- Destination Discovery* (Federal arts project), 46

- Deux Magots, Les* (Paris), 64
 Dewey Bartlett Square (Tulsa), 105
 Dewey, Thomas E., 3
Dialogues des Carmélites, Les, 152, 179, 180, 190
 Dickinson, Emily
 quotation, 208
Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg, 112
 Dieudonné, Annette, 62
 Dillon, Jerry, 123
 Dirksen, Richard, 112, 113
 Dizikes, John, 156
 Dodd, Elizabeth, 103, 115, 125, 126
 Domingo, Plácido, 97
Don Carlo, 23, 100, 101, 168
Don Giovanni, 13, 18, 94, 95, 187, 195, 198
 Doremus, John, 89
 Dorothy Chandler Pavilion (Los Angeles), 128
 Dorsey, Tommy, 39
 Dotson, George, 117
 Douglas, Canon Winfred, 135
 Dowgray, John, 124
 Downes, Olin, 9
 Draper, Dallas, 50, 51
Dreamkeepers (Carlson), 179, 189
Drugstorien, Le (Paris), 64
 Duke, Dolores, 140
 Dumit, Edward, 71, 80, 83, 97, 103, 105
 Duncan, Patti, 199
 Dunn, Mignon, 101
 Duparc, Henri, 213
 Dupré, Marcel, 65, 69, 125
 Duruflé, Maurice, 45, 46, 87
- E**
- Earl, Mary Michal, 71, 83
 Eastman School of Music (Rochester, New York), 172
 Eddy, Nelson, 41
 Edison High School, IV, **38–55**, 66, 84, 108, 119, 137, 139, 160, 164, 202
 Edison Junior High School, 183
 Edmonton Opera, 93
 Effron, David, 171, 172, 185
 Einstein, Albert, 215
 El Paso, Texas, 36
 Elder, Barbara (Mrs. Fred), 69, 71
 Elder, Fred, 74
 Eleanor Steber Award. *See* Hamilton, David
Elektra (R. Strauss), 28
 Elgar, Edward, 72
 Elias, Rosalind, 179, 180
 Ellington, Duke, 101, 200
 Elsberry, Martha, 169
 Elvira, Pablo, 179, 188
 English, Opera in. *See* Opera in English
 Estes, Simon, 167
- Evans, Damon, 167
 Evans, Mrs. Rex, 112
 Evergreen Conference on Church Music (Evergreen, Colorado), **135–38**
- F**
- Farish, Steve, 46
 Farrell, Mark, 118
 Fauré, Gabriel, 45, 58, 59, 61, 71, 76
Faust, 174, 178, 186, 198
 Fenn, Roger, 41
 Feroe, Jerry, 70
 Ferré, Susan Ingrid, 74
 Ferrer, José, 23, 24
 Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols, 71
Fidelio (Beethoven), 171, 185
 Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church (New York City), 127
 Filstrup, Scott, 159
 Firkusny, Rudolf, 17, 18
 First Christian Church (Tulsa), 119
 First National Bank (Tulsa), 90
 First Place Plaza Park (Tulsa), 90
 First Presbyterian Church (Fort Wayne, Indiana), 49
 McKay Hall, 50
 First Presbyterian Church (Oklahoma City), 42, 44
 Senior Minister. *See* Smith, C. Ralston
 First Presbyterian Church (Tulsa), 49, **66–81**, 91, 94, 115, 124, 137, 204
 Centennial, 1985, 78
 Chancel Choir (adult), 67, 68, 70, 72, 74, 80, 81, 115, 137
 Chancel Choir gives concert at AGO Southwest Regional Convention, 1979, 74
 Chancel Choir Roster, 1981, 81
 LS becomes "Choirmaster", 67
 LS Interim Music Director of, 66, 67
 Sanctuary Choir (high school), 67, 68, 125
 First United Methodist Church (Tulsa), 43, 45, 103, 106
 Fitzgerald, Ella, 101, 127
 FitzSimons, H. T. Company (Chicago, Illinois), 137
 Five Civilized Tribes, 178
 Fleming, Renée, 144
 Florence, Italy, 99, 123
 Florida State University, 125
 Floyd, Carlisle, 88
 Flynn, Janet, 140
 Fontainebleau, France, 12, **56–65**
 Fontainebleau, Palace of, 56, 57, 58, 59
 Ford Foundation, 50, 53
 Ford, Beryl, 178
 Ford, Don, 103
 Foreigner (rock 'n' roll band), 117, 118
 Forrester, Maureen, 111
 Fort Wayne, Indiana, 49, 50

Fortner, Rick, 110
 Fosdick, Harry Emerson, 47
 Fox, Malcolm, 158
 Fox, Virgil, 47, 49, 73
 France, President of, 13, 60
 Francis of Assisi
 quotation, 214
 Frank, Gerald, 74
 Frazier, Linda, 169
 Freni, Mirella, 97
 Freud, Sigmund, 142
 Frie, Mark, 125, 126
 Friedell, Harold, 124
 Frisell, Sonja, 168
 Ft. Worth, Texas, 36, 128
 Fuller, Vaughndeane, 116
Funny Girl, 202

G

Galos, Andrew, 111
 Gammie, John, 124
 Gandhi, Mahatma
 quotation, 214
 Ganter, Bishop Bernard J., 102
 Garbousova, Raya, 18
 Garden, Mary, 29
 Garnier, Charles, 100
 Gasaway, Georgann, 140
 Gatti-Casazza, Giulio, 4
 Geer, Elizabeth, 68, 156
 Gelfand, Janelle, 170
 Gershwin, George, 101, 167, 168, 200
 Giannini, Dusolina, 18
 Giannini, Vittorio, 18
 Gibson, Eric, 158, 189, 190, 191
 Gibson, Mary Jane (Mrs. Ellis), 95
 Gibson, Mr. and Mrs. Ellis, 94, 100, 101
 Gilcrease, Thomas, 178
 Gilly, Dinh, 19
Girl of the Golden West, The, 85, 172, 197
 Giulini, Carlo Maria, 85
 Gladys Axman-Taylor Memorial Award. *See* Shore, Joseph
 Glasgow, Robert, 68, 69, 72, 74
 Glyndebourne Festival, 18
God Bless America (Ringwald), 103
 Goethe
 quotation, 205
 Golden Globe Awards, 202
 Golschmann, Vladimir, 64
 Goodall, Jane
 quotation, 208
 Goodman, Benny, 39
 Gottlieb, Marc, 116
 Gould, Morton, 121
 Goulet, Robert, 128

Gounod, Charles, 12, 115, 186
 Governor's Arts Awards (Oklahoma), 169
 Graber, Eric, 124, 125, 126, 127
 Grace, Princess, 60, 61
 Gramm, Donald, 164
 Grandjany, Marcel, 56
 Grant Park (Chicago), 14
 Grant, Ulysses S., 201
 Graves, Denyce, 167
 Graves, Frederick, 83
 Graveure, Louis, 5
 Gray, H. W. Company, 47
 Greenwood Cultural Center (Tulsa), 156
 Gregory, James, 123, 124, 126
 Griffin, Wilda, 36
 Groene Lanteerne, De (Green Lantern, Amsterdam restaurant), 96
 Groom, Lester, 137
 Grunewald, Eugenie, 179, 187, 188
 Guarrera, Frank, 160
 Guild of Tulsa Opera, 156, 157
 Guymon, Oklahoma, 3

H

Hadley, Jerry
 quotation, 206
 Hageman, Richard, 5, 8
 Hahn, Reynaldo, 13, 44
 Hallman, Nyle and Roy, 66
 Halpine, Monsignor James, 115
 Hamilton, David, 75, 179, 187, 188, 195
 Eleanor Steber Award, 76
 Puccini Foundation Grant, 76
 Hamilton, Estelle and Bill, 76
 Hammond, Nancy, Mark, and Phil, 199
 Hampton, Norma Helen, 69
 Hancock, Gerre, 74
 Händel, G. F., 71, 93, 123, 153
Hänsel and Gretel, 42, 84, 85, 128
 Hansen, Patrick, 179, 188, 189
 Hanson, Howard, 43, 121
 Hardy, Wayne, 71, 94, 104, 115
 Harrell, Lynn, 17
 Harrell, Mack, 17
 Harrington, Karen, 140
 Harris, Roy, 121
 Harvard Men's Glee Club, 56
 Harvey, Peter, 43
 Hastings, Ross, 47
 Haydn, Joseph, 71, 94, 103, 124, 208
 Hayes, Helen, 30
 Hayes, John, 124
 Haymon, Cynthia, 178, 188, 189
 Hebert, Bliss, 101, 107
 Heckman, Robert, 140
 Heifetz, Jascha, 18

Heine, Heinrich
 quotation, 213
 Held, Wilbur, 136, 137
 Helmerich & Payne, 117
 Helmerich, Jono, 159
 Hemingway, Ernest, 64, 216
 Hemphill, David, 10
 Herford, Julius, 39
 Herring, Sandra, 84
 Hershey Chocolate Company, 32
 Hershey Community Theatre (Hershey,
 Pennsylvania), 32
 Hestwood, Arthur, 87
 Hill, Barre, 4
 Hill, Charles, 41
 Hindemith, Paul, 62, 123
 Hines, Jerome, 23, 168
 Holleman, Maxine, 112
 Hollywood Bowl, 6
 Holmberg Hall, University of Oklahoma, 6, 9, 51
 Holmberg, Frederick, 139
 Holmes, Burt, 124
 Holst, Gustav, 105
 Holy Family Cathedral (Tulsa), 115
 Honaker, Mike, 93
 Hoopert, Donald, 55
 Horne, Marilyn, 28, 179, 188
 Horst, Amy, 123
 Hôtel de Paris (Monte Carlo), 99, 100
 Housewright, Wiley, 53
 Houston Grand Opera, 93
 Houston, Texas, 36, 44, 93
 Houston, Walter, 30
 Hovhaness, Alan, 124, 125
 Hovland, Egil, 103
 Howell, David, 83, 87, 91, 93
 Howell, Wes, 46
 Hubbard, Bruce, 167, 196
 Hurst, Mary Neff, 199
 Hyeckha Chorus, 105
 Hyeckha Club of Tulsa, 5, 178
 Hyfrydol (tune for "Come, Thou Long-expected
 Jesus"), 113

I

Il Trovatore, 87, 98, 196
 Imig, Warner, 53
 Indianapolis Symphony, 76
 Inhofe, James M., 105, 113, 114
Irene, 99
 Iron Horse Retreat (Winter Park, Colorado), 138
 Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, 76
 Istomin, Eugene, 22
 Istomin, Marta Casals, 22
 Ives, Charles, 121

J

Jackson, Paul, 16
 James, Harry, 39
 Jasinski, Roman, 46, 84
 Jemison, Keith, 93, 103, 104, 121, 167, 185
 Jenkins, Libby, 118
 Jensen, Wilma, 44, 73
 Jeritza, Maria, 8
 John Jay Hall, Columbia University, 24
 John Knox Presbyterian Church (Tulsa), 124, 183
Spirituality in the Arts (Festival), 124
 John Steele Zink Foundation, 182
 Johns, William, 98, 112, 121
 Johnson, Gloria, 140
 Johnson, Samuel, 169, 216
 Jones, Francis, 46
 Jones, Mrs. Robert E., 53, 55
 Jubilee '73 Celebration (Tulsa), 84
 Juilliard School of Music, 18, 75, 76, 135
 Junior League of Tulsa, 84
 Junior Recital (LS, University of Oklahoma), 9

K

Kanawa, Kiri Te, 144
 quotation, 210
 Kansas City, Missouri, 34, 118, 126
 Kaohsiung (Tulsa's Sister City in Taiwan), 113, 114
 Karajan, Herbert Von, 96
 Kemp, John, 42
 Kendall College, 139
 Kennedy, John F., 216
 Kennedy, John F.
 quotation, 159
 Kern, Jerome, 126, 200
 Kerr, Harrison, 11
 Kerr, Robert S. III, 116
 Kessler, Walter, 41
 Kestner, Anna Norberg, 140, 198
 Kestner, Joseph, 169, 182, 198
 Kevan, G. Alex, 44
 Khatchaturian, Aram, 98
 Khedive of Egypt, 102
 King, Martin Luther
 quotation, 208
 King's College Chapel (Cambridge, England), 71
 Kirkland, Bryant, 78
 Klytämnestra (role in R. Strauss's *Elektra*), 28
 Kondina, Olga, 179, 181, 182, 187, 188, 189, 190
 KOTV (Tulsa Channel 6), 178
 program — The Spirit of Tulsa — The First 100
 Years), 178
 Kragas, Elizabeth, 179, 190
 Kramer, Tosca, 41
 Kraus, Alfredo, 166, 193
 Kraushaar, Fred, 185, 214
 Kreslins, Lija, 192

KTUL (Tulsa Channel 8), 157

L

L'Incoronazione di Poppea (Monteverdi), 111

L'Opéra de Montréal. *See* Montréal Opera

La Bohème, 19, **29–37**, 84, 97, 146, 147, 187

La Fanciulla del West. *See* *Girl of the Golden West, The*

La Scala (Milan), 85, 100, 101, 145, 168

La Traviata, 33, 41, 143, 145, 167, 181, 187

Ladies' Music Club (Oklahoma City), 2

LaForge, Frank, 5

LaFortune, Robert J., 90, 105

Lambert, Carol, 157

Landowska, Wanda, 56

Landver, Rose, 20

Langdon, Judy, 199

Langston University, 9, 116

Black Heritage Center, 116

Lanza, Mario, 5

Larkin, Moscelyne, 46, 178

Lawbaugh, Jimmy, 125, 126

Lawless, Jerrold, 41

Lawrence, Ashley, 98

Lazar, Joel, 106

Le Monde (Paris), 58

Lear, Evelyn, 183

Lecompte, Mme. Gilberte, 58

Lee, Lonnie, 183

Lees, Bob, 46

Les Indes Galantes (Rameau), 58

Leschetizky, Theodor, 5

Letcher, Frank, 181

Lewis, Roberta, 140

Lewis, Thomas, 87, 88, 101

Lewisohn Stadium (New York City), 24

Library of Congress, 76

Lim, Jee Hyun, 179, 187, 190

Lincoln Portrait (Copland), 121

Lincoln, Tad, 215

Linde, Don, 41, 46, 121

Linde, Mary Sue (Mrs. Don), 121

Lister, Marquita, 167

Liszt, Franz, 70, 76, 100, 210

Litany (K. 109) (Mozart), 93

Little Mary Sunshine (Tulsa Little Theater production), 41

Live From the Met, 156, 212

Lloyd, Theresa Treadway, 183

Lockhart, Stan, 71, 91

Logsdon, Guy, 124

London, 5, 19, 60, 85, 97, 98, 99

London Philharmonic, 85

London Symphony Orchestra, 98

Longfellow, Henry W.

quotation, 206

Louis XIV, Paris Court of, 153

Louisiana State University, 50, 51

Love for Three Oranges, The (Prokofiev), 87

Luboff, Norman, 39, 93

Ludgin, Chester, 164

Lukken, Albert, 49, 76, 119

Lully, Jean-Baptiste, 45, 153

Lundvik, Hildor, 126

Lynch, Miriam Spindler, 140

M

MacDonald, Jeannette, 29, 41

Macklin, Beth, 78

Macky Auditorium (University of Colorado), 36

MacMahan-Munroe, Sharilyn, 125

Madama Butterfly, 38, 143, 166, 189

Madison Square Garden, Theater at, 128

Magnificat in D Major (Bach), 94

Mahler, Gustav, 125

Mailman, Martin, 53

Malmfors, Ake, 103

Malottke, William, 137

Mancinelli, Aldo, 83

Mancini, Henry, 126

Mandela, Nelson

quotation, 205

Manhattan School of Music, **18–23**, 37, 38, 50, 56

Manilow, Barry, 118

Manon (Massenet), 8, 181, 182, 190

Mansouri, Lotfi, 167

Manuguerra, Matteo, 111

Marchal, André, 63

Margolis, Samuel, **23–25**

Mariazeller Messe in C Major (Haydn), 124

Mark Twain, 216

Marland Estate, 123

Marland Mansion, 122

Marland, E. W. (Oklahoma Governor), 123

Marriott-Southern Hills (Tulsa), 79

Martha Baird Rockefeller Fund for Music, 43, 84

Martin, Dr. and Mrs. Harry, 47

Martin, Ruth and Thomas, 31, 33, 35, 36, 147, 164

Masiello, Alberta, 32

Mason, Charles, 38, 39

Executive Secretary Ella Whitman, 38

Mason, Edith, 20

Mason, Marilyn, 73

Mass in B minor (Bach), 91

Massanetta Springs, Virginia, Presbyterian

Conference Center, 66

Massenet, Jules, 13, 190

Matthews, Mary (Mrs. Thomas), 136

Matthews, Thomas, 40, 45, 47, 74, 105, **135–36**, 137, 138

anthems written for L.S.'s choirs, 137

Mauro, Ermanno, 101

- May Fair Hotel (London), 98
 May, Billy, 126
 Maye, Marilyn, 203, 202–4
 Jazz Heritage Award for 1987-88, 204
 Mayo Hotel, 89, 162, 204
 Crystal Ballroom, 162, 204
 Mayo, Mr. and Mrs. Burch and family, 64, 65
 McAdams, Annelle Chandler, 112
 McBrayer, Phillele, 140
 McCormack, John, 29
 McCormick, Dorothy, 41
 McCright, Carolyn, 68
 McFarlin Methodist Church (Norman, OK), 10
 McGrath, Robert, 20
 McKechnie, David, 68
 McKechnie, Linda (Mrs. David), 68
 McKee, William E., 55, 82, 83, 91
 McKinnon, Mrs. Frankie, 124, 125, 183
 McNally, Robert, 82
Medea (Cherubini), 168
 Mediterranean, 100
Meistersinger von Nürnberg, Die, 112
 Melano, Fabrizio, 182, 189, 191
 Melba, Dame Nellie, 18, 19
 Melchior, Lauritz, 17
 MENC-Ford Foundation Contemporary Music
 Project, 53
 Mendelssohn, Felix, 111
 quotation, 205
 Menotti, Gian Carlo, 84, 85, 97, 108, 195
 Mercer, Johnny, 200
 Merrill, Nathaniel, 43, 128
 Merrill, Robert, 3, 23, 174
Messiah, 71, 76, 123
 Metropolitan Opera (New York City), 4, 6, 8, 10, 12,
 14, 16, 18, 19, 20, 23, 26, 30, 31, 32, 33, 43, 75,
 76, 88, 92, 101, 107, 118, 145, 149, 156, 160,
 167, 168, 174, 178, 180, 183, 198, 212
 Metropolitan Opera National Council, 93
 Michelangelo, 99
 Mid-Continent Tower (Tulsa), 115, 116
 Milan (Italy), 85, 99, 100, 101, 145, 168
 Miles, Ken, 175, 190, 197
 Millard, Marvin, 103
 Miller, Mildred, 164
 Mills, Donn, 46
 Mills, Erie, 111
 Minnesota, University of, 127
Missa Brevis (Palestrina), 47
 Mitchell, Leona, 98
 Mitchell, Max, 40, 41
 Modern Choir. *See* Tulsa, University of
 Monte Carlo, 99, 100
 Monteverdi, Claudio G. A., 6, 65, 111, 145, 153
 Montréal Opera, 86, 169
 Moon, Melinda, 125, 126
 Mooney, Kim, 125, 126
 Moore, Mrs. Werton Dee, 40
 Moresco, Carlo, 43, 89, 151, 162, 163
 Morrell, Barry, 24
 Morrison, Harry, 118
 Moseley, Carlos, 10
 Moses, Betty, 46, 140, 175
Most Happy Fella, The, 149
 Mostly Mozart Festival (New York City), 76
Mozart and Salieri (Rimsky-Korsakov), 93
 Mozart, W. A., 13, 17, 18, 20, 31, 39, 44, 71, 76, 83,
 87, 93, 94, 96, 100, 114, 115, 125, 144, 152, 164,
 200, 208
 litanies, 93
 Requiem. *See* *Requiem* (Mozart)
 worship of, by LS, 93
 Mozarteum (Salzburg), 96
 MTNA. *See* Music Teachers National Association
 Muir Woods, 112
 Müller, Edoardo, 168
 Muni, Nicholas, 170, 171, 172, 185, 186, 197, 198
 Municipal Auditorium (Oklahoma City)
 La Bohème performed by Charles Wagner
 company, 1955, 35
 Oklahoma Education Association annual
 convention, 1962, 41
 Tulsa Opera's *La Traviata* performed, 167
 Munsel, Patrice, 19
 Murray, Johnston (Oklahoma Governor), 2
 Murray, Willi Emerson (wife of Oklahoma Gov.
 Johnston Murray), 2
 Murray, William H. ("Alfalfa Bill") (Oklahoma
 Governor), 3
 Music Educators National Conference, Chicago,
 March 1970, 53, 66
 Music Teachers National Association (MTNA), 46,
 139, 141
 Constitution, Preamble to, 139
Musica Sacra (choral group, New York City), 127
 Mussorgsky, Modest, 107
 Muti, Riccardo, 85
 Myers, Maud Lorton, 178
- N**
- Nabucco*, 127, 174
 Linda Roark-Strummer as Abigail in, 86
 Va, pensiero chorus, 174
 Napoleon Bonaparte, 57
 National Cathedral (Washington, D.C.), 113, 135
 National Endowment for the Arts, 155, 159
 National Hall of Fame (Washington, D.C.), 8
 National Organ Competition (Fort Wayne, Indiana),
 49
 National Public Radio, 171
 NBC Symphony Orchestra, 6
 Neilson, Mrs. James, 112
 Nero, Peter, 204

Neubauer, Jane, 67
 New England Conservatory of Music (Boston), 50, 94
 New York City Opera, 10, 76, 85, 87, 114, 128, 156
 New York Grand Opera Company (New York City), 127
 New York Philharmonic, 10, 60, 109
New York Times, 9, 47
 Nielsen, Wendy, 198
 Nietzsche, Friedrich
 quotation, 206, 212
 Nigh, George, 169
 Nixon, Catherine, 120
 Nobel Peace Prize, 17, 216
 Norberg, Anna, 111
 North Texas State University, 46, 53
 Northwestern University (Evanston, Illinois), 47, 136
 Norton, Spencer, 10, 36
 Norvell, George E., 106
 Notre-Dame (Paris), 65
 Nureyev, Rudolf, 98

O

O'Brien, Darcy, 124
 Official Ambassadors of Good Will, City of Tulsa
 T.U. Modern Choir named, 1982, 113
 Ohio State University, 137
 Okemah, Oklahoma, 38
 Oklahoma Arts and Humanities Council, 116, 159
 State Convention (1975), 88
 Oklahoma Arts and Humanities Council., 116
 Oklahoma City Golf and Country Club, 169
 Oklahoma City Orchestra League, 183
 Oklahoma City Symphony, 42, 167
 Oklahoma City University, 4, 112, 139
 Oklahoma Congress of Parents and Teachers
 Distinguished Service Award for LS, 55
 Oklahoma Heritage Association, 116
 Oklahoma Music Education State Convention (1975)
 T.U. Modern Choir chosen Honor Choir at, 88
 Oklahoma Music Educators Association, 40, 156
 Oklahoma State Chamber of Commerce, 90
 Oklahoma State University, 40
Oklahoma!, 99, 105, 117
 Oklahoma, University of, 4, 6–14, 16, 29, 40, 44, 46, 51, 52, 112, 139
 Oliphant, Trudy, 88
 OPERA America, 155, 156
 Opera by the Slice (Tulsa charity event), 105
Opera in America: A Cultural History, by John Dizikes, 156
 Opera in English, 147–48
Opera in English Radio Hour (NBC), 6
 opera orchestra, 150–52
 Opera Potpourri (University of Tulsa), 84

Oral Roberts University, 46, 87, 118, 201
 Mabee Center, 118, 201
 Oral Roberts University Concert Choir, 87
 Orchestre Nationale de L'Opéra de Monte Carlo, 100
Orfeo (Monteverdi), 145
 Orms, Howard, 41
 Oswald, Mark, 174, 185, 186, 198
 Ozawa, Seiji, 96

P

Paderewski, Ignace Jan, 13
 Padgett, Kari, 111
 Paepcke, Walter, 17
Pal Joey (Rodgers and Hart), 150
 Palestrina, Giovanni Pierluigi da, 47, 50
 Pape, Jonathon, 179, 187, 190
 Paris International Voice Competition, 76
 Paris Opéra, 16, 97, 100, 168
 Parker, Ella, 76
 Parker, Robert L., 90
 Parriott, Mrs. F. B., 112
 Pasatieri, Thomas, 84
Passion According to Saint John, The (Bach), 104
 Pasteur, Louis, 215
 Payne, Betty, 77
Pearl Fishers, Les. See Pêcheurs des Perles, Les
 Pearson, Ron
 celebration of twenty-five years of service to First
 Presbyterian Church (Tulsa), 79
 Pearson, Ronald J., 68, 69, 70, 73, 74, 79–80, 91, 94, 95, 103, 104, 115, 124, 125, 137
Pêcheurs des Perles, Les (Bizet), 178, 188
 Peeters, Flor, 125
Pelléas and Mélisande (Debussy), 14
 Pelletier, Wilfred, 6
 People and Places, *Tulsa World* column, 157
 Performing Arts Center (Tulsa). *See* Tulsa Performing Arts Center
 Peri, Giacomo, 99
 Pershing, General John, 56
 Persichetti, Vincent, 114, 115
 Peters, Roberta, 160, 166, 193
 Petrikin, Ron, 159
 Pfautsch, Lloyd, 43
 Phelps, Brad, 118
 Phi Kappa Lambda, Society of (Beta Nu chapter at T.U.), 125
 Philadelphia Orchestra, 60, 85
 Philadelphia, Opera Company of, 76
 Philbrook Art Center, 84
 Patti Johnson Wilson Auditorium, 84
 Phillips, Waite, 178
 Piaf, Edith, 64
 Picasso, Pablo, 216
 Pierce, Edward, 123

- Pinkerton, Lloyd, 50
 Pinkham, Daniel, 94
 Pinza, Ezio, 149
 Pioneer Woman Statue (Ponca City, Oklahoma), 123
 Pittsburgh Symphony, 76
 Pizzaro, David, 21, 22
Place Vendôme, Paris, 64
 Place, Brad, 124
 Planning Executive Institute - Corporate Planning Conference, 110
 Planning Your Audition. *See* Thoughts for Future Voice/Music Majors
 Plato
 quotation, 205, 208
 Plowright, Rosalind, 168
 Pochintesta, Nelli, 21
 Poister, Arthur, 74
 Polacco, Giorgio, 20
 Polacco, Graziella, 20
 Pompidou, Georges, 60
 Ponca City, Oklahoma, 122, 123
 Ponnelle, Jean-Pierre, 111
 Pons, Lily, 5
Porgy and Bess, 167, 195, 196
 Porter, Cole, 101, 200
 Poulenc, Francis, 50, 115, 152, 179, 180, 190
 Powell, Bishop Chilton, 135, 138
 Predl, Ron, 46, 83, 87, 100, 128, 129
 Previn, André, 98
 Price, Betty, 116
 Price, Leontyne, 28
 Primrose, William, 18
 Prince Pierre Competition (Monaco), 60
 Prince Rainier, 60
 Princess Grace. *See* Grace, Princess
 Prokofiev, Serge, 87, 98, 99
 Proust, Marcel, 13
 Psalm 146 (Hastings), 47
Psalm of Peace (Dello Joio), 71
 Puccini Foundation Grant. *See* Hamilton, David
 Puccini, Giacomo, 8, 30, 85, 142, 172, 185, 187, 189, 191
 Pulitzer Prize, 110, 135, 178
 punch, Boulanger party. *See* Boulanger party punch
 Purrington, Edward, 107, 108, 112, 114, 166, 167, 168, 174, 175, 176, 183
 Purvis, Richard, 115
- Q**
- Quivar, Florence, 121
- R**
- Radford, Ronald, 116
 Raiford, Steven, 115, 127
 Rainier, Prince, 60
 Raisa, Rosa, 8
 Rameau, Jean-Philippe, 45, 58, 62
 quotation, 210
 Ramey, Samuel, 168
 Randall, Tony, 89
 Randle, Rodger, 116, 117
 Ratliff, Elwyn, 140
 Ravel, Maurice, 44, 56, 62
 Reading & Bates, 115, 116
 Reagan, Ronald, 113
 quotation, 159
 recital singing (vs. operatic singing), 148
 Reeder, Jimmy, 46
 Reese, Sarah, 196
 Refice, L., 8
 Reger, Max, 115
 Rennett, Günther, 111
Requiem (Durufié), 45, 87
Requiem (Fauré), 60, 71
 Pie Jesu, 71
Requiem (Mozart), 17, 87
Requiem (Verdi), 85, 101
 Rescigno, Nicola, 20, 195
 Respighi, Ottorino, 8
 Rethberg, Elizabeth, 6
 Reubke, Julius, 69
 Rhodes (Wolff), Mildred, 77, 97, 99, 100
 Richard Tucker Foundation, 162
 Richter, Sviatoslav, 64
 Ries, Joseph, 84
Rigoletto, 93, 99, 111, 121, 166, 186, 193
 Rimsky-Korsakov, Nicolai, 93
 Ringwald, Roy, 94, 103
 Ritz Hotel (Paris), 64
 Riverside Church (New York City), 47, 48, 73, 74
 Director of Music and Organist. *See* Swann, Frederick
 Rizley, Robert, 3, 164
 Rizley, Ross, 3
 Roads, Gene, 108, 185, 186
 Roark, Mr. and Mrs. Michael, 85
 Roark, Mrs. Ivan, 85
 Roark-Strummer, Linda, 71, 75, 83, 84, 86, 98, 128, 179, 188, 197
 as Feigen Scholar, 85
 Zenatello D'Argento Award, 85
 Robinson, James, 127
 Rockefeller, John D., Sr., 47
 Rodgers and Hammerstein, 106, 150
 Rodgers and Hart, 150
 Roger Wagner Chorale, The, 49
 Rogers, Will, 8, 29
 Rollo, David, 123
Romeo and Juliet (Gounod), 12
Romeo and Juliet (Prokofiev), 98
 Rooney, John, 105
 Roosevelt Junior High School (Oklahoma City), 1

- Roosevelt, Franklin D.
 quotation, 205
- Roosevelt, Mrs. Eleanor, 8
 quotation, 207
- Roosevelt, Theodore, 215
- Rosenfield, John Jr., 9
- Rosenstiel, Léonie, 56, 60
- Rosenstock, Joseph, 17
- Ross, Hugh, 20, 39, 50
- Ross, Stuart, 19
- Rossini, Gioacchino, 112, 171, 172, 180, 185
 quotation, 208
- Rotary Club, 51, 52, 106
- Rothschild's (Oklahoma City), 3
- Royal Festival Hall (London), 98
- Royal Opera House (Rome), 8
- Royal Opera House, Covent Garden. *See* Covent Garden.
- Royal Philharmonic Orchestra of London, 60
- Royal Swedish Opera Company, 128
- Rozsa, Bela, 82
- Rubenstein, Bernard, 121, 122, 123
- Rubinstein, Artur, 17
- Ruffner, Myrna Smart, 169, 170, 174, 198
- Ruhl, Jack, 50
- Ruprecht, Richard Steel, 175
- Russell, John, 102
- Ryan, Donald, 157
- Ryan, Frank, 125
- S**
- Sablon, Jean, 64
- Sacher Hotel (Vienna), 95
 Sacher Torte, 95
- Sahlman, Paul, 124
- Saied Music Company, 52
- Saied, James G., 52
- Saied, Robert, 52
- Saint-Saëns, Camille, 56, 71, 121
- Salle des Colonnes* (Palace of Fontainebleau), 64
- Salle du Jeu de Paume* (Palace of Fontainebleau), 58, 59, 63
- Salle Garnier* (Monte Carlo), 100
- Salter, Lewis S., 139
- Salzburg (Austria), 94, 96
- Salzburg Festival, 96
- Samson et Dalila* (Saint-Saëns), 121
- San Francisco Opera, 18, 71, 98, 111, 112, 196
 Merola Program, 18
- Sanditen, Janie, 93, 95
- Sayão, Bidú, 13
- Schenck, Janet, 22, 23
- Schmidt, Gregory, 182, 189, 190
- Schmidt, William, 6
- Schola Cantorum (New York City), 20
- Schroder, Wayne, 128
- Schubert, Franz, 94
- Schuller, Gunther, 50
- Schuller, Robert, 47
- Schultz, Ernest J., 10
- Schultz, Paul, 69
- Schuman, Charlotte, 169
- Schuman, William, 121
- Schumann, Robert, 59
- Schumann-Heink, Ernestine, 27, **26–28**
- Schweitzer, Albert, 17, 215, 216
- Scotto, Renata, 166
- Seabury-Western Theological Seminary, 136
- Seattle Pacific College, 137
- Sembrich, Marcella, 5, 19
- Sequoyah, 8
- Sessions, Roger, 211
- Setting Goals for Improvement. *See* Thoughts for Future Voice/Music Majors
- Seven Words of Christ, The* (The Passion) (Haydn), 71
- Seymour, Lynn, 98
- Shambaugh, Bill, 50
- Shambaugh, Dorothy, 50
- Sharp, Mr. and Mrs. Robert C., 70, 94
- Sharp, Robert B., 118
- Shaw, George Bernard
 quotation, 207, 208
- Shaw, Robert, 39
- Shellenbarger, Bill, 41
- Shelley, Percy Bysshe
 quotation, 214
- Shirey, Ronald, 3, 38
- Shore, Joseph, 87, 92, 93, 94
 Bruce Yarnell Memorial Award for Baritone, 93
 Gladys Axman-Taylor Memorial Award, 93
 WGN - Illinois Opera Guild National Award, 93
- Shostakovitch, Dmitri, 111
- Shrader, James, 182, 191
- Sid the Serpent Who Wanted to Sing* (Malcolm Fox), 158
- Sigma Alpha Iota (International Music Fraternity), **118–21**
 Patroness Chapter, 119
 Sigma Gamma Chapter, University of Tulsa, 119
 Tulsa Alumnae Chapter, 119, 120, 121
- Sills, Beverly, 33, 114, 194
- Silvey, Glenda, 178
- Simeone, Harry, 93
- Simmons, Mr. and Mrs. Larry, 87, 88
- Sinatra, Frank, 201, 204
- Singer, George, 169
- Singer, Martial, **14–16**, 15, 164
- Sirianni, Craig, 197
- Sister City. *See* Kaohsiung
- Skirvin Hotel Ballroom (Oklahoma City), 30, 40, 88
- Slovak Folk Songs* (arr. Bartók), 93

- Smareglia, A., 8
 Smith, Brooks, 18
 Smith, C. Ralston, 42
 Smith, Wayne, 84, 136
 Smithsonian Institution, 204
 Sneed, Jane (Mrs. James L.), 71, 193
 Sneed, Mr. and Mrs. James L., 88, 95
 Snell, Clark E., 1–5, 6, 14, 26, 27, 30, 192
 Snell, Ruth (sister of Clark E.), 30
 Snowden, James, 108
Solemn Vespers (Mozart), 71, 114
 Somogi, Judith, 60, 167
Sonata (Reubke), 69
 Sondheim, Stephen, 150
Sound of Music, The, 150
 Sousa, John Philip, 52, 117
South Pacific, 149, 150
 Southeastern Choral Conductors' Conference, 50
 Southern Hills Country Club, 50, 90, 117
 Southern Methodist University, 43
 Southwestern Oklahoma State University
 (Weatherford, Oklahoma), 112
 Souzay, Gérard, 62
 Soviero, Diana, 167, 194
 Sowerby, Leo, 113, 135, 137
 Spanish Trilogy, The (1992-93 Tulsa Opera season),
 171
 Spencer, Herbert
 quotation, 211
 Spindler, Nelle Garbutt, 139, 140
 Spohr, Ludwig, 153
 Spoleto Festival, 195
 St. Bartholomew's (New York City), 135
 St. Francis Hospital, 102
St. Germain des Prés, Boulevard de (Paris), 64
 St. John the Divine, Cathedral Church of (New York
 City), 43, 55, 136
 Music Director. *See* Wyton, Alec
 St. Louis, Opera Theater of, 76
 St. Luke's Church (Evanston, Illinois), 136
 St. Michael and All Angels Church (Dallas, Texas),
 137
 St. Nicholas, Church of (Amsterdam), 97
 St. Paul's Cathedral (London), 99
 St. Thomas Church (Leipzig), 94
St.-Sulpice, Église de (Paris), 65
 Staatsoper. *See* Vienna State Opera
 Staley, Thomas, 115
 Stan Kenton Orchestra, 126
 State Capitol (Oklahoma), 3, 88, 116, 169, 170
 Blue Room, 88, 116
 Supreme Court Wing, 169
 State Historical Society Building (Oklahoma), 3
 State Teachers College (West Chester,
 Pennsylvania), 32
 Steber, Eleanor, 12, 71
 Stein, Gertrude, 64
 Stein, Horst, 95
 Stellwagen, Kenton, 69
 Sterrenberg, Elsie W., 120
 Stevenson, Jim, 67
 Stewart Awards, 183
 Stewart, John, 183
 Stickle, Julia, 103
 Stivender, David, 10
 Stivenello, Tony, 160
 known as "Mr. Instant Opera", 160
 Stookey, C. M., 51, 52
 Strange, Marilyn, 112
 Stratas, Teresa, 180
 Strauss, Richard, 28, 44
 Stravinsky, Igor, 57, 65, 124
 Strayhorn, Billy, 200
 Streisand, Barbra, 202
 Strong, Diane, 126
 Strong, Edwin, 105, 106
 Strong, Edwin, Sr., 105
 Strummer, Peter, 85, 179, 187, 188
 Suez Canal, 102
 Summit Club (Tulsa), 70
 Sundgren, Mrs. Vincel, 114
Susanna, 88
 Sutliff, Richard, 108, 178
Swan Lake, 58
 Swann, Frederick, 45, 47, 48, 73
 Swearingen, Eugene, 124
 Szkafarowsky, Stefan, 178, 188
- T**
- Takazanckas, Albert, 179, 189
 TAMTA. *See* Tulsa Accredited Music Teachers
 Association
Taste of Elegance event at Greenwood Cultural
 Center, January 28, 2000, 157
 Taylor, Elizabeth, 60
Te Deum (Malmfors), 103
Te Deum (Persichetti), 114
Te Deum laudamus (Elgar), 72
 Teachers College, Columbia University, 24
 Tennyson, Alfred, Lord
 quotation, 207
 Teter, Loretta, 68
 Tetrizzini, Luisa, 19
 Texaco Oil Company, 156
 Texas, University of, 128
 Teyte, Maggie, 13
 Thomas, Ambroise, 30
 Thomas, John Charles, 6, 29, 36
 Thomas, Paul Lindsley, 137
 Thompson, Chris, 64, 65
 Thompson, Robert J., 113
 Thomson, Virgil, 56

quotation, 207
 Thoreau, Henry David
 quotation, 211
 Thornton, C. E. "Charlie", 115
 Thoughts for Future Voice/Music Majors, **131–34**
 Choosing Your Music Professor, 133
 Conservatory or School of Music
 Which is Right for You?, 132
 Planning Your Audition, 131
 Setting Goals for Improvement, 134
 Tibbett, Lawrence, 5, 6, 9
 Times Square (New York City), 37
Tocatta and Fugue in D minor (Bach), 69
 Todd, Aileen, 71, 83, 91, 94
 Todd, Aileen and Harry, 95, 97
 Toklas, Alice B., 64
 Toms, John, 83, 107, 109
 Torres, Virginia, 192
 Toscanini, Arturo, 20, 30, 163
 Tourel, Jennie, 12
 Trammell, Brenda, 104
 Traubel, Helen, 17
 Travel Designs, 94, 99, 100
 Treanor, Aline Jean, 35
 Trenet, Charles, 64
 Trenton, New Jersey, 37
 Trinity Episcopal Church (Tulsa), 40, 44, 74, 136
Trio (Mendelssohn), 111
 Trio Tulsa, 111
Tristan und Isolde, 142
 Troy, Frosty, 110
 Troyanos, Tatiana, 111, 168
 Truman, Harry S., 3
 Tsolainou, Constantina, 180, 190
 Tucci, Gabriella, 161
 Tucker, Barry, 162
 Tucker, Richard, 161, 162
 Tulsa Accredited Music Teachers Association
 (TAMTA), 46, **139–41**
 Tulsa Civic Ballet, 46, 84, 178
 Tulsa Club, 43, 70
 Tulsa County Historical Society, 178
 Tulsa Global Trade Foundation
 Operation Breakthrough Banquet, 122
 Tulsa Little Theater, 41
 Tulsa Opera, **160–91**
 Fiftieth Anniversary "gala concert", 179, 188
 first participation of LS with, 160
 LS Chorus Master for, 68, 78, 85, 107, 112, 121,
 151, 161, 164, 166, 170, 177, 182, 185, 186,
 198
 LS declared "The Honorary Lifetime Chairman of
 the Chorus" by Board of Directors, 182
 LS's final opera, *Faust*, 174
 Tulsa Opera Board of Directors, 103, 158, 159, 163,
 164, 168, 169, 172, 173, 182

Tulsa Opera Chorus, 75, 80, 102, 104, 107, 108,
 121, 154, 157, 158, 160, 168, 171, 177, 179, 182,
 199
Tulsa Opera Chronicles, 160, 185
 Tulsa Opera Guild. *See* Guild of Tulsa Opera
 Tulsa Opera's Youth Opera, 158, 190
 Tulsa Performing Arts Center, 81, 101, 102, 106,
 114, 123, 204
 Chapman Music Hall, 106, 109, 123
 Gala Grand Opening, 101
 Tulsa Philharmonic, 11, 64, 82, 87, 88, 101, 106,
 108, 109, 116, 121, 122, 123, 125, 189, 204
 Tulsa Philharmonic String Orchestra, 116
 Tulsa Town Hall Society, 114
Tulsa Tribune, 107, 109, 118
 Tulsa Trio, 111
Tulsa World, 44, 45, 46, 78, 118, 121, 157, 199
 Tulsa, University of, 14, 45, 46, 49, 55, 68, 74, 75,
 78, 80, **82–130**, 136, 139, 140, 166
 Kendall Hall ("new"), 84, 89
 Kendall Hall ("new") Auditorium, 89
 Kendall Hall ("old"), 83
 KWGS (FM radio station), 89
 Leta M. Chapman Theater, 89
 LS departure from, 128
 Modern Choir, 88, 89, 90, 93, 102, 104, 105, 106,
 109, 110, 113, 117, 118, 119, 120, 122, 125,
 127, 129
 Parents' Day, 109
 Sharp Chapel, 87, 94, 105, 115, 125
 Showcase Concert, 82
 Student Activities Building, 45, 82
 Tyrrell Hall Auditorium, 84
 University Chorale, 91, 94, 103, 104, 107, 108,
 114, 121, 125, 129
 Turner, Eva, 4, 6, 12, 36
 Turner, Jeannette, 163, 164, 166, 192, 193
 Turner, Roy J. (Oklahoma Governor), 2
 Twyman, President J. Paschal (University of Tulsa),
 87, 89, 103, 106, 109, 115, 117, 122, 124
 death of, at Lake Hudson ranch home, 124

U

Union Theological Seminary (New York City), 47,
 135
 University Chorale. *See* Tulsa, University of
 University of Arkansas (Fayetteville, Arkansas), 51
 University of British Columbia
 Shore, Joseph and, 93
 University of Colorado, 36, 53, 127
 University of Michigan, 68, 91, 119
 University of North Carolina
 Shore, Joseph and, 93
 University of Oklahoma. *See* Oklahoma, University
 of.
 University of Texas A Cappella Choir, 50

- University of Tulsa. *See* Tulsa, University of.
 University of Tulsa Showcase Concert. *See* Tulsa,
 University of
 University of Tulsa Symphony Orchestra, 125
 Unruh, Paula, 122
 Uzan, Bernard, 168, 188, 189
- V**
- Valéry, François, 63
 Valéry, Paul, 63
 Valletti, Cesare, 160
 Vancouver Opera, 76
 Vander Lind, James R., 109, 110
 Vaughan, Sarah, 201
 Vaughn, Clayton, 178
 Venice, Italy, 160
 Verdi, Giuseppe, 23, 41, 74, 85, 87, 93, 98, 99, 100,
 101, 102, 121, 127, 142, 144, 145, 153, 168, 174
 Verona, Arena di (Verona, Italy), 85
 Vesely, Carrie, 155
 Vienna, 94, 95
 Vienna State Opera, 85, 94, 95
 Visconti, Luchino, 145
 Vivaldi, Antonio, 125
 Volkman, Elizabeth, 118
 Vronsky, Vitja, 18
 Vunovich, Nancy, 83, 89
- W**
- Wagley, Richard, 47
 Wagner, Charles L., 14, 29–37
 Wagner, Richard, 17, 112, 142, 153
 Wagner, Roger, 39, 49
 Wald, Arno, 84
 Walker, Danna Sue, 157
Wall Street Journal, 168
 Wallace, Jean, 71, 84
 Wallace, Milton, 93
 Walser, Lloyd Alan, 10
 Walter, Bruno, 31
 Walters, David (Oklahoma Governor), 169
 Walton, William, 42, 50
 War Memorial Opera House (San Francisco), 112
 Ward, Robert, 178, 186
 Waring, Fred, 87
 Warren, W. K., 102
 Washington Cathedral (Washington, D. C.), 112
 Washington Opera, 76, 168, 183
Washington Post, 113
 Watkins, Lois, 43, 44, 45
 Watkins, Mark, 103, 104
 Watson, Buddy, 110
 Watts, James D., Jr., 157
 Weaver, John Knowles, 139
 Weber, Carl Maria von, 153
 Weeks, James, 104, 107, 194
 Weill, Kurt, 150
 Weisgall, Hugo, 76
 Westenburg, Richard, 127
 Westgate, Charles, 45
 Westminster Choir College, 137
 WGN - Illinois Opera Guild National Award. *See*
 Shore, Joseph
 Wheeler, Ron, 123
 White House, 8, 113, 215, 216, 217
 letter from, 176
 Whitehand Hall (University of Oklahoma), 9
 Whitney, Gerald, 38, 41
 Widor, Charles-Marie, 56
 Wilkerson, Steve, 126
 Williams Plaza Hotel, 110, 114
 Williams, C. A., 100
 Williams, David McK., 135
 Williams, Jack, 71, 83, 100, 160, 185, 197
 Williams, Joseph H., 90
 Williams, Mrs. John H., 114
 Williams, Ralph Vaughan, 83
 Wilson, Harry Robert, 24, 39
 Wilson, Woodrow, 13
 quotation, 207
 Wiseman, Mavis (Mrs. William J.), 66, 79
 Wiseman, William Johnston, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71,
 72, 73, 79, 80, 115, 124
 and First Presbyterian Church (Tulsa) Centennial
 Celebration, 78
 Chancel Choir Lenten Concert dedicated to, upon
 his announced retirement, 71
 installation as Dean of Chapel at T.U., 115
 Witherspoon, Herbert, 4–5
 Wood, Mary Stuart, 77
 Woodard, Mr. and Mrs. John R., III, 91
 Woodward, Kenn, 118
 Wroblewski, Patryk, 182, 187, 188, 189, 190
 Wu Chung-Ling, 114
 Wyton, Alec, 43, 55
- Y**
- Yannopoulos, Dino, 160
 Yeagan, Michael, 178, 187
 Youmans, Vincent, 126
 Young Presidents' Organization, Tulsa Chapter, 117
 Youngstown Symphony, 93
- Z**
- Zeffirelli, Franco, 94, 95, 145
 Zenatello D'Argento Award. *See* Roark-Strummer,
 Linda
 Ziegfeld Follies, 29
 Zink, Mrs. John Steele, 182