National Conference on Keyboard Pedagogy

Friday, July 20, 2001
Hyatt Regency Oak Brook
Oak Brook, Illinois

"On the Future of Music in America"

Dr. Robert Freeman
Dean, College of Fine Arts
The University of Texas at Austin

Fifteen years ago, at a meeting of the Music Teachers National Association in Dearborn, I offered a paper entitled, "On the Survival of Music in America," which apparently made a lasting impression on your executive director, Marvin Blickenstaff. Flattered when he called several months ago to invite a similar paper here, I began reflecting on the message I had delivered several years ago, imagining at the onset that I would try to recycle what I had said on that occasion. But I quickly came to the conclusion that what I had thought on the subject 15 years ago is not really relevant to the future of our new century, for a good deal, both positive and negative, has happened in the past 15 years.

In the mid-1980's, having completed 15 years as Eastman School director, I had become very much concerned that the wonderful institution I then directed with such pride was not really a school dedicated to the future of music in America, as George Eastman would have wished, but rather an institution in which we presented a broad array of tangentially related musical subjects, including the mastery of Paganini Caprices and Chopin Etudes, the dating and attribution of 18th century manuscripts through watermark and handwriting analysis, the production of ever better oboe and bassoon reeds, the development of better lesson plans for the enhancement of instrumental programs in the 8th grade, and the creation of yet more sophisticated Schenkerian analysis. My concern was not with the quality of the work accomplished, which seemed to me very high, but rather with the fact that too little thought was being given to the demand side of the supply-demand equation for good music in America.

Eastman and the other leading schools of music were doing a wonderful job producing technically and artistically very well prepared artists for a nation in which the demand for their services seemed negligible, and at best static. Many of the nation's symphony orchestras were experiencing widening budget gaps. Public school music was in a state of disarray all over the country. The role music played on television, on the radio, and in the printed press was in national retreat. And the nation's leading music schools appeared generally to ignore the fact that, while we were making rapid progress toward better and better prepared young artists, there appeared to be concomitantly less interest in hearing them, except for half a dozen large population centers on the east and west coasts. The result appeared to be rising fees for a smaller and smaller number of international celebrities, the progressive disappearance of concert music in the American heartland from the Alleghenies to the Sierras, and the continuing probability that all but a very few of the fine young artists the nation's professional schools were producing would end up hating music, leaving the field, or both. It seemed to me vital in those days that those of us whose faculties were in charge of the development of the curricula of such institutions give thought as to how we might teach music so as to include the development of skills among our young artists that would encourage them to seek broader professional goals than Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center. I said all of this partly because of my own moral qualms in overseeing the production of apparently unneeded artists, partly because I have always believed that music, properly conceived, can be an inspiring force - for the composers, the performers, and especially for their audiences.

Fortunately, a good deal has changed since the spring of 1986, and many of the changes are positive. The development of super titles for opera, making it possible for the audience to follow a running English translation of what takes place on stage, thus transforms opera from sung concert in costume and in a foreign language, to music drama, with music in support of love and lust, good and evil, friendship and rage, mercy and violence, charity an deceit, all matters of great interest to human beings. As a result, the number and the success of American opera houses has been growing, and increasing numbers of new works, often on a very high artistic level, have been commissioned.

Chamber music, too, has been an area of apparent growth - partly perhaps because of the quality of the repertory, partly because of the cost-effectiveness of touring smaller rather than larger ensembles, and partly, I think, because of the visual appeal of a process in which watching the performers in action seems often to help an aural understanding of what is taking place musically. The Rural Chamber Music Residency Programs invented by the National Endowment for the Arts and administered in the meantime by Chamber Music America have helped dispel the myth that chamber music by Beethoven and Brahms is for elitists only. Because such residencies, established for periods of one to three years, have helped demonstrate the fact that audiences are all different - why should the culture of a community of 2,000 Iowa corn farmers have much to do with a culture of a comparably sized town of unemployed Kentucky coal miners? - young musicians have begun to think about the needs of their audiences. This has led a long way from the days when musicians offered programs of the 18th, 19th, and 20th century classics to reflection on the kinds of music that might be attractive in the varying communities where young artists will be performing, thus increasing congruence between the needs of the artists and their audiences, a vital matter for anyone who wishes to be reinvited.

While there are fewer newspapers and fewer music critics, many of the orchestras appear to be experiencing the ongoing budgetary problems that afflicted them decade or two ago. While there is much more dance and much more world music offered in major concert venues all over the United States, the amount of concert music on television remains distressingly small. Despite the multiplication in the past 20 years of cable networks, what are we to think about our persuasive powers as music teachers when so many PBS stations raise money through televised concerts of Lawrence Welk, Yanni, and the Three Tenors?

Radio is a more mixed picture. During the three years I spent as President of the New England Conservatory, 1996-1999, I though it would be relatively easy as an ex officio trustee of WGBH to develop a new program of music from the 20th century. My working title was "Special of the Month," and involved the notion that, at the end of each of the 12 months, one Greater Boston artistic institution after another would present an important work from the century just concluding. When you think about the fact that Greater Boston includes not only the Boston Symphony and the Conservatory, but Harvard, MIT, Brandeis, Wellesley, Boston University, Tufts, the Museum of Fine Arts, the Celebrity Series, the Modern Orchestra Project, the Boston Lyric Opera, the Boston Ballet, the Longy School, and the Gardiner Museum, for example, one understands that there is plenty of talent to draw on. My idea was that, by way of preparation for live performances of important 20th century masterworks at the end of each month, the audience, at the same time in each preceding week of the month would hear a recorded performance of the piece later to be performed live, introduces by two minutes of spoken commentary from one Greater Boston musical expert after another, each generously compensated and with a competition at the end of the series in which the audience voted on the commentator whose verbal introduction provided the best gateway to the work at hand. Though I offered to produce such a weekly series at the expense of the Conservatory, there was no discernible interest, despite the fact that most of the educational and cultural institutions of Greater Boston belong too WGBH's Lowell Institute.

We were more successful, as the result of the energy and imagination of Gerald Slavet, an NEC trustee, in helping get the new PRI program, "From the Top," off the ground. With Christopher O'Riley as host, this weekly hour-long show features adolescents from all over the country, who perform, as composers, soloists and as parts of small ensembles, five- or six-minute musical movements, after which they are interviewed by host O'Riley. The point is not only to give national exposure to the best of the country's remarkable young musical performers but to make an ongoing demonstration of the fact that our best performers are not nerd s and geeks but articulate, hardworking, and dedicated young men and women of various racial backgrounds, the bedrock of the nation's future. To this point my favorite performer has been a young black soprano from central Massachusetts who sang a Mozart concert aria just beautifully, I thought, before being interviewed with her track coach. It developed that she was not only a very promising young artist but also an athlete who could run the 200-yard dash twice as fast as any other person in her age group anywhere in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. O'Riley focused the conversation on an attempt to determine whether the soprano's work on Mozart and breath control helped her running or whether her work as a young athlete helped her music making. Not surprisingly, O'Riley and the soprano came to the conclusion that each helped the other.

While commenting on special developments on the airwaves, we should throw a bouquet or two, I think, to NPR's "Performance Today," which tries to provide an overview of performance activities all over the United States, and to two good music stations at that, experimenting with new formats, believe that oral commentary in advance of the music can broaden and deepen the listening experience. WFMT in Chicago and KMFA in Austin are both producing programs that are much more imaginative than anything I hear on either the east of west coast. Dan Welcher's "Knowing the Score," a weekly hour-long introduction to music of the 20th century, deserves to be nationally syndicated in m y view, as does John Ailley's "Eklektikos," a daily production of Austin's KUT in which musical works of widely differing styles an genres are juxtaposed and commented on in a fashion that seeks linkages between disparate entities. Douglas Dempster's recent article in Harmony, the periodical of Paul Judy's Symphony Orchestra Institute, a think tank dedicated to the preservation and enhancement of the American symphony orchestra, draws our attention to the fact that, in an American of two wage earners per family and with lots of competition for each family's leisure time, listening to music is apt to go on much more in the home and especially in the automobile, while commuting, than while sitting in the kind of auditorium that the 19th and 20th centuries rejoiced in.

In the days of my childhood, in Rochester, New York, both "jazz" and "band" were four letter works in Howard Hanson's Eastman School of Music, as they were in every other leading American music school of the time. But by the late 1960's j azz programs had developed at Eastman and Indiana, and by the turn of the new century there were jazz programs at Juilliard and at the Paris Conservatory. And, under the leadership of Wynton Marsalis and his program at Lincoln Center, jazz during the past decade has begun to be treated as a classical music of its own, with masterworks by such innovators of the past as Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, and Thelonius Monk preserved for the future with the kinds of techniques derived from the earlier study of symphonic repertories, all to the discomfiture of a number of the country's leading jazz performers and teachers, who see the effort to classicize jazz as an effort to codify in too normative a fashion artistic processes that are better left free, improvisatory, and developing. Tough in High Brow, Low Brow, Lawrence Levine a decade ago separated cultures of high art (classical work worthy of preservation) and mass art (simpler, mostly louder material whose half life not more than a year), it is clear in t he past 15 years that the gap between these two worlds has been progressively narrowing. A look at the annual repertory lists of the nation's major presenters - Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, Kennedy Center, Tanglewood, Blossom, Ravinia, and the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, for example, all give evidence of a much broader selection of music repertories, from both high and mass cultures, than was generally available in a single venue a generation ago. The voracious musical appetites of such men as Leonard Bernstein and Friedrich Gulda, unusually eclectic at the time they lived, now seem much more normal, given the presence among us not only of the Kronos and Turtle Island Quartets, but Yo Yo Ma's ongoing collaborative efforts with such artists as fiddler Mark O'Conner and double bassist Edgar Meyer and now the impressive work fostered by his Silk Road Project, a testament to his continual search for new ways to communicate with audiences. Given the exceptionally rapid recent development of new technologies, and especially given the efforts of major recording corporations and distributors to control the use of the Internet against a broader distribution of all kinds of music, it is difficult to foretell as we begin the new millennium how broadly the availability of new technologies will impact music's future in a world that is getting smaller very rapidly.

Certainly, the situation of music in America's public schools is more promising than it was 15 years ago. Though teachers are still not well enough paid and though they continue to lack the recognition that I believe they deserve from the rest of the society, there are many more funded openings for music teachers in the schools than there were 15 years ago, and I believe there is growing recognition of the fact that people who teach music in the nation's public schools cannot accomplish much unless the musical standards of such teachers are supported at a very high level. During my days as New England Conservatory president I did my best to further a four-way collaboration that involved the Boston Symphony, the New England Conservatory, the Boston school system, and WGBH - towards a broader, more persuasive role for music in Boston's public schools. But while the idea of such collaboration was a good one and though the person leading the collaboration was a young woman of high intelligence and integrity, it was very difficult to make the project an effective one. Only a very small number of Boston Symphony members were sensitive to the need for such activity, and an even smaller number felt comfortable appearing in a classroom with eight- or nine-year-old children. Though the Conservatory offered a series of classes for BSO members designed to help facilitate the involvement of a broader number of players, artist faculty of the Conservatory felt they knew as much as they needed to about teaching, and weren't very much interested in the development of dialogue with those responsible in the institution for music education. And while the superintendent of schools seemed interested in music's potential contribution to the evolving cognitive capacity of his students, he was reluctant to invest discretionary money of his own in the development of the program. For my own part, I must admit profound discouragement to the fact that, when we presented each spring 15 or 16 musical groups of second and third graders, for five minutes each in Jordan Hall, one group was superb, two were passable, and the balance simply terrible, in my view, as musical experiences, for those participating. Put another way, I had the sinking feeling that, given the very low level of musical attainment, the superintendent was possibly right in withholding funds, for those responsible for the music teaching too often made the performance of music an experience that the majority of students would flee. Repertory that is out of tune, not together, and uninformed by any notion of musical architecture cannot produce a very satisfying result from the student's point of view, an outcome that seems to me inevitable if too many of the teachers responsible for the instruction are incapable of continuingly hard work towards high artistic results. And this, it seems to me, is an inevitable result if too many of those going into public school music teaching think of themselves at the outset as failed aspirants towards the roles of Itzak Perlman, Renee Fleming, and Sir Gerog Solti. To this end the ongoing work of such neurobiologists as Norman Weinberger (University of California, Irvine) and Mark Tramo, Gottfried Schlaug, and Michael Charness (all of the Harvard Medical School) bear enthusiastic support in the decades immediately ahead. Anecdotally, it seems to many of us as though there must be a cause and effect relationship between the abilities, fostered by music study, to listen, to work hard, to take risks, and to focus, on the one hand, and those abilities required of general academic work on the other. While thus far it has not been possible to establish the kind of causal relationship that some of u s think must exist, I have every conviction that the sort of work represented by those just listed will inevitably lead, within a generation to a much better and more positive understanding of the role that well informed and dedicated musical instruction might have for the population as a while on the development of human cognition, self esteem, and the ability to work together. Note should be taken in this connection of work done thus far in Eastman’s Arts Leadership Program, developed so ably during the past decade by my new Texas colleague, Douglas Dempster, by the Doris Duke Foundation (“seeking to make the arts a more integral part of daily life”) by the Gregor Piatigorsky Foundation, by the Midori Foundation, and by the Leila Wallace Foundation, among others. The spread during the past generation of community music schools and Richard D. Colburn’s recent initiation of a foundation in support of increasing musical literacy are both developments of fundamental importance in my view. During my days in Boston, Michael Charness, a fine pianist who began his medical career as a specialist in the muscoloskeletal arena before going on to his present focus in neurobiology, told me that, while the long hours of practice put in during adolescence by such artists as Leon Fleischer and Gary Grafman may have contributed to their problems with focal dystonia, Charness believes that his own best preparation at the piano comes from a regimen that involves 90 minutes in the morning, 90 minutes in the afternoon, and an hour after dinner, before getting to bed at 9:00 or 10:00 pm. Said Charness, “If I have practiced the piano with close attention to what I am doing, even for three or four hours a day, when I go to bed at night my brain will teach my fingers how to negotiate the most difficult passages." If anything remotely like that is true, think of the implications for the future training and education of pianists, for example.

Thus far, I have focused on what seem to me important developments in the musical world over the course of the past 15 years or so. In concluding, I'd like to list what seem to me important desiderata for the future.

1. We should be much more open to change in future collegiate curricula, bearing in mind as we do so the severe imbalance between supply an demand for good music in America, the imperative that we should be preparing young artists for useful lives in the societies they serve, and of the very important role that music could play in the lives of many more people were we to give more thoughtful consideration to what we are trying to accomplish. The repertories of the several acoustical instruments are not equally deep or equally difficult, though our collegiate programs of instruction normally treat them as though they were. Pianists and violinists have often been at work at their instruments from the age of five or six, while singers, for example, have often not considered the possibility of performing a work of music prior to the age of 17 or 18. Some young musicians have very good preliminary training in theory and solfege, many others do not. Some young musicians have had a good deal of experience in large and small ensembles before they reach music school, but many others have not. Some young musicians have learned to work with diligence and focus by the time they are 17 or 18, but a great many have not. Some young people have very good aural skills, though most young musicians appear not to. Some young musicians have had not only excellent training on their instruments but very good general education as well, though this is by not means true for the vast majority of students in NASM schools. Having spent nearly 20 years as Eastman director before I began to think about curricular reform, my work with a faculty that trusted me made much greater progress towards treating each student as an individual than I was able to attain at the New England Conservatory, where I may have well have tried, in what seemed to me the

institution's best interests, to move too rapidly towards curricular reform. There are all sorts of things that seem to me very attractive indeed at the University of Texas at Austin - including my colleagues, the facilities, the absence of winter, and the openness to interdisciplinary instruction. But I am especially impressed by the very good work that has already taken place there on the development of varying curricular tracks as a way of optimizing the educational experience and life outcomes of an inevitably broad array of different kinds of human beings. In UT's College of Fine Arts we are proud that in the past year one of our alumni was appointed the new principal trumpet of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra while a graduate of our Theater Department won an Oscar for her role as Best Supporting Actress in Pollock. But we are equally proud of an organist who took an undergraduate degree with Bill Doty and a UT master's degree in music history before finishing his academic studies at the University of Michigan with a DMA in organ - and who was recently appointed Chancellor of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Music school directors and fine arts deans must of course, pay attention to the idiosyncratic histories of the educational institutions whose work they try to lead. But in doing so it is vital for us all to dream together of the much more positive impact that music of all kinds could have on America were we to think together about how best to accomplish that goal.

2.Towards that end we should reflect together, I think, on the possibility of restructuring our musical society. Is it really a good idea that we try to lead the vast majority of our young artists to dream of a career in performance, all over the world, on a series of one-night stands? (How deeply ingrained this is in our way of thinking about values can be inferred from our use of the noun "residency" as a label for a one-night stand that has been extended, through two or three additional appearances, to a long weekend, say.) Wouldn't it make more sense for us to prepare half, say, of our young musicians to be the head of music in Amarillo, Texas, Springfield, Illinois, or Youngstown, Ohio, for example? To be sure, one would need not only to be able to play or sin g at a very high professional level, but to teach - both one's instruments and musical literacy generally, to speak intelligently for two or three minutes, in advance of any piece on the program, to conduct, and to foster the development of music as an art in the town of one's residence. J.S. Bach and Robert Schumann held such positions. To be sure, men and women successfully holding such would need not only be excellent performers but fine teachers as well. And I suppose that they would need to understand something of the art of presenting as well as something about public relations, accounting and interpersonal relations. While it would be difficult for a student at Juilliard, Curtis, or San Franscisco, say, to attain such expertise, it ought not to be in such large American institutions as Indiana, Northwestern, or Texas, for example. Put another way, wouldn't it make sense for us to develop a series of young people whose principal goal in life was to expand American demand for good music?

3. Matthias Voigt, director of the Saxon Institute for Cultural Infrastructure in Gorlitz, told me the first time I met him that, "... since Bismarck's time, there has never been a single Marck in a federal German budget in support of the arts." When I expressed surprise, Vogt quickly went on the say that there was in fact a great deal of support, but that it all came in the budgets of the individual Lander and cities. Vogt, professionally trained as a music historian, has spent the last generation studying the varying fiscal histories of local support for the arts in Germany, from Bismarck's time through that of the Weimar Republic, through the Third Reich, to Adenauer and reunification. What is striking, Vogt told me, is that some German provinces and cities are much more generous to the arts than are others, and in every case the driving force appears to be neither per capita income nor the level of higher education but avocational activity. "In those parts of Germany where people love to sing in church choirs, to play in town bands, and to perform chamber music home for their friends on weekends, there is strong fiscal support for the work of artistic professionals." It that is true in the United States as it is in Germany, the recent founding of the Van Cliburn Avocational Competition for Pianists is the sort of American event I would like to see multiplied. While the Cliburn International is held every four years, the Cliburn Avocational is held in each of the other three years of a four-year cycle, and with two principal rules: minimum age for participation, 35; and participation open only for those who make their living in some area other than music. Imagine an American musical culture in which we paid much more attention than we presently do to

fostering the work of avocational performers. I had no idea, 15 years ago in Rochester, when Roy Ernst asked me for a go ahead to create what he described as the New Horizons Band, that such activities would spread so rapidly all over the country, additional evidence of the joy that humanity takes from participation, under inspiring leadership, in musical performance. For the New Horizons ensembles I stipulated three conditions: minimum age 55, minimal previous musical instruction, and a doctor's certificate! And while we're at it, why don't we give more thought than we presently do to a more fruitful interaction between the professional and avocational musical aspects of communities all over America? When an orchestra has an annual budget of $40 million, it is in fact probably inconceivable that there would be much avocational involvement, especially among instrumentalists. But in a community that wants to have an orchestra, but is unwilling to support an annual budget of more than $2 or 3 million, the interaction of the professional and avocational communities is not only desirable but also necessary.

4. While during the 1940's, Petrillo and the American Federation of Musicians saw the mechanical reproduction of music as a terrible threat to the future of professional music making, we have now arrived at a time when more music is more broadly available to more people than at any previous time in the history of the world. Almost all of this music is performed elect ronically rather than acoustically, and the technologies for the presentation and instruction of music that have resulted from these evolving technologies are hardly less than stupefying. Think of the difference between 1955, when there was no complete recording of Wagner's Siegfried and the present, where one can devise lectures that compare different versions of the musical performance of the same eight measures, as performed in 1910, 1940, 1980, and 2000, for example. Think about what Robert Winter has been able to accomplish with his CD-ROM projects. Think of the ease through which a broad variety of musical principles can be encountered through the new technologies. (I have just reviewed with much pleasure the impressive CD-ROM History of Jazz on which my Texas colleague, Richard Lawn, is working on for McGraw Hill.) Think about what my colleague Darlene Wiley, Professor of Voice at the University of Texas, is able to accomplish in terms of distance

learning, all over the Lone Star State, through an ingenious juxtaposition of video monitors, spectroscopes of the voices of famous singers, and computers - helping vocal instruction on a broad basis all over Texas. Or think of the project on which I am working with respect to the renovation of the University of Texas's Hogg Auditorium, a 1200 seat concert hall built in 1933 that, by the time we are finished with it, will have, as at the Metropolitan Opera, a video screen for half of the seats in the house, each equipped, as on a major airline, with half a dozen channels for the instruction of interactive listening. As some of you already know, Deutsche Grammophone has already developed a program as the result of which the score scrolls past on he video screen while the music unfolds on stage. Imagine separate channels for beginning, intermediate, and advanced listeners. The technology, I'm told, is easy. What we do not have, at least as yet, is the content. In Bach's time it took Anna Magdalena and the students of the Thomasschule a week or 10 days to complete a set of parts for next Sunday's performance. These days it takes a composer but a push of a button to persuade the computer to produce a complete set of orchestral parts, without error of any kind! At Texas we are about to build a dormitory for 400 students, in which engineers and arts majors are allocated space on a 50-50 basis. Think of where that opportunity will take us.

5. And, finally, why have we given our students so little encouragement towards the building of future audiences? At Eastman, my then colleagues Barbara Butler and Charles Geyer, during the early 1990's, took what seems to me an exceptionally imaginative initiative, requiring that each of their trumpet majors invited, at least once each semester, some other student from the University of Rochester who had never previously attended a concert of classical music to do so as the trumpet student's guest. Said Professors Butler and Geyer, "It doesn't matter whether your guest sits next to you in the concert or whether you are on the stage and your guest sits in the audience. What matters is that afterwards you take your guest out for a sandwich and a cup of coffee and that you gain from your guest his or her reaction to the concert. Find out which aspects of the performance he or she liked best, and which least. Find our whether the program notes were useful and, if not, what kinds of instruction your guest might like on future occasions. Try to discover, too, whether your guest would like to

attend more kinds of concerts of the type just experienced, or other kinds of concerts, of different repertory, perhaps. And, then, you will be obliged to write a two-page paper outlining what you learned from the experience. We believe it would be helpful for all of the trumpet students to discuss their experiences with one another. Naturally, we will continue to teach you how to play the Second Brandenburg Concerto, the Hindemith Sonata, Pictures at an Exhibition, and Petroushka, just as we always have. But if you had been about to receive a straight A for your performance in those repertories and you failed to participate in our audience development project, you will receive an A- for the semester." As a result, a new culture developed among the trumpet students.

At the University of Texas, however, where we have an enrollment of 50,000 students, 2500 of whom are arts majors, under the leadership of a remarkable young entrepreneur named Jennifer Job, a member of this fall's sophomore class, we have developed a system through which arts concentrators invite non-arts concentrators in their own dormitories for dates that begin an hour before a concert or a play, with a statement of context by a relevant member of the faculty at an informal get-together of the students that involves soft drinks and pizza, followed by the artistic presentation itself. As you can imagine, I can see no reason why similar cultures can't be developed, with minimal expense, on the campuses of every American university whose enrollment includes both arts and non-arts majors. At a recent opening in Austin of paintings by master's degree candidates in art, Ms. Job handed a series of assignments to each of 60 or 70 students in attendance. The assignment for a student with whom I was chatting read something as follows, "There are 100 paintings in the exhibit your are about to look at. Please try to pick out one painting that would appeal most to your parents, for suitable hanging in a prominent place in their home. Be prepared in the social session that follows to discuss why you believe your parents would likely make the choice you have identified." Part of the problem with the arts in American, or so it seems to me, is that too many American believe that the arts are for someone else. What my young friends in Austin are working at is the persuasion of their non-artistic colleagues that each of them is in fact entitled to an artistic point of view.

In summary, I'd like to stress what seems to me the high importance for a young musician of as broad as possible an education and training in music. In a limited number of cases, I suppose, this will have to take place at the expense of the breadth of a person's general education, for some people are much less verbal than others. But I believe that we think too little about music, about musical instruction, and about music perception, and that as a result, we focus too much on the careers of performers rather than on our roles, like the late Leonard Bernstein, as teachers and as broadeners of the importance of music in people's lives. We should treat each student as an individual with a unique series of talents, dreams, and possibilities. We should stop thinking pejoratively of "academic" studies and should focus rather on the importance of how to think, to read, to write, and to speak persuasively to others. Computer literacy is also of central importance for the future, I believe. In teaching music we should learn to help each of our students think that what he has accomplished is not simply the ability to perform the Waldstein Sonata of the Brahms B-flat Concerto, but rather the ability to work hard on enhancing beauty and perfection, to focus narrowly, to perform under pressure, to collaborate with others, to take risks, and to communicate with the rest of humanity.

I close with a story not about musicians but about music, heard at a time in Rochester, perhaps eight years ago, when I spoke at the dedication of a new organ in one of Rochester's Roman Catholic churches. Fortunately, I was not the only person who spoke, and thus I had the opportunity to be inspired by the words of Bishop Matthew Clark. He spoke of the recent death of his mother, as follows: "I am one of several sons and daughters, and among my siblings there are two other priests. Our father had died several years before, and our mother was gravely ill with a very painful kind of cancer. We were all summoned to be present for our mother's passing and, understandably, we all gathered around her bedside. She was in great pain and her breathing was tortured. Led by the three priests in the family, we all prayed for her passing. But she did not die. Then one of my sisters had what seemed to us an inspired idea. She suggested that we join hands around our mother's bedside and sing gently to her some of the songs that she had taught us when we were children. We began with "You Are My

Sunshine." By the time we came to the end of the first verse, our mother's breathing had become quieter and more relaxed. And by the conclusion of the second verse, she had died. We all looked at each other, and then we all looked above, as one of my sisters said, 'music is a very special gift of God to humanity.'"

As you prepare your students for the next round of competitions, my message echoes that of Bishop Clark's sister. Please remember that music is a very special gift and that it is towards the broadened role of music in the lives of human beings that we must work. That should be the goal of all of our instruction. If we are true to that, there is a great deal we can all accomplish.

Music's role in America has changed in many ways during the past 15 years, I think. The most wonderful thing about the opportunity to teach, especially an art like music, is that there is manifold opportunity in the years ahead to make even greater progress towards the goal that inspires us all.

Thank you.

"All proceedings are copyright Frances Clark Center for Keyboard Pedagogy, 2001-2002. All rights reserved."