

THE COLLECTIVE INSPIRATION PROJECT

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THE MUSIC EDUCATORS OF BERGEN COUNTY, INC.
DR. MALLORY THOMPSON & DR. JOHN P. LYNCH, CLINICIANS

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PREFACE

Next year will be my 30th year of teaching and conducting. In this time, I've had an incalculable number of positive experiences. Many times over, I have reflected on the people who have helped create the fabric of my personal and professional journey. The contributors to this project are among many who have truly made a difference in my life.

This year we celebrate the 20th time that we gather for the Wind Conducting Symposium. I am very proud of this event, which I founded in 1987, with Mallory Thompson as clinician. It has now been sponsored for many years by the Music Educators of Bergen County, Inc. We took a few years off after 1996 when Mallory took the helm as Director of Bands at Northwestern University, but in the years since we restarted in 2002, the program has grown exponentially.

To make the 20th Symposium extra-special, I invited John Lynch, Director of Bands at the University of Georgia, to join Mallory, so that we would have two clinicians working together with our conductors and players. John was a member of the first group of conductors back in 1987, while teaching at Monroe-Woodbury High School, and I am thrilled that his career path has brought him full circle to work with this year's conductors.

My role in the Symposium has always been to organize and coordinate the event. This year I wanted to do something more.

The Collective Inspiration Project is a compilation of submissions from people who have inspired me significantly. The group includes twenty of my own teachers, former students, music parents, and colleagues who agreed to participate in this unique project.

I asked each contributor to write a short statement to answer the question: What has inspired you in your life's journey? I asked them to consider these questions as well: What has given your life purpose? What lesson or truth defines you? How have you dealt with failure and tragedy? How do you find and cultivate beauty in your daily life?

I truly believe that I am a better person and musician because of the many people who have impacted positively on my life. Every time I conduct, they are a part of my experience with that ensemble. I hope that this project will allow us to collectively broaden these insights. To paraphrase Thornton Wilder in *The Matchmaker* (1954): "[Inspiration] is like manure; it's not worth a thing unless it's spread around encouraging young things to grow."

The short essays in this document are arranged in chronological order, more or less according to when I met each contributor. I have written a short introduction describing how I met each one of these special people, and why each has been an important inspiration in my life.

I want to acknowledge Katie Couric and her book, *The Best Advice I Ever Got*, which motivated me to invite these friends and colleagues to contribute to this project. It is my hope, of course, that these ideas and personal experiences will serve to inspire readers to teach, learn, and inspire others in the days and years ahead.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to this project. Read on and find your inspiration!

Curt Ebersole
White Plains, New York
June, 2011

DR. OTIS D. KITCHEN

Conductor and Music Educator

I have known Otis since I was a sixth grade student, walking one block from my home to his for my weekly clarinet lesson. For many years, he was the Director of Bands at Elizabethtown College, Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania (my hometown). Under his baton, I earned my first opportunities to perform at two major venues: at Damrosch Park, Lincoln Center in New York City with the Lancaster County Youth Symphony, and at Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. with the Elizabethtown College Band. I had never heard of Northwestern University before he encouraged me to apply there, saying I should do so to study with John Paynter. I owe so much to Otis for giving me the boundless opportunities afforded by my undergraduate and graduate degree experiences at Northwestern.

I have been inspired throughout my life and career by a virtuous relationship with family, friends, teachers, students, mentors and peers who offered meaningful support regardless of my personal and professional shortcomings. Their

encouragement enriched my life, and was beneficial in providing a purpose to live life to its fullest and developing a meaningful work ethic.

“God gave us music that we may communicate without words,” consequently, as a youngster I became aware of the finer things in life as a means to deal with adversities in a peaceful manner.

I am encouraged that a number of current promising young people are receptive and motivated to share the rich and peaceful legacy of artistic pioneers. Music especially is “the international language,” and in my opinion can provide therapy and even cures for numerous physical, emotional, stressful and psychological challenges.

The epilogue is that personal happiness, life purpose and successful careers are positively influenced through association with those who care, lead and share unselfishly. It has been my quest to pass these traits on to the next generation.

INSPIRATION

DONALD STEWART

Teacher of English, Principal, and Superintendent

I knew Don when I was a student at Elizabethtown Area High School in Pennsylvania. I took his English elective course, "Methods of Research." I still use what I learned in that course to organize projects today (like this one). He was also the director for the two high school musicals in which I participated: The Fantasticks, and Oklahoma! After high school, I remained in contact with both Don and his wife, Nancy. I witnessed their slide shows of summer trips to Europe, remember the births of their children, Flynn & Ali, and marvel at their successes as educators, parents, and human beings. Don created for me the standard of what I wanted to be as a teacher: someone who made a difference, one student at a time.

A friend once told me, "There is no reason to fear Hell. If you can survive four years of high school, eternal Hellfire will be a breeze!" I'm not sure that is true, but for some the high school years can be incredibly challenging.

As a high school English teacher, I encountered kids who seemed to thrive in their high school environment, but I did see others for whom the high school years were a tough maze to negotiate. In addition to being an English teacher, I had the uncommon experience of serving both as Head Football Coach and Spring Musical Director. Many characterized that as an odd mix. I never saw it that way. The two roles seemed astonishingly similar. Both helped teens develop a strategy for suc-

cess and then on Friday nights the performers got a chance to test themselves under the bright lights - one on a football field, the other on a stage. Each had the potential for great reward. Each had the potential for stardom. Theater kids and footballers can be dramatically different on the surface. At their core they are incredibly similar. They are just kids trying to find their way. They are kids experiencing the weird combinations of the high school experience - joy/exasperation, affirmation/degradation, and elevation/humiliation.

There were some real advantages to being the football coach who directed musicals and the musical director who coached football. If nothing else we had a macho looking group of gamblers when we did *Guys and Dolls*.

I found inspiration when my two worlds mixed. I was inspired when a "theater kid" discovered that "jocks" were really not so different. I felt energized when a footballer learned that he could dance on stage without jeopardizing his masculinity. Whenever one of my students uncovered something surprising about themselves, then I was inspired. The educational process on its surface looks like it is about learning things - equations, dates, theories, and conjugations. It's not. It's about learning about ourselves - one frightening revelation at a time.

DR. MALLORY THOMPSON

Conductor and Music Educator

Mallory is my friend, in the truest sense of the word. We have laughed, cried, confessed, conspired, cajoled, consoled, analyzed, dined, dared, challenged, supported, and shared our mutual trust for 35 years.

As a conductor, I have spent my life embodying emotions in music in a non-verbal way. The musicians with whom I work never know the details behind those emotions but, hopefully, respond to an honesty that resonates with them. Writing about my life's journey requires a different and somewhat foreign verbal clarity which I find difficult when describing such a complex and multi-layered system.

I entered the profession 30 years ago, and half of that time I have been in my position at Northwestern University. I have been blessed with remarkable opportunities and have worked with amazing, profoundly talented, interesting, fun, intelligent, beautiful, and unique people ranging from my wonderful students at Northwestern, to all-states, elite military bands, the Northshore Concert Band, and hundreds of conducting students from all over the world. No matter how many experiences I have with these seemingly diverse groups, I keep learning that everyone wants the same things: to be seen as valuable individuals and to be inspired to feel something honest and even profound in the music they create. This inspires me to always try to be someone who looks past the instrument to see the person playing it and to look deeply and honestly into myself. Every time I perform I try to completely clear my mind and open my awareness to see what the music wants to do in this moment, in the energy of the people performing. My greatest hope is to be present, inspired, and to create an opportunity where the music can move the performers and the listeners.

At the last rehearsal of the year, I always share some thoughts with my Symphonic Wind Ensemble students. Here are a few thoughts from this year:

- Balance is a verb, not a place that you should try to achieve.
- You're not alone. When you are nervous, discouraged, afraid, or have doubts, it's good to know that everyone (including your teachers) know those feelings.
- It isn't always going to be fun, and that's normal. Life can throw a lot of obstacles your way: personal matters, deaths, health, negativity from people with whom you work, plateaus, and self-doubt. Know that this is normal and try not to over-react in the moment. Keep moving and trust that it will sort itself out in time.
- Everybody's crazy, and I don't mean everybody else. Have a sense of humor about yourself and cultivate empathy towards others.
- Know the difference between who you are and what you do. Your value is not dependent on what you achieve. Find and cultivate friends that you can trust and who see your innate value.
- It doesn't have to feel good to be good. Best of all is to feel good and sound good, but that's mostly just nice for you. Find a way to sound good no matter how you feel. (See above; it isn't always going to be fun.)

For me, great music and inspiration don't come from being comfortable, balanced, or being in my "happy place." For me, inspiration comes from 1) constantly putting the music in a new emotional and artistic context that comes from growth and evolution, and 2) going on this journey with people that I care for and that inspire me with their talent and trust. You don't have to be happy, you just have to be true.

DONALD FARLEY

Minister, Teacher, and 'Cellist

I met Donald Farley and his wife, Martha, as members of the Church in the Chapel congregation at Alice Millar Chapel while I was an undergrad at Northwestern. Don, a 'cellist, eventually invited me to play chamber music at his home, and so I had the opportunity to explore the works of Beethoven, Brahms, and others within the warm hospitality the Farleys offered me. Don impressed me so much as a musician, and when I programmed the Dvořák Serenade on my graduate conducting recital, I asked him to play the 'cello part. The experience invigorated us both; three years later, after he had retired from the ministry, Don pursued and completed a graduate performance degree in 'cello at Northwestern. Over the years, and across the miles, it has been a pleasure to remain friends with this amazing man.

Since my life's journey has now run to nearly 90 years (I was born July 24, 1922) and has been lived in something like a dozen widely-scattered locations beginning in Brookings, South Dakota, and including three years' Army service in Southeast Asia (1942-1945), and three years of teaching English in China (1948-1951), there have been many and diverse sources of inspiration in my life.

A constant in these many different circumstances, has been the steady and loving support of family, first my parents and my two brothers, and later, up to the present moment, my wife and our three daughters. As in all families there have been, from time to time, genuine differences of opinion and judgment among us. But there has never been any doubt about that steady and underlying love and support. This has sustained me and enabled me to pursue my own individual goals and objectives with confidence,

and in general I think, good humor and good hope.

Along with the loving support I received from my parents, I also inherited from both of them, and especially from my father, a certain zest for life, a good measure of curiosity about the world and its workings, an appreciation for the variety of its people and my fellow-beings, a sense of wonder at its beauties, and an expectation of ever-new possibilities for relating to world and people.

It was this inclination and these attitudes which led me at the time of my retirement in 1984, after 30 years of professional life in the Christian ministry and teaching, to embark on a course of graduate study in music, specifically 'cello performance, at Northwestern University. This came about, in part, because of the chamber music experiences I shared with Curt during his years in Evanston.

As an older adult student I appreciated Curt's invitation to me to be a member of the ensemble he assembled for his Master's conducting recital. As a student away from home Curt seemed to appreciate the personal interest my wife and I took in his progress, and the home hospitality we extended to him.

These developments, as I review them now over 25 years later, seem to me to simply exemplify and illustrate the value of the loving support I received as a gift from my parents and family, and the value of an attitude of openness to the wonders of the world and to other people, and a readiness for new ventures. These have been one of the most important sources of inspiration in my life's journey.

TIM TULL

Professional Percussionist and Opera Librarian

I met Tim while we were graduate students in the wind conducting program at Northwestern University, and it was clear we'd be friends for life. He also happens to be the son of the award-winning composer, Fisher Tull. Our common sense of humor (with a soft spot for all things Monty Python) helped us through many stressful and challenging moments that year, both in the conducting program, and as we served together on the NU Band Staff. Tim performs with the Houston Ballet Orchestra and serves as the Music Librarian for the Houston Grand Opera. Our friendship has continued over the years and across the miles, and is one of the bonds which I treasure most.

Any discussion of my life—and certainly my musical life—would have to begin and end with my parents, especially my father. They were, at once, guiding and freeing. They always encouraged me but never pushed. They wanted a life in music to be my choice and they helped provide experiences that could shape that choice.

My decision to be a teacher (a poor choice, as it turned out) was obviously influenced by them and the examples that I saw every day. When, for a period of time, my mother was not allowed to teach at the university she maintained a private studio, which was mostly at our house. Most of the students came after school and, of course, I was home also so I heard many different students and took in, perhaps subconsciously, the ideas and concepts she was teaching. I went to concerts and shows that my dad conducted and watched his interactions with the students. Because they both taught at the university I also spent much time there, sometimes just waiting for them to take me home but sometimes practicing or watching other rehearsals. It was an invaluable experience for someone being drawn more and more toward music as a career choice.

It may seem funny after reading what I just wrote but one of the most uncomfortable days of my life was my first day of college, sitting in the theory class that my dad was teaching. I struggled through for a couple of classes then he said, "Are you uncomfortable being in my class?" "Yes" I answered. "So am I" he said. The next day I transferred to another class and nothing else was ever said about it. Oddly enough, because of the illness of John Paynter when I came to Northwestern, my father ended up being my teacher for a period of a few weeks. Everything was fine this time.

My parents were also great teachers for me (and my sister) in other ways. They took us on trips to Europe and showed us great art and architecture and let us experience history through our own eyes. I think that had an effect on the way that I perceive and react to beautiful things. I am 100 times more likely to cry while reading an amazing story or looking at a stunningly beautiful photograph than hearing some piece of sad news. The reaction to beauty is more about an intense wave of emotion that sweeps over me. Often, it is too much to contain and it comes out as tears. This can be embarrassing and inconvenient at times!

Probably the hardest moments of my life were watching my father die over the course of an entire year. There were so many things to say and do that couldn't get said and done because of his illness. I have probably never really gotten over that but I have been able to carry on because of my faith in God and the love of my friends and the people who knew him. Just this week I met someone new and the first thing he told me was that he had met and worked with my father years ago and what a great person he was. So I continue to be in the shadow of my father – and I wouldn't have it any other way.

LORET CARBONE

Restaurant Entrepreneur

In 1981, I found myself in a position in where I had earned two degrees from Northwestern and was eager and ready to take on a position teaching and conducting. But, I couldn't land a job. Part of the problem was that I had a graduate degree but no experience. Faced with my life's first financial crisis, I had no other choice than to fall back on my only other talent: waiting tables. I was fortunate to land a job around the corner from where I lived, at the Pump Room in Chicago's landmark hotel, the Ambassador East. Loret was my training manager. Not only did I learn volumes from her about human nature and dealing with difficult people (critical skills for teaching, as it turned out), but she also befriended, protected, and supported me during that one very difficult and vulnerable year before I started teaching at NVOT. She went on to become a successful entrepreneur in her own right.

My inspiration in life is to strive to maintain a vision of service in all that I do. I have found that when I use my life to serve the world, I live from a mindset of generosity and abundance that feeds my soul. I think Albert Schweitzer said it best:

"I don't know what your destiny will be, but one thing I know: the only ones among you who will be really happy are those who have sought and found how to serve."

Being "in service" has supported me through the most glorious times of my life and given me grace and strength through my darkest hours. When I am living with a generosity of spirit and

servicing others (no matter how small an act) my energy soars and I feel good about myself no matter what is going on in my life.

Every relationship has in it—at every moment—the opportunity to serve. This is especially true when conflict is present. If I can avoid the "poor me"/"victim" mindset and the intense desire to be right, and instead find a way to serve the other person when things are stressful, (like the simple act of focused listening that says "what you are saying is important to me") both lives are enhanced. Then I am propelled to view the whole world differently. It opens up endless possibilities for problem solving and I am able to endure the little (and big) challenges that life offers each of us on a daily basis. So my intended focus is to stay conscious and be aware of how I can serve—of how I can share my heart with others.

We know that we can't (and certainly don't) do this thing called life alone. We learn together. If we live the old Golden Rule ("Do unto others as you would have others do to you"), we serve each other. And I know that the happiness I feel is in direct proportion to the love and service I give. I know that what I put out into the world comes back to me a hundred fold.

So in the end, it may be selfish and self-serving, but I believe that each of us define our lives by the choices we make. My choice is service. It has served me well in this lifetime.

EVAN COOPER

Conductor, Music Educator, and Music Administrator

Evan was the Band Director and All-School Musical Director at Northern Valley-Demarest when I arrived at NVOT in 1982. After retiring in 2008, he continues to contribute his talents as the Conductor of the Teaneck Community Band, the Coordinator of the MEBCI All-County Chorus and Band, and Director of the Bergen Teen Arts Festival. I played in many of Evan's pit orchestras in the 80's and 90's, and learned a great deal about producing musical theater because of those opportunities. When Evan became the Supervisor of Related Arts, I learned much more about the depth of his experience, his care for students and colleagues, and his passion about teaching.

I certainly have had mentors in my life. They have been teachers, counselors, advisors and administrators who have taught me and shaped me as I went through my career progression as a teacher and administrator. However, I think that my real inspiration has been my students and colleagues.

For twenty-six years, my inspiration was my students. I cultivated their talents and doggedly pursued opportunities for them to enjoy making music together. Nothing was more inspiring to me than seeing (and hearing) students reach their musical potential, both individually and collectively. I continued to push myself to find higher levels of achievement for them and for our program.

My school program did not seem to satisfy me completely. I saw opportunities to improve the County, Region and State programs for music students and became involved in those programs. New inspirations became available to me. I worked to have students throughout the state enjoy advanced opportunities to develop their skills. These programs allowed me to be exposed to

many of the finest student musicians in our state and many of the finest conductors in academia in the country.

I was offered the opportunity to leave the classroom and become an administrator. I was reluctant to leave my students, but Dr. Eugene Westlake, our school Superintendent and one of my chief mentors, advised me wisely. He told me that I might not be able to affect students in my program directly, but by working with teachers, I would be affecting far more students indirectly in many areas of their education.

The teachers, with whom I had the opportunity to work as Related Arts Subject Supervisor for the next 11 years, inspired me. I grew as an educator, as a facilitator, and as a person by working with them. I improved my communication and management skills. I was exposed to levels of commitment and creativity in my colleagues that I had not known they possessed. It was my great pleasure to be able to cultivate an environment for them, their programs, and their students to grow and succeed in the many different fields that made up our department.

Now in retirement, I continue to work at activities that provide teachers, students and musicians to appreciate the joy of music. I am inspired by Ginny Baird, who is approaching her fiftieth year as an oboist in our community band. The many students who eagerly attend workshops at our annual County Teen Arts Festival inspire me and I am inspired every year when I hear our All County Band and Chorus perform. For me inspiration is something that I continue to pursue with pleasure.

ANITA O'CONNELL

Registered Nurse, Music Parent

Anita was one of the first parents at NVOT to reach out to me and truly care about me as a person, in addition to me as a teacher. She not only served as our Music Parents Association President and helped work with costumes for our All-School Musicals in the early 80's, but she opened her heart to me at a time when I needed support. As a mother, nurse, and human being, her personal strength and compassion is monumental.

As I contemplated putting on paper those things which have inspired me throughout my life, some simple guides to joyful living came to mind. I have been a bedside nurse for over fifty years. It has been one of my great pleasures. My three wonderful children are also at the top of the list. They have grown into successful adults, good citizens, nice people who are fun to be around.

Life would not be worth living without friends. They are a staple. There are some guidelines that have evolved over the years, keeping me on track. I would like to share them with you. They are not necessarily in order of importance:

- *I knew a farmer once that said good morning to his cows when he entered the barn.* Be gracious to everyone you come in touch with especially if they are different from you.
- *There is no substitute for brains.* Use the one God has given you; it is uniquely yours and it is who you are.
- *The cream always rises to the top.* Be the very best

you can be. Reach high. If you fall short you will still be up there.

- *It has come to pass, not it has come to stay.* On those occasional dark days that come from time to time remember that the clouds will pass and the sun will definitely shine again. Don't ever believe that you cannot reinvent yourself tomorrow.
- *One day at a time.* Sometimes it may be an hour at a time, or a minute at a time. Stay on the road but don't quit.
- *Suit up and participate in your own life, every day.* Get up, make decisions, think new thoughts. Follow your bliss.
- *Be yourself, everyone else is already taken.* It is tempting to morph yourself into something you think others want you to be to make them happy. Give that up.
- *Each day, don't do more than you can do, but don't do any less either.* Don't over commit yourself, but don't stand still and do nothing. Doing nothing can be destructive.
- *Smile at the toll taker.* This came to me from the eulogy of one dear friend by another dear friend. Reach out to those folks who appear invisible. It makes you feel great.
- *Schpell it like it zounds.* This came from my Swiss mother. This illustrates that not all advise no, matter how well meant by someone you love, trust and might be respectfully afraid of, is good for you.

INSPIRATION

DR. PATRICIA RAUPERS

*Teacher of History, Staff Development Trainer,
Administrator, and Superintendent*

After starting her career teaching history at Northern Valley, Pat answered our superintendent's challenge to cultivate a Staff Development program. To enable this plan of action, she studied with Madeline Hunter, the founder of Instructional Theory Into Practice (ITIP), and used this model as a basis for a staff development program, which is now shared among a consortium of many schools. Pat's infectious energy and enthusiasm made her faculty development workshops both exciting and worthwhile. After serving for several years as Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Pat now brings her unique moxie to her new role as Superintendent of the Waldwick Schools.

As I reflect on what has consistently inspired me during my life's journey, the thought comes to mind that I am most motivated by the concept of belonging; belonging to numerous communities, each striving to accomplish goals. I believe that I am by nature driven to build and value long-term relationships and I derive great satisfaction from working collaboratively to achieve meaningful objectives.

For as long as I can remember, relationships of all kinds have been very important to me. Those relationships, when coupled with a commonly held goal, have provided me with the greatest inspiration to learn from others and to do my very best. As a child and the oldest of three, I remember being anxious whenever there was disharmony among us and exhilarated when we planned coordinated experiences. As a student, I was a

joiner; clubs, student government, the choir, and committees are examples of groups to which I belonged, working to achieve what we believed as young people, were important goals. I guess it is telling that I am still very close to two women I first met through membership in a grammar school club! We planned events in elementary and middle school, worked as class officers together in high school and have always been there for one another.

For me, family matters first and foremost and I am inspired by the opportunity to help our members to reach their potential and their personal goals. As a member of a fairly large extended family, I am moved to bring the family together at numerous times during the year to celebrate our family connections and the achievements and rites of passage of our members. As each member designs their own path in life, grapples with adversity, makes choices, forms bonds, I am inspired by their tenacity.

Professionally as an educator, I have been motivated by the enthusiasm of others as we have worked to create and build programs that will benefit students and their teachers. I am inspired when our collective efforts produce significant results and driven to tackle the next challenge. Seeing young people grow and develop into competent individuals and good human beings inspires me enormously to continue in a field that while always challenging, brings me great joy.

BEN ARMATO

*Professional Clarinetist, Studio Teacher,
Inventor, and Author*

Ben Armato played in the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra for thirty-nine years, and has probably performed more Mozart than anyone else living today. Ben invented and patented two clarinet reed devices, Perfecta-Reed and the Reed Wizard, and published The Opera Clarinetist and Perfect A Reed. . . . and Beyond. I studied clarinet with Ben weekly for seven years (1983 until 1991). The study with him deeply motivated me, and was critical to my decision to take a sabbatical leave from Northern Valley in 1989-1990. During that time I continued my study with Ben formally, and earned a Master of Fine Arts degree at SUNY-Purchase. I owe so much to Ben. My conducting and clarinet performance skills have both been enhanced significantly because of the time spent in study with him.

Inspiration? My faith has been my inspiration. I remember when I was about 14 years old, I went to church and said a prayer: "Please God, help me to become a clarinetist worthy of playing at the Metropolitan Opera." Through God's help and persistence, this came about.

At the time of the Met audition, my wife, Ruth, and I had been out of town on vacation for ten weeks. Ruth maintained that I should take the au-

dition, although I had not been playing regularly during the time of our trip. I was hesitant, but I trusted Ruth. (As it turned out, trusting her for over 60 years of marriage was an excellent idea!)

I took the audition, and after a second round of call backs, won the position. My contract named me as "General Clarinet," because it included responsibilities playing first, second, Eb, and bass clarinet as needed (my mother was thrilled that I was a "General!").

I played in the Met Opera Orchestra for over thirty-nine years, commuting twice a day from our home in Hartsdale, which allowed me to attend the daily rehearsal, return home to have dinner with my family and teach clarinet students, and drive back to Manhattan for the evening performance of a different opera. It was taxing and thrilling, all at once. I would not trade this life and this experience for anything. Trusting Ruth and daring to take that audition so many years ago proved to be the most important decision of my life, and I have been thankful to God for the strength to do so.

INSPIRATION

DR. JOHN P. LYNCH

Conductor and Music Educator

I met John in the mid-80's when both of us found ourselves playing in the Ridgewood Concert Band. We struck up a friendship based on our common musical interests, and the promise of several adult beverages every Monday night after rehearsals. At the time, he was the Director of Bands at Monroe-Woodbury High School (Central Valley, NY), and joined us as a member of the very first group of conductors at our first Wind Conducting Symposium in 1987. We've stayed close over all these years, sharing ideas and experiences, and many laughs as well. Now, years later, with successful stints at Emory University, Northwestern University, University of Kansas, and now the University of Georgia under his belt, it's a pleasure to include John as a clinician for our 20th Symposium.

What has motivated me on life's journey is the persistent desire to change, to grow, to learn, and to experience. The many wonderful people I have encountered along the way have had a lasting impact in me, and hopefully I on them. The many experiences, both personal and professional, have also shaped who I am and how I perceive the world. I believe our lives and who we are are the result of those we meet and what we experience, coupled with who we have always been at our core.

Life's journey is not always a smooth one: Not getting what we thought we wanted, sudden tragedy, deep pain or even death. However, we are survivors of life's challenges and hopefully emerge stronger. An openness to all that life

brings, a spirit of adventure, and a willingness to take risks in order to change and grow can lead to great success, happiness fulfillment, and even enlightenment.

Another personal source of inspiration has been giving to others as a teacher. Teachers have the unique opportunity to positively affect many people's lives. Teaching is opening doors to possibilities: Presenting ideas and paths perhaps never before considered! I have had the benefit of many very special teachers starting with my parents and family, public school teachers, musical mentors, life-long colleagues and friends, and my partner Mark. My goal is to inspire my students each day as I have been inspired, and to help them to believe in themselves. As a teacher I have had the opportunity each day to return the gifts I have been given. My students have unknowingly have been among my greatest teachers.

My final two sources of inspiration have been travel and music. As a world traveler, I have come in contact with many people, cultures, and ideas that have expanded my world view, and for that I am grateful. Music takes the external world and combines it with our inner world acting as a prism refracting light that connects and vitalizes us. Music helps provide meaning to our culture and our lives.

Music has given me a unique voice - a way to express myself and to better understand the world. It is a gift given to each of us.

JOHN HOUSLEY

Teacher of English, Musical Theater Director, Designer, and Choreographer

There can be no other more significant event in a teacher's life than seeing a former student succeed. No truer example could be found than that of John Housley. As a student, John was an inspired actor in three All-School Musical Productions and member of our NVOT bands and choirs. In 1991, he ventured a proposal to direct our All-School Musicals, and subsequently was offered a position in the English Department because of his successes with those productions. Now an award-winning teacher, director, designer, and choreographer, John is a significant contributor to the lives of the many students and adults with whom he has worked, and a cherished and respected colleague.

I grew up in a house without music. It was without most of the arts, really, but it was music's absence that was most felt. I can recall a dictionary we borrowed from my aunt, and of course the daily newspaper, but that was about it for books. I often joke that the only auteur whose complete works I studied was Burt Reynolds because it was only his films that ever inspired my dad to herd the family into the station wagon. (I've seen all three *Smokey and the Bandit's* and both *Cannonball Run's*.) Music was paraded on Memorial Day and museums were to honor soldiers. Much of this was a measure of my father's own impoverished childhood and some of it was a measure of his perceptions of gender. (I was allowed to go the Pocono Playhouse on a family vacation—but I had to go with all of my aunts while the men stayed behind and fished.) All of this is always an odd admission from someone who has studied and taught and worked in just about every possible area of the arts.

The explanation is a simple one: teachers. Special teachers. Teachers who gave me verbs and hues and time signatures. Who quite literally put into my hands pencils and palettes and saxophone

reeds. Who gave me silent films and gloriously not silent LPs, who took me to Lincoln Center and the Cloisters and even a piano bar. Teachers who showed me that the arts are vital to the day-to-day living of our lives. They are man's instruction manuals, helping us make sense of what's come before, letting us prepare for what may be, and, perhaps most importantly, making us pay attention to the present, that present that lies somewhere in between.

Although my father never took me to *Death of a Salesman* or showed me *Breaking Away*—those very works helped me to understand his context and decode the language that rarely came in the form of words, spoken or written, and certainly never came in the form of song. When I learned how to look and to listen, I discovered that my father was teaching me to value labor and to respect any man who worked for his paycheck. My father was teaching me to value a person who contributes to his family and to his community. These were important lessons that grounded me in my often self-indulgent studies. They were lessons that always made me demand that the arts weren't distractions from the world. The arts needed to be essential and useful.

My father also gave me a very concrete gift that I think now, these many years later, was the most important contribution to the development of that awakening artist. My dad worked on his feet in a factory his whole life. In the span of forty some odd years, he was in the employ of only two companies both of which printed and bound paper. He brought home an endless supply—stock that had been cut improperly or had some sort of flaw. I would staple together handfals so that I could write my own books. (Though most of the time I never got past dreaming up titles and de-

signing the book jackets.) Or I would lay them out on the floor into storyboards or roll out big sheets in to canvases. I painted and sketched and wrote for hours. I dove recklessly into every crazy idea I had. And when those ideas were exhausted, I developed what new ideas grew in the space that had been cleared. I made so many mistakes – as many mistakes as I could. Because I could. I didn't have to carefully plot out each expedition to be pursued on those precious few pages purchased with the little bit of spare money my mother had thriftily put aside. My father may not have passed on a love of music and words and images – but he did give me opportunity to create. And to fail.

And not just through paper he rescued from the trash. My parents saved up and rented me a saxophone when the music man came to Thomas

Jefferson School. And then a Casio keyboard when the braces of my early adolescence were making my lips bleed. And a membership to Northvale's first video store. And years later they took out two mortgages so that their son could get a Bachelor of Fine Arts even though they spent – and perhaps still spend – sleepless nights wondering what the hell he would do with it.

And in return, I filled the house with my own creations – much of it still sits on shelves and hangs on walls. It didn't matter if they were any good. As long as I worked hard on them, they had a place. I filled the house with drawings and books and movies. And for hours every night after dinner, regardless of whether people were trying to have a conversation or watch the local news, I filled the house with music.

INSPIRATION

LOUIS ALLORO

Life Change Agent

I remember the very first time I met Louis: at his 4th grade trombone recital. His slide fell off his instrument mid-performance, which mortified Louis, and made me giggle. Eight years later, Louis took the podium as Drum Major of the 1995 NVOT Marching Band, and made his first mark as a true leader. Inspired by the untimely death of his brother, Todd, in 1991, Louis has dedicated his life to instilling positive change in individuals, families, and institutions. His graduate work in Applied Positive Psychology paved the way for his framework of Social-Emotional Leadership. Louis and I presented our first workshop in Positive Psychology together at the 2009 Midwest Band & Orchestra Clinic, in Chicago. This is his third time as a guest speaker at our Wind Conducting Symposium. With clients across our nation and now all over the world (via Skype), Louis is motivating positive change at an exponential rate.

With so much talk of mavericks a few seasons ago, I could not help but think about who fits that bill? Is it Barack Obama for his ability to inspire hope? Harvey Milk for following a civil rights dream? Was it Mother Teresa who touched the lives of people no one else wanted to help? Who are mavericks closer to home? Is it my friend Bright who helped me change a belief system about the importance of being environmentally conscious – that it is in fact our responsibility? Was it my Nana Teeney, who graduated from New York University in 1939 as part of the first class of coed graduates and then go on to live nine lives? Was it teachers and coaches who helped me be my best self because they, too, were being theirs?

Across the board, my answer is “yes.” Mavericks are inspirational trailblazers, innovators. They are people who inspiringly exude a graceful

agency and a contagious energy in their quests for “the good life.” Mavericks go forth, at times into uncharted territories, to create positive change for themselves. As social beings, this process is never solely individual. We are all part of cultures and contexts with enormous histories and traditions that affect our lives in many ways. For some, these habits make life just the way it is, the way it has always been. Mavericks, though, look at life the way it could be or ought to be and take steps to get there.

I see a maverick as a paragon of Social-Emotional Leadership, a construct I have developed as part of my work at the University of Pennsylvania in the Masters of Applied Positive Psychology program, and what I’m facilitating now in a city-wide intervention in Cleveland, Ohio. Essentially, Social-Emotional (SOMO) Leaders are change-agents who envision better, co-actively designed futures for themselves and their worlds, starting with the belief that positive change is possible.

SOMO Leaders take the initiative to create new customs, new habits, and new traditions within their own lives and spheres of influence. They help us develop social, emotional, moral, communal, and psychological capacities that help us become our individual best selves. Becoming our individual best selves makes the groups we comprise stronger. As Robert Quinn says, “When you change yourself, you change the world.”

So, I’m inspired by people who are leaders in their lives, by those who kick it up a notch to the next level, continuously, realizing that we’re dynamic beings, changing every second of everyday. In which direction do you grow?

CHARLOTTE GERSTMAYR

Music Parent

I first met Charlotte as the parent of an incoming trumpet player. During the years that her sons Bernie and Andrew were members of my bands and All-School Musical Productions, she served in many capacities, including many duties within our Music Parents Association (including President), marching band and festival trip chaperone, props/set dressing/costume designer for our musicals, and more. During those eight years, she was my "go-to-parent" for every problem-solving task and project which presented itself. She continued to work on our musicals for two more years after her second son graduated. She has also served as President our local Northvale PTA and Northvale Library Association, and organized and taught preschool and elementary school library reading programs for Northvale Public Library for 17 years. All these activities earned her finalist standing in the 1990 NVSP Outstanding School Volunteer Program. Her laugh is, and will always be, one of the most distinctive, joyous, and welcome sounds of my life.

Once upon a time there were three men.

One was born in 1900 and came to America from Italy as an infant with his parents. He grew to be the oldest of ten children. He went to work to help support them with only an eighth-grade education but with strength and determination and knowledge that cannot be found in books alone. He worked with his hands. He had common sense, ethics, and dedication to his family.

The second man came much later and married the first man's youngest daughter. He was also from a working-class family with six children. His father, after losing his grocery store during the Depression, worked for the WPA. His mother, before becoming a wife and mother, was a suffragette, fighting for women's rights. The second man, as

a Korean War veteran, went to school at night for nine years to get his degree in electrical engineering while working days to support his family of three daughters. He volunteered teaching Sunday school, caring for hospice patients, bringing books to the homebound and teaching the illiterate to read. He had a love of knowledge, and the beauty in nature, music, and the fine arts. He could find humor in any situation.

The third man was from another generation but also, as a small child, immigrated to this country with his family. His father, a bookkeeper by trade in his homeland, came to America to make a new life for his young family. He took blue-collar jobs to support them while attending technical school at night, learning new skills in a new language. Through his father's hard work and value of education, the third man became a great success in his field. With strong work ethics instilled in him by his parents, this man works until the job is done. In a leadership position, he treats his employees with fairness and compassion while inspiring them to achieve. He has brought these characteristics into his personal life as well. This man married the second man's oldest daughter. They have two sons of their own. Despite his sometimes grueling schedule he manages to be there for them. When they were young, he coached their teams, attended all of their school functions, and cheered them on. He is the embodiment of selflessness, generosity, humility and perseverance.

These men are my grandfather, my father, and my husband.

Perhaps somewhere within me I have focused my endeavors on working with children and

young people to pass along what I have learned from these special men. Sometimes it was through preschool and elementary school reading programs, or with high school students involved in Music Department and musical production activities. At times I've needed to fill leadership roles in several organizations that affect learning and education. What is the true measure of success? Is it being the best, or doing your best? Above all, the

lesson we need to remember is to appreciate, to care, to fight for what is right, and maintain ethics.

Remember to laugh, even through adversity.

I hope in my small corner of the world I've taught someone to do these things. And I thank these men who inspired me.

And she lived happily ever after.

INSPIRATION

BARBARA CIANNELLA

Professional Pianist and Opera Coach

Barbara has earned my respect and admiration, not only as a pianist, but also as a friend. She has played for every musical theater production I've conducted and produced since 1992, and has also performed with me as piano soloist with two different adult ensembles. She has also come along for innumerable projects which have popped up along the way, including coaching many vocalists with whom I've worked, and performing on the dedication concert for our Bence Memorial Steinway Grand Piano in 2005. She is my rock.

So I'm standing in the cavernous Teaneck Armory, tenor sax in hand, waiting to march in the annual Competition of Bands. It was my first time. I was a freshman in the mighty Paramus High School Spartan Band - we were 140 strong with a big symphonic sound. That year we were heavy favorites to win and we had a killer program - all Gershwin, closing (of course) with *Rhapsody in Blue*. For an extra special effect our shakos were fitted with battery operated lights - very cool.

The final moments of the program had come. The helmet lights went on as the house lights went

off, and there we were in the formation of a giant grand piano with the color guard as the keyboard. The big tune from *Rhapsody* came soaring out of us but it was dwarfed by the sound of a thousand people on their feet screaming and cheering. I remember choking with pride at being part of something excellent, something bigger than myself. And just as I was feeling self-conscious about getting all sappy, I glanced over at one of the hardened criminals in the trumpet section to see his eyes all glassy with tears. And there it was . . . just like that. I was never the same after that head-on collision with the raw power of that music.

Thinking of that night so many years ago never fails to remind me how lucky I am to be in a profession that thrills me. Regularly. I'm also reminded how helpful it is to have a thick skin because the failures can be devastating, and usually public.

Here's my MO: practice a gazillion hours so that no one can ever say you can't cut the part.

DR. MARY SCHNEIDER

Conductor and Music Educator

I initially met Mary when she was teaching 7th grade band. She was an excellent teacher, I saw it when I visited her rehearsals. When I learned that Mary was researching Master's programs for conducting, I thought, "Now that is brave!" She broke away from the norm and typical expectations, because she knew she had the potential within her. Now with a Doctoral degree in hand, she is the Director of Bands at Eastern Michigan University. Mary is my number 1 example of "Yes, I can do it!"

During my doctoral studies at the University of Texas, one of my most memorable conducting "lessons" consisted of a story my teacher shared with me about his daughter. When she was a little girl, he recalled accompanying her to the neighborhood playground, where she watched other children playing gleefully on the slide. She was enthralled with the slide, yet no amount of cajoling could convince her to give it a try--she was terrified. Months later at Christmas time, she wrote a letter to Santa Claus requesting a gift that was on the top of her list. "Santa," she begged, "please can I have a flat slide."

Well, as we all know, there is no such thing as a flat slide, in conducting or in life! You've got to take risks in order to reap the reward. When I reflect on this simple but powerful lesson, I realize that the people I most admire are those who take risks; those who embrace all that life has to offer, and push the envelope, in pursuit of excellence.

Mentors throughout my life have inspired me in incredible ways, however what they all share is an unbridled passion for what they do, an unquenchable curiosity and quest for continued growth, and an approach to life characterized by integrity.

My professional journey has presented me with opportunities I never imagined earlier on in my career. Although teaching music at the collegiate level is quite different than directing a 7th grade band, there are constants that I have come to realize. Students are students, and music is music. Sure, the level of music making is different, but those "Ah ha!" moments we treasure are presented whenever there is music being created. I am still filled with teary-eyed pride recalling individual students and shared performances, whether they were those in a civic auditorium at a state music conference, at a conservatory in Luxembourg, or in a middle school cafeteria.

It is my students, past and present, who inspire me, and remind me of my good fortune to be doing what I love daily - making music and teaching young people. Because of them, I strive to infuse a level of joy and wonderment in every rehearsal; to cherish every opportunity to transcend the mundane and experience beauty. Most of all, I feel an obligation to seek excellence in all that I do, and to take risks. After all, there's no such thing as a flat slide!

INSPIRATION

MATTHEW SCOTT

Broadway Actor

Matthew took his very first musical theater audition as a sophomore in high school, and earned the title role in our production of Maury Yeston's Phantom. He continued his high school acting career as Franklin in Merrily We Roll Along, and as Josh in Big. Along the way, he earned several individual awards in the Paper Mill Playhouse Rising Star Awards, and was a catalyst for the record-breaking number of awards that these productions earned in that program. Those experiences played significantly into his current career on Broadway. Matthew was a member of the original cast of Harvey Fierstein's A Catered Affair, and understudied three of the Four Seasons' roles in Jersey Boys. He just completed the Broadway run of Sondheim on Sondheim, for which he recorded his first original cast album. Matthew has given back to our musical theater program by serving on our audition committees and acting as a vocal coach for several productions. I am so proud of his focused goals and success.

While working on the High School Spring musical, a production of Stephen Sondheim's *Merrily We Roll Along*, the entire cast gathered in the cafeteria to play a game created by our director, John Housley. It was an improvisation designed to help create back-story for our characters, but would prove to be much more. The idea is simple: you have five pieces of paper on which to write your hopes, dreams, and goals. Next, you imagine that ten years of your life have passed and you must give up one of your pieces of paper, placing it behind you in a line. Another ten years go by and as life becomes more complicated, you must

make another sacrifice (another piece of paper). At age 50 or so, you can go back to reclaim one paper, we call this a mid life crisis. But ultimately, you are left standing with a single paper. The improv is about priorities, making tough decisions and standing by them, literally.

A few weeks later, the cast went to the local middle schools to do a workshop in which we played the "paper game." At one school, there was a particular art teacher who insisted on playing with her students. As we were ready to pack up, she called me over to share her results. In her hand she clutched a solitary piece of paper that said "art." "But you are an art teacher," I said. "Yes," she replied, "and I couldn't be happier. But I never truly became an artist." She went on to explain that she adored her children and her husband was the love of her life, but she had a dream and she placed it aside. Years later, that desire still burned deep within her. As I left the classroom, she smiled as if to say, "Thanks, that was fun." Perhaps, she knew better than I, it was only a game.

Today, I am a 29 year old, working actor. My wife is also an actress, and sometimes we struggle to make ends meet. But at the end of the day we wouldn't trade it for the world. I carried my piece of paper in my pocket for over a year, till one day I reached in to find it wasn't there. Maybe it went in with the wash, who knows? But I will never forget what it said or how it changed my life.

DR. TOM MCCAULEY

Conductor and Music Educator

I met Tom when he was taking his doctoral work with Mallory Thompson. (Years before, I had met his wife-to-be, Shelley Axelson, through Mallory as well.) I was thrilled when I learned that Tom had taken the position as Director of Bands at Montclair State University, because I knew he would bring a fresh and unique angle to a program that had immense potential. He has delivered, and in a grand way. A dedicated educator and an engaging conductor, I feel lucky to know him and to number him among my closest colleagues.

CERTAINTY: The older I get, the fewer things I know for certain. However, the things that I DO know for certain have become deeper and more meaningful as the years progress.

I know for certain that . . .

- I am on this earth for a reason.
- there are only two true emotions; Love and Fear. If you are not motivated by one, you are being motivated by the other.
- there is no substitute for sincerity or preparation.
- nothing worth having comes easily.
- everyone has dreams, goals, and aspirations. The difference between success and failure in realizing those goals lies in finding and maintaining the will and courage to attain them.
- no matter what happens, never, ever, *ever* give up!

INSPIRATIONS: My inspiration comes from many different facets of my life and by many different people for different reasons.

I am inspired by . . .

- my life partner and our daughter. They make it easier to get out of bed each day and keep me on the straight and narrow.

- my mother, who taught me the value of hard work and dedication. Not through her words alone, but mostly through her deeds.
- many of my teachers, both formal and informal, from whom I continue to learn.
- anyone who approaches their work honestly, sincerely, and for the betterment of the world around them.
- anyone who takes the time and effort to help someone in need.

ASPIRATIONS: I aspire to . . .

- see God in everyone.
- be a better person, musician, and teacher than I was yesterday.
- be a better father and husband than I was yesterday.
- have enough courage to follow my chosen path.
- project love instead of fear.
- use my work to inspire others to do great things.

To close, here are some quotes that have helped along the way:

“Education...is a painful, continual and difficult work to be done in kindness, by watching, by warning, by praise, but above all – by example.”
– John Ruskin

“The students don’t have to love you, but you *must* have love for them” – Mallory Thompson

“Before you can inspire with emotion, you must be swamped with it yourself. Before you can move their tears, your own must flow. To convince them, you must yourself believe.” – Winston Churchill

PAUL HOSTETTER

Conductor and Music Educator

Paul is the chair of orchestra activities at the Columbus State University in Columbus, Georgia. I met Paul in 2009 while searching for a clinician to work with my string ensemble before our adjudicated festival performance in Boston. His approach with the ensemble was fresh and dynamic, and his suggestions were invaluable. I found his blog, which revealed intriguing perspectives on conducting, music, and life in general. We met again at another festival in 2010. I regard Paul as an intellectual, an motivating teacher, and a inspiring conductor.

There are so many times when I have felt deeply inspired throughout my life, and most of them have occurred when I am at my most quiet, thinking in my most long terms, and at my most prayerful. It is when I truly make time to be reflective with the greatest amount of humility that I seem to have epiphanies that resonate fully through all I do.

What are some of these inspiring revelations exactly? Nothing that isn't obvious in many ways; however, I somehow must continually remind myself of what has always been in front of me! Here are a few I will share:

- I feel most free when completely and compassionately honest with myself and others. This has ramifications in my music making, since I must be emotionally and physically open to receive sound, and any part of me that is closed diminishes the artistic experience as a conductor personally, and even worse, for those working with me! Honesty is the gateway to openness and vulnerability, and when in that place, magical experiences flow miraculously.
- If I am generous with others even in the face of rudeness, I always walk away with a sense of power in my humility. Not easy to do, but so good when it happens.

- When listening, I must always be careful to receive through the lens of the person talking. Same in conducting – I always hope to listen to what is really being performed musically, and not what I want to hear solely, because that initial idea found in silence always changes from what I've imagined when standing in front of a group of musicians. Relationships transform and evolve my most deep convictions on all levels, and I find this inspiring.
- I must always try my best to make thoughtful choices – this is a difficult one for me, since I always want to get things done, and the quick path is rarely the one that yields the best results.
- I don't look for high end rushes when living daily, less they become a drug; a slow and steady approach does win the race! Even then, occasionally moments of bliss can find their way into my life musically and otherwise. It feels good to be amazed without expectation.
- I need and try to invest fully in the present, whether spending time with my family (the greatest joy of all!), or making music, or doing administrative work, or meeting with students, or spending time with friends. There can only be space for one thing at a time. While planning and organizing with specificity are requirements for survival in all aspects of my life, I never want to allow them to diminish the pleasure of being present.
- When I make time to pray to God without an agenda, answers to questions seem to fall from the air. I'm repeatedly stunned in a most wonderful way!

These are but a few examples of how inspiration reaches into all aspects of my life. I hope that your life is blessed this year by many moments that are transcendent in the best ways imaginable!

BRIAN WORSDALE

Conductor and Music Educator

Brian is currently the conductor/artistic director of the Big Apple Corps Lesbian and Gay Symphonic Band in New York City, the Artistic Director/Conductor of the French Woods Festival of the Performing Arts, the Founder/Conductor of the New York City Inter-School Orchestra Symphonic Band, and Director of the Wednesday Winds/Third Street Music School Settlement. I met Brian in a purely 21st century manner: He sent me a message on Facebook: "You look like someone I should know. Will you friend me?" After many messages and several phone calls, Brian and I eventually met at the 2010 Midwest Clinic, and have been conspiring and plotting all kinds of projects ever since.

There are so many times where I am asked questions like: What influenced you to go into music? Why do you teach? What brought you to the podium? Why do you love it so much? I wish the answers were profound in their length and at the heart different but they are not. The answer for me is a pretty basic one: It was a calling.

Like those who are called to religious orders and those who are transformed by an experience, my love for music and my passion for conducting was apparently evident when I was seven years old, and like that toddler on YouTube I had a terrible habit of conducting the orchestra on the radio while sitting in the back of the car. I barely remember doing such things but my mother reminded me before a concert I was conducting at Green Wood Cemetery in Brooklyn. Home to some famous "permanent residents" like Leonard Bernstein it is also home to my grandmother. Her love of life and music was infectious. My memories of her are vivid and telling of someone who loved life and enjoyed the beauty of art and music.

Music knocked on my door because of personal tragedy but music became my life's journey because of what it can do. It evokes the body, mind, and spirit better than any other medium. You can close your eyes and be transformed by music. The continued inspiration I receive comes from hearing music from the podium and knowing that people are using their intuition, personalities, and desires to make the sounds they do at every turn. That motivates me to guide them even more and to enjoy their music. Music can also be there for you when life is not always giving you its best pitches. It can help you express all your emotions at the drop of a hat. Learning to make music and to understand the science of your craft is only the start of the journey. Self-exploration of your soul and the heart and soul of others helps to keep the path clear.

I guess the other great moment in my life came when I became artistic director of the Big Apple Corps Symphonic Band. These musicians make music not because they have to but because they want to. Their love and search for equality for all people is not only inspiring, it is contagious. I have always been an advocate for music and music education but rarely have I been so motivated to also be an activist. My activism comes not in words but in notes and musical phrases. These amazing musicians inspire me every day. You can be assured that I am spoiled in so many ways. A loving and supported family that extends past the normal model that includes everyone that enters my life. Anyone who has passion for something and wants to express it inspires me greatly.

EPILOGUE: IN MEMORIAM

John P. Paynter and Dr. Dean Simpson

A project such as this would not be complete without an acknowledgement of the impact that John Paynter and Dean Simpson have had on my life. I was given many opportunities and learned so much from both men, but their greatest gift to me was simply giving me a chance.

My experience playing with Mr. Paynter began with an opening for Eb clarinet in the Symphonic Band when I was a freshman. I had been assigned to the Concert Band with another conductor, and I realized that, without seizing this opportunity, I would not have a chance to play under Mr. Paynter for at least a year. Somehow I found the courage to ask him for the chance to play.

Although it was rough going at first (to say the least), he gave me a chance to prove my potential. Mr. Paynter's rehearsal technique was intimidating and inspiring at the same time. In one moment he could use his "death stare" to make you feel the impact of his will, and in the next moment, turn that stare into a sly smile that said, "I trust you, and I know you'll fix that." By the time I left Chicago, I had played in the NU Symphonic Wind Ensemble and the Northshore Concert Band - experiences which forged my musicianship and created memories for life. Beyond the ensembles, I gained immeasurable administrative experience as a member of the Band Staff and serving as the Band Staff Manager. What I learned through that experience could never be taught in any college course.

Recognized as one of the leaders of the wind band movement, Mr. Paynter's dedication to Northwestern instilled a sense of pride in me which I had never felt before I arrived in Evanston. That sense of pride would prove to be very important to me in the years ahead.

After finishing my graduate degree at Northwestern, I took more interviews in 1980-81 than I could count. I was stuck in the purgatory between my graduate degree and my lack of teaching experience. When I finally interviewed and accepted the position at Northern Valley, I wasn't sure that I'd actually stay. I loved Chicago; I wanted to get my career going there. But during my first year of teaching, Dean Simpson made a difference in how I felt. He helped me make the connection between the pride I had learned from Mr. Paynter and the long standing traditions of excellence in the Music Department at Northern Valley. I started to feel that I might be a continuing part of that tradition. And he gave me the chance to stand on my own, and develop the program into something that was uniquely mine.

The summer after my first year of teaching, Mr. Paynter called me out of the blue and told me about a band director position which had opened up in the Northshore area. Knowing his influence, I knew that this was essentially a job offer. It was in that moment that I realized that Northern Valley-Old Tappan had become my home - and I said "No, thank you" to Mr. Paynter. Thirty years later, I know I made the right decision.

In a project dedicated to inspiration, I'd like to throw in my own two cents. Both of these men gave me the greatest gift by simply giving me a chance. That is something I have always remembered, and something that I have tried to pass along. The energy we send out when we give someone an opportunity is energy we receive in return. The more we give, the more we receive.

I hope you will give that thought a chance.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and most importantly, I want to thank my husband, Tim McVey, for his patience and support. Project after project, he is always there for me with a sympathetic ear and kind encouragement that helps fuel my fire.

Mallory: You told me years ago, “You should write a book!” Although this is not *that* book, it is a start. Your friendship has nurtured so much of who I am, and I am grateful for that. Thank you as well for giving so freely of yourself over these 20 years so these symposia could affect positive change for so many players and conductors alike.

John: Thank you for our longtime friendship, which has offered me so many insights into both teaching and conducting, and for taking the time to join us this year as a clinician to add new angles and experiences to this workshop. Your contributions are invaluable.

Louis: I am indebted to you for helping me to shift my perspective, and to help me to see challenges in a new light. You are the inspiration behind this project.

And most of all, thank you to all the contributors of this project for taking on this challenge and inspiring all of us with your stories and insights. It has been a true joy to produce this with you.

INSPIRATION