

MAKING A WISH FOR CURTIS'S FUTURE

In many ways, Curtis is not the same as it was in 1986, when I was appointed artistic director. However, in the most important ways it still is. During my tenure, changes were not made for the sake of change, nor for keeping up with current trends (see article, starting on page 4). I prefer to call them “enhancements,” as they have enabled Curtis to remain unique as it pursues its mission, 81 years after being founded, “to train exceptionally gifted young musicians for careers as performing artists on the highest professional level.”

Or, as I wrote in a 1992 *Overtone* message: “The whole notion of Curtis, I think, is to keep it the way it has always tried to be: a small, tuition-free school with the highest possible musical standards, a great faculty, and great students, each attracting the other.”



In 1986, Gary Graffman, Board Chairman A. Margaret Bok, and Naomi Graffman celebrated the appointment of Mr. Graffman as Curtis's artistic director.

In 2005, Mr. Graffman and his successor, Roberto Díaz, prepared for the passing of the baton.

~ PHOTOS: CURTIS ARCHIVES, STEVE J. SHERMAN

These thoughts are consistent with my current views on the same matter. My hope for the future is that Curtis remain true to the vision of our founder, Mary Louise Curtis Bok. There are plenty of fine conservatories in the United States today, but only one Curtis. My wish for Curtis, which means for future students, is that the unique philosophy continue forever.

Those ideologies are as follows:

- to provide merit-based full-tuition scholarships to all of its students, who are chosen as a result of highly selective auditions;
- to keep its enrollment very limited and its student-to-faculty ratio such that unparalleled training is offered by many of the most respected artists and teachers;
- to have the length of a student's stay remain open-ended and be determined by his or her teachers, and to offer even the youngest students the same intensive levels of study with the same teachers as their older colleagues;
- to cap the enrollment age for most instrumentalists at 21 and have no lower age restrictions;
- to hire faculty who are distinguished performers or composers and whose livelihood is not primarily derived from teaching, ensuring that students are accepted on merit rather than to fulfill a teacher's contract;
- to continue to lend Steinway grand pianos to all keyboard, composition, and conducting students for use in their homes. ☺

Gary Graffman

IN FOND REMEMBRANCE OF MISS BRUESTLE



It is with great sadness and fond remembrance that I tell you that Vera Bruestle, my former executive assistant and our devoted friend, passed away on January 26. For nearly 20 years, her acumen in both administrative and aesthetic matters confirmed the unique spirit of our conservatory. Miss Bruestle, as she preferred to be addressed, provided invaluable support to the administrations of both John de Lancie and myself. Since her retirement as executive assistant in 2002, she remained a close part of the Curtis family. Her role in our history will long be remembered and she will be dearly missed. ☺