

At The Heart of Learning

By EDWARD BILOUS

On October 22nd at 8:00 in Paul Hall the Juilliard School will host a belated celebration of the 50th anniversary of one of the most enduring and influential achievements of William Schuman's Presidency, the creation of the Literature and Materials Department. This concert celebration will be an adventure in learning featuring performances by both students and faculty.

Fifty years ago, President William Schuman began the task of reshaping Juilliard into what would become one of the most prestigious institutes of higher learning in the world. He supervised the inauguration of the Drama and Dance Divisions, inspired the creation of the world famous Juilliard String Quartet and was the driving force behind Juilliard's move to Lincoln Center where it became the educational arm of the most celebrated arts center in the United States.



As important as all these achievements were to the development of the school there was one project that occupied a special place in Schuman's heart. A curriculum in which learning would not be confined to the classroom but would extend out through the practice room and into the concert hall and by doing so, would bring together all aspects of musical training into an

integrated whole. By encouraging students and faculty to participate jointly in performances, discussions and creative activities Schuman believed this new program would form the core of a community of artists dedicated both to learning about the arts and to the art of learning. This program was called The Literature and Materials Approach or L&M.

A natural educator himself, Schuman understood that if this new curriculum was to have any resonance it had to connect with a performer's experience and needs. To create the ideal environment for learning he decided that no text books would be used and no

theories advocated. Instead the materials of music would be deduced directly from the study of scores of masterworks of music literature in which they are operative. The simple genius behind this approach is that it is not reliant on sophisticated theories of music but rather on creative, interactive teaching. (In many ways the L&M Approach anticipated the kind of teaching advocated by institutes of aesthetic education and teacher training centers throughout the country.)

How The L&M Program Has Grown

Interactive Class Work

In the years that I have had the honor of serving as Chairperson of the L&M Department my colleagues and I have extended the original scope of the L&M Approach by augmenting the syllabus with creative assignments and live performances. The purpose of the creative assignments is to encourage our students to solve the same kinds of musical problems as the composers whose works they are studying have solved. One such assignment stands out as a particularly vivid example of this kind of work.

Three years ago an L&M I class began the study of a Haydn String Quartet. Rather than simply talking through an analysis of the work the professor decided he would begin with a seemingly free formed activity in which the students were asked to compose the exposition of a string quartet using the first four bars of a theme which he supplied. The following week students returned to their class to hear performances of each others work played by a quartet culled from the class. After they had compared the results of each others efforts the professor played a recording of the Haydn Quartet from which the four bar theme had been extracted.

Hearing the Haydn Quartet had a profound effect on the students. There was a immediate sense of understanding that passed through the class (the "ah-ha factor" as I like to call it), that could not have been achieved in a traditional lecture format. One student commented that he felt "as if he had collaborated with Haydn". Another said that it was the first time she ever considered "why a composer made certain choices".

Because the students were invited to interact with the material in a creative way their learning went far beyond the simple identification of structural elements of a work. They gained an intimate view of Haydn's compositional process while at the same time exploring their own musical creativity. They learned to think not merely about the language of music but *in* the language music. On an even deeper level, they began to see musical material not as having fixed meaning but rather as containing limitless opportunities for exploration and development. The study of music became the study of possibilities.

The importance for this kind of work is not limited to students. For in planning creative and interactive work teachers are reminded that it is impossible to separate *what* is being taught from *how* it is taught.

The study of the Haydn Quartet reached a remarkable conclusion with a special performance given by the Juilliard String Quartet. Following the concert Robert Mann led the members of the ensemble in an open discussion in which they shared their perceptions of the piece with the L&M classes. Finally, when the last applause had faded there was no doubt in my mind that we had cultivated the kind of learning experience that Schuman envisioned when he created the L&M Program.

The L&M Concert Series

One of the most important features of the original L&M Program was a series of Wednesday Afternoon concerts featuring performances by both students and faculty. These concerts (later called the *Wednesday, One O'clock Concerts*) included discussions and debates with the L&M faculty and the performers. As Juilliard grew it became increasingly difficult to maintain the intimate setting that these special events required and so the *Wednesday, One O'clock Concerts* were ultimately redesigned as a show case for young performers.

In the past three years the L&M department has revived the connection of classroom studies to performance with the creation of the *L&M Concert Series*. In principle, this series serves the same function as the original Wednesday programs except that the current series is dedicated exclusively to performances and lectures by professional artists especially Juilliard faculty.

In the four years since its inception the *L&M Concert Series* has become an enormously successful and vital part of our curriculum. They have provided our students with opportunities to hear their teachers speak about the connection between learning and performing. Our list of guest artists features some of Juilliard's most distinguished faculty members including (in alphabetical order) The Juilliard String Quartet, Lewis Kaplan, Jacob Lateiner, Seymour Lipkin, Charles Neidich, The N.Y. Brass Quintet, Lionel Pardy, Carol Wincenc and others. Several other notable artists have brought very different musical perspectives to our classes. Among them are Stephen Nachmanovitch who lead L&M IV classes in an improvisation workshop, Glen Velez introduced L&M II students to frame drumming and overtone singing and Lenny Picket, Music Director of the Saturday Night Live Band, performed some of his compositions using extended techniques for the saxophone.

The William Schuman Scholars Chair

In celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the L&M Approach President Polisi and the L&M Faculty have reaffirmed Juilliard's commitment to excellence in higher learning with the creation of a special award to be given to an artist who has made significant contributions both to the intellectual and artistic life of the Juilliard community. During the 1998 convocation Mr. Jerome Lowenthal became the first recipient of the *William Schuman Scholars Chair*.

For the past three years Mr. Lowenthal has been a regular guest of the L&M Department where he has generously shared his passion and insight in a series of intellectual adventures and performances. He will present two lecture-performances during the year, the first of which entitled "Seraphita Revisited: From B-A-C-H to S-C-H-B-E-G" will be part of our special 50th Anniversary Celebration on October 22nd in Paul Hall. This event is open to the entire Juilliard community.

The Music Technology Center

Although technology has always had a profound effect on music (the pipe organ, the piano, valves for brass instruments all represent major technological innovation), in no other time has the effect been so dramatic and so rapid as in our own. There are many reasons for the controversial nature of this change, the first being that earlier innovations were without exception, mechanical. The innovations of recent years have been electronic and increasingly computer oriented. Secondly, the huge advancements in music technology have been spurred on by the popular music and film industries. Although more and more classical artists have begun to explore electronic mediums non-classical artists remain the prime advocates of new technology.

Regardless of how we feel about including computers in music making the ubiquitous nature of the medium demands our attention. It is the position of the L&M Department that no musicians education can be considered complete without some understanding of the basic principles of music technology.

Since its inception four years ago the MTC has become one of the most frequently used facilities at Juilliard. Our classes are generally filled by the first day of registration and all of our facilities (two fully equipped studios on the 5th floor and six work stations in the computer center) normally operate at full capacity.

The study of music technology begins in the second year of L&M where every student is required to take a special introductory workshop taught by Michael Czajkowski, the first requirement of its kind among the nations conservatories. In that workshop students learn the fundamentals of sequencing, digital recording and editing, and music notation.

Violinist and Juilliard alumni Mari Kimura is a new member of the MTC faculty. She will be teaching a course for students interested in using computers in live performance entitled *Computers In Music*. The other four other electives which are offered to graduate students include *Introduction to Music Technology* (Milica Paranosic instructor), *Film Scoring*, *Music Production* and *Independent Study In Music Technology* (Edward Bilous instructor).

The Arts and Education Program

For years the L&M Department has relied on gifted students to serve as teaching assistants and fellows. In addition to assisting the faculty by coaching younger classmates in L&M they are given an opportunity to gain practical experience in

teaching. For many, the opportunity to serve as a TA or TF has been one of the most significant experiences of their student lives. In fact, 9 of the 13 current L&M faculty members began their careers as teaching assistance at Juilliard.

TA's and TF's are not selected on talent alone. They must first complete a year-long training course entitled *Arts In Education* co-taught by Eric Booth and myself. In this class they explore a broad range of educational issues ranging from Multiple Intelligence Theory to Peak Experience and Flow. They are also required to do practice teaching, create lesson plans and design curriculums for students of every level of development.

The *Arts In Education* class is not only for students interested in becoming L&M TA's. It is also a prerequisite for students applying for either Morse or Concert Fellowships, both part of the community outreach program. The training of Morse and Concert Fellows is the responsibility of Mr. Booth whose recent book *The Everyday Work of Art* has made him one of the nation's most respected authorities on the role of the arts in education. Other notable guests who have visited our class have included Dr. Frances Rauscher who spoke about her research on the effect of music on learning, Dr. Maxine Greene from Teachers College, Columbia University, Visual Artist John Toth and Juilliard Faculty members Stephen Piers and Dr. Peter Rojcewicz.

It is important to note that this class is the first of its kind offered at any conservatory in the country. The *Art In Education* class is open to graduate students or 4th year undergraduates interested in applying for one of the three fellowship programs.

The L&M Chorus

Although Juilliard is known for having some of the finest student performances in the world, sadly there has been very little opportunity to hear music written before the 17th Century or for that matter any choral literature. Four years ago we started a chorus of students from all the L&M I and II classes for the purpose of introducing them to the glorious sound of choral literature. Under the direction of Maestro Kent Tritle, the chorus has given six performances both at Juilliard and at the Church of St. Ignatius Loyola. Next semester Dr. Tritle will be leading them in a performance of the Schubert Mass in G, Bach Cantata #12 and two works by Buxtehude.

InterArts

InterArts is not a program but rather a forum which allows like-minded artists of different disciplines to collaborate on the creation of original work or new productions of existing work. Although not officially a part of the L&M Program many InterArts projects have been developed with the support of our department. In fact, the term InterArts was first used in an L&M production of George Crumb's *Ancient Voices of Children* that featured performers from the Drama, Dance and Music Divisions. These events provided opportunities for creative work that would not normally happen in any one division. They also allow faculty members from different departments to collaborate in creative new ways. Some of my most rewarding experiences at Juilliard have been the result of

collaborations with Benjamin Harkarvey and Stephen Piers of the Dance Division and Dr. Peter Rojcewicz, Chairperson of the Liberal Arts Department. Notable InterArts events include multi-disciplinary performances of *Folk Songs* by Luciano Berio, *Cantatas # 82 and 20* by Bach and *Pierrot Lunaire* by Arnold Schoenberg with choreography by Glen Tetley.

Conclusion

Of the many important ways in which the L&M Department has grown it is the growth in understanding of the work we do which is most significant. I believe that as teachers of the arts we are at our best when our students experience learning as a by-product of the imagination. By nurturing in them the art of creative thinking we encourage them to visualize their own work in terms of limitless possibilities.

I am deeply grateful to my own teachers, Elliott Carter, Krzystof Penderecki and Vincent Persichetti, each of whom could illuminate even the most resisting of young minds. I also wish to thank the most committed and dedicated faculty I know, the members of the L&M Department. The generous way in which they share their time and energy with their students truly place them at the heart of learning at Juilliard.

Finally, much has been said about William Schuman's contributions to education but not nearly enough about the contributions of our President, Joseph Polisi. Over the past few years I have spent many hours with the President reflecting upon Juilliard's mission and that of the L&M Program. Although my colleagues and I have been diligent in honoring Schuman's original vision it is President Polisi who has challenged us reexamine our goals so that the work we do would remain vital and relevant to the needs of today's artists. It is due to his support and encouragement that we have been able to reaffirm our commitment to excellence in education and to prepare our students to become the first generation of artists in the new millennium.

Edward Bilous is chair of the L&M Department and director of the Music Technology Center.

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