

April 30, 2025

## **Friends of LAMC Spotlight**

### **Honoring Professor Emerita Elaine Walter Ph.D.**

**Dear Friends of the Latin American Music Center,**

As we conclude this academic year, we take a moment to reflect on the remarkable individuals who have shaped our musical and educational landscape. In this edition of the *Friends of LAMC Spotlight Series*, we are honored to celebrate the extraordinary career of **Professor Emerita Elaine Raftery Walter Ph.D.**—a distinguished educator, scholar, and leader whose contributions have left an enduring mark on music education and performance, particularly at The Catholic University of America and its Benjamin T. Rome School of Music.

For over six decades, Dr. Walter was a cornerstone of the Rome School, serving in multiple leadership roles including professor, dean, and visionary program builder. Her leadership was instrumental in developing innovative curricula and founding the **Latin American Center for Graduate Studies in Music**, which significantly expanded opportunities for students and elevated the academic and performance presence of Latin American repertoire.

Beyond her academic legacy, Dr. Walter made lasting contributions to the operatic world as the founder and artistic director of the **Summer Opera Theatre Company**. Under her guidance, the company became a vital platform for emerging talent, launching the careers of countless young opera singers, conductors, and directors. Her collaborations with renowned artists such as **Mstislav Rostropovich** and **Gian Carlo Menotti**—along with memorable performances in **Vatican City for Pope John Paul II**—further underscore the international scope and impact of her artistic work.

In a recent conversation with Dr. Walter, we reflected on the importance of sharing these perhaps lesser-known stories with our colleagues—stories that shed light on the circumstances that made the Rome School the most visible and dynamic school at CUA at the time. Understanding how we rose to such heights is not only inspiring, but also essential to appreciating the legacy we are part of. Learning about the history of our institution through Dr. Walter's insights is, in my opinion, a truly rewarding and enlightening experience for our entire community.

Dr. Walter's unwavering commitment to education, artistic excellence, and cultural exchange has profoundly enriched the music community. As we celebrate her extraordinary career, we invite you to reflect on her legacy and join us in honoring her invaluable contributions to the field.

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As we close this academic year, we are also thrilled to share a special announcement:

***The LAMC Excellence in Latin and Ibero-American Music Award***

The Latin American Music Center (LAMC) at The Catholic University of America is pleased to introduce the *LAMC Excellence in Latin and Ibero-American Music Award*, a special recognition for individuals who have made significant contributions to the promotion and preservation of Latin and Ibero-American music.

This award aims to celebrate those whose work has advanced the understanding, performance, and study of Latin and Ibero-American music, enriching both our cultural and academic landscapes.

We are especially proud to announce that the first award will go to **Professor Emerita Elaine Raftery Walter Ph.D.**—in recognition of her visionary role in founding the LAMC and her lifelong dedication to music education.

As part of the award presentation, Dr. Walter will be invited to participate in a celebratory event with the CUA community, where she will share reflections on her career and enduring legacy.

We hope this award will further the mission of the LAMC and strengthen our ties with those committed to the growth and vitality of Latin and Ibero-American music.

Thank you for continuing to support our efforts to strengthen the mission of the Latin American Music Center. We look forward to continuing to share inspiring stories, celebrate outstanding musicians, and foster a deeper appreciation for Latin American music in the seasons to come.

God bless,  
Gustavo Ahualli  
Director, Latin American Music Center

## **Elaine Raftery Walter, Ph.D.**

### **A Lifelong Advocate for Music, Education, and the Arts**



Dr. Elaine Raftery Walter is a revered figure in American music education and arts leadership, whose legacy spans more than six decades of transformative impact. A proud member of the first graduating class of Notre Dame Academy in 1955 and later a student leader at Anna Maria College, where she earned her B.M. in 1959, Dr. Walter began her graduate studies as a prestigious Woodrow Wilson Scholar at The Catholic University of America (CUA), earning her Ph.D. in 1973.

Her primary professional home was CUA's Benjamin T. Rome School of Music, where she progressed from Graduate Teaching Assistant to Part-Time Faculty, and eventually to a tenured Assistant Professor. In 1982, she was named Dean of the School—a position she held until 2001—after earlier serving as Assistant Dean. Her tenure was marked by expansive academic innovation, administrative leadership, and a steadfast commitment to student opportunity. She oversaw comprehensive revisions to more than 30 undergraduate and graduate programs, introduced new degrees including the Musical Theatre B.M., and established the Latin American Center for Graduate Studies in Music with support from the Organization of American States.



*Awardee Joyce Garrett, M.M. '70, a vocal music teacher at Eastern High School in Washington ,D.C.,  
And Dr. Elaine Walter*

As Dean, Dr. Walter also spearheaded high-profile performance initiatives, including 25 annual Kennedy Center concerts with the CUA Symphony Orchestra and Chorus, and organized three student trips to Vatican City, where the ensembles performed privately for Pope John Paul II and publicly in Rome.

Following her deanship, Dr. Walter returned to the classroom as Professor of Music, teaching courses in music history, opera performance, and arts administration, while also designing interdisciplinary and honors-level curricula such as “Russian/Soviet Music & Policies” and “Classics in Conversation.” Her dynamic approach inspired students across disciplines and deepened the school’s educational offerings.

Outside the university, Dr. Walter made an indelible mark on the national opera scene as founder, general manager, and artistic director of the Summer Opera Theatre Company (1978–2007), which offered professional opportunities to emerging artists—many of whom went on to sing at the Metropolitan Opera and major houses around the world. She also maintained strong ties with institutions such as the Curtis Institute of Music.

Her professional affiliations are vast: she served on the National Board of Directors for the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM), chaired the NASM Mid-Atlantic Region, and acted as an accreditation evaluator. She presented research and served on panels for the Organization of American States, WolfTrap, XM Radio, the National Symphony Orchestra,

Zonta International, and more. She also adjudicated competitions for the Metropolitan Opera, Annapolis Opera, and Pittsburgh Concert Society, and served as a panelist for federal programs such as the NEA/USIA Arts America Program and the U.S. Department of Education's Jacob Javits Scholarships. Among her most treasured career memories are two extraordinary collaborations: with the legendary Mstislav Rostropovich—who spent a sabbatical in residence at CUA, coached students, and conducted a spring concert while also performing as soloist—and with renowned composer Gian Carlo Menotti, who wrote two cantatas commissioned by the school. Menotti personally attended and supported the premieres in Washington, D.C. and Philadelphia. Her civic contributions include producing programs for the White House Historical Society and the Bermuda International Arts Festival, chaired the music committee for all Diplomatic Receptions for Ronald Reagan Inauguration, and supporting cultural diplomacy efforts through USIA. She has been a trusted advisor to countless singers and arts organizations for over 40 years.

Her accolades include the CUA Presidential Medal for Community Service, the WETA Woman of Achievement Award, the CUA Alumni Achievement Award in the Performing Arts, and an Honorary Doctorate from Anna Maria College—the first alumna ever to receive this distinction. Upon retirement from full-time teaching, she received the Thomas Shahan Award for Distinguished Service, one of the university's highest honors.



*Tom Pedersen ( Former Head of the Music Theatre Division , Bishop David O'Connell (Former president of the CUA) and Dr. Elaine Walter*

Dr. Walter currently serves as a Board Member and Artistic Advisor for *Partners for the Arts*, an opera organization she co-founded. She has completed a book documenting the rich history of

the CUA School of Music, titled *Legacy: Memorable People, Memorable Events*, supported by university research grants.

Elaine Raftery Walter's enduring legacy is one of vision, dedication, mentorship, and an unshakable belief in the power of music to transform lives.

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## Interview

*In responding to these questions, I have consulted my completed, well documented, yet unpublished book, for answers, especially for names and dates of people and events. "Legacy: Memorable People; Memorable Events. Music at The Catholic University of America: 1950 – 2018. A Memoir" Dr. Elaine Walter*

1. **Reflecting on your extensive career at CUA**, where you held various leadership roles, what were the most significant challenges you faced, and which achievements do you find most rewarding?

During my years of leadership at the Music School (Assistant Dean-1974-'81; Dean-1981-2001), I lived by the mantra: Create and maintain an environment where faculty can teach, and students can learn. To me, that meant a stable and predictable 'world' for all working and studying in our school. Surprises were out; consistency and transparency in all policies affecting faculty, staff and students were stated and maintained. They involved changes to procedures, previously missing from the administration of the school.



*Captured in a candid moment, Dr. Elaine Walter shares a conversation with students in the lively hallways of the school, embodying her approachable leadership style.*

Immediately facing me (and the deans before and after) were financial issues. An initial budget challenge occurred immediately when I became dean. In my first meeting with the provost, I was advised to get the school into some sustainable financial shape, or changes would be made. I asked – would he give me one full dean’s term (4 years) to try to fix our income/expense model, without his making any drastic changes. He agreed. I couldn’t change how the university allocated school budgets. They were either reduced before a new academic year began, or more damaging, deans could be told to cut “X” dollars from our budgets during an academic year. As Assistant Dean, I was already knowledgeable of the school’s budget, and as dean, I was able to rework lines within it, to the school’s advantage. At the same time, I began serious work on alumni and donor gifts to the school, and explored endowment possibilities. Recruitment and enrollments were addressed, as meeting their goals impacted how the following year’s budget allocation was determined. I shared all budget lines – excluding individual faculty salaries, with the faculty who then began to understand what we had to spend, and I gave them a vote in faculty meetings, on budget line redirections, per my recommendations.

Other challenges addressed and fixed had to do with schedules, bridging faculty self-interests to overall school goals, and faculty vs. staff relationships. The wonderful faculty I inherited was not accustomed to regular days/times of faculty and committee meetings, nor were there common school goals in a working relationship between faculty and our small staff. Predictable schedules were put into place. Committee goals were re-identified, and memberships were streamlined so that no one faculty member was overburdened with committee memberships. Another challenge faced began in 1999 through 2001. Some among our long stable faculty announced their retirements. Search committees were formed, interviews with recommended candidates were held with faculty and students, and 9 new faculty members were engaged. Other achievements I am most proud of are detailed in the answers to questions that follow. My years as dean were busy yet satisfying ones, filled with “memorable people and events.”

2. **As a pivotal figure in founding the Latin American Center for Graduate Studies in Music (LAMC)**, how have you seen music education evolve, particularly regarding the inclusion and appreciation of Latin American music, from the beginning of your career to today?

The creation of the Latin American Center for Graduate Studies in music was clearly a rewarding achievement, but one I shared especially with Dr. Emma Garmendia, LAMC's first director, and her husband – Dr. Efrain Paesky, head of the cultural unit at the OAS. Emma, already an accomplished administrator in her home country of Argentina, was studying for a doctorate with us, and was a graduate assistant teaching theory. I was aware of her outstanding abilities, and wanted to find a place for her in the Music School, following her graduation. It was through Efrain that a spark was planted that ultimately brought about the LAMC. Efrain invited me as a guest of the OAS and the Inter-American Council, to present a paper on music education at the university level, in Caracas, Venezuela, in May, 1983. For several days following my presentation, other deans of higher education units in Latin American countries, talked with me about their problems and needs. There were no graduate degree programs available in their schools. Unless their teachers went to Europe for advanced degrees, their faculties were comprised of teachers with under-graduate degrees only. Additionally, non-performance degrees were obtained only at universities; performance was concentrated only at conservatories. There was no sharing of native music between Latin American countries, nor was their own native music taught in their universities or conservatories. I listened carefully. At the same time, back home, our Catholic bishops were discussing how to address the needs of an ever-growing Catholic Latin population within the U.S. Church. Pooling all this information, I considered – was there something we might do as a school in a National and Catholic University to address these needs?



I was not seeking to create new degree programs in Latin American music. I was searching for ways to bring students and professors from Latin America to CUA for advanced music degrees already well-established, and to include new courses on Latin American music, open to all our students. We could request scores of native music from the different countries, house them here, and make them available for performance by any country. And, I had Emma here at the school, who could head up this effort. I discussed this idea with our senior faculty; they understood and agreed to what I was proposing. I then took it to Emma and Efrain. I also approached how to fund these students from Latin America. Could/would the OAS help us by inviting their countries to support their students with scholarships? The intention was to educate these students who would then return to their respective countries, to teach in their universities and conservatories. Efrain took all this to the OAS, and in a relatively short time, all parties – the Music School, CUA, and the OAS were ready to create this new center. Then, there were few Latin American Music Centers at U.S. universities. Ours would be the first of its kind, with our specified goals supported by all cooperating parties.



*Armando Sánchez Málaga ( Peruvian Composer and Orchestral Conductor), Dr. Elaine Walter Dr. Emma Garmendia.*

The official signing of this agreement by the OAS Secretary General, CUA president – Fr. William Byron, S.J., Efrain, Emma, other OAS dignitaries, and me took place at the OAS, and the LAMC opened in the fall of 1984, with 8 students pursuing Master's degrees. Two came from Argentina, and one each from Bolivia, Costa Rica, Honduras, Panama, Peru, plus one from territorial Puerto Rico. An Inaugural Ceremony, by invitation of CUA President Fr. Byron, was held in Ward Hall on September 28, 1984.. A reception and exhibit of Latin American scores donated by Ricordi Americana, S.A., and primary and secondary sources given by the Inter-American Music Council, concluded the event. Emma created wonderful courses, focusing

on the music of one particular country per semester. And, she brought us the outstanding U.S. scholar of Latin American music. Dr. Robert Stevensen, from UCLA, came often, and served especially as theses/dissertations director for students wishing to research and write on Latin and Caribbean music topics. Our center flourished for years, with students attending from different Latin & Caribbean countries until failing economics in those countries forced the cessation of scholarship support. Then, Emma became one of those professors who retired during that 1999-2001 exodus. Joseph Santo, our Assistant Dean of Graduate Studies became the new LAMC head, followed by a new faculty member – and later dean of the school – Grayson Wagstaff. Both did fine jobs in keeping the center alive, and current LAMC director – Argentinian born Gustavo Ahualli, has brought new life and excitement to the center. Not all of those LAMC scholarship students returned home to teach in their universities. Some chose to remain here, finding teaching positions in our U.S. universities and conservatories, thus spreading the study of Latin and Caribbean music elsewhere in the U.S. Other such centers opened in the U.S., and the study of Latin/Caribbean music expanded and grew. Today, the study, inclusion, and appreciation of Latin American music is now a standard component in the study of music, at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Such inclusion and appreciation within our institutions of higher education has been accomplished.

3. **Dr. Walter, as the founder of the Summer Opera at Catholic University**, you've played a pivotal role in creating opportunities for young singers, conductors, and directors. What inspired you to establish the program, and what have you learned from working closely with emerging artists over the years? How do you view the evolution of opera as a form, and what role do you believe academic institutions should play in nurturing contemporary opera and sustaining the vitality of the art form?

#### The creation of **THE SUMMER OPERA THEATRE COMPANY: MISSION STATEMENT**

*“The Summer Opera Theatre Company, Inc., seeks, promotes and presents young artists ready for work with major opera and musical theater companies, {offers more established artists the opportunity to rehearse and perform before a critical Washington metropolitan audience new or previously performed roles,} and brings fully mounted professional opera to the public at the lowest possible ticket prices.” The original mission was approved by 13 founding board members.* What appears in parentheses above, was added some years later, as the company grew.

By the mid 1970's, after hearing many voice auditions at the music school, and judging local vocal and opera competitions, I learned there were many singers who wanted to remain in this area, and to perform opera locally. But there was nothing here for them. The only local company – the Washington Opera, hired professionals from across the country, rehearsed in NYC until production week, when it returned to perform at Lisner Auditorium.

Then too, there was hardly any music performed in town in the summer. I had experience in getting music school operas on stage – from projecting budgets, to scheduling, rehearsing, and marketing these productions. It seemed that perhaps It was a good time to launch a new opera company, and through auditions, to engage these young singers to perform during the summer, when D.C. was a cultural oasis. Discussions with a few colleagues and like-minded friends, consulting with local professionals including music critics, and with appropriate CUA personnel, yielded a plan: to create a non-profit opera company, independent from but legally in residence at CUA, to produce high quality, professional opera, during those quiet summer months. We negotiated to rent from CUA the Hartke Theater at a ‘friendly’ rate, and proposed that the drama department be allowed to keep that rental money, to supplant their annual departmental income. Talks with those at high levels in the university were positive. They recognized that if this company was successful, it could attract new people to the campus, who would then learn more about the university, and who could become equally new friends of CUA. All those consulted agreed; this new company could be a win-win for all involved. I then identified 13 local friends (including Mrs. Pellegrino, wife of CUA’s president), mostly from business and civic entities, who agreed to come together to form this new Summer Opera Theatre Company ( SOTC). In December, 1978, a first board meeting was held at the home of business entrepreneur Edith Schubert., our first board president. An attorney board member then applied for SOTC’s non-profit status, and we planned a first season for 1979, with open auditions in February, and with a first production – “Carmen,” in the Hartke Theater, in July. That first Audition day, attended by SOTC’s 1979 contracted conductor and stage director, the board, and me, was a snowy Saturday. However, we were deluged with singers, including many of our recent music school graduates. The board now saw first-hand the need for this local company, and how so many highly qualified singers auditioned, attracted to this new opportunity and chance to perform. SOTC now had a small office in the music building, its own direct phone line, volunteer office help, and rehearsals were scheduled in our Rehearsal Hall in the “New” Wing, under-used like the Hartke Theater, in the summer. That first production sold well, and was well received by audiences and critics. Musically, we proved we could do opera at a high level. Initially aided by some local government-paid summer “jobs” people - who failed us at the 11th hour, we needed to improve the visuals – sets and props, and especially costumes. We accomplished these visual improvements in the following 1980 season, and the critics agreed – this company has arrived and deserves our local support.

SOTC grew and thrived for 32 years. Our board expanded to 41, we employed two full time staff year- round in the SOTC Office, ran successful fund raises during the year, and operated in the black until the last year – 2007. Annually, we contracted and paid 200 seasonally, including soloists, chorus and orchestra musicians, and an artistic and tech staff. We evolved to a national company, sometimes even employing international artists, including two principals from Latin America. We grew to two productions per summer, with five performances of each opera. As our audiences came to trust us, we became bolder with our opera choices, combining popular operas with less well known ones including two by Janacek, a “Dialogue of the Carmelites,” and SOTC

was the first to bring “Die tote Stadt” to D.C. Our “discovery” young singers were often swept up by the major companies, including the Metropolitan Opera (whose artistic personnel came to all our productions), and Chicago Lyric. NEA awarded us grant money for years, and reviews by all our local papers and the Met’s “Opera News” were usually glowing. Running this company was my volunteer professional work outside of my music school responsibilities. For me, it was another most rewarding achievement.

What did I learn from working with those young singers? Easy answer: they wanted to work where they lived, to sing opera with good conductors and directors, in a company with good working conditions and schedules well established in advance, and decent pay.

You ask -how can opera continue to evolve? Should academic institutions promote contemporary opera, and can they help to sustain opera as a continuing art form? I believe that our universities and conservatories - through their voice faculties, coaches, and student opera performances, are the breeding grounds for emerging singers seeking entry to the profession. I also think that after formal study at our degree- granting institutions, these young singers should seek further study opportunities in master classes, by admissions to Young Artist Programs, and by participating in summer festivals. These add to completing their formal education, and to networking - critical to getting ahead in the profession. Likewise, our educational institutions and post-graduation programs must play a role in educating the public, through their performances of contemporary operas, critical to the continuation of this art form. This does not suggest that the operatic masterpieces of the past are to be ignored. It means that the “new” must be heard, to allow the best of them to become the new masterpieces of tomorrow, joining lists of past opera favorites - by performers and audiences alike.

4. **During your tenure, the School of Music was renamed in honor of Benjamin T. Rome.** How did this renaming reflect the school's mission, and what impact did it have on its trajectory within the broader landscape of music education?

I know there were people on campus who thought I ingratiated myself into Ben Rome’s world, hoping I could secure some financial support for the music school from this enormously wealthy Jewish business man and CUA Trustee. Not true; Ben made the first overtures. In 1972, Vincent became CUA’s Director of Alumni Relations. Then, he and I were sometimes invited to CUA Trustee social events.

As young ones in attendance, we were a bit shy, and at one of those parties, Benjamin T. Rome approached us, introduced himself, and proceeded to introduce us to the other trustees. A year or so later, a second, and dissimilar, happening occurred between Ben and me. Ben lived at the Watergate, and went to many performances next door, at the Kennedy Center, including our 1973 full orchestral and choral music school program in the Concert Hall. I had chaired this concert

for Dean Tom Mastroianni (the first of 26 concerts there, chaired by me. Considered another achievement.) That fall, Ben then called me and asked: Did the school intend to continue those annual concerts in the Ken Cen? I answered yes. Then, with no preamble, Mr. Rome said - I'd like to pay for those concerts. Send me all the bills! That was the first of years of his beneficial financial support for the music school, and for what evolved into a beautiful personal friendship between us.



*Elaine Walter with (from left) Dean Thomas Mastroianni, piano faculty member William Maselos, and CUA President Clarence C. Walton at the dedication of the new wing of Ward hall in 1974*

Because of Ben's support of other things Catholic – including the Vatican, he had already received a number of honors and rewards, including his induction as a Knight Commander of the Order of St. Sylvester, confirmed by Pope Paul VI. At Commencement on May 19, 1984, President Fr. Byron announced: "Ben Rome loves this place, especially the School of Music. ....Naming the school in his honor is a way of saying how much we love him in return." Following the naming of the school, we received a One Million Dollar Endowment from Ben. Later, he turned his support of our annual Kennedy Center concerts into a Spring Concert Endowment Fund, and large annual gifts from him to me for the school, continued until his death in 1994. Ben's (mission) agenda for the school was my agenda. He wanted to know what was needed, and he would then choose how much to give for specific needs that included faculty merit raises, scholarships, 7 new grand pianos, new orchestral instruments, VCR and CD players for classrooms, and computers for faculty and staff. In 1993, Ben – who had attended our first

Vatican Concert for John Paul II in 1987, decided it was time for our instrumentalists and singers to travel again to Rome for another concert for John Paul II, and he offered me a budget of \$110,000 to make the trip with the students again. He came with us, and I saw how John Paul II singled him out, giving Ben His warm, personal greetings, and seating him in a place of honor, flanking the Holy Father in His private Reception Room, inside the Vatican. Ben's gifts to us – over those 20 years between 1974 and '94, impacted every aspect of our school, from faculty/staff and student needs, to programs. He provided us with the means to increase and advance personal, performance and scholarly excellence.

5. **Your collaborations with esteemed artists like Mstislav Rostropovich and Gian Carlo Menotti** must have been profoundly influential. Could you share specific experiences or lessons from these interactions that have shaped your approach to music education and performance?

Programs with Mstislav Rostropovich and Gian Carlo Menotti, as well as other performances conducted by our own faculty, were memorable. There were many concerts at the Kennedy Center, Library of Congress, St. Matthew's Cathedral, and at the Shrine/National Basilica of the Immaculate Conception, prepared and conducted by Michael Cordovana, Leo Nestor, Robert Ricks, Randall Craig Fleischer, and Piotr Gajewski. But for all of us, having Rostropovich ("Slava" to us who called him 'friend') in our midst, rehearsing, conducting and performing with our orchestra, was a treasured learning and performing highlight.

In early fall 1983, Rostropovich surprised me with a phone call. He asked a favor; one that I easily granted as I had been seeking a solution to a school need which was answered by his request. When I agreed, he asked – "What can I do for you?" Slava was then the Music Director/Conductor of the National Symphony Orchestra. He was on sabbatical from the NSO during the 1983-'84 season, and was therefore free for other engagements. I said – Spend your Sabbatical with us, and conduct our final Spring Concert. He agreed. Next, Slava came to my office, and with Ricks and Cordovana, we planned the concert Program, and scheduled the dates when he would take over the rehearsals from the preliminary preparations by our faculty conductors. Our May 1984 concert date in the Kennedy Center had already been booked. Slava's contract with the NSO prevented him from conducting any other group at the Kennedy Center.

Hastily, I cancelled the Ken Cen date, and booked DAR Constitution Hall, the only other D.C. location big enough to hold our orchestra and chorus on stage, and that had a large enough audience space, enough to accommodate what I knew would be a sold-out performance w/ Slava as our conductor.

Slava began his rehearsals in the spring, 1984. So well organized, he rehearsed sections carefully, always kindly, and pulled out of our students their best. He not only conducted that May 4

concert; he opened with the Haydn 'Cello Concerto in C,' playing with and sitting among a chamber group of students he pulled from our orchestra.

What an experience for those students, to play with the former Soviet humanitarian, who was considered the world's best living cellist. At the conclusion of the program that included music by Glinka and Rachmaninoff, the audience applause was long and loud. What a performance and achievement for our students and music school! Perhaps one story best illustrates a lesson learned on how to approach anew, the most known and performed pieces, as taught by the great man himself. After having heard the Canadian national anthem headlining concerts at the Royal Conservatory in Toronto, I returned home and initiated the beginning of all our joint symphonic and choral concerts with our national anthem. This May program would open similarly, and towards the end of our dress rehearsal, Slava wanted to run through the anthem.

The orchestra and chorus did its usual job with it, and I thought it sounded fine. But Slava did not think so. At its conclusion, he put his stick down on the music stand and addressed the students. In a heavy accent (sometimes, on purpose, the accent was more pronounced than at other times), he told them about his struggles, and what the freedom we take for granted meant to him, and what it should mean to them. His remarks were stirring; the students listened and understood. Then he said: "Ve vill rehearse this again." Never had they played and sung "The Star-Spangled Banner" so movingly." It was equally inspired by the performance.

After the concert, through the cooperation of Efrain and the OAS, I had arranged for a midnight supper, for the school's major donors and friends. Slava, with his wife –Galina (the former prima-soprano of the Bolshoi), not only attended; he greeted every donor, thanked them for their support and attendance, and stayed with us until the end of that long, glorious evening.

Working with Gian Carlo Menotti was a far different experience, but one that ultimately became equally satisfying, and memorable. My brilliant scholar/priest friend and neighbor – Carmelite Friar John Sullivan, loved music, and often came to our school performances. Early in the 1980's, he approached me with a proposal. October 1982 would be the 400 th anniversary of the death of St. Teresa of Avila, a co- founder of his Order. He asked – with the Carmelites paying the commission, would the school commit to premiering a new work on a text by St.

Teresa, by a composer, that together we would choose. I consulted Bob Ricks and Michael Cordovana, who agreed. We all then met, and finally selected Menotti, a well- recognized composer of accessible music, since his made-for- TV opera – "Amahl and the Night Visitors"

first played on Christmas Eve, 1951. Through several phone calls, Fr. Sullivan then presented his invitation to Menotti, but Gian Carlo (facing bankruptcy) kept turning him down. Fr. Sullivan then turned to a young Carmelite nun in Philadelphia; her well-off family had agreed to pay the commission, and he asked her to call Menotti, to assure him of payment. She made the call; Menotti then agreed.



Next, a tripartite contract was drafted and signed by the Carmelites, Menotti, CUA's General Counsel. Warned that Menotti was frequently late in delivering manuscripts and parts, I purposely spaced out 1982 summer dates for receipt of the score and parts, allowing enough time should he miss some deadlines. We needed to have all in hand by the start of the fall semester, so rehearsals could begin promptly for the performance on October 15, 1982. This signed agreement meant nothing to Menotti. He failed to meet those summer dates. I made many calls to him at his home in Scotland, becoming more insistent with each one. He told me not to worry; the students can learn it in time.

By the opening of the fall semester, we had only the piano/vocal score. The choral parts were copied and distributed, and Bob Ricks studied and prepared for rehearsals, solely from that one score. The full score and orchestral parts arrived with Gian Carlo on Monday, October 11, just five days before the premiere performance at St. Matthew's Cathedral.

Menotti was charming and full of good cheer. I escorted him up to the Rehearsal Hall, introduced him to Bob and the students, and Bob – having isolated sections to rehearse first from that piano/vocal score, distributed the parts, and began drilling those sections he had pre-selected. Menotti gave some notes, but seemed pleased with the rehearsal, that ended at 10 P.M. Then, Menotti asked that the parts be collected, and we returned to my office.

He did not like everything he had composed, and wanted to rewrite some sections already drilled by Bob. The parts were laid out on my floor, and with his long-time copyist by his side, Menotti paced and dictated changes. Without glancing at the music, he would cite page, brace, and measure numbers, and directed the copyist in this way: 'Change the chord to A minor, and give the "A" to the oboes.' The copyist then spelled out the rest of the chord, and distributed notes to the other instruments, at his discretion. For an hour, Menotti made more note and rhythm changes. I was witnessing a process, new to my concepts of composition.

Menotti chose St. Teresa's text: "Muero porque no muero" ("I die because I do not die"), and miraculously, everything came together in time for the performance. It was wonderfully received by a packed audience in the Cathedral. There is one other story surrounding this performance that must be told. During one of my many summer phone calls to Menotti, in a grandiose gesture, I asked if there was a soloist he'd like us to try to get for the performance. He said "Yes. See if you can get her as she is on the edge of a major career." I asked her name and of her agent, and called immediately. But, the relatively unknown Renee Fleming had a prior engagement. His second choice, Marvis Martin, came from New York, and she proved to be a fine soprano soloist. While here in Washington for the premiere performance, in an interview with NPR, Menotti told why he (a self-proclaimed agnostic) accepted the commission. He told of the nun's call, at the end of which he asked her – her name. She said – Sr. Pia. He said – That's a strange name, why did you choose it? She said after college, her non-Catholic family gave her the grand tour of Europe. While there, she visited the stigmatic priest (now Saint) Padre Pio, who converted her to



Catholicism. When she became a nun, she took the feminine version of his name. Menotti then revealed – after W.W.II, he went up into the Italian mountains to talk with Padre Pio. Mostly they fought, and when Menotti angrily left, Pio said: “I will re-enter your life when you most need me.” Facing bankruptcy, Menotti said he viewed this new commission as Pio re- entering his life, as promised.

Our next and second commission for a new work by Menotti was far less stressful, and so much easier to arrange. Again Fr. Sullivan asked - Would the school premiere a companion piece to “Muero”, on a text by St. John of the Cross (the other co-founder of Fr’s Order), as 1991 was the 400 th anniversary of St. John’s death? We agreed, and similar contractual arrangements were made for this new cantata, to be paired with “Muero,” and premiered at our annual concert at the Kennedy Center, on April 28. This time, Menotti chose the text “Llama de Amor Viva” (“Flame of Living Love”), and both cantatas were conducted by Randall Craig Fleischer, who had become our conductor, following Bob’s retirement as Orchestra Director/Conductor.

Menotti again traveled to D.C., attended the D.C. premiere, and rode with us (and with Ben Rome in his chauffeur-driven car) where we repeated the performance at the Basilica in Philadelphia. Both performances were wonderful successes. Gian Carlo asked to meet with Sr. Pia while in Philly. This was arranged; she - behind the usual monastery grill, he on the other side, both talking together. This final performance of “Llama” and “Muero” concluded our working relationships with Menotti. Yet, Gian Carlo and I remained friends, communicating frequently, until his death, at age 95, in February, 2007. For me and the students, having the opportunity to work with a famous and living composer on the preparation and performance of two new works, was an extraordinary experience. While Slava taught us to take always a fresh approach to the preparation and performance of past and familiar works, Menotti showed us the slower, careful process of creating, amending, and perfecting new ones. Both lessons were to be savored, and practiced.

6. **Looking back on your multifaceted career at CUA**, is there a particular project or accomplishment that stands out as especially meaningful—one that you hope will inspire and guide future generations in the field of music?

The answers to the above 5 questions all had to do with my leadership years. Now, I speak first about my final years as a teaching professor. I LOVED teaching the students, the courses I was assigned, and new courses I was allowed to create. The latter were diverse, and included topics: “Arts and Society in 20 th Century Russia/Soviet Union,” “A Cultural History of Russia: 18 th to 20 th Centuries,” (the latter for the university’s Honors Program,) “Classics In Conversations,” – the CUA wide ‘Freshmen Experience’ on teaching “The Iliad” and related sequential books, ending with “The Inferno,” all created and organized by English Professor Michael Mack, and “Arts Management in the Nonprofit World.” I considered these significant and meaningful

accomplishments, and hope that both assigned courses and the will to create new ones --relevant to the world today, would guide future teachers in music.



*Dr. Walter during the unveiling of her portrait in the Deans' Portrait Hall at the Rome School of Music, Drama, and Art.*

There were important lessons I learned from experience, that were paramount in my years of leadership and teaching, and that I hope would guide future leaders/professors in music at CUA. Today's world is far more complicated than the world I left as a leader/teaching professor in 2018. Yet, I believe certain precepts remain: 1) Always find new approaches to repeated issues and to course structures. (EX.) Don't pull your last course syllabi and simply change the dates of topics for the next semester's presentation. Look for new things to add. 2) Never "wing-in" in meetings or course lectures. Always be fully prepared in advance. 3) There are always two sides to every question/issue. Investigate both sides before making a decision. 4) Whether leader or professor, make sufficient time for faculty/staff and students to have easy access to you. Faculty and staff should always be able to schedule timely appointments with their leaders, or drop-ins, as needed. Students should likewise be easily able to schedule time w/ their dean/faculty members. (I handled students in a way that worked well.) As dean, I held Open Hours for them every Thursday afternoon. No appointment necessary; they could come in then to discuss anything on their minds. Likewise, as faculty teachers and/or advisors, do provide ample office hours, and widely post them for all to view.

Two senior faculty gave me advice when I became dean. I listened, learned, and applied their advice through-out my dean years. Professor Thad Jones (long- time head of Theory/Composition) advised me – You must deal with perceptions, often more "persistent" than the facts. That proved to be so true. I learned from Michael Cordovana (who taught me more

about administration than any one or any course) by observing him as Assistant Head (later Assistant Dean), as I worked for him as a student volunteer, when I first arrived as a grad student. Michael always kept his ear close to all things on-going within the building.

He would then initiate and address solutions to any growing issue/situation before it/they erupted into a major problem. That too was valuable advice. In summary, I could list other things learned and practiced. But I believe if these above points are followed, music could continue successfully on campus, through its devoted leaders and teachers. Where-ever and how-ever music continues at CUA, because of its very wide-spread/across disciplines public appeal, music should return to its rightful place, to lead the university in public visibility of its excellence and appeal.