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**The Conductor's Voice:
Working Within the Choral Art**

Part Three of a Three-Part Series

by

Patrick K. Freer

This is the third in a series of three articles exploring interviews of choral conductors. The list of interviews was compiled by David DeVenney¹ and extended through the June 2006 issue of the *Choral Journal*. The first article focused on how choral conductors describe components of “flow experiences” in terms specific to choral music. The second article centered on descriptions of singer experience, the conductor experience, and how these influence the process of moving through rehearsal to performance. Conductors are identified within the text or in parentheses following the quotations.

This article contains many quotations from choral conductors about their work. The interviews from which these quotations are excerpted involved conductors of all types of ensembles ranging from children’s choirs to university ensembles and professional choirs. Several common topics arose from the analysis of these interviews, specifically issues of leadership, pedagogy, and craft. These topics and related subtopics form the structure of this article, with a final section containing some of the advice these conductors offered for the profession.

Leadership and Pedagogy

Howard Swan emphasized that a choral conductor “must be a leader: not a dictator; not an autocrat, but a leader. One must accept the fact that when one stands in front of the chorus, one is a leader. As a result of this, one has responsibilities.”² Leadership requires the recognition that

There are some amazing things that are possible with limited resources, and there are also some amazing things that are never made possible, even with unlimited resources. In other words, you cannot always rationalize defective or unimaginative music-making just because you say, ‘well we’re not professionals’ or ‘we don’t have a budget’ or ‘we don’t have enough rehearsal!’ This goes for music at every point from creative conception to its ultimate deliverance through a performing body to a listening audience—fellow human beings who are sitting out there and who could possibly be a chorus themselves. And the music director is the key to all of this. A musical performing organization must have a focal point and must have a pilot, and the pilot is the musical director who sets up goals, who is aware of them, and who is aware of what is over the horizon.

—Morton Gould³

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Dale Warland offered the condition, “there must also be a mutual respect between singers and the conductor. Unity and spirit are very important for the success of a choral ensemble, and this unity and spirit, to a large extent, are established by the leadership of the conductor.”⁴ If, as Roger Wagner stated, “a great conductor is one who knows what he or she wants and knows how to get it,”⁵ the choral conductor needs to know the skills involved in the pedagogies of music and singing.

Robert Shaw proposed that conducting and teaching could be synonymous, adding “as long as the conductor does not make it difficult for ensemble to take place, as long as he keeps a sort of vitality and a joy in the air for the group to use, and as long as he knows where the piece is going, he is making a significant and essential contribution.”⁶ Theodore Morrison cautioned, though, “almost any smart conductor with a good heart and some adrenaline can convincingly deliver the places in the music the audience will remember, but it takes talent to make the crafty connections. If you don’t convince there, if the connections are awkward, the audience will forget everything you do.”⁷ Robert Page noted that achievement levels of choirs may be held back by poor teaching skills: “So many conductors settle for mediocrity. They palm off bad sound for sociological reasons for making music.”⁸

Alice Parker observed,

When I am in a situation where I hear three or four choruses in quick succession, it is always fascinating to hear how different each group sounds. And if it is the kind of situation where there are three or four different choruses being led by the same person, or rehearsed by different people, how much each chorus changes with a different director. Whoever is leading is getting basically what they are asking for. Whether or not they are satisfied is beside the point, at this moment. They get what they ask for and each one of us asks for something different.⁹

Planning for Rehearsals

When conductors design rehearsals to achieve their objectives, they might plan so that “the initial rehearsals are structured to operate like patterns of falling dominos. I want the first rehearsal (domino) to facilitate the accomplishment of all succeeding rehearsals” (Dennis Shrock).¹⁰ Speaking about her choir members, Margaret Hillis said, “My biggest problem is to make them better, and I sit down and think about that a great deal. If you try to make them better in a phony kind of way, or by drill and that sort of thing, it becomes dry and sterile.”¹¹ Jean Ashworth Bartle concurred, “I try to make all rehearsals interesting and musical. The long term goal is to develop artistry and artists. We’re not training seals when we deal with children. We’re training musicians and developing artistry.”¹²

Planning for rehearsals is essential as “you can be detrimental to the growth of your program/student if you have rehearsals but are not prepared for them. The more rehearsals you have the more the choir director has to be challenging” (Stan McGill).¹³ When asked about standards of choral excellence, Doreen Rao noted, “for me, ‘standards’ means conducting my rehearsals

thoughtfully, with a wholehearted awareness of my singers and with the integrity of careful musical preparation and understanding. When we conduct our rehearsals and concerts thoughtfully, and when performers and audiences are moved by the musical experience, we might say that we have reached a standard of excellence."¹⁴

The specific order of rehearsal activities intrigued Weston Noble:

Indeed, I cannot overstress the importance of psychology in rehearsing a choir. Since working with voices entails far more subjectivity than working with instruments, psychology, in my opinion, should play a great part, including the first selection to be rehearsed each day, where to begin within that selection (most of the time I do not start at the beginning), what characteristics that piece should possess if it is to be successful as an opener, the placing of the more challenging repertoire within the rehearsal plan, warm-up procedures, and keeping the attention of the student to the maximum degree possible ... Every time I fail to observe psychological ramifications of rehearsal procedure, I reduce the optimum effectiveness of the time spent.¹⁵

Robert Shaw observed that careful planning allows conductors the opportunity to "keep the chorus alive by giving meaning to rehearsals—it's also easier for a chorus to change a going concept than to approach the final rehearsal without any."¹⁶

Warm-ups as Pedagogical Tools

Many conductors begin the teaching of repertoire and skills in the first moments of the warm-up session and carry it forward from rehearsal to rehearsal. Carl Druba said, "you must assume ... whatever technique they are going to have ... you have to build. I don't try to accomplish everything at once, but have in the back of my mind the progress of sound over the course of the semester."¹⁷ Helen Kemp added, "I use warm-ups at the beginnings of rehearsals, but always with a purpose. Instead of abstract melodic scales or patterns, I'll use snatches of music from

our repertoire. Musical phrases are much better for the children; they are more interesting, more accessible, and they help you relate warm-ups to the music."¹⁸

Helen Kemp also spoke of structuring her warm-ups around the development of basic skills: "In striving for excellence in a limited amount of time you should concentrate on fundamentals. These will build your program by building on each other, and they will make your later work more efficient. Careful work on fundamentals will build good habits."¹⁹ Oren Brown concurred, "I constantly have to refer to the basics, to wake up their minds for a particular function, and to remind them of such fundamentals as breathing and posture."²⁰

Occasionally a well-intentioned conductor will construct warm-ups that are unhelpful, as when "I've seen colleagues of mine warm-up a choir in the traditional way. They simply let basses and altos strain and struggle as they continue to go higher and higher" (Richard Westenberg).²¹ Another instance calling for carefully planned warm-ups is when

There is excessive vibrato, there [often] has not been sufficient training in the upper part of the voice ... Individuals in amateur choirs who have not sung during the summer have more vibrato in the fall. They have not used and exercised the upper part of the voice! I think a lot of vibrato is an excessive pressure, especially from the lower part of the voice carried too high. Exercise is needed to lighten the upper part of the voice and carry it down low. It's like a sigh. We sigh from the top down

—Oren Brown²²

Richard Westenberg added,

When amateur choirs have been performing, say, Bach cantatas or passions, I frequently use chorales as warm-ups; I have them sing without text on certain vowels. This way they concentrate not only on notes, but also the alignment of the vowels, intonation, etc.²³

Goal Selection

Conductor focus needs to be placed upon both the musical and psychological needs of the singers before them:

If you get on the podium and assume that people are going to be bored, they're going to be bored. If you assume they're going to be involved, they're going to be involved. If you assume that they can do something, they can. If you assume that they can't, they never will.

—Margaret Hillis²⁴

When discussing the goals that conductors might set for choruses with relatively inexperienced singers, Alice Parker offered,

It depends on your point of view. Is the aim to provide a community event that uses everybody to the best of their abilities? Then you can have wonderful success with it, I think. If your aim is to present an excellent program of difficult music, then you are going to have trouble. So there are all kinds of goals in choral music.²⁵

Matching the conductor's goals with the needs of the ensemble is essential because

Inspiring one's singers is wonderful, but if the singers do not have an in-depth understanding or comprehension of the music they perform and do not know why they are singing in a certain manner, we have failed.

—Joseph Huszti²⁶

In other words, conductors "are remiss if they only teach what they've been taught to teach, rather than teaching what needs to be taught" (Fred Waring).²⁷

Accordingly, Jo-Michael Scheibe advised,

I am a firm believer in introducing a composition at or near the eventual tempo if at all possible and with as little support from the keyboard as possible. I do not,

however, believe in allowing the choir to struggle and not achieve initial success in the introduction of a new composition, and at times in more difficult compositions, have used the keyboard for harmonic support—because failure does little to win your choir—and success builds the ensemble's trust in you as a conductor.²⁸

Music Reading of Amateurs

Alice Parker commented that when working with amateurs who may not feel confident about reading music,

Working by ear is a wonderful way of bringing out people's native musical ability—you also can make music right then and there in that room. It makes laboriously learning a three-minute church anthem with an amateur group that doesn't read well just seem like an exercise in frustration. You are always trying to get the accuracy of the page before you can get any musical value.²⁹

She added,

If people are reading and if that is difficult for them, then very often they are not controlling their voices as well as if they were singing something they knew. And so, the problem voices sound worse than they really are. Once they know the music they sound better.³⁰

Robert Porco emphasized, however,

For the most part, the volunteer people are better than they give themselves credit for: I do a lot of rehearsing unaccompanied—even reading. See, there's this sense that they're volunteers—amateurs—and that begins to rub off on them, on their estimation of what they can do. Most of the time, they can do far greater things in terms of reading. So, I just challenge them.³¹

No matter the reading level of the choir members, Jo-Michael Scheibe advocates

establishing early success in first readings of a composition:

When the choir leaves the rehearsal they should feel that they have achieved something. This may be only the final bar or two, but success is paramount in the positive learning curve. Introduction of a new composition is critical to the success or failure of that composition in concert.³²

Movement and Gesture

Many conductors ask choir members to incorporate movement and gesture during the rehearsal process, sometimes to facilitate the learning process, and at other times to reduce vocal tension. Harold Decker commented,

Rhythm is the first thing you respond to as a child. As civilization grows, you learn to use your mind as well as your body. I think moving is important, particularly in rehearsals, to loosen up and keep the body from getting tense. Movement, without feeling for the phrase, is what Joe Flummerfelt called 'mindless rhythm.' Music has to have everything: rhythm, melody, and a mental concept.³³

Nancy Telfer noted that

There are two different kinds of gestures: ones conductors make and ones singers do. They work very similarly; both are very powerful. Singers' bodies can work with the voice to help the voice improve. When they do certain movements with the body, other parts of the body unconsciously react in certain ways.³⁴

On the other hand,

Any tension in the conductor's body is reflected in the tone quality of the singers. Ideally, the conductor's gestures should be very liberating to the singer. When the conductor visually expresses the flow of the music, the singers' tone quality responds to the conductor's gesture

without any verbal incentive.

—Nancy Telfer³⁵

Robert Porco commented,

In my view, there are too many young conductors who have beautiful technique and that's it. I'm not criticizing them, but I don't think that is what music is all about.³⁶ Rather, the relationship between gesture and sound means that "I can change tone during a performance by how I look and how I conduct" (Howard Swan).³⁷ Paul Salamunovich recalled, "I once read that you shouldn't use all your gestures in rehearsal—you should save some for the performance. I disagree. In order to get a point across, I would hang from the chandeliers by my toes in rehearsal. But when I get on the podium, I simply try to look like the music—no more, no less."³⁸

Conductor as Voice Teacher

When working with choirs,

Good voices, of course, help in accomplishing the demands or requirements of scores, but good voices can't take the place of score study and the conductor's responsibility for learning all he or she can about voices and instruments, etc. All music starts from score study.

—Margaret Hillis³⁹

Donald Neuen recommended that conductors learn to

Understand and solidly teach voice—teach people (of any age!) to sing, really sing! I know we must care for and protect the younger voices especially, but I feel that there are far more choirs who sing in an anemic, meaningless manner than those who may be over-singing. There is a very specific sound heard in truly great singing. Any choir is capable of achieving that sound without forcing, straining or sounding older. The conductor simply has to know what that sound is, how to teach it, how to inspire the singers to desire it, and then never accept less!⁴⁰

Choral conductors rely heavily on the use of their own voices when modeling technique and phrasing for choirs. Paul Salamunovich cautioned,

I am always concerned that one of tomorrow's successful choral conductors not be left at home for the sake of a voice, and that singers not be allowed to fall in love with their voices before they fall in love with the music for which the voice was intended. Many of the most successful choral conductors are or were just average singers. They can express beauty, however. They may not be great singers, but they can be tremendous teachers.⁴¹

Helen Kemp agreed that the conductor's own singing voice

[I]s really very important, but I think the repertoire and teaching techniques are more important. The director of a children's choir doesn't have to have a great solo voice, but he or she has to have an understanding of the child voice.⁴²

But, continued development of their own vocal skills will permit conductors to "know and love the voice [and] know and love the singer with all the eccentricities involved" (Robert Page).⁴³

Conducting as Craft

The function of choral conductors as musical leaders implies that "students will be an exact mirror of us; if we do not exude energy we are never going to get it... You can exude energy with the way you move from the piano to the stand or the way you carry your body. I think it's a matter of looking like you care" (Sally Herman).⁴⁴ The choir's perception of a conductor's musical leadership can be greatly influenced by how that conductor attends to other, often non-musical, responsibilities.

Spontaneity and Responsiveness

Howard Swan believed

A great choral person must learn

how to plan for and feel like the people with whom he or she is working. Not all would agree with this premise. We both know great musicians who have not possessed this last attribute. It's not so necessary for the instrumentalist. But one must never forget that we deal with voices—voices that in one respect are related to the way in which a personality shows itself and hopefully will grow. It is very difficult for some to do this, to put themselves in the other person's place.⁴⁵

Norman Luboff reflected that such empathy is rooted in communication of

[T]he composer with the conductor; the conductor with the chorus/orchestra in rehearsal; the conductor/chorus/orchestra with the audience. Should this chain break down at any point, the whole idea and intent of the composer, to communicate with the audience, is lost. I won't hesitate to do anything which will help keep that chain of communication intact.⁴⁶

A conductor needs to be aware of

[T]he individuals in his chorus at all times. How do they seem to be feeling physically, mentally, emotionally? Are they tired? Are they nervous? Are they uptight about something? Their eyes will tell. Their frowns will tell. The pursing of the lips, the use of the tongue are signs which can tell a sensitive person a great deal about the feelings of the chorus.

—Howard Swan⁴⁷

When listing the skills involved in empathy, Colleen Kirk outlined that conductors

[M]ust be thoroughly grounded in musicianship sensitivities and understandings, care about the singers and their concerns, be alert to cues which reveal the interests and growth of choir members, and be sensitive to time and to comfortable rehearsal and concert pacing.⁴⁸

Empathy with singers may be reflected in the choices conductors make about the design and pacing of both rehearsals and concerts. Margaret Hillis commented, "in any rehearsal there are certain basic procedures that I have, but I always vary them according to what the music needs."⁴⁹ Brock McElheran referred to the

[T]ype of conductor who never lets down, but drives the group for two hours, demanding the ultimate at all times. I don't agree with that. I think it's very hard to reproduce intense emotion for any length of time. I prefer the conductor who works quietly and low-key and then says, 'Now, let's do it!' Like a skyrocket, finally put the match to it and let 'er rip! The utmost intensity is turned on then, instead of trying to sustain it over a long period.⁵⁰

Howard Swan engaged in an action research project where he compared the effects of a five-minute break with a fifteen-minute break in the middle of the rehearsal. He related,

The result [was what] one would expect: the group that had the five-minute break did the best in every respect, adding that when the break was fifteen minutes in length, the group lost interest and abandoned the rhythm of the rehearsal, so to speak. One had to bring them back and start all over again, build rehearsal goals anew. I think we make this mistake today in our rehearsals.⁵¹

To maintain interest, convey enthusiasm and refine the musical skills of choristers, Michael Palmer found that he would use "whatever means are at my disposal to come up with the right imagery for them to create the kind of sound that I'm looking for or the kind of approach to a passage."⁵²

Ultimately, the conductor needs to transfer responsibility for musical performance to the choir. For Robert Porco, tempo highlighted this issue:

It is the choir or the ensemble that keeps the tempo, not the conductor. I think most ensemble

people haven't thought of this. The conductor may start things, end things, and shape things, but as you're going along, the sense should be that the chorus is performing and actively executing the tempo.⁵³

Allen Chapman agreed, saying

I dare to try to allow the music to happen ... There are times when the choir is not as accurate as it might be, but we try to get to the heart of the music. I think all of us hear too many safe, predictable, and merely accurate performances. I try to make music live.⁵⁴

The route to rehearsals and performances where the conductor and choir are fully engaged is centered upon

A certain instinctive communication which immediately brings a kind of respect [A] conductor must have a tremendous love for people because he or she has to work with them. One has to love them a lot because they're terribly hard to love sometimes. They make some miserable mistakes. They've got to know that the conductor loves them even when correcting them.

—Allen Lannom⁵⁵

Elements of Text and Blend

The conductors in these interviews were recognized for their leadership and rehearsal skills, but they became respected for the musical results they achieved with their choirs. They offered specific advice about performance practice and choral technique, and the topics of text and blend are sampled here.

Paul Salamunovich related,

From the moment a choir starts to learn notes, I want them to start understanding the meaning of the words which inspired the composer. Then I want them to telegraph their message through the music. I tell the chorus they are vocal actors, that I want to see that meaning in their faces and hear it in their tone.⁵⁶

Concurrent with understanding the literary meaning is the task of articulating the text. Weston Noble noted, "consonants receive my primary attention, especially as the year unfolds. I believe that rhythm is the basic underpinning of everything. If consonants do not have the correct 'rhythm,' the effectiveness of the beauty of the vowel is diminished."⁵⁷ Harold Decker added, "If you can get your choir to get over the consonant and get directly to the vowel and then keep the integrity of that vowel until you get to the next one, you will have something that will sound like an ensemble instead of like forty singers."⁵⁸

Relating diction to blend, Eph Ehly's position

[I]s to accept blend, not to force it. One can have blend when one has unity of vowel sounds, unity of amplitude, and a well-positioned or focused tonal placement. All of these things contribute to blend, but I'm not going to change a person's voice in order to conform to a peculiar quality I have in mind.⁵⁹

Care for the voice of the individual singer concerned a number of conductors, including Weston Noble:

We choral directors who work with the younger voice have to be unusually careful. The voice is at such a formative stage. To ask it to modify before the technique is established can be destructive. Howard Swan stressed that the individual singer must never be sacrificed for blend. This is a strong dictum—one not always easy to observe.⁶⁰

To that end, Margaret Hillis related,

Many years ago I threw out the word 'blend.' I prefer the term 'unison' and/or 'matched vibratos' and/or 'matched vowels.' Blend is too often spelled 'bland' and suggests that music is made for choruses rather than the truth of the matter, which is that choruses are made for music.⁶¹

Howard Swan stated, "I cannot go too far with blend, because I feel that if I do, something very important of an individual

nature is destroyed or at least is hurt very badly."⁶² Don V Moses agreed,

I actually never use the word 'blend.' I suggest to the singers that if they sing the same vowel and the same pitch at the same time, we will have the sort of sound that I'm looking for. I would rather not ask singers to sound like one another, because they've been working all of their lives not to sound like other singers.⁶³

Responsibility to the Composer

Colleen Kirk related,

Excellence in choral music is complicated. It involves the vocal sound itself. A successful conductor must recognize and elicit a sound that is beautiful, well produced, and appropriate for the work being performed. A successful conductor hears simultaneously what the composer had in mind and what is actually being produced by the singers. Excellence in choral music requires the ability to interpret musical ideas of composers representing various countries, styles, and periods. It involves communicating through music and speech. It necessitates interpreting and managing artistic expression.⁶⁴

Harold Decker cautioned,

Some conductors get so involved in getting the music the way that they want to hear it that they forget how to reach an audience with it ... Conductors must also add something of themselves to a performance. However, this must be proportionate, because if the conductor adds all of himself or herself and forgets the composer, the music suffers and becomes phony.⁶⁵

Margaret Hillis held that the preparation of conductors was key to understanding the composer's intent, saying "you have to get as near as you possibly can to what the composer had in his ear. That's the whole point of all score study."⁶⁶ Hillis echoed a frequent comment of the

conductors in these interviews when she acknowledged, "a conductor's first duty is to his composer, and his composer's welfare. After that comes the chorus and the orchestra, and long, long after these comes the conductor."⁶⁷

Wishes for the Profession

Advice to Beginning Conductors

Kenneth Jennings advised young conductors,

First of all, I think that you've got to do your own study. It's wonderful to find out how Robert Shaw does a particular work, or how Eric Ericson manages to pull off marvelous things with his great choirs from Sweden. One can learn a great deal in this way. But mainly one's learning has to come from within. It's not something that can be stuck on from the outside. You have to learn how to deal the best way you can with the very imperfect human instrument housed completely within real human beings. There are no props or mechanical aids. It's this 'humanness' that reaches into people's hearts and deepest needs. Choral music is able to do that. So my main advice is to dig deeply yourself and become the best musician you can. It's a study of history, of literature, of performance practice, and your own continuous personal exploration of the music. You have to know what's going on in the music if you're going to make it come alive. And then you need to develop the ability to use all of that to teach it, to draw it out of the people you have in front of you. That's the real excitement of the choral art.⁶⁸

"Become the best musician you can," Joseph Flummerfelt encouraged. He continued,

Excellent aural skills and a deeply rooted sense of rhythm are obviously essential. Continually try to enrich your humanity through reading, reflection, and experiencing the other arts. In

preparing a score, always ask 'why?' Why did the composer set the text in this way, with this melodic, rhythmic, or harmonic gesture? Allow your imagination to perceive the interconnectedness and the relatedness of things.⁶⁹

Allen Chapman offered "some encapsulated bits of advice and wisdom: work hard ... use only quality literature ... genuinely love young people ... sing more—talk less—avoid the piano!"⁷⁰ Stan McGill added, "I would tell the young teacher to be prepared to face this challenge him or herself. It's scary, because so much of your success is based upon repertoire. Nothing is more important, not budgets, talent, or structures."⁷¹ Margaret Hawkins advised, "people who want to be choral directors outside of an academic setting have a lot to learn in terms of simple things—like what sells tickets and what doesn't."⁷² Two other succinct sentences of advice: "Stop living in your own little world of music" (Paul Salamunovich),⁷³ and "Study hard as hell!" (Robert Shaw).⁷⁴

Hopes and Concerns

These conductors had a number of wishes for the profession, frequently informed by areas of deep concern. For instance, a frequent concern about the academic and musical preparation of future conductors was shared by Donald V Moses: "One of the problems with standards in choral music during the past fifty years is that there are many people who enter the choral profession without in-depth training and without choral repertoire standards."⁷⁵ Helen Kemp agreed, "I'm always amazed that people know so little repertoire. It is important to give young children music that is appropriate for them—quality music that encourages interest and good vocal habits."⁷⁶

Continuing the emphasis on knowledge of repertoire, Harold Decker noted,

Today we are emphasizing multicultural and contemporary music, often to the exclusion of our great heritage of choral music passed down to us through history. We shortchange our singers if they do not come in contact with many of

these masterpieces when we select our choral repertoire."⁷⁷

Kenneth Jennings elaborated,

We are heading towards a 'pop-hit-stardom' mentality; a 'here today, gone today' existence, one of 'high calorie low nourishment,' without artistically establishing the tastes and values of our people. We need to be cautious in selecting what we attribute as having value and significance. Popular is not always synonymous with good. Quantity does not signify quality. We have to decide what is acceptable as good American choral music, and how we want it to look and sound in fifty years. We have the privilege of studying hundreds of years of music, and we have seen what has survived and still works when given a chance. We must decide how best to use the resources entrusted to us. More of immediate concern, we need to look at what Americans are contributing to the world of choral music.⁷⁸

Charles Bruffy cautioned that conductors not allow choirs "to become vocal drill teams, worshipping perfect precision, interested only in an impeccably 'correct' performance at the cost of emotional impact and communication."⁷⁹ Several conductors spoke to the need for the profession to engage in furthering the choral art at all levels, not just at the university or professional level. Allen Chapman added, "I think we have lost sight of the vast majority of our students ... We need to start looking at the 'everyman' in the school system."⁸⁰

Other conductors noted how they had changed during the course of their careers. Donald Neuen reflected that he was initially "too demanding, too intense, verging on anger, too black and white, lacking in flexibility and understanding."⁸¹ For many conductors, these types of temperaments were more common during their formative years, later maturing into such concerns as:

How often do genuinely encouraging words issue from our lips or from our pens? I'd like to recommend

that we all determine to be more encouraging and genuinely supportive of our professional colleagues who are perspiring, sometimes agonizing, sometimes near rapture on that podium trying with all their powers to realize the musical score and to bring those notes out of the silent pages and convert them into living sound.

—Lara Hoggard⁶²

The words of these conductors are profound and inspiring. It is this author's hope that these excerpted quotations encourage conductors to read the interviews in full, drawing repeatedly upon the knowledge that they contain. In so doing, they will fulfill the wish expressed eloquently by Lara Hoggard,

But of one fact I am certain: we must continue trying to find ourselves, to know ourselves, and to understand that we have been given a place in time and eternity. We have been blest abundantly with precious gifts not available to all human beings. Why us? I want never to forget how finite, simple, and little I am; yet it has been given to me to probe mysteries and to experience beauty. We musicians have good cause to ponder just how wondrously large our souls and our outreaches could have been had we managed to cooperate in their nurture.⁸³

NOTES

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