

Reflections and Genuflections

by Mary Kay Fink

Some people have touched my life deeply.

Bob, you are one of them.

There are many reasons I feel this way

And I'd like to mention some of them.

As my major flute teacher,

During those formative years;

You were the perfect mentor

To prepare me for a music career.

Drawing upon a wealth of experience,

Your suggestions always made sense.

Knowing as little as I did then,

Your knowledge seemed immense.

When I needed inspiration,

You were the perfect source.

You gave one hundred percent as a teacher and performer

Always- -as a matter of course.

You encouraged me to do my best,

To always try a bit harder.

I always felt your gentle push,

As I reached a little bit farther.

You were demanding but always patient,

Serious, but not without humor.

No lesson time wasted with small talk

Or spreading the latest rumor.

*Although, now that I think of it...
There is one character flaw,
You really detest the piccolo.
(Seems it leaves your nerves quite raw?)*

*That didn't use to bother me,
For then I hated it, too;
But somehow I've ended up good at it,
And there's nothing I can do.*

*And as I've grown to love it,
This reality I've faced:
Bob Willoughby, in this regard,
You certainly lack good taste.*

*There is one other area
Where your lack of taste is shown:
You seem to exhibit a fondness
For my very silly poems.*

*I knew you'd expect one for this event,
And I'm glad I had the time.
But I regret that my thoughts and feelings
Are limited by rhyme.*

*I've found it difficult to say it all,
And the rhymes seem to make it sound trite.
But Bob, I'd like to thank you,
For in my life you've been a bright light.*

*I know I cannot repay you,
And that wasn't in your plan;
I can only try to pass the gift,
Whatever way I can.*

*But the most amazing gift of all
From such a knowledgeable and talented man,
Was that somehow you taught us to think for ourselves,
As very few teachers can.*

*It wasn't enough to do as you'd say,
We'd have to understand why.
And it wasn't enough to just play as we felt,
Without studying between the lines.*

*No empty technical display,
No mindless mimicry allowed.
Only the combination of heart and intellect
Left you feeling proud.*

*I've tried to carry that with me,
As I perform and as I teach;
And I feel your influence in my practice,
As perfection stays just out of reach.*

*And when I meet your other students,
We seem to get along great.
They're down to earth, they know what's what,
And their embouchures inflate.*

*Yes, the infamous inflation of the cheeks,
Has gotten a very bad rap.
Yet, your students have done remarkably well,
In spite of all that cheek flap.*

*Sounds almost too good to be true!
You must have a fault or two.
Well, I suppose so, don't we all?
But you kept them well out of view.*