

## Robert Hugh Willoughby

June 6, 1921 – March 27, 2018



**“I love working with young people, I love that passion that you can bring to students. Sometimes people are so concerned about technique, but you have to have passion when you play. To make beautiful music and to make it exciting - for me, it's my life.”**

*Robert Willoughby*

**Robert Willoughby - Tribute Event, National Flute Association**  
"to make beautiful music and to make it exciting - for me, it's my life"

Friday, August 10 - 6:30-7:30pm  
Regency T  
Hyatt Regency Hotel  
Orlando, Florida

Reflections on my father - John Willoughby

Sonata for two flutes h-Moll TWV 40:141  
1767)  
Leela Breithaupt  
Wendy Rolfe

Georg Philipp Telemann (1681-

Legacy of Robert Willoughby - Katherine Borst Jones

Fourteen Pieces for flute and piano, Opus 157 (1936)  
Dianne Frazer, piano

Charles Koechlin (1867-1950)

- I. Vieille Chanson - Ann Fairbanks
- II. Gai, assez animé - Sarah Brady
- III. Andante espressivo - Lisa Cella
- IV. Moderato con moto - Mary Kay Fink
- V. Allegro moderato - Leonard Garrison
- VI. Andante quasi adagio - Adrienne Greenbaum
- VII. Beau Soir - Danielle Hundley
- VIII. Andantino - Katherine Kemler
- IX. Allegretto con mote - Jan Kinmonth
- X. Allegretto quasi Andantino - Jane Lenoir
- XI. Allegretto - Emma Shubin
- XII. Danse Printanière - Eileen Grycky
- XIII. Marche Funèbre - Nancy Stagnitta
- XIV. Allegro Moderato - Robert Willoughby

Duo Concertant, Opus 129, #2 Scherzo: Allegro molto  
Robert Willoughby, flute, Wilbur Price, piano

Carl Czerny (1791-1857)

Andante Festivo  
Celebrate!  
*World Premiere*  
Ervin Monroe, conductor

Jean Sibelius (1865-1957)  
Ervin Monroe

Zayt Lustik  
Adrienne Greenbaum, conductor

Adrienne Greenbaum

Robert Willoughby Students in attendance include,  
Nancy Andrew, Francesca Arnone, Julia Bogorad-Kogan, Katherine Borst Jones, Sarah Brady, Leela Breithaupt, Lisa Cella, Ann Fairbanks, Mary Kay Fink, Steven Finley, Leonard Garrison, Adrienne Greenbaum, Eileen Grycky, Danielle Hundley, Katherine Kemler, Jan Kinmonth, Jane Lenoir, Michael Lynn, Lindsey McChord, Wendy Herbener Mehne, Ervin Monroe, Vanessa Mulvey, Hal Ott, Wendy Rolfe, Emma Shubin, Patricia Spencer, Nancy Stagnitta, Carol Wincenc.

## **ROBERT WILLOUGHBY TRIBUTES**

*(These and more can be found on <http://robertwilloughby.com>)*

Mr. Willoughby, as I always called him (too much respect to do “Bob”), was always the consummate artist, teacher, and gentleman. I had the great honor and joy of studying with him at Peabody, where many of us were thrilled to do graduate (and undergrad) work with him. I had studied with Marcel Moyse only five years before, and found the same true greatness in Mr. Willoughby, accompanied by impeccable integrity. His openness to discussing possible interpretations impressed me and I loved sitting with him, scores in our laps, playing through possibilities. He fostered engagement and independence, along with comprehensive training and artistic development. His influence on a generation (or two) of players and teachers cannot be underestimated—indeed it is of “Kincaidiana proportions!” We are so fortunate for his presence in our flute world for so many decades. Thank you, Mr. Willoughby!

- *Nancy Andrew*

Forever grateful to you, Mr. Willoughby, for teaching us so much... Your inimitably wise ways of nurturing the sparks in us all continue to teach us to connect to others, and to always be thinking, learning, growing.

- *Francesca Arnone*

Mr. Willoughby, in his upbeat, gentlemanly way, was invaluable in helping me overcome a tight sound to find a more flexible, open one. He also opened up a whole new world of informed performance practice to me, which I had never known existed. As we celebrate his life and career, I know his influence lives on in our performing and teaching as well as in our hearts

- *Julia Bogorad-Kogan*

Robert Willoughby changed by life for the better, as a person and a musician. His example shaped and influenced me beyond measure. He pushed me beyond what I thought was possible while giving me “my voice”. I am grateful for his kindness, generosity, spirit, intellect, love of life, persistence, discipline, teaching acumen and friendship. Thank you Mr. Willoughby, “Bob” for everything!

- *Katherine Borst Jones*

A gentleman, a mentor and a remarkable teacher. I will forever be grateful for every moment together, every note played and hope to honor his memory with my music, my teaching and by living a full life full of humor and love.

- *Sarah Brady*

Robert Willoughby, or Bob as he invited me to call him upon graduating, was an incredibly positive, rational, and life-force giving mentor. He encouraged all his students to question, why: why does this phrase begin here and end here, why are you using this type of vibrato in this passage, why are you playing this appoggiatura long or short? When I came to him as a freshman at Peabody Conservatory in 1989, I thought that I knew something about playing the flute and making music. I quickly realized that there was a whole world of subtleties, structures, and intricacies that I didn't know existed. Bob was my patient, encouraging, demanding, and intellectually probing guide through this discovery process. His wisdom, humor, and authenticity gave us a platform on which to grow. It was as if he saw the world from 30,000 feet (as a WWII decorated pilot), and could adeptly and lovingly lead his students along the intricate maze of learning how to express music through flute playing. We would come out the other end much more rich in both our personal and musical competencies having been mentored, guided, and encouraged under the steady gaze of those twinkling, clear blue eyes. I count myself so very fortunate to have been taking under his wing, nourished, and set out to fly.

-*Leela Breithaupt*

When I think of my time with Bob, I am filled with such a deep sense of gratitude. From the first meeting, I was impressed with his quiet grace, his elegance, and his endless kindness. I learned so much about teaching by watching him interact with his students and hear his voice on a daily basis in my own teaching. I feel so lucky to have been able to know him.

- *Lisa Cella*

Along with my sadness at hearing of Bob's death is my overwhelming sense of gratitude for having had the chance to be his student. I will always treasure memories of Bob as a gracious person of the highest integrity, as a superb musician and as a master teacher. I especially appreciated his intellectual curiosity - during one of my semesters at Oberlin, he himself was a student in Europe, learning all there was to know about the Baroque flute. His ability to perform and teach the music from the 18th century to the most recent contemporary repertoire left a wide-spread legacy unmatched by most other musicians. Robert Willoughby, thank you for setting a high personal and artistic standard for all of us!

- *Ann Fairbanks*

The extraordinary thing about Bob's teaching is that he instilled in each of us the ability to teach ourselves. As musicians, we need to keep growing and improving. We were lucky to study with Bob who taught by asking us questions, sparking our intellectual curiosity, guiding us always closer to the composer's intent, and making sure that as flutists we mastered the tools needed to express the music. What a gift! Every minute of the lesson time was valuable and constructive; he was never one to small talk or waste time. I appreciated that. (I remember being surprised at how chatty he could be if you happened to catch him during his free time!) He wasn't one to spoon-feed or lecture. He was able to let you know when your efforts fell short without leaving you feel discouraged. He led by example, as a flutist, musician, teacher and person of great integrity. I treasure the time I spent as his student and feel so fortunate to have known him.

- *Mary Kay Fink*

Bob Willoughby, teacher supreme, wonderful musician, flutist, and friend.

I can't think of another person with such clarity of thought, brevity, and brilliance in observation.

His sage advice elicited individuality, at its best, in everyone he taught.

I am forever grateful to have known him, to have worked with him, and to love teaching as much as he.

- *Steven Finley*

Robert Willoughby was the primary musical influence in my life, as he was for anyone fortunate to study with him. We have boundless praise for his passion for life and music, his generosity, his impeccable taste, his sense of humor, his command of style from the baroque to the modern era, his high standards, and his ability to draw the best from every student. The greatest tribute to him is that there is not a single Willoughby "school"—all of us have found our own voices. He challenged each of us to be a thoughtful musician, not to play automatically or to ape some model but to discover in a deep sense what the music demands. - *Leonard Garrison*

So much to say. I was incredibly privileged to be a student of this Master. Not sure I knew so at first, testing my wings of independent thinking while only uttering such in my head. I was brought up in Ohio and so luckily had been taught to question authority silently. This meant that I did not choose to accuse Bob of being hard of hearing when I wasn't doing what he asked but kept it as a thought - for a long time... Not only did my silence and desire to please keep me in good stead but I flourished with his broad yet detailed knowledge, his humor, his pushing, and ultimately with his teaching all of us to be thinkers.

I owe my ability to Bob. I would have perhaps fallen into the likes of the average fine flutist; there are a good many out there. But I have been asked, for example, "How do you do that slur so perfectly?" Tom Nyfenger himself asked me to pass along Bob's teaching of this element. Well, it was an easy answer: Mr. Willoughby never let one escape done poorly. No hiccups, no stopping the air. We were "caught" every time, to the point where I chose to leave my lesson early because I knew I hadn't done enough slurs well. See you next week...and he didn't try to lure me back.

Demanding. But with a smile. Bob had a way of asking for things that were in essence near impossible, but he didn't let you in on that aspect of what he was asking. He told me "I can't add this new work to the contemporary festival that's happening in four days so you're going to play it." Puts the music up and I see the notes are many and miniscule. "Come back tomorrow and I'll hear it." He had confidence that we didn't have for ourselves and that encouraged me quite a bit to be a quick learner and a perfectionist at the same time.

What a gift he was to me. Continued thanks and love as I continue as best as I can his teaching through my performing and teaching.

- *Adrienne Greenbaum*

Poor Bob. I think I was a difficult student for him. I was a crier, one of those students who could burst into tears in the middle of a lesson for no apparent reason. Eventually I became less needy and more open to actually listening to Bob's brilliant pedagogy. However, it wasn't until years later when I heard Bob present a master class at a flute convention that I realized how much of my core flute concepts were from Bob. Bob's teaching and ideas about playing the flute have guided me throughout my career. I share what Bob taught me with my own students. And I always think of Bob when one of my students cries in a lesson for no apparent reason.

Bob was so passionate and knowledgeable about the wild contemporary and avant-garde repertoire, and I eagerly worked on new music with him. Bob taught me so much about playing the flute, from the orchestral repertoire to new music and back to the baroque. He taught me how to teach. He made my career possible. I am ever grateful to Bob for accepting me into his glorious studio and for sharing his incredible musical insights with me. I will always remember Bob with great fondness and appreciation. And when I do look back, when I remember what a wonderful teacher he was and how blessed I was to have worked with him, I just may have to cry.

- *Eileen Grycky*

Picture Cambridge, MA on a cold Tuesday in January — mounds of snow, freezing temperatures and lots of closures. Longy was officially closed for the day due to the weather. I had the 8:00 AM lesson time and I knew Bob would be there, and expect me to be there too. I took the T to Harvard Square and trudged up the street to Longy. The building was locked and no one was around, except (to my surprise) another Willoughby student that had the same plan as me. Roseanne and I tried all of the entrance doors and nothing was open. As a last resort we scaled up the somewhat rickety fire escape and got in through an upstairs window. It was getting close to my lesson time, so I bolted down the stairs and unlocked the front door just as Bob walked up the steps. He was not fazed in the least by the weather and didn't say a word about it. Once we got up to the studio he put his flute together and sounded brilliant as usual.

- *Danielle Hundley*

I knew for many years that I wanted to go to Oberlin and study with Bob Willoughby because he was the best flute teacher in the country. My parents did not want me to get a Bachelor of Music degree, so I got into Oberlin as a BA student with a major in music, based on just my grades and SAT scores. I didn't even audition until I got there. At first, I was told that I would study with the secondary teacher and I was devastated. However, Bob generously agreed to teach me and I was so grateful, although I know I was not an ideal student. I am so appreciative that he put up with me. I learned so much from him and that foundation has enabled me to have a successful life in music. I think it is wonderful that he was able to teach for so long and now his legacy will live on, not only through all of his former students but also through our students. I recently reread an article that Bob wrote in 1972 about his practice techniques. I was amazed at how many of those ideas are still in my head and in my own playing and teaching today. What a wonderful tradition to perpetuate!

- *Katherine Kemler*

I began my studies with Mr. Willoughby at Oberlin as a transfer student. As a result, I had many small problems and a lot of catching up to do. Every lesson was a challenge, either musically, physically, or mentally. But Mr. Willoughby set about giving me his pieces of wisdom without letting up. He focused on my weaknesses (which will go uncounted), and supported my strengths, which at the time were piccolo, my love of the orchestra and flute repair.

The puzzle of my progress was not complete when I graduated, but shortly thereafter, the last piece of the puzzle seemed to fall into place. Willoughby was there to hear a performance of mine at that time and I knew he was pleased: he gave me several compliments and invited me to call him Bob!

All the puzzle pieces he shaped with me have been the foundation for moving forward and creating the many musical paths that have enriched not only my life, but hopefully the lives of others. I am forever grateful to have had such a wonderful teacher and human being to help me along this path.

- *Janet Kinmonth*

Bob Willoughby was my teacher for 3 1/2 years at Oberlin. After I graduated, I saw him in SF at the NFA Convention many years ago. I told him I was into jazz, and asked him to go to a jazz club with me in San Francisco in North Beach to hear Roger Glenn, a great jazz player and good friend. I ended up sitting in with Roger on a tune. Willoughby loved the music, really enjoyed Roger's playing and we hung out quite a while. I never saw this side of him at Oberlin. Later, when I recorded my first jazz CD, he sent me a lovely note talking about his interest in jazz, favorite players (JJ Johnson on trombone) and others. It was really great to see another dimension of him and how supportive he was of my efforts. He had many interests and was really passionate about many things.

- *Jane Lenoir*

I didn't have the pleasure of being a student of Bob Willoughby, but I had the great honor of being his faculty colleague at Oberlin Conservatory for many years. I was only 24 when I started teaching and Bob was like a teach-father-figure to me. I also had the great luck of being able to teach the baroque flute to many of his fantastic modern flute students. His influences on me were very strong, first and foremost, helping me understand from observing him, what being a gentleman was all about. Seeing both his respect for his students and that respect being reflected back was something I appreciated greatly. We played together many times and I know it helped me to develop as a professional. I remember him making a tactful little suggestion when he thought I was "tapping my foot" too visibly. Always with a great sense of humor. Last but not least, was the friendship I shared with Bob and Mac - both such special, wonderful people! I pride myself on being the person who got him interested in good wine - wish I could share a glass with him now.

- *Michael Lynn*

I studied with Robert Willoughby when I attended the Oberlin Baroque Performance Institute in 1983. He was an enormous influence in my musical life and defined the direction of my performance and research interests. It is a measure of who he was as a teacher and a person that he could make such an impact in a short period of time. His musicianship, intelligence, and knowledge about Historical Performance Practice were inspiring. He was professional and demanding as a teacher, seeking excellence from his students and encouraging them to exceed their own expectations. Robert Willoughby's expertise as a modern flutist and traverso player was relatively unique at the time I studied with him. His example demonstrated to me, and many others, that exploring both worlds was a path to greater artistic communication by informing our playing techniques, musical choices, and stylistic interpretation.

Robert Willoughby's legacy is what we learned from him, carry with us, and pass along to others as teachers, flutists, and musicians.

- *Wendy Mehne*

What a joy it was to have Bob Willoughby as a teacher, friend and mentor. I owe him my career. He taught with kindness, yet persistence. He demanded perfection of the basic fundamentals, and taught us how to analyze and fix any technical problems we would encounter in the future. Likewise, Bob taught us the art of analyzing music so we could perfect our performances and express ourselves with confidence. He inspired us everyday. Then he let us go.

- *Ervin Monroe*

- "So he scraped and scratched and scabbled and scrolled and then he scrolled again and scabbled and scratched and scraped working busily with his little paws muttering to himself, 'Up we go! Up we go!' till at last pop! his snout came out in the sunlights and he found himself rolling in the warm grass of the great meadow."

*Wind In The Willows*, Chapter 1, *The River Bank* by Kenneth Grahame

Bob read this excerpt to our flutists early one Friday morning demonstrating phrasing. He used 'Wind in the Willows' to demonstrate phrasing and nuance. He showed how the the meaning of the words change depending on the inflection and energy in the voice. I think of this lesson often, so straightforward, yet so powerful. Bob had the unique ability to uncover the simplicity in musical expression for maximum expression.

- *Vanessa Mulvey*

Little did I dream when playing the Siciliano from J.S. Bach's E-flat Sonata, BWV 1031, at my Oberlin audition for "Mr. Willoughby", that this would resonate until the moments when I said my final goodbyes to him. At that audition, in a studio at Carnegie Hall, Bob suddenly sat down at the piano and played the accompaniment along with me. What a treat! Many adventures (dinner and otherwise!) later, when it came time to honor Mac as she was laid in her resting place on the shore in New Castle, NH, we played the Siciliano as our farewell. And, for Bob's beautiful April service at his church in New Castle, crafted by John, it was the first music which came to my mind when I was honored to be asked to take part. The Siciliano will always evoke memories of Bob.....

- *Wendy Rolfe*

Mr. Willoughby is one of the most grounded and down to earth people I have ever known my many years of of pursuing music and flute learning. He commanded a a respect for himself and for the music he taught, not through fear, but through love and sharp wit. He demanded an understanding of the structure of music, the knowledge of the way a phrase was built, and above all finding and being expressive through the 'simple melody' or the harmonic and melodic scaffolding of each musical idea. Although I grew older, and at a certain point I could have called him "Bob," but he was and will always remain "Mr. Willoughby" to me. Lessons with Mr. Willoughby were a time warp, where the more you knew, the less you had prepared. He would listen and hear that you had practiced, understood, and internalized a concept, and then gesture with his hand to turn the page and exclaim "next!" It is with complete awe that I remember the sheer amount of music we could cover, and the depth with which we could explore it, with just an hour long lesson per week. Mr. Willoughby was a force of nature, in the most kind, humorous, and respectful of ways. He supported each of his students in their individuality, creativity, and unique pursuits without letting his standard for great music slip for an instance. We all became part of a great musical tradition through our work with Mr. Willoughby - he visits my teaching, practice, and performance on a daily basis, showing me how to express my unique voice on through the flute with great energy, love, and above all expressive beauty.

- *Emma Shubin*

One of my treasured memories of Bob shows his continuing support for our musical work even after graduation. Over lunch in New York, during those struggling years when chamber music players bounce continually from famine to feast and back again, I summoned courage and asked if he would be willing to join a Consortium Commissioning project that Wendy Rolfe and I were proposing to the National Endowment for the Arts. To me it seemed like the kind of project young, unproved professionals dreamed up not only because of the merit of the project but also because we were under-employed and had time to pursue it. For us to be able to include Robert Willoughby, with his stature and renown, seemed all but unthinkable. When he said “yes” with no hesitation I was actually a little stunned. To which his response was “It’s a good idea, of course I’ll do it.” The NEA gave us funding—certainly influenced by the inclusion of such an eminent artist and teacher—and together we commissioned 4 pieces that are still among my favorites in the 20<sup>th</sup> century repertoire:

Thea Musgrave, *Narcissus* – Robert Willoughby’s composer  
Salvatore Martirano, *Phleu* – Harvey Sollberger’s composer  
Stephen Jaffe, *Three Figures and a Ground* – Patricia Spencer’s composer  
Yehudi Wyner, *Sweet Consort* – Wendy Rolfe’s composer

Bob’s support for this project was just one of many examples of his continuing care and involvement with helping us, beyond graduation and beyond expectation.

- *Patricia Spencer*

Succinct, eloquent, gentle, honest, clever, wry. Those were just a few of Robert Willoughby's hall-marks. He was a truly kind and humble gentleman, filled with compassion and humor. He defined mentorship. He encouraged hard, thorough work and unique individuality. He lived by example and changed lives. His influence stretches over decades, and has touched - and will touch - countless lives. His gifts to us will continue to reveal themselves throughout time. That is a true and legendary legacy.

- *Nancy Stagnitta*

My admiration for "Mr. Willoughby" is boundless. Not only did he impart to me a vital flute foundation while studying with him at Oberlin (1967-69, freshly and gratefully re-entering from working with Gazzelloni in Rome and Siena)

but as a continuing role model as devoted teacher, early music enthusiast and all around music and life enthusiast! You are sorely missed Mr. Willoughby.

With love and admiration,

- *Carol Wincenc*

\*\*\*\*\*

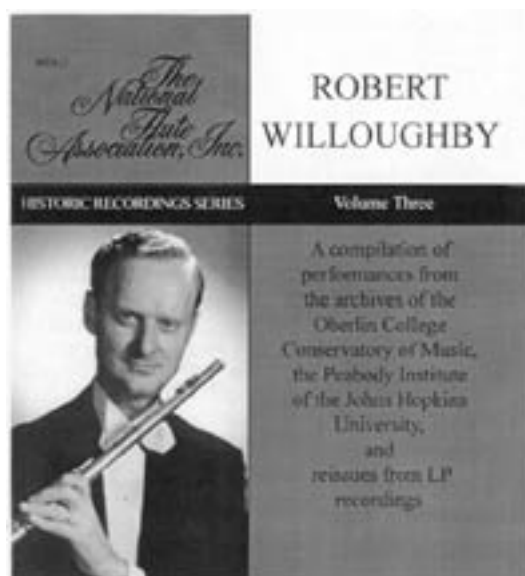
*Robert Hugh Willoughby - June 6, 1921 - March 27, 2018*

*Afterglow*

*I'd like the memory of me  
to be a happy one. I'd like  
to leave an afterglow of  
smiles when the day is done.*

*I'd like to leave an echo  
whispering softly down the  
was, of happy times and  
laughing times and bright  
and sunny days. I'd like  
the tears of those who  
grieve to dry before the  
sun, of happy memories  
that I leave behind when  
the day is done*





### **Robert Willoughby, flute**

Assisting artists: Wilbur Price and Julian Martin, piano; Lisa Crawford and Fenner Douglas, harpsichord; Catharine Meints, viola da gamba; James Caldwell, and Wayne Rapier, oboe; Loren Kitt and George Waln, clarinet; Kenneth Moore, bassoon; Robert Fries, horn.

Music of C.P.E. Bach, Caplet, Carter, Debussy, Gaubert, Hindemith, Ibert, Koechlin, Martin, Martinu and Telemann.

***Available from [nfaonline.org](http://nfaonline.org)***

## **The Robert Willoughby**

**Endowed Flute Scholarship Fund of the**

**Oberlin Conservatory of Music**



It would be hard to name someone who has done more to educate and inspire flutists than **Robert Willoughby**. During Bob's many years at Oberlin, and subsequently at Peabody, and Longy, his teaching, performance and mentorship has been unsurpassed. As his students, we know this better than anyone! A flute scholarship fund in his honor has been endowed. All donations, in any amount are welcomed, and are tax-deductible to the full extent of the law. For details about how to contribute, refer to:

**<http://robertwilloughby.com/scholarship.html>**

# ROBERT WILLOUGHBY

