



In Memoriam: Otto-Werner Mueller

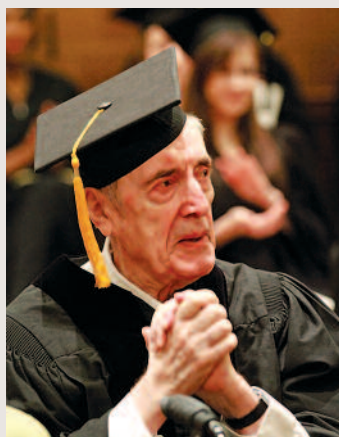
The Curtis Institute of Music mourns the loss of its legendary maestro and emeritus faculty member, **OTTO-WERNER MUELLER**, who was widely regarded as the most important conducting pedagogue of the last 50 years. Mr. Mueller passed away at his home in Charlotte on February 25.

“Otto was the definition of the word ‘maestro,’” Curtis President **ROBERTO DÍAZ** (Viola ’84) recalled in learning of Mr. Mueller’s passing. “He was an absolute master of the musical art form who brought new insights and nuance to every score he interpreted and every rehearsal he led. I know our students feel fortunate to have studied with him, not only because they learned deeply and profoundly about music, but because they understood he was also teaching them about life.

“Because of him, all of us at Curtis understand more fully the importance of respect, how to learn, and how to offer the very best of which we are capable.”

Just a few of the hundreds of musicians who have been influenced by Mr. Mueller commented on his indelible impact for an *Overtures* tribute in 2012, when Curtis awarded him an honorary doctorate. At the time his former student, New York Philharmonic music director **ALAN GILBERT** (Conducting ’92), noted: “Otto-Werner Mueller remains one of the most important influences I have had in my musical development. My years studying with him were crucial and I literally think about things he taught me every day.”

His influence was no less profound on the students playing in the Curtis Symphony Orchestra. “Mr. Mueller instilled in each of us the utmost respect for the composer’s intentions, and made certain that we placed the importance of the score before our own passing musical whims,” recalled **ELENA URIOSTE** (Violin ’08). “He opened our ears to a new level of detail, and insisted upon a devout care for every note, in both quality of sound and in its contextual placement.”



Above:

Otto-Werner Mueller received an honorary doctorate from Curtis in 2012. PHOTO: DAVID SWANSON

Mr. Mueller with his wife, Virginia Allen, at Wednesday Tea PHOTO: PETE CHECCHIA

MAESTRO AND MENTOR

A native of Germany, Mr. Mueller was appointed director of the chamber music department for Radio Stuttgart at age 19. He conducted opera and operetta for the Heidelberg Theater and founded and conducted an orchestra for families of United States military forces stationed there. After immigrating to Canada in 1951, he worked extensively for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. He taught and conducted at the Montreal Conservatory; served as director of the Victoria Symphony and founder and dean of the Victoria School of Music; served as guest professor at the Moscow State Conservatory; and guest conducted the Moscow, St. Petersburg, and Riga symphony orchestras.

Mr. Mueller conducted in every major city in Canada and appeared as guest conductor with the National, Atlanta, Detroit, and Saint Louis symphony orchestras; the Scottish National Orchestra; and the Krakow Philharmonic, among others. In addition to his faculty position at Curtis, he taught at the Juilliard School, the Yale University School of Music, and the University of Wisconsin—Madison. His former Curtis students include Mr. Gilbert; **TEDDY ABRAMS** (’08), music director of the Louisville Orchestra; **MIGUEL HARTH-BEDOYA** (’91), music director of the Fort Worth Symphony; and **PAAVO JÄRVI** (’88), music director of l’Orchestre de Paris. Mr. Mueller also trained conductors who became the music directors of the San Diego and Pittsburgh symphonies and the Swedish National Orchestra, as well as associate or assistant conductors of most of the major U.S. orchestras.

Mr. Mueller joined the faculty of the Curtis Institute of Music in 1986 and held the Rita E. and Gustave M. Hauser Chair in Conducting Studies until his 2012 retirement. The Curtis Symphony Orchestra’s concert on February 5, 2017 will be dedicated to his memory.

“I tell my students that only by preparing and knowing everything about a score can they think of themselves as conductors,” Mr. Mueller told the *Philadelphia Inquirer* in a 1987 interview. His unmatched intellect and his gentlemanly disposition will be missed at Curtis for years to come. ♦

Contributors to Noteworthy include Jennifer Dionisio, Jennifer Kallend, Daniel McDougall, and Melinda Whiting.