

American Music Research Center Journal

Volume 25 • 2016

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American Music Research Center
College of Music
University of Colorado Boulder

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The American Music Research Center Journal is published annually.

Subscription rate is \$25 per issue (\$28 outside the U.S. and Canada)

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www.colorado.edu/amrc

ISBN 1058-3572

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Information for Authors

The *American Music Research Center Journal* is dedicated to publishing articles of general interest about American music, particularly in subject areas relevant to its collections. We welcome submission of articles and proposals from the scholarly community, ranging from 3,000 to 10,000 words (excluding notes).

All articles should be addressed to Thomas L. Riis, College of Music, University of Colorado Boulder, 301 UCB, Boulder, CO 80309-0301. Each separate article should be submitted in two double-spaced, single-sided hard copies. All musical examples, figures, tables, photographs, etc., should be accompanied by a list of captions. Their placement in the paper should be clearly indicated.

If the editorial committee accepts a manuscript for publication, the author will be asked to supply a brief biographical paragraph and an electronic email attachment with the text, sent to thomas.riis@colorado.edu. Once accepted, the preparation of final copy in electronic form will require the following: abstract of no more than 200 words; article text in Microsoft Word including endnotes and appendices (preferably as a .doc or .docx file). All references should be included in the notes; no separate bibliography is required. Musical examples and figures for final production should be high resolution (at least 300 dpi) images.

In general the *AMRC Journal* follows the formats and guidelines of the *Journal of the Society for American Music* and *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 16th ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010). For further instructions on footnotes, bibliography, discographic references, etc., please consult this volume or the editor.

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Editor's Note

This volume of the *AMRC Journal*, despite its broad title, is neither a definitive nor a complete biography of George Lynn. The chronology below is intended only to give a road map by which to follow Lynn's varied and remarkably productive career. Neither does it approach a complete catalog of Lynn's activities or his compositions, which number well over a thousand individual pieces! (For the latter, readers should consult the collection descriptions of the AMRC found at www.colorado.edu/amrc.)

The articles that follow the timeline take up Lynn's interests, ideals, and accomplishments from four distinct perspectives in order to provide a well-rounded picture of the man and his impact on those who knew and loved him. These four articles first came together in October 2015, in the form of oral presentations, when the American Music Research Center, with the indispensable assistance of Lynn's daughter Christina Lynn-Craig, celebrated George Lynn's centennial in Boulder, Colorado. (Lynn had served on the faculty of the university in the early 1950s and remained in, or returned to, Colorado for many years of his life.) Over the course of several daily concerts, lectures, and receptions, each of the speakers shared his or her personal, passionate views, but all reinforced the general impression of Lynn's unique combination of talents in a powerful way. I invited the conferees to expand upon their remarks from that week in the interest of making more permanent—in printed form at least—the energy and excitement they derived from knowing and working with this special man.

1915

October 5: Born in Edwardsville (near Wilkes-Barre), Pennsylvania, to Charles and Anna Lynn, the youngest of eight children, and the only child of Anna, Charles's second wife. The children of Charles and Emma Lynn were: Johann, Ellsworth, Walter, Carl, Florence, Elmer, and Helen.

1922

Begins piano studies; later takes up the organ at Wyoming Seminary, Kingston, Pennsylvania.

1927–1935

Organist at Trinity Lutheran Church (Wilkes-Barre). Spring 1933: graduates

from Carson-Long Military Academy. Attends Mansfield [Pennsylvania] State Teachers College until 1935; directs choir of Jenkinton Baptist Church.

1935–1938

Transfers to Westminster Choir School, Princeton, New Jersey; graduates with Bachelor of Music degree in 1938. Minister of Music, First Presbyterian Church, Upper Montclair, New Jersey, 1937–1940.

1939

Wins second prize for his choral composition *Hem and Haw* at the New York World's Fair. Marries Geneva Leach; they divorce in 1944; there are no children.

1940–1942

Choir director at First Methodist Church, Pasadena, California, the largest Methodist congregation in the country at the time. Composes *Gettysburg Address* for modern music festival in Los Angeles.

1943–1945

Called up for military service, is assigned to train at Camp Gruber, Oklahoma, where he forms a men's choir, then serves as a chaplain's assistant in the 42nd Infantry (Rainbow) Division stationed in Europe until war's end. Marries Betty Stone; son Eric born 1945; Stone and Lynn divorce in 1950.

1945–1948

Attends Princeton University and earns Master of Fine Arts degree; serves as music director at Pennsylvania and New Jersey churches; teaches organ, conducts choirs, and assists the president at Westminster Choir College. Teaches summer school at Colorado College (1947). Assists Henry S. Drinker in editing the *Psalter* of Heinrich Schütz (1585–1672), whose music becomes a lifelong interest. In 1948 presents with fellow Princeton student Joseph Ker-man what is believed to be the first all-Schütz program in the U.S.

1950

Sings in a concert performance of *Four Saints in Three Acts* with Virgil Thomson conducting, where he meets a fellow singer, contralto Lucile Miller, whom he will marry in 1953. Accepts post as visiting professor at the University of Colorado Boulder, where he will teach for two years.

1951–1963

Holds a succession of church music directorships and conducts choirs in the Denver area, and at summer schools in Texas and Nebraska. Teaches music history at Iliff Theological Seminary. 1954: Found the George Lynn Singers. 1956: Elected to the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers (ASCAP) and becomes an annual recipient of ASCAP Standard Award

(through 1989). The Lynns have two children, Christina (b. 1957) and Lorna (b.1959). 1959: Receives Honorary Doctor of Laws degree from Harding University, where his *Sacred Symphony for Voices* is first performed. 1962: Founds Golden Music Publishers Co. with Thomas Zook.

1963–1969

Appointed professor and music director at Westminster Choir College. Continues to lead summer workshops in New Jersey, Colorado, and Washington. 1964: Nominated for Grammy Award for Best Choral Performance for Verdi, *Requiem*, recorded by Columbia, with the Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy, conductor; on it George Lynn directs the Westminster Choir. 1965: Performs at the White House with Westminster Choir.

1969

Resigns from Westminster Choir College and returns to Colorado to devote more time to composition, but also assumes several teaching and directing positions in the Denver area between 1970 and 1986.

1969–1979

Presents annual summer vocal camp programs at Ghost Ranch, New Mexico.

1974

Made a National Patron of Delta Omicron International Music Fraternity.

1976

Receives Award of Merit from the National Federation of Music Clubs. August 9: String Quartet no. 2 performed at the Kennedy Center, Washington, D.C.

1986–1987

Visiting professor, Rice University, Houston, Texas.

1987–1989

Fruitful years of composition, including the song cycle *Eight American Poets*.

1989

March 16: Dies after a heart attack at Penrose Hospital, Colorado Springs. Ashes are scattered at Ghost Ranch and at Westminster Choir College. His surviving children include son Eric and daughters Christina and Lorna. Grandchildren: Courtney Lynn-Kelly, and Anna and Jacob Lynn-Palevsky. Great-grandchildren: Chloe and Molly Kelly. Lynn also leaves more than 1,000 musical compositions, many still unperformed.

Larry Biser

George Lynn's Westminster Connection

In fall 1933, George Lynn decided to study music at Mansfield State Teachers College in Mansfield, Pennsylvania. While he was totally involved in the music department and had no intention of making any change, an event happened that was to change his personal course and, ultimately, that of Westminster Choir College, as well.

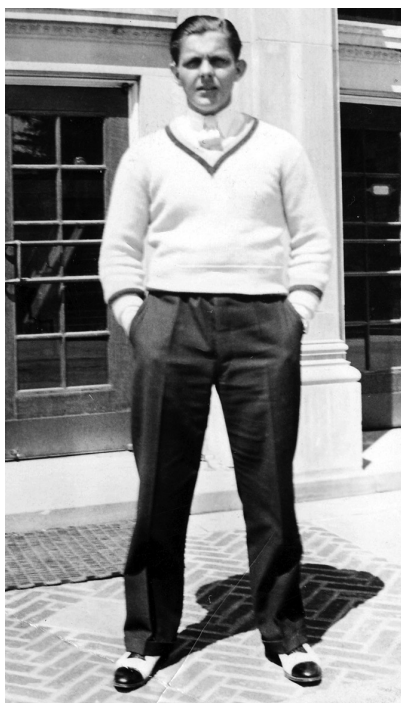


Figure 1. George Lynn, circa 1933.
Courtesy of Christina Lynn-Craig.

As George Lynn told the story, Freddy Huntington from Princeton's Westminster Choir School visited the campus of Mansfield State Teachers College to see his girlfriend. "I heard him sing a little and thought, 'I like that.'" By this time (1935) he had been studying voice for two years at Mansfield. Lynn quickly decided that he would like to go to Princeton and hear the choir in which Huntington sang at Westminster. When he made the trip, the Westminster Choir had just returned from its European tour. "When I heard Freddy Huntington's voice, I heard a full-blown sound that none of the tenors on the Mansfield campus had. And I thought, 'Gee, this is amazing.'"¹

To Lynn, music had always been about sound—pitch being secondary. He reasoned that pitch was to music as legs are to track stars. You can't do without them. So off to Princeton Lynn and a couple of his friends went to hear Westminster Choir sing in Alexander Hall on the Princeton University campus. "I couldn't get over the sound. So, I went back to Mansfield and said, 'I can't come back to school here next year. It just didn't have the glamour I heard at the Choir School.'"²

In fall 1935, George Lynn entered Westminster Choir School as a scholarship student, where he found faculty who challenged him at every turn. In my personal talks with George Lynn, as well as in John Buehler's fine dissertation, *George Lynn—the Westminster Connection Choral Sound and Choral*

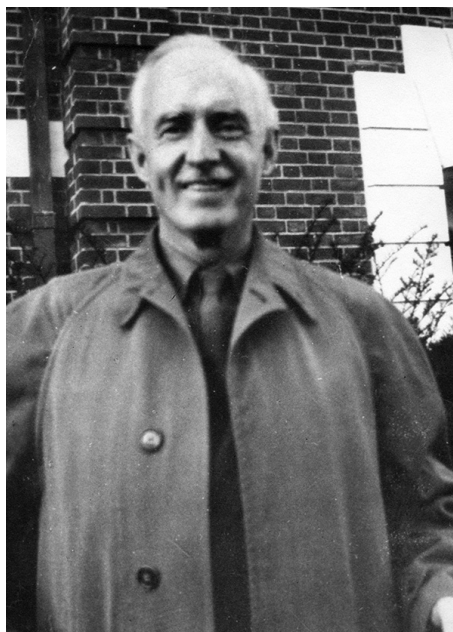


Figure 2. John Finley Williamson, circa 1963. Courtesy of Christina Lynn-Craig.

Composition: A Vocal Approach, Lynn mentioned time and again how greatly he was affected by the many teachers at Westminster. Of the twenty-one educators he mentioned to Buehler who most influenced him, thirteen were encountered at the Choir School.

These were instructors with not only knowledge to impart, but ones who insisted on perfection.

John Finley Williamson

“All of art must come from the heart. This must be true because the quality that makes art endure is the spiritual value that must be in art. The art that comes most quickly from the heart and speaks most readily to the heart is the art of music—in particular the art of solo and choral singing.”

J. F. Williamson, lecture, summer, 1959³

Williamson was born in Canton, Ohio, in 1887, the son of a British-born couple, the Reverend Walter and Mary Williamson, who had immigrated to America in 1880. At the age of three, Williamson's mother died and he lived for a time with family friends and then his aunt until his father remarried, at which time he and one of his sisters moved into the family home. His stubborn and exacting father and the strict environment in which the boy was raised would later be reflected in his adult actions and decisions. John Williamson entered Hiram College after leaving the Navy in 1907. The following year he entered and ultimately graduated from Otterbein College of Westerville, Ohio. He married his classmate Reah Parlette in 1912. He was eventually awarded four honorary doctorates and Reah, two, but their diplomas from Otterbein would be their only earned degrees. After college he formed a voice studio in Dayton. A botched tonsillectomy ruined his voice, but he continued to study vocal pedagogy. He established a choir at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Dayton in 1920, which flew in the face of everything that was happening at the time in church music. This church choir gained significant praise for its beauty of tone and style of singing. The Westminster Church Choir went on a European concert tour in 1922. This led to a partnership with Katherine Houk Talbott, who ultimately assumed all expenses for their tours. In 1926, he established a “choir school” as part of the program of the Dayton Westminster Church. The Dayton years of 1926–29 were rich in performances, but Williamson developed larger ambitions. He moved to Ithaca College in upstate New York in hopes of starting a college, but the funding never materialized. In August 1932, the Westminster Choir School was incorporated in Princeton, New Jersey. In 1933 Sophia Strong Taylor offered to provide funding for the

property and buildings of the Westminster Choir School. This meant that students would have normal housing and practice space on a campus of their own instead of being scattered about the town of Princeton, meeting where space became available.

The choir returned to the new campus from a 1934 concert tour of Europe, which included Russia. The Westminster choir of 40 voices went on to perform multiple concerts across the country and overseas. Williamson's symphonic choirs performed with a number of major symphony orchestras, particularly the New York Philharmonic, under the baton of such conductors as Arturo Toscanini, Leopold Stokowski, Bruno Walter and Artur Rodzinski.

Carl Weinrich

Weinrich was born in Patterson, New Jersey, and began studying the organ at the age of six. In later years, he studied with Marcel Dupré in Paris and with Lynnwood Farnam, and earned degrees from New York University and the Curtis Institute of Music. He served as organist at the Church of the Holy Communion in New York and was the organist/director of music at the Princeton University Chapel from 1943 to 1973. He taught at Westminster Choir College as well as other famed institutions. Although his most most noteworthy

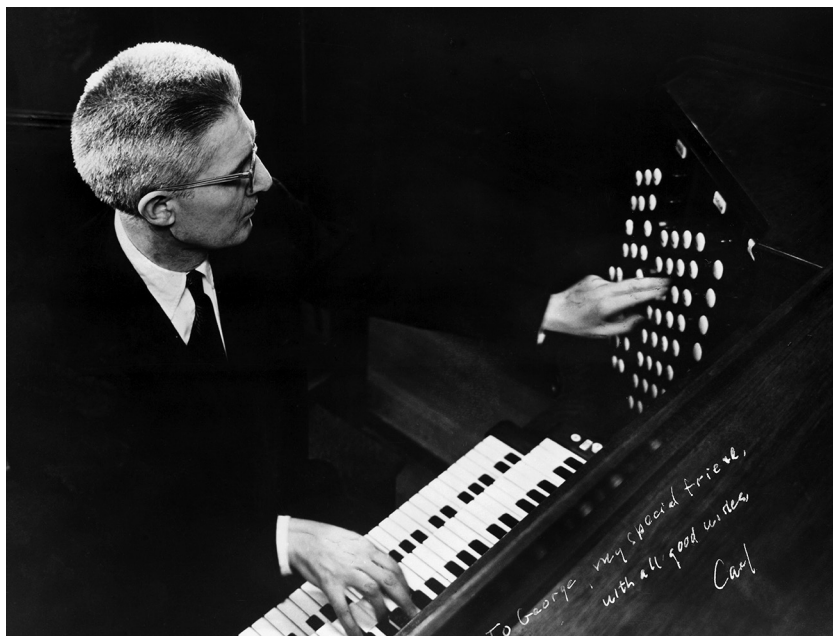


Figure 3. Carl Weinrich. Courtesy of Christina Lynn-Craig.

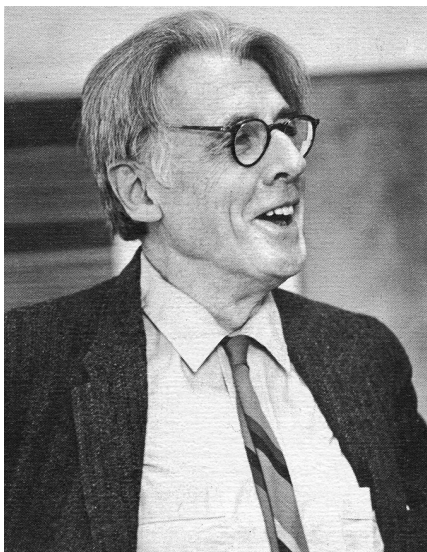


Figure 4. Paul Boepple, circa 1967.
Courtesy of Christina Lynn-Craig.

recordings featured Baroque music, including the complete works of Bach, he was also a huge fan of contemporary organ music, especially the works of Barber, Vierne, and Schoenberg.

Paul Boepple

Boepple was a Swiss-American conductor and pedagogue known for his attraction to the Dalcroze Eurythmics method. He studied at the Dalcroze Institute in Geneva and was later a member of its faculty. In 1926, he immigrated to the United States and became associated with several American institutions, including Westminster Choir College early on (1935–1938) and later when Lynn became the director of music at that institution. His work with the Desoff Choirs (1937–1968) was legendary. He introduced works of the Renaissance into his programs, including those of Josquin Des Prez, Victoria, Le Jeune, and Schütz. In addition, he favored the music of Arthur Honegger, introducing *King David* and *Judith*, works which he premiered in Switzerland, to American audiences.

John Baumgartner

John Baumgartner was born in New Stark, an unincorporated community in Hancock County, Ohio, in 1899, and died in 1946 in Portsmouth, Ohio. Baumgartner studied at the American Conservatory in Chicago, graduating in 1925. He auditioned for Williamson in 1926, sitting in with and observing

his voice teaching methods in preparation to teach in the Westminster Choir School in Dayton. He was a frequent soloist with the choir on both European tours of 1929 and 1934. Baumgartner accompanied many of the early tours of Westminster Choir School and was not only the bass “section leader,” but was also a sort of spiritual advisor to the members of the choir. He performed with the choir as a baritone soloist when the choir sang with the Philadelphia Orchestra and the New York Philharmonic. Along with LoRean Hodapp and David Jones, he was with the school from the early days at Dayton, following Williamson to Ithaca and then Princeton. He died unexpectedly following a *Messiah* rehearsal in Ohio at the age of 46. In a rather short career, he sang five times with both the Philadelphia and the New York orchestras under Stokowski and Barbirolli. Williamson said of Baumgartner, “John was more than a man, more than a singer, he was one of those rare individuals that we call good.”⁴

Roy Harris

Born on Abraham Lincoln’s birthday (February 12) 1898 in a log cabin in Chandler, Oklahoma, Harris was the son of poor parents. His father used all his resources to move the family to San Gabriel Valley in California in 1903. Harris began his studies with piano lessons and later took up the clarinet.



Figure 5. Roy Harris with George Lynn in Princeton, circa 1967. Courtesy of Christina Lynn-Craig.

While a student at the University of California, Berkeley, his early compositions were largely those of a self-taught composer. His friendship with East Coast figures, such as Aaron Copland, led to the opportunity to study in the masterclasses of Nadia Boulanger (1926–29). When he returned to the United States in 1929, because of serious back injuries, he came into association with Howard Hanson and Sergei Koussevitzky whose influence gave him access to the major performance forces that could present his newly composed works. His Third Symphony was the first American symphony to be recorded professionally. He taught at several universities and schools, including Westminster Choir School from 1934–1938. He ended his academic career at California institutions, having composed at least 12 major symphonies, piano works, and various other compositions. His *Symphony for Voices* was often performed by Westminster choirs and was a favorite of George Lynn.

All these men provided lifelong inspiration and mentorship to Lynn. They shaped and molded him in preparation for his return to New Jersey as music director of Westminster Choir College in 1963. Lynn was to accept totally their discipline and strove to adhere to it as closely as possible. Perhaps he didn't rebel at their need for perfection, because he had grown up in a household where many of the same values were imposed by his father.

In the years that George Lynn was at Westminster as a student (1935–1938), it is important to note that it had not yet been designated a "college." In many respects he always felt the Choir School had abandoned some of its original values in taking on the title of Westminster Choir College. He complained,

[T]he good ones [graduates] . . . could leave with a practical knowledge and could walk into a town, audition anybody, put them in a chorus, find pieces that were within their aesthetic capacity, and make a fine sound. . . . It was a school for carpenters, not architects . . . very common people out of which they could find uncommon qualities. That was the greatness of the school. Now we think that sophistication is greatness. It's not. It's froth.⁵

During Lynn's years as a student, the campus in Princeton was very new. Only the original quadrangle was there; the buildings were given by Cleveland philanthropist Sophia Strong Taylor and designed by Sherley W. Morgan of the Princeton University School of Architecture.

Appearances with orchestras seem to have been rare in this period of "breaking in," but Williamson's quest for sound was unrelenting. He could be quite obstinate and did not tolerate any opposition to the right way of doing things.

Nonetheless, Lynn always viewed Williamson as the figure most influential in his personal and musical development. Williamson drew people to him, touched by his magnetic personality and dynamic leadership.

I remember writing papers against him in his conducting class. My senior year I accused him of being an autocrat. . . . I didn't go to the last couple of months of classes. He still gave me three A's because he knew I was an honest-to-God maverick.⁶

It seems to me when he returned to Westminster as the director of music and all that meant, Lynn sought out and extended a friendly hand to all the mavericks he encountered, faculty and students. It is the only reasonable explanation for why he became not only my mentor of things choral, but a dear friend, as well.

Time was the agent of distillation. As George Lynn moved into his professional life, he discovered just how great John Finley Williamson was.

I had to get out in the world before I realized how valuable he had been to me, and then, whenever he'd call, he'd say, "I have a favor to ask," and I'd say, "Shoot! What is it?" And then he'd say, "Well, why don't you let me tell you what it is?" And I'd say, "I owe you too much. I can't let you do that."⁷

This quote, from an interview by John Buehler in the summer of 1986, explains Lynn's determination to do whatever Williamson asked him for the sole reason that Lynn felt he owed Williamson everything. He responded immediately to all of his mentor's requests, including the eventual move to Princeton to become Westminster's director of music.

After the Second World War, Lynn took advantage of the GI Bill and returned to New Jersey to study composition with Randall Thompson at Princeton University. He taught and conducted at Colorado College in the summer of 1947 after receiving his MFA in music from Princeton in June 1947. He returned to Westminster in the fall as a member of the voice faculty, conductor of the seventy-voice Chapel Choir, and head of the conducting department. He collaborated with Joseph Kerman, a fellow graduate student at Princeton, to present what is believed to be the first all-Schütz concert in the United States on May 5, 1948, with George Lynn conducting the Chapel Choir. This period of Lynn's work at Westminster is not well documented in the archives, but I do think it made him acutely aware of what was needed at Westminster.

When I was conductor of the Chamber Choir of Grand Rapids, Lynn repeatedly asked me to consider performing Schütz's *Christmas Story*. I finally arranged a performance, with him slated to conduct it, and hired a local early

music instrumental ensemble to accompany, thinking that he would really enjoy that experience. After the first rehearsal using sackbuts, recorders, etc., he turned to me in the car on the way home and said, "You know, Larry, there is a reason we don't drive Model T's anymore!"

Williamson retired from Westminster Choir College in 1957 at the age of 70. Fears of dropping enrollment at the announcement were justified. Others stepped in as president with some success, and as music director, with less success than Williamson expected. I think Williamson feared that the Choir College was losing its original focus and was leaning far too much toward the "sophisticated," to use Lynn's words.

By 1962, it was evident to Williamson that someone of the "old school" needed to take the reins. Lee Hastings Bristol assumed the position of president, and George Lynn was called in to become the music director.

[H]e (Williamson) called me every week for one year [during 1962]. Williamson cautioned me when I went back in 1963, "Don't do anything to interfere with their [Westminster Choir College students] singing in New York or Philadelphia [with the New York Philharmonic and the Philadelphia Orchestra]. That's where their big [learning] experience is." He knew that. He was a tone man.⁸

In Williamson's mind, Lynn was by far the most qualified person to take on the duties of the director of music at Westminster. He felt that Lynn had the talent and ability to maintain the sound that he, himself, best advocated. Of all the people he had taught, he believed that Lynn understood what the Williamson method was all about.

George Lynn arrived at Westminster Choir College at a difficult time. His determination and vision equaled those of his mentor in many ways. He also realized that the Westminster Choir College was missing elements of the old Westminster Choir School.

To that end, he made additions to the faculty. Paul Boepple returned to teach his delightful brand of conducting. I was in that class and never wanted to miss a moment. Every class was a delightful venture into subjects not always covered in conducting books. He was innovative and exciting to observe, with an infectious personality, and got compelling loyalty in return.

Julius Herford not only continued to teach music history, but was given the top ten or so students to study the music of Bach, which was the same class he taught the doctoral students at the Indiana University. Herford was demanding and not always easy to understand. His intellect was, however,

amazing. I recall Herford reading open scores at the piano and becoming so excited at their content that he could hardly speak, but playing every note of the orchestral score perfectly!

Lynn didn't forget Williamson's words about the importance of choral orchestral performances. There are various listings of orchestra performances in the archives of the school, although the sources do not always agree. The following list is a distillation of those, as best my wife and I, who were actually there, can recall.

In his first year as music director, the following performances took place:

Janáček, Slavonic Mass with the New York Philharmonic, conducted by Leonard Bernstein.

Bernstein, Symphony no. 3 ("Kaddish"), with Leonard Bernstein and the New York Philharmonic.

Mozart, Mass in C minor, conducted first by Lynn at the Philadelphia Museum of Art for the Musical Fund Society of Philadelphia.

Mozart, Mass in C minor, with Nicholas Harsanyi and the Princeton Symphony.

Most of us fell completely in love and awe with Bernstein when we sang the Janáček under him for the opening of the Philharmonic (Avery Fisher) Hall. It was the first time we worked with Maestro Bernstein, and to say we were excited would have been to grossly understate the case. We loved the man and loved the way he made music. Most of us had learned to call him "Lenny," as did his orchestra, friends, stagehands, etc. Probably not the best idea we ever had, but a natural one given the experiences in Philharmonic Hall.

Anticipating Bernstein's entrance into the Bristol Chapel to conduct his "Kaddish" Symphony, I recall sitting next to a very beautiful woman in the pews, waiting for the rehearsal to begin. Students threw about the name "Lenny," which she noted, turning to me to ask if we all called him "Lenny." I allowed that we did and that we all thought he was a wonderful conductor.

I should have noticed the smile emerging on her face and maybe have gotten a clue, but the clue train passed me by that day. I was too excited, as the rehearsal was about to begin. Bernstein entered the room and was introduced. He thanked us for singing and said he was pleased that the narrator for the performance was present and that he would like to introduce her, as she was his wife, actress Felicia Bernstein.

To my horror, who should stand and walk to the front of the chapel, but this exquisite lady seated next to me! Might I tell you the embarrassment was very real?

The number of performances increased in 1964:

Bach, Cantatas 79, 51, and 147, with Anshel Brusilow and the Philadelphia Chamber Orchestra.

Verdi, *Requiem*, with Eugene Ormandy and the Philadelphia Orchestra, which was recorded for Sony, and still receives rave reviews.

Beethoven, Symphony no. 9, with Leonard Bernstein and the National Symphony.

Orff, *Carmina Burana*, with Victor Tevah and the Chilean National Ballet in the State Theater, sung by the Westminster Choir.

Mozart, *Requiem*, with Herman Scherchen in Avery Fisher Hall in recognition of the first anniversary of President Kennedy's death, sung by Westminster Choir.

The Symphonic Choir sang Jacques D. Belasco's *Cantata* with the Columbus Boychoir and Marian Anderson, with Belasco conducting members of the NBC Orchestra for a television special on NBC about the New York World's Fair. The Belasco was actually recorded in a ballroom in Brooklyn, and then we lip-synced the music on a very cold April day at the site of the fair before it opened, moving through exhibits of the fair. It was broadcast on April 22 and showcased 200 Westminster singers as well as 75 from the Columbus Boychoir choristers. Not a bad day for Princeton choirs!

For the Orff *Carmina Burana*, Westminster Choir was required to memorize the entire score as it was being staged with the Chilean Ballet, and we were to be housed in various "monk huts" toward the rear of the stage. I remember the first dress rehearsal. Here we were in sack cloth—literally, robes made of burlap—clustered into various huts at the back so far removed from the lip of the stage that Tevah was scarcely visible in the pit.

Supposedly, we were to sing a complicated score from memory in hot scratchy burlap while scantily clad dancers were leaping here and there before our faces, further obscuring the already hard-to-see conductor. Does that sound like a recipe for disaster? We saw Lynn saunter out of the State Theater seats and tap Tevah on the shoulder.

An orchestral break was called, and when it was over, we were positioned in half the orchestra pit with the ballet orchestra in the other half. We retained the burlap garb, and sang the work from our new and greatly improved sight lines, while the dancers leapt and twirled in unbridled splendor in front of hired extras who filled the monk huts. Lynn was ever aware of the needs of his choirs!

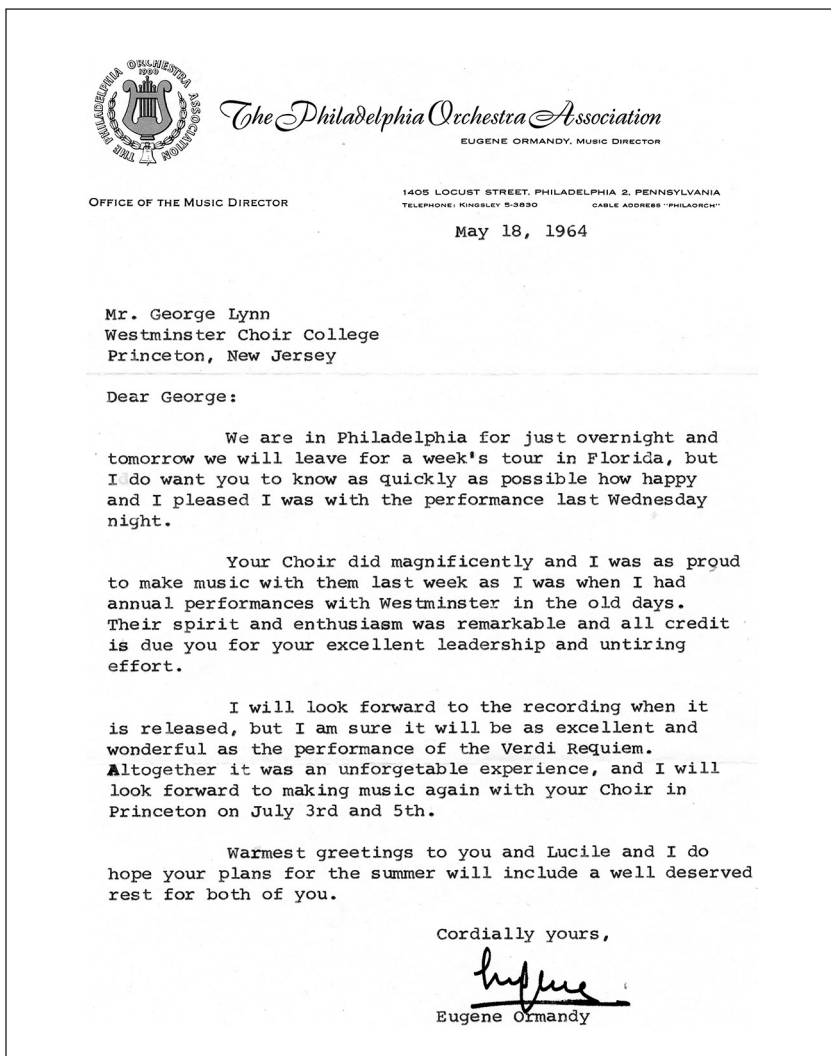


Figure 6. Greetings letter to the choir by Eugene Ormandy. Courtesy of Christina Lynn-Craig.

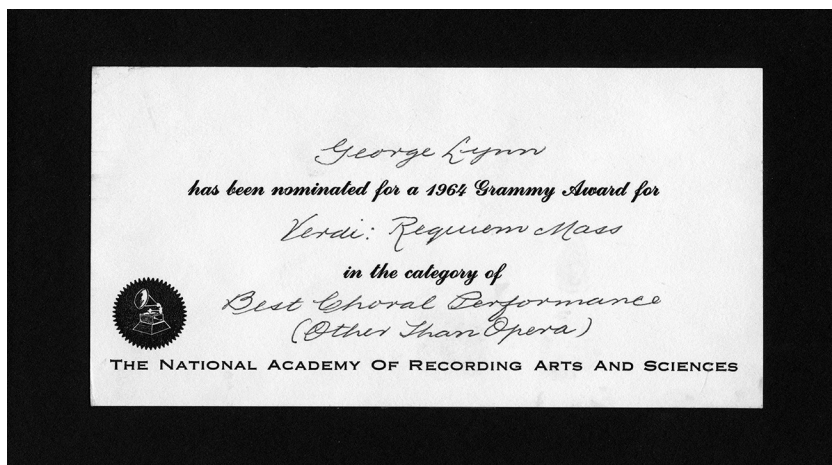


Figure 7. Grammy nomination certificate. Courtesy of Christina Lynn-Craig.

The next year, 1965, brought

Beethoven, Symphony no. 9, with Herbert von Karajan and the Berlin Philharmonic.

Mahler, Symphony no. 4, with Leopold Stokowski and the American Symphony.

Verdi, *Requiem*, with Eugene Ormandy and the Philadelphia Orchestra in a performance in New York's Philharmonic Hall. I remember that Ormandy kept us seated for the "Kyrie." *The New York Times* reviewer said of the performance, that when the choir rose to sing the "Dies Irae" in their brilliant red robes, "it was as if the flames of hell themselves were leaping off the stage." Now there was a review!

Mendelssohn, *Elijah*, Lynn conducting, First Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia with Alexander McCurdy at the organ console, in honor of his retirement from Westminster.

While not an orchestral performance, the *Elijah* provided another sort of education since McCurdy was, in fact, a one-man orchestra!

Each of our years at Westminster brought special and unforgettable performance opportunities.

1966:

Bach, Mass in B Minor, with Lynn conducting the New York Chamber Orchestra.

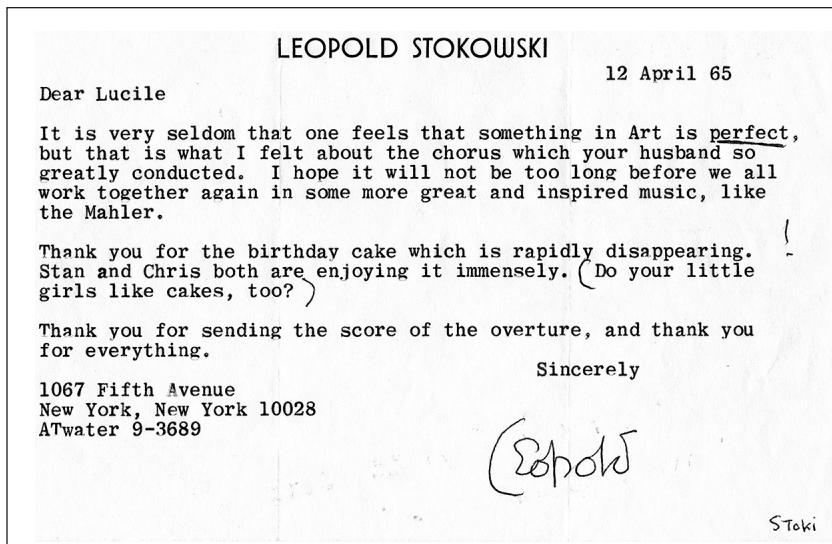


Figure 8. Letter from Leopold Stokowski. Courtesy of Christina Lynn-Craig.

Handel, *Messiah*, with Sir Malcolm Sargent and the New York Philharmonic.

Beethoven, *Missa Solemnis*, with William Steinberg and the New York Philharmonic.

Mahler, Symphony no. 8, with Leonard Bernstein and the New York Philharmonic.

Frank Lewin, *Music for the White House* with the Marine Band with Westminster Choir, performed at the White House.

Immediately following the fourth performance of the Mahler, Westminster Choir boarded buses and were whisked to Washington to sing the *Music for the White House*. This piece was commissioned and performed at the request of Lady Bird Johnson.

1967:

Lynn's own *Gettysburg Address* with Leopold Stokowski and the American Symphony

Gabrielli, *In Ecclesiis*, with Leopold Stokowski and the American Symphony

Beethoven's Symphony no. 9, with Leopold Stokowski and the American Symphony.



Figure 9. Members of the Westminster Choir and the Marine Band at the White House. In the front row, from far left: Vice President Hubert Humphrey, Lady Bird Johnson, George Lynn, Muriel Humphrey, President Lyndon Johnson.

Haydn, *The Creation*, with Alfred Wallenstein and the New York Philharmonic for the American Bible Society.

Berlioz, *The Damnation of Faust*, with William Steinberg and the New York Philharmonic.

Brahms, *A German Requiem*, with Lynn conducting for the Musical Fund Society of Philadelphia.

1968:

Bliss, *The Beatitudes*, with Sir Arthur Bliss and the New York Philharmonic for the American Bible Society.

1969:

Beethoven, *Missa Solemnis*, Leonard Bernstein and the New York Philharmonic.

Orff, *Carmina Burana*, Leopold Stokowski and the American Symphony Orchestra.

Preparations for all these works were made within daily rehearsals of one hour, Monday through Friday at 10:00 a.m. Weekends were rarely dedicated to rehearsals because most students served in area churches in New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania, and were unavailable for rehearsal. In fact, many were gone for the entire weekend. The select Westminster Choir of forty voices had additional rehearsals on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 5:30 p.m., as well as returning two weeks before the fall session began for preparatory rehearsals of their tour program.

Certainly, in his years at Westminster, Lynn more than made good on the promise to sing with orchestras, performing 28 large-scale choral works with 14 orchestras led by 16 conductors. A major innovation, having the conductors come to campus to rehearse with Symphonic Choir before going to the onsite orchestral rehearsal, markedly enhanced the choir's work. These rehearsals used student accompanists and student soloists, and the choir was also able to become familiar with the whole of the piece being sung, with invaluable lessons gained for all from renowned conductors.

What an education that provided for the young student body. Some conductors were favorites of the choir. We always enjoyed seeing Leonard Bernstein walk onto campus to lead a final rehearsal! We loved the energy and vigor he brought to everything he did. Eugene Ormandy was another favorite, with his thoughtful and almost introspective approach.

I recall that when we did the Mozart *Requiem* with Hermann Scherchen, we were perplexed. Generally, conductors raved about our preparation and tone. Herr Scherchen barely said a word; perhaps he didn't trust his English? We had no idea what he thought. I recall that we had sung the work from memory. Even after the moving performance in Avery Fisher Hall, we were somewhat perplexed at the nonresponse we got from the maestro. We returned to campus feeling a bit down and wondered what else we could have done.

Three days later a letter arrived on campus, which Lynn immediately posted on the Williamson Hall bulletin board. Maestro Scherchen had written a glowing account of the concert and was extremely moved by the performance. Crowds of students lined up to read the letter as if it were from an accounting firm advising us that we had each received an inheritance, which of course we had—a fine experience with a noted conductor singing a magnificent masterpiece with outstanding soloists for a very solemn occasion.

How very privileged we all were. These experiences were exactly what Williamson had wanted when it came to choral/orchestral performances—education while under fire! Again, George Lynn's tutelage and faithfulness to the words of Williamson were proven.

Munich, Germany
December 23, 1964

My dear President,

Thank you so very much for your kind letter of December 4, 1964, and please extend to your students my heartfelt thanks again: the most wonderful part for me was, at the second performance on the evening of November 22nd, as we began freely to improvise within the strict boundaries of the classical music of Mozart. The hearts of the students followed me into Mozart's creative thoughts and allowed their voices to attain that lightness of artistic form which can only be aroused from the very essence of the work.

I can give the students and to all of you who have built this wonderful choir school no greater thanks than to say that I was very fortunate.

Now it has been written to me from New York that in 1965-66 we should do together Bach's "Mass in B Minor" and Handel's "Messiah" (I wish also the Berlioz "Requiem Mass"), and for the Westminster Choir to be interested in this would be a triumph for me--I would answer the invitation for your students with great joy.

I extend to you all and to your excellent Choir Director my best wishes for the season and my joy over the prospects of our eventually working together again in 1965-66.

Herman Scherchen

Figure 10. Letter of congratulations from Herman [sic] Scherchen, translated into English from Scherchen's original German. Courtesy of Christina Lynn-Craig.

Singing for Lynn was a demanding proposition. He expected and got perfection. He also expected perfection from the faculty. Was he universally loved? No, I doubt it, but he was highly respected.

The 1965 tour took us to New England, and across the Midwest. I recall that after the first performance of Roy Harris's *Symphony for Voices* somewhere in Rhode Island, Lynn was clearly displeased with what we had done. The work is chorally and vocally very demanding, and we were performing it from memory. After the concert, when we were all sheepishly seated on the bus, he keyed the microphone and announced that we would have a "very early

breakfast” since we would be “wood shedding” the Harris in the hotel ballroom until the bus departure at 10:00. He insisted on, and finally got, perfect performances. I can still almost sing that work from memory!

George Lynn was always a champion for his choirs. On the 1965 tour, he was increasingly annoyed with the conditions of the hotels in which we were expected to stay. There were hotels with holes in the carpets, dirty sheets, ripped window shades, and, in Illinois, a third-rate hotel that was a series of modular units leaking rain at every jointure and rooms that had only three-quarter-sized beds that were supposed to sleep two each. As conditions continued to decline, Lynn finally called Carl Dahlgren at Columbia Artists Management and told him that if Westminster Choir were to continue touring for the management, the choir would have to be decently housed. Dahlgren was informed that this choir deserved better. He was invited to join the choir tour for a few days. Dahlgren came and realized that Lynn’s complaints were entirely justified. On subsequent tours, housing conditions ceased to be a problem.

When Westminster Choir was bused from the Mahler performance in New York City to Washington, D.C., to sing at the White House, the men were housed in a barracks where they were treated like new military recruits. Needless to say, they rebelled and asked not to stay there after the concert, as was planned. Lynn listened and arranged for the choir to be driven to Princeton after the White House concert, arriving there in the early hours of the morning. He had arranged that signs be placed all over the campus asking people to be quiet so that the Westminster Choir members could sleep in order to be fresh for the final performance of the Mahler Eighth. He cared for his singers and went out of his way to listen to their needs and responded accordingly.

But we learned other lessons from Lynn. He was a man of convictions and principle. Tour events demonstrate that. When the choir was on tour, he always sat in the front right hand seat of the tour bus. Generally, he sat there solo, composing on his lapboard or doing score study unless he issued an invitation for someone to sit with him. Of course, this generally was thought of as being summoned for “correction,” but that was far from true. It was Lynn’s way of getting into the lives and minds of the students. He wanted to know what everyone was thinking, doing, or planned to do. His approach was not question-and-answer, but a more gentle process of hours of conversation.

Other times he was more direct. At a lunch stop in Alabama where he saw the sign “colored entrance” and was told that two of the choir members would have to use that entrance, he summoned the restaurant manager to tell him that not only would the two not go in the “colored entrance,” but that the re-

mainder of the choir would not go in the "whites only" entrance. No students at all from that bus would enter that restaurant. Back on the bus the choir went to find an establishment where all were equally welcomed.

Later on that same tour, the choir was to sing in Montgomery, Alabama. Lynn received a note from Governor George Wallace inviting Lynn to bring the choir to the capitol building the next day and to the Governor's Office for a photo shoot with Wallace, but not to bring the "negro" students. Lynn penned his classic reply stating that not only would the "negro" students not be coming, but that he, and the "white" students, would not be coming, either. In fact, he wrote, if the governor changed his invitation to include the entire choir, they still would not come.

This rather dramatic example shows how strongly Lynn supported his choir. In another instance, when a choir member became pregnant, he opened his home to the couple for the wedding and reception. Such inclusive gestures were second nature to George Lynn.

A collection of sayings resulted from the weeks of rehearsal with Lynn. Their meaning was not always clear to the choir, but they always seemed to have an effect. I remember some story that ended with the words, "What white horse?" We all looked at each other, perplexed at the meaning. Nearly instantly his hands flew into the air and he announced the measure we were to begin. Amazingly, the quality of singing improved. Why? Who knows? Such seemingly incoherent outbursts and his habit of wearing a tan cashmere overcoat on his tall, imposing frame and broad shoulders when crossing the Westminster campus led us finally to call him, unknown to him we thought, "Crazy Bear." This term, I learned years later over a drink in our living room, was well known to Lynn. I asked him what the story that ended "What white horse?" meant. He looked at me and said, "Clearly, Crazy Bear didn't always have to make sense, did he?" I don't know if Lynn even remembered the story or if he just wanted us to know that *he* knew our pet name for him. I meekly asked, "You knew we called you that?" "Yes," he said, "I knew everything you all said and did."

In 1969, Lynn decided to return to Golden, Colorado. He and Thomas Zook had founded a publishing business, Golden Music Publishers, in 1962. It was doing well, offering choral, organ, and vocal selections, but was especially devoted to choral music, and featured many Westminster and Colorado composers. After Westminster, the family returned to their home in Golden.

In 1977, the Lynns moved to Colorado Springs, and the stock of Golden Music moved with them. The company stacks were housed on shelves in the Lynns' garage. I remember on my visits there being asked to pull choral piec-

es to fill orders. The Lynn family ran the business for twenty-eight years until Lucile Lynn sold the company in 1990. Many pieces are still in print through Fred Bock Publishers, though the website may be difficult to navigate. Try searching under John Finley Williamson for the original pieces.

During his years at Princeton, Lynn missed his daily ritual of composition. For George Lynn, composition was a religion unto itself. It was a huge part of his day-to-day routine as a college teacher. Early morning would find him in his robe and pajamas sitting in a chair in the living room or studio with his lap board and stubby pencil creating or editing a new choral score.

Time for composition at Westminster was harder to grab, as Lynn's energies needed to be directed elsewhere. He poured his every effort into Westminster, and it was wearing him out. How sad we were to see him return to Colorado. We realized, however, that that was where he needed to be.

With Lee Bristol leaving the school to return to private life, a new president taking over, and Alexander McCurdy, the longtime head of the organ department, having retired in 1965, perhaps Lynn felt it was a natural time to move. He never confided his reasons to me.

But he made this statement in retiring from the school he so loved:

My years at the College have been a privilege, sometimes very lonely, but always with the mission that the work of the founders must be kept at the core of its activity lest the school suffer from the success of mediocrity. I urge the alumni, with my help, if needed, to take the thought as seriously as they possibly can. I needn't remind any of us what standing and participating in the Williamson sound had meant in our lives. Although Westminster is a college, it is perhaps a better school. We must never forget that.⁹

George Lynn departed Westminster, leaving it a finer place than he found, a more musical one, and with a warmer choral palette. As he left his beloved school, it moved past the mark of more than 250 choral performances with orchestras. The touring Westminster Choir was placed under professional management (Columbia Artists), and continued to sing in concert halls throughout America.

Lynn's legacy to Westminster was as a talented and gifted faculty member. And he left his students, as did Williamson, with the ability to go out into the world and create beauty, to rouse sleeping voices, and to inspire countless people in the pews and concert halls of the world with their vibrant sound.

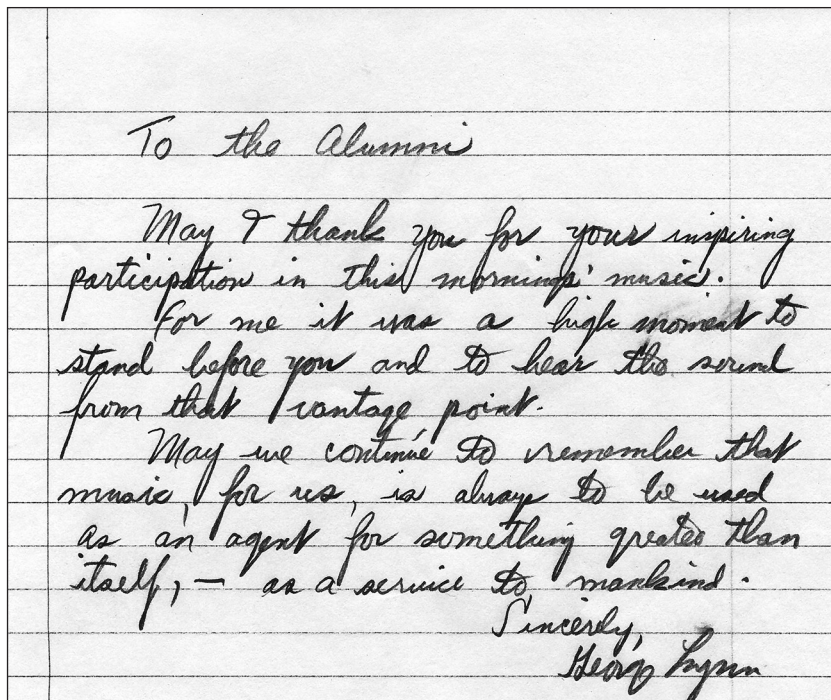


Figure 11. Thank-you letter, written circa 1969, from George Lynn to Westminster Choir College alumni. Courtesy Christina Lynn Craig.

NOTES

¹ John M. Buehler, "George Lynn—The Westminster Connection Choral Sound and Choral Composition: A Vocal Approach" (DMA dissertation, University of Missouri—Kansas City, 1989) 31.

² Ibid.

³ Quoted in Joseph Beck, *America's Choral Ambassador: John Finley Williamson*. (Bloomington, IN: Author House, 2014), xiii.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Buehler, 26.

⁶ Ibid., 36

⁷ Ibid., 37.

⁸ Ibid., 38.

⁹ Ibid.

Anna Wheeler Gentry

George Lynn: A Life Lived in Music

In the 1966–67 Community Concert Association program for the Westminster Choir, there appeared a significant sentence: “George Lynn’s career as a conductor has been divided between the academic and the church fields, with an emphasis on music composition.”¹

So, while George Lynn successfully taught organists, pianists, singers, and conductors, and prepared great choral works for churches, universities, and professional venues throughout his life, for him, music composition remained consistently at the forefront. His catalogue of compositions includes operas, several symphonies, stunning chamber music, hundreds of impressive solo



Figure 1. Dr. George Lynn (1915–1989). Courtesy of Anna Wheeler Gentry.

works for piano and organ, and, of course, his abundant collection of choral arrangements and compositions. While many of these manuscripts remain unpublished,² during his lifetime his compositions were in print with more than fifteen companies, including Theodore Presser, G. Schirmer, Oliver Ditson, Mercury Music, and Golden Music Publishers. It is fitting, therefore, to highlight and focus on some people who inspired or commissioned him to compose works throughout his life, and the places and events that influenced his compositions.

Nearly every aspect of George Lynn's life was filled with music. During those early, formative years, outside of Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, his mother sang Swedish folk songs to him and his siblings, although he was considerably younger than his seven brothers and sisters. His piano studies began at the age of 7, enabling him to secure his first job as a church organist at the age of 12; he expanded his professional experience during his high school years working as a stand-up bass player in a dance band, which helped earn money for college.

It was in his late teens (circa 1934), however, when he first heard the Westminster Choir at the end of one of its performance tours, in Princeton, New Jersey, with John Finley Williamson conducting. The excitement he experienced when witnessing Williamson's choral mastery immediately drew him to *this* kind of music-making. He then transferred from Mansfield State Teachers College in Mansfield, Pennsylvania, to study at the Westminster Choir School in Princeton.

Williamson's influence was a determining factor in George Lynn's life and career, introducing him to greater understanding of proper vocal technique—the Williamson sound model—which enabled the individual voices in a choir to sing with great maturity and healthy vibrancy, in full voice. During those undergraduate years at the Choir School, George Lynn made lifelong friends, such as James Berry, Warren Martin, Wray Lundquist, and Roy and Johana Harris. His most significant recollection—in his own words—was of his composition teacher:

When I was an undergraduate at Westminster Choir College, my professor of composition was Roy Harris. My studies with this composer who represented the forefront of American national music in the 1930s unlocked the imagination and intuition needed to find my own identity as a composer.³

During summer 1936, John Finley Williamson hosted the first Composers Forum with Roy Harris, Arthur Farwell and Aaron Copland teaching com-

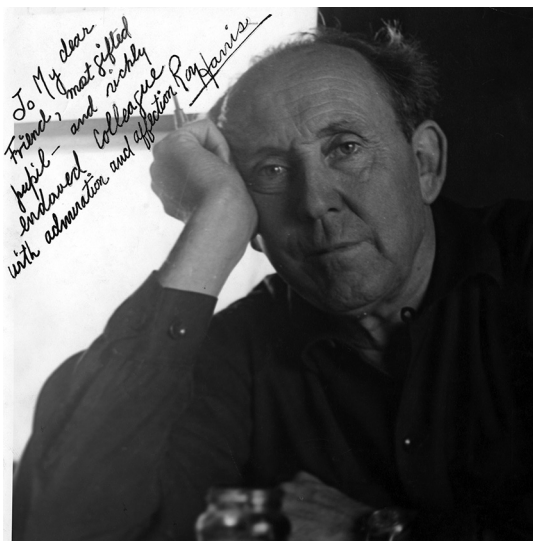


Figure 2. Roy Harris (1898–1979). Courtesy of Christina Lynn-Craig.

position to a class of students that included George Lynn, Wray Lundquist, Mary Louise Wright, and William Schuman. Out of these collaborative studio enterprises, some of the student compositions were chosen to be featured on concert programs in the Princeton area. For instance, the Second Annual Festival of American Music (Contemporary Choral Program hosted by Roy Harris, program director), conducted by John Finley Williamson on May 6, 1937, featured all new compositions by the students of Roy Harris and his teacher, Arthur Farwell: “Choral Symphony” by Evelyn B. Bull; “Time and Death” by Dorothea Fee; “Navajo War Dance” by Farwell; “Sweet and Low,” by Normand Lockwood; “Alleluia” by George A. Lynn; “Choral Memorial” by Harrington Shortall; “Fugue” by Harris.⁴

A review of George Lynn’s work from that concert program appeared in *Musical America* published May 25: “An ‘Alleluia’ by George A. Lynn, a junior student in Composition at the Westminster Choir School, showed genuine feeling for choral technique, where sharp dissonances, syncopation and dynamics were made the vehicle of sincere exaltation.”⁵

The May 27 program, later that same month at the Westminster campus chapel, featured compositions by Walter Reneker, Wray Lundquist, Lois M. Beardslee, George Lynn, W. Brownell Martin, David Felt, and Hubert Taylor, all of whom were students of Roy Harris. Both Lynn’s compositions and his vocal talent were featured in this concert, which included his “Alleluia” and “Ars

Poetica” (with text by Archibald MacLeish). Lynn also sang the baritone solo in “Sonnet XII” by Wray Lundquist with Lundquist at the keyboard.

Roy Harris also gathered several of his students to present a concert of original compositions in 1937—some instrumental, some solo vocal, some choral—for the Works Progress Administration’s (WPA) Federal Music Project in New York City. In the printed program, a footnote explained that participants were “students [who] have all studied with Mr. Paul Boepple, teacher of theory at Westminster Choir School, and then have continued their studies, because of outstanding talent, with Roy Harris who heads the Department of Composition.”⁶

It was out of those studies with Roy Harris that “Hem and Haw: Seven Rounds and a Coda” was composed in 1938, “for unaccompanied four-part chorus of mixed voices.” The piece—“set to the satirical poem of Bliss Carman where each quatrain⁷ of the poetry is set in a different mode, and then presented in round form”—received second prize at the 1939–40 New York World’s Fair and further confirmed Lynn’s ability as a composer.⁸

During that time, George Lynn maintained the position of organist and choir director (1937–1940) at the First Presbyterian Church in Upper Montclair, New Jersey, where he hosted and premiered his first piano sonata in May 1939, programmed alongside several patriotic “free paraphrase” settings—“John-



Figure 3. George Lynn with the Choir of the First Presbyterian Church of Upper Montclair. Courtesy of Christina Lynn-Craig.

ny Comes Marching Home” and “He’s Gone Away” by Roy Harris—just four months before Hitler invaded Poland.

In January 1941, Lynn moved to California to accept a higher-profile church position, as organist and choral director of a large music program at Pasadena First Methodist Church. In Pasadena, inspiration compelled him to write his first major composition: a setting of *The Gettysburg Address*,⁹ which would eventually be performed by several major symphonies, including the Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Eugene Ormandy, and the American Symphony under the baton of Leopold Stokowski. The genesis for this striking composition is discussed here in an interview, in the composer’s own words:¹⁰

I was in Pasadena before the Second War as a church musician and I was called to the city auditorium one day to conduct the “Star Spangled Banner” for some kind of a city meeting that afternoon.

On the stage was a curious collection of people: Carrie Jacobs Bond, who wrote “A Perfect Day,” the Kingsmen, which was a great radio quartet of those days brought over from Hollywood to sing it to her, and so on. Among which was a man who was very, very old. This man hobbled to the podium and said to us, “I am now going to recite The Gettysburg Address as nearly as I can remember hearing Mr. Lincoln say it.” Now that gave me quite a start. Here was a man who had actually seen and heard Lincoln. He had been a drummer boy in the Northern Army at Gettysburg.

This was about 1940, and he was very old, maybe 90. It affected me. I went right home and I made a setting of this for chorus and baritone, piano and organ, which of course was an easy orchestration after that.¹¹

While serving as director of music at First Methodist Church of Pasadena, Lynn hosted many concerts for visiting ensembles and solo performers such as organist Carl Weinrich. On Sunday, October 11, 1942, at 4:30 p.m. in the sanctuary of the church, The Hall Johnson Choir performed “a Benefit Recital of Negro Spirituals,”¹² where George Lynn marked in pencil a particularly significant paragraph, from Hall Johnson’s program notes, in the printed program for that afternoon:

As no captive people may enjoy absolute freedom of speech, much evasion and symbolism had to be used in these songs. Consequently, the ‘rivers,’ ‘valleys,’ and ‘mountain-tops’ refer not to physical locations but to ‘zones of the spirit’ to be reached by means of the ‘Sweet

HEAR HALL JOHNSON
FAMOUS DIRECTOR GREEN PASTURES CHOIR
 Direct the Festival Negro Chorus of Los Angeles in a Recital of Negro
 Spirituals at
First Methodist Church
 OAKLAND AND COLORADO
 SUNDAY AFTERNOON, OCTOBER 11, 4:30 P. M.

Chorus Due Here



HALL JOHNSON

Hall Johnson will bring his festival Negro chorus to the First Methodist Church for a program of Spirituals.

Negro Spirituals to Be Featured Here Sunday

At First Methodist Church Sunday afternoon at 4:30 the American composer and conductor, Hall Johnson will present his Festival Negro Chorus of Los Angeles in a program of "Negro Spirituals" as a benefit for Scott Methodist Church whose minister is Rev. Karl E. Downs.

The Inter-Church Christian Social Relations Committee of the Women's Societies of Christian Service of the 11 Methodist churches of this city is sponsoring this benefit.

Hall Johnson is nationally known for his "Green Pastures" choir, as well as his exquisite arrangements of Negro Spirituals. Olin Downs of the New York Times said of the Hall Johnson Choir: "They were singers imbued with tender and wild ecstasy of the Negro traditional music."

The chorus is composed of some 80 music-loving Negroes from Los Angeles. This chorus was formed to "build a great chorus, to foster exceptional Negro talent, to work toward a Negro Symphony orchestra and to erect a building for all these activities."

Mrs. I. J. Reynolds, chairman of the sponsoring committee of the 11 co-operating churches, invites the public. An offering will be taken for Scott Methodist Church.

Figure 4. Photo of newspaper clippings (1942) from scrapbook. Courtesy of Christina Lynn-Craig

Chariot,' the 'Gospel Train,' the 'Old Ship of Zion,'—all just many symbolic ways of arriving at the 'Promised Land.' And who can prove that this longed-for land was, in the minds of the singers, really located beyond the stars? Could it not just as easily have been the promised land of personal freedom, coming suddenly one day in answer to their age-old prayer for freedom? . . .

HALL JOHNSON¹³

By 1942, Hall Johnson (1888–1970) had written the musical *Run, Little Child* (1933) for Broadway, which was then revived on the West Coast under the WPA's Federal Theater Project (1939). The ground-breaking Hall Johnson Choir went on to appear as a singing ensemble in more than thirty feature films, including *The Green Pastures* (1936), *Dimples* (1936) with Shirley Temple, *Meet John Doe* (1941) directed by Frank Capra, *Cabin in the Sky* (1943) directed by Vincente Minnelli, and Walt Disney's *Song of the South* (1946). George Lynn maintained a lifelong friendship with Hall Johnson after meeting him and hearing the Hall Johnson Choir perform at the First Methodist Church of Pasadena in 1942. Lynn, inspired by Johnson, arranged many spirituals for mixed chorus over the years, and used spirituals as a staple in his own voice studio instruction to encourage healthy singing, especially in men's voices.

Lynn's choral piece "Hem and Haw" became his first choral publication in print, published by G. Schirmer in 1941, the same year the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. As World War II began to weigh heavily on America's collective mind, George Lynn decided, in 1943, to enlist in the United States Navy, while still living and working in Pasadena. However, a day or two before his naval enlistment papers came through, he was instead drafted into the US Army and assigned to Camp Gruber in Muskogee, Oklahoma, where he served in the Forty-Second Artillery Division and, naturally, started an army choir.

His division deployed to the European theater in 1944–45. When their unit arrived at Berchtesgaden, perhaps a day or two after Hitler and his entourage had fled, George Lynn sat down at Hitler's piano, using his "meat-hooks"¹⁴ to play Irving Berlin's "God Bless America" as loudly as he could so that he might break a piano string, knowing full well that Irving Berlin was an American patriot, and Jewish.¹⁵

After the war and demobilization, Lynn returned to New Jersey and in 1945 entered the Master of Fine Arts program at Princeton University under the G.I. Bill,¹⁶ studied composition with Randall Thompson, musicology with Oliver Strunk,¹⁷ and was appointed choir director at First Presbyterian Church of Princeton.¹⁸ He was now receiving commissions and exposure on both coasts, as his "Seven Last Words of Christ" for mixed voices a cappella



Figure 5. George Lynn in uniform at the organ. Courtesy of Christina Lynn-Craig.

had been commissioned in 1946 for the Good Friday Tre Ore service at the First Congregational Church of Los Angeles. Arthur Leslie Jacobs conducted the church's eight-member Chancel Singers for the event, an ensemble that included esteemed soprano Fern Sayre and bass Warren Martin, also a composer and Westminster Choir School alumnus.

After earning his MFA from Princeton in May 1947, Lynn joined the faculty of Westminster Choir College (formerly Westminster Choir School) as a voice teacher, conductor of the Westminster Chapel Choir, and head of the conducting department. Several fine choral pieces were arranged specifically for the Westminster Choir and special events in 1949, including: "Lonesome Valley" (1949), arranged for the 1949–50 Concert Tour Program of the Westminster Choir, John Finley Williamson, director, and "O Magnify the Lord With Me" (1949), dedicated to the 1949 Professional Summer Schools of John Finley Williamson.

Some years later Lynn was inspired to compose "Precepts"¹⁹ (1978), "dedicated to Randall Thompson: Teacher, Friend."²⁰ Over the years, poetry and text of both religious or philosophical content consistently inspired George Lynn's music and composing. The movement titles here read like a list of

tenets that defined Lynn and Thompson's intellectual relationship, thereby enlightening us as to the depth and introspection behind "Precepts," where both the texts and their authors signified deeply for both men.

- 1 "He shall take Holiness," from the Apocryphal Bible's Wisdom of Solomon²¹
- 2 "Things we cherish most," text by 19th-century philosopher and psychologist William James
- 3 "Perfection of the Soul," text by Miguel de Molinos, 17th-century Spanish mystic
- 4 "Flowing out of God," from Jan van Ruysbroeck, 14th-century Flemish mystic
- 5 "Narrow is the mansion of my soul," from *The Confessions of St. Augustine*²²
- 6 "Listen to God in silence" from *Abandonment to Divine Providence* by French Jesuit priest Jean Pierre de Caussade (1675–1751)
- 7 "Though Christ a thousand times," anonymous English poem
- 8 "What are servants of the Lord," words by St. Francis of Assisi²³

Also dedicated to Thompson's memory was Lynn's chamber music piece *Elegy for Strings* (1984, composed one month after Thompson died).

George Lynn spent several summers between 1947 and 1950 in Colorado Springs at the Colorado College Summer Music Academy, where he served as faculty director of the Colorado College chorus for concerts at Shove Chapel and other venues throughout the town. Radio broadcasts of select choral performances were part of the "Summer Festival Broadcasts of the American Broadcasting Company," sharing the bill with the Colorado College Sinfonia, conducted by Roy Harris. For these summer academies, Roy Harris would often invite students he had mentored to take a room for the summer at or near his residence, a Roy Harris salon, if you will, in this beautiful Rocky Mountain setting, whose members included George Lynn, Wray Lundquist, Cecil Effinger, Normand Lockwood, Harris's wife, Johana, of course, and others.

George Lynn was offered the position of visiting professor at the University of Colorado in fall 1950—as interim for Warner Imig—his duties being to conduct the University Choir and the Modern Choir and to teach where needed. Around the same time he relocated to Colorado, Lucile Miller moved to Colo-



Figure 6. Modern Choir, University of Colorado (1951). Courtesy of Dr. James H. Gentry.



Figure 7. George Lynn and Lucile Miller Lynn (1952). Courtesy of Christina Lynn-Craig.

rado from Philadelphia with her mother and sister, to be nearer to her mother's relatives, the Twomblys, who lived in the town of Brush.

Lucile and George met as soloists (singing the roles of St. Teresa and St. Ignatius) for a concert that included excerpts from the opera *Four Saints in Three Acts*,²⁴ with the composer Virgil Thomson²⁵ conducting, at the Colorado College Summer Music Academy in 1950. Apparently, during rehearsals Thomson kept losing his place in his own score, and became very frustrated.²⁶ Lynn, the baritone soloist, was quite nervous, having to portray St. Ignatius and sing the big Act III aria "Pigeons on the grass alas." Lucile, infinitely wiser than her years, thoughtfully helped the maestro stay organized by providing paper clips for his score, and in turn calmly encouraged St. Ignatius. *She* became the true saint of this opera, having endeared herself to both men, and she and George Lynn married in 1953.

Lynn's first choral dedication in Colorado was titled "Ode" (1951), composed while teaching at the University of Colorado, written in celebration of the 75th anniversary of the University of Colorado Boulder, and dedicated to the Festival Chorus, Berton Coffin, conductor. Also in 1951, Lynn was hired as the organist and choir director at Denver's First Baptist Church, where his choral singers included Mildred Coffin, soprano; Lucile Miller, contralto; and Berton Coffin, baritone. It is worth noting that several of his devoted voice students during this period—some of whom followed him from CU's Modern Choir to the First Baptist Church Choir to The George Lynn Singers and various other choral groups—included sopranos Martha Opdycke and Madeline Roberts, alto Lorraine Hoskin, tenor Robert Carl, and bass James Gentry, the author's father-in-law.

The George Lynn Singers formed in 1954 and often presented concerts at Denver's Phipps Auditorium in City Park. The group started with sixteen select singers and within five years had grown to fifty. Representative of their style and repertoire was a 1957 American program of pieces arranged entirely by George Lynn and Normand Lockwood. Using in-house composer-arrangers and local venues saved the group a lot of money (and indeed out of those collaborations came the L&L [Lockwood and Lynn] Choral Publications series with Southern Music Co. In 1958 the George Lynn Singers performed as the chorus for Wagner's *Flying Dutchman* with the Denver Businessmen's Symphony, Antonia Brico, conductor; in 1959 they performed choral excerpts from Moussorgsky's *Boris Godunov* with the Denver Symphony, Saul Caston, conductor, George London, soloist.

Freelance musicians occasionally receive surprising calls. With only six hours' notice, George Lynn successfully stepped in to accompany Metropolitan

Figure 8. Elena Nikolaidi, contralto, Mertens and Parmelee Management promotional flier, circa 1950s.



Opera contralto Elena Nikolaidi on her 1954 Western concert tour when her pianist suddenly developed pneumonia. Lynn went on to compose several song cycles for her over the next few years, including *Four Greek Folk Songs* (1954), which she performed on recitals and promotional tours. From that one experience in 1954, Lynn and Nikolaidi forged a life-long friendship and stayed in touch for many years, referring students to each other and collaborating on projects.

For more than a decade, George Lynn maintained a vibrant presence in the Denver music scene as a church musician, conductor and composer. He collaborated with Saul Caston, conducting an intimate “Coffee Chat” concert of “contemporary music”²⁷ around 1955 with the Denver Symphony that featured works by Schoenberg,²⁸ Lynn, Daniel Moe (another Denver composer), and Henry Cowell.²⁹ Another concert, in February 1958, with the Musician’s Society of Denver featured instrumental music by Virgil Thomson, Aaron Copland, Paul Nordoff, and George Lynn.

Additionally, Lynn’s work in Denver’s church music scene—moving as organist-choir director from First Baptist Church in Denver to Bonnie Brae Baptist, to Temple Emmanuel and St. Thomas Episcopal, to First Plymouth Congregational—had significant effect on the regional music community. Lynn considered music-making and teaching a kind of priesthood, as he often told

his own students. His serious commitment to the ministry of church music regardless of specific denominational ties is reflected here in his resignation letter to the Chapel and Chancel Choirs of the First Baptist Church in Denver, Colorado, which he presented to the ensembles by asking a leader in the choir, not himself, to read to the singers upon sharing the news of his 1954 resignation to move on to another church music post:

To The Chapel and Chancel Choirs of the First Baptist Church

There are happier things to speak of than parting. There are more satisfactory things to leave than unfinished things. There are memories of past moments that are precious. There are dreamings of the yet-to-come that are exciting. There are friends. These thoughts and many more cross my mind as I prepare a statement for friends to hear, friends who have welded themselves into a collective body, with but the single purpose of taking a high art and offering to the worship of God. It is to such a group that I address a farewell. A Farewell that is addressed to such collective endeavor is hard to phrase. Perhaps, better not tried. To look at youngsters who have accepted the field of my choice for an expression, to look at older people who have joined their music expression to mine in things that we have been able to accomplish, to look at this union of endeavor and to say farewell, is a hard phrase. . . .

You are the individuals who make up this choir, this infant tradition. You are the living charters. You are they who have allied themselves to a high cause. You are the individuals who, in spite of anything, will push on for higher plateaus. You are the individuals who must act as a collective body, as you offer your personal vitality to a collective effort known as the worship of God through music. I ask you to reason this out as you make personal decisions regarding the futures of the Chapel and Chancel Choirs. I ask you to eliminate personal feeling, which can be quite selfish, and to think as a choir of Christians doing its Christian Mission. I'm sure that I can speak for the music staff when I say that we cherish the privilege of having worked with you. For all of us there have been great rewards. May we of the music staff feel that our work has not been short-lived, but rather, is a well-prepared beginning for greater days to come.

George Lynn³⁰

Here are a few of the sacred pieces dedicated, written or arranged for choir by Lynn, and published—mostly by Theodore Presser—during his first Colorado phase:

"Tread Dem Troubles Down" (1953), dedicated to the Chancel Choir of First Baptist Church, Denver;

"Crucifixion" (1954), dedicated to Madeline Roberts;

"Come to the Saviour, Make No Delay" (1956), dedicated to George Lynn's mother;

"I Waited Patiently for the Lord" (1958), dedicated to the Harding College A Cappella Choir, Kenneth Davis Jr., conductor;

"Kalmar" (1959) composed for the dedication of the new sanctuary of Augustana Lutheran Church in Denver;

"A Sacred Symphony" (1959),³¹ commissioned by and dedicated to the Harding College A Cappella Choir, Kenneth Davis, conductor;

"Sacred Symphony no. 2" (1960),³² commissioned by and dedicated to the Choir of Southwest Texas State Teachers College;

"Sacred Symphony no. 3: Mandates" (1961), commissioned by and dedicated to the Dartmouth College Glee Club, Paul Zeller, conductor.

Fellow conductor and friend Kenneth Davis Jr., from their time at the Westminster Choir College during the late 1940s, commissioned George Lynn to write numerous choral works starting in 1958. It was Davis who then nominated and had granted to George Lynn the honorary Doctor of Laws degree from Harding College in Searcy, Arkansas, in 1959.

Davis, also a World War II veteran, had participated in Marine operations on the Marshall Islands, Iwo Jima and Saipan, where he was gravely wounded. After the war he enrolled in the graduate program at Westminster Choir College in 1948 during George Lynn's first full-time appointment as faculty there. During this time they established what would become a good friendship and life-long collaborative relationship. Davis went on to a long and successful career as director of choirs at Harding College. Not only did his collegiate groups make professional recordings (somewhat unusual in the 1950s), but his choirs toured nationally and internationally, including performances with the USO.

Lynn wrote *The Choir Loft Choral Book: an Easter Cantata* (1957), "dedicated with sincere admiration to Dr. James Francis Cook." Cook was an accomplished pianist, voice teacher, composer, author, theorist, fellow member of ASCAP and president of Theodore Presser Publishing from 1925 to 1936, as well as editor *The Etude Music Magazine*, from 1907 to 1950. George Lynn had several pieces of music published in *Etude*, as well as his review of the 1956 world premiere of Douglas Moore's *The Ballad of Baby Doe* at Central City Opera in Colorado.³³

Lynn's offbeat sense of humor surfaced occasionally in his reviews and general comments. For example, after attending the Santa Fe Opera he observed that its production of Alban Berg's "*Lulu* was a lulu!"³⁴ In a 1956 review of Central City Opera's production of *The Ballad of Baby Doe*, he unsentimentally declared

[Horace Tabor's] social ostracism is followed by an economic denouement, with Tabor ending his life in rags again. Baby Doe remains at his side and after his death maintains an irrational thirty year vigil at a worthless mine . . .³⁵

In 1962, George Lynn co-founded Golden Music Publishers to publish, edit and promote well-crafted choral music, classical and modern. Through Golden, he edited classics by Mozart, Beethoven, Bach, and Schütz, for instance, and published original works by Cecil Effinger, Roy Harris, Normand Lockwood, Henry Morgan, and himself, among others. One of the first pieces he published was his "Sing Unto the Lord."³⁶

That same year, when the Lynn family moved from Colorado to Princeton, New Jersey, Lynn's professional responsibilities changed dramatically. He describes his career shift in his own words:

In 1963 I returned to the faculty of Westminster Choir College to become its Music Director the following year. In 1965 I was awarded a Citation of Merit by the College. During the six years that I conducted Westminster Choir, we were managed by Columbia Artists Management and traveled throughout the United States. The Choir also appeared in concert at the White House. Additionally, I prepared the Symphonic Choir in the major choral-orchestral repertory for performances with Stokowski, Bernstein, Ormandy, von Karajan, Steinberg, Sir Malcolm Sargent, Scherchen, Victor Tevah, Sir Arthur Bliss and Wallenstein. It was difficult to keep time free for composition, with classes to teach, the choir rehearsals, touring and administration. By 1969 the need to reduce my commitments led me to return to Colorado and allow myself a year for composition before reestablishing my free-lance career of teaching and church work.³⁷

Because of the demanding schedule, Lynn composed fewer pieces during his time back at Westminster, although he managed to complete a commission "Canticle of Gratitude" (1967) dedicated to the Oratorio Society of First Presbyterian Church of Germantown and Robert Carwithen, a gifted organist and faculty colleague of Lynn's at the Choir College.



Figure 9. George Lynn and Robert Carwithen from the 1968 WCC Quadrangle Yearbook. Courtesy of Christina Lynn-Craig.

In the early 1970s, exhausted and unable to devote more time to composition, Lynn resigned his position at Westminster Choir College, and moved the family back to Colorado, settling in the small town of Golden. He rarely spoke of his time and experiences at Westminster Choir College, but would refer to great musicians with whom he had worked, the great students, and sometimes in a moment of frustration could be heard saying, “God so loved the world that he did not send a committee to create it.”³⁸

After becoming re-established in the Denver area, Lynn accepted two part-time faculty positions: Loretto Heights College and Colorado School of Mines. He built active student choirs and voice studios on both college campuses, including with nonmusic majors, such as the engineers at Colorado School of Mines, and taught composition, arranging and conducting at Loretto, as well.

Lynn composed many pieces with young students in mind, including “Three Ideas for a Young Pianist” (1965), dedicating it “To Tina, from Daddy,” and then “Toccata no. 2” (1974) “for Adele DiJulio,” daughter of Max DiJulio. Max and George were close colleagues at Loretto Heights College through the 1970s and 1980s, and maintained a great friendship, often having lunch on campus with Col. Frank Kelly,³⁹ who taught economics and world history there.

Another World War II veteran and Pennsylvanian, Max DiJulio (1919–2004) was born in Philadelphia, enlisted in the Army Air Force Band in 1942 as a trumpeter, and settled in Denver after the war, where he served as director of fine arts at Loretto Heights College for more than thirty years. Max, as he was known to all, was a prolific composer, arranger and conductor, a beloved,



Figure 10. Kathleen Joiner, pianist. Courtesy of Lee Joiner.

bigger-than-life character. Over the course of his career, he collaborated with Glenn Miller as well as Henry (“Hank” as he referred to him) Mancini during the war; conducted concerts for President Dwight Eisenhower; conducted Colorado performances for Rosemary Clooney, Bob Hope, Pearl Rae, Jack Benny, and Jimmy Durante; and served as president of Denver’s American

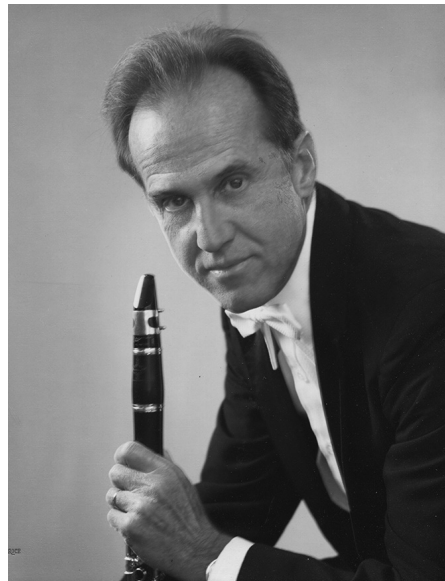


Figure 11. Richard Joiner, clarinetist. Courtesy of Lee Joiner

Guild of Musicians chapter for many years. Because George Lynn's young adulthood overlapped with the Second World War and the turbulent intensity of those years, it is hardly surprising to note that Lynn formed deep, long-lasting connections with many of his fellow veterans, especially musical ones: Roy Harris, Wray Lundquist, Cecil Effinger, Normand Lockwood, Max DiJulio, Frank Kelly, Kenneth Davis, James Berry, and Richard Joiner.

Lynn maintained close associations and colleagues of a very high caliber, and composed numerous piano pieces during this time. Some of the more difficult were written for and dedicated to Kathleen Joiner, a close friend and faculty colleague at Loretto Heights College, including *Collezione per Piano* (1972) and Piano Sonata no. 4 (1982). Kathleen Joiner was pianist for the Denver Symphony for many years, while her husband, Richard Joiner (1918–1999), was principal clarinet with the Denver Symphony. The Joiners were something of a power couple in Denver's classical music scene: Kathleen, a concert pianist with degrees from Colorado College, and "Dick," a frequent clarinet concerto soloist with his degree from the Eastman School of Music.

Dick Joiner joined the United States Marine Band (the "President's Own") as principal clarinetist when drafted in 1941, and played for F.D.R.'s fourth inauguration and for his funeral. After the war and a short stint with the Baltimore Symphony, he accepted the principal contract with the Denver Symphony, met Kathleen, and they married. Among the other pieces Lynn composed for and dedicated to the Joiners are *Cantilena for Clarinet and Piano, Reminiscences, with Folk Tunes* (1984),⁴⁰ and *Concert Piece for Clarinet and String Orchestra* (1970). As active members and soloists with the Denver Symphony, Kathleen Joiner also taught piano at Loretto Heights College, while her husband taught clarinet at the University of Denver and the University of Colorado.

Over the years, Lynn composed or arranged many solo and choral works for former students in the field. A small sampling of those choral pieces written for students:

"Alleluia" (1965) commissioned by the Scottsbluff Concert Choir, Eph Ehly, conductor;

"Calvary" (1974) written for First Presbyterian Church Choir, Flint, Michigan, William Rennecker, conductor;

"Nunc Dimittis" (1979) commissioned by East Congregational Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Larry Biser, conductor;

“Didn’t My Lord Deliver Daniel” (1980), a choral arrangement for Western Kentucky University Choir, Bowling Green, Kentucky, Charles Hausmann, conductor;

“By the Prophets Foretold: A Christmas Cantata” (1981) for the First Presbyterian Church, Boulder, Colorado, Wayne Richmond, conductor;

“Four Choruses to texts by Dag Hammarskjöld” (1985), composed for Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter, Minnesota, Patricia Kazarow, director.

Wray Lundquist, also a former Westminster Choir School composition student of Roy Harris’s and one of George Lynn’s friends, had prodigious command of the keyboard. “Memoire (pour Wray Lundquist)” as it is titled, was written immediately after Lundquist passed away in May 1982—three minutes of piano music that took the composer a full week to compose.⁴¹

Lynn was commissioned to compose a choral piece for the Myers Park Baptist Church in Charlotte, North Carolina—*Under the Shadow of the Almighty* (1985)—where he chose to use sermon texts from the first three ministers of the church: George Heaton, Carlyle Marney, and Eugene Owens. The Reverend Carlyle Marney, proclaimed “a legend among American preachers in the latter 20th century,”⁴² was ahead of his time in confronting issues of race and Christian ethics. Lynn chose four of the seven movements in this choral piece to feature powerful texts from Marney’s sermons,⁴³ thus capturing the spirit of the Civil Rights Era.

Another piece for which Lynn used sermons as text was *The Scandal of Christ* (1986)⁴⁴ a cantata by George Lynn, text by J. Ernest Somerville, Senior Minister at First Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia. Somerville was a dynamic preacher of strong Scottish heritage. The work consists of eight movements: “The Scandal of Christ,” “Scandal at Nazareth,” “The Scandal of Bad Company,” “The Scandal of Bad Behavior,” “The Scandal of the Tree,” “The Scandal of a Crown,” “The Scandal of Broken Bread,” and “The Scandal of Easter.” It was premiered March 25, 1986, at First Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia with Thomas Jaber conducting.

Ghost Ranch, New Mexico, was, and still is, a wonderful desert sanctuary, a highly reflective place; artist Georgia O’Keeffe was inspired by these very same breathtaking views. Lynn harmonized *Kum-Ba-Yah*, dedicating his arrangement to Ghost Ranch for one of the first summer workshops; he later composed and dedicated his *Psalms 121* to Ghost Ranch for the final year of his summer choral workshops there. The beautiful scenery and serene



Figure 12. Scenic New Mexico landscape, the Pedernal mesa south of Abiquiú Lake in the Santa Fe National Forest. Courtesy Christina Lynn-Craig.

setting inspired Lynn as much or more than the individuals who attended or the texts he set. Pedernal, a narrow mesa in north central New Mexico, south of Abiquiú Lake in Santa Fe National Forest, is one of the many scenic landmarks surrounding Ghost Ranch. This sacred Indian land also spawned *Pedernal—Poem for Piano* (1979) three days after the tenth and final George Lynn workshop. The summer choral workshops at Ghost Ranch became a place to focus and learn, make new friends, create profound choral music in a natural setting, nurture future dreams, and retain lasting memories, for Lynn and those who experienced that time with him.

George Lynn encountered a remarkable variety of luminaries during his career, including Leonard Bernstein, Sir Arthur Bliss, Saul Caston, Nicholas Harsanyi, Herbert von Karajan, Eugene Ormandy, Sir Malcolm Sargent, Hermann Scherchen, Leopold Stokowski, Victor Tevah, and Bruno Walter. Quite a few of the American composers with whom he studied or collaborated studied with Nadia Boulanger, including Virgil Thomson, Roy Harris, Cecil Effinger, Randall Thompson, Normand Lockwood, and Leo Kraft. Lynn's compositional output is formidable, and many pieces were written for or dedicated to a wide variety of friends, family, acquaintances, and luminaries. Toward the end of his career, he even dedicated pieces to the memory of the popular entertainers Jackie Gleason and Fred Astaire.

George Lynn found inspiration in profound poetry, texts from the Bible, dynamic mentors and friends, moving sermons, historic events and talented people, as well as the beautiful scenery of the western United States. Unlike many composers, he did not require a commission to create music, but only an intellectual stimulus. Many of Lynn's former students can attest to his philosophical side. It was not enough to teach a simple melodic line, a basic technique or musical method: he taught the whole student. His teaching demanded instinct from a student—"teach the student, not the subject"⁴⁵—as it applied to a greater meaning. The thoughts and philosophical reflections of George Lynn continue to be quoted often by his devotees. His sound model description for the perfect choral sound is a "blend of correctly produced differences."⁴⁶ Cannot one say the same for humanity?

When asked about his role as a teacher, George Lynn stated: "I do think that a teacher has something to do with a student, and perhaps it is to make the student think."⁴⁷ And then, when asked 'how do you teach a person?' he thought for a moment: I think [you teach] very little, with the hope that the student will learn a lot. Perhaps if you can ask a student one right question, he may deliver many answers."⁴⁸

George Lynn's legacy has lived on through his students. But it may be time to revisit the wealth of his compositions, both published and unpublished. Well-known choral conductor and music educator Eph Ehly, the first DMA student to graduate from the University of Colorado's choral conducting program—and a student who drove without fail from central Nebraska to Golden, Colorado, for bi-weekly lessons with Lynn—feels that "the time is ripe, and the time is right"⁴⁹ to explore and revive these great and substantive works, to discover and perform again the music of George Lynn. One need only look as far as Lynn's unpublished *Quintet for Piano and Strings* (1947) performed beautifully by the Altius Quartet at the University of Colorado in October of 2015.⁵⁰ In this music, one can hear the influences of Harris, Copland, and Thompson, nevertheless through George Lynn's own voice rooted in the significant events and cultural heritage of twentieth-century America.

NOTES

¹ Excerpted from the printed program for the 1966-67 Community Concert Association concert season, "in association with the Westminster Choir College Choir."

² American Music Research Center (AMRC); manuscripts for many of these works are held in the George Lynn Collection of the AMRC, University of Colorado, Boulder.

³ George Lynn. Guggenheim Fellowship Application, 1987; p. 1 of the Brief Career Statement.

⁴ Printed program from 2nd Annual Festival of American Music, Westminster Choir School, May 6, 1937; scrapbook of George and Lucile Lynn, courtesy of Christina Lynn-Craig.

⁵ From cut-out printed excerpt from *Musical America*, dated May 25, 1937—family scrapbook collection courtesy of Christina Lynn-Craig.

⁶ Excerpted from the WPA printed concert program, dated January 26, 1938—family scrapbook collection courtesy of Christina Lynn-Craig.

⁷ George Lynn. Guggenheim Fellowship Application, 1987; page 2 of the Brief Career Statement. The essence of this quote is from a newspaper announcement (found in the scrapbook kept by Madeline Roberts—courtesy of Christina Lynn-Craig; article from *The Denver Post*, ca. 1952) for the upcoming performance: Tickets available for 90 cents at the Phipps Auditorium box office.

⁸ *The Gettysburg Address*, published in 1962 by Theodore Presser, Philadelphia.

⁹ Excerpted from the audio interview for “American Composer Showcase: the Colorado Composers Series” KGNU community radio (Boulder) broadcast interview of Colorado composer George Lynn (1982); interviewer Thomas “Timm” Lenk, asks about George Lynn’s *The Gettysburg Address* for baritone solo, chorus and orchestra.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ As stated on the program jacket for the Hall Johnson Choir, October 11, 1942; concert program from scrapbook of Christina Lynn-Craig.

¹² Excerpted from program notes written by Hall Johnson, for the Hall Johnson Choir, directly from concert program of October 11, 1942; from scrapbook of Christina Lynn-Craig.

¹³ While George Shearing once likened Fats Waller’s broad piano-playing hands to a bunch of bananas, George Lynn referenced his own expansive piano-playing hands as “meat hooks.”

¹⁴ This story is recalled from Lynn telling the story ca. 1979 at Loretto Heights College, to the author, as I’m sure many of his choral students can also recall.

¹⁵ The GI Bill, as explained on the website for the US Department of Veterans Affairs: “The Servicemen’s Readjustment Act of 1944—commonly known as the GI Bill of Rights—nearly stalled in Congress as members of the House and Senate debated provisions of the controversial bill. Some shunned the idea of paying unemployed Veterans \$20 a week because they thought it diminished their incentive to look for work. Others questioned the concept of sending battle-hardened veterans to colleges and universities, a privilege then reserved for the rich. Despite their differences, all agreed something must be done to help veterans assimilate into civilian life. Much of the urgency stemmed from a desire to avoid the missteps following World War I, when discharged veterans got little more than a \$60 allowance and a train ticket home.”

¹⁶ That Lynn studied musicology with Oliver Strunk during his master’s degree work at Princeton University from 1945 to 1947, is stated in the Colorado Composers Series broadcast interview by Thomas Lenk, 1982.

¹⁷ First Presbyterian Church of Princeton is the same church and building that is now Nassau Presbyterian; Nassau Presbyterian was formed from First Presbyterian and Second/St. Andrews Presbyterian in 1973. Personal communication from Noel Werner, director of music, Nassau Presbyterian, January 29, 2016.

¹⁸ This is a 15-minute choral piece, completed August 22, 1977. The manuscript for this, and many other pieces, is housed as part of the George Lynn Collection at the American Music Research Center, Norlin Library, University of Colorado Boulder.

¹⁹ Performance premiere in April 1978 by the Harding University A Cappella Choir.

²⁰ Wisdom of Solomon, a collection of ancient Jewish writings dating in some cases to 220 BC.

²¹ St. Augustine, fourth-century North African Christian theologian and philosopher.

²² St. Francis of Assisi, thirteenth-century Italian friar, one of the most revered religious figures in Western religious history.

²³ *Four Saints in Three Acts*, with a score by Virgil Thomson, and a libretto by Gertrude Stein (piano score completed in 1928, and later orchestrated in 1933). Thomson divided Stein's plotless libretto into scenes and acts, and added two figures representing the laity to the cast of characters. This concept opera, set in sixteenth-century Spain, speculates interactions between the two historical figures, the Spaniards St. Teresa of Avila, St. Ignatius of Loyola, and two fictional figures, St. Settlement and St. Chavez.

²⁴ Concurrently, Virgil Thomson was also the music critic with the *New York Herald Tribune*.

²⁵ As told to Christina Lynn many times by her mother, Lucile Miller Lynn.

²⁶ Excerpted from a newspaper clipping found in Madeline Roberts's scrapbook on George Lynn and the George Lynn Singers, ca. 1955.

²⁷ "Theme and Variations" (1943) by Arnold Schoenberg, performed on this Denver Symphony program.

²⁸ Symphony no. 11, "Seven Rituals of Music" (1954) by Henry Cowell, performed on this Denver Symphony program.

²⁹ Excerpted from original 1954 letter to the Chapel and Chancel Choirs of the First Baptist Church in Denver, Colorado (which was read aloud to the choir by a trusted choir member); from the Gregory R. Gentry's private collection of George Lynn music and documents.

³⁰ Premiered March 21, 1959

³¹ Premiered April 26, 1960

³² I have no doubt that Lynn investigated nineteenth-century miners and Colorado mining folklore to better understand *The Ballad of Baby Doe*, which, as a result, led to his discovery of the poetry of Margaret "Clyde" Robertson (1870–1954) to create his *Colorado Ballads* (1958) for mixed chorus, soprano solo and orchestra. Robertson's husband was a miner during the Colorado Gold Rush, sharing a parallel timeline to Horace Tabor (1830–1899) and the adventures of Baby Doe Tabor (1854–1935).

³³ This observation about the Santa Fe Opera production of *Lulu* was told directly to the author by George Lynn before a choir rehearsal at Loretto Heights College.

³⁴ George Lynn. "The Ballad of Baby Doe: Central City Opera Has Important Premiere," *Etude* (November 1956), 52.

³⁵ It is worth noting that many of these gems originally published by Golden Music Publishers from the 1960s through the 1980s, out-of-print for a number of years,

have recently been made available again through the Gregory Gentry Choral Series published by Fred Bock Music—www.fredbock.com—distributed by Hal Leonard].

³⁶ George Lynn. Excerpted from the Guggenheim Fellowship application, 1987.

³⁷ A comment often stated by Lynn throughout his time at Loretto Heights College to his students in the choral rehearsal setting.

³⁸ The man that John Wayne portrayed in the Vietnam War film *The Green Berets*.

³⁹ Wray Lundquist (1913–1982) was a pianist, composer and college professor, and a longtime friend of the Lynns, and studied at Westminster Choir College at the same time as George Lynn.

⁴⁰ Jacob McConnico. “WFU to co-host symposium on ‘Priestly Prophet’ Carlyle Marney,” quoting Bill Leonard, in Wake Forest University news release, January 20, 2004.

⁴¹ The movements of *Under the Shadow of the Almighty* are: 1 Eternal God (Owens); 2 Everything that Issues . . . (Marney); 3 The Leap of Faith (Marney); 4 There is a hope (Marney); 5 Lift Up Your Hearts (Marney); 6 He whom a dream hath possessed (Heaton); 7 Closing Sentence (Owens).

⁴² Premiered at First Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia, March 25, 1986; for narrator, soloists (SSATB), choir and organ (approx. 35 minutes in length)

⁴³ Excerpted from the audio interview for “American Composer Showcase: the Colorado Composers Series” KGNU community radio (Boulder) broadcast interview of Colorado composer George Lynn (1982); interviewer Thomas “Timm” Lenk.

⁴⁴ As stated by Eph Ehly at the George Lynn Centennial Symposium, University of Colorado Boulder (October 8, 2015).

⁴⁵ As stated by Eph Ehly at the George Lynn Centennial Symposium, University of Colorado Boulder (October 8, 2015).

⁴⁶ An exciting premiere performance of *Quintet for Piano and Strings* (1947), a three-movement work, performed October 6, 2015—<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NOp0epLhysE>—68 years after it was completed, by the Altius Quartet, Grusin Hall, University of Colorado Boulder, as part of the George Lynn Centennial Symposium.

Christina Lynn-Craig

Songs My Father Taught Me: An Overview of the Song Cycles Composed by George Lynn

As a performer of my father's music, I have given his songs a lot of thought. In particular, I have wondered about the inspiration for these compositions. I believe that the answer is Love. Love of a particular text or a particular voice; love of the process of composing and creating something for a special occasion; and the love of collaborating with living poets.

In this article I will discuss the diverse song cycles of George Lynn. The explorations are related but independent. Some cycles are quite short—taking the form of a single song setting multiple short poems. Some are lengthy, from which single songs could be excerpted and performed as stand-alone solos. Others take the more traditional form, telling a story through the careful selection of a sequence of poems and musical keys.

The Place of Songwriting in Lynn's Oeuvre

George Lynn was a singer and a voice teacher himself, so it is not surprising that he composed a great many songs, 294 altogether, over the span of fifty-two years, representing approximately one-sixth of his compositions.¹ His first song, *Ars Poetica*, was written in 1937; his last song, *The Way of the World*, was composed just eight days before his death in 1989. There were three particularly fruitful “years of song”: 1965, in which twenty songs were composed; 1977, in which twenty-three songs were written; and 1981, which boasted twenty-seven songs. The decade of the fifties yielded more than fifty songs. But the years from 1977 through 1989 were the most productive over-

all. The 154 songs written during this twelve-year period constitute more than half of his entire song repertory. Because he maintained an active voice studio throughout his adult life and was an accomplished pianist and organist, Lynn was able to program performances of most of his songs.

Text Sources

Lynn drew from ninety-two sources for the texts of his solo songs. The greatest number of his original songs have biblical texts and include five settings of the *Twenty-third Psalm*, three settings of *The Lord's Prayer* and two solo *Alleluias*. The balance of the repertoire includes texts by ancient Greek poets in English translation; texts of theologians and philosophers; poems by great American poets (fifty-nine men and sixteen women); poems by students, family members and friends; texts written collaboratively with colleagues; original texts by the composer; traditional texts used in folk songs from many countries; and African-American spirituals.² He wrote the majority of his songs in English, but also wrote sets of folksongs in Greek and Swedish, and a Sabbath Service for solo voice in Hebrew. *Weltenspiegel*, a song cycle in German, is of special interest.

Such wide-ranging sources may be explained in part by the fact that the meaning of a poem was more important to Lynn than the sonorous qualities of the words. This allegiance to content over formal elegance is verified in John Buehler's 1989 dissertation "George Lynn—The Westminster Connection, Choral Sound and Choral Composition: A Vocal Approach," in which he is quoted as saying, "Content is very, very important to me in text selection. . . . If the text is shallow, the music will also be shallow. Clarity of meaning is important, too. If the poem is opaque, then the music is going to have to redeem it." ³

Discussions about the relationship of text and music reveal that for him the text always came first. He generally avoided melismas in his choral and vocal music because he felt that they stopped the text from "progressing."⁴ A review of the solo vocal music demonstrates Lynn's concern for clear statement of the text and also discloses his greater sensitivity to the idea or the mood of a text than to the nuances of the individual words.

During his tenure at the University of Colorado in Boulder in the 1950s, Lynn met two people who would become lifelong partners in the creation of his songs, choral compositions and operatic works, despite their highly contrasting approaches to writing verse. Donald Sutherland (1915–1978), specialized in making poetic translations of ancient Greek or Renaissance texts, and Ai-

leen Fisher (1906–2002) helped him with her vast experience in writing poetry for children, drawing inspiration from nature.

The Ladybug and Her Friends

Lynn met Aileen Fisher in Gold Hill, Colorado, during the summer of 1950. Her verses for children are widely acclaimed, and her loving descriptions of nature's creatures won many awards through the years. The genesis of the little song cycle *The Ladybug and Her Friends* goes back to a faculty recital presented by George and his third wife, Lucile, in February 1951, on the Boulder campus, in what was then the Music Room of the University Library. The program included Francis Poulenc's *Le Bestiaire*, a song cycle based on six poems by Apollinaire about animals and fish. Lynn was intrigued by the idea of writing a similar cycle in English with texts by Fisher. She provided him with seven poems about insects so suggestive that they virtually set themselves.⁵

The cycle was written for and dedicated to Lucile Lynn, who sang the premiere performance in recital at Green Lake, Wisconsin, in 1954 with the composer at the piano. She performed an orchestral version of the songs in 1956 with the Fort Collins Symphony. A chamber orchestra version of the work calls for the same instrumentation that Poulenc used for *Le Bestiaire* (string quartet, flute, clarinet, and bassoon). The songs are quite simple vocally and have been performed by children's choirs. Lucile often concluded solo recitals



Figure 1. Photo of Aileen Fisher courtesy of the *Boulder Daily Camera*.

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Example 1. Lynn and Fisher, “Daddy Longlegs” mm. 1–8.

with this “mini song cycle.” It never failed to bring smiles to the faces of the audience, the singer and the pianist (see Example 1).

In 1955 Fisher and Lynn collaborated on a children’s folk opera called *The Violinden Tree*, and 1981 saw their creation of *By Prophets Foretold*, a retelling of the Nativity that combined passages from the prophets of the Old Testament with original poetic reflections by the various characters in the Christmas story.⁶ The years in between included sets of compositions for children’s choir and solo songs.

Three Songs for Nikolaidi

In 1954 Elena Nikolaidi, a Greek contralto with the Metropolitan Opera, was on tour in the western United States for Community Concerts when her accompanist developed pneumonia. George Lynn was asked to play her program in Cheyenne on six hours’ notice. This concert was followed by several recitals in Montana and provided the foundation for a lifelong friendship. The song set *Three Songs for Nikolaidi* was written for and dedicated to the singer as a tribute to her rich and agile voice.⁷ Of special note, “Danäe’s Song,” pays homage to Fauré’s *Les Berceaux*, with its rocking rhythm of the sea in the accompaniment (see Example 2). Lynn admired Fauré’s *mélodies* and this song in particular.⁸

The texts for the songs “Clear Spring” by the French Renaissance poet Pierre de Ronsard, “Danäe’s Song” by the ancient Greek poet Simonides of Ceos,



Figure 2. George Lynn and Elena Nikolaidi at the Lynn home in 1954. Photo courtesy of Christina Lynn-Craig

and “Fleet Hours” by the late Renaissance Italian poet Torquato Tasso were selected and translated by Donald Sutherland, professor of classics at the University of Colorado from 1944 to 1971. He was a member of Gertrude Stein’s inner circle in the 1930s and is best known as an early bio-bibliographer of Gertrude Stein’s works, for his translations of Greek plays, and his

Example 2. Lynn and Simonides, [translation Sutherland], “Danäe’s Song,” mm. 1–8

1971 book *On, Romanticism*. Lynn admired his intellect and humor, and enjoyed his stories about life in Paris in the 1930s. Sutherland had expertise in areas which Lynn did not, and their collaborations on art songs were fruitful.

Unlike *The Ladybug and Her Friends*, the songs composed for Nikolaidi present vocal challenges, particularly in calling for long sustained phrases and melismatic passages. The songs were first performed in 1956 by CU alumna Martha Opdycke with the composer at the piano. Lynn programmed them frequently throughout the years, either as a set or individually on recitals featuring his college and adult students. He was proud of these pieces and wanted them to be sung and heard by many different singers and audiences.⁹

In addition to these song texts, Sutherland provided the libretto for Lynn's opera *From Time to Time*, his oratorio *Hippolytus*, and the texts for many songs; of special note is the comic encore for baritone "Anacreon, Do Act Your Age," written for and dedicated to Leonard Warren.¹⁰

Sacred Art Songs and Sets of Solo Service Music

Seven Last Words of Christ was composed in 1957 for soprano and alto and/or baritone. The fifteen-minute work contains an introduction appropriate for a Maundy Thursday service along with the traditional Good Friday texts as recorded in the Gospels.¹¹ The work was first performed in 1958 when Lynn was serving as organist and choir director at Saint Thomas Episcopal Church in Denver,¹² sung by soprano Geraldine Garnett and contralto Lucile Lynn, with the composer at the organ. Ever practical, George Lynn composed some of the pieces in two alternate keys, so that they could be sung comfortably by the best voices in the choir. This piece includes solos and duets, and as such resembles a cantata. Typically, a sermon or homily would have preceded or followed each movement or "word."

Sabbath Service for Solo Voice contains original settings of traditional texts used in a Jewish Sabbath service, with which Lynn had become familiar while serving as music director at Temple Emmanuel in Denver from 1958 to 1959. The texts (some prayers in Hebrew and others in English) are given melodies that have a distinctive Middle Eastern flavor; the accompaniment is simple and supports the vocal line.¹³ Composed in 1960, the work is suitable for performance by a trained cantor of modest gifts.

Three Songs of Hope is clearly a song cycle rather than service music and uses texts from Proverbs and Psalms. This set was composed for and dedicated to Lynn's wife, Lucile, in 1964. The songs stand alone and can be sung individually if desired. The tessitura of the songs is high for contralto and

would better fit a mezzo-soprano. Lynn began a version of the songs with string orchestra accompaniment but never completed it. In the first song, “The Righteous One Hath Hope,” the singer is asked to sing expressively, but in a speaking manner, while the accompaniment plays a beautiful and elaborate line. The second song, “God is Our Hope,” uses texts from Psalm 46, which were later reused in Lynn’s choral work *There Is a River*.¹⁴ (There is nothing in common between the solo vocal and choral pieces, save the mood.) The third song, “Thou, O Lord, Art My Hope,” is quite angular and makes use of whole-tone motifs. It has a lengthy (twenty-two-measure) postlude, which is quite unusual among Lynn’s songs (see Example 3).

Prayers from the Ark was composed in 1979 for Lynn’s older daughter, Christina (the author of this article), to sing and play, since he knew that she enjoyed accompanying herself. The texts were chosen by Christina from Rumer Godden’s English translation of a French book, *Prières dans l’arche* by Carmen de Gastold (1919–1995). These poems imagine prayers offered to God by Noah and by the creatures on the ark.

The pieces resemble those in *The Ladybug and Her Friends*, although the animals on Noah’s ark are expressing here their own points of view unlike the insects described by an observer in the earlier set. Like the Teasdale and Fisher cycles, the songs are brief and require quick changes in vocal character and

Espressivo ma parlando $\text{♩} = 48$

p e legato

3

When the wick - ed dies his hope per-ish-es. Hope de-

3

Example 3. Lynn and Proverbs, “The Righteous One Hath Hope,” mm. 1–5.

both the singer and the pianist, and requires a mature singer to convincingly express Hammar skjöld's profound texts (see Example 5). *Markings* continued to serve as musical inspiration for Lynn throughout the rest of his life as evidenced by songs and choral works written in the 1970s and 1980s.

Three “Deceptively Simple” Miniature Song Cycles

Six Poems of Walt Whitman is a six-minute song cycle for “mezzo-alto” [*sic*] that was composed in the summer of 1966 and revised in the summer of 1980 at which time Lynn added the final song to the cycle. In a handwritten comment across the title page, the composer noted the cycle as “deceptively simple,” a caution not to mistake brevity for lack of expressive potential.¹⁶ Indeed, most of the songs’ melodic lines remain within the staff and none spans more than an octave. But their limited range does not imply that they would be appropriate for young singers. The harmonies foreshadow those in *Markings*, although the vocal lines are not as bold and compelling as those in that work.

The first song, “There Was a Child Went Forth Every Day,” introduces a melodic motif in canon in both hands in the piano accompaniment, which is repeated eleven times. In a footnote at the bottom of the first page, the composer asks that each time the pattern is played it be “individually expressed.”

4 28

do. To - mor - row, to - mor - row, to - mor - - -

sfz *sfz* *ff*

30

- - - - - row!

Example 5. Lynn and Hammar skjöld, translation by Sjöberg and Auden, “Tomor-row,” mm. 28–31.

The vocal line uses exactly the same pattern of intervals with a compass of a major sixth. It is varied rhythmically and is independent of the canon in the accompaniment (see Example 6). The poems are selected from different sections of *Leaves of Grass* by Walt Whitman (1819–1892). The first two are not set in their entirety, in contrast to the way Lynn treats most poems, but similar to the way in which he sets scriptural passages. The other five poems are set as written by the poet, that is, without added repetition or elaborate text painting.

*Cinquains of Adelaide Crapsey*¹⁷ is a three-minute song cycle composed in 1977. It has the character of a single song with short interludes for the piano that carry the listener from one cinquain to the next. Changes in meter facilitate the natural declamation of the text, while modulations to new keys reflect changes in mood. Written for lyric soprano, the vocal line requires a singer with good command of soft dynamics in the high range; the accompaniment is not demanding (see Example 7). The poetry of Adelaide Crapsey (1878–1914) was suggested to Lynn by voice student Martha Miller, to whom the cycle is dedicated. The texts chosen for the cycle focus on nature and death and flow beautifully as though the poems were written as a set.

A Brief Song Cycle on Poems by Mary Kratt is four minutes in duration, and, much like *Cinquains of Adelaide Crapsey*, has the character of one extended song. Lynn met the poet in 1984 when he was the director of music in residence at Myers Park Baptist Church for five months in Charlotte, North

Simply
There was a child went
forth ev - ery day, And the first ob - ject he look'd up - on, that ob - ject

Example 6. Lynn and Whitman, “There Was a Child Went Forth,” mm. 4–9.

"Susannah and the Elders"

7 *f* Why do you thus de - vise E - vil a - gainst her?" "For

mf

Example 7. Lynn and Crapsey, "Susanna and the Elders," mm. 30–40.

Carolina. The songs were composed at that time. The subject of the cycle is trees, contrasting a gnarled old tree with "foolish" early flowering trees whose full flowering makes them break when a late snow arrives. Other trees leave messages with their falling leaves, while a favorite "hiding tree" is cut down and used as firewood. Kratt, born in 1936, commented in a letter to the composer that her favorite settings were "Hiding Tree" and "One by One," saying, "The music complements and echoes the words and makes it much, much more. Art is like that, yes." In another note she writes, "The musical phrases have permeated my life in a way the words alone had only introduced. I thank you for lifting me and my efforts in such a lovely grace-filled way."¹⁸

Rivers to the Sea

Rivers to the Sea is a song cycle for lyric soprano setting poems by Sara Teasdale (1884–1933) from her book of the same name. It was written for Elaine Bridges, who studied with Lynn during the late 1970s, as both a compliment and a challenge to her vocal abilities. With her very agile voice, Bridges was most at home with rapid passage work. She found the long legato lines in the majority of the songs in this cycle demanding. However, the high tessitura allowed the silvery timbre of her voice to shine. She was well acquainted with Teasdale's poetry and recommended specific poems to Lynn. Having chosen the poems allowed her to sing with great sensitivity to the text and increased expressivity. The accompaniments are not especially difficult but require a

pianist sensitive to flexible rhythmic structure. This is the only cycle for which the composer provided extensive handwritten notes to accompany a lecture recital presented by him and the singer.¹⁹

Lynn's setting of *Rivers to the Sea* bears some resemblance to Robert Schumann's setting of Adelbert von Chamisso's cycle of poems *Frauenliebe und Leben* insofar as both present a series of songs that describe in the first person a woman's experience of love and life. Unlike Schumann's cycle, *Rivers to the Sea* does not offer a clear chronological progression, and the poet was, in fact, a woman. The ten songs in the cycle are brief and require the singer to make rapid changes in mood. The longest song lasts two minutes and the shortest a scant forty seconds (see Example 8). The entire cycle is approximately eleven minutes in duration and is intended to be performed without pause.²⁰ Once, when I asked my father what his favorite composition was, not simply his favorite set, he named "Dusk in June," the fifth song in *Rivers to the Sea*. I never knew him to change his mind about this, though he may have given others different answers.

Weltenspiegel

George Lynn was a chaplain's assistant in the Army in World War II and served in the Rainbow Division. When the division was in Alsace-Lorraine he met Paul-Georges Koch (1908–1982), a minister and poet. They renewed their friendship by mail in 1978 when Koch sent him a volume of his own poetry

The image shows a musical score for the song "Dusk in June" by George Lynn and Teasdale. The score is in G major and 4/4 time. It features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "The air is blue and sweet, The few first stars are white, Oh, let me like the birds Sing be-fore night." The score includes dynamic markings such as *mp*, *mf*, and *p*. The piano part has a triplet in the left hand at measure 146. The score is numbered 142 and 146.

Example 8. Lynn and Teasdale, "Dusk in June," mm. 145–150.

called *Weltenspiegel* (Mirror of the World). This song cycle sets eight of the poems by Pastor Koch and was written for and dedicated to his younger daughter, Lorna Lynn, who presented them to the poet in France in 1981.²¹ The majority of the songs set the text in a lyrical manner. The accompaniments are simple and support the melodic line without the angular dissonance present in many of Lynn's other songs from this period (see Example 9).

Eight American Poets

In the summer of 1947 Lynn served on the summer school faculty of Colorado College and heard the bass voice of young Herbert Beattie, who graduated in 1948. At the fortieth reunion of that class, Beattie asked Lynn to write a song for him and to accompany him on an upcoming recital he had planned for the spring of 1989. Once they began working together, Lynn was inspired to compose an entire set of songs for Beattie's voice. *Eight American Poets* was begun in December 1988 and completed in January 1989; it was the last song set he composed (see Example 10). The two men worked on the cycle during February and March of that year shortly before Lynn's sudden death. Beattie performed the cycle with Sue Grace during the summer of 1989 at Colorado College.²²

The eight poets are Ralph Waldo Emerson, Emily Dickinson, Walt Whitman, John Greenleaf Whittier, Edwin Arlington Robinson, Robert Frost, Carl Sandburg and T.S. Eliot. The collective life span of these poets is 1803–1967. Many

Nicht nur, was träg-e Spieg-el off-en-bar-en von mein-em still-en An-ge-sicht,

3
o-der Ge-dank-en der-en wild-e Schar-en das Aug-e wie ein Spieg-el hält und bricht

Example 9. Lynn and Koch, "Weltenspiegel," mm. 3–6.

205 ♩. = 84

tell me if any get more than the lovers in the dust . . . in the cool tombs.

mf

f *mf*

T. S. Eliot

Verses from "The Hollow Men"

210 *f* *mp*

Here we go round the prick - ly pear Prick - ly pear

p

Example 10. Lynn and Sandburg, "Cool Tombs," and Lynn and Eliot, "Verses from 'The Hollow Men,'" mm. 202–213.

of the texts seem to foreshadow Lynn's death, but I do not believe that there was any conscious intent in the selection of these particular poems.²³

Influences on Solo Songs and Conclusion

As noted at the beginning of this article, the majority Lynn's solo songs used texts chosen from the Bible. African-American spirituals, folk songs and hymns were of special importance to any composer coming of age in the late 1930s and early 1940s—especially those who studied with Roy Harris, as Lynn did. As one can observe by the abundance of arrangements of these pieces, this wellspring of inspiration never ran dry. The songs use the traditional melodies and texts with original harmonies and textures in the accompaniments.

All of his vocal music and other compositions may be found in the George Lynn Collection at the American Music Research Center on the campus of the University of Colorado Boulder. It is this author's hope that readers of this



Christina Lynn and
George Lynn in
January 1985 at
Temple University.

article will explore the extensive database so that George Lynn’s songs will continue to be heard and appreciated by current and future generations, and in that way, they will become “Songs My Father Taught *You*.”

Text Sources for Solo Vocal Compositions and Arrangements by George Lynn

Appendix I: Original Poetry and Secular Texts

| | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Anonymous | I Sought the Lord |
| Catholic prayer | Ave Maria |
| from Des Knaben Wunderhorn | Wiegenlied |
| traditional Latin conductus | Orientis Partibus |
| (thirteenth century) | |
| Alexander, Cecil Frances | Once In Royal David’s City |
| Arnold, Matthew | Encore |
| Bonfield, Sister Loretto | God’s Call |
| | Nightfall |
| Caswell, Edward | |
| translation of a twelfth-century | Jesus, the Very Thought of Thee |
| Latin poem | |

Caswell, Edward, continued
 translation of a poem by
 Francis Xavier

Cather, Willa
 Chesterton, G. K.
 Chivers, Thomas H.
 Cooke, James Francis
 Cooper, C. E.
 Crapsey, Adelaide

Crosby, Fanny
 Cummings, E. E.

Dickinson, Emily

Dunbar, Paul L.
 Eliot, T. S.
 Emerson, Ralph Waldo
 Evans, David A.
 Field, Eugene
 Fisher, Aileen

My God, I Love Thee

The Way of the World ²⁴
 O God of Earth and Altar
 Faith
 Gentle Saviour
 Genesis
Cinquains of Adelaide Crapsey
 November Night
 The Warning
 Susanna and the Elders
 Triad
 Arbutus
 Niagra
 Safe in the Arms of Jesus
 i carry your heart with me
 i thank You God
 little tree
 o Thou to whom the musical white
 spring
 somewhere i have never travelled
 this is a garden: colours come and go
 why
 your homecoming will be my home
 coming
 He Preached Upon "Breadth"
 My Life Closed Twice [2 settings]*
 The Debt
 The Hollow Men*
 The Apology*
 Neighbors
 Little Boy Blue
 Candle in the Window
 Gently, Little Jesus
 Magic Night of Christmas
The Ladybug and Her Friends
 (orchestrated)
 Ladybugs
 Mothmiller
 Beetles
 Hoppity Toads

*from *Eight American Poets*

| | |
|---|--|
| | Fireflies |
| | Caterpillar |
| | Daddy Longlegs |
| Fosdick, Harry Emerson | God of Grace and God of Glory |
| Foster, Stephen | I Dream of Jeanie with the Light Brown Hair |
| Frost, Robert | A Soldier* |
| | Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening |
| | To the Thawing Wind |
| de Gasztold, Carmen Bernos | <i>Prayers from the Ark</i> |
| English translation by Rumer Godden | Noah's Prayer |
| | Prayer of the Cock |
| | Prayer of the Little Ducks |
| | Prayer of the Butterfly |
| | Prayer of the Giraffe |
| | Prayer of the Cricket |
| | Prayer of the Mouse |
| | Prayer of the Elephant |
| | Prayer of the Raven |
| | Prayer of the Dove |
| Gurney, Dorothy F. | O Perfect Love [2 settings] |
| | Each Day a Life |
| | A Single Moment |
| | Thine the Day |
| | Tomorrow! |
| | The Shuttle |
| Hammar skjöld, Dag | Caustics |
| translated by Leif Sjöberg and W. H. Auden | Rumination |
| | Soon the Gray of Dawn |
| | <i>Markings</i> [song cycle]** |
| | Expectation |
| | Moss Fire |
| | Peace |
| | Only What You Have Given |
| | The Channel |
| | How Seldom Fruit |
| | Time's Flight |
| | Sparseness |
| | Thy Will Be Done |
| | The Hand |

** The songs "Caustics," "Rumination," and "Soon the Gray of Dawn" all come from Hammar skjöld's book but were composed separately from Lynn's song cycle of the same name.

Hammar skjöld, Dag (continued)

Havergal, Frances R.

Heyse, Paul

translated by Philip B. Miller

House, Stephen

Hubbard, Elbert, Jascha Heifetz,

Ogden Nash, and W. H. Auden

Jonson, Ben

Kipling, Rudyard

Koch, Paul-Georges

Kratt, Mary

Lindsay, Vachel

Longfellow, Samuel

Lowry, Robert

Lynn, Charles Alfred

Lynn, Christina

Lynn, George

adapted from a translation
by Henry Drinker

Be Grateful

Be Grateful, So Live Then

(with male chorus).

Another Year is Dawning

Now Come Along, Mary

Song of the Insurance Man

Cerebrations

Drink to Me Only with Thine Eyes

Non Nobis Domine

Seal Lullaby

Weltenspiegel

Weltenspiegel

Untergang

Abend, des 7 Mai 1945

Lichter Abend

Hellsichtiger Traum

Frühlingsregen

Aufenthalt

Farbenspiel

A Brief Cycle on the Poems of Mary

Kratt

Late Snow

Gnarled Tree

The Noble Ones

One by One

Hiding Tree

The Strength of the Lonely

Tis Winter Now

Christ Arose

A Miner's Home Sweet Home ²⁵

Reflections on a Requiem ²⁶

Alive, Alive Oh!

The Bunny and the Egg

Here's Your Heart

Hiawatha's Farewell

Mary, Near the Cross

One Blind Mouse

Peace

Sit Down Listener, Sit Down

Sleep, My Little One

There Are Two Stars Above You***

| | |
|---|--|
| Lynn, George, and Hal Chase | Inflation Blues*** |
| Lynn, George, and Eugene Irey | I Only Know*** |
| Lynn, George, Eugene Irey, and Howard Waltz | Can It Be? |
| Lynn, George, and Marilyn McKasson | Your Love and Mine*** |
| Lynn, George, and Jennie Soderstrom | If Roses Bloom Among the Stars Just for Fun*** |
| MacLeish, Archibald | Ars Poetica [2 settings] ²⁷ |
| MacFayden, H. R. | The Lone, Wild Bird |
| Martin, C. D. | His Eye Is on the Sparrow |
| McCue, Lillian Bueno | Christmas Star Return Thank God for the Stars |
| Miller, William Otto | Lord, I Believe A Prayer ²⁸ |
| Moore, Clement Clarke | A Visit (Night Before Christmas) |
| Newman, John Henry | Lead Kindly Light |
| Newton, John | May Grace Rest Upon Us |
| Norén, Lars translated by W. S. Merwin and G. Harding | Today Everything |
| Oxenham, John | In Christ In Christ There is No East Nor West Fire, Fire, Fire A Christmas Sonnet The Dark Hills ** Consider the Lillies Cool Tombs ** Graves Hear the Angels Sing So Hallow'd Prometheus Unbound Time Loretto Heights |
| Piety, Chauncy | |
| Robinson, Edwin A. | |
| Rosetti, Christina | |
| Sandburg, Carl | |
| Sears, Edmund | |
| Shakespeare, William | |
| Shelley, Percy Bysshe | |
| Simpson, Barbara | |
| Sutherland, Donald trans. of Anacreon trans. from <i>Confessions of Saint Augustine</i> trans. of Torquato Tasso trans. of Pierre de Ronsard trans. of Pierre de Ronsard | Anacreon, Do Act Your Age. I am the Stroke that Hath Pained Thee Jerusalem Delivered Play at Love To Helene <i>Three Songs for Nikolaidi</i> Clear Spring |

*** from *A Group of Pop Songs*

Sutherland, Donald (continued)

trans. of Simonides of Ceos

trans. of Torquato Tasso

Tams, Peggy

Teasdale, Sara

Tennyson, Alfred, Lord

Walter, Howard

Wesley, Charles

Whitman, Walt

Whittier, John Greenleaf

Williams, M. C.

Williams, William Carlos

Wilson, Sir Stuart

Wooley, Celia

Wordsworth, William

Dan e's Song

Fleet Hours

Old Man Winter

The Voice of God

Rivers to the Sea

Peace

The Answer

Twilight

The Flight

Dusk in June

Gifts

A Cry

After Love

Debt

Joy

Crossing the Bar

The Eagle

If I Were Loved by Thee Nothing Will
Die

I Would Be True

Hark, the Herald Angels Sing

From Montauk Point**

Halcyon Days

There Was a Child Went Forth
[2 settings]

Youth, Day, Old Age and Night

*A Brief Song Cycle on Six Poems of
Walt Whitman*

There Was a Child Went Forth Every
Day

Miracles

O You Whom I Often and Silently
Come

Thought

To Old Age

Gliding O'er All

Laus Deo**

Like a Bird

This is Just to Say

To a Poor Old Woman

Praise We the Lord

Had I Been One of Those

The Rainbow [2 settings]

Appendix II: Biblical Texts**ANTHEMS**

Alleluia [2 settings]

And the Two Shall Become One

As We Forgive Those

Be Ye Filled with the Spirit:

Beloved Texts for Christmas

Blessed is the Man

Children of Men:

Creation

Every Knee Should Bow

The Faithful Shepherd

For You Shall Go Out in Joy

God Our Refuge

Grace Be with You All

I Know

I Lift Mine Eyes

I Lift Up My Eyes to the Hills

Know Ye What I Have Done to You?

The Lord is My Shepherd

The Lord's Prayer

Now When Jesus Was Born

O Lord, How Many Are My Foes

Our Days Are as a Shadow

Sanctify a Fast

Song of Contrition

There is a Right Time

Mark 10:8

Matthew 6:10

Ephesians 5:15

Isaiah 35:5–6; 40:11;

Matthew 11:28–30

Psalm 1

Psalm 62: 9–12

Genesis 1 and 2, and Helen Doss

Philippians 2:5

Psalm 23, paraphrase by Henry S.
Drinker

Isaiah 55:12–13

Psalm 90: 1–4, 12, 16, 17

Hebrews 13: 1–3, 8, 14, 21, 25

Psalm 23, paraphrase by George Lynn

Psalm 121

Psalm 121

John 13:12–15 (for Maundy Thursday)

Psalm 23 [3 settings]

Matthew 6: 9–13 [3 settings]

Matthew 2:1, 10–11

Psalm 3

1 Chronicles 29:15

Joel 2:15–17, Matthew 6:18–21

Ecclesiastes 4

SONG CYCLES AND SOLO SERVICES WITH BIBLICAL TEXTS*Sabbath Service for Solo Voice*

Bor' chu

Sh'me Yisrael

Mi chomocho

V'shomru

May the Words

Va-a nach-nu

On That Day!

Deuteronomy 6:4

Exodus 15:11 and 15:18

Exodus 31: 16–17

Psalm 19:14

Psalm 51:15

Zechariah 14:9

Seven Last Words of Christ

Father, Forgive Them

Today, Thou Shalt Be With Me in

Paradise

Woman, Behold Thy Son

Luke 23:34

Luke 23:43

John 19:26–27

| | |
|---|---|
| My God, My God, Why Hast Thou Forsaken Me? | Mark 15:34 |
| I Thirst | John 19:28 |
| It Is Finished | John 19:30 |
| Father, Into Thy Hands I Commend My Spirit | Luke 23:46 |
| <i>Three Songs of Hope [Song Cycle]</i> | |
| The Righteous One Hath Hope | Proverbs 11:7, 13:12, 26:12, 19:18, 14:32, 10:28 |
| God Is Our Hope | Psalms 46:1–5, 7, 10, 11 |
| Thou, O Lord, Art My Hope | Psalms 146:5, 78:7, 119:116, 39:7 |

Appendix III: Traditional Texts

| | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| African American Spirituals | Behold That Star Blow Your Trumpet Gabriel Deep River The First Trumpet Go, Tell It on the Mountain Heav'n, Heav'n I Want Jesus to Walk with Me [2 settings] In the Mornin' Lonesome Valley O Peter Go Ring-a Dem Bells Poor Wayfaring Stranger [2 settings] Same Train Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child Soon I Will Be Done Steal Away Were You There You May Bury Me in the East Koliko |
| Afro-Cuban Folksong | American Cradle Song |
| American (United States) Folksongs | Black is the Color of My True Love's Hair The Colorado Trail Common Bill Fare Thee Well, O Honey The Garden Hymn Hush L'il Baby I Wonder as I Wander |

| | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| | Lolly-Too-Dum |
| | The Lover's Lament |
| | La Primavera (Old California) |
| | O Bury Me Beneath the Willow |
| Traditional Creole | Mu'sieu Banjo |
| Traditional English | Greensleeves |
| | The Ladder |
| | O Waly, Waly (The Water is Wide) |
| | Pretty Polly Oliver |
| Traditional French | Maman, Dites Moi |
| | So, Brother |
| Traditional German | Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming |
| Traditional Greek (orchestrated) | Efgha Golfom (The Shepherd) |
| | Yarubi |
| | Ap'ola |
| | Kato St Thassa (A Summer Afternoon) |
| Traditional Irish | I Know My Love |
| | Irish Carol |
| | Shule Agra |
| Traditional Scottish | I Know Where I'm Going |
| Traditional Swedish | A jänta a ja |
| | Allt när sasom jag var en yngling |
| | Gick jag ut I lunden gröna |
| | Hej dunkom |
| Traditional Welsh | All Through the Night |

NOTES

¹ The number of compositions is greater than 1,200, although many are very short piano pieces and these have not been included in the number as referenced by the author.

² Lynn composed a set of pop songs during the years 1943–1954. Discussion of these songs is not included in this article.

³ Buehler, 67.

⁴ Ibid, 68–71.

⁵ *The Ladybug and Her Friends* includes the following poems: "Ladybugs," "Moth-miller," "Beetles," "Hoppity Toads," "Fireflies," "Caterpillar," and "Daddy Longlegs," performed by Christina Lynn-Craig, soprano, and Grace Asquith, pianist, 2015, <https://youtube/ijCkxsSQgW0>.

⁶ *The Violinden Tree* (1955) excerpts from a concert performance for the Colorado Springs Opera Guild, 1995.

"Anna's Song" and "The Flower Girl's Song" performed by Christina Lynn-Craig, soprano and Alex Craig, piano, <https://youtube/UnQ5FSAAPuE> and <https://youtube/tqRPw3klwbU>.

"The Pastry Lady's Song" and "The Caller of Rabbits Song" performed by Wendy Bernardy, mezzo-soprano and Alex Craig, piano, <https://youtube/p-8W0Acllg> and <https://youtu.be/FKaSCHh540c>.

By the Prophets Foretold: The Nativity in Song and Scripture, performed by the Chancel Choir of the First Presbyterian Church in Boulder, 1981, conducted by Wayne Richmond.

First Movement: Micah's Prophecy, <https://youtube/MJnJY-7sDjl>

Mary's Lullaby, sung by Lucile Lynn, contralto, https://youtube/_-qPHuLBgak

⁷ A song set differs from a song cycle insofar that the song texts are by different poets as contrasted to a song cycle, which presents musical settings of texts by a single poet.

⁸ *Dr. George Lynn Choral Workshop*, Memorial Avenue Methodist Church, Houston, TX, March 18, 1987. Original videotape transferred to DVD by Media Services at CU Boulder in 2015.

⁹ *Three Songs for Nikolaidi*, "Clear Spring," Danäe's Song," and "Fleet Hours" (1954–1955) performed at the University of Colorado College of Music in Boulder on October 6, 2015 by Abigail Nims, mezzo-soprano, and Mutsumi Moteki, piano, <https://youtube/Wiu9afXU8s>.

¹⁰ Program notes which say that the song was written for and dedicated to bass Igor Gorin are incorrect. The song that was composed for Igor Gorin was "Sit Down Listener, Sit Down."

"Anacreon, Do Act Your Age" (1954) performed at the University of Colorado College of Music in Boulder on October 6, 2015, by Joshua DeVane, baritone and Mutsumi Moteki, piano, <https://youtube/kYcaMU-Eklw>.

¹¹ Sources for the texts for *Seven Last Words of Christ* and voice types indicated for each of the seven words.

1st word: Father, Forgive Them—Luke 23:34 (2 keys: soprano, baritone.)

2nd word: Today, Thou Shalt Be With Me in Paradise—Luke 23:43 (contralto)

3rd word: Woman, Behold Thy Son. Son, Behold Thy Mother—John 19:26–27

(2 keys: baritone, soprano/alto duet)

4th word: My God, My God, Why Hast Thou Forsaken Me?—Mark 15:34

(2 Keys: contralto, baritone)

5th word: I Thirst—John 19:28 (soprano)

6th word: It Is Finished—John 19:30 (soprano)

7th word: Father, Into Thy Hands I Commend My Spirit—Luke 23:46 (contralto)

¹² George Lynn was the organist and choir director at Saint Thomas Episcopal Church in Denver from 1957 to 1961.

¹³ Sources for the texts for Sabbath Service for Solo Voice are Bor' chu, Sh'me Yisrael, Mi chomocho, V'shomru, May the Words, Va-a nach-nu, On That Day!

¹⁴ *There is a River* for unaccompanied mixed choir, published by Theodore Presser Co. in 1973.

¹⁵ These excerpts from *Markings* (1965) "Introspection" and "Expectation," performed at Westminster Choir College on November 22, 1966, by Martha Lattimore, soprano, and Michael Stairs, piano. Includes a spoken introduction by the composer from Timm Lenk's *Colorado Composers* series broadcast on KGNU in 1982. <https://youtube/t0F0J1RODvg>

¹⁶ He made a similar comment about the *Cinquains of Adelaide Crapsey*.

¹⁷ A cinquain is a type of poetry similar to haiku and tanka. Adelaide Crapsey is credited with inventing the structure of the American Cinquain and a book of twenty-eight of her cinquains was published in 1915, one year after her death, in a collection titled *Verse*.

¹⁸ See correspondence from Mary Kratt dated Sunday, May 6, 1984.

¹⁹ An eleven-page handwritten script for a lecture recital includes detailed biographical information about Teasdale; the song texts with tempo, meter and timing for each song; a discussion of what a song cycle is, which lists ten 'master song cycles'; notes about the composition of *Rivers to the Sea*; and "thoughts" from a biography of Teasdale.

²⁰ Though intended to be performed as a complete cycle, "subsets" of the cycle were extracted and performed during the composer's lifetime with his approval.

²¹ *Weltenspiegel* includes the following poems: "Weltenspiegel" (Mirror of the World), "Untergang" (Going Down), "Abend, des 7 Mai, 1945" (Evening, May 7, 1945), "Lichter Abend" (Clear Night), "Hellsichtiger Traum" (Clearsighted Dream), "Frühlingsregen" (Spring Rain), "Aufenthalt" (My Home), "Farbenspiel" (Kaleidoscope).

²² These excerpts from *Eight American Poets*, "Apology," "Cool Tombs," and "The Hollow Men," were performed at the University of Colorado College of Music in Boulder on November 7, 1995, by Patrick Mason, baritone, and Alex Craig, piano, <https://youtube/krzw2N9sdOQ>

The same excerpts were performed in a transposed version at the University of Colorado College of Music in Boulder on October, 6, 2016, by Gregory Stapp, basso profundo, and Mutsumi Moteki, piano <https://youtube/kYcaMU-Eklw>

²³ *Eight American Poets* includes the following poems: "The Apology" (Ralph Waldo Emerson), "My Life Closed Twice" (Emily Dickinson), "From Montauk Point" (Walt Whitman), "Laus Deo" (John Greenleaf Whittier), "The Dark Hills" (Edward Arlington Robinson), "A Soldier" (Robert Frost), "Cool Tombs" (Carl Sandburg), "The Hollow Men" (T. S. Eliot).

²⁴ "The Way of the World" is the last song Lynn composed. Dated February 8, 1989.

²⁵ Charles A. Lynn was George Lynn's father.

²⁶ Christina Lynn is George Lynn's older daughter.

²⁷ "Ars Poetica" was the first song composed by Lynn. Dated 1937.

²⁹ William Otto Miller was Lucile Lynn's father. He died in 1931, many years before George Lynn met Lucile, his second wife.

Gregory Stapp

Musician, Educator, Mentor, Friend: A Personal Reminiscence of George Lynn

An acclaimed professional composer, conductor, organist, pianist, accompanist, singer, arranger, editor and publisher, George Lynn was a musical giant whose works and performances have affected untold multitudes. His stature as an educator is equally great, having taught on faculties at a variety of colleges and universities; served as minister of music at many churches; directed scores of workshops, camps, seminars, and festivals across America; and inspired legions of followers to carry on his legacy.

Thanks to his imposing and charismatic presence, he was able to draw forth extraordinary artistry from his performers. And they in turn believed that they had a personal line of communication with him and willingly strove to answer his artistic challenges with their utmost commitment.

Many knew him best in less grand settings, one-on-one, during private lessons, long walks, drives, or while sharing quiet conversations over a meal. He had strong personal friendships and cordial professional relationships throughout his life and forged close associations with people from all ages and walks of life.

Lynn took a personal interest in all of his students, but many were fortunate to become especially close to him. I am personally acquainted with several of these, including bass-baritone and ophthalmologist James Gentry, who first studied with him at the University of Colorado; Eph Ehly, famed conductor and longtime professor at the Conservatory of Music, University of Missouri-

Kansas City; internationally renowned conductor David Agler; and Metropolitan Opera mezzo-soprano Jane Shaulis. Agler and Shaulis studied at Westminster Choir College during Lynn's tenure as music director in the 1960s.

I, myself, am yet another, having met Lynn after his retirement from Westminster Choir College. The following account is a personal remembrance of, and tribute to, George Lynn, who, to my great personal and professional fortune, was my mentor and friend.

George Lynn's success as a musician and a pedagogue rested upon a firm foundation formed by a mixture of insatiable curiosity, tremendous imagination, an unfailing work ethic, a generosity of spirit and devotion to his creator. Together they transformed him into a modern equivalent of a Renaissance man—constantly seeking, questioning, exploring, challenging, discovering, renewing, and building upon knowledge and faith.

Lynn graduated from Westminster Choir School (as it was then known) and received his master's degree from Princeton University. Later he was awarded an honorary doctorate of laws from Harding College. He was a protégé of John Finley Williamson, Carl Weinrich, Roy Harris, and Randall Thompson, among others.

Lynn received an annual ASCAP award for decades. Hundreds of his compositions were published by 16 publishers. He served as an editor of many choral series for a variety of publishers and founded his own publishing company, Golden Music.

He prepared choruses for major performances with the Philadelphia Orchestra, Denver Symphony, New York Philharmonic, and American Symphony, among others, and collaborated with such conducting legends as Leonard Bernstein, Sir Arthur Bliss, Leopold Stokowski, Eugene Ormandy, William Steinberg, and Sir Malcolm Sargent.

Many aspiring and working musicians and educators were directly affected by Lynn's philosophies and methods, whether during his stints teaching at Westminster Choir College (where he eventually was appointed music director and head of the Voice and Conducting departments), at Denver's Loretto Heights College, the Colorado School of Mines, the University of Colorado, Colorado College, the University of Denver, the University of New Mexico, or Houston's Rice University, among others; or at annual Ghost Ranch seminars, a host of American churches, innumerable workshops, camps, all-state choirs and festivals. Legions have been uplifted by George Lynn's beautiful compositions, arrangements, editions, and performances, while vast numbers of students and audiences continue to benefit from the tutelage and performances of the

many musicians, educators and ministers of music who were in turn, taught and inspired by him.

In 1970, when I was sixteen and just finishing my sophomore year at Cherry Creek High School in Englewood, Colorado, Theodore Bradshaw, a professional baritone and a former member of a professional choir called The George Lynn Singers, telephoned my mother, Betty, herself a choir director, organist, pianist, and possessed of a fine contralto voice, to tell her that George Lynn was going to be conducting the University of Denver's Summer Symphonic Choir and that adult members of the musical community were being invited to supplement the university's summer students in the choir. Bradshaw thought my mother would enjoy participating.

My mother was intrigued, and during the process of signing up she inquired if I, her high school son, might be able to participate as well. The university acquiesced, as long as my mother was convinced that I would be able to keep up.

The first rehearsal at the University of Denver's Lamont School of Music changed my life. Not only was I surrounded by an inspiring bunch of wonderful singers, including many current and former Westminster Choir College students, but the conductor, George Lynn, completely mesmerized me with his imposing and charismatic presence. I'd never seen such an inspiring director, who seemed to magically elicit astounding sounds and artistry from the forces newly assembled before him.

And once I learned during a break that Lynn was returning to Colorado permanently and that he would resume his former position as music director at First Plymouth Congregational Church, I promptly informed my mother that she had just lost a bass from her own church choir because I felt compelled to spend more time learning from Lynn. No doubt she viewed this as a demonstration of the adage, *No good deed goes unpunished!*

It turned out that Lynn's first year of so-called retirement not only included serving as composer- and conductor-in-residence for the summer term at the University of Denver, and resuming his position as music director, conductor of choirs, organist and pianist at First Plymouth Congregational Church; but also accepting the position of composer-in-residence at the University of New Mexico, splitting each week between Denver and Albuquerque. He would also serve as the guest conductor for Colorado's Children's Choir Festival and Summer Camp at La Foret, and the Colorado All-State Choir Festival. Retirement, indeed!

A few days after the performance of the University of Denver's Summer Choir, I followed through on my threat to my mother and called Lynn to ask if I could join First Plymouth Congregational Church's youth choir. He explained that they didn't have a separate youth choir but that their adult choir consisted of 60+ voices, age 14 to 82, which I was welcome to join. I promptly did so.

I soon learned that First Plymouth had two worship services each Sunday morning, choir rehearsals were on Thursday evenings, and Lynn followed a specific rehearsal schedule that he rarely varied. Typically he began rehearsals by working on the two anthems to be performed on Sunday, jumped to music for four weeks beyond, giving those pieces a quick read-through, then moved to music three weeks ahead, two weeks ahead and one week ahead, spending increasingly more time on each week's music as we progressed. Finally, we'd move from the choir room to the sanctuary to run through the coming Sunday's anthems again as well as the scheduled hymns. Eventually, most Thursday rehearsals ended up being held in their entirety in the sanctuary. Given that so many of the pieces required organ accompaniment, it was just more efficient. And the acoustics were better.

Lynn later explained to me that he used this schedule to ensure that volunteer choirs would be completely prepared and comfortable with each week's music when it was time to perform on Sundays. First, just a casual browsing, then increasing work for the next four weeks until it was as familiar as an old friend. And it worked, every week.

On Sundays, after a brief warm-up, we quickly sang the anthems through before lining up for the processional hymn. Congregational singing was a big part of the service and most hymns had at least four-part harmony. During processionals and recessionals we'd often sing the first and last verses in unison and the middle verses in harmony. However the other hymns were almost always harmonized on each verse.

From my first rehearsal in First Plymouth's adult choir, I was seated next to Dr. James Gentry, a renowned ophthalmologist, who also possessed one of the finest bass-baritone voices I've ever encountered, and who had studied voice with George Lynn at the University of Colorado decades earlier. Listening to Gentry at each rehearsal and service was a voice lesson in and of itself.

I soon came to realize that Gentry and his family were not only musically gifted, but extremely supportive of young aspiring singers. They were also close friends of the Lynns, and before long, Gentry was pestering Lynn to accept me as a private vocal student.

A few months later, Lucile Lynn, an extraordinary professional contralto and accomplished pedagogue herself, heard my voice easily carrying over the 220-voice Colorado All-State Choir during the performance conducted by her husband. She approached me after the concert, commented on the phenomenon and quickly reassured my embarrassed self that such vocal presence did not mean that I wasn't blending properly. She then turned to Lynn and simply informed him that he was to begin my private voice lessons the following Saturday morning.

At that first lesson, armed with music provided by James Gentry, I found myself introduced to my voice. I sang a descending five-tone scale on the syllable "la," at which point Lynn leaned back from the piano, removed his glasses, let them dangle from one hand, and pronounced: "Young man, you have an operatic voice." "Great," I replied, "What's that?" As the lesson progressed, Lynn mentioned that the fact that my consonants were the same size as my vowels was an indication that I might be able to become a professional singer. Upon leaving the lesson, I decided I should try to find out what this opera stuff was all about. At the time there were no active opera companies in Colorado. Undeterred, I went to a music store. (Remember music stores?) I was directed to a large section devoted to opera, which included books, scores, and records. (Remember records?)

After browsing through many books and scores, I was drawn to the vinyl records section. The first opera album I saw was *Rigoletto*, with Cornell MacNeil, Joan Sutherland and Cesare Siepi in the cast. Of course, I couldn't even pronounce *Rigoletto*, let alone Cesare Siepi. But I saw that Siepi was a bass and that he obviously had a big enough role to be prominently credited. Then I looked at the next album in the bin which proved to be of Boito's *Mefistofele*, with Renata Tebaldi as Margherita, Mario del Monaco as Faust, and again, Cesare Siepi, this time in the title role of the devil.

I had no idea that these were all superstars, and indeed, it probably wouldn't have mattered even if I had known how famous each of them were, for from my huge database, the two recordings I'd browsed, I'd immediately leapt to a few completely unfounded conclusions. One, that the bass always has a good role, and, two, that half of the time he has the title role. Not! But what riveted me was the entrancing album cover, which showed Siepi wearing a gold cape on a throne being caressed by two half-dressed gorgeous women. At which point I exclaimed, "Damn, if that's opera, that's for me!" The next day I charged into my high school counselor's office and declared that I was dropping a science class in order to participate in another choir because, thanks to the revelation the record album had provided, I had determined that I was going to be a musician.

Lynn told me that his wife, Lucile, told him that the only time he was ever patient was when he was teaching voice. True or not, he certainly exhibited extraordinary patience with me. I had sung throughout my youth, first as a soprano (I loved to sing the National Anthem in school but the other kids just covered their ears in pain; whether or not I was any good, I was definitely too loud for their young sensitive ears!); then as a mezzo (which was fun since I could make two-part harmony with others); then, starting in fourth grade, as a tenor ("Why is he singing so low?"). After four glorious years, that came to a crashing end after seventh grade, when overnight my voice dropped even lower than the Russian octavists, who sing everything an octave below the second basses.

The *highest* note I could sing then was low G at the bottom of the bass clef, but I could go lower than the left end of the piano! Great for freak shows but completely impractical and enormously frustrating for a public school kid. I was thrown out of the eighth grade choir (no one else's voice had even changed to baritone yet among my fellow students). In ninth grade I was invited back, but spent much of each concert silently mouthing words since so much of the music in the bass part was simply too high for me. By the time I had begun studying voice with Lynn, I still faced many challenges singing into the bass clef, let alone above it, despite the fact that I was a member of Cherry Creek High School's select choir, had been selected for the All-State Choir Festival, and had managed to keep up with the University of Denver's Summer Symphonic Chorus.

Yet Lynn was always encouraging and constantly transposing songs on the fly for me so that I could sing them comfortably. When I become frustrated at my seeming lack of progress and inability to hit the "high" notes of the beautiful Brahms *Requiem* bass solos, he simply told me, "It's alright to be disappointed, but don't be discouraged. Your time will come."

He told me that my voice needed to be "guided more than taught" and made a point of focusing on the things that needed to be improved rather than complimenting me on what I was doing well. Years later, after a lesson, he told me that "it was a pleasure to listen to you." Of course, he immediately brought me back to earth following that compliment by adding, "Mind you, that wasn't always the case."

Within a few months of starting lessons with Lynn, he had me singing solos at the church and doing little outreach concerts at senior homes. The lessons themselves focused on building the vocal instrument, introducing me to a variety of repertoire (spirituals to operatic arias), and emphasizing the importance of possessing excellent dictionaries. My lessons were usually in the choir room

at First Plymouth, but sometimes they were in the church sanctuary, which I preferred for its expansive acoustics. In the choir room I often found myself doing physical exercises while singing. Lynn was determined that I would come to understand that singing is a physical activity demanding physical strength applied in a judicious manner. Thus, I spent many lessons lifting one end of a grand piano about two inches off the floor, holding a chair with my arms outstretched in front of me, doing pushups, etc., all the while learning to gently apply the physical energy that these exercises elicited from within me to my singing. He was determined that my enunciation be impeccable, with vowels and consonants equally partnered in a seamless legato line. He insisted that that even a bored and jaded husband who had been dragged to a performance by his wife and who was determined to surreptitiously listen to a ball game with a transistor radio ear-bud would be compelled instead to pay attention to my performance if my communication of the text demanded it.

Lynn loved words, always demanding that his singers pay at least as much attention to their texts as to their musical lines. His students and choir members quickly learned that in order for audiences to understand their words, consonants had to be just as prominent as vowels. For example, we were told that we should treat the word *God* as if it had two syllables, i.e., that the final consonant *d* needed to be voiced so strongly that it felt as if we were pronouncing *duh*.

In addition to focusing on the technical execution of pronunciation, he was determined that everyone express the meaning of the text. He often discussed the background of the lyrics (and the music), explaining the historical context of source materials (books, plays, poetry, etc.) as well as the factors that had affected authors, lyricists and composers when the musical works were created.¹

Ten months after my first voice lesson, Lynn had me sing one of the solos in First Plymouth's performance of the Christmas portion of Handel's *Messiah*. Although First Plymouth had a volunteer choir, many of its members studied voice and played instruments; several of them had sung professionally. So, for this performance, each solo was sung by a different choir member. I sang the arioso, "For behold, darkness shall cover the earth." Gentry sang the aria, "The people that walked in darkness," which immediately followed it.

After his first year of so-called retirement, Lynn relinquished his position at the University of New Mexico and joined the faculties of Loretto Heights College and the Colorado School of Mines as an adjunct professor. At Loretto he directed the choir and taught voice, while at Mines he directed the choir, taught voice and music history (the most challenging course I took). He explained

his dilemma to me. So many people were flocking to Denver to study with him but their skills, courses of study, and home institutions were diverse. He chose to teach at both Loretto and Mines so that students with widely different interests would still be able to take lessons or participate in his choirs, and continue their formal studies without too much inconvenience.

Over the next several years, my life and the lives of my family increasingly revolved in orbit around Lynn. My brother, Steve, began studying voice with him when he was a junior in high school and joined me in First Plymouth's choir. Soon my mother, Betty, gave up her own church position and joined the First Plymouth family as Lynn's assistant, directing the children's and hand bell choirs, accompanying some of the adult choir's concert performances, serving as a substitute organist, and regularly singing in the choir.

Upon graduating from Cherry Creek High School, where I had enjoyed a terrific musical education—in senior year I had seven music courses (two bands, three choirs, orchestra and theory) as well as five nonmusic academic classes—I made the first of several annual sojourns to Lynn's Choral Workshop at Ghost Ranch, New Mexico. There, I saw him work with choir directors from all over the country as well as with scores of high school and college students. He would hold daily master classes for the directors using high school students as participants to demonstrate his teaching and vocal philosophies. He patiently drew beautiful sounds from the shyest young teens and as easily helped young men find gentle ways to produce huge tones.²

That fall I began attending Loretto Heights College to continue my studies with Lynn. Before long Steve had joined me there. Indeed, there was one year when Steve, my then-wife Victoria, and my mother, who earned a third degree in music to join her previous bachelor's and master's degrees, and I were simultaneously LHC students, a reflection of Lynn's magnetic attraction that is perhaps surpassed only by the Gentry family's relationship with the Lynns.

Sometimes, when hearing stories of George Lynn's various stints at Westminster Choir College, I would find myself yearning to have been a part of such storied artistic adventures.³ But I came to understand that even though Lynn had extraordinary personal relationships with many students during his tenure at Westminster, few could have had as much personal access to him as I was blessed to receive. And this was simply because, as busy as he was in Colorado, he had vastly more flexibility in his schedule than he'd had while dealing with all of his additional responsibilities at Westminster Choir College.

I was fortunate to be able to have meals with him several times a week. We took frequent walks and spent hours talking in his car. And, often as not, our

discussions would be about diverse subjects with little or no direct connection to music. Lynn proved to have an insatiable curiosity about everything. He was a true Renaissance man, and he found a kindred spirit in my father, Gerald. Their discussions were always fascinating, and I enjoyed just being a silent sponge in their presence.

When my marriage disintegrated during my junior year of college, Lynn invited me to spend a weekend with his family at their home in Golden, Colorado. Although I had previously been to his home on a few occasions, this was the first chance that I had to experience a lengthy glimpse of his domestic side. He shared some of what he had experienced when his own first marriage ended and was an enormous comfort to me. At this time, he also distracted me by showing me many of his original manuscripts and memorabilia while telling stories about some of the great musicians he had worked with over the years. He said that Leonard Bernstein had once asked him how he could possibly let other people conduct performances of works that he had prepared so brilliantly. Lynn responded that for him the true joy was actually in the preparation, rather than the performance.

He had similar feelings about his compositions. For him, the compulsion was to create them, not to see them performed. He made me laugh when he told me that, despite his accomplishments as an instrumentalist, pianist, organist, singer, conductor, and teacher, his real instrument was a pencil. For that was how he manifested his compositions. Of course, he well knew, and frequently commented, that musical scores were just blueprints, hoping to be turned into music by someone's performance. Ironical, given how comfortable he claimed to be that many of his compositions were languishing unperformed in file cabinets.

He invited me to sit in and observe the voice lessons he taught at Loretto Heights, but added one caveat: "You may not apply anything that you learn to your own singing. You are learning how to listen to and observe other singers, and to learn how to make constructive suggestions to improve their singing, not yours." He realized that despite what we may think, our own ears are easily deceived about our own voice, since they hear a combination of sounds conveyed by interior bone conduction and reflected sound from our ever shifting surroundings. This is why singers "have to rent other's eyes and ears" to receive accurate feedback and corrections. Over the years, I observed hundreds of lessons, and was amazed at how quickly he could diagnose problems and apply corrections that would bring immediate results, whether working with accomplished singers, beginners, or those suffering from vocal trauma.

He told me that when he was offered the position of music director at Westminster Choir College, his acceptance was contingent upon being simultaneously appointed head of the Voice and Conducting departments. Being extremely familiar with Westminster culture, he felt this was the only way he could guarantee success as a new music director. He recalled from his first meeting with the voice department a lot of trepidation from the faculty about whether he was going to steal their best students for his own studio. To their surprise, he told them that the only students he was interested in teaching were the ones that no one else wanted to teach.

Relieved, but nonetheless eager to pass on problem students, the faculty was astonished and intrigued to discover as the first year passed that these students were suddenly singing very well. At which point the faculty willingly reclaimed them. Consequently these now successful singers were redistributed among their original teachers, and Lynn happily received in turn a new batch of "problem students." His generosity and ability to set aside his own ego for the greater good were hallmarks of his political genius, but also show how much he enjoyed solving puzzles and helping everyone. At Loretto Heights, time and again I watched as he would draw forth beautiful sounds from untrained, and sometimes heretofore believed-to-be-tone-deaf students with the same care that he worked with his most advanced and successful students.

He proclaimed that it was essential that every lesson be taught with a fresh set of eyes and ears so that each student receive one's best advice. He lacked respect for a certain teacher in New York who was said to teach a great first lesson of the day, but then proceeded to teach the identical lesson to all of that day's subsequent students, whether they had any of the same problems as the first student or not. He said it was easy to fall into patterns and routines that eventually interfered with real learning, and that it was necessary to tailor lessons to the individual needs of the students rather than simply expecting every student to follow exactly the same curriculum. "You're supposed to know the subject and teach the student." He told me that when he first taught at the University of Colorado, he was presented with a long list of things that voice students were required to know by the end of their first semester. His response was, "What if they can't sing an AH vowel yet?"

Although I never formally studied conducting with Lynn, his constant guidance, criticism, and advice, as well as his vocal, choral, and pedagogical philosophies—to say nothing of the experience of singing in his choirs at the University of Denver, First Plymouth, Colorado All-State Choir Festival, Ghost Ranch, and Loretto Heights College over six years and studying voice with

him for a similar period—so informed my own approach that to this day they dominate my conducting and teaching just as much as they do my singing.

During my junior year at Loretto Heights, I did most of my coursework on an independent study plan, primarily focusing on conducting under the tutelage and guidance of Professor and Fine Arts Division Chairman Max DiJulio, who by this time had me teaching Loretto's conducting classes and jazz choir, Studio Singers. Lynn convinced DiJulio to arrange for me to spend my entire senior year student teaching, first at Wheat Ridge High School (where Lynn's daughter Lorna was a student) and then for six months at my alma mater, Cherry Creek High School.⁴

Upon graduation, I was extended several offers for high school teaching positions, but Lynn had arranged for me to be accepted on a full scholarship by the Academy of Vocal Arts in Philadelphia, the only conservatory in the world that solely trains opera singers, so that I might pursue an operatic career and continue my vocal studies with Dorothy DiScala, whom Lynn had previously hired on to Westminster Choir College's voice faculty. (Lynn said that before hiring DiScala, he took a lesson with her himself, to better judge her ability.)⁵

While studying at the Academy of Vocal Arts I had the opportunity make my professional debuts with the Opera Company of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Opera Theatre, and the Philadelphia Orchestra, among others. But the first professional job I had in Philadelphia was as Balthazar in Menotti's *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, conducted by David Agler. It turned out that Agler had been a special protégé of Lynn's at Westminster. We had a good experience with the *Amahl*, and a couple of years later he arranged for me to audition (successfully) for the San Francisco Affiliate Artists Opera Program, which truly launched my professional career. Years later, Agler told me that he'd had a chance to visit with Lynn and that he was so happy to discover that, unlike the case with some of his other early mentors, he found Lynn to be every bit as inspiring and caring as when he'd studied with him at Westminster.

Once, when I was visiting the Lynns at their Colorado Springs home, Lynn suggested that I should consider returning to conducting and quickly earn a master's degree so that he could recommend me for various university teaching positions that were going to become available. However, having then completed a four-year collegiate degree program, a four-year conservatory artist diploma program, and a three-year professional apprenticeship program with San Francisco Opera, as well as then being in the midst of a successful performing career, it didn't seem a tenable proposition to return to school at that time. Nonetheless, when the opportunity subsequently presented itself

for me to teach conducting, voice, and history, and to direct opera scenes programs as well as conduct *The Marriage of Figaro* at Notre Dame de Namur University, I was amazed, and relieved, that my previous training made it easy to return to the academic path.⁶

When I was young I lived to sing. Nothing gave me greater pleasure. But there came a time when I began to tell people that, to my surprise, conducting gave me a greater sense of satisfaction than singing. What I later discovered was that teaching voice is an even greater pleasure. Of course, none of these things would have been possible without the training and inspiration that Lynn bestowed upon me.

As part of the circle of life experiences and the recurring crossing of paths, I should mention that while at AVA I had a chance to renew my friendship with Lynn's daughter Christina, an excellent musician in her own right. And before long, fellow Loretto Heights College alumna and good friend of my brother, Steve, Anna Wheeler was rooming with her. Later, Anna married Gregory Gentry. And, both Anna and Gregory studied with Lynn.

Many people have had an extraordinary influence upon my life as a musician.⁷ But George Lynn was a force of nature who aspired to be a *complete musician*, and, whether as a singer, organist, pianist, accompanist, conductor, pedagogue, or composer, he repeatedly demonstrated excellence in all of his musical endeavors. To this day, he remains a seminal influence upon my entire life.

George Lynn was a master storyteller. His stories might be directly related to a work that was being prepared (its structure, progenitors, background, etc.), a vocal or musical difficulty, an artistic interpretation, or a personal challenge. Some on the surface seemed like complete nonsense. But in every case, the stories not only illustrated his point, they reached his audience in a way that ensured his point wouldn't be forgotten.

Lynn always demonstrated a real and personal interest in people. He consistently applied his insatiable curiosity to gain a deep understanding. Then, when working with individual students or colleagues, he would use this knowledge to help him find ways to relate to them based on their own experiences, and to help them find aspects of their own experiences to better understand how to address challenges in their performing, work, or personal life. For example, if his voice students happened to play other musical instruments, he tailored his comments to correlate the way they played their instruments to the vocal process. String players might be asked to apply how they used bowing to a legato vocal line, while wind or brass players might be shown how the rigors

of breath support and embouchure for their instruments are antithetical to good vocal production. Percussionists were asked to apply their mastery of various instruments and rhythmic complexities to the challenges of singing in different languages and genres by memory while not tripping over their feet (figuratively or literally) and letting their bodies express the emotions of the music and text rather than letting the audience be distracted by the challenges of their walking and chewing gum at the same time.

He took it upon himself to monitor the general well being of his students and choristers. I was constantly amazed by how cognizant he was of issues that happened to be troubling anyone within his orbit. He often reached out to these people personally or arranged for others to provide support for them. I am convinced that such attention, enhanced by his imposing presence, added to the already strong visceral responses that his students and performers felt for him and further increased their affection and respect.

For many of us, he became a towering figure in our lives, inspiring us to strive for goals we'd never imagined could be achieved. We wanted to be in his presence, and we needed to earn his approbation. Unfortunately, we also knew that he believed that his job as an educator would not be fulfilled unless we students surpassed his own accomplishments. This was an all but unimaginable challenge for most of us as we grew to learn of his vast abilities and successes, not only as a musician and as an educator, but as a person.

To those who have asked me what it was like to study with Lynn, I have sometimes replied that they should imagine what it might be like to study with a modern version of Johann Sebastian Bach. A man who not only brilliantly played several instruments, had an outstanding singing voice, conducted professional and religious choirs, taught at leading music schools, and edited, arranged, published and created hundreds of compositions. Needless to say, I myself didn't come close to matching, let alone exceeding, his achievements. Still, we all learned to set high goals and to strive to meet them.

Lynn was strongly influenced by his own mentors, including John Finley Williamson, Carl Weinrich, Randall Thompson, and Roy Harris (who once inscribed a photograph to Lynn, "To my most talented student"). Lynn would tell me stories about all of them (including the fact that Weinrich, then one of the most famous concert organists in the world, received only a tiny fee, with no royalties, for his voice/organ arrangement of Malotte's *The Lord's Prayer*, a piece that became and remains one of the top selling songs in history.) But it was his stories about Williamson that most fascinated me. Whether it was learning about Lynn's first encounter with the Westminster Choir as an audience member, and how its sound so startled and impressed him that it led

him to transfer to Westminster Choir School (later College, now part of Rider University) in Princeton; how he became a protégé, associate and eventual successor to Williamson; or, my realization that in many ways, Lynn remained a lifelong disciple and evangelist for Williamson's choral methods and personal philosophies.

Although I never had the chance to meet Williamson or to hear any of his live performances, I felt that I knew of him in some ways thanks to the numerous anecdotes Lynn shared about him and many aspects of Williamson's approaches to singing and conducting that Lynn credited to him. I also had the opportunity not only to listen to Williamson's commercial recordings, but to hear tapes that Lynn possessed of performances and workshops that Williamson had led.

One such workshop, for which Lynn had done the initial preparation for Williamson, included the first moments that Williamson began working with the assembled choir. He spent some time with vocal and tonal exercises, one of which included having the second basses vocalizing. To the astonishment of the others choristers, and perhaps of the second basses themselves, he had them sing scales that descended to gloriously profound low Cs and then ascend to equally impressive full-throated and strain-free high Cs. Naturally, I was not only astounded myself when I heard this, but simultaneously depressed (since I still was most comfortable below the bass clef) and inspired to master such a feat myself.

When I attended my first George Lynn Workshop at Ghost Ranch, I had the opportunity to meet David and Mabel Smith, who had both attended Westminster Choir College when Lynn was working for Williamson and in charge of the conducting and erstwhile graduate programs. David and I were seated next to each other in the Ghost Ranch symphonic choir, and the first time the choir warmed up I was thrilled to hear David sing the same wonderful low and high Cs that I had heard on that old tape of Williamson's workshop. David assured me that such a feat was common among Williamson's bass sections. It would still be fifteen years before I could produce a similar phenomenon. And almost twenty years after meeting David and Mabel, I was honored when they attended and complimented my performance in Knoxville, Tennessee, of Ramfis in Verdi's *Aida*.

Lynn was not the only choral director to be so strongly affected by his first encounter with the Westminster Choir Sound. Following my graduation from Cherry Creek High School, I was awarded a scholarship to attend a University of Denver weeklong workshop for adult choir directors with Paul Christiansen, conductor of the Concordia Choir, composer of note, and son of F. Melius

Christiansen, the founding director of the St. Olaf Choir at St. Olaf College, Minnesota. On the first day of the workshop we spent several hours in sectional rehearsals learning the music that had been distributed to us upon our arrival. That evening, the choir as a whole met with him for the first time. One of the pieces we rehearsed had been composed by Christiansen and included a lengthy incidental bass solo for Jesus. Before beginning to work on the piece, Christiansen announced that he would immediately hold an audition before the choir for the solo part. He also explained that whoever sang it needed to be able to convince the audience that he sounded like the voice of the Old Testament God.

At that point, all of the other members of the bass section, who had been rehearsing during the sectionals, turned and pointed to 18-year-old me. Christiansen looked at them in surprise but agreed to let me sight-read the solo. He signaled for me to begin and then started walking back to the conductor's podium. Christiansen's back was still turned as I sang the first few words, and he suddenly stopped, still in shock, turned around to look at me and then exclaimed, "Very well, the part is yours." He was very cordial and complimentary to me throughout the week, and a couple of years later I was invited to observe a workshop he gave at Cherry Creek High School.

During those days, I had many opportunities to have private discussions with Paul Christiansen. He told me that he understood why I was pursuing a performing career at the moment but that he thought that I might very well later decide that a conducting/teaching career would be even more rewarding. He explained that he, himself, found no greater joy than in seeing the shining uplifted faces of his choristers as they were singing, truly living music. At this time he also told me about the first time he heard John Finley Williamson's Westminster Choir. It was at Carnegie Hall, and Christiansen said that he was so amazed and disconcerted by hearing the full resonant sound of the choir that he had to bolt from the hall during the middle of the concert, unable to process what almost seemed like an aural assault upon his ears; the overtone spectrum was so strong that he had difficulty discerning fundamental pitches.

Perhaps this experience contributed to his break from his father's and brother Olaf's rigid St. Olaf sound and strict lack of vibrato. (Lynn sometimes referred to Paul Christiansen as the renegade of the Christiansen family since he refused to consistently maintain their restrained orthodox choral sound with his singers.) But it is certainly notable as another example of the visceral effect Williamson's choirs could have upon their audiences.

During the time I worked with Lynn, references to Williamson and the Westminster Choir Sound were plentiful. I also realized that Lynn not only followed

the tenets of Williamson but that he also elicited the same kinds of sounds from choirs not directly associated with Westminster wherever he was conducting, much in the same way that Leopold Stokowski and Eugene Ormandy were able to draw approximations of the Philadelphia Orchestra's string sound from orchestras they were guest conducting.

Speaking of the Philadelphia Orchestra, because Lucile Lynn had such close relationships with both Stokowski and Ormandy, and because George Lynn had prepared works for both of them, I heard many stories about them and the incomparable Philadelphia ensemble. Nonetheless, I was overwhelmed when I first heard the Philadelphia Orchestra in person. I will never forget hearing Bruckner's Eighth Symphony while sitting in the amphitheater of the Academy of Music. And when I later had the opportunity to perform a principal role in a concert performance of Falla's *La vida breve* with the orchestra, I was stunned as I was surrounded by perhaps the most expensive collection of wood in the world. My body was vibrating in sympathy with the orchestra's peerless string section.

But what was it about the choral sound that Williamson espoused and Lynn propagated so successfully? And what separated it so starkly from other schools of choral techniques? How could Westminster Choir, a touring group of 40 voices, sing so many genres of music, from madrigal to contemporary, with equal aplomb, and also be able to convey the impression that many more voices were present than actually appeared on the stage? Lynn told me that he once invited noted voice teacher Dorothy DiScala to attend a rehearsal of Westminster Choir in Princeton Chapel. During a break, he asked DiScala what she thought of the 40 voices. "Forty," she replied, "it sounds like 400!" And how could Westminster's Symphonic Choir of around 200 members, with a median age of 21, so easily dominate the dynamics and volume of some of the greatest orchestras in the world?

The fundamental answer is vocal freedom. Unlike so many other choral traditions that tend to alternately strangle and strain their singers' voices, the Williamson/Lynn approach avoided imposing the all too common artificial handicaps that result only in a precipitous, and most uncomfortable, fall to the lowest common denominator, e.g., "Oh, I'm sorry, your voice is too big/small/bright/dark, [etc.], please weaken/force/restrict/push, [etc.], in order to conform."

Rather, the individual choristers were encouraged to sing to the best of their ability (and to be studying voice concurrently) using dynamic ranges that were within their own vocal capabilities, and agreeing to match vowels and enunciate consonants in a consistent manner with their fellow choristers. This

approach defined a blend as “a mixture of correctly produced differences” (somewhat like a chef creating a wonderful salad by combining just the right mixture of different ingredients), as opposed to the weak anemic tones produced so often in other choirs whose blends appear to be the sonic equivalent of white paste. Unappetizing and not terribly useful.

Unsurprisingly, when singers are allowed to let their voices function freely, they not only bring all of their strengths to the mutual endeavor, they also look forward to singing in the choir. Indeed, each choir rehearsal and performance becomes another opportunity to enhance their vocal development, unlike too many situations where accomplished singers resent or even dread being forced to participate in choirs. Whereas so many institutions may tell aspiring singers that they’re not good enough to be soloists so they should just sing in the choir, under the Williamson/Lynn tradition, it was more like: Once you’re good enough to be a soloist, you might begin to someday dream of auditioning for the choir!

So often when attending performances of great oratorios such as the Verdi *Requiem* or Beethoven’s *Missa Solemnis* in grand concert halls with professional orchestras, the choral forces, often numbering 300 to 500 voices, are inaudible, completely dominated by the orchestras. But Williamson’s and Lynn’s uninhibited choirs could actually blow the orchestras away with their voices. This also led to extraordinary performances since, one, the choir could easily soar over the orchestra, and two, the orchestra wasn’t having constantly to underplay in a futile attempt to avoid drowning out the choir.

One example that demonstrates this vocal prowess comes to mind. When the great organist Alexander McCurdy retired as the head of the organ department at Westminster Choir College, a position he also held at the Curtis Institute of Music, a special performance of Mendelssohn’s *Elijah* was held at the First Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia, where McCurdy was its longtime organist and choirmaster. Lynn’s Westminster Symphonic Choir traveled to Philadelphia to perform, and McCurdy provided the accompaniment on the magnificent organ that had been rebuilt and enlarged to his own specifications, playing from the full orchestral score.

Elijah commences with a brief recitative for the title character. Then a long overture begins at an extremely soft dynamic level. During the entire course of the overture the volume gradually increases until it is thundering powerfully, at which point the choir makes its first entrance. I had the opportunity to hear an old reel-to-reel tape recording of this commemorative performance in Philadelphia. I listened to it in my parents’ family room, which had an excellent sound system. Once the initial recitative was finished, I found that I had

to get up to increase the volume to the maximum level since the organ was practically inaudible. As the overture progressed, I repeatedly moved to lower the volume still further (this was before remote controls were ubiquitous) as the organ kept getting louder. Finally the volume was at 0.5 on the dial and the room was shaking from the incredible power of the organ—and then the choir began to sing, and the organ was obliterated. All you could hear was the choir. Unbelievable!

Lynn believed that voices needed “always to be huge and gently produced.” Therefore, dynamics, tempo, and pitch, individually or in any combination, were not allowed to interfere with this constant. Imagine how freeing it is to discover that one doesn’t have to strangle oneself to sing softly or to strain, force, and shout to sing loudly. Or to make similar compromises for high or low pitches, or slow or fast speeds. Instead, one’s voice is always huge and gently produced, no matter what.

Sadly, beginning in the 1970s, Westminster Choir College turned its back on many of the principles that Williamson, Lynn, and others had espoused. Their musicianship remained pristine, but they abandoned what had set them apart from all others, the Westminster Sound. No longer was Westminster Choir capable of effortlessly unleashing torrents of glorious sound; when I had the chance to work with them at the Spoleto Festivals in Charleston and Italy in 1985, it was one of the greatest disappointments in my life.

While I was still at Loretto Heights, Lynn told me he thought that one of the few major schools where the Westminster Sound was still being taught was the Conservatory of Music, University of Missouri-Kansas City, where Eph Ehly was in charge of the choral program. (Ehly had previously studied privately with Lynn and attended workshops with John Finley Williamson.) Indeed, Lynn believed so much in Ehly that he later recommended that Gregory Gentry, son of James, and now director of Choral Studies at the University of Colorado, go to Kansas City to work with Ehly for his graduate studies.

I had the opportunity to bear witness to the terrific results Ehly was producing in Kansas City while I was student teaching at Cherry Creek High School. One day I was passing through a hallway of the school’s Performing Arts Complex when I heard the sounds of a chorus emanating from the theater. I quickly went into the theater and saw 40 singers on risers rehearsing. What I heard sounded as if hundreds were singing.

I quickly verified that no amplification was being employed and discovered that this was a choir from the Conservatory of Music, University of Missouri-Kansas City. They were warming up for a concert that would take place that

afternoon. I just stood there, reveling in the Westminster Sound manifestly surrounding me, for though I had been a participant in Lynn's choirs in many different settings, this was the first time I had been awash in these sonic glories from an audience's perspective made by a group that Lynn had not prepared himself. I was in heaven.

I should mention something about how George Lynn would use his warm-up periods with his choirs, whether at festivals, colleges and universities, workshops, or churches. No matter which exercises he employed he was always interested in achieving several objectives. Ensuring that the voices were properly warmed up, limber, agile, and ready for the vocal challenges ahead of them. Exploring the capacities and ranges of pitches, dynamics, vowel matching, rhythm and speed. And, most of all, developing tonal expression and listening skills.

The choir was his instrument, and he was determined that each part of that instrument would excel. Like John Finley Williamson, George Lynn firmly believed that each person had something extraordinary about them. His job was to help them find it, explore it, cherish it, and express it through their voice. His singers learned to be thrilled by sonic phenomena, and even more excited to realize that they had the capacity to unleash cascades of beautiful sounds in music.

He insisted that we learn "to listen like chamber musicians, who must be constantly aware of and depend on each other in order to succeed." Or even better, "to imagine oneself as a prey animal in the wild, anxiously listening for predators, knowing that the smallest inadvertent sound could lead to one's demise. They," he would say, "really know how to listen!" In contrast, he spoke rather disparagingly of some orchestral musicians who knitted or graded papers during long *tacets* (sections of silence), paying no attention until it was time for their own next entrance.

Although Lynn's physical presence was large enough that apparently his nickname at Westminster Choir College was Big Bear, his movements as a conductor were often so subtle that unless his performers were paying the utmost attention it was likely that they would commit errors. I remember the very first rehearsal of my first Colorado All-State Choir Festival, which Lynn conducted. It started at 8:00 a.m., and was held in the old University of Denver Chapel that the Lamont School of Music regularly used. The 200+ voice choir was sitting with somewhat bleary eyes in several pews at the front of the chapel, and we were doing some vocal exercises to warm, and wake, up. We were given a keyboard chord on which to sing a sustained AH vowel. Lynn stood

before us on a raised platform with his large arms stretched out in front to give us our entrance cue. Abruptly, he asked us, "Why didn't you start singing?"

Suddenly everyone was sitting on the edge of their pew as we realized that, despite his size, his cues could be so minuscule that they were barely observable. We quickly learned that just the slightest movement of his fingers or the raising of his eyebrows or just an inhalation could be expressing not just an entrance or a cutoff, but tempo, dynamics and emotion. I also remember that I was sitting at the end of a pew by the central aisle a few minutes later, beginning to sight-read the music we would be performing in a couple of days, as Lynn happened to be walking down the same aisle. As we sang and as he passed by me, he suddenly paused and tapped me on my cheek, softly calling out, "Wrong note!"

As years went by and I had many chances to observe Lynn meeting choirs for the first time and watch him flummox and discombobulate them with similar subtle cues, I realized that this was a conscious technique for him—a quick way to ensure that they would be paying the utmost attention henceforth and thus would be making the most of their time together.

Still, his conducting stance was very open, and often his gestures were grand, as well. One of the few times he actually worked with me on conducting was in a master class at Ghost Ranch. And I will never forget the first thing he told me after I had completed conducting a piece, "Just because I conduct as if my arms were around a large barrel doesn't mean that you have to, as well." He wanted his students to find their own ways of understanding and expression, and not to simply imitate him or anyone else.

Actually his repertoire of conducting gestures was quite large. First of all, he was not someone who simply mirrored his hands (right and left aping each other in a reflection). Rather, he was completely proficient in beating time, giving cues, and showing dynamic expressions with either hand. If both hands were moving simultaneously they could be synchronized or totally disparate with equal ease.

He also could use gestures that imitated instruments, e.g., pretending to bow a string bass would signal a particular legato and/or tonal expression for the bass section. Likewise, he could simply touch his chest and the altos or the basses would know that he desired a deeper tone from them. The way he held his head, initiated a breath, or animated his face could signal a host of cues to his choirs. But his eyes were the true key to his communicating with us. A single glance could elicit the most extraordinary responses from his singers.

Lynn insisted that one couldn't be a successful choir conductor unless one knew voices and how to teach them. He also said that "if you can't afford to rent a choir of professionals, you had better be able to train them." Actually, when he conducted choirs, he was simultaneously giving them voice lessons, passing on new ways to unleash and use their instruments artistically as they were rehearsing or performing. This not only kept their voices fresh but helped give their singing an additional vitality and spontaneity.

His musical gifts were truly extraordinary. Although he didn't possess so-called perfect or absolute pitch, he had great relative pitch and, perhaps most amazing, could look at a piece of music and hear it fully resound inside his head. Indeed, his hearing was so acute that Lucile Lynn told me that once he was questioned in school for the way he had so easily orchestrated a melody during a quiz. It turns out that he'd heard the piece sometime earlier on the radio and thus just subconsciously knew how it was supposed to be orchestrated. He had not been cheating!

He was a master at transposing music at sight, which was of enormous benefit to those he accompanied. He once related to me that when he was accompanying the great Greek contralto Elena Nikolaidi and they were about to walk back out onto the stage for the next set of pieces, she suddenly turned to him and whispered, "The voice doesn't feel just right tonight, please play the next piece down a step." Then, without giving him a chance to breathe let alone comment, she walked out onstage.

He also told me that when he played for Nikolaidi's master classes, she would often tell students that they needed to remember, "In the studio it is always about technique, technique, technique, but on the stage it can never be about technique." By which she meant that you can't be focusing on technical details during a performance at the expense of the audience to whom you were communicating. (Decades later, Lynn arranged for my brother, Steve, to study with Nikolaidi in the graduate program at the University of Houston after Steve graduated from Loretto Heights College.)

Lynn's technical proficiency at the piano and organ always amazed me. He maintained his prodigious skills by rigorous and regular practice. He was the one who first told me the oft-repeated anecdote attributed to Vladimir Horowitz, who, when asked about what happened if he failed to practice regularly, replied, "If I don't practice for a day, I know it. If I don't practice for two days, my wife [Wanda, daughter of famed conductor Arturo Toscanini] knows it. If I don't practice for a week, the world knows it!"

Lynn credited his ability to begin pieces with the correct tempi to the fact that he spent so many hours practicing the organ with a metronome clicking throughout. Using a metronome can also help players to ignore the delay in sound that occurs between keys being played on an organ's manual and the pipes actually producing tones from locations that may be far away from where the organist is sitting.

At Westminster Choir College the young George Lynn, studying with the great concert organist Carl Weinrich, dutifully practiced many hours a day. During this time, his stupendous vocal gifts so inspired his teachers that they arranged for him to have a major audition in New York City. There he was told that within five years he could be the greatest *heldentenor* [a Wagnerian "heroic" male singer] in the world. Lynn thanked them for their time and comments but politely replied, "Sorry, I am an organ major." He headed back to Westminster and continued his regimen at the organ. Later, while giving a full organ recital, he looked out into the hall and saw but a very few people in the audience. At which point he decided that he had better uses for his time than to be communing with an organ many hours a day when only a few people would hear the fruits of his labors.

Thereafter, he primarily focused on composition and conducting, although, as I indicated, his skills at the piano and organ remained formidable throughout his life. He once told me that he longed to spend time working as a craftsman with electric saws and other power tools, but that he couldn't risk injuring his hands as long as he was still playing the piano and organ.

He also continued to sing. I can testify to his powerful voice, which even by the time I was studying with him could effortlessly produce fulsome low Ds and high Bs with regularity and aplomb. He claimed that he gained this ability by rooming with two fellow students at Westminster, one of whom had a very deep voice and the other a very high one. Personally, I was in equal parts amazed and disgusted by his vocal prowess. Well, probably mostly disgusted at my own inabilities. But once, when I was struggling with a bad case of laryngitis, he admitted to me that the reason he eventually stopped singing professionally was that he suffered from stage fright as a singer and feared that a recurring susceptibility to colds was related to that fright.

Lynn was also a musician who was able to completely transfer his skills at the keyboard to the conductor's baton (or hands). Too often, this is not the case, with tempo control and communication weakening or disappearing entirely as the confidence and authority displayed at the keyboard vanish once a leader takes the podium.⁸

Lynn was adept at finding the simplest way to express profound thoughts, and this carried over to daily life. Once when he agreed to critique some application letters I had drafted, he responded: “They’re adequate, but, personally, I would eliminate all of the adjectives.” Doing so shortened the letters by half and vastly improved them.

So, in closing, I would only say this: George Lynn was a compassionate man of faith, blessed with many gifts, dedicated to his family, curious, industrious and imaginative, who generously shared his life’s works with humanity.

NOTES

¹ I am convinced that his devotion to the text, no doubt coupled with and enhanced by decades of study with my wife, Marcie Stapp, vocal coach and author of *The Singer’s Guide to Languages*, led to my exasperation with performers whose words I couldn’t understand; my determination that my own students have impeccable enunciation; and, the fact that the only reviews of my performances I enjoy are those that applaud my diction.

² I remember his asking me to perform an excerpt from Mark Twain’s poem “The War Prayer,” so he could demonstrate to the directors the correlation between speaking and singing. By the end of the workshop, the high school students sounded like adults and the choir directors were inspired to achieve similar results when they returned home armed with new techniques.

³ Lynn once told me that had I attended Westminster during his tenure as music director I would have been selected for Westminster Choir as a freshman, which, he said, would have been an unusual occurrence.

⁴ I had been hired the previous summer to be the vocal music director of *My Fair Lady*—its production to celebrate the opening of a new theater—and where I then assumed two teachers’ full loads simultaneously and was given primary vocal responsibility for the first amateur production of *Jesus Christ Superstar* in the world, in which Rob Gentry, son of James, portrayed the high priest, Caiaphas.

⁵ DiScala was a protégé and later teaching associate of Sidney Dietch, the renowned voice teacher of Leonard Warren and James Pease (Wotan in the Red Rocks Amphitheatre Denver Symphony production of Wagner’s *Die Walküre* with Margaret Harshaw, my next voice teacher, in the title role of Brünhilde and Lucile Lynn as a Walküre). Dietch was on the faculty of the Academy of Vocal Arts for decades and also taught Andrew White, the subsequent teacher of Sherrill Milnes.

Lucile Lynn was also a longtime student of Dietch and when she was about to begin teaching voice herself, Dietch famously told her: “Now, Lucy, remember, don’t go teaching everybody your own problems!” This comment referring to the tendency of too many voice teachers to teach solutions they learned for their own voice rather than diagnosing and remedying the problems of the student before them.

⁶ Back in high school, one of my choral directors, Thomas Miyake, told me he thought I would become an excellent teacher. That astonished me, because at the time I was shy, introverted, not especially sociable, and had no thought of ever

teaching. I expressed as much to him, and he replied, "No, the reason that I think that you would be a good teacher is because you have so many vocal problems." Because I didn't grasp his point immediately, he explained that since I had faced so many difficulties I would be better able to relate to others who had problems. (Mind you, he also wrote me a great college recommendation stating that "Stapp has the best male voice I've encountered in my teaching.") I remained unconvinced. But thanks to the opportunities I received throughout my education, I gradually learned the skills to be an effective and sympathetic conductor and teacher.

⁷ Starting with my extremely supportive parents; my wonderful music teachers in the Denver Public Schools, Jack Fredericksen and Maxine Westfall; Thomas Miyake, Michael D. Mendoza and Fred Selby at Cherry Creek High School; Max DiJulio, Lucile Lynn, and Kathleen Joiner at Loretto Heights College; Dorothy DiScala, Marcie Stapp, and Richard Weitach at the Academy of Vocal Arts; Margaret Harshaw at Indiana University; my subsequent private voice teachers, Janet Pavlova, Jerome Hines, and Judith Natalucci; as well as untold numbers of conductors and coaches I've worked with throughout my career.

⁸ In spring 2015, Westminster Choir College celebrated the life of George Lynn. That summer, during a leadership conference of the American Guild of Musical Artists (AGMA), in which Westminster alumna and Metropolitan Opera mezzo Jane Shaulis and I both serve as national officers, we had a chance to discuss our mutual relationships with the Lynns.

As Jane related many stories of her days at Westminster and of the many kindnesses and affection that defined her time interacting with the Lynns, I was struck anew by how many lives have been affected by the extraordinary Lynn family.

This was reinforced again in fall 2015, when I participated in another tribute to Lynn by the University of Colorado and was able to hear Eph Ehly, James and Gregory Gentry, Anna Wheeler-Gentry, Michael Gold, and so many others share their recollections of the Lynns. And I was so happy that the accomplished Lynn daughters, Lorna and Christina, were present to hear the tributes.

Contributors to This Issue

Larry Biser is a graduate of Westminster Choir College of Rider University in Princeton, New Jersey, where he sang in Symphonic and Westminster Choirs under Lynn. Biser holds a Master of Church Music degree from Concordia Chicago. Following church positions in Bristol, Pennsylvania, and Arlington and Norfolk, Virginia, for forty years he served East Congregational Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He directed the Chamber Choir of Grand Rapids for twenty-six years, touring Europe several times. He is retired from Aquinas College as adjunct professor of music. Biser is director of music/organist at Trinity Lutheran Church in Grand Rapids. He is a published author and composer.

Anna Wheeler Gentry made her New York Lincoln Center solo debut in 2003. In April 2011 she presented her concert performance and research “Vladimir Dukelsky: Russian Undertones with American Overtones” at Moscow’s Tchaikovsky Conservatory of Music. Gentry has studied voice with Michael Cousins of the Metropolitan Opera, performed operatic roles (Mozart, Britten, Persichetti, Ward), musical theater (Sondheim, Gershwin, Rodgers & Hammerstein), and concert works (Stravinsky, Saint-Saëns, Brahms, Haydn) in cities including Philadelphia, New York, Kansas City, Denver, and Phoenix. She presents concerts/lectures on her musical theater history research and continues as honors disciplinary faculty at Arizona State University (since 2005).

Christina Lynn-Craig (DMA, University of Colorado; MM Temple University; BA, Loretto Heights College) has performed her father’s piano and vocal music for most of her life, including recitals in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Princeton, New Jersey; Colorado; and Siena, Italy. She founded *ASTER* Women’s Chamber Choir in 1999. She is a former member of the music faculty at Metropolitan State University and Loretto Heights College in Denver, Colorado, and served on the voice faculty at the University of Colorado Boulder for three years. She received the Heart of Broomfield Award for the Arts in 2001. Christina is married to pianist Alex Craig and teaches singers of all ages.

Gregory Stapp was featured as Sarastro in *Great Performances: Live From Lincoln Center’s* telecast of NYC Opera’s *Die Zauberflöte*; Ashby in Spoleto’s telecast of *La fanciulla del West*; Bluebeard in UC Davis Symphony’s film of *Duke Bluebeard’s Castle*; Fasolt in Seattle’s and Arizona’s *Ring* festivals; Mr. Kofner in Edinburgh’s *The Consul*; and in NPR broadcasts of 15 of his 30

roles with San Francisco Opera. Stapp has performed with more than 100 American companies including the Philadelphia Orchestra and San Francisco Symphony; and in Europe, Canada, Mexico, Japan, and China. He is the 2nd vice president of the American Guild of Musical Artists (AGMA).

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