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### MENC: Remembrances and Perspectives

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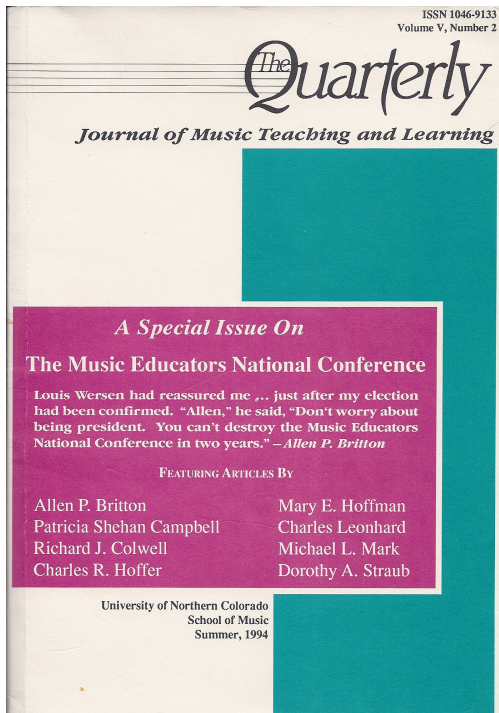
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*It is with pleasure that we inaugurate the reprint of the entire seven volumes of The Quarterly Journal of Music Teaching and Learning. The journal began in 1990 as The Quarterly. In 1992, with volume 3, the name changed to The Quarterly Journal of Music Teaching and Learning and continued until 1997. The journal contained articles on issues that were timely when they appeared and are now important for their historical relevance. For many authors, it was their first major publication. Visions of Research in Music Education will publish facsimiles of each issue as it originally appeared. Each article will be a separate pdf file. Jason D. Vodicka has accepted my invitation to serve as guest editor for the reprint project and will compose a new editorial to introduce each volume. Chad Keilman is the production manager. I express deepest thanks to Richard Colwell for granting VRME permission to re-publish The Quarterly in online format. He has graciously prepared an introduction to the reprint series.*

# MENC: Remembrances And Perspectives

**By Allen P. Britton**

*Dean Emeritus, School of Music  
University of Michigan*

I remember how pleasant and satisfying it was to be president of the Music Educators National Conference. Like all teachers of the subject, I believed that music was the greatest thing ever invented and that teaching music was the finest thing anyone could be doing. As president, I assumed that I was, so to speak, roaming in the Lord's very own vineyards, engaged in holy work for which I would go to heaven someday, unless I did something really awful. The late Louis Wersen had reassured me in this respect just after my election had been confirmed. "Allen," he said, "Don't worry about being president. You can't destroy the Music Educators National Conference in two years."

No one starts out with any intention of becoming president. It comes to every president, as it came to me, as a real surprise. Robert A. Choate simply called me at home one night in the fall of 1959. As the immediate past president, Bob was chairman of the nominating committee, and he wanted to know if I would be willing to accept the nomination for president. Earl Beach of the Southern Division was to be the other candidate. Good, I thought, Earl is much better qualified than I and is sure to be elected. If I accept, I'll have the honor of the nomination, but I won't win, and I'll be able to continue work on my bibliography of eighteenth century singing-school textbooks.<sup>1</sup>

It was only later that Clifford V. Buttelman, at that time the executive secretary of MENC, told me that, in his experience, re-

gardless of merit, the candidate from the largest division always wins. So, since Michigan is in the North Central Division, the largest, I got elected, as I learned from President Karl D. Ernst, who telephoned after the votes were counted.

At the national level, the MENC was, as it remains today, virtually free of politics in the partisan sense. There are never any rival factions supporting the nominees. Every president comes to office with ideas of his or her own, I suppose, but not with a burden of promised accomplishments. A candidate for the presidency of MENC has never felt forced to say, "Read my lips."

So I had no burden of promises, but I did bring a private agenda consisting of two special items. One was to emphasize to the extent possible the importance to music educators of music itself as distinguished from methodology; the other was to reconstitute the committee on accreditation and certification.

With regard to the first, which stemmed from a feeling that we teachers can easily come to think and talk too much about technical rather than artistic matters, the Ford Foundation unwittingly came to my aid when it approached MENC about taking over the management of the Young Composers Project, established several years previously under the artistic guidance of Norman Della Joio. It was the hope of the organizers that the exposure of young composers to student musicians in the public schools would provide immediate feedback regarding the playability and acceptability of their compositions. School musicians, it was hoped, and eventually the general public, might come to like modern music better. Modern music, of course, meant to Della Joio the kind of high

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*Allen P. Britton served as MENC President from 1960-1962. He is a founding editor of the Journal of Research in Music Education as well as American Music.*

art music being produced in collegiate composition departments.

Originally, the general management of this project had been entrusted to the National Music Council, which at that time maintained a small office in New York with a part-time executive secretary — not really enough staff for the task — so the Ford Foundation itself had been compelled to take over the practical management of the details, including selecting young composers, finding public schools to put them in, supervising the operation, and tending to all the other necessary work the project entailed.

Chester D'Arms, then Ford Foundation officer for the arts, had been looking for an organization with sufficient staff and professional know-how to do this job. The full story has been told elsewhere<sup>2</sup>, so it will be sufficient to mention here that the search finally came down to a competition between the MENC and the American Musicological Society (AMS), unlikely adversaries because one group hardly knew of the existence of the other. The MENC deservedly won out because the AMS leadership failed to evidence much interest in the fate of school music or American composers. With the chance of a Ford Foundation grant in the offing, we began immediately to conduct MENC operations in a manner best calculated to convince the people at the Ford Foundation that MENC not only possessed enough staff to manage the job but also the musical taste and knowledge to do so with appropriate elegance.

Thus, in planning the program for the Chicago conference of 1962, I personally reviewed every proposed concert program with a view to the quality of the selections. At Vanett Lawler's suggestion, so as to continue our promotion of American indigenous music, I approved a full schedule of sessions featuring what we then euphemistically

called stage-band music but what was, of course, jazz. To prove that we also possessed a more universal taste, we engaged the Budapest Quartet for the final concert. The Ford people were impressed, and shortly thereafter the MENC received a grant of \$1,380,000. The extra \$380,000 was for a project of our own, intended to benefit music education specifically. We had asked for this extra money to make sure that our special interests could also be furthered. We as-

sumed direction of the Young Composers Project and launched our own Comprehensive Musicianship Project. We were fortunate to secure the services of Bernard Fitzgerald and Grant Beglarian in the general direction and management of the projects. I believe, but do not know for sure, since the implementation of the project occurred under Gil Zimmerman's leadership, that Beglarian, himself a composer and theorist, was the one who came up with the idea of stressing comprehensive musicianship (i.e., an advanced version of what people usually call music theory).

I'll never forget the day that Vanett, Gil

Zimmerman, and I went from Washington to New York to talk to Chester D'Arms at the Ford Foundation. Two things stick in my mind: One is that, after asking us to take over the project, D'Arms turned about and asked, in effect, what made us think that MENC could handle something like this. The other is the vision of Vanett taking notes on the back of an envelope, putting down a hundred thousand dollars here and a hundred thousand there. I kept reminding myself that this would be the first time that the world of higher learning had come to believe that our profession might have something to offer American culture. I hoped that we were making a real breakthrough and that

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many similar projects might be undertaken in the future. In this I was mostly wrong, as things have turned out, for national inertia has made a mishmash of many rosy dreams. The MENC and the AMS still have nothing to do with one another. The Ford Foundation has not helped us in many years.

Coming to grips with the problems associated with accreditation and certification also involved our relationships, or the lack thereof, with other organizations. In the first place, I felt that the MENC should not take a one-sided position in the matter. But if I am to make a complicated story intelligible, I must begin with reference to the American Association of University Presidents (AAUP), a potent group whose dictates, then as now, largely control the American world of higher education. Unable to tolerate the accreditation process as then practiced, sometime during the 1950s the AAUP formed a subgroup that was designated as the American Commission on Accrediting (ACA), decreeing that no accrediting body not recognized by the new commission would be allowed on the campus of any AAUP institution.

The complexity of the situation can be inferred from the fact that at least five organizations claimed accrediting jurisdiction in the field of chemistry alone. Comparable situations existed in other fields — there seemed to be more accreditors than there were fields of study. After the creation of the ACA, all the accrediting bodies had to face the unpleasant task of getting accredited themselves, and there ensued some really hot times down at the old academic corral.

The ACA, however, had no hesitation in recognizing the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) as the proper body to accredit music instruction, and neither did it have any hesitation in recognizing the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) as the accrediting authority for courses in professional education. But which of these two bodies should accredit programs for preparing music teachers? Both NASM and the AACTE claimed jurisdiction. In my opinion, the two organizations, if left to themselves, eventually could have worked out satisfactory arrangements, but still another organization, the influential National

Education Association (NEA) (this was in the days before it became a trade union), argued that elementary and secondary teachers and school administrators, as well as local school boards, should also have voices in the matter. The NEA accordingly organized its own subgroup called the National Committee on the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). The group included representatives of the larger world of education, including the AACTE (which surrendered its accrediting power) and various factions of the NEA such as superintendents, teachers, and school boards.

NCATE seemed to provide a plausible solution to the problem of representing education in the business of accreditation, so it was approved by the newly formed and still naive ACA while the rest of the educational world was looking the other way. The problem with NCATE was that it was the only accrediting body that did not consist entirely of the institutions being accredited. The NASM, for example, was made up of the heads of the music departments comprising its membership. The AACTE similarly was comprised of the heads of teachers colleges. Thus, accreditation was carried on by responsible and knowledgeable people who knew what was possible and what was good and what was bad. The NCATE, on the other hand, consisted at first of 17 individuals appointed from the ranks of the general constituencies to be represented. Thus, these persons were, almost by definition, responsible only to their own consciences, and, in my opinion, helpless in the hands of the professional representatives of the NEA, which provided most of the funds for maintaining the NCATE itself.

As director of NCATE, the NEA appointed and paid the salary of W. Earl Armstrong, who quickly asserted himself and his organization in the accreditation scene as well as in the state certification of elementary and secondary school teachers. Armstrong's principal career had been made as an NEA employee. He led a movement aimed at putting the NEA in authority not only over elementary and secondary education, but over higher education also. As president of MENC, I was invited to attend several confer-

ences in Washington at the NEA national headquarters on 16th Street, just north of the White House. There I was instructed in the NEA plan to "professionalize" all of education, to use the NEA term for it. Even professors in medical schools, I was solemnly assured, would need to get teaching certificates that would require them to take several hours of academic credit in professional education.

I asked how such control could be obtained, not only in medicine but in liberal arts, engineering, and other subjects, in the face of the comparative strength of medical and other lobbies. The task was to be accomplished, I learned, through state boards of education, which were staffed entirely by NEA people. Certification laws could be changed so that all teachers, including those in colleges and professional schools, would be required to obtain teaching certificates; and the certificate, in turn, would require a total of 60 hours of credit in departments of education in such areas as administration, history, psychology, and practice teaching. These were certainly the days in which the NEA and its supporters basked in the heady glory of their own imagining.

I remember spending a whole morning in a Washington hotel room discussing the matter with Armstrong, and I engaged in many hours of conversation with other members of the NEA staff. I was unsuccessful, not only with them, but also with members of the MENC staff. Everyone around me was convinced that the NEA was invincible and that NCATE should and would take control of the preparation and certification of all teachers in American education, including those in colleges and universities. The NASM would soon be out of the business of accrediting, I was told.

I came to feel that the NEA staff and many professional educators all over the country believed in the NEA and its doctrines much in the way that the faithful of any church believe in the true religion. I pointed out that medical schools never paid any attention to anyone but themselves. I pointed out that engineers would insist on managing their own affairs. I pointed out that faculties in the liberal arts tended to view the world of professional education with a lofty disdain. In short, I told them that the NEA had zero

chance of getting the world of higher education to submit to the certification of college and university professors by state boards of education.

Nobody believed me. In 1960, Earl Armstrong came to Michigan to speak to the presidents of Michigan liberal arts colleges and defend proposed new state certification requirements for public school teachers. The Michigan State Board of Education had published the proposed new requirements, which were designed to establish a basis for the reform of teacher training according to NEA doctrine. The proposal raised from 30 to 60 the number of semester hours credit that would be required in professional education, and limited the hours in the major subject-matter field to 30. In a mimeographed document distributed statewide, the Michigan board claimed that "no person who has demonstrated a primary interest in a given subject matter can at the same time have a primary interest in the welfare of children."<sup>3</sup>

Needless to say, Armstrong was not well received in Michigan by the assembled college presidents and deans. When he got back to Washington, he told Vanett that he had been assured by the Lansing staff of the state board of education, previous to the meeting, that the people in Michigan were solidly in favor of the proposed new certification requirement. He was shocked at the vehemence of the opposition and felt himself somehow betrayed.

This incident illustrates how far out of touch the NEA was with American education as a whole. And so, it seemed to me, was the rest of the world of professional education. For reasons that are not entirely obscure, the world of education with a capital-E had partitioned itself intellectually from the rest of the educational world. At the time that there was a considerable amount of disdain for capital-E education on the part of "mere subject-matter specialists" (as the NEA called college professors), and the capital-E types felt similar disdain for lower-case educators. There was a lot of misunderstanding and distrust on both sides.

Within the MENC family itself, the problem was complicated by a certain rivalry between two of our greatest leaders. Marguerite V.

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Hood and Vanett Lawler are both members of the MENC Hall of Fame, and rightly so. And if we had a hagiology, they would be listed there too, for if any two people ever deserved MENC sainthood, their names are Marguerite and Vanett. Yet these dynamic women came to view one another with considerable suspicion. They both, for example, were devoted to the International Society for Music Education (ISME), and each contributed generously of her time, talent, and funds to its welfare. In its early years, Vanett took care of ISME business through the MENC office facilities. Marguerite was also a founding member of ISME and attended every meeting until shortly before her death. Their rivalry in ISME matched that in MENC.

When the *Journal of Research in Music Education* (JRME) was founded, I first came to know Vanett, who then held the title of assistant executive secretary. We got along very well, but when I came to Washington in 1960 as the new president, I could sense a little wariness in Vanett's manner. It stemmed, I soon came to believe, from Vanett's problematical relationship with both Marguerite and with the dean of the University of Michigan School of Music, Earl V. Moore. Moore was the long-time chairman of the NASM Commission on Accrediting. He actively opposed the entrance of NCATE into the accrediting of music programs. Marguerite, a professor of music education at Michigan and chairman of music in the Ann Arbor public schools, sided with Moore in trying to keep musicality as the basis for certification in music. After her term as president, Marguerite became chairman of the MENC Committee on Certification and Accrediting. Her problem with the NASM was in defending the importance of teaching methodology. Her problem with NCATE was in defending the importance of teaching music itself. Vanett sided with NCATE, not from any doubts as to the value of music itself, I

believe, but because NCATE was a creature of the NEA. Our rent-free quarters in Washington were at the NEA headquarters itself.

During Karl Ernst's presidency, he became convinced that the MENC should not concern itself with accreditation and certification and abolished Marguerite's committee. I re-established it, convinced that we should take a positive but neutral stand in the matter. As a result, I like to believe, some important battles were won for music education. One of the objectives of NCATE was to denigrate the importance of proficiency in subject matter by limiting the number of credit hours one could take in it. The NCATE position, as stated by Armstrong, was that interest and ability in subject matter (i.e., music) was comparatively unimportant. In the public discussion at East Lansing, in response to an objection I had made in this regard, Armstrong asked me whether or not I agreed that music should form a part of every child's education. When I indicated that I did agree, he smiled and said that I had just proved that every teacher could teach music, because everyone would have received musical instruction as a part of general education. Hoping to keep the MENC on some middle ground, I argued that no winner could ever emerge from the campaigns being waged. Departments of education were not likely to be abolished, and neither were departments of music and other subjects. All these people somehow would have to learn to get along together.

This all happened a fairly long time ago, and other problems have risen to the forefront of attention. Nevertheless, although the NEA itself is certainly out of business as a force in accrediting, NCATE and the NASM are still functioning, and the academic wars of the 1960s are still being waged with scarcely diminished vigor in the 1990s. A recent issue of *National Forum*, the *Phi Kappa Phi Journal* (Fall, 1993) contains detailed articles by many of the principal pro-

ponents of views on various sides of the issue. Discouragingly, at least from my point of view, W. Earl Armstrong's successor as president of NCATE, Arthur E. Wise, recommends that NCATE be empowered to "make education a profession" by having the authority to accredit all college curricula for preparing teachers.<sup>4</sup> He has the full support of Dale G. Andersen, president of the Association of Land Grant Deans of Education.<sup>5</sup> Frankly I am amazed to find that 30 years of failure to gain support for the NCATE viewpoint has stimulated no change in thinking.

I note that the Goals 2000 Educate America Act makes no mention at all of the means by which the goals might be achieved. The passage of this bill indicates that no one in Congress is aware that accrediting bodies already exist; the world of higher education and its system of accreditation seem to have escaped all notice. The business of reaching national goals for education apparently will be left entirely to congressional committees. This is probably just as well, I suppose, given the proven ineptitudes of NCATE and the capital-E educational establishment.

One of the most valuable aspects of the presidency of MENC is getting to know the people who carry out its business. I was fortunate enough to work directly with Clifford Buttelman, Vanett Lawler, and Charles Gary, each of whom served the MENC enormously and unselfishly with intelligence, energy, and love for the profession. The MENC has also benefited from the marvelously dedicated services of many others, among whom I cannot fail to mention Gene Morlan, who managed all of our national meetings for many years; Jerry Ivie, the quiet and indefatigable lady who seemed to have responsibility for keeping the ship as a whole in the right channel; Dorothy Regardie, who was Vanett's devoted secretary; and other devoted employees such as Harriet Mogge, Birgitte Parrow, and Marlynn Likens. Each expressed dedication to the proposition that the elected leadership should be treated with great forbearance, kindness, and promptitude, and that each regular member deserves nomination as teacher of the year.

It also has been my pleasant good fortune to know almost every president since Joseph

E. Maddy served in 1936-38. Of course, I didn't know Joe while he was president, but I got to know him very well later when serving at Interlochen as director of the University of Michigan Division of the National Music Camp (now the Interlochen Arts Camp of the Interlochen Center for the Arts). In those days, nominations for the presidency were made from the floor during the official business meeting, and Joe thought he had won election mainly because his name was better known than that of the other nominees. Joe was one of our genuine geniuses of music education, a sprightly spirit who enlivened any gathering. Wherever Joe could be tied down for a week or two, there you would find a 200-piece high school symphony orchestra.

I met but never got to know Louis Woodson Curtis (1938-40). I met Fowler Smith (1940-42) as a student, when he visited the campus of the University of Illinois in the spring of 1937 in order to interview Graham Overgard for a position at Wayne University in Detroit. Years later, Smith told me that Overgard had impressed him because when Smith missed the train at the station in Champaign, Overgard took him on to Rantoul, speeding through heavy rain in a car with faulty windshield wipers along the highway that follows the railroad tracks. Reaching out to move the windshield wipers with his hand, Overgard successfully overtook the speeding Illinois Central Express. This is how you get really good jobs.

I came to know the next four presidents only after their terms were completed, and then only slightly, but they indeed were persons of real stature, genuine leaders in the field, and possessing personalities varying in nature but of dominating influence: Lilla Belle Pitts (1942-44), John C. Kendal (1944-46), Luther A. Richmond (1948-50), and Charles L. Dennis (1950-52). Then came Marguerite V. Hood, who, as described above, did not hesitate to involve MENC in the developing struggle over the education and certification of teachers but who also insisted upon the establishment of the *Journal of Research in Music Education*. In both of these endeavors she had to overcome the resistance of the national office. Both Vanett Lawler and Cliff Buttelman thought they al-

ready had enough to do in running the *Music Educators Journal*. Once the national board had established the new journal, however, both gave it every possible support. I have always felt grateful to Cliff for teaching me how to read hot-lead type upside down and backwards, right out of the Linotype machine.

Marguerite's successor, Ralph E. Rush (1952-54), was also crucial to the establishment of JRME. Having made his early reputation as the conductor of a famous high school orchestra in Ohio, he went on to serve for many years as chairman of music education at the University of Southern California. Robert A. Choate (1954-56) presided over the transfer of our national office from Chicago to Washington and the appointment of Vanett Lawler as executive secretary to succeed Clifford Buttelman. There was some opposition to Vanett's appointment. A management firm that Robert Choate consulted, however, pegged the salary for such a position at \$25,000, a figure that exceeded the total budget of the MENC at the time. So the best-qualified person, Vanett, got the job only because she could be hired for only a slight increase in salary.

William C. McBride (1956-58) was elected at the St. Louis meeting, and quite by chance I was pulled out of the hallways to serve as chairman of the vote counting and so had the pleasure of notifying Bill of his victory. Bill proved to be a careful monitor of the business activities of the national office. Karl D. Ernst (1958-60) succeeded in setting up a pension plan for Vanett, the first MENC had ever established. Since Cliff Buttelman had no pension, Karl saw to it that both Cliff and eventually his widow were continued on salary for the rest of their lives. Karl subsequently became the first American president of the International Society for Music Education.

I succeeded Karl, and so had the honor of presiding at the Chicago conference of 1962. My wife Veronica and I stayed in the huge Marshall Field suite on the top floor of the Hilton Hotel. (We had spent our honeymoon in the same hotel, but not in that suite.) I remember that at the reception right after the final concert, Joe Maddy took me aside to tell me that he was "going up to Evanston tomorrow to get a million dollars"

for his proposed winter school. And he did so, somewhat to my surprise. I had always known that Joe would get the money someday, for he never stopped trying, but I didn't know when. Joe acquired the funding from W. Clement Stone, the wealthy insurance magnate from Evanston who continues his generosity to Interlochen to this day. Stone's pet principle was, and remains, to acquire and keep a positive mental attitude in all of life's endeavors. In Joe, Stone was quick to recognize a true believer.

Alex H. Zimmerman (1962-64), a veritable prince of a man, became president at a particularly difficult time in his career (the school board in San Diego was in political turmoil, and during his presidency Alex lost his job as chairman of music), but he succeeded in getting the Ford Foundation projects off the ground and continued to achieve success in other venues of music education. We remained close friends throughout the remainder of his life.

His immediate successors, Paul Van Bodegraven (1964-66), Louis G. Wersen (1966-68), and Wiley L. Housewright (1968-70) similarly became good and close friends as we worked together on a variety of MENC committees, task forces, commissions, and the like. I had gotten to know Paul first in 1952 as a member of the national executive board at the time JRME was authorized. Paul is skilled in matters of finance and for many years acted as the chief financial advisor for MENC, serving without salary, of course. Under his guidance, our organization moved from chronic financial precariousness to genuine stability. Louis Wersen served with Paul and me on the finance committee. I remember when we decided to relieve Vanett of the responsibility of handling our investments — not that she hadn't done well with them. As a matter of fact, she had done much better than the big New York bank to which we consigned our funds for a few years. We felt that she should not be burdened with such responsibilities.

Wersen was also very competent when it came to finances and served as a restraining influence in such matters until he became president himself. He then decided that it was time for MENC to exert itself more in the



musical and educational worlds. Since the published final report of the Yale Seminar of 1963 had been maliciously edited so as to put music education in the worst light possible, Louis decided to stage a conference that would highlight the successes and benefits of school music rather than its shortcomings. The result was the Tanglewood Symposium on Music Education of 1967. Bob Choate served as managing chairman, and he employed professional conference managers and editors to provide practical know-how and to edit the papers and prepare the news releases. The symposium as a whole was carried out in a distinguished and strictly professional manner. The dismal effect of the Yale Seminar was put behind us, and the profession was able to unite behind the principles expressed in the Tanglewood Declaration, composed by Charles Gary along with Arnold Broido and me as a summary of the sense of the meetings. Louis Wersen had contributed immeasurably to the cause of music education for all of his long career, but perhaps his greatest single achievement is the Tanglewood Symposium, which came into being solely as a result of his courage and creativity.

As president, Wiley Housewright negotiated an extension of the Ford Foundation project, securing an additional grant of \$1,380,000, among other things. His contributions to music education over his extended career are truly extraordinary. I first came to know him in 1953 when he was appointed as an associate editor of *JRME*. He was already well known as a choral conductor and as president of the Southern Division. Wiley has attracted many more honors than most of us, including that of having the magnificent music building at Florida State University named after him by the state legislature. A southern gentlemen in the best sense of the term, Wiley remains the very embodiment of the true scholar and impeccable musician.

With the end of Wiley's term of office in 1970, my own work with MENC tapered off quickly. I resigned as editor of *JRME* in 1972, after having been appointed dean of the School of Music at Michigan. Although I made the acquaintance of all the fine men and women who succeeded Wiley in the presi-

dency, my knowledge of their contributions came only as a distant observer, except, of course, in the cases of Paul R. Lehman (1984-86) and Karl J. Glenn (1990-92), both former students and graduates of the University of Michigan; forgive me for mentioning with great pride their outstanding accomplishments.

I remain in touch with MENC largely through membership on the Council of Past Presidents. The latter group meets for dinner every biennium, and a happier group than this is rarely convened. For the most part, we are content to reminisce a little and criticize a little less. Of recent years, we have been entrusted with the administration of the selection process for the MENC Hall of Fame, which is generally a happy business except for an occasion or two when the relative importance of various components of our complicated profession comes into question. According to regulations adopted by the national board, only three names can be added to the Hall of Fame each biennium. Is a famous specialist in general music of greater worth than a famous conductor, administrator, composer, or textbook author? No one knows, of course. In the end, the selection committee can only act on a consensus of individual opinions about individual music educators.

I began with mention of how pleasant and satisfying it was to be president of MENC. There were special highlights, of course, such as our interim meeting of August, 1961. It took place in Washington at our national headquarters in the NEA building. Quite by serendipitous coincidence, Jacqueline Kennedy was putting on one of her concerts on the lawn at the White House, a concert to which all of the institutionalized children of the area were invited and which was to be performed by the high school orchestra and ballet troop from Interlochen, with Joe Maddy conducting. Vanett was a friend of Letitia Baldridge, Mrs. Kennedy's social secretary, and managed to get the whole board invited. There were no more than 200 in the audience, children and adults combined. We were seated on the south lawn on ordinary collapsible chairs in front of a temporary wooden stage and a portable shell. When the concert was about to begin, who should come out of the White House to greet us but



the President himself. I happened to have an aisle seat, and he walked right by me, close enough to touch. He apologized for his wife, who was in Hyannisport, and hoped we would accept him as a substitute. Kennedy was at his best on this sort of occasion, and in this particular instance he was superb. I can never forget his grace of manner and speech. He closed by saying he had so much work on his desk he could not stay for the concert, but that he would leave his office window open so as to hear everything. No other meeting of the national board compared with this one.

Two or three days later, when Joe and the students were back at Interlochen, Joe suddenly remembered something he had forgotten to tell the president, so he dialed the White House number and asked to speak to him. Kennedy came right on the line and asked, "What can I do for you, Dr. Maddy?" That was a particularly happy day at camp.

Still other memorable events occurred two years later, after Alex Zimmerman, bless his heart, called to ask if I would be willing to represent him at a conference of music educators in Santiago, Chile. By that time, I held the MENC office of first vice-president. Alex thought I deserved a foreign trip, he said, since I had not managed to get one during my term as president. Never having been in South America but possessing a long-standing love for anything Hispanic, I agreed to go, even though it involved reading a paper.

The jet planes were new then, and fast, but the trip from New York to Rio still took eight hours. I was surprised to learn that Rio is halfway across the Atlantic Ocean. I was also surprised to learn that hotels in Rio do not serve dinner until 11:00 p.m., and that food can not be obtained any earlier elsewhere. So Veronica and I both had good appetites by the time we were served.

I remember that the dining room was walled with windows which, at that hour, looked out on the expressway carrying homeward-bound traffic, six lanes headed south. Anyone who wanted to go north, however, simply got in a lane and did so. The sight was horrifying, but it prepared us for better understanding the vibrant people of South America.

After spending a day or two exploring beautiful Rio; enjoying its mountains, mosaic walkways, and beaches; and riding its cable cars, we flew to Santiago, which involved changing planes in Buenos Aires. Thus, we happened to be in an aircraft flying high over the Andes at the moment that President John F. Kennedy was shot on November 23, 1963. We knew nothing of it until going through customs in Santiago. Instead of opening our suitcases and pawing through our belongings — as was normally done at that time — the uniformed customs agent fixed me with his eye and pronounced what I finally understood to be the name Kennedy with a question mark behind it. I gave some kind of affirmative indication as to my knowledge of the name. He then struck his chest and said, "*Muerto*." I didn't understand Spanish but nonetheless understood that something was gravely amiss.

Arriving downtown, we saw the newspaper headlines with words such as *asesino*. During the next few days, we were treated with the respectful concern that is accorded those who have just suffered a death in the family. Within a day or two, many shop windows in Santiago were displaying replicas of the White House. The Chilean flag hung at half-mast in the park off the Avenida O'Higgins. A funeral mass was sung at the cathedral, attended by the president of Chile. A week or so later, while taking a side trip to Cuzco in Peru, we strolled into the cathedral on the square and found it filled with school children attending another mass in honor of Kennedy. Recognized as Americans, we were ushered to aisle seats in the front row.

It was in Santiago that I first came to know some of the beautiful Chilean songs that haunt me to this day. In my mind's eye, I can still see and hear the lovely and distinguished Chilean music educator Brunilda Cartes singing "Rio, Rio" along with the others present at a dinner given us at the Club Union:

How grandly flows the river, how grandly to the sea.

And when my tears augment it, how much grander it will be

River, river, bring me back my love — bring me back my love because I am tired of weeping.

This lovely song often is sung in Chile at the end of any gathering, and this particular MENC president, ever after, remembering it, longs to return to the mountains and valleys of Chile.

It was there I first met Eric Simon, who became a life-long friend. He was attending as the delegate from Uruguay, where he was at that time conductor of the Montevideo Symphony Orchestra. The occasion was the second annual meeting of the Inter-American Society for Music Education, the Latin American version of the MENC, organized by the redoubtable leader of Chilean music education, Cora Bindhof de Segrin. I was gratified to learn how highly respected Vanett was in Chile and indeed throughout Latin America. The University of Chile honored her in a special ceremony while we were there. Vanett had worked in South America for many years as a representative of the Pan American Union and was particularly beloved because she had taken the trouble of learning the Castilian tongue.


You may have noticed that so far I have avoided attempts at profundities, and I hope that you will not be too disappointed if I don't attempt many now. In fact, no one has a very clear idea of just what MENC should really be about, other than to publish journals and to stage meetings where music educators can come talk to one another and listen to students perform. I have gradually come to the conclusion that our basic aims should be defined only after the fact, as we analyze what the profession has already actually accomplished. It seems to me that MENC as an organization should be considered a vehicle for the exchange rather than the promotion of ideas. Those who at any given time are charged with MENC affairs should seek, I believe, only to provide for the widest possible spectrum of ideas and activities, maintaining a willingness to schedule any activity that members wish to engage in. That, I think, is what we have mostly done over the years. MENC has programmed all shades of opinion and all types of music. It has never sought to maintain one opinion over another.

We as an organization have often been subjected to criticism on this account. Occa-

sionally, people have urged us to fight for special causes. But today's wisdom may well be outmoded tomorrow. Music and teaching both are arts, not sciences, and their very natures are conditioned by change. We must, of course, always be willing to listen to the newest ideas, but whenever one of them is so striking that we come to think that the end of change has arrived at last, we are probably wrong. We can be confident only that music itself is good, that teaching music is a worthy endeavor, and that we can justifiably trust in the collective wisdom of the profession to find how best to carry out its mission.

Let me add a word in praise of music teachers, my companions in the journey of life. If there are people anywhere in the world who surely go right to heaven in special baskets when they die, their names are to be found on the membership rolls of the Music Educators National Conference. Vigorous in everything they do, they gladly and unselfishly spend their time on earth instructing humanity, young and old, in the art of music. I am sure God loves them each and every one. I trust that includes me.

### Notes

1. The bibliography of tunebooks took 30 more years to finish. It has recently been published as Allen P. Britton, Irving Lowens, and Richard Crawford, *American Sacred Music Imprints, 1698-1810 — A Bibliography* (Worcester, MA: American Antiquarian Society, 1990).
2. See "The Tanglewood Symposium," pp. 77-78, in Allen P. Britton, "Music: A New Start," *Brittanica Review of American Education* (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., 1969), vol. 1, pp. 73-91.
3. Ephemera of this sort are difficult to document in an orthodox way. You can find the material mentioned here among my personal papers, located in the MENC Historical Center at the music library of the University of Maryland. See Box 12, "Accreditation and Certification," Michigan, file folders 25-39.
4. Arthur E. Wise, "A Vision of the Future," *National Forum, The Phi Kappa Phi Journal*, 73 (Fall, 1993), pp. 8-10.
5. Dale G. Andersen, "The Journey Toward Professionalism: Accreditation, Licensure, and Certification," *National Forum, The Phi Kappa Phi Journal*, 73 (Fall, 1993), pp. 11-13. 

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