

MARY ANN HART

My goal with this brief biography will be to bring a sense of the breadth and humanity of Mary Ann Hart to a larger group of individuals than simply her home department.

Mary Ann was born in Warrensburg, Missouri. Her father was chair of the music department at the University of Central Missouri, and the recital hall there is named the Hart Recital Hall in his honor. She completed her bachelor's degree there, her master's in voice at the University of Illinois, and a diploma in voice from the Hochschule für Musik in Vienna two years later.

She won numerous song competitions including the Concert Artists Guild International Competition, NATS Artist Awards, and second prize at the Carnegie Hall International American Music Competition. She was also awarded a Solo Recitalist Grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Mary Ann Hart made her New York Philharmonic Orchestra debut under the baton of Kurt Masur, and appeared with the New York Chamber Symphony, Minnesota Orchestra, Seattle Symphony Orchestra, San Antonio Symphony, American Composers Orchestra, Santa Fe Symphony, and Boston Baroque. She has been a guest artist with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. Recital appearances have taken her to 26 American states, Austria, Germany, Romania, Canada, and the Virgin Islands.

Mary Ann Hart has recorded for Chandos, Albany, Eterna, Arabesque, Telefunken-Decca, and the Musical Heritage Society. She has a solo CD of American songs, *Permit Me Voyage*; was one of four singers chosen to record the complete songs of Charles Ives; and appeared in the tour of the Philip Glass opera *Hydrogen Jukebox*, subsequently recording that work for Nonesuch. She was featured as a voice actor in the Disney film *Beauty and the Beast*.

She served on the faculties of Vassar College and the Mannes School of Music before joining the Voice Department at the Jacobs School of Music in 1999. She has taught voice and song literature during her entire tenure here, and served as chair from 2004 through 2019.

I asked my colleagues for some help with this tribute, and three themes



emerged. The first is her literacy. The following quote is from one of our colleagues on the voice faculty: "When I first visited her home, I was absolutely moved by her collection of books on our repertoire, our composers, our poets, our craft—shelf after shelf. I consider myself a reader, with much reverence for those who write—but the surpassing dedication of the person who had assembled and studied all these sources was something that literally brought tears to my eyes."

The same colleague shared the following pithy quote from Mary Ann herself: "No pencil, no career."

Another colleague wrote: "Many times I would go to Mary Ann and say 'I need a French set, written in the 1900s for a high coloratura soprano,' or 'a German set, Romantic period, for a big-voiced baritone with a great range.' She would, on the spot, tell me three or four ideas off the top of her head. All would be perfect for the very specific situations that I had presented to her. Her encyclopedic knowledge of song literature is awe-inspiring to me!"

The second theme is her mentorship. One of our colleagues wrote: "I always felt her support," and "I often spoke with her about situations in which I was not sure how to respond and she always gave me good advice."

Rudy Professor of Music and Fellow of the American Academy of Arts Sciences Marietta Simpson wrote:

"I will always think of her as my sister from another mother. She embraced me as

a friend from my first day on the IU Bloomington campus. Her wisdom, humor, and worldview have made her an indispensable and cherished member of my JSoM family. Mary Ann has taken the role of mentor and friend seriously. If I have needed an editor, song recommendation, or shoulder to cry on, she has been there before I could ask, sometimes before I even expressed the need. That's what I love about her. She is a sensitive, creative, and innovative thinker whose positive energy is contagious. She will leave behind a legacy of the love and joy of singing song literature, respect for one's peers, and sharing one's gifts with others."

I myself echo this sentiment. I had been tenured at a previous institution before coming to IU. I had to give up tenure and earn it all over here. I never doubted for one moment that Mary Ann would treat me fairly, advise me well, and do what she could to guide me. When she sees you walking down the hallway, she sees your strengths and not your weaknesses and she helps others see them as well.

Her legacy will be her extraordinary recordings, but it will also be hundreds of students who achieved their dreams during her time as chair, more than two dozen individuals who served on the voice faculty under her leadership, and the internationally renowned Jacobs School of Music, which benefitted from her wisdom in countless ways.

I have only cited two themes: literacy and mentoring. The third was raised just as often: *pie*. Distinguished Professor Timothy Noble simply wrote: "She makes the best apple pie in the world!" She seems to use baking as therapy for herself and as bonding and sympathy for others. As much as I will miss her mentoring and her literacy, I would be disingenuous not to write that I will miss her pie most of all.

Godspeed, Mary Ann Hart. You made a difference here.

Brian Horne