

EUGENE O'BRIEN

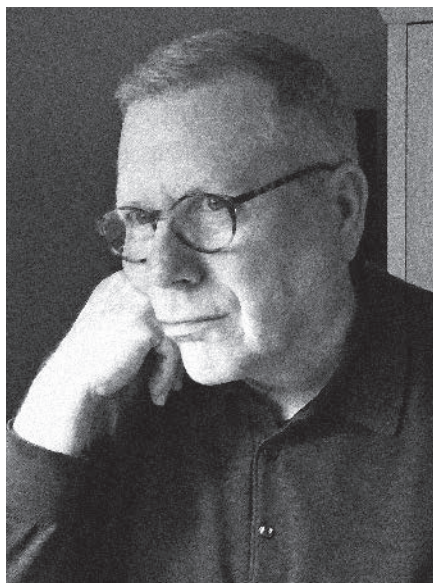
A gifted composer, dedicated colleague, and wise administrator, Eugene O'Brien retires from the faculty leaving a legacy of refined music and utmost commitment to the Jacobs School of Music, including guidance through challenging times and major construction projects. His significant influence on the department, school, and university will be felt for years to come.

Born in Paterson, New Jersey, on April 24, 1945, Gene was given an influential glimpse into the music of Stravinsky, Ives, and Varèse at an early age by his aunt, Margaret Stanley Hall. He first studied composition with Robert Beadell at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, where he completed undergraduate and graduate degrees in music in 1967 and 1969. A Fulbright scholarship then enabled him to study with Bernd Alois Zimmermann at the Staatliche Hochschule für Musik in Köln, Germany.

Gene next studied briefly with Iannis Xenakis and John Eaton at IU, but left to accept the Rome Prize and a two-year fellowship at the American Academy in Rome from 1971 to 1973.

Appointed to the faculty of the Cleveland Institute of Music in 1973, Gene studied with and then succeeded Donald Erb as chair of the CIM composition and theory department in 1981. Two years later, he completed his Doctor of Musical Arts degree at CIM and Case Western Reserve University. In 1985, he joined the music faculty at Catholic University in Washington, D.C., where he taught for two years. Gene joined the faculty of the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music in 1987, directed the New Music Ensemble from 1990 to 1992, chaired the Composition Department from 1994 to 1999, served as associate dean for instruction from 1998 to 2002, and was the school's executive associate dean from 2002 through 2016. In the latter capacity, Gene served as steadfast advisor to Dean Gwyn Richards and offered valuable insight and fair-minded perspective to many a committee.

As executive associate dean, bringing to bear his early study of and interest in architecture, Gene was integral to the development and realization of plans for the newly constructed East Studio Building and the addition to the west of the Musical Arts Center. Indeed, these widely praised major improvements to the facilities of the Jacobs School bear his influence and are



testament to his love of and sage advice to the school.

In addition to the prestigious Rome Prize, Gene received an Academy Award in Music from the American Academy of Arts and Letters as well as awards from BMI; The American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers; and the League of Composers/International Society for Contemporary Music. He has received Guggenheim, Rockefeller, Fulbright, National Endowment for the Arts, and other fellowships, and has been commissioned by the Fromm Foundation at Harvard University, the Serge Koussevitzky Foundation in the Library of Congress, the Meet-the-Composer/Lila Wallace Reader's Digest Fund, and many American and European performers and ensembles.

His music has been heard in concerts by the Cleveland Orchestra, the Italian Radio (RAI) Orchestras of Rome and Turin, and the Omaha Symphony; as part of the Saint Louis Symphony *Discovery* series and the Louisville Orchestra *New Dimensions* series; and in numerous other concerts and festivals throughout this country and abroad. Recorded on the CRI, Golden Crest, Crystal, Fontec, Capstone, and Indiana University labels, his works have been published by Codex Nuovo, G. Schirmer, and Boosey & Hawkes. Biographies and descriptions of his work are included in *The New Groves Dictionary of American Music*, *Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Musicians*, and *The Harvard Biographical Dictionary of Music*.

Prior to his stint directing the IU New Music Ensemble, Gene was active elsewhere in the performance of new music, co-founding the Cleveland new music ensemble, *Reconnaissance*, with Donald Erb in 1978 and serving as its director until 1984. He also served on the production board of the Contemporary Music Forum in Washington, D.C., from 1985 to 1987.

Bloomington and the IU community have been fortunate to hear performances of Gene's wonderfully crafted compositions in faculty and student chamber, ensemble, and orchestral programs. The New Music Ensemble in particular has relished opportunities to perform works such as *Mysteries of the Horizon*, *Embarking for Cythera*, *Taking Measures*, and *In The Country of Last Things*, which was featured on the NME's west coast tour in 2003. Chamber works such as *Close Harmony*, *Fancies and Goodnights*, and *Black Fugatos* are always a treat to hear, as is his latest composition, the monumental *Algebra of Night* for voice and piano quartet. His music never fails to exhibit superb contrapuntal technique, vivid imagination and orchestration, elegant architecture, and always fantastic invention. It draws a listener in with the clarity of line and intent, expressive quality, and adventurousness—not to mention the evocative titles! We in the Composition Department are looking forward to bearing witness to the next stage of Gene's creative life with its renewed focus on music composition.

We wholeheartedly congratulate Gene on his retirement and thank him for his years of service to the school.

David Dzubay