

RAY WRIGHT REMINISCENCES SURVEY QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Eastman alumni who studied with Ray Wright were encouraged to share their reminiscences of the time they spent with Ray and the impact he had on their lives and careers. Don Hunsberger, with assistance from alumni Ellen Rowe, Tony Garcia, Mike Titlebaum, Mike Patterson, and Scott Healy, prepared a survey that was distributed in advance to alumni who participated in the jazz program during the Ray Wright era. Their responses were used to help Don and his team shape the focus and content of the "Reminiscing on Ray" panel presentation that was held on Saturday, October 13. Bruce Diehl compiled the responses, and an abbreviated compendium of selected reminiscences was distributed as a handout at the session. Here are the complete responses:

1. What are your most treasured memories of working with Ray?

He was quiet, courteous, humble, methodic, and mostly communicated his confident mastery of his subject. No ego or histrionics in Ray's way. (Michael Isaacson-1979)

One-on-one arranging lessons and going on the Montreux trip with the jazz ensemble. His critique of one of my arrangements on first listening and when we sightread his "Sackbut City" in auditions. (Kim Scharnberg-1982)

I have so many great memories. Our private lessons were so wonderful. He so quickly could assess what needed help in a score. I'd love the eye-opening help, but also found myself completely in awe of his ability to break apart a score so quickly. I loved that he valued if I broke certain 'rules' in a way he found acceptable or even good--he encouraged that. He encouraged individuality and would suggest things to listen to that he felt would resonate with my aesthetic. I loved that he was so clear in his opinions, but also, so kind. What stands out most, is how simply incredible it was to be around that level of excellence. I worked so hard every single day to feel somehow worthy of being there and studying with him. (Maria Schneider-1985)

Although I only had the opportunity to be in contact with Ray relatively briefly (I was more focused on my classical playing while at Eastman,) I fondly remember a brief bus tour with the EJE which stopped in NYC at Barry Harris' Jazz Cultural Theater. I remember watching and listening with awe as he would work through music during EJE rehearsals. (Bill Williams-1987)

Ray was always so laid back--never loud or boastful--a real "quiet genius" surrounded Ray. If he stopped in rehearsals, you could see his brain working before he spoke. I also think he knew he

had very talented students under his baton, so he was quite smart in just letting them do what they did best. He certainly guided and offered insight in rehearsals, but a lot of what he did was just talk about nuts and bolts: "let's repeat this section 4 times, and let's have the following soloists..."

(Bob Feller-1986)

Arranger's Holidays, Jazz Ensemble Concerts, Arranging lessons.

(Dave Ratajczak-1980)

I loved EJE rehearsals. That 1983-84 band was terrific — Mark Kellogg (a freshman!), Charles Pillow, Joel McNeely, Jim Doser, Tom Christiansen, Jonathan Krueger, Jeff Beal, Lenny Foy, Bill Grimes, Rich Thompson, and on and on — so many great players. Ray gave us a wonderful array of repertoire, balancing classic big band repertoire with cutting edge new works, all the while fostering an "incubator" for all of the superb student charts generated specifically for that ensemble. There was new, fresh music at every rehearsal. I admired the way Ray solved ensemble problems — so efficiently and to the point — and I was in awe of his remarkable musical ear.

There was a famous government poster back in those days with Uncle Sam pointing a finger and saying "I Want YOU for the U.S. Army." Matt Harris and I once joked that Ray looked like Uncle Sam, and our version of the poster would have stated "I Want YOU to Have a Chart Done by Tomorrow!" (Fred Sturm-1984)

Private writing lessons. His insights and guidance were incredible and invaluable.

(Todd Beaney-1985)

I'd have to say it was the experience I had working with both Ray and Michael Brecker. There was a very positive feeling about not only the concert but also the rehearsals and workshops (Spring of 1988). Everything seemed to come together very magically. I could tell that Ray was really enjoying the experience as well...which, of course, made it a memorable concert for the entire ensemble. (Tom Nazziola-1988)

Professional, earnest, enthusiastic about each of our futures. (Paul Ferguson-1986)

I loved witnessing the first person I'd ever encountered who could look at a score and hear it. How he could scan it and immediately notice the mistakes and how he could know right away what the point, if any, there was to the piece. (Joel McNeely-1984)

There are so many memories it is hard to pick, but here is one: After graduating the JCM Masters program I moved to New York City. This was the fall of 1979. Work was not easy to come by and there was a long string of lonely days and nights, not knowing if I could make a career happen. One day there was a message on my answering machine. It was Ray Wright, telling me I had won the Downbeat Magazine "Best Jazz Arrangement" award. He repeated the words "the best" as if he knew what it felt like to be wandering around New York City, wondering if you would ever get to write a note professionally. A personal call from Ray Wright was the beacon that kept me going. Thanks to Ray, I never gave up. (Manny Mendelsohn-1979)

In retrospect I value most the level of perfection that he expected from himself and everyone around him. While he was never mean, he always let you know when he didn't think you had done your best work or could do better. One of my most treasured memories was when he looked at a page of a studio orchestra score of mine and said "This is going to be nice!" (one page out of a 30 page score, that is!) Earning his praise was a huge deal for all of us. Another favorite memory came at the end of a reading session where I had had a piece read after having stayed up straight for several nights in a row. He obviously saw how exhausted I was but instead of directly expressing his sympathy (as I'm sure he thought it was just a case of my having to do what was necessary to get the job done and had I been more organized it wouldn't have been necessary in the first place!) he merely told Sal Scarpa that he should "Take me for a strawberry soda", which was kind of the way he expressed things to us!
(Ellen Rowe-1982)

I played in the Eastman Jazz Ensemble 1974-75. I have great memories of Ray's leadership of the group in terms of the variety of the music we played, the focus on student arrangements, a great assortment of guest artists and an unyielding pursuit of professionalism in every single pursuit. On a more personal level, Ray was an effective and generous coach as I explored a career on the business side of music. This was before there was a formal business of music program, yet he still spent a lot of time helping me think through the possibilities. I ended up being Chief Editor at Kendor Music Publishers from 1976 to 1984, and my proudest accomplishment there was approaching Ray to write a book analyzing the writing of several of Kendor's writers. He accepted, and the result was his classic book, "Inside the Score." (Bill Hammond-1976)

I am sure that the most common answer is "there too many to count".

My favorite memory was my last studio orchestra concert. I painted myself into a corner by writing a piece to accompany the reading of three Dr. Seuss stories. I say painted into a corner because I had to do the readings, using silly voices no less. As I stood on at the front of the stage trembling, Ray looked over to me and made a perfect little bow in my direction as if I was Jascha Heifetz. Of course it was for comic effect but he did it so perfectly and it made me feel that we were in this crazy thing together. (Brian Gaber-1987)

His deep knowledge and ability to guide me in honing my composition and arranging skills enabled me to find my voice in the jazz writing field. I remember a reading session with the EJE. Ray had encouraged me to write something in a more aggressive style, and I had written a slow blues chart. Vince DiMartino entered on a solo passage in the middle of the chart, and musical sparks began to fly! I was one happy composer, and the band loved it!
(John Mahoney-1978)

My freshman year at ESM in I was a double major in trumpet and composition. I was frustrated that the composition part of my studies was not the right fit for who I was as a composer. Even though JCM was not offered as a degree path to Eastman undergraduates at the time (1981), I felt my time would be much better spent by dropping the composition major, and creating my own degree within a degree by taking all of Ray's arranging and writing classes as electives. I

remember discussing this idea with him as a very terrified and frustrated freshman. Ray's immediate enthusiasm and support of this made the abrupt and difficult decision a no-brainer. It turned out to be exactly what I needed to do, both for then, and preparing for what I do now. (Jeff Beal-1985)

Despite his enormous musical, organizational, and interpersonal gifts, Ray had an unassuming modesty that added to the positive flow of his direction in class and on the bandstand. He had an immensely satisfying sense of humor that I took to be a marvelous counterpoint to the obvious stresses of his roles. His actions showed remarkable personal insight into the abilities and stresses of his students--insight necessary for their mere survival, much less their flourishing, in the demanding but professional environment Eastman and its Jazz program presented them. I wish I could have observed him in action for more than the two years I did. (Antonio Garcia-1985)

The Arrangers Holiday Orch. 1975 and 1976 and winning the Notre Dame jazz festival in 1975. (James Saporito-1975)

I'd have to say it was the "whole package" - his encyclopedic knowledge of the subject matter, his huge ears, his patient and organized way of communicating the information to his students, his kindness and good humor and general "unflappability". (Doug Walter-1976)

In the summers, many of us played for Ray Wright and Manny Albam in the Arrangers Holiday Studio Orchestra. Writers from all across the globe came for the 3-week writing session/workshop. We rehearsed in various configurations for two weeks and the last week culminated in a full studio orchestra concert featuring a guest artist, a short musical skit/play written by the attendee's, and various charts written by the students and honed by Ray and Manny. Both of them conducted on the rehearsals and the show. Well, as usual, the sound checks could get longer than one would anticipate. Ray was always so meticulous about how the music sounded and its presentation. In the "heat of the moment", toward the end of one of these grueling sound checks, Ray looks up from his score and says, "Ok everyone, take it again at measure 125." He puts his hands in the air to give us the cue to get ready and then he stops. He turns to the trombone section and asks the bass trombonist if he knows where we are starting. The bass trombonist replies; "I think so, why?" Ray answers, to everyone's amazement, "because your slide was in the wrong position according to the note written on the score."The whole orchestra lost it! (Rich Thompson-1984)

Jazz composition and arranging lessons. Time with him in a one-on-one setting was a deeply meaningful experience, where one could gain the full measure of his mastery of our craft. His suggestions for one's own work were uniformly on-target and right for the music. I also very much liked Ray's ability to expand the usual list of descriptive terms applied to music. Although he probably wasn't a foodie---I recall a story of him trying to find a good ham sandwich in each new Japanese city during an international tour---I have come to realize he used a lot of adjectives to describe music which dining critics might also use: crisp, crackling, fresh, etc. I always thought that was a neat expansion of the usual musical descriptors. Although that might seem more common now, at the time it seemed pretty unusual to me. (Russell Schmidt-1988)

My most treasured memories are my daily experiences with him in private lessons, the classroom, and in jazz ensemble rehearsals, observing his vast knowledge, organizational skills, and keen musical ear for both the details as well as large-scale musical storytelling. (Dave Slonaker-1980)

I have few specific memories, just the overall essence of RAY. It is impossible for me to separate the musical and educational experiences I had while at Eastman from him, they are so enmeshed for me. (Steve Bramson-1983)

Ray Wright was a gifted musician and teacher, dedicated and inspiring. He was a wonderful mentor who brought out the best in his students, often by providing them with musical opportunities. I recall sitting next to Ray on the bus ride home from Jazz Ensemble performances in Albany and at the University of Connecticut. He wanted to create a medley for Studio Orchestra and vocal soloist based on my arrangement and another student's arrangement. He asked me to write an introduction, interlude and coda that would combine the two pieces into one arrangement to be performed on a concert in Eastman Theatre. Ray's approach was personal and motivating. That was just one of many opportunities afforded me by Ray Wright. I learned about music, and also about professionalism from Ray. I value having had the opportunity to study with him. He has had a profound influence on my life. (Christopher Azzara-1992)

He pushed me well beyond what I thought my limits were. He told me he was going to put my Studio Orchestra piece on the program, I had three weeks to finish and copy it...this is for a class I was taking as an elective. No sweat, right? He had a matter-of-fact professionalism and level of expectation that helped us all do our best. (Scott Healy-1982)

Ray's patience with me and the other students was almost as amazing as his breadth of knowledge. I still have more respect for him as a teacher and a person than just about anyone else I've met. I learned a great deal about how to conduct myself as a person just by being around him. I never saw him get angry even though I thought there were many times I really thought he would or should have. Another classmate, Christopher Smith, and I were talking about that subject while we were there as students and Chris revealed that he'd actually asked Ray about it. Ray's response was that getting angry never helped the situation so he just never did it. I also was fortunate to be on one of the EJE recordings, Spiral Galaxy, which was the first one released as a CD. It was the first CD I owned. I was surprised when I found out the recording wouldn't be on vinyl and I asked Ray about it. With what I thought was great foresight at the time, he told me that CD's were the future of recordings and they would quickly replace vinyl. We all know that he was correct now but back then I was not so sure. Ray's knowledge and preparation for the recording as well as his leadership during the sessions made it a success as well as a great experience. (Dave Wiffen-1988)

Observing his rehearsal techniques, His professionalism, His un-erring judgment and ability to give unprejudiced advice. Ray's teaching and interaction with us as human beings and musicians gave us a sense that we could meet with confidence, any musical or personal challenge that came our way. I think he always assumed that we would all be successful, his confidence was that thread that connected us. Long after we left Eastman. (Mike Patterson-1980)

The Arranger's Holiday classes were really amazing. His real world experience.
(Mike Titlebaum-1991)

I have many treasured memories, but one in particular was the day Ray came up to me in the Main Hall and asked me to take care of something for him. I still remember the feeling that came over me when Ray put his hand on my shoulder. It was electrifying and full of expectation. It made me feel like I could do anything! (Dave Rivello-1989)

I have lots of great memories of Ray, like us 24-year olds huffing and puffing trying to keep up with him going up to the 6th floor – taking 2 steps at a time (“uh, do you...ever take the... elevator?”). ...Watching Ray sight-read through charts, his little airy whistle letting you know that he instantly got the whole vibe that you were going for. ...Going boating with him – and not quite being mentally prepared to be soaked head to toe – but still having great fun. (David Yackley-1988)

I remember his amazing energy when counting off a chart...this would be during a recording session starting at 8 a.m. in HHH. He had such faith in each student arrangement....his manner of counting off reflected this. It made us all play at a high level despite the early hour.
(Bruce Diehl-1990)

2. Were you one of Ray's grad assistants? Please describe those experiences.

I was Ray's jazz composition/arranging TA in 1983-84. Because I had already served as a university prof before doing my ESM grad work, I viewed my TA post as a way to learn both WHAT Ray was teaching and HOW he was teaching it. I had two concurrent notebooks going in every class, one with class notes and one with observations of Ray's pedagogy. That year-long experience dramatically changed my teaching in the years that followed. (Fred Sturm-1984)

I was grad assistant for his basic arranging class, 1985-86. Three things leap out.

1. Ray made sure everyone had a chance to hear their music performed. I had to "hire" the bands, often for 8a.m. reading sessions at Howard Hansen hall. This was way before email. But in a typical year, I would guess that in a class of 15-17 people writing 4 pieces a year, we read about 60-70 pieces a year, some of which ended up being performed on concerts.
2. Ray gave me a chance to teach the class on occasion, which I considered a great honor.
3. A regret-Ray taught the class with some worksheets he had prepared, but he ran out of time before he could assemble them, with some augmentation, into a book. Sometimes I've bounced the idea around with Bill Dobbins and some grads about creating a Rayburn Wright Basic arranging text, but I think to do it justice may be a more difficult task than completing Mahler's 10th symphony. Not because of length or complexity, but mainly because Ray's skills of organization were so superb, anything we did, even with the best of intentions, would probably pale. (Paul Ferguson-1986)

Yes. As his assistant, Ray gave me access to his score library as well as the film library. I learned a great deal poking around in those. (Joel McNealy-1984)

I was an assistant in his Jazz writing course. Being Ray's assistant helped me a lot with confidence and I had the pleasure of teaching a course somewhat similar to Ray's at DePaul University one semester. Naturally, I structured it quite a bit like Ray's course, with an emphasis on students hearing their own work. (Manny Mendelsohn-1979)

Yes, I got to help with the Arranging Courses, grading some papers and helping him organize. I learned a tremendous amount about how to sequence information, how to present coherent lectures with appropriate assignments and just how to prepare a class in general. (Ellen Rowe-1982)

I was privileged to direct the Jazz Ensemble IV for the '84-'85 school year. He and Bill Dobbins believed that I had talent in the ensemble-direction area and gave me my first opportunity to run a big band. It was a personal and professional revelation for me that changed my career path for the better. While Ray and I did not consult constantly on the band, he provided superb support when needed. (Antonio Garcia-1985)

Yes. It gave me the opportunity to teach some of the small improv classes, as well as the "real-world" experience of copying a studio orchestra chart that Ray did for Stan Getz to play at the Arrangers' Holiday concert one summer. (Doug Walter-1976)

Yes. Teaching and lot's of photocopying! (Dave Slonaker-1980)

Yes. I had to assist Ray in his beginning arranging course. I had not taken beginning arranging with him so it was very interesting to see him go through the basics of the materials that I had previously studied with someone else. He said a lot of common sense things that I had not thought of before. One of my duties was to meet with students and critique them on their arrangements. He sat with me one day so he could give me his "tips" about how to go about this and to give me a "heads up" about some of the students' work. It was a great exercise to have to do this, it allowed be to see things another way. (John Oddo-1978)

Yes. I remember that I worked with the film scoring classes. (Steve Bramson-1983)

During my second year at ESM, I was granted a TA position. Because of my lack of experience as an instructor of improvisation, Ray had no choice but to assign me to run Jazz Ensemble IV. I was very much in over my head but Ray was very patient and helpful. It was a great learning experience that still affects how I run ensembles and conduct myself in them. (Dave Wiffen-1988)

I was a grad assistant, teaching Jazz Theory and Improvisation and Jazz History. (Mike Patterson-1980)

I wasn't a grad assistant, but I assisted with Arranger's Holiday. Ray kindly allowed me to attend the classes in exchange for running errands and helping with copy work. He also had me write, and be involved with both the reading/recording sessions and the final concert. A second event Ray had me assist with was Howard Massey's week-long course on his book The Complete DX-7,

which he came and taught in the summers. As barter for the classes, I would assist Howard with anything he needed during the week. (Dave Rivello-1989)

I had the chance to work with Ray as his "Jazz Ensemble Manager". With this came the responsibility of selling recordings, running house sound at concert venues, reading scores for television appearances, scheduling tour buses and hotel rooms, and being a liaison in the MENC/JCM High School Jazz Festival. In this capacity, I would meet with him almost weekly and I learned of his organizational skills and found them to be equal to his musical sensibility. (Bruce Diehl-1990)

3. Relate your experiences with Ray in a private lesson; in a class situation.

His job was to teach you to master the material; not to be your pal, shrink, overlord, or parent. You walked into his lessons knowing his and your musical objectives. (Michael Isaacson-1979)

Ray was always serious, moved things along quickly and prepared us for the professional world in both lessons and class. (Kim Scharnberg-1982)

In private lessons, Ray was always encouraging and caring. You could feel the depth of his experience in the way that he would look at and make comments on a score. (Dave Ratajczak-1980)

In the fall of 1983, Ray "commissioned" each of the MM JCM writing skills majors to create a new work for the Studio Orchestra. As I neared completion of my score, I hit a major patch of writer's block, and I trudged darkly into Ray's office for a lesson. He put the score on his old upright and eyeballed it for at least a half hour, never uttering a word. He finally took out a piece of scratch score paper, drew some notes and abstract shapes, and delivered (with perfect logic) 3 or 4 different ways to conclude the piece. He solved the problem instantly. As I exited his office, I was so jubilant and relieved that I did the unthinkable: I EMBRACED RAY WRIGHT. I stepped back and uttered, "uh, sorry Ray." He just laughed and said "Go finish it!" (Fred Sturm-1984)

One memorable experience came when most of us bombed a test in Intermediate Arranging (we were expected to know instrument ranges—written and sounding). In the next class we went over the test thoroughly, and then he asked, "If I were to give the same test again tomorrow, would you be confident that you would know the material this time?" We all nodded our heads enthusiastically, assuring him that we knew it now, and anxious to move on to a new unit. Sure enough, and to the surprise of most of us, we walked in the next day to learn that we were being tested again! He wasn't going to take our word for it, that's for sure, and we weren't moving on till we knew what we needed to know.

One thing that always impressed me in private lessons was his ability to hear the written page in his head. He would read my score silently for a few minutes before offering comments, and I could almost hear the music playing in his head as he did so. (Todd Beaney-1985)

In class, Ray was to the point. If you were truly eager to learn, he would provide direction with equal intensity. Also, in recordings (or any high pressure situation) Ray was well equipped to deal with the most extreme personalities and situations. He also knew how to let things go that weren't worth indulging. Of course, these are all attributes of a great leader, of which Ray was. (Tom Nazziola-1988)

Ray and Bill were such a good team, a serendipitous and fortuitous combination. Bill was a fountain of information, and poured as much into you as he thought you might be able to digest in the course of a lifetime or 3. Ray's approach was different. Information, of course (check out his final exams!) But Ray's approach relied more on hints, possibilities, and watching students make their own discoveries. This is hard to explain (Paul Ferguson-1986)

Ray taught me to orchestrate, the practical nuts and bolts, the importance of knowing each instrument's unique idiomatic qualities. But beyond that, he taught me about creativity. How to constantly think beyond the first idea, how to look for ways to alter something fairly ordinary and make it sparkle with some unique bit of color. (Joel McNeeley-1984)

Ray was the greatest advocate for student growth, both musical and personal, that I have ever encountered. His entire focus was on the development of the student's ideas and career. Ray appreciated every note and effort, and did not seem to express any notable preference for one type of writing over another or one type of career over another. One of Ray's first pieces of advice was helping me select courses to take **in case I got called on the road and had to leave Eastman!!** Imagine that from a teacher. He was focused on what life in the "real world" was going to be like for his students, and not on any program that was based around "the academy". Ray was relentlessly encouraging and positive. The only time I remember Ray bristling is when I said or did things that were indicative of low self-esteem. Ray's insights in this area were penetrating, deadly accurate, and prophetic. (Manny Mendelsohn-1979)

In private lessons he was always kind and extremely helpful, though very guarded with praise and always trying to encourage you to work even harder and not be satisfied with a less than 100% effort. I remember him relating how he had to finish a score and rehearse the Radio City Orchestra the day that Kennedy was assassinated, trying to teach us that you have to soldier on through the most trying of circumstances. (Ellen Rowe-1982)

In his arranging and film scoring classes, I remember Ray having a rare ability to be honest, yet encouraging. He didn't beat around the bush when something I wrote didn't work, but I never felt defeated because he had a unique way of explaining why it didn't work and helping me explore the alternatives. (Bill Hammond-1976)

Goethe said, "Treat people as if they were what they ought to be and you help them to become what they are capable of being". Ray would have found a way to say it in 3 words but I always felt that this was his philosophy. Ray's expectations were very high but he always set me up to succeed. If you were on the wrong track, Ray had a way of giving you just enough rope to hang yourself before giving the guidance you needed. It was not unlike letting a child stumble occasionally to get the feel of gravity rather than carrying them and never letting their feet touch

the ground. In the days of pencil and paper he taught me the beauty of the words: "*colla voce*". (Brian Gaber-1986)

I'm afraid my recollections are a bit foggy after all these years! But, I was deeply impressed by his ability to take my score, hear in his head what it would sound like, and make suggestions on how to improve it, often without the aid of a piano. BIG EARS! I remember being a bit shocked when he took my studio orchestra score, (I think) after the first reading, and giving me about ten alterations he wanted me to make, which ended up consuming most of my Christmas vacation that year. Of course I learned a lot from doing it! (John Mahoney-1978)

I treasure experiences during his arranging classes; we would get assignments to write for various instrumental groupings and then hear them PLAYED by ESM students as part of our work! We would always record these student performances and bring them back to the classroom to discuss our results. His knowledge of recording and the recording studio were crucial to the finesse he brought to the concept of orchestration. He understood the physics of sound and how composing and arrangement can be integrated into a complete musical statement. He also understood the orchestra so well, and how the more intimate one's knowledge and feeling for instruments the better one can compose.

Ray was never afraid of technology. I loved the way he was always figuring out ways to make the gear work FOR him, not against him, and use it as a tool in his work. I had no idea how prescient this would be at the time, as these lessons of being proficient with technology and recording techniques. The tools are now outdated by today's standards, but the principals are the same. You can't be a film composer today without have a lot of technical computer and media skills. I still do a lot of my own recording and engineering of my film scoring projects, and I'd like to think Ray's fearlessness in these areas was a driver. He also showed us you were *never* too old to learn. When digital technology was first becoming used in recording, Ray excitedly showed us a project he was working on, a recording of arrangements he was recording for professor Bonita Boyd. He was thrilled with the ways he could use this medium to do things that would have been previously impractical or downright impossible. (Jeff Beal-1985)

Joy. That's the best word. I'd had great instructors in undergrad years who then assisted me in finding this opportunity to study with Ray, Bill, and others who showed me what I needed to do next in order to grow. It was absolute joy to study with Ray.

I'd say some of the most memorable moments were the two times he informed me in lessons that I should write the opening piece for the two Eastman Studio Orchestra concerts during my years there--which turned out to be an arrangement of "Invitation" in '84 and an original, "Tales of Twilights Past," in '85. Though writing anything for studio orchestra poses its challenges, I felt that writing the music that might set the tone for the audience at the start of the concert was daunting and exhilarating. Of course he was brilliant in showing me creative options for revision even while ensuring that the direction of the pieces was still mine. And when, for example, I realized that the best path within one of the works was to replace several pages of my scoring, I knew with his guidance that it was the right thing to do--lesson learned. (Antonio Garcia-1985)

I took "The Business of Music" class with him my senior year. His grasp of facts and clarity of

presentation will always stand out with me. His commitment to the idea that one can always improve and do better has stuck. (James Saporito-1977)

While I saw him practically every day either in class or rehearsal, I didn't really have many one-on-one lessons with him, except when going over a chart occasionally. As usual, his unfailing ability to see what was wrong - and right - on the page as we sat there was to be admired and appreciated, not to mention his soft-spoken way of getting his point across. In class, it was often my favorite place to be that day, as I was being presented with the exact type of information - both from books and of course from Ray's personal experience - that I had been hoping to get. (Doug Walter-1976)

Time after time we would sit at the piano together in Ray's office working on a score or a "solis" section of an arrangement where Ray would help me take the bad notes and turn them in to something musically coherent. Ray would patiently work through the rough spots using his red pen. All of this information and guidance was delivered with kindness and respect making sure that the music at hand received the utmost care and respect. I would go back to "the drawing board" as it were to rescore my soli with Ray's corrections. The amazing part of this story is in the initial reading by the jazz ensemble during one of rehearsals at the end of the semester. Ray turns to me after my piece is played and says, "great job Rich!" Selfless, kind, confident, mentor, pro.....(Rich Thompson-1984)

He seemed to know me and what I needed to do better than I did. I think he subtly put us in a direction or in situations where he saw our talents lay and could therefore learn or grow from these challenges. On a specific level in private lessons, he had the ability to dig out the dramatic essence of the piece of music you were working on and help you find where it should go. The command of detail and intellectual curiosity as evidenced in both his books: *Inside the Score*, and *On the Track*, was inspiring. (And I got my harp writing down, too, which was to become very handy!) (Dave Slonaker-1980)

I remember in a film scoring class someone had miscalculated a timing in a short film. The music was already recorded, the music was 2 beats short and there was a hit in the wrong place if I am remembering correctly. Everyone in the class was eagerly trying to come up with solutions, most of which would have worked. Ray was just quietly thinking for a few minutes then said "What if we did this..." He had come up with a solution that no one thought of that not only solved the problem but made the musical phrase better than it had been originally written. One of the most important things I heard Ray say in a class that really made an impression on me was this: "A lot of you say 'I'll wait to write this arrangement until I learn this one more thing'. Well I have to tell you that if you thought that way, you would never write anything". (John Oddo-1978)

One clear memory I have was actually during my second summer at Arrangers' Holiday. I had the assignment of weaving together the then popular NY State theme song "I Love New York" with the Rochester theme "I'd Rather Be In Rochester". Try as I could, I could not crack my way into it. Not only did I sweat over not being able to see my way to solving this puzzle, I dreaded having to admit it to Ray. After many attempts and frustration, he took his pencil and quickly scribbled out the first couple of bars on my score pad. I slapped my forehead feeling the fool, how could I not

see this. He sent me on my way and I followed his lead and finished up the chart on my own. (Steve Bramson-1983)

I was an undergrad composition major, not a JCM student, so I wasn't officially in the program. Nevertheless, Ray's door was always open, and I could get a private lesson whenever I had something to show him. That went against the grain of the establishment—my legit teachers discouraged me from studying arranging and jazz comp, but I was determined, and Ray couldn't have been more helpful. He was aware of the conflict with the classical powers at the school, but never got stressed about it. Although I was not able to spend as much time writing for him as I would have liked due to my "serious" schoolwork, he looked at everything I brought him, and seemingly treated me like a grad JCM student. His lessons imparted simple tools and techniques, all hands-on but in a way that was all encompassing. Nothing was ever overly complex, he had a great command and strictness about harmony, and everything he imparted was memorable. I often wish I had recorded his lessons, but I realize that I remember pretty much everything he talked about, because it was all directly applied to my work, over and over. He was very concerned with form and pacing in music, the sound of the ensemble, and trying to get as much sound and variety of expression out of the band as possible. His approach to voice doubling, unisons and balance was clearly based on years of experience, and he demanded full familiarity with all the instruments, ranges, tonal quality, etc. But most of all he always showed you the best way to communicate your ideas to the performers—everything from careful part preparation to articulations and other performance practices. He even saw me in his office after I graduated; I spent a year in Rochester gigging, working on jingles and writing, and would drop in from time to time with charts. (Scott Healy-1982)

Every concert, arrangement, or meeting with Ray Wright resulted in a change in how you might think about something. He was always helping each person reach their own personal best. His suggestions were always presented in the most positive light, no matter how bad a job you had done! He was a person of great humility and earned the highest respect from every person with whom he had contact. A once-in-a-lifetime experience for all of us lucky to have been a part of his Eastman tenure. (Vincent DiMartino-1978)

Ray's teaching style was such that I feel that I remember vast amounts of what we were discussing, even though I have never gone back to study my notes. That is definitely not the case with many of my other instructors. I have several vivid memories of him standing in front of a blackboard explaining some arranging technique or other like I was there yesterday. Likewise, I have many similar memories from my arranging lessons that come flooding back whenever I think of the particular technique we were discussing at the time.

Ray's career advice in our lessons and in our regular advisory meetings was and is invaluable (Dave Wiffen-1988)

Ray had a way of having me solve the compositional or arranging problem. He would prompt me. By asking a question and making me probe the problem further. One of the things that always stuck with me re: my approach to composing at the time...was his comment, "you grope and find and make harmonic sense, perhaps this could be achieved more quickly with some thought and analysis of what you are doing. A little thought is therapeutic, it gets the mind going" I also recount the following comments Ray made when I was composing a Gil Evans style piece and as I

was trying to crack the code. Dissecting Evans's piece, he made the following observations: Re: Role of the rhythm section: "They are not laying the time out so your ears are forced to go with the colors." Re: Orchestration/Colors: "Gil puts a film over everything." Re: Bass part (at least on the piece I was analyzing Gil's "song # 1" - "The bass plays a two beat feel and when he does "walk" it works as a contrast, melodically." "The harmonic progression is "slippery", not definite, he teases so the ear is always anticipating" - I always sensed that Ray was teaching me to teach myself. (Mike Patterson-1980)

In classes, Ray was always incredibly organized, but yet could easily go in any direction whatsoever to answer a question, and he was always patient with everyone, even when they weren't getting it. In my private lessons, I learned not just about music, but about all of life. In addition to all of the musical stuff, Ray taught his students about real-life deadlines, professionalism, expectations, high standards and integrity - lessons I've taken with me ever since. I also was constantly amazed at how open-minded he was to every style and kind of music, so long as it was done with integrity. I am certain that he would have been open to the addition of a turntable and hip-hop beats; in fact, by the time it got to the mainstream, he probably would have already been teaching it! He was able to guide you with any kind of piece you would bring in, whether it was period-type 1930's swing, a funk piece, a Latin piece or a rock piece. He was able to span all of that time and knew all the styles. I thought of him as an Absolute Window - able to see to the past or the future. As an artist and teacher, Ray was always at the front edge of what was happening at the moment. He made me feel that I could write in any style and that all styles were equally valid. He gave me the skills to feel like I could write anything. I asked him once in a lesson about how to write a Gil Evans type voicing. He reached over, picked up one of his Post-It note pads with staves and wrote out my melody line in a Gil-influenced way right out of his head. I still have that Post-It. (Dave Rivello-1989)

One of my most memorable lessons was observing his first day of Arranging I class - he walked into class, turned to me with a mischievous smile, and wrote on the board the date that the first big band chart was due: about 3 weeks into the future. (Oh, the wailing and gnashing of teeth!) But he knew that people tend not to learn much "in theory" so he intended to grab the students' attention right from the start - and he certainly accomplished that. (David Yackley-1988)

4. Did you play in the EJE or the SO? Discuss Ray's approach to rehearsal techniques.

I once wrote an arrangement for the SO and forgot to put in rehearsal numbers (this was before Sibelius or Finale). In rehearsal, after struggling to identify the faulty measures in question, Ray quietly asked me where the rehearsal numbers were? I hemmed and hawed and sputtered in poor defense. Ray even more quietly announced: "Please pass in the parts" That was it. That was the end of my shot for that week....and I never forgot to include rehearsal numbers since then. (Michael Isaacson-1979)

Yes- both. His preparation for both was amazing and set the standard for all of us.

(Kim Scharnberg-1982)

I didn't play in the ensemble, but would often go and watch him rehearse. He was so quick, clear, concise. He could get a piece sounding great in the minimum amount of time. I learned so much by just watching. On the band's very last concert, he insisted that I conduct my arrangement. I was terrified. Eastman Theater was so big, and there were always so many people there. I told him I was too scared, but he insisted not taking no for an answer. I'd have never imagined that THAT would end up becoming my life. Ray really looked into us as individuals, offering support and experiences that matched our own personalities, talents or needs. He so much wanted us to go out into the and find our perfect niche. What an incredible teacher he was in that way.

(Maria Schneider-1985)

Ray's ability to hear scores as he read them, and to analyze problems immediately, was something unfathomable to me at that time. Rehearsals seemed to move very quickly--the level of Ray's musicianship and leadership, coupled with the level of the other players in the EJE, was something that inspires me to this day. Although I didn't often directly see it, I do recall hearing about Ray's legendary work ethic and his attention to detail. I remember some of my friends ironically mimicking Ray's comment when there were errors in copying (which he apparently found unacceptable): "the part's got to match the score!" (Bill Williams-1987)

I fondly remember playing in the Studio Orchestra and hearing the student compositions and thinking: "This stuff is 10 times better than what you can buy out there on the market!" The student compositions had such a great feeling of: "Write whatever you want--don't worry about having to sell it". Therefore the students poured out their new ideas, and they were truly inspiring! He nurtured and guided so much talent in his student composers!

I also remember 2+ hour sound checks on stage for the EJE concerts. As a lead trumpet player you want to maybe "save a little" for the concert so I'd hold back just a bit to save chops. But Ray kept on saying: "We need to hear it where it's going to be in the concert so we can get a good level". So I'd end up playing all those double "F's, F#'s, and G's" as written and as loud as called for in the sound checks. When the concert came around, you had to really dig deep to keep the energy up and be able to deliver. (By the way, I purchased a recording of EVERY SINGLE concert and made CD's out of them. A picture of Ray leading the EJE is on the front of every one and I cherish them to this day!) (Bob Feller-1986)

Both. Ray's rehearsal technique spoke of his experience in the professional music world, where time was valuable and not to be wasted. That said, you never felt hurried or unprepared come concert time. He knew the capabilities of his players and programmed his concerts accordingly. (Dave Ratajczak-1980)

Yes; Ray would go through and have us play a new piece all the way to the end first then he would take and break down the section: sax section, brass section, the rhythm section, the dynamics and tempo. (Fred Stone-1988)

I was the bass trombonist in both EJE and SO. The EJE was invited to perform downtown at a local event one Saturday evening, and our set ended at midnight. Before exiting the venue, I walked back to the stage to make sure I had collected all of my gear. Ray was there alone, folding

up the stand fronts and collecting the books. I thought: *This is Ray Wright, Glenn Miller alumnus, former musical director at Radio City, premier jazz educator in the country, he's 60 years old and he's packing up the band gear ALONE at midnight.* I asked, "You mean you still have to do this menial stuff, Ray?" and he said, "It's all part of the job." He was the epitome of the disciplined, old school professional. (Fred Sturm-1984)

I played in both. Ray knew how to dissect a score very efficiently. I seem to remember Ray spending his initial efforts on balance and intonation with each section of the band / orchestra. After addressing sectional concerns, he would shift his attention towards ensemble playing, making sure that the band was tight and clear in its execution. His understanding of the chart at hand was clear to anyone working with him, and I believe it was the reason why so many students gave their utmost attention and respect during rehearsals. (Tom Nazziola-1988)

Played in both. I don't remember much specifically. But broadly, I remember taking pride in how much we accomplished with so little rehearsal time. (Paul Ferguson-1986)

Yes to both. Ray's rehearsal techniques reflected someone who had been working under professional time constraints for years. He never wasted time. He never ran things over and over without a point. He instead, bore in on the problem areas, worked them through, and moved on. He was the master of efficiency. He also loved working on balances to achieve beautiful colors in the piece. (Joel McNeeley-1984)

I played in the Eastman Jazz Ensemble and the Studio Orchestra. Ray was such an incredible conductor and musical director that he made it all look easy. It was only when he called upon me to conduct one of my own Studio Orchestra pieces that I found out how difficult it was. It was because of Ray's mastery and instant comprehension of the score that I got to hear enough of my works played to convince myself I could make a go of it in music. When one thinks that virtually our entire repertoire in the EJE was a collection of newly-copied pencil parts written by teenagers, and that Ray could actually make sense out of our early chaotic efforts, you have to shake your head with wonder. (Manny Mendelsohn-1979)

He added me as an extra pianist for the Montreux Jazz Festival Tour so that I could help out on the trip and get to hear one of my charts performed. I use to watch him rehearse, however and picked up pointers on how to use rehearsal time efficiently, what kind of body language to use to get the best results without overdoing it, and, of course, how to listen to an ensemble and pick out wrong notes, which he was a master at. He would never yell, merely ask in his quiet way whether someone had an Ab or A, correct it if necessary and move on to the next situation that needed his attention. (Ellen Rowe-1982)

Being a French horn player in Ray Wright's Eastman Jazz Ensemble in the 70's was a once in a lifetime experience. Being a part of a group with such amazing artistry is a cherished memory. Every concert, Ray Wright would incorporate the horns into a few of the charts.....he referred to us as "The Colors". We would thrive on Thad Jones compositions and quite often we could talk our way into arrangements done by fellow ESM students.

In Ray's calming, professional manner, he patiently coached the horn section to move from the Mozart and Strauss style from the rest of our week, into a significantly different jazz style. Ray's teaching and encouragement opened the gates for the learning and creativity that all musicians crave.

After graduation, my first high school teaching job included leading the jazz ensemble. I had the courage and confidence to pass on Ray's teachings to eager young students and to help them to overcome their fears of a style of playing that was similarly new to them. Oh yes, I did occasionally add "The Colors" to my high school group too. I think that Ray would have approved. (Jill Mavis-Hammond-1976)

I played in the EJE and SO 1974-75. Ray could hear everything, which meant I couldn't hide. I think we all knew we had to be prepared for every rehearsal so as not to let him down. (Bill Hammond-1976)

Yes, in the EJE 77-78. As I recall, we never had a lot of time to prepare for concerts, and he was always efficient and organized in the rehearsal time we did have. The Studio Orchestra concert (Jan. '78) preparation was an amazing example of this. Then there was a blizzard the day of the concert, and only about 75 people made it to the concert. (John Mahoney-1978)

I played in EJE and SO for three years. Ray had great taste in music that would challenge the performers, and also enhance what he was teaching in our writing classes. His ability to single out a single detail that wasn't quite "right" in a composition by a student, or an error in a part was uncanny. I learned so much by watching him conduct, esp. in the studio orchestra setting, where he was a master of multi-tasking and clear musical direction. So much of the repertoire would involve student compositions there was always this great sense that we were all participating in a workshop environment.

One of my fondest memories was performing my first studio orchestra composition, "Sojourn" with the ESO in my freshman or sophomore year. It was one of the many "aha" moments I had when I realized just how lucky I was to have had such a great teacher who provided not only the knowledge but a chance to hear our works performed on a regular basis. (Jeff Beal-1985)

I was most fortunate to play tenor trombone in Bill Dobbins' New Jazz Ensemble my first year and then in my second year tenor and finally bass trombone in the Eastman Jazz Ensemble under Ray. I declined the opportunity to play in the Studio Orchestra for a reason noted further below. I learned one of his most valued rehearsal techniques rather abruptly in my first weeks at Eastman. I'd written a new work over the preceding summer, a two-movement suite, just to hit the ground running on my arrival. Ray invited me to bring it in to the EJE, of which I was not a member. As I began to pass out the parts--all very neatly inked on Alpheus manuscript stock--Ray noticed that I had not taped together the parts. (I hadn't done so because I'd hoped to make photocopies first and then hand out the copies for marking up.) He quietly asked me to collect the parts and explained to me that bands read best when they don't need to balance pages. He suggested that when I was ready, I should tape the parts together and then bring it into the New Jazz Ensemble, of which I was a member, because the EJE then had to move on with its goals of the moment.

I was a bit stunned, holding my 100 or so pages of crisp cardstock. But he was right, and he had informed me without embarrassing me. And when I took the chart into the NJE, Bill and my bandmates devoted full attention on it that yielded a wonderful performance--also quickly teaching me that the NJE was up to addressing its repertoire. I've required my arranging students to tape their parts together ever since. The "small stuff" makes a big difference when you're asking musicians to read their best.

My one favorite conducting moves by Ray? The way he would arrive at a ballad-closing fermata, allow his hands to rise slowly within the fermata as if momentarily liberated of gravity, and then gently bring the ensemble back for an utterly rewarding final chord. I probably never get that move right; but in my imagination, I do every time! Ray had offered me the choice of playing trombone within the Studio Orchestra or serving as producer for its recordings. Having produced house sound for several jazz ensemble concerts, I didn't hesitate to choose producing the ESO: the opportunity to study the scores of each of the incredible pieces created by my peers, faculty, or others out in the field was nothing less than a gold mine for an incipient composer/arranger such as I was. One of my compositions, "Tales of Twilights Past," was recorded twice by the Eastman Studio Orchestra: first in a studio reading in Room 120 with one rotation of non-EJE players joining with the band in November '84, then live in concert with another roster of non-EJE players in February '85. Both were wonderful performances. Though I favored the live version slightly, there was a moment there when a musician had played early in an exposed spot; so after graduating, I decided to experiment with electronically splicing a portion of the November studio version into the February live version. Darned if Ray hadn't nailed the exact same tempo in the two versions, consistently throughout the piece. I know how hard it can be to move 60 or more musicians along in pace, much less on two occasions, three months apart, in different rooms, with different performers--and he simply did it with his usual grace and apparent ease! Ray used to say that he'd set all his tempos by The Rockettes from his Radio City Music Hall days, and I never had reason to doubt him. In mid-March or so of 1985, EJE bass trombonist Jim Martin knocked on my residence hall door at 424 University Avenue at about 2 a.m., knowing I'd be up copying parts for my latest writing project, and informed me that he was leaving the next day to be bass trombonist in Buddy Rich's band--and that Ray had decided that I would be moving from tenor bone in the EJE to bass trombone for my last month at Eastman, including the band's April concert and its recording sessions for the album later released as "Hot House." Though it was a huge challenge to perform the parts that I and the other writers had penned for Jim in that chair, it was of course a tremendous blessing to record as the EJE's bass trombonist, who gets to invoke far more independent musical decision-making than anyone on an inside chair.

We recorded for two days on the Eastman Theatre stage, one evening stretching to about 1:30 a.m. It was so educational to hear Ray's counsel to us all during the session, steering us towards the best recording possible. My favorite instructive moment? We writers loved writing for woodwind doubles in the EJE sax section, as not everyone back home could play such varied parts. And there was a passage in someone's chart--perhaps mine, "'Hang' Time"--where the recording was not effectively capturing the crescendoing and decrescendoing of the woodwind doubles across eight or so measures. Ray came in over the talkback mic: "Let's have the woodwind section physically lean towards and back from the mics during those dynamic

changes so that we really capture the shifts." Simple solution, very effective recording. (Antonio Garcia-1985)

I played in the EJE and SO all four years of my undergrad. He was always prepared and he used his rehearsal time most efficiently. I loved the way he could clear up wrong notes and articulations in seconds. It inspired me to work harder! (James Saporito-1977)

Both. While I appreciated his efficient use of rehearsal and time and his ability to hear everything that was going on, I didn't realize how much till I played under some people years later who possessed almost none of those qualities! He was someone who could simultaneously embody the ideals of the ivory tower while giving us practical skills - both by teaching and by example - that would serve us well in the "real world." (Doug Walter-1976)

Ray's time at Radio City Music Hall seemed invaluable during Studio Orchestra rehearsals. It was always amazing to sit there and watch as, after a chart was sightread, he would go through the score, find the little pencil check marks he popped in during the reading, and then say something like "2nd Oboe, bar 47, the and-of-two...You played an A. Your note should be an A-flat." He was efficient, direct (without being harsh), and always, always right on the money. Those studio orchestras always sounded great in concert, with limited rehearsal time. And that was a testament to his skills as a rehearsal technician. (Russell Schmidt-1988)

I didn't play with the ensembles, but I was at many reading sessions and rehearsals, and had pieces played by the ensembles. He was firm and totally in control, and had this uncanny ability to get right to the heart of the piece, even if he'd never seen it before. On the podium he would give you feedback. While he was sightreading. And correcting notes in the parts. Plus, I don't think I ever saw him screw up! (Scott Healy-1982)

I played in EJE –I was fascinated by his rehearsal techniques and how quickly he could identify and pull the sound of the ensemble together. He wanted the ensemble to have its own sound, but wanted the music to be represented as the composer intended. (Mike Patterson-1980)

I always appreciated how Ray treated the players like professionals. I started watching Ray rehearse the EJE I was in high school, and his cooperative approach of soliciting input from students stays with me to this day. I specifically remember him letting trombonist John Gove make comments about the entire brass section. I had never seen that kind of collaborative approach before. (Mike Titlebaum-1991)

I played in both the EJE and Studio Orchestra. The things that I saw in his rehearsals were the amount of energy that he brought to the bands, and the energy he conducted them with. He was also always patient and diplomatic and at the same time quietly demanding, with very high expectations and little room for excuses. He brought the best out of everyone. (Dave Rivello-1989)

5. Did you attend or perform in the Arrangers' Workshop or Lab Institute? How did those experiences and opportunities differ from regular school year performance experiences?

No. But I remember the frantic energy during hot summers when members of the AW struggled to finish copying parts on time. They cared that much to please Ray. (Michael Isaacson-1979)

Yes- I played the Arranger's Workshop. We got to see and work with lots of talented (and some not-so-talented) writers from all over. It was intense and very fun. (Kim Scharnberg-1982)

I'd never dreamed of such an opportunity as Arranger's Holiday. It was mind-blowing to be around such intense productivity of students, professionalism of the big band and orchestra that read through all of our music, and getting such great recordings out of Ros Ritchie's engineering students. I'd not been accepted into Eastman as a masters student initially, so I enrolled in Arrangers' Holiday the summer of '83, as Ray invited me, saying he would watch my progress. I'll never forget the end of the three week session. I was in a practice room and he knocked on the door. He came in and told me how impressed he was with my progress. I felt shocked and completely ecstatic. After that moment, I became bound and determined to find a way to get into his program and be one of his masters students. (Maria Schneider-1985)

I performed in the Arranger's Holiday Studio Orchestra for three years. I always enjoyed it because it felt a little closer to what it would be like in the professional music world. Ray and Manny Albam together created a wonderful opportunity for arrangers, composers and players alike. It was a gift to be a part of it. (Dave Ratajczak-1980)

I participated in the 1982 Arrangers Holiday along with a couple dozen composers and arrangers from all over the globe. It was the 3 most intense weeks of my musical life. Ray instructed us in advance to arrive with finished scores and parts that were then recorded by the amazing pro big band or the studio orchestra (comprised largely of RPO musicians). In addition to attending the daily sessions, we met as a class with Ray and Manny Albam, where each writer's score was placed in front of the group for examination and critique as we listened to the playbacks. We wrote in every spare moment each day, generating another score or two over the 3 weeks. The best part was the late night part copying (by hand, of course) with the writers assembled around those big tables. Constant coffee, no sleep, the usual endless writer paranoia, lots of laughs. Unforgettable. Nothing like that experience out there these days. (Fred Sturm-1984)

Yes. I performed in the Arrangers' Workshop. Actually, I believe we were paid for our participation...making this more in line with work to be pursued as professionals outside of the academic environment. Other than that aspect of the program, it was quite similar to the regular school experience - especially with regard to the working attitude of all involved (very professional and intense). (Tom Nazziola-1988)

Arrangers was more relaxed, of course, except for the arrangers! Ray and Manny would allow their sense of humor to come out more. In 1986, the year the Statue of Liberty was refinished, Ray and Manny created a wonderful skit about Rochester's "Liberty Pole" in front of Sibleys. We

played the opening of "Also Sprach Zarathustra", but before the climactic chord, Ray put in the last 3 measures of Glenn Millers "Moonlight Serenade". I'm not sure I have ever laughed so hard! (Paul Ferguson-1986)

I performed. The atmosphere was much looser, but still professional. And we played and recorded an enormous amount of music in a short period of time. (Joel McNeemey-1984)

I attended two or three summers at the Arranger's Workshop before entering the masters program. One summer Ray and Manny Albam awarded me the Duke Ellington award. These institutes changed my life. Without them I would never have known I could write. After attending these institutes, including the high-pressure "Arranger's Holiday" program, I knew I could meet any deadline, and compose and arrange at a professional level. Ray facilitated hours and hours of reading time with Big Bands and Studio Orchestras, he got it all recorded, and then reviewed it with us class. The Workshops had to be one of the most demanding programs ever undertaken in the field of commercial music. The sheer time and effort it took to be a student was grueling enough...but what it took to organize and implement the program year after year...this was a superhuman effort by Ray Wright. Surely these programs will go down in the history of our field as an unparalleled achievement, and the Arranger's Workshops surely secured Ray's fame as the mentor of generations of professionals. (Manny Mendelsohn-1979)

Arrangers was just a more concentrated version of the JE and SO reading sessions - if anything he was even more on his game in those situations as there was new material to get through every single day. I thought he was often more relaxed in the summer and you would get to witness his sense of humor more. (Ellen Rowe-1982)

My summers at ESM and the Workshop are some of my happiest memories. I loved teaching the high school level jazz classes, and the chance to play in the workshop was so rewarding. It was bittersweet, because I knew that once I left ESM there would only be a few places in the world where this type of music is regularly practiced and performed. Everybody was more relaxed and enjoying themselves during the summer Workshop, Ray included. Also, this was when I got the chance to spend some personal time with Ray (of course) on his sailboat! (Jeff Beal-1985)

I attended the Arranger's Workshop ("Arranger's Holiday") the summer of 1982. The pace of that session was reasonably accelerated, given the limited weeks available. It was no surprise that I found the other students to be more advanced than I, and I enjoyed learning from them as well as faculty. This was one of the reasons I'd wanted to attend Eastman during the regular year!

The instruction was brilliant. Because Ray and the EJE were out on tour at Montreux and other locales for most of that session, Manny Albam took an even far greater role that summer than usual. What an amazing musician, gifted teacher, and keen studio leader! When Ray arrived, he gave key sessions on his concepts about reharmonization that were critically invaluable.

Meeting Gene Bertoncini was inspiring. Somehow he saw specific potential in me and coached me on writing guitar lines for my charts. It began a friendship that continues to this day.

But Ray's fingerprints were all over the summer session. And when he produced the recording session of an arrangement I'd done for Small Studio Orchestra, he came on the talkback mic to ask me if I'd really meant to close a passage with an exposed half-step between flute and alto flute. I replied that I did, which was true; and later that week he told me that he appreciated that I knew what I wanted out of my music.

That session was crucial for me. It affirmed that though I had not been accepted into the JCM Program, I would certainly consider applying again. In the final days of the session I asked Ray for a 15-minute appointment and asked him, given the very short time that he'd had any contact with me and my work since his arrival from Montreux, if he had any impressions at all as to whether I should in fact re-apply or would be wasting my time and Eastman's.

He spoke concisely and eloquently about how of course he could make no guarantees but that it was typical that Arranger's Workshop alums would experience a rather pronounced growth in their writing skills within a very few months after attending--and that he certainly hoped I would benefit from the same.

In my view, that's exactly what happened. I'd been exposed to such great music and information that the next chart I wrote, a couple of months later, I without realizing it imitated completely the pace, texture, melodic rhyming, and even certain backgrounds of Bob Brookmeyer's "Skylark"--which I'd heard only once: in Manny Albam's class at the Workshop. I didn't own the recording and had never heard it live. But I was listening intently, and it showed. More things began to show, and I was growing--if not exactly yet original!

I should add that several members of the recording ensemble for the Workshop--especially trumpeter Vinnie DiMartino and bass trombonist (and then-student) Mark Lusk--became friendly mentors of mine that summer and were very valuable to my growth in the years thereafter. (Antonio Garcia-1985)

Playing the two summers with Ray and Manny more than prepared me for my career in NYC. IT gave me a confidence in recording and performing that serves me to this day. As a matter of fact, the arrangers I encountered at Eastman I still work with today. Ray's professionalism, in many cases, out shined some of the studio situations I encountered in NYC. (James Saporito-1977)

I performed in the workshop band/orchestra for several summers. One of the main differences was that it was a paying gig for the performers so time was of the essence. Yet it some ways it wasn't really that different from the experience we got in school, because the rehearsals and concerts and reading/recording sessions of students' works prepared us for the "real thing". It was seamless, and a joy. (Doug Walter-1976)

Yes, both. It was always great fun. These are my most treasured experiences and memories. This was the closest to putting us in real world "music on demand" situations. (Dave Slonaker-1980)

I attended the Arrangers' Workshop for 3 summers. He would always come up with a project for the final concert that would somehow relate to a real work situation you might find yourself in someday. It would always involve writing something at the last minute, sometimes working with

several other students on the same project, each person having to write a section or sections of the project and somehow figuring out how to put it all together.
(John Oddo-1978)

My first Arranger's Workshop in 1978 was my introduction to the school and to the JCM program. That experience had everything to do with my eventually attending Eastman and, I'm certain, with the success of my career in general. The intensity was greater in the summer due to the short time frame and the greater number of writers attending. It was a thrilling, energizing and inspiring experience and, with the final stage show, much silliness. (Steve Bramson-1983)

Yes. It was terrific to work with Ray Wright and Manny Albam. (Christopher Azzara-1992)

I attended Arrangers Holiday in 1981 or 82, I brought in a chart, wrote another one which was performed, and he announced, "you're writing the finale to the show..." I think the music was to combine the ATT jingle with "New York, New York"...I sweated it out and it was a gas! Arranger's Holiday was more hardcore than the regular class, the deadlines were more compressed, and the band was made up of both locals and imported heavyweight cats from NYC and elsewhere. They would tell you what's up with your chart. Some of the best notes came from the players. A few months after I graduated, he hooked Ellen Rowe and me up with a gig arranging pops orchestra music for a conductor who had called him looking for recommendations. That was an amazing experience and I wrote for the same orchestra off and on for three years or so.
(Scott Healy-1982)

1975, 1977 and 1978 (Arrangers Holiday) The level was very high and every area of study was more compressed. The opportunity was to connect with composers from all over the world. And to share our music of course but also to collaborate by putting on a show at the end of the Holiday! That was key to developing a sense of how to be organized, to meet deadlines and work with others towards a common goal. The experience was invaluable training for both theater and film composing. Working commercially.(Mike Patterson-1980)

I both attended the Arranger's Holiday workshop in '85 and '86, and played in the orchestra in '88 and '89. (Mike Titlebaum-1991)

Being involved in the Arranger's Workshop really felt like the real world. To be given a very specific writing assignment with its short deadline for the Arranger's Holiday concert was exhilarating and terrifying at the same time. All the frantic music copying... it was very thrilling to be a part of such a magical time. (Dave Rivello-1989)

6. Some of us recall having learned life lessons from watching Ray navigate especially challenging situations. These were events not always confined to the notes on the page. If you had similar experiences- ones informed by Ray's way of handling such sometimes-unexpected situations- please share your memories of these occasions.

Ray was about economy. There was never any braggadocio, or any kind of showboating. He did his job quietly and masterfully as a journeyman musician. This posture had a tremendous elegance to it that rubbed off on many of his students and all his admirers. (Michael Isaacson-1973)

One of the best for me was when one writer came in with a new chart after staying up all night to copy it (by hand of course) and he forgot to put in rehearsal letters or numbers. Ray looked at it and said, "well we can't do this since it's not ready" and put it aside. Preparation and attention to detail and working within the allotted timeframe. (Kim Scharnberg-1982)

One day I was in the movie editing room working on a little film project. Ray knocked on the door to ask me deep questions about how I was doing as he knew I was having some difficult things going on at home with my family. I remember how much it helped to feel that kindness and compassion beneath everything. I felt a lot of pressure being amidst such excellence (students and teachers) every day, but he made me feel that he cared deeply about us all as people too. It meant the world to feel that tenderness from him. (Maria Schneider-1985)

I was having problems relating to academic life at 40 although Ray and I didn't always see things the same way he did tell me that I should get more involved by playing with more of the students. (Fred Stone-1988)

In 1983-4, I served as Ray's JCM graduate teaching assistant and played under his direction in the Jazz Ensemble and Studio Orchestra. The Studio Orchestra was invited to perform at the 1984 IAJE Conference in Columbus, and I viewed the trek as a relaxing weekend getaway. While hanging out in the hotel with a roomful of S.O. pals the night before our performance, I got a call from Ray. "Clark Terry's sitting in with us tomorrow night. We need one of your big band charts expanded for studio orchestra." So much for my restful night! I loved the fact that he expected it of me. Ray's way was the real world way, with the highest professional standards. He never dumbed it down for his students as players, writers, and teachers -- an immeasurable gift to all of his protégés. (Fred Sturm-1984)

I would have to refer back to what I mentioned in part 4. I'd like to reiterate that Ray knew how to handle a wide range of personalities over the years. He knew how to bring out the best in performers and get beyond personal issues. (Tom Nazziola-1988)

I saw Ray at his home, Thanksgiving, 1989. I'm pretty sure he knew he was dying. I had sent him a letter telling him what I was doing and asking if I could visit. He supplied an encouraging response and said he was feeling well for the moment. We chatted briefly about his health. His basic message was "I take it a day at a time, and would you like to see what I just arranged for the Canadian Brass" He then shared his remarkable arrangement of "Simple Gifts", a moment I'll always cherish. Dave Rivello was with me. (Paul Ferguson-1986)

Ray was the hardest working man I'd ever known. He seemed to never take time off. I asked him about why he didn't take more time for other things. He said because when you love what you do, taking time off isn't really appealing. He also said that once he stopped his momentum, that it was very difficult to regain it. (Joel McNeeley-1984)

The lessons Ray taught me about how to navigate career challenges were “make or break” lessons that were undeniably responsible for my career path. In one instance, I asked Ray if I should take a job offer outside of New York, where I was then living. Ray Wright unequivocally advised me to “take the work. It is always best to appear busy”. **This advice may have been the best single piece of advice I ever received in my life.** Thanks to Ray I took those jobs, and ended up with an immensely satisfying career in Chicago. If not for Ray, I might still be looking for work in New York.

Ray also saved my Masters recital. He literally came downtown late one night to advise me on fixing one of the pieces in the recital. His advice, involving the last-minute substitution of one singer for another, saved the piece, and possibly my degree. **I can't emphasize strongly enough that Ray never confined himself to the classroom.** This particular incident was just one example of Ray's superhuman commitment to the advancement and success of his students. Ray also paved the way for publishing jobs for me, and introduced me to the music production company that would become my “home” for decades.

In a completely different area, Ray also called my attention to certain character issues that I needed to solve. Although I have made only partial progress in these areas after over 30 years, I always recall his feedback as the first, and in many ways, most accurate picture of the kind of personal, psychological progress I needed to make in order to succeed. And one more thing: Ray' example, in teaching, rehearsing, mentoring, and problem-solving was an ongoing series of lessons in how a true professional approaches life. Ray never, ever, lost his cool. Even when he needed to correct something, you never sensed an emotional agenda. The agenda was to solve the problem. Ray also **never focused on Ray Wright, not for one second.** Ray must have decided long ago that he would choose to have his success measured by the success of his program, his school, and his students. It may sound trite, but Ray showed us all, by example, that “There is no ‘I’ in T-E-A-C-H-E-R”.
(Manny Mendelsohn-1979)

I just remember that on the tour there were frequently times when we would arrive at a venue and find that it was not as advertised, either in space or logistics. Ray was a master at just adapting to whatever circumstances he found himself in. He was also wonderful at letting someone know that things were not right and needed to be fixed without being overtly critical or alienating them. (Ellen Rowe-1982)

I remember him being momentarily flustered with a guest artist or an unprepared student, but then being able to move on, and take a positive course, making the best of a situation despite setbacks or problems. Pretty cool-headed, he was. (John Mahoney-1978)

Once during my studies there Eastman hosted a legendary jazz figure whom most of the students quickly grew to despise during his several-day residency. He had declined to provide any scores for recording-production study, stating concern that they might be in some way stolen. His initial rehearsal with the EJE ran several hours beyond schedule, during which he cursed at the players and told them he knew of "musicians in Sweden who'd swing better" than they did (though I wasn't sure exactly how that was an insult, given the quality of European musicians even at that time). He ran the performance-day soundcheck two hours overtime, unheard of, and insisted that

the brass players perform the soundcheck full-on at all times, tiring their embouchures.

By intermission of the concert, roughly half the audience had left in dismay of what they'd heard of the artist's works; and at the end of the concert I could see from the television monitor of the recording booth (where I was producing the concert-recording from various lead-alto and trumpet parts) that the EJE bandmembers were not applauding the guest at all. In sum, there was no love lost.

So during this residency I was walking with Ray from a lesson in his office to the elevator in the Annex; and I told him how angry so many of the students were becoming during this artist's visit, seeking his reaction. He calmly responded that he'd indeed observed the dark moods, that he'd hoped that the residency would not have taken this emotional direction, but that it was still not only important music to be performed under the guidance of the man who'd composed it but also an important lesson for us as students: that not every gifted artist would treat us in our careers as we might hope.

As we rounded the corner in full pace towards the elevator we nearly ran into the guest artist, awaiting it. Mid-sentence, without breaking his tone or his stride, Ray changed the topic of his words to something completely different. We greeted the artist, made small talk, and moved on our way. Ray and I never discussed that later, but I've always taken it as a lesson in diplomacy. And I remind my own students, when one of my guest artists is not ideally interpersonal, that that, too, is a valuable lesson.

By the way, at the end of that residency, the day after the concert, the artist took questions in a workshop. I very politely inquired, "You've worked with many of the greatest jazz artists in history; so I must ask: do you treat them in rehearsal the same way you've treated us, or do you treat us differently?" And he calmly replied, "I do treat you students differently. I believe that the only way to get an emotional, expressive performance out of you is to get you angry, to feel emotion." I thanked him sincerely for clearing up the matter and resolved that day never to teach using that approach.

On a lighter note.... one of my greatest honors at Eastman was when Ray asked me to produce the studio demo recordings in Room 120 of his orchestral arrangements commissioned by the gifted vocalist Susannah McCorkle. I was stunned by his confidence in me, but not so much that I couldn't croak out a "yes" in time to accept. The opportunity to study a binder of Ray Wright orchestral scores? Never mind that he would pay me a modest fee for my services; I should have paid him.

At one early point of the recording session, he discovered from a musician that one of his parts was not on the stand. With some 60 musicians nearby, he came into to the booth where Ros Ritchie and I were, picked up the phone, called home to his wife, Doris, and asked her to look at the desk in his study for the part. She confirmed it was there and would drive it in to him.

The orchestra recorded a different arrangement of his and then took a break. I was sitting in the Eastman's main hall when Doris arrived with the part in hand. Ray had walked out of Room 120 at that point. They met in the middle of the main hall; they embraced, sharing a brief kiss; she

gave him the part; and they turned their opposite ways to carry on with their days.

Even one of the most organized persons I knew could make an error. Problem solved without drama. An expression of love. It may have been a tiny moment to them, but to me it was one of the most important lessons I'd learned at Eastman. (Antonio Garcia-1985)

There was a reading of Strauss's Til's Merry Pranks that Ray conducted. I was playing bells and triangle. At the point in the score where the triangle rolled, Ray stopped the orchestra to correct a wrong note he had heard. After listening to each section of the orchestra separately without the percussion, he asked us to play tutti and again he stopped us when he discovered that the "wrong" note he heard was the overtones from my triangle!!!!!! I was amazed at his ears. This from a man who did not have perfect pitch. (James Saporito-1977)

He was always giving advice about real life situations in the music business. He once was talking about how to behave when playing on a recording date. "The arranger was up all night writing the arrangement, they brought the wrong chimes etc...It's not the time to raise your hand and tell him that this note is 'off the horn'."

After I graduated, I felt that I could always call him for advice. I remember calling him on several occasions to ask him what he would do in a particular situation and he always had the right answer to really make you think. (John Oddo-1978)

I had written an arrangement for Roland Hanna, a piece titled Seasons, which was a waltz. It was to be a feature on the Holiday concert. I wrote a lush opening and ballad style intro, then launched into a medium tempo jazz waltz middle section for Roland to improvise with the band, and then a big ending. Roland loved the intro, but after he politely played through the rest of the chart, he said "I don't play jazz waltzes, but the ballad part was good..." and then said, "maybe I'll play this one by myself." I was so upset. Now what? Ray said to the orchestra, lets take a ten. Then he had myself and Roland discuss the chart, and Ray suggested we do the piece as a slow ballad, and salvage the intro and use it as an ending as well, and that we could also play some of the worked out string and horn backgrounds in the ballad tempo as well. Then he addressed the orchestra and gave them indications of who would play and when, and we were back on track in minutes. This was just a typical example of how he thought on his feet and made something good out of an unexpected situation that could have ended badly. It was so like him. And a real model as to how I could handle similar situations in the future. (Mike Patterson-1980)

7. Was there a special program or study with Ray that you feel was most important in your own career development?

Although I was a classically oriented undergrad student, many of my jazz-focused friends spoke of Ray in the highest possible terms. This encouraged me to take his Business of Music class. To this day, I tell everyone that this was one of the most enlightening courses I ever took anywhere, and it changed my life. I am now a professional composer in NYC and run the American Modern Ensemble and a thriving record company, and also give lectures on the business side of music.

Without having taken Ray's excellent course, I don't think I would have ever ventured down these paths. (Robert Paterson - 1995)

All of it was important. When I auditioned for Eastman as a high school student I met with Ray because I wanted to start in the arranging program with him right away instead of waiting until the 2nd year which was more commonplace. He treated me like any other student that was already working with him and it was BRUTAL. He found wrong notes in my oh-so-proud-of charts and pointed out other flaws but I was able to start working with him that next September! (Kim Scharnberg-1982)

For me, I have often reflected on his incredible work ethic. I was also very mindful of the regard that my friends who worked closely with him as JCM composers/performers held for him. From my perspective, I understood Ray to be a model of professionalism that many emulated. (Bill Williams-1986)

Not specifically, but to be involved with Ray on any level was to have an opportunity to be treated as a professional and to be trusted with "the keys to the car" in advance of having to do so in the real world! (Dave Ratajczak-1980)

The road trip we did out to Notre Dame Jazz Festival. (Fred Stone-1988)

Everything. I don't find that I distinguish any one particular program, course, or lesson from the others. He was so deeply knowledgeable in every aspect of the program—from big band to film scoring to musical theatre to small combos—that all of it had a profound and inestimable influence on my development. I cannot begin to quantify how much I owe to him.

Shortly before he passed away, and several years after I had graduated, I think he made an effort to write letters of encouragement to his former students. I received such a letter, and to this day I still find it uniquely encouraging and inspiring that he expressed confidence in me in that letter. There is no higher praise than a word of approval from Ray. (Todd Beaney-1985)

Arranging class was particularly important to me. (Tom Nazziola-1988)

I've been very fortunate to teach at Case Western Reserve since 1988. I was hired by Peter Webster, who took Ray's Basic arranging class in the 1970's. Ray called Peter to recommend me. A lifelong gift! (Paul Ferguson-1986)

I learned the most from him in the lessons where Ray would push me to be more creative. Every day since then, when I've written music, it's almost a reflex that Ray programmed into me to look for more creative solutions. (Joel McNeeley-1984)

Ray Wright's program, and his work within that program, was so spectacular that I cannot recall any course or activity that was anything less than world-class. Jazz arranging, theater, film scoring, private lessons, large ensembles, and on and on...you just sat there, taking in as much as you could, feeling grateful that someone of his immense talent and experience would be willing to transfer that lifetime of experience to the rest of us. I guess one of the keys to studying with

Ray was actually **doing the thing you were studying**. In film scoring, you literally edited film...with a razor blade and tape. In musical comedy, you wrote and directed a full-scale musical. In studio orchestra, you wrote for a full orchestra. For your Masters Recital, there was a menu of musical works that you had to be able to write. Ray showed us that to be a professional you had to start acting like one, in all areas, from the day you set foot in his class. (Manny Mendelsohn-1979)

The jazz pedagogy course he taught was incredibly helpful as I went on to model my concert programming, chart selection, and pedagogical sequencing after everything I learned from him. (Ellen Rowe-1982)

All his courses and lessons were important, and I still rely on these experience and information to help guide my own students at Loyola University New Orleans. (John Mahoney-1978)

Without a doubt being in his film scoring class was the most important in terms of giving me a start in what I do today. The ability to write to picture, conduct our own sessions, and hear the works of our fellow students was invaluable. Like all of Rays classes, there were constant composing deadlines; the opportunity for procrastination was not an option. He had some great advice in this area, something to the effect of, "it's more important to MAKE a choice when composing and see where that leads you creatively than sit stuck on the fence." (Jeff Beal-1985)

His comments to me at the end of the Arranger's Workshop (see #6) were pretty crucial towards my persisting in re-applying. Once admitted to the JCM Program, every day could be counted on for some revelation. Arranging, Film-Scoring, Writing for Musical Theatre, Music Business...those were just some of the courses I got to take with Ray--along with incredible experiences with Bill's classes, plus occasional substitutes such as Roland Hanna and Jim Hynes.

But aside from the great coursework and ensembles, the opportunities Ray gave me to produce house sound and then recordings and radio broadcasts were incredible real-world educations. He improved my score-reading, taught me what to mark, allowed me to grow my voice in making recommendations over the years to Ros Ritchie, the superb engineer at the time--all of which of course allowed me to envision, as I composed a piece, how it should eventually present itself both live and on recording. Priceless. Well, some \$25,000 spent for two years...but I've often said, it was the "best 25 grand I'd ever spent in my life."

In '84 Ray was kind to feature a Small Jazz Ensemble composition of mine, "In Which Our Hero...", within an Eastman Jazz Ensemble concert. I hadn't heard of a combo performing on an EJE concert for any recent time before or since, though I could easily have missed it; so I viewed that as a strong affirmation of the work I was doing. He asked me to explain the tune's title to the audience, as he felt it would draw them into the piece; and that taught me something about programming concerts.

My fellow students of course performed the piece marvelously as I sat back observing. And the entire concert--including not only that piece but also an arrangement of "They Can't Take That

Away From Me" that I'd penned for the EJE and the superb vocalist Teri Koide--was broadcast over WXXI-FM, sending my music out a bit further than usual. I certainly noticed what Ray had done for me that evening and others, and I try to provide similar opportunities for my own students.

Programming was certainly a major lesson that I learned from Ray and Bill, building on what I'd learned from my undergrad mentors. Those concerts were artfully balanced, despite many needs driving those concerts. I'd like to think I've learned that lesson well.

Finally, one of the most important moments regarding study with him was literally just getting in. He and Bill made terrific choices as to whom to admit into the JCM Program; so I benefited incredibly not only from their mentorship but also that of all my JCM peers and all the other Eastman students who'd perform with me or on my compositions. But one of the lessons I learned was certainly persistence, another was timing.

I didn't get into Eastman the first time I applied, for Fall '82. It was the only place I wanted to go, the only place I applied to; but I didn't get in. After studying there for the Summer '82 Arranger's Workshop, I decided to re-apply; and during my audition visit in Winter '83 I heard the first-year shared graduate recital of the two students who had gotten in when I had not: Matt Harris and Joel McNeely. I'd owned some humility before that day but gained quite a bit more during that recital. I did reapply and got in for Fall '83.

Several years after my '85 graduation, I read the remarks of a classmate of mine, Maria Schneider, who had been invited back to give commencement remarks to Eastman students. In it she mentioned that she had not gotten into Eastman when she first applied for the Fall '83 semester but got in for the Spring of '84. I had certainly known she had joined us a semester after I'd arrived, but I'd never known that she'd tried to get into the Program when I had. I called her up, incredulous that I could be among the entering first-year students that somehow had taken up the space she might have occupied in that initial semester. In turn, she was surprised when I told her that I hadn't gotten in my first try, either: she'd figured I'd "always had it together" in the writing department.

From that, as other things, I learned a lot about persistence and timing, as there are few other reasons to explain how some things spin out. And I pass those lessons on to my own prospective students, who can be as disappointed as I had been when I didn't get into the school of my choice my first time around.

But I made the right choice of school! (Antonio Garcia-1985)

The last time I saw Ray was when he guest conducted the Radio City Music Hall Orchestra when I was a member. 1982?83? Of course he was more than prepared and he enjoyed running into his old friends from the orchestra. We had a lot of laughs that day.
(James Saporito-1977)

It was all so much exactly what I wanted and needed out of the program and the instructor(s) that I can't single anything out. But I can mention a small moment that I didn't realize till perhaps

years later was Ray's doing. We had the honor of having Thad Jones do a guest concert with the Jazz Ensemble, and I was in heaven playing his charts under his direction. While Thad was in town, Ray set up a time with him where some of us could have a few minutes with Thad and Ray alone to talk about arranging and whatever else. In my meeting, I showed him a chart I had done for the Jazz Ensemble, and Thad said he'd like to buy it for his band! We came up with some nominal (really small) fee, and I said I'd photocopy it and send it to him, which I did. I was practically beside myself that one of my heroes had shown an interest in my music. In retrospect, it finally dawned on me that Ray must have created that whole scenario, knowing how much I revered Thad. Obviously it worked. It says so much about Ray as a person and as a professional that he would do something like that. It makes me smile to this day. (Doug Walter-1976)

Writing for studio orchestra, film-scoring. (Dave Slonaker-1980)

His whole approach always made me feel that I was preparing for my career. One time after finishing a class with him, he asked if I would be interested in staying around because he had to edit a recording of an arrangement that he had written for studio orchestra. He had two recordings of the same arrangement, recorded at different times, neither one was perfect and he wanted to capture the better sections of both. The challenge was that both recordings sonically were different, sounded like they were recorded in different places. But he involved me in the process, asking for my opinion in spots and with recording tape, razor blade and tape came up with a very good combination. (John Oddo-1978)

Without question, the whole package. (Steve Bramson-1983)

I can't choose one specific class that was more important than another. It all added up, along with the invaluable contributions from Ray Ricker and Bill Dobbins, to a life-changing educational experience. I tell anyone who will listen that I wouldn't be playing for a living if I hadn't gone to Eastman. (Dave Wiffen-1988)

8. What outside-of-school experiences did you have with Ray? (Sailing, parties, etc.)

I once watched Ray conduct at Radio City Music Hall with a podium that had three metronomes set in different tempi. It was a quiet tour de force. I asked him how he got from the vaudeville dog act to the corps de ballet with a smooth segue. He answered "A shot gun modulation" (That's when the snare hits a forte rim shot and you immediately cut from eg: the middle of a polka to the middle of a pas de deux in "one"). I still laugh at that technique today. Ray not only had the theoretical part down but all the pragmatics as well. You couldn't ask for a better teacher. (Michael Isaacson-1973)

I loved sailing with Ray. It felt like such a privilege to be on the lake in his wonderful boat, talking about music, but just enjoying life. A lasting memory is the day his trusty crew (Ellen Rowe) was among us, put up his big jib sail "upside down" during a race. We also hit a boat. Ray

laughed about the sail, but the other part clearly frazzled him, though he was very sweet about it all. (Maria Schneider-1985)

Sailing. At the end of our senior year, Ray took David Finck and myself out on his boat and we had a wonderful time. We felt very privileged to be asked! He allowed us both a chance to skipper the boat and to do some basic maneuvers such as "coming about." It was a first experience for me! (Dave Ratajczak-1980)

After I graduated from ESM, I invited Ray to visit as a guest conductor/clinician here in Wisconsin. We performed his charts and he worked with my students and faculty colleagues. I felt like I was "showing off" my mentor to all of my comrades. (Fred Sturm-1984)

I did get to go sailing with him, and I always appreciated his reaching out to me that way. I remember mundanely observing something like, "Boy—this really makes you forget about the work and the pressure," to which he replied simply, with his characteristic grin, "That's the idea!" (Todd Beaney-1985)

I remember attending a party, which took place shortly before the release of his new book: On The Track. It was a joyous occasion. Also, traveling with Ray and the Eastman Jazz Ensemble was always a fun adventure. Ray knew how to hang with the band and also get down to business. There was a time to be serious and a time to enjoy life's little moments...Ray knew how to do both! (Tom Nazziola-1988)

Never sailed with Ray, sadly. But I did beat him at ping pong after the JJ Johnson arranger's holiday concert in 1988. (Paul Ferguson-1986)

I have fond memories of sailing with Ray and watching him let his hair down a bit. When things got really wild, he'd pull out a cooler with one beer for each of us. (Joel McNeeley-1984)

Ray Wright had several get-togethers at his home while I was at school. Ray and Doris made you feel like family. Over 20 years later, Doris mentioned in an email that she recalled my Mom being at one of these gatherings. I do not recall any events at the home of any other faculty while I was at Eastman. It is almost beyond imagination to contemplate the sheer devotion Ray had to his students, and the magnificent program he created. I am sure the last thing Ray needed to do was to spend yet more time with his students, and yet, there he was. (Manny Mendelsohn-1979)

I use to crew for him - he was extremely patient with me, especially the time I tried to put the spinnaker on upside down. I remember parties at his house where he would relish the ping pong games (he was, of course, very good!) but most of all I remember seeing the inherent sweetness in his personality as he showed off the tricks he had taught Jennifer, his English Setter (I think she was an English Setter?) to do. He was very proud that he could put a dog biscuit on her nose and get her to wait to toss it up in the air and eat it until his command.

I also organized a group of us to go and Christmas Carol at his house one December - he and Doris invited us in and were very nice about the whole thing, though I'm sure our out of tune singing probably hurt his ears!

My other favorite story from the Glenn Miller days comes from playing the Sunnybrook Ballroom in Pottstown PA. Anyone who has played there knows that covering the walls backstage are the names of band members going back into the mists of time. We were waiting to go on when another Eastman grad said "hey, look at this. Behind the rear curtain was the roster of the Glenn Miller-Tex Beneke orchestra of 1951(?) Among the musicians listed were Hank Mancini-Piano and Rayburn Wright (the new kid) 4th Trombone. I can't tell you why that was such a poignant moment. Maybe just knowing that, for a time, Ray was playing the same tattered book and wearing a cheap sport coat like I was. (Ellen Rowe-1982)

The last new reconnection I have made to Ray is through the composer Ellen Taffe Zillich. She teaches here at Florida State and I am fortunate enough to get to speak to her on a regular basis. She was speaking to my class about career building. She told them that she fed herself for many years in New York by playing violin in the Radio City Music Hall pit orchestra. Sensing that the years were right, I asked if she worked with Ray. She knew Ray well. She told me that she became aware of Ray the first time she played one of his arrangements. She told me that often when playing his arrangements, she found herself thinking: "how on earth did he do THAT?" (Brian Gaber-1986)

I don't remember any - there may have been a party around graduation time. I was pretty busy with a young family, substitute teaching and gigs for much socializing, I'm afraid. (John Mahoney-1978)

I remember well the times we had on his sailboat. It was obviously very special and relaxing for Ray to be out on the water. As a pastime, it fit his personality; there was something so "Ray" about sailing. It's part craft and technique, but also has a more aesthetic transcendent side, the rush of the wind, the lean of the boat, the arc of the sail, the whole experience was very memorable for me. (Jeff Beal-1985)

I didn't do any social activities with Ray, other than one or maybe two gatherings at his house at 10 Green Valley in Pittsford for the JCM students. I remember it was a joy to just be in an actual home, anyone's home, much less the warmth of Ray and Doris' home. 424 University Avenue was a solid, convenient place to live for me; but walking into Ray's home, I was grateful for the personal feeling.

Ray and Bill were kind to allow several students, including me, to join a post-concert dinner in 1984 with trombonists Dave Taylor and Jim Pugh, who had performed works they'd collaborated on in the studio with Bill and more. As a trombonist, that night was pretty high on my social list.

I came back to Eastman for a couple of days in the Fall of '85 to see friends, and it was good to greet Ray and Bill and thank them again for the experience. The last time I believe I saw Ray, though we'd correspond briefly each Christmas, was at an IAJE concert circa 1987-88, I believe. He displayed his usual toothy grin and great sense of humor, and I enjoyed the opportunity to share seats with him, Manny Albam, and a couple of other Eastman grads. (Antonio Garcia-1985)

The programs at Eastman that helped me become the musician I wanted to be the most were; Ray Wright's and Bill Dobbins' and Donald Hunsberger with the Wind Ensemble. I learned a ton from recording the Vox Box "Manchester Brass Band" with Dr. Hunsberger. (James Saporito-1977)

One party at his house comes to mind, and the main thing I remember about it at the moment is the ping pong table. And finding out that he was very good! (Doug Walter-1976)

I loved how insanely competitive he became when playing ping-pong. When he and Doris would host parties, ping-pong battles would inevitably rule a portion of the evening. And you got to see a more dynamic, energized side to him that was a blast to witness. (I am actually grateful for this question because I hadn't thought about the ping-pong thing in probably 20 years and it is bringing a big smile to my face.) (Russell Schmidt-1988)

Sailing! I learned to sail with Ray. I specifically remember sailing a Regatta with him and, I think, Ellen Rowe. I considered it a generous gift that he shared something he loved so much with his students. As I remember Ray in the classroom, he was all business, focused on helping you solve the problems at hand, getting the job done. To get out on the water with Ray was to see another part of him and I think this at times helped balance the intensity that often permeated the school work. (Steve Bramson-1983)

At the end of my second year, Ray invited me and several other students to go sailing on his boat. He offered me a ride and I met him in the faculty parking lot. When he pulled up to the exit, the gate wouldn't open. He calmly got out of the car, grabbed the wooden gate barring the exit and snapped it off, got back in the car and drove off without a word while I sat in the passenger seat not sure whether to be shocked or laugh out loud. It was a great start to a great day. It was also one of the best days of sailing I can recall. I had the most experience as a sailor among the guests and ended up acting as first mate. I learned quite a bit about how to properly trim a sail that day. I have a memory of looking up the mast to the telltales on the sail on his boat that flashes back every time I do the same on another boat. (Dave Wiffen-1988)

The annual party for new Masters students was always significant. And the summer Arranger's Holiday wrap parties, with the guest soloists were always a treat. (Mike Patterson-1980)

I remember a party at Ray's house on Green Valley Road in Perinton where an awful lot of ping pong was played — in the garage. Ray was really pretty good at it! (Mike Titlebaum-1991)

I enjoyed being on tour with the group. Not surprising, Ray's graduate students took me under their wings which was so great for me! Ray would engage the bus driver in conversation ("is this an MCI bus"etc.) and I find I still take the opportunity to chat up the bus drivers in my travels with students to this day. We took trips to Schenectady, UCONN, and Alfred University while I was working with Ray. (Bruce Diehl-1990)

Miscellaneous Thoughts About Ray:

I was touched when Ray took the time to write to me upon the occasion of his health situation and ultimate retirement. His letter was cordial and upbeat despite harboring the untimely news of his condition. He was more concerned with a smooth transition for Bill Dobbins and that the group would not lose any ground.

Ray passed away the day after I presented a Jazz Forum. I had thought to make mention of Ray in perhaps a dedicatory moment, but decided against it so as to not jinx his recovery. I regret my decision, but think we all dedicate ourselves daily to bring a small portion of Ray into our teaching, writing, and humankind.

After undergraduate graduation, I sought out graduate work to study specifically with someone who had studied with Ray. In this case, I found Jeff Holmes and attended UMASS, Amherst where Jeff has headed the jazz program for 30+ years. Ray's compositional attributes are abundant in Jeff's works and teaching. This has fulfilled my goal with the second-best outcome, but Ray passed too soon for those of us arriving in *his* world as late as we did. (Bruce Diehl-1990)

Yeah, for two years (1989-1991), Rob Hudson and I shared covering Ray Wright's teaching load. I taught Intermediate and Advanced Arranging courses, Film Scoring Techniques I & II, Pedagogy of Arranging, and co-conducted the Eastman Studio Orchestra one of those two years, sharing the podium with Bill Dobbins. Rob taught Basic Arranging I & II and took over the New Jazz Ensemble with Bill Dobbins shifting over to the Eastman Jazz Ensemble.

If you start adding up all of those courses, it's easy to see what a ridiculous teaching load it was. I didn't understand this at the time. But as I have remained in academia since, I now know that Ray Wright maintained a substantial overload...maybe 140% of a normal full load. And Ray did that year after year to make the writing program work. (Russell Schmidt-1988)

It's well-known that Ray Wright was an extraordinary musician and teacher. But I think the reason that he is still so close to our hearts 22 years later is that he was also an extraordinary person. He had incredible musical instincts, so much knowledge to share, and such generosity in doing so. He approached everything with an open mind, a committed work ethic and a optimistic vision; he challenged everyone around him to do the same.

But I think the key to understanding the success of Ray Wright is how infectious his energy and enthusiasm was. He held very high standards and he gave everyone the benefit of the doubt that, of course, their standards were just as high. But beyond the arranging techniques, the reams of paper, the academic expectations, there was a niceness about him that was truly genuine. Spending just a few minutes with him made you realize that this man was the real deal, an unusually accomplished and articulate musician. But he was humble and down-to-earth, smiling and seeming to say: come along for the ride, I know you can do it too.

I feel that my education with Ray continues, two decades later. He was more than a teacher, he was truly a mentor, and a man to be personally admired. To this day, I attempt – in my own feeble way - to take a little Ray of light in my work and how I relate to all those around me. (David Yackley-1988)

Upon reading through less than a chorus of a student arrangement with a few errors, Ray said "OK-pass it in" handing it to the student and remarking, "Fix it and if we have time at the next session, we will try it again". This changed how each of us looked at our work BEFORE we turned it in to him to play. He expected us to be at the highest level performing, writing and interacting with others-just like he was.

Upon watching the public TV show "A Tribute to Alec Wilder", I sent Ray a card awarding him "The Golden Splice Award". He had somehow pieced together a selection (arranged by Ellen Rowe!) that had not gone perfectly on the show. I never did figure out how he did it... Ray Wright changed lives! He had the knack of taking all of our talents and shortcomings, quietly "rearranging" them, and reforming them into something more presentable. I know that he was a big part of any successes I had over the course of my career because of his talent to do just that we with me! (Vince DiMartino-1978)

One of Ray's most important goals was for his students to get out in the real world and be successful. There were several occasions after graduating when I came back to Rochester to perform with Woody Herman's band or with Rosemary Clooney. With his busy schedule, he always managed to show up at these performances. I remember one time playing in a club with Woody Herman's band, there were about 7 of us from Eastman playing with the band at that time. He was sitting there beaming from ear to ear cheering each of us on.

After I graduated, I would periodically run into musicians in NY who had worked with him. The respect that they had for him was unreal. Several of the guys who were around during Ray's Radio City days would tell me how much they looked forward to playing on a date that he would be writing for, they just knew the music would be great.

When I called him to tell him that I was working with Rosemary Clooney, he said to me: "Did you know that Rosie and I are old friends?" They had both worked with the Tony Pastor band at the same time. I did not know this and the next time I saw Rosemary I told her that I had studied with Ray. She just looked at me and said: "Ray was a perfect gentleman".

I have such fond memories of the time I spent at Eastman with Ray as well as Bill Dobbins and Manny Albam (in the summer sessions). I think about these times often. (John Oddo-1978)

Favorite one liner: "Parts have to match the score!"

"The jazz dept. is like a family and we all have jobs that we like and ones that we don't. We run like a family and if someone is not here (in class), it effects all of us." Ray told me this after I didn't show for arranging one morning. Rochester had a huge snow storm and my car got buried by the snow plow. I planned ahead and didn't miss any more classes 😊

"When you get out of Eastman, work for someone who likes and appreciates your skill and talent."

The first year I attended Eastman, I played in New Jazz under Bill Dobbins. Around Christmas, I was asked to sub in Ray's jazz ensemble as Bernie Dresel needed out of the rehearsal. I gladly accepted and went to the rehearsal. About midway, I noticed that the saxophone section, as Ray had stopped the band and became engrossed in one of the student charts we were reading, began putting their mouthpiece covers on their noses and their clarinet and soprano saxophones (bell side) to their eyes. They looked like something out of Star Wars. The whole band started to crack up with muted laughter. When Ray looked up from the score he was stone faced, deadpan even. He looked left and then right and said, "letter 78, one-two-un-two-three-four. I smiled as the sax section raced to get the proper instrument in their hands and play the chart. Ray was amazing that he could so easily diffuse the antics of the sax section ☺ (Rich Thompson-1984)

Thanks Don (Hunsberger) for the opportunities and trust. I'm sorry I can't attend the upcoming celebration, but know I always think about all of you and how much you taught me. I carry my Eastman years very proudly. You guys are always in my thoughts. Ray, Bill, DR. H and John Beck. Three cheers for you. Most sincerely, Jim Saporito (James Saporito-1977)

"If I had to name just one teacher who informed and inspired my musical life it would be, without a doubt, Ray Wright" (Jeff Beal-1985)

"There's always a solution." Ray said this during one of my early writing lessons with him when I'd faced a predicament within one of my compositions or arrangements we were examining. I quickly realized how true it was, and that truth was to become one of my major delights in scoring music. It's one of the relatively few things in life that always has a solution! But often the joy is in finding the best solution. (Antonio Garcia-1985)

Thanks for the opportunity. And you know, if called for, I could write just as many thanks regarding my time with Bill Dobbins there. How fortunate I was to be at Eastman during those years! (Antonio Garcia-1985)

After graduating I was touring with the Glenn Miller Orchestra. Ray gave me the opportunity to help orchestrate *Reaching for the Moon* and gave me a regular schedule of deadlines. I found myself in Chicago with the flu and high fever. As I sat shivering in front of a pile of score paper, blanket wrapped around me, I knew I couldn't get this chart to him by Monday as planned. I called him and told him that I just didn't think I was going to be able to make it on this one. He was very sympathetic and hoped that I felt better soon. Then there was a short pause.... "So, I'll look forward to seeing it on Monday". (Brian Gaber-1986)

Ray Wright made you ready. His approach to the reading sessions for the studio orchestra replicated real life situations. Composers had a limited amount of time to get their work recorded and that reflected onto the players who were under pressure to play it right THE FIRST TIME. When I arrived in NY and played my first big orchestra recording session in NY, I did not have any nerves at all. That is in a big part due to the training he provided

Pedagogically speaking, his teaching and resources were top shelf, well thought out and very organized. I did not appreciate this until much later when I had to start to canonize my own

extremely detailed curriculums for the New School and now for the Graduate program at Manhattan School of Music. His book "Inside the Score" speaks to his immaculate research and his uncanny ability to impart all that great information in his warm friendly but incisive manner. And then let's talk about the EXPERIENCES that he provided for the students: Marian McPartland, Dizzy Gillespie, Stan Getz, Gerry Mulligan. Teo Macero, Thad Jones, Phil Ramone, and Joe Williams, just to name a few. That is a lifetime of lessons from the highest order of masters one could ever hope to play during a professional career, let alone a 6 year period, four in school and an additional 2 years playing with the Arrangers Workshop. All I have to say is "THANK YOU RAY!" (Phil Markowitz-1974)

Hi to the Ray Reminiscence Planning Committee!! Thank-you for creating a vehicle to allow all of us to express our gratitude and love for the incredible Rayburn Wright. (Manny Mendelson-1979)

In a difficult business, there really is someone you can trust. There really is such a thing as a role model. There really is someone to look up to. There really is a standard by which all others are judged. Thank you Rayburn Wright.

Ray Wright **selflessly connected** the potential of the student with the realities of the real world of professional music.

First, the "**selfless**" part. Ray always answered the phone. Day or night. I cannot recall any incident in which Ray was not available with counsel and advice. The music business moves really fast, and crises are commonplace. Ray never delayed. Yes, a teacher is supposed to transfer knowledge. That's worth a lot. But "being there"? That's priceless. Ray also selflessly stepped aside to facilitate direct contact with industry professionals in the classroom. When he taught orchestration, you sat down with a percussionist, or a harpist, and got to hear them talk about how to write for these instruments. In Musical Theater class he brought in Broadway legend Charles Strouse to talk to us. Outside the classroom, Ray was constantly facilitating connections between the students, and real-world job opportunities. Virtually all of the opportunities that came my way were a result of Rayburn Wright. All of this required strenuous effort, even devotion, from Ray, and virtually none of it would fit on a job description. That's the meaning of "selfless".

Now, the "**connected**" part. As often as Ray answered the phone, he was also calling on the phone. Before there was Facebook or LinkedIn, there was the Ray Wright Social Network. Typically, a call would come in to Ray from someone needing an arranger or composer, and then Ray would call one of his students, telling him to expect a call from such-and-such about a job, an assignment, an opening etc. Sometimes I would get calls from a third party saying "Ray Wright recommended you..." That was all it took. Ray was the essential man. They only person with the authority, the gravitas, to assure the client: "yes, this writer is young and new, but he can do the job". Without Ray there, facilitating that connection, you were just another guy with a pencil. A crap shoot. A mere possibility. With Ray in the picture, you were a young and gifted professional. But the gift, really, was Ray being there. (Manny Mendelsohn-1979)

Additional thoughts: As with so many of the teachers / conductors at Eastman, Ray's attention to detail and pursuit of excellence in the realization of any chart was an inspiration. It became clear to me many years later that we were really learning a way of approaching life...not just playing music. Our attitude towards our craft and the commitment to quality carries into all other areas; It's a way of being. I'm thankful to Ray for sharing his gifts with us. His legacy lives on through his students, peers, friends, family and music. (Tom Nazziola-1988)

Actually, my memories of Ray gravitate towards his wonderful dry sense of humor and quick wit. I can remember rehearsing a Gershwin play "Reaching for the Moon" in Kilbourn Hall. Ray was conducting the pit orchestra. At one point, in the middle of rehearsal, someone accidentally turned off all of the lights in the theater so that it was pitch black. The next thing we heard was Ray's immediate response: "Thanks a lot!" Something about the way Ray responded that had the rhythm section bursting into laughter.

Another time was when the Eastman Jazz Ensemble was performing at the Cincinnati Jazz Festival with Terrance Blanchard as guest artist. We had just rehearsed a Tom Wolfe arrangement of a Terrance Blanchard tune (which was nicely done, by the way). After the run through, Terrance (who was very impressed), turned to the ensemble and said "yeah....that was bad". Ray then turned to the band and replied "He said it was bad..... that's good!" It was a classic Ray moment. (Tom Nazziola-1988)

Some of My Memories of Ray Wright by Dick Lieb:

I graduated from the Eastman School of Music in 1953. While at Eastman my trombone teacher, Emory Remington, and orchestra conductor, Frederick Fennell, told me about Ray Wright and Lewis Van Haney who had been trombone students at Eastman. Ray Wright was by then chief arranger at Radio City Music Hall and Lewis Van Haney was a trombonist with the New York Philharmonic. When I came to New York in 1951 I contacted both of them---Ray Wright to be my arranging teacher and Van (as he was called) to be my trombone teacher. I joined my former Eastman room mate, Bob Norden (now a lifelong friend of more than 50 years) and with the help of Ray and Van we got an apartment—the same one that Ray and Van had shared years before.

I started my private studies with Ray Wright and took my lessons at his West Side apartment. Ray provided me not only with valuable arranging knowledge but friendship and support as well. At the same time Don Hunsberger, who was in the Marine Band in Washington, D. C., was also making trips to New York to study with Ray. Don graciously took some of my arranging assignments to the Marine Band and got them recorded. I still have a recording of those pieces.

I was lucky to get a job (my first steady playing job in the music business) as bass trombonist with the Kai Winding Septet and toured with him for a little over a year. In 1958 I left the road trips with Kai Winding because my wife and I were expecting our first child. I was fortunately able to start subbing as a bass trombonist at Radio City for the regular bass trombonist, Dick Hixson, and eventually got the job there when Dick Hixson quit. I'm sure that Ray's input and influence with the contractor (Bob Swan—another Eastman graduate) helped me get that job.

Frederick Fennell who had very kindly played some of my first jazz/commercial string arrangements with the junior orchestra at Eastman—something that many conductors at a music conservatory might not have done in those days—did two albums for Mercury Records—“Fennell Conducts Gershwin” and “Fennell Conducts Cole Porter”. Ray was the arranger for these albums, but he allowed me and another student of his, Fred Karlin, to each do three arrangements on each of these albums. Ray’s generosity and willingness to take a chance on two “students”—giving them a chance to have their arrangements played on a high profile commercial album and played by the finest studio musicians in New York is just one example of what kind of man Ray Wright was. Later on Ray gave Fred and me many opportunities to work for him as orchestrators on several different ABC documentaries and also to do occasional arrangements for Radio City Music Hall. Once when Ray’s schedule didn’t allow him to conduct the ABC Documentary—“Legacy of Rome”—he gave me the job of conducting the project with Fred Karlin in the sound booth—again showing his generosity and support along with the willingness to take a chance on two young “students”.

At one time when my family and I were living in an apartment, Ray and his wife Doris were going on a vacation and let us live in their house in Croton while they were gone. Ray and Doris’s friendship and support was not limited just to musical matters.

In the 1960’s, while still living in New York, Ray started the Eastman Summer Arranger’s Workshop (we had nothing like this when I went to Eastman) first having Fred Karlin and then Manny Albam as his assistants. In 1970 he and Doris moved to Rochester where he then established a permanent department—certainly well known to all of you—and it developed into one of the premiere programs of its type anywhere in the world. I can’t count how many musicians in the mainstream of the music business I have met who studied at Eastman and benefited from Ray’s teaching.

Looking back I realize how fortunate I was to have him as my private teacher and friend when I first came to New York. Today—fifty plus years since I was involved with the Fennell albums—I listen to them with ever growing appreciation of the mastery Ray had in writing for the orchestra and how many different and beautiful sounds he could get from an orchestra. After his move to Rochester we remained friends but had less contact just because of time and distance. His teaching and influence will always be with me whenever I write music. He was certainly one of the “treasures” of my life in music. (Dick Lieb-1953)

After having the pleasure of deepening my understanding of Ray, I am sure there will be more memories to share, and more examples in our day to day lives of the great influence of this brilliant person, musician and teacher. I am honored to have had the chance to learn more about Ray through the eyes and experiences of all who have responded and who may continue to add to this treasure trove of memories. Thanks go to the Remembrance Committee, Dr. Hunsberger, Ramon Ricker, Dave Rivello, Bill Dobbins, Doris Wright and Family, and Suzanne Stover. (Bruce Diehl-1990)