

For your records ☺

Wednesday, April 03, 2002

Dear Mr Glaze;

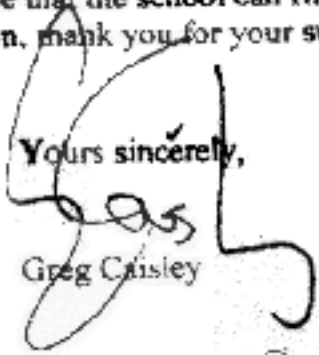
As you know, I have been attending USC for three years, working towards my Doctorate in Keyboard Collaborative Arts with Dr. Alan Smith, and have concurrently been a Teaching Assistant with responsibilities for accompanying the vocal studios, vocal auditions and other assorted duties within the vocal arts department. In those three years, I have had the opportunity to see almost every vocal studio in the school, and watch how the students grow and develop. Now that my time as a teaching assistant is nearly over, I wanted to thank you for giving me the opportunity to learn so much from these teachers. I feel strangely wistful (considering how much work it all has been!) that this great time of learning for me is coming to an end.

With regard to the state of the Vocal Arts Department, from which I think I have a unique view of the standard and progress of the various studios, I also wanted to write and let you know that I was saddened to hear a nasty rumor that there is possibility that Richard Fredricks may not be teaching here next year. I realise that there are many factors involved in the decisions made with regard to who is teaching here from year to year, but as a teaching assistant accompanying in his class, I have personally found his energy and vocal standards to be extremely high, and his students have improved unbelievably from last year. Those students who are now under his care this year have grown in leaps and bounds from September- I think there can be no doubt that his studio is dramatically improved from last year.

It is interesting to watch from the piano over the course of the year how his students have begun to really "buy into" his system, and are starting to really believe in their own vocal potential. Never once has Fredricks been anything but incredibly supportive, and his vocal techniques have all of his students developing both much higher ranges, and much higher vocal standards, both in terms of diction and repertoire. It is hard for me to believe, as I have sat in his vocal forum classes over the year, to see students who were struggling with "24 Italian Hits" songs for their upcoming jury in previous years, now consistently commanding attention with much more major arias. Watching these kids start to actually believe they can sing is a wonderful gift that Fredricks has given them, and I know that over the next few years, the seeds that are being planted will bear some wonderful fruit for the Vocal Arts Department, and the School of Music as a whole.

One of the things that I have found so important as a student in this school has been seeing professional people in the music business with real life experience, from which we can learn exactly how the various detailed aspects of the art are practiced, almost in the sense of the renaissance ideal of apprenticeship. Having a personality like Fredricks is such a feather in USC's respective cap in this regard, with his outstanding experience internationally; and his current desire to be here and share it with the student body. As you know, his energy is legendary, and such a compliment to have working for this school. I know I speak for his entire class of students when I say that I genuinely hope that the school can find a way to have him back again next year to continue this work. And again, thank you for your support for me over the years I have been here.

Yours sincerely,


Greg Crisley