

CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF ROBERT F. JUDD

A tribute from Bonnie Gordon



Thanks and acknowledgements are usually the afterthought; the things you stick on the back of the program, in a footnote. But this time it's more. To thank everyone who put this celebration of Bob's life together is to feel in a gut-wrenching way that he made collectives out of individuals. The thing about organ players is that they act as the rhythm section, the conductor, and the soloist all at once. And they usually have to do it in a way that makes each person in the choir feel like they did it all by themselves. So, we are here in this room, the Westin Grand Ballroom B, because Katie VanDerMeer lovingly figured out how to reharmonize the program to provide a space for remembering Bob. And we are here tonight because Carla Zecher generously threw her heart and soul into making the annual meeting happen without Bob; something that seemed almost unimaginable.

When David Schulenburg plays tonight, we will not just hear the harpsicord that the Boston Early Music Festival so generously provided, but we will hear in the overtones Roger Freitas, the Society for Seventeenth-Century Music, and Ellen Harris, who together made it happen. When we join together to sing *For All the Saints* we do so thanks to Mark Peters, who on behalf of the Society for Christian Scholarship in Music found the perfect tune on All Saints' Day for a society that deeply loves music but rarely makes it together. To touch the book that Judy Tsou put together with memories of Bob is to feel the knitting together of so many people. To see the slide show is to observe the work of Abigail Fine who, from the Committee on the Annual Meeting, put the pictures of a life into video form. To see the program is to see the work of a recently minted PhD, Stephanie Gunst, and a graduate student, Lauryn Downing, who in the details of design articulated the ways that for so many graduate students and young scholars Bob was the face of the AMS and the long tone that they can't quite believe is tacit. In all of this Suzanne Cusick led, also like an organist.

I don't know how to thank Cristle not just for helping tonight but for her role in transforming the AMS. And, of course, we all need to acknowledge that Cristle, Katie, Hannah and Sarah shared their husband and father with us for so long. Sarah, you were here even before you were born, when a collective of Penn grad students found it hilarious to make a Baby Judd leitmotif. Your mom's AMS paper the night before you were born is legendary especially for those of us who after that felt validated not just in giving papers while pregnant but in making lives as scholars and mothers. Hannah, you made an early appearance at a Penn colloquium of some sort when your head was about the size of my hands. I didn't realize until I had my own babies the miracle of a tiny baby awake, alert, and quiet.

I can't swear that my memories of Bob are facts, but they resonate with the cohorts of grad students who worked with the Judds for the thirteen years they were at Penn. I think I met Bob when I babysat for Katie, who was pre-school age. Katie, you and your Dad separately and collectively were bright lights for me and so many grad students when your Mom came to Penn. Your parents had famous end-of-semester parties with delicious lasagna and early music singing. Neither you nor I were actually in the classes. I crashed those parties with Matt Butterfield. Jennifer Salzstein remembers Bob covering Katie's ears right before singing





Il bianco e dolce cigno. Laurie Silverberg Elwort said, “That was our first semester of graduate school, and we were all coping with the multiple stresses of becoming graduate students, adjusting to a new city, and the then-new post-9/11 world. That night provided us with much-needed community and music making. (Singing madrigals at a party, for fun! Somehow that met all of my expectations for life as a musicology graduate student.)

Bob was the kind of musician you learned from just playing and singing with; he taught musicianship and painstakingly coached PhD students through a dreaded keyboard requirement. We all had to get to a point where we could read a Brahms score at the piano, which was way absurd if you didn’t play the piano. I didn’t get to have Bob as a teacher. Later I read his dissertation on notational practices in Spanish and Italian keyboard music and realized he had an intensely deep knowledge of how keyboard players get the tools they need for pedagogy. And maybe his interest in notational practices at a pivotal moment in keyboard history helped him translate the notational practices of different generations of music scholars at pivotal moments in the field. He knew how to help generations hear when they were not in fact speaking a different language.

Most of you know that Bob was an avid biker and squash player, and he was a key player on the Penn Music softball team, the Meisterswingers. Bob ran hard and fast to catch a ball, even the ones hit by the Wharton Business School team that beat the Music department in scores that looked more like basketball. But he didn’t miss a beat when those of us with other strengths ducked to get out of the way of the ball. (That was me!)

When Bob took over as Executive Director of the AMS, he welcomed us into the field and remained a quiet but powerful mentoring presence for many, in my case until literally hours before he died. When I joined the AMS Board, the very frequent emails with Bob felt like such a gift, and they remind me always of the gifts he gave me and so many of my grad school friends.

