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RICHARD PIERRE ("PETE") DELONE
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ALLEN WINOLD

The opportunity to write about Pete DeLone as a teacher in this inaugural issue of the *Journal of Music Theory Pedagogy* is a welcome challenge. It is welcome because Pete was always a strong advocate for such a publication and he would have rejoiced at its inception. It is a challenge because his legacy as a teacher was not a rigidly structured system of pedagogy, but rather a set of principles and attitudes that are not easy to elucidate in an objective manner.

In *Music: Patterns and Style* (Addison-Wesley, 1971), in many ways his most characteristic book, Pete DeLone stated one of the guiding principles for his teaching: "a sympathetic understanding of music (on any level) must come from active involvement with music, rather than passive acceptance of it" (p. viii). For students in his classes, active involvement meant performing great music rather than merely listening to it, writing meaningful musical passages rather than slavishly following a set of rules, and exploring their own ideas about music rather than docilely accepting theoretical dogmas.

For Pete himself, active involvement meant rigorous preparation of classes and organization of the work of his teaching assistants, intensive exploration of his own research interests in fields as diverse as the ballades of Machaut and the piano works of Debussy, and dedicated supervision of the research efforts of his own students in their theses and dissertations. Beyond this, active involvement in music meant that throughout his life Pete continued to compose an astounding number of beautiful works for all genres and to be active as a jazz pianist. His compositions not only deserve performance, but also the kind of careful study that he lavished on the works of others.

One of the most important, and at the same time surprising, principles of his teaching career at Indiana University was the importance of preparation. His classes always seemed fresh and spontaneous—as if they were being improvised on the spot—but Pete

insisting, however, that this not be done at the expense of musical or human values.

Pete's sense of humor was legendary, but what students and even his assistants did not always realize was how effectively and subtly he would use humor for pedagogical purpose. Years after being in one of his classes students would remember a humorous remark, but what was more important, they would remember the theoretical principle associated with the remark. Yet for all the humorous moments, Pete was not shy about making his students confront serious issues of art and life.

Some of the general principles that guided his analytical work were derived from Paul Hindemith, in particular the importance of the step progression in creating melodic unity, and the two-voice framework in creating contrapuntal cohesiveness. This influence was natural because he studied composition and advanced theory with Bernhard Heiden, himself a student of Hindemith. His outlook on harmony was conditioned somewhat by his experience as a jazz musician, but his harmonic palette as a composer and his harmonic understanding as an analyst were broad and sensitive.

One principle that he mentioned frequently in textbooks and in his lectures was the importance of *inner* hearing in writing, analysis, ear training, and sightsinging. Students were admonished to try to hear how their writing sounded, rather than merely checking it for picky part-writing errors. They were encouraged to hear a passage in their inner ear and describe it meaningfully, rather than mechanically affixing a set of labels to it. They were instructed to have a clear mental recording of a passage before trying to write it down, and they were reminded of the absolute necessity of hearing a passage in their inner ear before attempting to sing it.

He was remarkably flexible and undogmatic about such matters as particular techniques for sightsinging and dictation. His own rigorous training in fixed "do" (European) solfege with René Longy made him sympathetic to the time-honored value of this system. However, he was just as comfortable working with moveable-"do" solfege or numbers, and indeed he generally recommended that students sing on neutral or "scat" syllables. It was the final musical result that counted more than the particular technique used in arriving at this result.

He was equally flexible and open-minded when it came to the research interests of his students. The diversity of topics covered by students who wrote dissertations, theses, and papers under his guidance was incredible. The common traits they shared were the qualities that distinguished his own research and writing: enthusiasm for the subject, elegance in expression, and avoidance of obfuscation.

We could continue to examine the principles and techniques of Pete's teaching and still not come close to understanding the unbelievable impact he had on his students. To fully understand this we must consider, instead, his qualities as a human being, and of these none was more significant than the caring attitude he had for each student. He had the rare ability of making each student believe he was special. In classes of 10 or 200 he always got to know the students as individuals, and made each student aware of his concern for their personal growth as well as their musical development.

Buoyed by the strength he drew from his family, his religion, and his own inner resources, Pete was an indomitable optimist who managed to imbue his students with this same positive attitude. Students wrote more effectively, sightsang more accurately, and analyzed music with more insight when they were working under his influence. And this influence did not end in the classroom. In a remarkable volume of letters written to Pete's wife, Joanne, after his death, countless students reported how his influence on their lives continued long after their formal teacher-student relationship ended and touched aspects of their lives far beyond the narrow boundaries of subject matter.

It would be relatively easy to follow some of Pete DeLone's teaching techniques. They are lucidly set forth in textbooks such as *Materials and Structure of Music* (1966); *Introduction to Ear Training* (1967); *Music: Patterns and Style* (1971); *Music Reading: An Ensemble Approach* (1971); *Aspects of Twentieth-Century Music* (1975); *The Comprehensive Study of Music* (1976); and *Literature and Materials for Sight Singing* (1981). It would also be possible to put into practice some of his principles—indeed many theory teachers do emphasize such things as active involvement; conscientious preparation; balance between tradition and innovation; flexibility and discipline; and the other ideas that guided his teaching.

It is, however, in the area of human relations that he left his greatest legacy and challenge. Each time we are tempted to put off a student's request for help we can remember his ability to find time in the midst of even the busiest day to sit down with an individual student. Each time we are tempted to dismiss a student as untalented or unmotivated we can remember his faith in the ability of every student to reach what might seem at first like unattainable goals. In short, each time we are tempted to think that we are college professors teaching music theory we can remember that we are, or at least should be, concerned human beings helping other human beings to realize their fullest potential. This was the lesson that Pete DeLone never forgot.