

December 2, 2008

To whom it may concern,

This is a testimonial for flutist Rhonda Larson. I became familiar with Ms. Larson's playing at the 1994 National Flute Association Convention in Denver when I heard her compete and win in the Association's Young Artist Competition. At that time she was only 22 years old and already exhibited astounding technical and tonal ability on the instrument as well as heartfelt, passionate expressiveness.

As the years progressed I continued to hear Rhonda on CD's as a member of the Grammy Award-winning Paul Winter Consort. I am a music faculty member at Tennessee Tech University and in 2004 I contacted Rhonda's management about having her perform on our University Artist Series. The day for her arrival came and I went to pick her up at the airport in Nashville. Winter weather delayed her flight to the point that when she finally arrived and we zoomed back to Tennessee Tech, only fifteen minutes remained before the concert was to start. We didn't have time for her to drop her luggage off at the hotel or even grab a quick dinner! In spite of this, she was the picture of relaxed composure (in stark contrast to myself) and did a show-stopping performance for a capacity, standing ovation crowd.

The next day, after giving a very helpful master class for my flute students, I had some extra time to spend with her before heading back to the airport. I was completely drawn in by her friendly vitality, candor, and sense of humor and by the time I dropped her off at the airport I felt that I had met a long-lost best friend. Such is the strength of her engaging, enthusiastic personality.

This year I had her return for another performance on our University Artist Series. On this visit (October '08), we had arranged an additional day in her stay for a more substantial master class with the flute majors. It was electrifying! She led us in a session including movement and improvisation that opened doors for student expressiveness that had been standing ajar at best. Again, her passionate enthusiasm for music and the flute was brilliantly contagious. Her performance the next evening was an inspiring example of all she had worked with us on in her master class.

If you are reading this, I assume you have at least heard a recording of Ms. Larson. If you have not there is a marvelous treat in store for you. Rhonda is without doubt one of the finest flutists on the current international scene. Her strong, beautiful sound is underpinned by a dazzling technical command of the instrument. Her interest in folk musics of the world and the many different types of flutes they are played on is the foundation of her current recital format and her ability to interpret melody goes straight to the heart. Rhonda Larson = Passionate Musical Vitality. Whether performing, teaching, or simply having a conversation, Rhonda will make a positive impact that you will not forget.

Sincerely,



Dr. Roger Martin
Professor of Flute
Tennessee Tech University