CHARLIE NEIDICH

It is a tribute to Robert Mann's broad vision and his larger than life personality that he exerted a great influence on my musical development well before I knew him. From my pre-teens I was an avid Juilliard Quartet fan and Robert Mann was in my mind the Juilliard Quartet. Their wonderful Bartók quartet recordings had a lot to do with cementing my commitment to and love of the music of our time; their performance of Carter's Second Quartet literally blew my mind; and of course there were the Beethoven quartets, performed with great rhythmic energy which when I look back had much to do with forming my own heightened sense of rhythmic drive. When finally we met and came to make music together, I found in him a mentor, a wonderful colleague, great friend, bountiful source of inspiration, a kindred spirit.

What stays in my mind most of our collaborations are particular musical phrases he plays with unusual character and beauty: the emphasis he gives to the beginning of the final eighth notes of the Brahms Quintet Adagio opening melody and the unusually intimate and touching way he plays the coda; the great rhythmic excitement he gave the opening of Milton Babbitt's quintet in our performance together; the great character of the opening pizzicati of the Bartók *Contrasts*. Indeed, I have my collection of "Robert Mann gestures, bowings, and fingerings" which I liberally refer to when playing and coaching chamber music.

Robert Mann has shown me more than anyone else how the power of one's vision and convictions (and musicianship) towers over everything else. I have been constantly amazed at how with a bow arm which breaks all conventional norms he is able to get a range of articulation and nuance wider and more varied than anyone else I have heard.

And in my years of friendship with Robert and Lucy Mann, I have never ceased to be touched and moved by their inquisitiveness, their freshness, their passionate embracing of what is new and exciting, their unstinting devotion to the seriousness of artistic endeavor. Most important, Robert and Lucy are for me models of youthful energy and curiosity to which we all must hope to aspire. They have my great admiration, and, of course, my love.

