EARL CARLYSS

For the last 52 years, I have known Bobby Mann, first as a teacher in my student years at Juilliard, and then for 21 years as my colleague in the Juilliard String Quartet. Lately we enjoy being colleagues in the passing on of the string quartet tradition to the next generation.

My admiration for Bobby is boundless. His infectious passion and enthusiasm for music has always been enormously inspiring to me. I truly feel that he has never played a casual note on the violin in his whole life. Every bow stroke he takes has a musical intensity and a positive purpose.

He always had an exalted vision of the music we were playing in both rehearsals and performances. Even though he is, in a real sense, a musical icon, I never remember him imposing his musical will on any one of us in the quartet. He believed completely in a quartet as a democracy, and he practiced what he preached. I never felt, from the time I joined the Quartet in 1966, that I was the 'second violin,' even though I was 20 years everyone's junior. From the beginning of my Juilliard Quartet experience Bobby insisted on complete equality of ideas and opinions, although I felt at the time that I was in way over my head! Even though Bobby never insisted on it, we always found ourselves being pulled upward to a more lofty level of musical expression by his unique leadership.

To approach the age of 90 years with the same freshness of positive musical energy as he surely had as a young teenager, one can only conclude that he operates on a different physical plane than the rest of us mortals!

Bobby is like a brother to me, and I will always live in the beautiful memories of 21 years of performances together, and the extraordinary impact he has had in musical and artistic life.

