# URSULA OPPENS

It is a wonderful privilege to be able to honor Robert Mann tonight. I first heard him when I was ten years old, and became acquainted with the greatest masterpieces through his playing. I first heard the complete Beethoven string quartets, the complete Bartók string quartets, the complete Carter string quartets performed by the Juilliard String Quartet; of course I went to hear the Quartet play as often as possible. I feel that my long-standing relationship with the music of Elliott Carter began in the summer of 1961, when I heard the Quartet present a lecture demonstration on Carter's Second String Quartet. My understanding of music was indelibly formed by Robert's clarity and exuberance, his fierce honesty, his ceaseless explorations of the new. Occasionally I have had the inspiring opportunity to play with him, or with the Quartet, and learning and performing Sofia Gubaidulina's *Dancer on a Tightrope* was one of the truly exciting musical experiences of my life.

I have had the honor to be involved with both Robert and Lucy as a member of the board of the Naumburg Foundation, whose competitions, almost miraculously, result in real musical careers for its winners. And of course almost all the wonderful young and even not-so-young string players of today have somewhere, somehow, studied with Robert.

Congratulations to Robert and Lucy Mann!

With enduring love and admiration,

