Jan-1994

Profile: Maxine Asselin

Recommended Citation
Available at: http://vc.bridgew.edu/br_rev/vol13/iss1/7

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The roads that bring faculty to Bridgewater State are many and varied. In the case of Professor Maxine Asselin of the Music Department, the journey begins in New York City. After receiving her Masters Degree from the Manhattan School of Music, Maxine was taken under the wing of Hugh Ross, one of the leading choral directors in the world, and thrust into the front ranks of the New York music scene. Maxine quickly found herself singing with the New York Philharmonic Choir under the direction of Leonard Bernstein. The work with the Philharmonic led to other professional opportunities, including recording with the popular Robert Shaw Chorale.

But despite the excitement of singing with some of the world's top chorales, Maxine yearned to bring her love of music to young people. So it was off to the University of Connecticut and the pursuit of a Ph.D. in Music Education. After successfully completing her degree, Maxine headed for Bridgewater where she was immediately given the responsibility of directing the Women's Glee Club. Gradually she was drawn to chorale directing and membership in the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA). Maxine's involvement in the ACDA would grow and shape her professional life.

For the most of the 1980s Maxine expanded her involvement in the ACDA to the point where she was elected state president and later Eastern division president. Recently, Maxine mounted an unsuccessful campaign for national president, but it has not deterred her interest in the association, since she has been designated as Assistant National Convention Chairperson for the 1995 gathering of the Association in Washington D.C. and is a charter board member of the Endowment Trust Fund, which is the fundraising arm of the Association.

When Maxine is not off to a meeting of the ACDA she is leading the premier choir in southeastern Massachusetts, the Jubilate Chorale. From a membership of thirty-six singers in 1982, Maxine has transformed the Jubilate Chorale into a nearly eighty member group that has been on three European tours, including a personal invitation from the government of Denmark. The Jubilate Chorale, which is based in Brockton, performs regularly in the region to rave reviews and strong citizen support.

Maxine's considerable professional and community involvement is balanced by her role as music instructor and chair of the Music Department at the college. Maxine teaches a broad range of courses from voice to music listening to piano. She is also leading the Music Department on a new venture as the new Music major gets off the ground. From its inception in 1989, the Music major this year has a complement of forty majors and signs that the growth is only beginning.

The management of a growing major and a growing department take up a considerable amount of Maxine's time, but the work entailed in developing a new major leaves her undaunted. In fact Maxine is overjoyed at the success of Music and the new initiatives that are on the horizon including work on a music education certification program from nursery through ninth grade and the arrival on campus of a new football band to enliven the crowds at Bridgewater State football games. Although Maxine shies away from taking credit for the success of Music at Bridgewater, it is clear that her energy and professional reputation have contributed significantly to the advancement of both the major and the status of the department on the campus.

As with any busy faculty member, Maxine is looking forward to new challenges. She will direct a major choral work, Mendelson's Elijah, in the spring at St. Nicolas Catholic Church in Brockton. Funded through the Massachusetts Arts Lottery and local fund-raising, the performance is an enormous undertaking but one that gives further evidence of Maxine's commitment to spreading the joys of music in the community.

In the case of Maxine Asselin, New York's loss is Bridgewater's gain. The decision to give up the glitter of the New York Philharmonic to bring music to the students and the residents of southeastern Massachusetts is one that Maxine never regrets. Bridgewater State is indeed fortunate to have in its midst a tireless promoter of the arts and a caring mentor of students.