

Dear NEC Trustees,

I hope you have all had an opportunity to read my recent Board Update containing some exciting news about the achievements of our amazing students. This is becoming routine for us at NEC, but their successes never cease to amaze me. Our triumphs at the Indianapolis Violin Competition with 2nd, 4th, and 5th places going to NEC students, at the Kreisler Competition in Vienna, and at the Casals Competition in Spain where cellist Taeguk Mun won first place, all speak to the vitality and artistic energy of this great institution, and like you, I couldn't be more proud.

Many people have referred to the last several years as a golden period in the history of NEC. Gunther Schuller recently stated that NEC has never been better. As I reflect on these years, I'm moved to remind you of some of the most significant ideas and developments we have advanced, including:

- the Orchestral program under the inspired direction of Hugh Wolff, now considered to be the finest program in the country,
- the Sistema Fellows program which has launched 50 outstanding leaders into the field with stunning results,
- the reinvestment in our Opera program, which has repositioned NEC as a destination for outstanding young singers,
- the contribution that Entrepreneurial Musicianship is now making to the thinking and lives of our students as they begin to manage their careers,
- the celebration of our Jazz and CI 40th anniversaries as cutting edge programs nationally,
- the creative spirit that abounds throughout NEC as a result of our very real focus on chamber music,
- and our thriving Preparatory School which now attracts more students than ever.

I am pleased with the substantive improvements we have made to our financial wellbeing; and I am grateful for the support that all of you have provided for this astonishing organization.

Leading NEC is a privilege. Indeed, it is a position I have always described as the best job in the world. My motivation as President of NEC comes from my real love of the students, my deep respect for our faculty, and my passion for education, for music, for the quality of the student experience and the very real need for scholarship support. I am, after all, a musician, and I see NEC first through this prism. I would like to think that this has contributed to the joyfulness that spills out from classrooms and concerts throughout NEC on a daily basis.

What has become very clear to me in recent times, however, is that NEC is at a moment in its history when it needs a different type of leader as its President. The pressure to balance budgets in the face of scholarship demand and changes in philanthropic support, especially in the years that followed the world's economic financial collapse, tests every one of us in ways, frankly, I never imagined when I took the reins at NEC. So much so, in fact, that I have come to the conclusion that I have for many years, subjugated my passion for classical music and performing arts to meet the demands of the rest of the job.

As I have shared with Board Chair Ken Burnes, I feel strongly that it is time for me to return to my roots, if you will, and find an outlet where my creative, teaching and musical talents are better tapped. I am therefore announcing my intention to step down as NEC president at the end of the academic year in June 2015. I have communicated this to Ken and I am pleased that he supports me in what has been a very difficult decision.

My intention is to ensure that this transition is as seamless for the Conservatory as it can be. I love NEC very much and I will work through the period of this transition to support you in every way I can as you enter into a search process for my successor. I will do this with the same devotion and commitment I have always demonstrated at NEC.

Sincerely,

Tony Woodcock