
Linda Naylor



Linda Naylor is in an enviable position. She is the head of the Saxophone Department at the University of Tulsa, a school with a very strong and vastly underrated instrumental music program. She has ample opportunity to play the music of her choice in a wide variety of circumstances, including regular dates with the Tulsa Philharmonic, faculty recitals, and numerous community appearances. She is one of the most sought-after teachers in the area, and spends much of what's left of her time teaching privately in her home, and always because she wants to. No long hours on the road. No scrambling for gigs. None of the usual pressures associated with playing at this level. No crass, non-musical worries about money or job security. Just the opportunity to play as often as desired, whenever desired, and to share her knowledge and excitement with students ranging from twelve year-olds trying out a musical instrument for the first time to twenty-two year-olds preparing for a career in music.

by Dallas Koehn

But don't let the relative ease of her position make you think she's slacking. Her appearances are usually standing room only, in a town not known for its strong support of the less-popular classical arts. Her students regularly occupy the most prized seats not only in their classrooms but in all-district and all-state band. She has the respect of virtually every player and educator in the area. And, to put it bluntly, the lady can play. Not bad for someone who made it through her first four years of college on a baton-twirling scholarship.

I grew up in a little town in Iowa called Bettendorf, right on the Mississippi River. I started twirling baton very young, and my Dad wanted me to be this world-famous baton twirler and twirl for the Bettendorf High School Band. So he went to the band director when I got to sixth grade and said, "Look, my daughter twirls baton and she's going to be up here in another three years. We've got to get her started on an instrument so that

she can play in the band and be eligible to twirl the baton." The band director said, "Well, we've got a tenor sax sitting in the back room. It's too big for her, she'll never be able to march with it. Let's give her that. It will be perfect."

So my Dad came home one night, drew a crude picture of a saxophone on a piece of paper and said, "Look, honey, you're going to play one of these, it's a saxophone!" Obviously, destiny was at play, because my immediate response was "Huh? Why?" But I soon decided that if that was what I had to do to twirl in the high school

band, then that was what I was going to do.

For the entire first year, I sat in band class with this thing. I didn't learn any fingerings, I never knew a single note, I just watched the kid next to me and I pretended to be doing whatever he was doing. I had no intention of learning that horn, because I was a baton twirler. My entire first year I just vegetated. That's how all of this started. I never initially chose to play.

At some point during the seventh grade, I decided to learn a little, if only to keep from being so bored in band class. By eighth grade I could do some things fairly well. I could play very fast, and I found that I had a good ear. Somehow that year the high schoolers began circulating a rumor that this girl coming up the next year was going to blow them away on her sax. I don't know how or why it started, but this was a very small town and stuff like this was high drama for the whole community. I certainly wasn't going to dispel a rumor of this caliber, so I started getting quite serious about playing the saxophone, if only to keep up with my exaggerated reputation. It was quite a challenge, but I thrived on that sort of thing. By the beginning of ninth grade I was ready. I knew I was hot. I went in for my first chair test, a sight-reading test, as all tests were back then, and I bombed. Totally.

You see, I had no idea how to count. I got last chair in the last band and sat in the very back of the room. I had been on alto for the past two years and I was bumped down to bari sax, almost as bad as being busted to bass drum. I was devastated. I had plenty of technique, I could read notes by that time, and because I had a decent ear I could follow along until I knew basically how the piece was supposed to go. But when I tried to sight-read a new piece I

LINDA NAYLOR'S EQUIPMENT LIST

Saxophones
Buffet Crampon "Prestige" alto
(copper body and keys)
Selmer Mark VI soprano
Yamaha 52 bari
Flute
Gemeinhardt 3 SHB
Clarinet
Selmer Signet
Mouthpieces
Selmer S-90 C* alto
Selmer S-80 C* soprano
Selmer S-80 C* bari
Reeds
Vandoren 3 1/2 traditional for alto
and soprano
Vandoren 4 for bari
Ligatures
Selmer standard metal ligatures for
all horns

is, until tenth grade. That's when they started this thing called "Jazz Band."

Now, naturally, as a sax player I was expected to want to be in jazz band. But I had already figured out at this point that in band the flute and trumpet players got most of the cool parts. I sat in the back doubling the French horn, which never got the cool parts. I wanted to play what the flutes were playing. So, I did (or I tried to anyway). I was a band director's nightmare. I didn't know what notes they were playing, but if their part went "ta de-de-da" then I went "ta de-de-da." If they trilled, I trilled. It was much more interesting than simply playing my part.

Besides, by this point, I had fallen in love with notes. Lots of notes. As many as could be packed onto the page. The more notes there were, the more challenging it was, and the more I wanted to play it. I began to look for the blackest pages, and those were the parts I wanted to play.

I sat down the first day in jazz band and found this part in front of me composed primarily of eighth notes and triplets. I didn't know how fast they were supposed to be played or what the overall effect was intended to be, I just knew that there darn sure weren't enough notes on that page. I rejected it without a second thought. Fortunately, around this same time my

was totally lost. My band director, a trombone player named Ernie Beerends (who as far as I know is living in Bettendorf and teaching private lessons), started helping me that summer and teaching me how to count. Gradually I improved enough to get the alto back. I was really beginning to enjoy playing by now, and I started to get interested in what the band was doing. That

band director put the Glazounov *Concerto* in front of me. I'd never heard of this or any of the other critical literature for the instrument, but boy did it have lots of notes! And the drawing on the front was so ornate, I think it was a Baroque design of some sort. The combination was irresistible for me. Lots of notes and a fancy cover page, what more could I ask for? The next year he put the Ibert *Concertino da Camera* in front of me, and off I went.

Of course, I was nowhere near doing justice to either of those pieces, but I was hooked. I started flunking my other classes, including biology, and my dad was the biology teacher! He tried to convince my director to kick me out of band because I was practicing all of the time and not doing my other work!

Still, Linda somehow managed to graduate from high school, and soon found herself in Denton, Texas, at Texas Women's University as a Music Therapy major (as she explains, "I had no imagination, and it was a degree with 'music' in the title"). Because they had no saxophone teacher, she studied with the bassoon teacher, and began trying her hand at local contests.

I went to a 'Young Artists' competition my freshman year, sponsored by the San Angelo Symphony, and took the Glazounov. I didn't win, but I did run into a string bass player at the contest who was from North Texas State University, not that far from where I was. He heard me play and asked if I was planning on pursuing a career in music. I was elated at the prospect of making a living playing my instrument and, thinking he must be pretty impressed with my playing, responded with an enthusiastic Yes! "In that case," he told me, "you really need a teacher." He suggested I check into North Texas State, quickly. I took him up on his suggestion, but I'm ashamed to say I was pretty glad when he didn't win either.

So, I roller-skated over to North Texas State University (that was how I got around in those days) and managed to get an appointment with John Giordano. I auditioned for him, and spoke with him, and he allowed me to come to North Texas State on one condition: that I would never enter the

jazz program.

To this day I don't know why he stipulated that, because I was never very inquisitive, particularly back then. Besides, I didn't want to enter a jazz program anyway. In retrospect, I've only been able to come up with two possible explanations, and both are pure speculation.

It may have been that I was just that bad, and he didn't want me to mess up a perfectly good jazz program. In spite of my brash confidence and enthusiasm I had relatively little skill. I had yet to study with an actual saxophone player, and all I knew were the *Ibert* and the *Glazounov*. He may have been protecting his program.

Or, it may have been because I was the only girl out of the one hundred-five saxophone majors there. You have to realize that at this time, although North Texas was widely respected for its jazz program, the jazzers met in the basement of a decrepit old building with minimal structural integrity. At one point a piano actually fell through the floor and into one of the practice rooms below. And this was the late 60s, things were different then. Drugs were much more prominent, particularly in the jazz community, and free love was the rule of the day. I don't think North Texas was worse off than anyone else in this respect. In a way it may have



even dressed nicely on the day of the lesson so that I would appear to be a more serious player. I looked up to that man like no one before. It didn't hurt that he was Italian and beautiful, too.

While I was there, Jim Riggs (the current head of the saxo-

phone department at North Texas State University) was there working on his masters. Although he was a jazz player, he had to learn classical as well for his degree, and I ended up practicing next to him as we both worked on the *Ibert*. I remember aspiring to reach his level, make no mistake, he was



Linda's Home Studio



High School Student Quartet



High School Student Quartet



University Of Tulsa Sax Quartet

even built a certain character, I remember seeing piano players in the jazz band rip off and throw away keys that didn't play or were nowhere near in tune. They didn't stop playing to do it either. They just worked with what they had. But Giordano may have been protecting me from the smoke-filled caverns of an all-male jazz world."

So now you finally had a saxophone teacher.

Yes! Giordano became like a god to me. I wanted to do anything I could to please that man with my playing. I practiced literally eight hours a day. I

much, much better than I, and I was actually racing with him in an effort to play faster than he could. This was not the most musically sound decision I ever made, but trying to keep up with him definitely challenged and inspired me. I don't know if he even noticed.

Those four years changed my life completely. I was exposed to the world of music like never before. I had grown up in a house that listened to talk radio and Cardinal's baseball. The closest I came to hearing real music was in high school when my Dad went out and bought me a stack of Sonny Stitt albums. He carefully explained to me

that real musicians “didn’t read the notes.” I never even opened the albums, they’re probably in his attic somewhere. So not only was I not familiar with literature for classical saxophone, I was only vaguely familiar with any music before North Texas. I was exposed to literature like I’d never dreamed, and most of it had lots of notes! And music was a way of life for all of the music majors then. You practically lived in the music building. It was not at all unusual to stand for a long time outside one of the practice rooms waiting for someone to finish so you could go in.

And, of course, I didn’t practice down with all of the other saxophone players and jazzers. I practiced up where the violinists and flute players were. They had a nice building with tiled floors and music stands. Granted, I practiced there primarily because I was vain and full of myself, having a very limited number of peers with whom to put myself in perspective, but the experience was very useful. I learned about phrasing and vibrato in a way I never could have down in the saxophone world. I was exposed to Bach and Beethoven much more completely there than I ever could have been otherwise. I don’t know if the pianists and string players liked having a sax player honking away in their respectable little rooms, but it benefited me immensely.

Linda graduated from North Texas in 1972 with a degree in saxophone performance. Clueless as to what it was she actually intended to do for a living, other than not become a band director, she managed to grab a recently vacated saxophone assistantship at Wichita State University. This allowed her to pursue her master’s degree, but more importantly, it meant that she suddenly had students. Students who, in some cases, knew more than she did.

Kids were coming to Wichita State knowing altissimo, which I did not. So I locked myself in a practice room from dusk till dawn until I learned altissimo. It was very much a “have to” situation for me; I simply had to stay ahead of the students I was supposed to be teaching. When I found out my senior year at North Texas that I had been accepted for the following

semester at Wichita State as a graduate assistant I was elated, until it suddenly hit me: I’d never tried to teach anyone to play. I didn’t know how to describe vibrato. I didn’t know how to explain intonation.

Fortunately there was a graduate assistant at North Texas named Bob Austin who spent hour after hour with me, with no compensation, and showed me how to teach someone to breathe, to control their embouchure, or whatever.

After starting on my master’s at Wichita, I traveled once a week back to North Texas State to study with Elie Apper, who was there as a visiting professor when Giordano left. He’s now at the Brussels’ Conservatory in Belgium. In his own way, he was as challenging as Giordano. More practice, more literature, more refining.

Somehow I survived that first year. But the following year, Wichita State decided that they needed a true saxophone teacher, not simply a graduate assistant. They brought in John Sampen, fresh out of Northwestern, where he’d been studying with Hemke.

Boy, did I learn a great deal from that man! Basically, everything I know how to do well I learned under John Sampen. He taught me how to play clean. He taught me how to phrase. He taught me to care, not only about what was on the page, but about what was coming out of the other end of my horn and how clean it was, how rhythmically and musically correct it was, how it really sounded. He taught me about putting an ensemble together, and how to play with somebody. Previously when I had soloed, I played, the pianist played, and if all went well we met at the end. Sampen showed me how the parts worked together, and taught me about playing as one. He showed me how to take a piece completely apart and put it back together with all of the parts doing exactly what they are supposed to do. He was easily my single greatest influence. He made me become a player.

When he left, Fumiyoshi Maezawa came in. With him came more lessons, and more literature. What a thrill. And the more I learned, the more I fell in love with the instrument.

While working on her masters at

Wichita State, Linda began teaching at Friends University, a Quaker school in Wichita. She continued teaching there after graduation until her husband was transferred to Tulsa in 1981. In the late 80s she had an opportunity to substitute for Dwight Dailey, the previous head of the saxophone department at the University of Tulsa, while he was away on sabbatical. When he retired in 1989, she was offered the post, and has filled it quite successfully ever since. In addition to her students through the university, she accepts on a first come, first serve basis students of any level who wish to improve their saxophone skills. The studio in her home contains reminders of every step along the way.

Alongside photos of a young Linda in her high school uniform twirling her heart out, are pictures of her in Fumiyoshi Maezawa’s quartet, in which she played soprano for several years after college. Displayed alongside these are pictures of her with each of her other major instructors: Giordano, Apper, and Sampen. Also represented are a number of Master Lessons taken with Fred Hemke, Paul Brodie, Eugene Rousseau, Jim Riggs, Sigurd Rascher, and Harvey Pittel. Many of the photos are accompanied by letters of praise from the various teachers, some for work as a featured soloist, others for work done in various quartets or other contexts.

The wall she is much prouder of, though, represents what she considers her most important accomplishments to date. This wall is covered with pictures of and by her students. “They’re the ones who make me look good,” she insists.

So, how did someone with a promising future in performance end up in the heart of the Midwest, rarely traveling, and teaching fifteen year-olds how to use a high F# key?

Well, at first it just sort of happened, she explains. After I graduated, I got married to Monty, a wonderful man who is the absolute biggest thrill of my life. Needless to say, that slowed me down, albeit only slightly. In September of 1976, Jacob, my first son, was born. Now, at this point I figured, “no problem.” I was confident that I could travel, play, practice eight hours a day and raise a baby boy. It only took until

December for me to realize that just was not going to happen. I wanted to play, but more than that I wanted to be a Mom. I wanted to actually raise my kid (soon to be kids. Mark was born in 1980). And whatever else I did was just going to have to work around that, not vice versa.

In retrospect, I'm glad not only that I took the opportunity to be with my boys as they grew up, but that my decision forced me to concentrate on teaching. I don't know at what point I first realized it, but I absolutely love it. I get so excited when my kids do well, even if it's just one line in one piece and it's taken them all week to get it just so.

I also feel very honored to be a part of such a prestigious university, and one that understands what it takes to have a truly successful music program. Ron Predl (director of the TU school of music) is fabulous to work with, and I'm surrounded by people who are not only gifted professionals, but whom I actually enjoy being around. Of course I'd say that anyway, but in this case it happens to be true. I also live in Broken Arrow, a Tulsa suburb, where the band program is extremely strong.

What makes Linda such a successful teacher? Sure she's an excellent player, but there are plenty of great players who are unable to consistently produce superior students at every level. I asked about her experience with kids in general over the last twenty years, and about teaching in Tulsa in particular. Although a wonderful city in many ways, a hotbed of cultural activity it is not. Even the most determined student is simply not exposed to the variety of great players that someone on either coast or in a major metropolitan area can be. How does she handle this lack of exposure, and how does she motivate her kids to really learn?

I have a real enthusiasm for the saxophone, and for my students. No one is more excited than I am when they do something well, or when they win an award. And it doesn't matter if you're in Chicago or Pawhuska when you accomplish something you've set out to accomplish.

I do try my hardest to expose them to my world. My recitals are, of course, all free, and though I can't require them to attend, I do strongly encour-

age it, and most do come. I can expose them to the literature. I can introduce them to the best players via CDs. There is no reason that a student in Tulsa cannot become fully equipped to move to the coast, or anywhere for that matter, and pursue playing or further study. There is certainly nothing in the water here to make them inherently less of a musician.

And students are coming to me better prepared, with more smarts and more talent every year. I'm constantly amazed. They come in with more and go farther in a shorter amount of time each year. I don't know if kids are genetically improving or if the schools are simply getting better and better at bringing out the musician in them, but I'll take it.

This makes it possible to teach literature at a much earlier age than I was ever capable. And, of course, the rudiments are essential. Every week, my kids pick out a poker chip and turn it over. Whatever key is on the other side, they have to play me that major scale, that major arpeggio, major thirds, octaves, minor scale and arpeggio, minor thirds, then the chromatic scale beginning and ending on that note, the diminished scale beginning and ending on that note, whole tone scales, everything. I make sure that my students know their craft. And I have yet to encounter one that simply cannot learn those things.

I do wish band directors would avoid requiring saxophone players to start on the clarinet. The clarinet embouchure and the saxophone embouchure are not the same. The angle of the horn going into the mouth is not the same. The direction of the air is not the same. Sure, the fingerings are similar, and both use a reed and a mouthpiece, but it's a real thorn in my side when a director requires kids to start on clarinet, then six months or a year later allows them to switch to saxophone, and want me to clean up their mess. Suddenly these kids have to discard everything they know and try to learn a similar but distinctly different approach to an instrument, quickly.

Most of them would be better off sitting in band without an instrument the first year than to start on clarinet.

As far as the literature goes, I work

very hard to match the piece to the personality. I want the kids to like the music they are asked to play. Generally, at that level, if you don't like a piece of music you're probably not going to learn to play it very well. Of course, it helps to hear the piece, so I try to keep a well-stocked library of performances. I record all of my performances, and I give them access to the professionally recorded versions of whatever piece we're looking at if they are available. Whatever it takes to let the student get an idea of whether they'll like it or not.

It's wonderful having students come to me ready to get into literature and fine-tuning their skills. Not that kids don't come in with the occasional intonation problem or poor hand position, but these are things we can fix, if the student will allow me to help them. And I've made most of the mistakes my students are going to come up with. I've played the saxophone in almost every wrong way possible. What mistakes I've not made, I've come across often enough in teaching that there are very few mysteries the student and I can't solve together. On the rare occasion that they simply won't move forward, I'm very up front with them. I tell them, "Look, you're paying me every week to help you. Obviously you think that I'm better at this than you. Why aren't you taking my advice?" The standard reply is "I'm trying." Now, as any experienced teacher will tell you, there is a world of difference between "trying-but-can't" and "not trying." So I politely but firmly point out that we've been working on the same problem for a dozen lessons or whatever, and that maybe they need to rethink whether they really want to play the saxophone. I suggest they talk about it with their parents and decide whether they wish to improve, which is something I can help them do, or just hang out and play the same way every day, in which case they are wasting their parents' money. Fortunately, confrontation of that sort is rare, it's just usually not necessary. I will not sit for half an hour and listen to a kid practice. If it's one of my college kids, I simply leave the room until they're ready to get serious, but in private lessons there's no reason to put myself through that.

I think it's important, though, for the student to realize that it's OK to make mistakes. We all do, no matter how hard we practice. I tell them at the first lesson that if they make a mistake, we'll accept it, correct it, and move on. This is the place to screw up, we can fix it here. They need to understand that I cannot and would not punish them. I can't send them to their rooms or ground them over the weekend, and I will never, ever raise my voice to them. We can be quite serious about learning and have fun in our lessons.

Let's face it, kids are stressed out enough these days. Many of the younger players don't even know for sure that they want to play the saxophone forever. Why make it a nightmare for them when it can be a good experience, whether they continue or not? At the same time, younger players need someone to make them practice. Heck, they need someone to tell them when to blow their nose, of course they need someone to tell them to go play their horn. That's why I like it when the band directors have regular chair tests. It keeps the kids motivated, they either practice or they quit. And I don't ask for hours and hours of practice from young students. I emphasize consistency and quality of practice. As they grow as people and as players they'll figure out that it's more fun if they put enough effort into it to really do well.

I also find that kids who play an instrument do much better academically. So many of my students are honor students, and I'm sure that proportionally that's true of most band students. When you play a musical instrument you get an immediate feedback that tells you how much you're studying, or practicing, in this case. Spend time with it, and you do well. Don't, and you won't. That's true of any subject.

The students are much more aware than they let on of how well they can or can't play. They know who can play better than them and who can beat them in a chair test or in a contest. And they carefully gauge their behavior based on what they think the results will be.

I'm fortunate because my students have made my reputation. All I do is guide them, they do all of the work.

Ninety-nine percent of my students get some sort of financial aid for playing in college, in spite of the fact that many of them are not music majors. They have vindicated my belief that you can focus on having fun with your instrument, which is why I've pursued the saxophone for this many years, and strive for excellence.

Linda plays at almost every opportunity, not only giving her students and other local players a chance to hear the music she loves, but keeping herself constantly challenged. Recitals, American music concerts, new music concerts, all-women concerts or concerts highlighting women composers, chamber music concerts, whatever comes up.

Students and their parents, other players, even past students show up and fill the room on most occasions. She has an affinity for "lots of notes," and while it's important for a piece to be lyrical in order to be chosen, given the option between two or three lyrically interesting pieces she will always choose the most technically demanding. What does she do to prepare for these performances, and how does she prepare her students for their moments in the spotlight? Is it all technical wizardry, or do serious performances require a "spiritual" element as well? What are the important elements she shares with her students for going out after all of this practice and actually playing for somebody?

There's certainly an emotional or spiritual element to playing. I teach my students that way and I try to be aware of it with my own music. You visualize what the music is communicating, you find the message within the notes. It's both a very personal experience and a very critical one. Without it you may have a very clean technical performance, but you will not have moved your audience. My favorite player is Robert Black. He is so technically clean, and yet so emotionally energized. His choice of literature is always profound. He's my hero. Ideally, I want to have an effect on my audience like he has on me. But I want the audience to at least react to my playing and to my students' playing. Good, bad, whatever, as long as they react.

Technically I prepare as long in advance as possible, usually several months at least, and I try to instill that

sort of work ethic in my students as well. No performance will be perfect, in fact, you can always relax a little after that first error, because it's out of the way. But saxophonists simply must hold themselves to a higher standard of performance. I have some professional recordings of some very prominent names playing and making mistakes that a violin soloist or flute player would not tolerate on a commercial release. The standards are getting higher, but I would like to see more awareness of that at the professional level.

Anyway, in spite of that preparation, I try to maintain my daily routine up through the day of the performance as much as possible. I encourage my students to do the same. Do the sensible things, get plenty of rest the night before, give yourself plenty of time to get there, but know that you are prepared. Be confident. And I have them practice the little things, walking on stage, tuning, where to stand in relation to the judges, all of that. A young student can know a piece inside out and get blown away by something trivial if they are unprepared for it. I particularly emphasize tuning. The few moments it takes may seem like forever, but it will never seem as long as playing an entire recital a quarter-tone off from your accompanist.

During the practices leading up to a student's recital or contest, I'll talk to them while they play to get them used to dealing with distraction. I'll make comments on their playing so they can make adjustments without losing the flow of the music. When rehearsing with the pianist I'll talk to the student and make them answer during long rests. I don't want them to rely on counting measures, I want them to know the accompaniment as well as their own part.

Ensembles are also a big thing with me. I strongly encourage my kids to get together in quartets or other combinations and work out pieces together. It's necessary in order to be a good musician, and it also gives them an opportunity to cooperate and support one another rather than always being in direct competition.

One idea that has really worked out for both my high school and college students is the judging clinic I run at

the University before the high school competitions. I teach my college kids how to judge, something they will likely (eventually) be called upon to do if they pursue a career in music. Then, I reserve the recital hall and bring in all of my high school and junior high students to play their solos for the college kids. They gain the experience of playing for a judge and get comment sheets and scores without the pressure of a "real" contest, and the music majors learn how to judge young players. It works out great for everyone.

Equipment-wise, I think the reed and mouthpiece setup are critical. I encourage parents at the earliest possible opportunity to get their kids a professional mouthpiece and decent reeds. Most of them end up with a Selmer S-80 C*, but if something else works better for them, so be it. Normal metal ligatures are fine, but I do insist on Vandoren reeds. As far as horns go, I have a very hard time telling the parent of a high-school student that they need to spend \$3000 on little Johnny or he won't sound good. Many of my kids switch to pro horns before they graduate from high school, but I never push the issue. Of course the college students are expected to have a better instrument. I've always played the Buffet, but any legitimate professional instrument is fine for the students. It's a matter of what they can afford and what works for them.

More important than the brand of the horn, I think, is its condition. It doesn't matter how expensive an instrument is if it's seriously out of adjustment or you can't get it fixed correctly when something happens to it. There will always be more so-called "repair" people who do more harm than good to the horns they touch than there are professionals who take pride in their work and have the skill and know-how to really bring an instrument up to its full potential. I feel very fortunate to have a good working relationship with Paul Felzke here in Tulsa. He's probably the finest repair man in the state, if not the entire Midwest.

One thing I do regret is that I don't have a teacher here. I always had a teacher before. Different teachers, but always great ones. They introduced me

to new literature and recordings and provided other information and insights and, even more importantly, they provided a situation where I had to play for someone every week. I need that. I sorely miss being forced to stay accountable, to continually prove that I can do it. After my husband was transferred here in 1981, I lost that. I've been able to make up for that somewhat with the *Saxophone Journal*. The reviews, comments on new literature, ideas on playing, it's invaluable. Because, as much as I love Tulsa, in this area, I'm it.

Despite her modesty, I suspect Linda would be "it" in many much larger cities than Tulsa, even ones filled with many players. The excitement and dedication she has brought not only to her playing, but to passing that knowledge and skill along to the next generation are invaluable. Invaluable to classical saxophone in general, a form striving to come into its own. But more importantly, invaluable to the students who learn not only technical proficiency and musical styles, but who learn something about why to play, and how to make that experience mean something, whether they play twelve hours a day as a living or one hour a week as a hobby.

And that, perhaps, is the most important thing a person can do when destiny puts you into such an enviable position. §