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Jerome Barry, Founder/Director

Dear Friends,

Twenty five years. Hard to believe. A twenty-fifth birthday is a hopeful, energetic notation for young people, an impossible landmark for a pet, just another day at the office for Methusala.

But for us at the Embassy Series, as we look forward to the spring portion of our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, it is an occasion for not a little pride, evidence that dreams really do come true, however improbably, and a moment to remember with both bemusement and a little wonder about our small beginnings. It is true there is ambition of a general sort involved in beginnings---we, myself and my wife, Lisette, my constant guide and bulwark, had some idea of creating an institution that would seize the opportunity inherent in the existence of this city's rich diplomatic community to present evenings of musical art and performance joined to a social occasion (with food) that would allow patrons to travel the world without leaving the city.

Over time, and with literally over one hundred embassies and the residences of ambassadors, as well as occasionally international and specific cultural centers as venues, we managed to broaden and deepen that original impulse and even give the task a name—we practiced cultural and especially musical diplomacy all around the town and the world in a manner of speaking. In the process, (some 600 concerts, 200 ambassadors), we presented to our patrons over one thousand rising, young as well as established musical artists, with the initial and primary focus on selections from the established classical canon from Beethoven to Mozart, to Tchaikovsky, to Chopin, to Bach and Brahms and the works of the Strauss waltz kings.

Over time again, that approach in terms of music soon broadened and expanded to include at various times music specific to the countries who participated, music both ethnic and ancient and characteristic. We further broadened and shared our musical selections to include the more modern, including pop and jazz.

Even more importantly, we realized that musical diplomacy meant a recognition that we lived in a constantly changing world, a fact not only reflected in the comings and goings of embassy ambassadors and staff, but in the nature of diplomacy, and the changes in governments. **We came to believe and still do that the world operates through the confluence and interactions of others with each other, people of different hues, cultures, belief and political system in the company of each other.** Our concerts, we believed and still do, were occasions which undermined long-held and established clichés held by all of us about each other.

We also came to view these concerts as more than just performances, but as events in the lives of the participants, artists, officials and audiences. Sometimes—because of an international tragedy, a commemoration of origins and beginnings, or simply something mysterious as a piece

of particularly well-played music connected with the audience and took flight—something magic occurred, and memories were made.

We can point out the two times: marching bands from a school in heartland America in Indiana were the audience for concerts at the Embassies of Austria and The Russian Federation, and how the occasion transcended events outside and became events themselves. We remember concerts—sad, moving and epochal—at the Embassy of France which were fitting memorials in the aftermath of shocking acts of terror. **We remember—even and especially now the last concert at the Embassy of Syria, which closed and remained so after the horrors of civil wars engulfed that country.** And, in a different and more recent vein, we remember last month's concert at the Embassy of Slovakia, which moved us with nothing more than the civil greeting from the new ambassador, classic, gypsy and tango music being played with artistry and grace on violin and guitar and the easy interaction that occurred in its wake—helped by astonishingly delicious cuisine.

**And those who attended the concert at the Residence of the Polish Ambassador last month and the excellent coverage of Public Television (PBS) will attest to the efficacy of musical diplomacy. The ½ hour special is permanently viewable on the YouTube. The program can be seen all over the world and is the prototype of our noble mission of “Uniting People Through Musical Diplomacy.”**

In all those memories made and during all that time, we realize that none of this could have happened and been achieved without you—our patrons, our audience, our friends, both new and old. Some of you have been there from the beginning and some of us came along on later parts of our journey.

Nothing can happen without your support and we hope your affections and your contributions continue. I know how many people ask for your end-of-year financial support, but all non-profits must constantly re-valuate their fundraising technique.

We hope you, and people you know who don't as yet know about us, will support us at a time of year-end giving opportunities. Join us on future journey—you can get an idea from the enclosed brochure for our 2019 concerts—pass the word and please give us your continued and much-appreciated support.

Warmest thanks and best wishes for a beautiful holiday season. We look forward to greeting you in the spring when we will present a panoply of unique events.



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