

## Memories & Tributes to Clara Lyle Boone

*The following testimonials, some on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of Arsis Press, bear witness to the profound influence Clara Boone's encouragement had on many composers and performers, the personal interest she took in each composer she published, and the affection the various musicians in her life had for this extraordinary woman*

When I first saw Clara Boone she had a book bag thrown over her shoulder and she looked like a free spirit with lots of daring-do, one who could take on the publishing world and conquer it for women composers. This she has done! Clara, I salute you with admiration and affection on this 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of your company!

Harriet Bolz (1909-1995), in 1984

Clara Lyle Boone has made a superb contribution to the women's music movement through the creation of *Arsis Press*. Quietly, humorously, patiently and stubbornly, Clara has proved wrong all of the early (and late) predictions of failure for a publishing company devoted to women's music. Her editions are as tasteful as her advocacy letters; her attention to detail as punctilious and pleasant as everything else in her life.

Anecdotes? I wouldn't know where to begin!

The first ten years were only the beginning, Clara. We know the next ten will be even more extraordinary.

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Clara was a wonderful champion of music by women, and a fine composer herself. How sad that she is gone. But her legacy remains with us forever.

Emma Lou Diemer, 1984 & 2015

Clara Boone's advocacy of women's music dating from the 1950's culminated in the founding of Arsis Press in 1974. Her publications provided a springboard for many composers; her friendship and advice were priceless. Thank you, Clara, rest in peace!

Clare Shore, 2015

What Clara did was recognize my ability before anyone else did. She gave me the dignity and recognition of being published. It's hard to exaggerate how much it means to make that connection with the outside world of publishers and agents. Composing is a very solitary process, it's very isolated, and it's very personal. She helped me see myself as a professional, in both a spiritual sense and a practical sense.

Anna Larson (1940-2007), in 1997

I have deep respect and gratitude for Ms. Boone's decades of promoting women composers and their work.

Renee Arakaki, 2015

Clara was and is determined  
to present works of women composing in a wide variety of styles...

in professional quality publications  
whose beauty rivals those huge publishing houses lavish  
only on their most promising male composers.

For a decade's devotion and persistence  
by a fine musician/composer,  
women and women composers are not the only ones to benefit...

All who live and listen in our time are indebted to her.

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Daniel Boone would be as proud to have this pioneering musician, teacher, publisher, and  
community activist as his descendant, as she was to call him her forefather.

Jane Brockman, 1984 & 2015

Clara was the catalyst for my reemergence into the central meaning of living for me: that of  
writing music. At a time when I had become despondent about returning to composition after  
many years of nurturing my family, one daughter having been chronically ill since birth, Clara  
became one of the first advocates for my music by publishing my choral music.

I knew that I could trust Clara's musical perspicacity, since she seemed to read my musical mind  
so effortlessly. A fierce proponent and champion for lesser known women composers, Clara did  
not suffer fools gladly!

Her contribution to the music of today resonates mightily and the musical seeds she has planted  
will continue to sprout.

Elizabeth R. Austin, 2015

My neighbor, friend, and publisher, Clara Boone has been a source of humor, support, and good  
advice for the seven years that I have lived on Capitol Hill. There are many anecdotes that I  
might tell, like the time, for instance, that Clara and I, on the impulse of the moment, went fund  
raising dressed, as Clara later put it, "like school girls"—in Capitol Hill *de rigueur* denim skirts,  
walking shoes, even emblematic bluestockings, not calculated to convince the several bank vice  
presidents to whom we went. We did not strike pay dirt that day, but we did eventually get funds  
for the cause, the woman's concert at the Library of Congress.

Clara tells one anecdote about the early days of *Arsis Press*. While delivering scores of women to  
music stores for possible distribution, she encountered one clerk who told her, in a very loud and  
hostile voice, that she could not possibly be carrying such cargo since, in his words, "There are no  
women composers." Typical of her ingenuity, she not only managed to circumvent him and  
persuade the management of one of Washington's largest downtown music stores to distribute her  
scores, she also accomplished his conversion. Soon thereafter he was promoting *Arsis Press*  
scores.

It is Clara's appealing combination of forthright honesty and gentle tact that have accounted for much of the success of Arsis Press. In another age, I am sure that she would have made an excellent missionary in that she combines uniquely the crusader's zeal and the warm caring humanity that have made her such an excellent judge of the music she promotes.

While League members are well aware of Clara's contribution to women in music, those of us who live in Washington are also aware of her long record of community service. She is an active member of Capitol Hill Methodist Church, where she sings in the choir and occasionally plays for services. She has also been a reliable neighbor, a friend that the people on her block turn to for help and advice. She has lent her valuable business expertise to Jones Trucking Service, a Capitol Hill neighbor, for years. Anyone who has walked through Capitol Hill with her is immediately made aware of her years as a teacher in the District of Columbia Public Schools by the numerous young people who extend their warm and admiring greetings.

As program coordinator of the Contemporary Music Forum, I should also mention that Clara Boone is a composer to whom audiences respond. In this age of academic excess, her *Songs of Estrangement* drew enthusiastic, extended applause. They are songs of soul and sensitive communication.

Clara is an individual given over to a dream: that dream is *Arsis Press*. But more fundamentally she is given over to giving. She came forward at a time when we as women who write music needed her. Acting out of generosity, she was destined as a treasure for some important cause. In fact, she has already been just that for many important causes: the legislation for the National Endowment for the Arts, the civil rights movement, the women's movement, to name a few. In that she was bound to give of herself to yet another cause and to invest her energetic creativity in yet more fortunate individuals, we are privileged indeed that we are the ones who got her.

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Clara was such a unique individual; ready to fix the things she believed needed fixing. This passion led her to run for the US Congress in Kentucky, to found and run Arsis Press, to turn up at the concerts of her Arsis Press composers here in DC. She was a born pioneer, like her Boone ancestors. Clara was a wonderful sight on Capitol Hill, biking to her errands in a broad rimmed sun hat and white gloves. Her innate gentility and Southern manners masked her true identity as a determined revolutionary. She led the way for women composers for at least two generations, and she did change the things that needed changing for all of us.

Frances McKay, 1984 & 2015

From her very first response to an audition cassette that I sent to Arsis in 1988, Clara has always stood out in my mind as an exceptionally humane and encouraging publisher. Arsis Press was the first publisher to respond to my young and inexperienced inquiries, and brought out my "Eternal Life With Thee" that same year. I will always be grateful for her warm welcome to the music publishing world.

Carol Barnett, 2015

Clara was always so sweet to me; she went out of her way to acquire rights to one of her favorite paintings for the cover of my Clarinet Sonata.

Carolyn Bremer, 2015

It is a joy just to stop and think of Clara when my days get out of control as they often do. Clara in her Bay Street house with her face shining with serenity—surely it would fill me too with some of her quiet peacefulness.

I happen to know that her life is not really peaceful at all. Work not done on time—in my case the graphics were three years late (I think it was 3). Clara was frustrated and disappointed; anyone else would have been desperate. But in her gentle way she went about repairing the damage, altering her catalogue, withdrawing from the publisher's annual competition.

I have seen Clara sweetly congratulate a singer who had left out the last page of her beautiful song. I have admired her selfless way of concentrating on others' music instead of her own. I am happy that her work is heard here increasingly and am uplifted by hearing it.

Bertha Terry Donahue (1917-1994), in 1984

Clara Lyle Boone has done a great deal for me in my life as a composer. I reread the letters I received from her a few years back when I first submitted works for *Arsis Press* and during the time my piano sonata was in the process of publication. I was once again touched by her dedication to the woman composer and by her untiring support of my work. I have never met her, and yet she has spent a lot of her time and energy taking my scores to performers and promoting my compositions. Her encouraging words to me have always made me feel like I really did have something to offer. I recently have made a greater commitment to composition and music in my life, and it was very timely for me to reread Clara's letters now as it reaffirms my dedication to my work. I think Clara deserves a great deal of admiration for her devotion and support of women musicians and I personally owe her a great deal for the impact she has had on my life.

Jane Frasier, 1984

To Clara Lyle Boone,  
In appreciation of your long years of loving effort to recognize, promote, and inspire women composers.

CONGRATULATIONS, and Many Thanks!

Susan E. Funk, 1984

Among the gems of the mandolin repertoire are two songs by Mozart with mandolin accompaniment. There was never anything to program with them, though, so I was thrilled to discover Clara Lyle Boone's Slumber Song. The piece was written for voice with an unspecified melody instrument, but works very well on the mandolin, and I have programmed it with Mozart many times.

Neil Gladd, website, 2015

Three cheers for Clara, and three cheers for Arsis Press. May we all be around to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary!

Winifred Hyson, 1984

Although I never had the pleasure to meet her in person, she impacted my life and so many other women composers immensely. What a wonderful legacy to leave in this world.

Ingrid Stolzel, 2015

Dear Clara,

I wonder if you will recall that our first exchange of letters was about a Requiem Mass which I had just composed, and which I sent to you with great hubris, considering that it had not been performed! Your letter of refusal was extraordinary in that instead of feeling rejected, I was aware of having contacted a person who was taking me seriously as a composer. Thus emboldened I sent you materials, which you were able to accept. But I shall always remember the very positive note you sounded in your refusal, and the helpful information your letter contained. How much it meant to me at that time to be given serious consideration! This was a turning point for me.

Your work with Arsis Press has been a major factor in creating visibility and public awareness of women composers.

Ruth Lomon, 1984

Clara Lyle Boone passionately devoted her life to the promotion of women composers. With her beautiful editions of their music, she granted women opportunities previously unavailable to them. May the memory of her pioneering work live on.

Janet Peachey, 2015

To Clara,

Happy 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary!  
Long live Clara Lyle Boone and Arsis Press!

Very best wishes,

Nancy Van de Vate, 1984

Clara began publishing some of my works in 1994 and I have a lovely folder of all our correspondence--actual letters that went back and forth in the mail! She often closed her letters with a mention of her life in the moment, her bicycle ride to the post office, her back surgery, Washington's snow emergency, or lovely insights into her self-perception ("For me accounting is a learned discipline, not a natural gift."). Without ever meeting her in person, she was able to create a friendship fabric with me over a great distance.

Although Clara was always supportive and encouraging, she did offer very specific criticisms when she felt strongly, always on behalf of what she termed "your true musical voice." She seemed to me to be a wonderful mix of powerful intuitions and practicality. I was thrilled when she took on the task of making more orchestral works by women available through Arsis and this, too, seemed to be a mix of intuition about what would be marketable and practicality ("...we should have a 'trial run' before venturing into a commercial print effort.').

Thank you, Clara, for your efforts on my behalf and other women who compose. Your long and loving efforts have contributed mightily and graciously to our progress in this world of music!

Zae Munn, 2015

Dear Clara Lyle Boone,  
I hope this is in time to be included in what can only be an *outpouring* of appreciation and affection for you on your tenth publishing anniversary.

It may be for others, as for me, a surprisingly rare occurrence to have a trusted musician sit down with our scores and give in some detail generous-willed and insightful comments.

It was touching to me, and very much made its mark in a connection I feel towards you and your work—even though we have yet to meet and have exchanged only a few letters...

It has been an especial source of satisfaction and pleasure to be included among those published by *Arsis Press!*

Alexandra Pierce, 1984

### To Clara

Can you think of a  
Laurel more suited to her than  
A song that  
Resounds  
And a tempo that soars;

Leaps that define  
Your musical shape;  
Lines that  
Etch a new musical space?

Bring  
Only your  
Own voice;  
Nothing else, no ingenious device will  
Entice the taste of Clara Lyle Boone.

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Clara Lyle Boone believed in women composers when most people could not even imagine that such exotic creatures walked the earth! And she not only believed, but also devised a plan to support our work through beautifully designed and thoughtful publication. She was a woman of powerful determination, as well as one with a sense of humor and a twinkle in her beautiful blue-grey eyes. When I read comments by numerous, especially young, women today, and even by some at the time, who believed that there is/was no issue to address, Clara immediately leaps to mind. In my own life, while I have seen some important changes in the possibilities for women as composers (and performers), I still see how much remains to be done. Clara helped steer many of us on our paths, and gave of herself in a remarkably selfless manner. She will live on in the beautiful music that she fostered and in our multitude of memories.

Judith Shatin, 1984 & 2015

The founding of *Arsis Press* was an historic moment for women composers. All too often our scores have languished on closet shelves, unpublished and unperformed. For those in the *Arsis* catalogue, there has been not only the joy of seeing one's own music beautifully printed but also the additional pleasure of working with a publisher who truly understands what one is about. Congratulations to Clara Lyle Boone on the tenth anniversary of *Arsis Press*! *Arsis Press* has made its mark and has made a difference.

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Clara Lyle Boone had many accomplishments but I knew her best as a passionate feminist, a pioneering publisher of women's music, a prolific correspondent, and a steadfast friend and mentor. Her press was the first to publish my music and that made a world of difference to me and to others like me whose first publications came through *Arsis Press*.

While I mourn her loss. I will forever remember and cherish her friendship and support, and those wonderful letters revealing her irrepressible and quirky spirit in comments such as: "Dear girl, I can see you breaking trails when you are ninety!" and "I'm glad you did not cut off the applause" [on a taped performance]. I also know that her own trail-blazing press continues to function under Empire Music Services as she has arranged.

Elizabeth Vercoe, 1984 & 2015

Thank you, Clara and *Arsis* press, for giving young, unpublished (or under-published) composers the encouragement of publication. BRAVO!!!"

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Clara, I applaud your strength of conviction and your generosity of spirit and time in your work on behalf of women composers. I celebrate your life, and thank you for all that you have done for us all.

Gwyneth Walker, 1984 & 2015

Clara was a true original. She was a good friend to me, and I loved that she remained completely young at heart, even in her last months.

In 1974, with her own spirit and money, she created *Arsis Press*, whose mission was to promote and publish works by women composers. She gave validation to many women composers, including myself, in an era where women composers were particularly overlooked.

We will all miss her smiling face and her tireless spirit but her legacy will live on.

Lori Laitman, 2015