

Intermezzo

cfm
chicago federation of musicians
local 10-208 afm

November 2021
Special Edition



GARY MATTS
1951-2021

FROM THE FAMILY

GARY MATTS

SEPTEMBER 16, 1951 - OCTOBER 11, 2021

Putting into words the essence of who Gary Matts is certainly a tall task. Logic says to go in chronological order, which happens to start with the first love of his life: music.

Gary began playing the drums at age 6, joyfully attending weekly drum lessons. He attended Lane Tech High School in the city of Chicago where he participated in the school orchestra and concert band (not to be confused with the school marching band, which he definitely wanted to have no part of!). He would play drums at family parties, accompanied by his brother who would quite resentfully play the accordion. When the family wasn't playing music, they were taking fishing trips to Wisconsin, the highlight of Gary's childhood summers.

After graduating from Lane Tech, Gary continued his education at the University of Illinois - Chicago where he studied chemistry in his first year. He quickly realized that his heart did not lie among test tubes and beakers, but rather among timpani and bongos. He switched to the Chicago Musical College of Roosevelt University where he followed his true passion: playing percussion. He graduated in 1974.

Music then took him on a wonderful decades-long journey through many genres, theaters, venues and cities. In the Chicagoland area, the audiences of the Shubert Theatre, Arie Crown Theater, Drury Lane Theatre, Chicago Theatre, Auditorium Theatre – among

many others – were graced with his playing. The Civic Orchestra of Chicago and the Lyric Opera Orchestra also called Gary one of their own. He not only rubbed elbows with some of the most elite in entertainment, but even got to accompany some of them, such as Luciano Pavarotti, Johnny Mathis, Burt Bacharach, Julie Andrews, Bernadette Peters, Vic Damone and countless others.

Most of Gary's musician pals knew him for, besides his rimshot-worthy sense of humor, his parts in TV commercials and Broadway musicals. Collaborating on drums and percussion for producers such as Dick Marx, Comtrack, Alan Barcus Music, Colnot Fryer Music, Klaff/Weinstein Music, Steve Sperry, Alan Moore Music and others, he added the beat to commercials for United, McDonald's, CarX, The Beef Council and Allstate to name a few. He was the go-to drummer and percussionist for years for many Broadway shows in Chicago, including *Evita*, *Cats*, *Pirates of Penzance*, *Phantom of the Opera*, *Les Miserables*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *Joseph and the Technicolor Dreamcoat*, *Guys and Dolls*, *42nd Street*, *Miss Saigon*, *Ragtime*, *The King and I* and many more. This was Gary's niche; so much so that he was awarded a Living Art of Music Award (LAMA) in 1994 for Best Theater Musician in the Midwest. In 1999 Gary took his musical talents on the road and traveled with the production of *Fosse* through many cities in the US and Canada.



Gary could even make glasses sparkle.

Gary shifted his focus from performing to labor leadership in 2004 when he was elected President of the Chicago Federation of Musicians, of which he had been a member since 1969. Prior to his presidency, Gary served on the Board of Directors and as assistant to the previous president. His work as president encompassed negotiating several multi-million dollar contracts for the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Lyric Opera and various other musical organizations. He was also a board member of the American Federation of Musicians Employers Pension Fund. He retired from Union leadership in 2016. In addition to his Union responsibilities Gary served as board member of the Illinois Arts Council from 2013 to the present.

Although music was at the center of Gary's life, he also cultivated other interests, one of these being architecture, having been an avid enthusiast of Midwest architects such as Frank Lloyd Wright and Louis Sullivan and the Catalan architect Antoni Gaudí. Perhaps this is what inspired him to try his hand at sketching as well. Gary also took pleasure in the outdoors, enjoying bike rides together with his wife on trails all over the Chicago area. Scuba diving was another outdoor pursuit he enjoyed, visiting several sites in the Caribbean and Hawaii. He also traveled to Spain, France, Germany, Italy and Ecuador, indulging in the local culture of each country.

Anyone who knew Gary was well aware that he was an avid "foodie", always willing to try unique and adventurous cuisines. He also tried his hand at gourmet cooking, often following the recipes of Jacques Pépin. As a former chemistry student, a natural transition later in life was to be a mixologist, creating exquisite cocktails

for all the guests he so graciously entertained at his home. He loved spending time with people, sharing meals, anecdotes and thoughts on life in general.

Gary's greatest love was his family. As a husband, he was blessed to spend 45 years together in marriage with his wife Kathy. They had three children: Janine, Kevin and Karen, all three of whom followed musical pursuits well into their teenage years. Gary was always proud to share the accomplishments of his children on their different paths. He loved spending time with his cherished grandsons, who adored their grandpa.

In the last few years, Gary continued to keep music very present in his life. He played drums for the 10:00 Sunday mass at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish. He also loved playing drums and piano with his oldest grandson Joaquin; their preferred repertoire included "Itsy Bitsy Spider" and "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star". Recently, his second-born grandson Stephen also got in on the action. Many jam sessions were via Zoom because of the geographic distance, but Gary's passion for music was definitely transmitted to the next generation.

Gary will be greatly missed by many, but his essence will perdure. He has been described by those who knew him as a good-natured, honest, noble, thoughtful, generous, insightful man with a big heart. And that is how he will live on through all those whose lives he touched.

In lieu of flowers, please honor Gary's caring spirit by making a gift to the [Pancreatic Cancer Action Network](https://pancan.org/) (pancan.org) or the [scholarship fund](#) at the Chicago Federation of Musicians.



Gary gives his acceptance speech after his inauguration, December 2004.



Gary drums at son Kevin's wedding.

FROM THE AFM PRESIDENT

RAYMOND HAIR JR.



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AMERICAN FEDERATION OF MUSICIANS

OF THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA
AFL-CIO/CLC Affiliated

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October 14, 2021

Terry Jares, President
Chicago Federation of Musicians
Local 10-208 American Federation of Musicians
656 West Randolph, Suite 2W
Chicago, Illinois 60661

RE: Loss of Gary Matts

Dear Terry:

All of your AFM Executive Officers and staff, and Trustees and staff of the AFM's pension fund were shocked and deeply saddened to learn of the untimely passing of Local 10-208 President Emeritus Gary Matts, who departed this earth Monday evening, October 11, 2021. I cannot imagine how difficult your loss must be under these circumstances, but please know that fond memories of Gary are uppermost in our minds at this time. We know that his wife Kathy and family, and the many friends and colleagues he worked with in life as a husband, father, accomplished musician, student, teacher, union officer and pension fund trustee will miss him in ways that words cannot adequately express.

I knew Gary as a peacemaker, as a kind soul with a caring and generous heart who was dedicated to the good and welfare of professional musicians and who sought to promote compromise and middle ground among the natural conflicts that always arise in our workplaces.

Please know that we will honor and support the memory of Gary Matts, and will always remember the years of dedicated service he brought to the Federation, its locals, our members and especially to the members of Chicago Local 10-208.

With sincerest sympathy,

Raymond M. Hair, Jr., International President
American Federation of Musicians
of the United States and Canada





FROM THE PRESIDENT

TERRYL JARES

My Memories of Gary Matts

Gary and I first met when he strolled into Rupert's 33 Club in the early 1980s where I was playing in the band. I had heard about Gary and his reputation as one of the finest drummers in Chicago, however being a violinist, our paths had yet to cross. On his many visits, he was filled with enthusiasm for the musicians and the music we were playing.

Six months after the club closed, I moved on to work in the theaters in and around Chicago and to my surprise, there was Gary playing drums. I now heard first-hand his musical skills which were second to none. I got to know him better during this time as someone who was kind, generous and caring. He never failed to say hello and ask how you were.

Gary joined the board of the Chicago Federation of Musicians in 1992, three years before I was recruited. We served together for two terms until Gary left to go on the road. When the tour ended, Gary was back at the CFM, working as the administrative assistant to then president Ed Ward. It was in December of 2004 that he was elected president and I joined him as vice president which started a friendship that continued until the day he died.

Professionally, we worked side-by-side for twelve years through hundreds of negotiations, many grievances and the everyday toils of union officers. Gary was calm

and patient through it all. Gary taught me to analyze every situation and that to make the best decision, it took time. I learned to sit back and listen. Because of his persistence, we nearly always achieved the desired goal.

It wasn't always work. During the Holiday season, Gary and Kathy never failed to hold lavish dinners with fellow union officers. They would prepare elaborate menus consisting of many courses with lighthearted conversations that rarely centered around union business.

Every summer my husband Tom and I hosted a canoe trip launched from our backyard down Salt Creek. Gary and Kathy in one canoe, Spencer (CFM Secretary/Treasurer Emeritus) and Marilyn Aloisio in their kayaks, and us in a second canoe. We'd paddle upstream for a few miles and then float back home. It was great fun and although we often docked covered with mud, the barbeque afterward made for a very special day.

It's hard to say goodbye to a man who was always a gentleman, who strived to do his best every day and deeply cared about everyone whose life he touched. He and Kathy had a wonderful marriage and together did a great job of raising their three children - Janine, Kevin and Karen. In knowing Gary, my life was changed in so many positive ways, of which I will be eternally grateful. Thank you, my friend.



Spencer, Gary and Terry.



FROM THE VICE-PRESIDENT

LEO MURPHY

Gary Matts, My Thoughts

I do not know how to begin to describe Gary Matts. A father and husband who dearly loved his family. A fantastic musician, who always brought his "A" game to the job. A dedicated and thoughtful labor leader, always serving the membership in whatever activity he was pursuing. And while all these things are true, they barely describe the man that I knew and was proud to work with musically and in union leadership. I will miss him and his friendship.

Even before I moved to Chicago in 1978, I had heard of Gary. My teachers in Chicago mentioned his name as someone who was a talented percussionist and that I should meet. He was among some of my first contacts in Chicago.

Through the years, we would periodically work together in pits or in a concert setting, and it was always a pleasure. A talented percussionist/drummer who just made the gig musical and very easy to play by providing a solid foundation. He brought a dedication to preparing his parts that was demonstrated in his performance on the job. And as the years progressed, his ability and instincts continued to grow. If Gary was playing drum set, we had a "master" guiding us through the performance and we had a great chance of playing a "perfect show". On all jobs things can go wrong, but having Gary's cool head, thoughtfulness and instincts gave us a great chance of making music.

That same "cool head" and thoughtfulness was exhibited in Gary's leadership with Local 10-208. I remember many times talking with him about the different perspectives of an issue under consideration; the pros and cons as well as examination of what each outcome might yield. Thoroughness was a hallmark of his process. When you

got done, you really felt that you had done due diligence in looking at the issue.

In the early 2000's, I came onto the Board of Directors. That was the same year Gary won the position of President of the CFM and that brought me the opportunity to spend time with Gary. I learned so much from him. Gary listened well. He wanted to understand the point being presented. I always felt (after a discussion with Gary) that he understood the issue that had been brought up. Even if the issue was not going to resolve the way the other person wanted, they felt heard. And that was demonstrated by the discussion and time given for that discussion and to work through it with that person. To help that individual come to terms with what could be accomplished.

I also remember discussing our families and children. Gary's dedication to family was strong and admirable. One never seems to outgrow that natural concern for your kids and spouse. And sharing those concerns and thoughts is good for one's mental wellbeing. He helped me with mine and I hope that I was helpful to him.

The passing of Gary Matts is a deep and profound loss for his family and many of us in the musical community. From the earliest days of my relationship with Gary, I was struck by his honesty, thoughtfulness, fairness and desire to help others. His ability and desire to listen and understand a situation was a gift that many do not obtain. But those skills led to his ability to take in the information and offer good advice on personal and union issues. I learned so much and so many things from Gary. I was truly blessed to have had him in my life, and I thank his family for sharing him with us for all these years.



Gary is administered the oath of office by Ed Ward.



FROM THE SECRETARY-TREASURER

B.J. LEVY

A Great and Kind Man

It was such a shock to hear of Gary's illness and untimely death. What a loss to our community. I was driving home from a show at the Marriott on a Sunday night in 2007 when I got a call from Gary asking me if I'd be interested in running for a position on the CFM board of directors. I was both surprised and honored, and immediately accepted. That was a phone call that changed my life. That Gary believed in me enough to extend this opportunity was and is something I will always cherish.

I am still absorbing the lessons I learned from watching him work, not the least of which was a measured but firm advocacy for working musicians that is based in empathy. Among many other things, also a tireless drive to gain knowledge that assists in the endeavor of leadership and representation.

One of the great things about the union business is that officers start their lives as rank-and-file laborers. We sit in these chairs with the full knowledge of what it is like to sit in those chairs. Gary's love of music was always infectious, and though I never had the pleasure of working with him in the field, I know that he was an extremely fine musician. When he retired, I was so happy for him that he'd be picking up sticks again. He seemed excited for that in such a sweet way.

Gone too soon, and so quietly, but that was his manner. Dignified, thoughtful, compassionate and intelligent. Thank you for believing in me, Gary, and thank you for your good works. May you rest in peace now that your labor is done.

FROM THE PRESIDENT EMERITUS

ED WARD

Gary Matts Remembered

Although I had known Gary for many years, we traveled in different circles. I really got to know him well when he decided to serve on some theater negotiation committees. At the time he was pretty much "first call" for shows and was very active in the recording-jingle scene. I was impressed with him from the very beginning. He was thoughtful, deliberate and careful about making hurried decisions. Quite the opposite from me, whose style was more "shoot, fire, aim." He was a very stabilizing influence on me. One day we were just sitting around and talking and I asked if he would consider working for the Union. He wasn't really keen on the idea because he had plenty of work. I pointed out that that work comes and goes. However, I agreed that if he came to work for

us he could adjust his schedule whenever he hooked up with a show or other playing work. He finally agreed and became my assistant. I also dangled the idea around that if he did that and things worked out, I would endorse him for my job when I retired. Someone once told me to "hire the best, most talented people you can find." Gary was the best example ever of that philosophy. That could not have been truer in Gary's case. He became President and did a wonderful job. His careful management skills guided us through his tenure. He was thoughtful, caring, considerate and ever mindful of our members' concerns.

I cannot recall a single incident when he ever complained about anything. If something was broken, he would do his very best to fix it.

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He was a very private man when it came to talking about himself. However, he would never pass up an opportunity to talk about anything that Kathy or his kids Janine, Kevin and Karen accomplished.

We spent many hours together pondering the many trials and tribulations of our musicians. His decisions were always honest and well thought-out.

As was his nature, he didn't share his battle with cancer with most of us. That was just his style. I will deeply miss this exceptional man.

RIP Gary.

Ed Ward

CFM 10-208 President Emeritus



Ed hands Gary the gavel.



FROM HIS FRIENDS

Gary and I had a friendship that spanned 50+ years. Not only did we work together, I had the pleasure of hearing him in performance. Not once did he phone in a performance. He always gave his "class AA" best, whether he was playing a trust fund concert or solidly locking in the rhythm section for a musical.

Early in his career, for a pick-up ballet orchestra at the Auditorium, Gary was assigned a 32-measure xylophone solo. The gig was just a one-night job, and no one would have blinked if he played the part "as is", but he took the time to make that humble solo sparkle.

In the early '90s, while playing short run of a *Man of LaMancha*, Gary took pains to get the snare drum sound

"just right", which made the rather cantankerous composer/producer very happy. He would have done this anyway, but in this case, the extra effort was greatly appreciated. For the finale of *Fosse*, Gary moved from the pit to the stage, sitting atop the band "pyramid" set, doing his best to swing out, even though he was locked in to an ever-changing click track, and a myriad of dance moves he had to "catch" exactly the same each show. Whatever music he was handed, he played it with all the musicianship he had. A model for us all.

Joel Cohen



Gary and Joel

Gary Matts was a true champion and advocate for our CFM members. More so, he was both a gentleman and someone who was always respectful of those around him. Gary loved music and musicians and was a very talented and sought-after performer. It was my honor to be able to call Gary a colleague and a friend for 30 years. We both came to the CFM as board members on the same day in 1992 having been recruited as a couple of "young guys" (that boat has sailed...) to be a part of our leadership. Gary was kind, thoughtful, chivalrous and, when necessary, tough as nails when it came to ensuring our members were given the best deal they could get in

contract negotiations or any matter of policy that affected the lives of musicians. I'll always remember his honesty and integrity, and his ability to make tough decisions that reflected what he viewed to be in the best interest of the members. While Gary loved and supported his CFM family, he always kept his own family very close to his heart. My heartfelt condolences go out to his wife Kathy, their three children and their grandchildren. Gary's physical presence may have left us, but his memory will live on in our hearts forever. Rest easy, my friend. You lived a life filled with meaning and significance. Gratefully...

Rich Daniels

CFM 10-208 Board Member

Subbing for Gary Matts

I had the wonderful opportunity of subbing for Gary on several shows, both downtown and at Drury Lane Oak Brook. The compensation and exposure for me was not the best part of the process in the least. The best part was getting to sit next to Gary 2/3 times every show and study what he was doing! Gary was the consummate "show" player. He had tons of experience and knowledge. As a drummer, he had the great combination of 1940's Big Band and 1970's Steve Gadd. We both loved Steve Gadd and would constantly discuss which albums were best. He also displayed great attention to detail, which is essential for the show musician. Here are a couple of examples: the standard bell tree is mounted vertically with each bell on top of the next. In most cases, the bells touch each other and either buzz or don't speak at all. Gary mounted his horizontally and added extra spacing between each bell. The sound was amazing! Loud and crystal clear. Another thing I saw him do was for the show *Ragtime*. The show called for mark tree. That is the horizontal instrument with hanging thin bars low to high. At one spot, the show required just hitting several individual bars for effect. Gary was unhappy with the lack of accuracy and clarity with this, so he made his own instrument. He mounted the several bars he needed, cutting to size and choosing pitches that enhanced the music. It was perfect eight shows a week!

I spoke with Steve Leinheiser recently. He shared a dressing room with Gary during the show, *Fosse*. Every night toward the end of the show, they went onstage to recreate "Sing, Sing, Sing". Steve was Benny Goodman to Gary's Gene Krupa. Steve remembers the great conversations with Gary; a little sage life advice and interesting union education. Steve says though, "Onstage playing drums was where Gary was really in his element!"

Bass player Scott Rosenthal stayed one of Gary's closest friends over 30 years of playing shows together. He was with Gary very close to the end, and he was able to share this great story: Gary's son Kevin did an amazing gesture for his father toward the end. He reached out to Steve Gadd and told him Gary's story and his great admiration for Gadd's playing. So one Saturday night, Gary's cell rings and it says Steve Gadd on the display. Gadd actually called Gary and they had a great conversation. Gary apparently told Steve that he probably owes him money for all the licks he borrowed over the years...

Rest in peace, Gary.

Jeff Handley

CFM 10-208 Board Member

To the officers and staff members of AFM local 10-208:

It was so very sad to hear that Gary Matts is no longer with us. His years of experience as a working musician prepared him well for becoming an officer and eventually President of Local 10-208. He was sensitive to the challenges and needs of musicians in the workplace and his advocacy on their behalf was appreciated by all who knew him. While he was cool and calm in his manner, he was strong and assertive in negotiations and was always seeking ways to advance the interest of his members. Gary's warm personality garnered him support from AFM officers around the country who often sought him out for advice on how to address some of the challenges in their locals. Gary earned a place in our hearts that forever reminds us of a good, honest, sincere advocate that we should all try to emulate.

Tom Lee

AFM President Emeritus

1st Call, Gene Krupa ~ A 'Pope' of AFM Presidents "Ode to Gary Matts"

Still in shock and disbelief upon the October 11th, 2021, passing of 'our' Chicago Federation of Musicians, Local 10-208, former President for four consecutive terms and invited to further serve as an AFM International Trustee of the AFM-EPF (aka, American Federation of Musicians - Employer Pension Fund) headquartered in NYC, and in so doing, I believe Gary Matts helped stir many best decisions of said AFM-EPF Trustees to an equitable Right, Just and Fair accommodation with his sense of fairness and fidelity to all. Subsequently vacated

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by Gary Matts, it was later filled by current CFM Local 10-208 union president, Terry Jares. President G. Matts' final fourth term at CFM 10-208's helm was graced from December 2013-December 2016 ... and now I must share my experiences having first met former CFM Local 10-208 President, Gary Matts, in late August of 1980, when former 'Boss' of the Shubert Theatre in downtown Chicago, Leo Krakow, gave notice to all engaged folks in the Shubert Theatre *Evita* Orchestra of rehearsals, and noticing a marvellous rhythmic verve with adaptable swagger in the varied changes of mood in London 'pal', Andrew Lloyd Webber's, exquisite musical score and due to, allow me to say, '1st Call=Gene Krupa', Gary Matts, whom possessed serious respectful musical discernment, 'tuned' to all lyrics of the *Evita* cast of singers! As a violinist, (1 of 7 original pupils of Jascha Heifetz), the substantial 'bass lower track', = percussion amplified section, was intriguing and had a G-Force Pull attractiveness to all others in a very experienced Chicago loaded musician 'Band' yet imbued with classical rooted discipline ~ (lifting the level of Live performance up to a then international perception of famed Chicago Symphony Orchestra) of which some *Evita* orchestra members were either 'On Call' or Substitutes for ill CSO players in Music Director, Sir Georg Solti's, renowned orchestra at that time. Our Gary Matts, Lead Drummer/Percussion Section & Co., always made a show-stopper, "Buenos Aires" rock far beyond Chicago borders! Sharing another Gary Matts attribute, all of us noted his chamber music ensemble approach though armed with percussive tools and an instinctive sense of how to add soft pedal or a mute to grant warmth to "Don't Cry For Me, Argentina!", and in other tender interludes woven into the Lloyd-Webber score.

Our Shubert Theatre *Evita* run lasted one full year to sold out audiences all nights and on Wednesday and Saturday Matinees. Even my RCM (Royal College of

Music, London) 'pal', Andrew Lloyd Webber, arrived at the Shubert Theatre and raved about our musical *Evita* Orchestra with rare fused connection to singers on stage in the last Preview rehearsals and in conversation, on a break, did make mention to his famed NYC Producer, 'Hal' Prince, (also listening/viewing both Orchestra and on Stage *Evita* Cast Actor-Singers) regarding, "a seductive quality of your own Chicago Lead Drummer in the 'Buenos Aires' number", referring to none other than Gary Matts!! Both Andrew LW, NY 'Hal' Prince and myself, a music friend of Andrew Lloyd-Webber in London, were thrilled!!!

While preparing for a City Symphony of Chicago Orchestra celebratory concert conducted by music director Charles Groeling, (Professor of Music Education/ Northwestern University) in March of 2013, as Concertmaster Volunteer, I felt compelled to mark my bowings with fingering suggestion tips in all string parts, to somehow fuse the String bowed sound to that of all Winds/ Brass. The time needed to achieve a musically bowed cohesiveness was enormous yet offered out of Love ...Following a rare and loving performance-offering of the entire concert yet with an audience ovation and invited Concertmaster bow, Gary Matts was apprised of our musical with full house audience success. Although a bit compensated with an honourarium for my work as Concertmaster Volunteer, Gary Matts, ever caring musician with knowledge of a guessed number of hours, called me in to inquire how much time I had spent with my full bowings. Shyly, I quoted far less than the total. Gary did not believe me and I finally fessed up. Stunned, Gary Matts insisted upon some additional compensation and later did so out of his own personal funds, sending me a check and note ... I was amazed and feel his grand gesture so genuinely felt, sums up The Man of Right, Just and Fair of 'our' beloved late Gary Matts ... Long may all good works of 'Gary The Good Matts' remain ever present in collective memory.

Honourably submitted by **Elisabeth Matesky**



He was even proficient on the musical saw!

On October 11, our Chicagoland music community lost a giant when we lost Gary Matts. There never, ever was a kinder, gentler or more gracious man. We loved and admired him for his tremendous talent, but even more, for his willingness to jump in and create something out of nothing when we asked him. "I'll just bring the kitchen junk drawer and anything in the garage that isn't nailed down" would be his response when I tried to describe the sound effect we were searching for. All of this in the days before the synthesizer took over such things and when half the fun of recording that element was in the getting there.

Gary was a gentleman of the first order – quiet and unassuming with a quick, dry sense of humor. His brilliant leadership at the Chicago AFM was transformative for those of us on the production side. He was always open to discussion and ready to remedy any problem. His answer always was, “How can I help?” We are heartbroken to have lost a friend.

Mary Stewart and Alan Barcus
Opus III, Inc.

Reflections on Gary Matts

I am honored to have an opportunity to share in this tribute to a wonderful human being.

Saying I worked with and served with Gary doesn't scratch the surface of my experience as a friend and brother in labor to Gary. He helped so many working men and women and was a steady and calming hand during tumultuous times. I particularly was moved by how Gary, while in the midst of some very difficult moments of his own, made time for and took interest in assisting others, including myself on more than one occasion. I have many wonderful recollections on our relationship and am grateful for all of them. To put it simply – I knew Gary to be an honest man, a solid leader, a kind soul and a great and unwavering friend. I am grateful to have known him and I thank his family for their sacrifice in sharing him with his union and the broader labor movement.

Your work is done, you are loved, you will be missed. Now rest in peace.

With sincerest gratitude and love,

Jorge Ramirez
CFL President Emeritus



Gary walks the line in the CFM's boycott of *The Music Man* at the Chicago Theatre

I lost one of my best friends, Gary Matts. I am privileged to have had him as a friend, a co-worker and as our 10-208 President for 12 years. We met in the Civic Orchestra of

Chicago many years ago and later had the pleasure of working with one of the finest drummers in the city. I believe my first show with Gary was at the Auditorium Theatre with *Les Miserables*. Back then, the book was all electric bass with drums and percussion. It was always a deep pocket to play in and he made my job so much easier with his superb time keeping. He always found the right tempo that the conductor wanted which in some rare cases could be hard to find. We played *Miss Saigon* with my favorite conductor Kevin Stites – another great run also at the Auditorium. We played other memorable runs together, including *Showboat*, and *Beauty and the Beast*, conducted by Don York at the Chicago Theatre. Don later conducted the tour of *Fosse*.

Besides being a superlative drummer, he was a great friend with whom I had many memorable dinners at various restaurants downtown, most notably a now closed Thai restaurant off of State Street where they had this great green curry soup with eggplant. We were usually joined by percussionist Bruce Carver as well. One other memorable dinner was at Bruce's house between shows on a Saturday and it was a vegan menu since Bruce is a vegetarian. I was stuffed for 2 days after that! *Ragtime* at the newly refurbished Oriental Theater was another highlight. Fast forward...

My wife Linda and I moved to Santa Fe, NM for three years but for a number of reasons, we came back to Chicago, specifically Naperville. I didn't realize at first I was only 15 minutes from Gary just down 75th Street in Darien. Of course he immediately asked what he could do to help us move in. He helped with my music room to unpack my vinyl collection and CDs. This was the essence of who he was. He was always there if I needed to talk about anything and gave great advice to keep the gig on an even keel.

Last summer we got to bike ride together along the Cal Sag Bike Trail sometimes riding 14 miles or more. And then we grabbed a sandwich from Jimmy John's and headed over to his house and beautiful backyard for lunch and conversation. We usually discussed music and I would send him Steve Gadd videos, most of which he had seen. I myself had become a drum student and always was picking his brain for tuning tips, etc.

But sadly, when I knew about his diagnosis I was stunned and tried to help in any way I could. It was hard to see him near the end as he had lost so much weight. But I never thought he would go this quick.

I miss him dearly. I have lost a great friend and mentor. Every day I wake up and think I'll call him, then have to remind myself he is no longer with us. The world was a much better place with him in it. Rest in peace my friend. Love, Scott

Scott Rosenthal

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I had the great fortune to meet and work with Gary on some smaller venue shows and then in the pit orchestra of the Shubert Theatre a good many years ago. Gary's reputation as being the "solid as a rock" center of the rhythm section was understated. His precision was undeniable and as consistent as any conductor and ensemble could hope for; his musical taste was impeccable; and above all, his attitude was all business (music) and all heart, respect and understanding as a colleague and friend. We shared many dinners between matinees and many post show coffees (cocktails) talking about our families, the business and what life was to be built around our chosen profession. Little did we know from those discussions that our business acumens were to extend into business ownership and a future leadership role in the CFM.

The discussions deepened quickly and so did our relationship as friends. It was shortly after starting to work together on the show *Evita* that we closed the circle and had dinners together as a family. Our Italian heritage came to center stage as well as Gary's love of cooking. He took to recipes with the

same precision as he did his music, and the results were extraordinarily composed meals. His lovely wife Kathy and my wife Cynthia soon became fast friends each enjoying talking about their lives they shared as teachers and the rest is history. As our families grew and lives intertwined, Gary and I both continued to grow a relationship of mutual respect, our love of music that brought us together and brotherhood. I miss him dearly, and he will be missed by many.

Ed St. Peter



Gary in rehearsal for *Miss Saigon*.