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Honorary Degree Award Citation for John Koopman

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Honorary Degree Awarded to Retiring Faculty

John H. Koopman, Professor of Music

"John Hugh Koopman, for thirty-four years you have unstintingly shared with your students, colleagues, and a wider public, your knowledge and love of singing and singers in their many guises, from recital to opera theater.

Your compelling performances of the bass solo repertoire have brought you celebrity in your community, most notably for 'refining the fire' and 'sounding the trumpet' in *Messiah*, your Tevya in *Fiddler on the Roof*, and the voice of God in Britten's *Noyes Fludd*. But your early promise as a performer on the concert stage and in opera was largely transformed in the crucible of Conservatory studio and stage into the drive of the director and impresario of student productions, from *Dido and Aeneas* to *The Marriage of Figaro* and *The Magic Flute*, from *The Merry Wives of Windsor* to *Ruddigore* and *Sunday in the Park with George*. Your students will not forget your perspicacious choice of repertoire suiting the forces at hand, your particular flair for Mozart and Menotti, and your fondness for Gilbert and Sullivan, the latter contributing, no doubt, to the sobriquet of 'Captain K,' by which you have affectionately been known for years.

Students from your studio have gone on to prominent concert and stage careers. Indeed, one whom you directed as Toby the Mute in the *Medium* of Menotti shares the stage with you today, honored for his international accomplishments as singer and actor. All benefited from your focus on helping students find their own vocal personalities, and from your interest in specialized recital programming ranging from departmental recitals of single composers, to lecture recitals, and to recitals of multiple settings of texts.

As John Koopman and under the pseudonym of Lawrence Singer, your international pursuit of the denizens of the opera world for reviews and interviews that have been published in French, German, Italian, British, and American publications, has brought an eponymous repute to your university; and this more public research has been completed by the quieter scholarly pursuits of annotated lists of vocal literature, years of study of the life and music of Arthur Honneger, and matters of vocal health and pedagogy.

Always an appreciator of the good life--of fine food, fine wine, and fine art--you have balanced these to a degree with the enjoyment of the outdoors, as an imposing figure as faculty marshal in formal processions, but also, by reputation, as a fisherman who single-handedly sank a rubber boat. You have said that your post-retirement plans are to write, eat garlic, and go fishing. May these efforts ever prosper--and may you stay afloat while pursuing the last.

By the authority vested in me, I now confer upon you the degree of Master of Arts, *ad eundem*, and admit you to its rights, its privileges, and its obligations."

Citation read by President Richard Warch at Commencement, 1994

