

# Princeton ALUMNI WEEKLY

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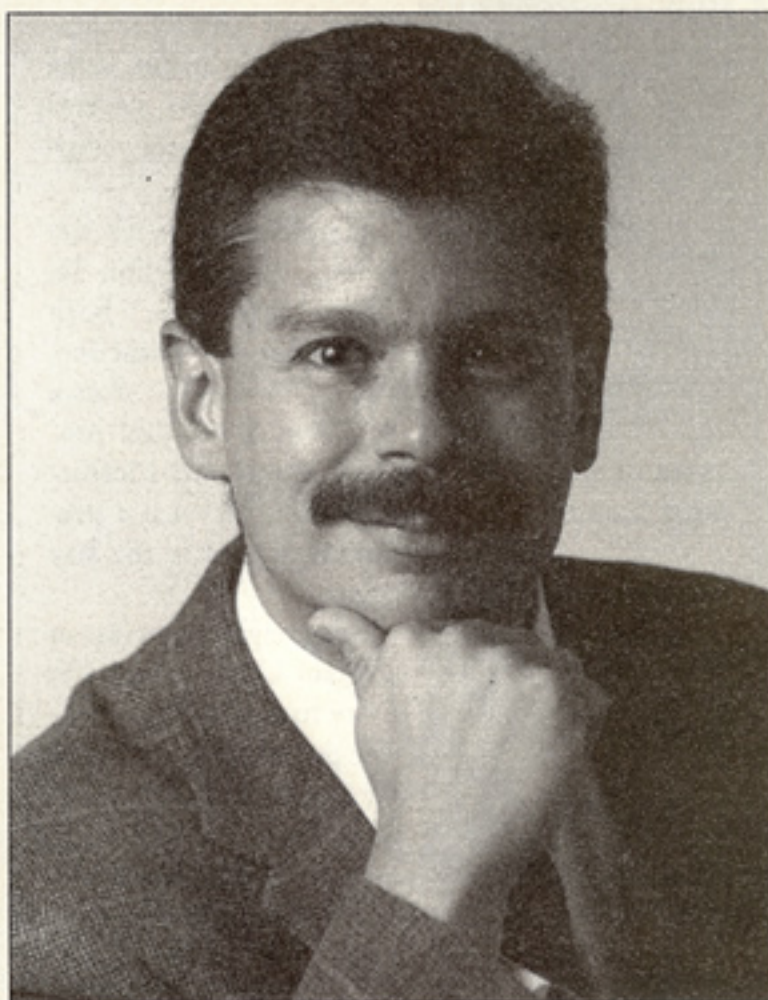
## CLASSICAL MUSIC MAVEN

**ROBERT M. GREENBERG '76** is a musician with a mission. "We must have an educational renaissance in music," he says. "The arts can be an intellectual and emotional refuge for the nineties. We live in a dark world—we need this stuff!" A composer, lecturer, consultant, and musical administrator, Greenberg draws his enthusiasm from a thorough knowledge of his subject and a conviction that if the stresses of twentieth-century life are the question, then music is the answer.

Greenberg chairs the Department of Music History and Literature at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, but to the public he's known as a master teacher of music appreciation. He directs the conservatory's Adult Extension Division and has created a minor industry teaching music to young professionals. Bechtel, Arthur Andersen, and other firms have hired him to lecture to their executives. His course entitled "How to Listen to Music" attracts students who seek a break from high-pressure careers, who feel the need for a little polish, or who simply want to continue their collegiate musical training. Classes in the eight-week course are held in the early evenings in San Francisco's business district, and routinely draw sixty to eighty students.

"Bob Greenberg's course isn't going to make me any better at doing the financial analysis for a retail building," Adele Hayutin, a real-estate economist, told *The Wall Street Journal*, "but I think it does make me more open to new ideas, more able to be creative with solutions. Taking his classes and learning about music have been one of the most rewarding experiences of my life."

In his teaching, says Greenberg, he tries to "persuade people that classical music is not horrific, not just for snobs." Music, he adds, "is a unique human experience. It's different from other arts, such as literature, because its symbolism avoids words and cuts right to emotion. Music is a function of our ability to imagine. It's abstract; it stretches our minds, opens us up,



**Bob Greenberg '76**

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transports us to different times and places. This is the age of the bottom line, and too often a sense of the sublime, a higher level, is educated out of us. Music can help put that back."

At Princeton, the Brooklyn-born Greenberg studied under Edward T. Cone '39 \*42, Milton B. Babbitt \*42, and others, including jazz pianist Benny Carter, who spent a year as a visiting lecturer in the Department of Music. After graduating *magna cum laude*, he enrolled at the University of California at Berkeley, which in 1984 conferred on him a Ph.D. in music composition. As a composer, Greenberg has written some forty pieces. "It Don't Mean a Thing," a 1990 composition for percussion ensemble, has been performed widely on the West Coast.

Greenberg also runs the San Francisco Orchestra Discovery Series, which he founded. He and selected members of the orchestra give a three-hour lecture/demonstration on a musical topic. Students then attend three concerts, each preceded by an hour-long lecture. "The symphony is an endangered species," he says. "Orchestra audiences are aging one year per year. We have to draw new people in, to make music relevant to everybody."

This entrepreneurial teacher will even come into your home, provided you can collect twenty friends to share the experience, and lecture in your living room on topics like Beethoven's symphonies or Verdi's operas. In these smaller sessions, he says, he teaches musical structure and can explore his subjects in more depth than he can in his conservatory courses.

When teaching professionals, says Greenberg, he stresses that music is a solace and a "place to go for truths, provided you have a little knowledge to start with. I also believe that an understanding of music will make people better negotiators, better problem-solvers, better creators. And not incidentally, they'll be better able to deal with their international clients, for whom musical sophistication is a birthright."

—**Nicholas H. Morgan '75**