



An open letter to the campus of the
University of North Carolina School of the Arts
Wednesday, November 5, 2008

Thoughts on the Election of Barack Obama

John Mauceri

Dear UNCSEA Family,

Yes. I was there last night in Grant Park, about 50 yards from President Elect Obama and I wanted to say something to you about the experience.

It was perhaps accidental that I would be in Chicago on that particular night and that a phone call from one of Mrs. Mauceri's friends alerted her to an extra "Honored Guest" pass and that, after my last performance at the Chicago Lyric Opera, I somehow found my way to Grant Park, walking among thousands of people screaming for joy, honking horns, crying and dancing in the streets.

The calm in the center of the storm of many passions was Senator Obama. Somehow, as he spoke, there was a sense of peacefulness and resolve. Besides feeling utterly unworthy of standing there so very close to our next President, there was much he said that made me think of all of us at our school.

His call for working together in tough times, of rejecting the negativity that sometimes fuels the energy in our attitudes at school and his determination to find consensus from diverse opinions was something that we all know is the only future for UNCSEA as well as USA. Yes, there are decisions some people do not like. We will listen to everyone to find a collective vision for our school.

Here in Chicago, I have met with (one on one) many alums of the school, and of their many and diverse stories, one thing is consistent: their passion for life, creativity and our school.

I walked an hour or more from the event back to the apartment I am leaving today, here in Chicago. T-shirts that were going for \$5 each, were now two for \$5 and then there were no T-shirts being sold. The horns were still honking and people were screaming for joy in the streets below when I finally fell onto the bed and slept for a few hours before starting the day with the many e-mails and phone meetings that come with the job of chancellor.

But something has changed in us today. America has said something to itself and to the world about who we are and who we aspire to be. Whether or not you voted for Senator Obama, that surely is clear to each and every one of you. I hope we as a school can take that very same spirit in our every day at UNCSEA. Now, more than ever, we need it and with it, we shall become the very best educational and inspirational institution anyone could imagine.

I was proud and humbled to be there and proud and humbled to represent you in Grant Park last night when the world changed.

Sincerely,

John