Joseph Haruda interview

Joseph Haruda
Lowther: Before we get into your experiences here at Central, I’d like to have you tell us a little of your family background. Where you were born and brought up, the schools you went to, where you got your advanced training, and any career experience you had before coming to Central.

Haruda: All right. I was born, believe it or not, in St. Paul, Nebraska. That’s a long ways away from here, and I was supposed to have been born in a corn crib, believe it, or not. And grew up in St. Paul, that’s a little small town, it’s the County Seat of Howard County in Nebraska. And my father was actually emigrating from Bohemia, so I’m of Bohemian background, and he was a baker. He started this small business and as we grew older it grew up pretty well until the Depression came, and then like a lot of businesses, it just went out of business. From there we moved to Superior, Nebraska, which was not too far away, and he had another bakery there, so my parents, more or less, grew up in that area of St. Paul to Superior. I don’t have to tell you any more about it than that I’m sure. My dad died there, then my mother moved to Kansas City, where her daughter was, and got into an apartment there. So I used to do quite a bit of traveling going down to Kansas City to see my mother, etc. but by a lot of that time, I’d already gone out on my own career, deciding what I wanted to do and so forth and so-on. Do you want any more of that?

Lowther: What Colleges did you go to?

Haruda: Oh, well, I started at the University of Nebraska, if I don’t get the year just right, will you...

Lowther: It’s OK.

Haruda: I spent two years there, and, of course, then about that time was the severe Depression. Believe it or not, The University of Nebraska you could take a full course for $50.00 a semester. And it was a good school, it was an old fashioned school, but now, of course, you’ve heard of Nebraska in different ways, like football, etc. And I was a music major there, if you want to call it that. I had no trouble there at all, except that I ran out of money, and so I decided that since my parents couldn’t help me very much, I got in a cattle train and traveled to New York City. And that was a lot of fun, a lot of experience. Getting thrown into jungle camps, etc., in those days of the Depression. From there I got off the train, I think it was in Newark, New Jersey, and got accommodations to go into New York City itself, where I had never been before, and I had a sister then who was working at a hospital in New York City, and so she sort of guided me and helped me, and eventually I also had a friend in Long Island, so got hold of him, stayed with him for a few days, and then he was good enough to take me to see the major league baseball and Yankee Stadium, so that was quite a thrill I hadn’t seen before. And then eventually it was up to me to try to find some kind of employment, and I did. I also found a voice teacher which was my major area of interest. I got a job, believe it or not, as a waiter in Child’s Restaurant. I don’t know if you remember that or not, but that was a fancy restaurant in New York City. And at least I had enough to get started and I moved in with my voice teacher in his apartment, and that was cheap enough, so we worked at that for about, I don’t know, a year or two, but in 1940, or ‘37, I auditioned at Julliard School of Music in New York City, which at that time was one of the greatest, I think it still is, and they accepted my audition, and I took some courses for two years there. Such things as, all music courses, singing in foreign languages, etc., etc., that sort of thing. But those were very fine times, Meeting a lot of well-known people, and so forth and so-on. From there, let’s see, that was around 1940 and in between I’m, I went a great deal to where I started, mostly in Columbia University, Teacher’s College, Columbia, and I stayed there until it was time to get into the War. What was that 1940, or ‘41? And so then I tried out for several activities that I thought I’d like to do, I failed at most of them,
like being a flyer, I couldn’t make it. But anyway I did get in the Air Corps, and so Event overseas, one of the first in the Country to go overseas. We landed in Egypt, southern Egypt, and we were supposed to be a supporting force for, for example the 98th Bomb Group, which I’m sure you’ve heard of. One of the most famous Groups of B-24’s that they had, and that was responsible for the Ploesti air raid years ago. Anyway, so we stayed over there for four years almost. In the meantime I had been transferred over to Italy because my rotation time was up. In those days if you were in the Army long enough and your rotation number came up you were supposed to be number one to go home, and so I was lucky enough to get part of that, so in 1944, or the end of 1944, I came back home. And then I started all over my musical career, and so forth and so-on. One of the problems there, for some reason or another, I had trouble singing, and finally, losing a lot of jobs I had before, finally I was sent by Iva, by the way, to (?) important Doctor in, well, he came originally from this town, Ellensburg. His name was Clerf, and he was the Head of Medicine on the main floor in this hospital which took care of people with all kinds of problems with their throats, and I was operated on there, and put on silence for six months, which probably was a good idea, I don’t know. Anyway, so I finally got back into singing, but not the way I wanted to, so I more or less, decided since I couldn’t sing at the Metropolitan, I might as well teach voice, which I enjoyed doing. I’ve done that all my life. I didn’t get into the Metropolitan, but I worked for years at that, and went through Columbia University, by the way I got my Bachelors there in less than a year because I’d had a lot of previous work. And then I got my Masters, and finally received a job through Wayne Hertz, (?) hearing people sing, stuff like that. Let’s see, from there, well when I got my Masters, then from there we decided it was time to go back to where we’d been offered a job, right?

Iva Haruda: (Joe’s wife): (Yes.)

Haruda: The original job was in

Iva: Yankton, South Dakota.

Haruda: Yankton. South Dakota. And I was there for a year, and they ran out of money, and decided that they would let me go. I’ve been through that, and then, then was when I was interviewed by Wayne Hertz to come to Central. And that was in 1951. You were already there. I remember that you were the man that operated on me.

Ham Howard: Yes, that was fun.

Haruda: You want to go into on that?

Howard: We had a big faculty party, Larry, to introduce the new faculty.

Lowther: Anyway, so that was in 1951, and when you came to Central you had your Masters, but not the doctorate.

Haruda: That’s right.

Lowther: OK. And what was your assignment, your first assignment when you came to Central?

Haruda: Well, in those days, the Department was pretty small, and the school was pretty small, What did we have about 800 people, 900? And we had a small staff, so we found that if you were in there, you had to do a lot of things that maybe you wouldn’t have had to do in a larger school. But my main thing was teaching voice, and I was the Assistant Choir Director for a while, and then after that I became the Director for the Men’s Glee Club, which we had, by that time we were growing quite a bit and the staff had increased from, I think it was from 8 or 9, up to 19 or 20. And so that more or less, brought me to, during that time or before, in 1955 about, I was given permission to go to the University of Iowa, and there I received my Ph.D. in Music. It’s quite different from the Doctorate in Music. The Doctorate in Music is
more or less like the Masters Degree with, but the Ph.D., they throw the works at you. Anyway, so I got
that in 1960. It took quite a while to write up my Thesis, and by that time I was still on my job and I was
interested in teaching. And I just kept on teaching.

Lowther: Can you recall the sort of work load that you had in the 1950’s here? Did you teach certain
number of classes? Did you have a certain number of pupils that you taught individually? What was your
typical day like?

Haruda: Well, all I can say about most of my teaching career at Central was that I always had an overload.
Always. Maybe you remember that do you. (?) You always had an overload. Wayne and T were the voice
people, just two of us, and I had some 30 to 35 private students, and a large class in voice, which met twice
a week. And one Introduction to Music Course, a five hour course, which met every day. You’re talking
about load, it gets to be quite a load when you’ve had all of that, then…there, that was about it. Lowther:
You said that you had about 35 individual pupils, and about how long was each lesson for those students?

Haruda: Well, legally, I suppose, for half an hour. But generally, for a lot more than that.

Lowther: And did you give them a lesson, one lesson a week, or did you meet them twice?

Haruda: Some only once a week, but a lot of them twice a week, depending on their ability to sing and to
improve, and so forth and so-on. If they were good singers, etc., I wanted them twice a week. Sometimes
we even did more than that, but those people were not as frequent as you’d like to have them be. Many of
them towards the latter part of my career there, I took, most of my students took two lessons a week, but
then I didn’t have 35 a week, I had definitely cut down.

Lowther: Could you tell us a little bit about your teaching philosophy and techniques? Is there anything that
stands out in your mind on that?

Haruda: First I’ve got to mention that I’ve got a mind. Anyway, you asked about the philosophy of teaching
voice, I’ve got a list of voice teachers, major people in New York City at least ten names which would,,
who have taught Metropolitan Opera singers, they were the leading singers in the nation, etc., so I would
have to say that I was influenced some by their philosophy, and I think that in general all of them were
slightly different. They did not seem to have the same ideas, and that only served to make me more
interested in the business of singing because I was trying to find out, really what the right way was. You’d
be amazed to hear how many major singers, who were known all over the world, and didn’t really have
much training in voice, it’s just a fact. But it led me to want to investigate it a little bit more. Incidentally,
when I was wanting to work on my Doctor’s Degree at Columbia, they would not let me write a Thesis on
that because they knew that if I did I’d be very, you know, emotional, or over emotional maybe, about
certain people, and not about certain people. In other words they just didn’t want me to write it on a
controversial subject like that, and it is controversial.

Lowther: What year did you retire?

Haruda: 1981.

Lowther: OK. Between the 1950’s and when you retired, had you noticed any change in the quality of
students?

Haruda: Well, by the time that you get in the 19, later on there I had lost contact with many of the students
who weren’t music majors in these courses where you just have so many people because they are taking the
required course. With which we generally had over a hundred in the class. But that changed, and invariably
the philosophy of those kids was that they wanted to he, they were there because they wanted to be music
teachers, whether they were going to be singers or playing instruments, or whatever. But that was what they wanted to do, and that was just about the main philosophy they had.

Lowther: When you came here Wayne Hertz was Chair of the Department and he remained Chair until he retired, I can’t remember when it was that he left...

Haruda: Let’s see. He retired I think about 1974, I think it was.

Lowther: OK, Do YOU have any recollections concerning your relationship to Wayne, or the way he operated the Department. The way he managed things?

Haruda: Well, Wayne was Wayne Hertz. I think you’ve heard that, haven’t you?

Lowther: Uhm hum.

Haruda: And he had his own ideas about what he wanted to do and he did them, in general. Although I had quite my problems, like other teachers had with him. But we always seemed to work it out so that we ended up being friends, and so forth and so-on, but I think finally, in the latter part of his career, I think he was a little bit especially attached to me because I gave a full recital for Tecla Hertz, his wife, for a scholarship for entering freshmen, and he was quite pleased with that, and that was a lot of work. But, I don’t know, one time later on, and this is just additional we met on a ship, on one of these tours, and we didn’t know, he didn’t know, and I didn’t know he was going to be there. And finally we ran into each other, he says, “Let’s forget all of our arguments and let bygones be bygones and be friends.” So we were.

Lowther: Did you have quite a number of arguments with Wayne?

Haruda: Not too many, but there were a lot of faculty who had a lot more than I did.

Lowther: How would you describe the morale of the Department during those years?

Haruda: That’s a pretty tough question to handle. I’m sure that in the, for the other faculty, what they heard, and what they knew of Wayne Hertz was that the morale was not good, but within the Department itself, I think that morale was pretty good. Does that answer your question? I’m not sure.

Lowther: OK. Was it, would you say in terms of the way the Department was run, would you say it was a democratic operation, or authoritarian Or somewhere in between?

Haruda: Well, I think, as far as Music Departments go, I think it was run about as well as most Departments I’ve seen, the ones I’ve been to in many schools. That includes Columbia and Nebraska, and New York University, and Julliard, even, and so forth and so-on. I didn’t see too much wrong with it.

Lowther: When did you become Chair of the Department? Approximately? Was it the mid Seventies?

Haruda: It was 74.

Lowther: OK. Just when Wayne Hertz retired.

Haruda: Yeah. That was the time we changed, remember, instead of the Chairman getting another Chairman in to take his place, the Committee would vote on people within the Department, and I just happened to be lucky enough to be called by them to be Chairman.

Lowther: So the members of the Department chose the Chair?
Haruda: Yes.

Lowther: OK. During your tenure as Chair do you recall any outstanding accomplishments, problems? What stands out in your mind concerning that experience?

Haruda: Well, as far as I was concerned my teaching load was, perhaps, not as big as it used to be, but most of the people I had were Masters Degree students, and it was a problem of work, of handling all their writing, and theory, and all that. I was, more or less, stuck with all that stuff Which was all right. I didn’t mind. I didn’t mind doing what I did because I’ve always been busy, one way or the other. I’ve always felt like I was doing more than I was getting paid for, but that’s just the way it goes.

Lowther: OK. How would you rate the Music Department, compared with Music Departments that you’ve known throughout the region?

Haruda: Well, that’s another difficult question. Some smaller schools, such as Central was at the time, and because of their smallness, they were able to control groups of students much better than some big schools where, you know, students were spread out all over, and it was difficult to get them all together. That was one of the things, I suppose, that’s an advantage in a small school. In a large school, I don’t think that the tendency to be so perfect in everything, that is like singing well, was so great in the large schools, for example at the University of Nebraska I was in an Opera, Aida, which employed in their chorus, I think over a hundred fifty voices, and that’s an awful lot of voices. Where as in a small school, you wouldn’t have that many people around. So that had quite a bit to do with it.

Lowther: Did you, or did the Department actively recruit students, pretty much as Athletic Departments do, or did you just wait for students to come, and take whatever you got?

Haruda: Well, again, size, I think, had something to do with it because, for example, if Wayne was doing some judging in the Spring, and he did a lot of that. He would hear a lot of singers sing, and if they were good enough, he’d offer them a scholarship to come to Central. And that was one of the big ways we got a lot of students. And every other person, regardless, Wayne whether it was Bert Christianson. Or whoever it was would do the same thing, so the contact was, I think, made by the school itself. You didn’t have to write a long letter and all that sort of thing to be accepted, but if they heard you perform, that was pretty good. And then, of course, they’d hear good things about the student. In general, I would say we had very good students.

Lowther: OK. Now I know that today you have frequent concerts, which you raise scholarship money? Did you have much money for scholarships, oh, say, in the Fifties and Sixties, and those earlier days?

Haruda: I may he wrong about that, bull think I was one of the first of the faculty to put on a recital for a scholarship for a freshman coming in. That was the one that I did for Tecla. And then following that I think we had quite a few, but from there it’s gone way up now, hasn’t it? It must be very high.

Lowther: OK. A lot of the people who went through the Music Department were training to become teachers, is that not right?

Haruda: Yes.

Lowther: What was the relationship between the Music Department and the Education Department? Was there a close working relationship? Was there very much friction, or do you recall?

Haruda: Well, as far as I was concerned, in my time as being Chairman, I don’t recall too much friction. And as far as Wayne, I didn’t have much to do with that since I wasn’t in that position. I don’t think there was an awful lot of trouble; I’m not sure. If there was, I don’t think Wayne advertised it.
Lowther: Did you serve on any campus-wide committees outside your Department?

Haruda: I was on the Graduate Faculty Committee for quite a few years, and then for a little while, I’ve forgotten now, I wasn’t on the Senate really, but I used to go to a lot of meetings, but I don’t think I was officially a member of the Senate. Here recently they have one of our faculty as the Chairman...What’s his name?

Iva: Sid.

Haruda: Sid Nessleroad, one of our singers there for a while. But I might have been on some temporary committees, you know, that had something to do at a certain time, but I don’t think not too much permanent.

Lowther: Were you ever on the General Ed. Committee?

Haruda: No.

Lowther: Or Teacher Ed., OK. As you think back over the years, are there. I know you’ve mentioned Wayne Hertz, but are there ether outstanding people that you recall in your Department? Faculty members.

Haruda: Well, it depends on what you would talk about, outstanding. We had people that are very outstanding that maybe somebody else didn’t think they were so outstanding, so. you know, it gets to be sort of personal thing there, but some of those that I think that arc more beneficial at least, and very helpful...(?). People like Bert Christiansen, do you remember him?

Lowther: Yes.

Haruda: And he was a good band man, and by the way, he was unhappy with me because I was chairman, and he wanted to be Chairman, but anyway, he would have deserved it. I don’t know whether I deserved it. But, anyway, had a big name and, well, he was about the main one.

Lowther: OK. Were there any of your students that you recall that rose to particularly great heights nationally?

Haruda: Blank.

Iva: Juanita Davies.

Haruda: Oh. yeah, Juanita Davies. Do you remember her?

Lowther: Yes.

Haruda: She was a great gal. She worked very hard. She was just like me, had an overload most of the time, and she was very interested in her students. And I suppose one more student you could say was Tommy...

Iva: Clemens.

Haruda: Clemens. Thank you. Who got quite a reputation in Arizona, or California.

Iva: In what?
Haruda: In piano… Anyway...But another one, of course, that many of us didn’t give him credit for, but he earned a lot of credit was John Mouwad. Have you ever heard of him?

Lowther: Oh, yes.

Haruda: He and his Jazz band. Of course, a lot of us (?) we don’t have anything to do with that, you know, we’re . . .But hover the years he did quite a bit. He had quite a reputation.

Lowther: OK. When you came to Central, McConnell was President. Did you have any dealings with President McConnell? Do you have any remembrances of him?

Haruda: Oh, I have a few humorous things, but…

Lowther: You’re not going to tell us.

Haruda: Well, he was always, more or less, a gentleman every time I saw him, but, I probably shouldn’t say this either, but when I wanted to go to Iowa, Wayne wouldn’t let me go. He thought I had too much to do with the Department. And I told him, “Well, if that’s the way you feel about it, I guess I’ll just have to go see McConnell about it.” And I talked to McConnell and he said, “Where are you going?” And I said, “Well, I’m going to the State University of Iowa.” And he said, “Iowa, that’s where I got my Doctor’s Degree.” So guess about it, whether he let me go or not. He let me go.

Iva: Do you want to tell them about his phone call congratulating you on Jan’s birth?

Haruda: Let’s keep it clean, shall we?

Iva: I think it would be kind of fascinating it showed that he’s a human being.

Haruda: Well...

Iva: You don’t remember.

Haruda: I remember. Anyway, we talked about. I had some girls over to help clean the house. She was in the hospital, and the girls came over, two marvelous soprano singers, to help out. I had some very fine students in that respect, and so I don’t know how it happened, I was talking to Dr. McConnell and I said, ‘You ought to come over here, I’ve got a couple of girls here.’” And I think he sort of took me seriously, and said, “You’ve got a couple of girls?” And that was practically the story, OK?

Lowther: Did he come over?

Haruda: No. He had a good sense of humor. It was all a joke.

Lowther: Do you remember anything that you’d like to tell us about Jim Brooks’ term as President?

Haruda: I always got along all right with Jim Brooks. I didn’t seem to run into any problems. I had, some of the problems I had, which many of the people in the Department had, when there wasn’t much money around, was you didn’t get promoted. Or you didn’t get a pay raise. I suppose, maybe some of you’d remember that. You figured that you were supposed to get because you were hard working, and you were the best in your business, and so forth and so on. But outside of that, no, I didn’t really...

Lowther: Let’s see. you were here at the beginning of Dr. Garrity’s time. Do you recall anything there that you would like to tell us about? His administration.
Haruda: Well, I can hardly say very many things without getting personal. And I don’t think it’s right to get personal, particularly. I remember was Dr. Garrity, this shouldn’t be written down either, but he would, he seemed to refrain from going into the my office to talk to me, but he was always talking to John Moawad out in the hail there, and it sort of got me a little “teed off’ because he was a saxophone player, I think it was, and he played with John Moawad, and I didn’t really think too much of that. But outside of that, I didn’t have anything to complain about, particularly.

Lowther: Now among the other administrators during your time here, you know, the Vice-presidents, Deans, so on, do any stand out in your mind as particularly important leaders for Central?

Haruda: Which were important leaders?

Lowther: Yeah, which ones do you remember as important leaders among the Deans and Vice-presidents?

Haruda: Well, I don’t think you would really call any of those, outside of saying you were attached to them in a friendly way, for example, I was one of Maury Pettit’s best friends, I know that, and we thought a lot of him. And I always got along well with most of them. It’s pretty hard for me to make…

Lowther: OK. That’s all right. Do you recall any significant differences between students and faculty?

Haruda: You know there have been some. And I had to sit in a meeting on one, but I still don’t know how that worked. One of our, well, when Wayne retired, just previous to that, he had hired a fellow by the name of Gordon Leavitt. Remember Gordie?

Lowther: Oh. yes.

Haruda: He was a nice fellow. And I lost my job because I didn’t want to be the Director, Assistant Director of the Choir, and so Wayne gave him the job. That was all right. It seemed to be a problem after Wayne left that he had Gordie Leavitt take the choir. There were over a hundred people, you know, in the choir; there were quite a few there. And I know for some reason or other. There was some consternation between the boys’ teachers, from one to the other, actually, Wayne Hertz also, they didn’t care for some of the things that Wayne did, so after Wayne left, Gordie somehow or other, got a lot of the choir against him. And they started writing letters to the Personnel Committee, and so forth and so on, and maybe T was part of that, I didn’t write letters, but I was trying to be honest, and find out whether some of these things were actually true, and the students were doing what they knew they should, or they shouldn’t do. I found out myself, that it was just about more or less, even, wasn’t too far one way or the other, but the ones that were going too far were always the ones who had something to talk about, you know? So anyway, I ran into the dog house with Chuckles”. . .Harrington. And that sort of put me in the dog house with both, let’s see, it was Garrity that was here then, and I got kind of tired of that. I defended Gordie, but he was out. The Dean then was Williams, and he had enough evidence. I guess, to tell Gordie that he was through. He’s now an insurance man in Yakima. There was quite a lot to talk about, since he resigned, he wasn’t fired, he resigned, and that was to me. a little bit, you know, getting along with everybody and that didn’t seem to work that way. But it came out, it turned out all right. Gordie’s making a good living now in insurance.

Lowther: You were here about thirty years, during that time how would you describe the relationship between the school, Central, and the town, the town-gown thing?

Haruda: That’s pretty hard for me to find an answer to that. I could say a little bit more. . .When Joe Kehleher, do you remember him? Joe Kelleher died, and he was very strong in starting that program of special people in came into the school, whether they were music majors, or what. If they could have that scholarship up to a certain level, they’d receive a scholarship. He did a great deal for helping that whole business. It didn’t matter what Department it was, it was giving scholarships to deserving, people.
Lowther: Do you feel that the town gave a strong support to the music program here?

Haruda: I don’t really feel like they gave any more support to the music program than to a lot of other programs. For example, drama, etc. Maybe I’m wrong there, but we, our auditorium holds a little over nine hundred people, and when we’d give a recital, generally every seat was taken, so I don’t think we could complain too much about our attendance.

Lowther: Well, I think before we go on, we’ll give Ham a chance to change the tape there.

TAPE STOPS AT 640 ON THE MACHINE COUNTER!

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Haruda: I do say that I suppose this is in respect to the retired faculty that I didn’t go to the last meeting, and a lot of meetings I don’t go to because I just don’t feel well. I guess, I’ve had a couple of strokes and a broken hip. I was in the hospital for quite some time, and…

Lowther: We’re on again. OK. What is your feeling about the way the University, or College, handled faculty salaries and promotions?
Haruda: Are you talking about the administration within a Department? How they handled it, or the general?

Lowther: Yeah, the University as a whole.

Haruda: I really can’t say too much about that because I didn’t have much control over it, and I know we had people that were very unhappy because they didn’t get enough money, you know, I couldn’t really blame them, but I think that’s more an administration problem, you know, from up above there. I think a lot of it depended on how much money they had, and how much money they were willing to spend on a particular Department.

Lowther: What did you think of the merit raise system?

Haruda: Oh, I think that’s all right.

Lowther: OK. And did you feel that people who deserved promotion generally got it?

Haruda: If you’re talking about my own Department…

Lowther: Yes, your Department.

Haruda: I won’t name any names, but I know at least one who was very unhappy with the Department, and he certainly didn’t get promoted the way he should have gotten, so forth and so on. I won’t mention his name.

Lowther: Was promotion policy controlled pretty much by the Department?

Haruda: Well, no. I would say that was up to Wayne Hertz, the Chairman at the time, and certain people could feel as though, if they wanted to, they could write a letter to the Dean, or whoever about a certain person, bull think they were inclined, more or less, to do what the Chairman of the Department would recommend.

Lowther: OK. Do you have any remembrances of various Boards of Trustees and their role in the University?

Haruda: You’re getting into some tough problems here. I really didn’t follow what the Board was doing, too much. I’ve heard some things lately about the Board. Which I don’t think I have to go into talking about, but I’ve heard a lot of those things.

Lowther: So, you were not really not much aware of the Board or what it was doing.

OK. Well, I think, Joe, we’ve just about covered most of the topics that I wanted to ask you questions about, but maybe you have some recollections, or some things that you would just like to get on the tape.

Haruda: I think I have been talking too much already. But you never did go into any details about that hospital business…

Howard: Do you want to tell about it?

Lowther: Any humorous events that you’d like to pass on?

Haruda: Well, not really.
Lowther: OK. OK. I think we’ve just about gotten to the end of the tape anyway, and so I want to thank you, Joe, for coming and giving us this interview. We appreciate it very much.

Haruda: It’s been a pleasure being here.