*Praise the Lord with the harp…make music to him on the ten-stringed lyre.*

*Sing to him a new song…play skillfully, and shout for joy.* [PSALMS 33:2-3]

Throughout his life, Van Cliburn did … of course … play skillfully, and in keeping with the spirit of Psalms 33, he played with an extraordinary amount of joy.

People sensed that joy, and thanks to his God-given talents, he was able to let them experience that joy alongside him

*My heart, O God, is steadfast...I will sing and make music with all my soul.* [PSALMS 108:1]

*I will praise you, Lord, among the nations…I will sing of you among the peoples.* [PSALMS 108:3]

Van did, indeed, make music among the nations, and the peoples of the world heard his voice.

At a time when the Soviet Union and the United States were talking all the time, but not really listening to one another, Van Cliburn communicated his profound love of music and his passion for living.

That was a message that penetrated the din, that made fans out of our nation’s adversaries, and taught us an important lesson we all could take to heart.

That lesson was that we all, deep down, are more alike than we are different.

Van was a true hero of the Cold War, a label he accepted as part of pursuing his passion for making music.

In his world, making music wasn’t just something he did at the piano, it was something he did in the world around him.

Through efforts like the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition, he brought new talent to light, and inspired new artists around the world.

He also helped keep Texas firmly on the map as a center for fine arts.

Today, thanks to Van’s hard work and dedication to his art and his craft, entire generations of fine artists…in Texas and beyond…are making music of their own.

In that way, Van lives on, and will continue to live on…in every note they play.

Those of us honored to know him have suffered a profound loss, tempered by the blessing of having been lucky enough to be counted among his family and friends.

We knew a Van who was kind, intelligent, compassionate and genuine.

We’ll miss the light he always brought with him into the room… the unwavering pleasure of his company … and the sheer contagiousness of his love for life.

Texas lost a true legend with his passing, and he will never be forgotten.

Whether you play an instrument, or express yourself in any other way, I urge you to draw inspiration from how Van did it: Skillfully … and with joy.

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