

FOREWORD

The idea behind this book is to pass on to you the experiences I have gained through many years of teaching students and training horses at all levels. My hope is to help trainers, as well as amateur riders, to have a better understanding of how to work with their horses. Since much of my experience has been gained by making my own mistakes, it has become a personal goal to help others avoid making those same mistakes. If I can accomplish this, then my purpose in writing this book will be fulfilled. In addition, it is my wish that a better understanding of classical dressage will enable us to educate our horses in a manner that is acceptable to them.

No one can say that this is the way everyone should work with horses; no one person has the answer to how each and every one of us should teach or train. That is because we are all entitled to our own opinions. Furthermore, how boring would it be if we all rode and taught in the same manner? So, take what you feel you can use from this book—that which fits into your riding and teaching—and leave the rest.

You see, the riders and trainers who really succeed are those who have the courage and ability to develop a system and a philosophy that is uniquely theirs. It is important that we come to our own conclusions, and that we believe in our own methods. At the same time, it is important to keep our eyes and ears open, so that we can continually pick up inspiration and ideas from others.

We cannot really understand a movement until we have felt it executed correctly. Regardless of all the words we hear as students or use as teachers, to be successful, these words must lead us to an experience—the feeling of the horse responding correctly. No one can describe such a feeling with words. Try to explain to someone how a banana tastes, or how it feels to ride a bicycle. Impossible, isn't it? One must have tasted the banana first. One must have tried to balance on a bicycle before knowing the feeling.

It is also very important to have an overview. To achieve this, you must work systematically as well as have a goal and a work plan, and you must arrive at a point along the way where you are able to simplify all the many details. You will find some examples of how to do this in the pages that follow.

It is my hope that this book will be of some help to you; that it will provide inspiration and ideas, and that, by testing some of the theories and methods, you may find yourself in a situation where you will learn from the experience of a truly correct feeling. Good luck—and have fun!