

The Place Above the Stars  
My Journey from Horn Player to Composer  
and Defender of Animals  
An Autobiography

by

David Irving

## **Dedications**

To my brother Darrel whose support has been  
so vital for the journey and without which  
I could never have traveled the path and endured.

To J.R. Schlatter whose encouragement helped  
put me onto the road of a highly exciting musical journey where  
I met many wonderful musicians and many good and kind people.

To all my incredible friends and associates past and present  
with the greatest love and affection.  
I have no doubt you have tended your gardens  
far better than the story told within

**To the One Above the Stars  
in whom I am sometimes privileged to marvel**

## **In Fond and Loving Remembrance**

Laurence Gerow Irving (1900-2002)  
Adeline Thomas Irving (1899-1997)

Ann Irving  
1926-2007

William Byron Irving  
1928-2016

Irene Read  
1918-2016

Irene Tysonia Read  
1945-2017

Forward  
by  
Tim Page

It is a moving experience to have known somebody for more than 40 years, to have admired his intelligence and musicianship, and then to be presented with an autobiography that proves that you'd never guessed at the richness of the life that he's lived.

I met David Irving in a writing class at Columbia University in the summer of 1976. It was a different New York then, scruffy and dangerous and profoundly unfashionable, yet it had a way of bringing people together – not just for necessary comradeship and self-protection but also to share amazement that we had inherited this once-glorious, now battered city as a place to recreate ourselves. Many of our fellow students were taking the course simply as a summer make-up to meet Columbia's strict graduation requirements but David and I became friends because we really wanted to write. And so we wrote, filling our notebooks with stories and anecdotes and dutifully mimeographing our weekly articles so that all the students could read along and offer critiques.

David was gentle and approachable and he wrote from the heart. I remember one story about an acquaintance of his who was slowly, sadly disentangling himself from life, becoming ever more passive and removed until, refusing to make a motion to save himself in a sudden crisis, was drowned on the spot.

This, as the reader will quickly discover, was not a self-portrait. On the contrary, David was always a swimmer -- through cities, cultures and his deep and lasting friendships and now through a grave illness that he is facing courageously and doing what writers do with adversity -- writing about it. The world has changed enormously since David's childhood and what he called his "kind of Tom Sawyerish existence" in Indiana, with its then-vibrant river life and the ever-present sound of locomotives off in the distance, but he brings it to us still fresh. The young man fell in love with music and the music drew him off to great world cities, playing in the Seventh Army Symphony across Europe (his memories of postwar Vienna are undimmed as well as his formative experiences with the opera in Graz) moving on to Boston, to San Francisco in the beat and hippie years, and then to New York for the city's long and improbable revival of fortunes.

In between, David explored religion of many kinds, had some life-changing LSD experiences (both ecstatic and excruciating), came to know extraordinary people of all stripe, many of whom make appearances in this book. He became a distinguished horn player, playing under many of the leading conductors of his time, and then moved increasingly into composition, where he has given us some of his own intense and passionate music. He thinks about music too – one of the qualities I most admire about this book is the way David examines aesthetics of many sorts, taking nothing for granted,

either in his own music or that of others. In such passages, he seems both visionary and logician, a valuable combination.

Late in life, this very kind man turned his attention to the betterment of society's treatment of animals writing several books including *The Protein Myth*. Today, David is still a seeker, still asking questions and questioning answers and his book and his life may help and inspire the rest of us as we soldier through our own challenges. And now it is time for you to read on – and to discover a wise new friend.

Tim Page  
February 17, 2019  
Los Angeles

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

#### Prologue

A major question arose when I reflected on whether to put down on paper the story about myself and my life in music. Why did I think I might be capable of writing an autobiography in a manner people would find interesting, possibly even intriguing? To that question the great American dancer Isadore Duncan provided the waiting answer. The story of anyone's life will take the reader on a fascinating journey if honestly told no matter who the author might be.

Yet in my own case a short biography of my life in music had already been written by Juliann Hayward in her doctoral dissertation titled *An Exploration of Four Songs for Soprano, Horn, and Piano (1990) by David Irving* (University of North Carolina, Greensboro). While the importance of biographic data cannot be underestimated, still it hardly matches an autobiography for bringing the story of a composer's life alive in a more compelling manner. In any case, I will hope that this story reads more like a memoir rather than the kind of biographical work which primarily catalogs the events of someone's life in a series of interesting facts.

Simply put, this is the story of my musical journey and where it led. It has been a journey that would broaden the scope of my life and would transform me, an orchestral musician, into a composer with concerns about the world in ways in which I could never have foreseen as I grew up in a small town in Northeastern Indiana. There, in the age before television, youth lived nearly cut off from the outside world. Yet that isolated environment loomed large. It was everything. Only music beckoned me from its security propelling me like a spinning top out into a far greater reality where I groped and searched for direction in the new world that suddenly surrounded me.

As a composer, one of the most important lessons I learned from the beginning was that you needed to grasp the attention of the listener immediately from the very first note just as I seek to do in writing words here. Keep the intro short, keep it simple, but keep it filled with meaning. Indeed, who would want it otherwise? For whether in writing or composing one must reach for those deeper levels of human possibilities where we may "stand surrounded, detached, in measureless oceans of space" and from there, like Walt Whitman's cosmic spider, fling out our gossamer thread among the spheres to catch somewhere and so provide a path for our journey.

As I stand before you I view a person who has been given the gift of music to soar through musical space buoyed by that indecipherable language only music can convey and to jot down, on occasion, some of what I found there. But this is a gift reserved not just for me, for music is the universal language available to all who would receive it, even, in some cases, for those without the capacity to hear. The gift accrues also to you, the reader, for whom, hopefully, this book will represent an enjoyable excursion down

the rivers of my life with many worthwhile adventures to observe taking place along the rivers' banks.

### **The contents of this book.**

Many years ago I worked for the United States Post Office for a few months. It was the heyday of the great cultural renaissance that was breaking loose across the country, mostly in larger cities in places suitable for rebellion like the Haight Ashbury of San Francisco, the lower East Side of New York City, and other such enclaves. Thousands were the hippie/beatnik/flower children and various artistic types, including me, who flooded the Postal Service employment office in San Francisco during those years seeking a job that paid enough to allow them to pursue their objectives without restraint. There the personnel officer struggled without success to turn the tide of temporary employment seekers aside. "We're looking for career candidates," he said, hoping for understanding. "What we want are prosaic types, not poets!" Alas, the poor man's efforts were futile. The floodgates had been opened and wave after wave of poetic types flooded in. For San Francisco was one of the primary homes of a new kind of poetry and music being born which so many people were creating together while attaching their own individual additions. Yet, it was more than that. It was the search for newness and meaning in a dizzying surfeit of ways fueled by an underlying rebellion against practically every societal norm. This book will describe my personal encounter with that world.

On our journey we will also meet up with some fascinating figures of the times. That is because for reasons I have yet to understand, I have often found myself in close proximity, including interacting in some way, with quite a few well-known and influential figures in contemporary society. These people ranged from Nobel Prize winners, to Pulitzer Prize winners, to famous actors and actresses, to some of the best known artists and poets of the day, to some of the nation's top singers and musicians in the classical field—also sometimes in jazz and pop and rock—and even world famous political figures. Yet, who was I but just a simple musician who somehow found himself face-to-face with these intriguing people?

On one occasion, for example, I met an elderly woman in the laundromat just a block from my apartment in New York City. She turned out to be Sophie Feuermann, the sister of the great Emanuel Feuermann, considered by many to be the greatest cellist of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. His recording of Beethoven's *Archduke Trio* with Jascha Heifetz and Arthur Rubenstein is one of my favorites of all time. Sophie, a piano prodigy in her own right, who grew up beside Emanuel in Vienna, often concertized with him. We got to know each other a little through telephone calls and e-mails. She and her husband, Harry Braun, had fled from Vienna to safety in America in 1938 at the time of Hitler's annexation of Austria. Once here she concertized and taught piano. Sophie remained quite bitter about Austria's acquiescence to Hitler and all the evil his Third Reich brought with it. She died in New York City in 2007 at the age of 99.

The reader will find reminiscences such as these sprinkled throughout the book.

I should add that by virtue of the colossal mistakes arising from my own ignorance as I crashed like the proverbial elephant in a China shop through life's challenges, I developed a world outlook that is a little different than the ways in which most people see it. No doubt it is born in part from experiences such as the little baby elephant I happened upon as I meandered around a circus one day long ago in San Francisco. The little elephant was alone—not a person or another animal in sight—just the baby elephant and me outdoors in between these large circus tents staked down adjacent to each other. This little elephant was tethered by a chain to one tent and was crying. I watched the tears in the elephant's eyes and my own heart began to weep. Where was the baby's mother? I spoke to the elephant and tried to comfort it. I did not say, "Oh! It's just an animal. Those couldn't possibly be real tears." I brought the plight of the little elephant to the attention of someone there though I knew the task of bringing any real relief to the situation was next to insurmountable. To whatever extent I failed in this endeavor was on me. I believe, nevertheless, that my concern and compassion for the little elephant represented a way of thinking that, fortunately, was growing and spreading to millions of people the world over as it has the past few decades.

Unfortunately, only a few musicians and composers, or for that matter, artists, poets, writers and members of the cultured elite which supports and controls the arts—those with the ability to take up a leadership role in this area—have caught up to the new way of thinking. When artists hear about it—and I have spent considerable effort in communicating this message to dozens of such people in my personal circle—they shrug their shoulders and say, "Interesting! But, have you seen my latest painting? Have you read the poem I just published? Have you heard my most recent recording?" Or, they remain silent.

In an effort to exercise greater personal responsibility in promoting this new world view, at the beginning of 2007 I took a hiatus from composing that would last for 10 years. During this time I devoted my creative efforts to writing about the human responsibility to the nonhuman population of the earth. I will hope to share a little of that outlook in these pages.

### **Exploring the ways of religion**

At different times I have embarked upon in-depth study of certain spiritual disciplines. In the 1960s this included familiarizing myself more with Eastern religions and Eastern thought like many others during that time. More recently, I began rethinking Christianity and enrolled in a program of study that would lead to a Masters degree in theology. I had completed two courses and was starting the third when I dropped the program with the realization that, really, I was not needed in this field. Religious scholars were already doing a far better job than I would ever do in promoting what I viewed as greater truths about Christianity. These were based on the most up-to-date research in biblical scholarship. In any case, we will take a look at some of the fascinating aspects of that part of my journey and my beliefs about a higher—what shall I call it, "authority," "power"? No! The right word is "love."

## **My work**

For those not familiar with my work, this book will also offer the opportunity to get to know something about my music including youtube.com recordings which are listed in Appenix III. Fortunately, I hooked up with an excellent recording engineer, Dan Velle, in nearby Oneonta, New York who worked with me in getting these recordings posted— along with those of my sister, Ann Irving. (See chapter 11.)

Some of these recordings presented problems which could not be completely overcome which the ear quickly discerns. I should also warn that in the chapters on the development of my compositional technique some passages may seem to verge a little on the erudite for those without a music background. In such cases the reader is urged to skim lightly through, choosing what is valuable, or to omit such parts entirely.

The same advice can apply if the text should appear to stray, such as with a brief foray into the historic development of incubators that were vital to the survival of my twin brother and me. These passages are not essential and can be omitted or read according to the reader's inclinations. Because each chapter is divided into topic headings it should be relatively easy to skip around.

## **Studies and career**

After years as a conservatory-trained professional horn [French horn] player, I started composition studies at Columbia University where I worked my way through supported by scholarships and the partial tuition exemption program Columbia offers its employees. At Columbia I earned a BA, graduating Magna Cum Laude, Phi Beta Kappa, and then proceeded to earn an MA in music composition. The death of a close friend by suicide derailed all thoughts I entertained about pursuing a doctorate, and, after I obtained my Master's degree, I left university education. This foreclosed the opportunity for obtaining a university or college teaching job, for which a doctorate is normally required and upon which many composers depend for a living. I must add, though, that I have never regretted the decision.

Somehow during the ensuing years I managed to get dozens of my compositions performed not only in New York City and New York State but across the country and occasionally in Europe. (See appendix II) Even a commission would sometimes come sailing my way from out of the blue and some of my music would be reviewed. Meanwhile, I sustained myself for a while teaching music history-type classes for the retirement program of the United Federation of teachers in Queens, Brooklyn, and Manhattan; a class on the symphony for the adult division of Marymount Manhattan College; and teaching trumpet and horn at the highly prestigious Spence School.

But I had to face the facts. It was time to do something with which I have always had more than a little difficulty, get a job in the real world. Somehow, by trial and error I accumulated enough skills to work as a legal secretary and other administrative type jobs even becoming at one place of employment an Executive Secretary to the President of the

organization. How that ever happened amazes me still. During this period I scraped together and saved every cent I could muster until finally I had saved what amounted to enough to take out a mortgage on a modest home in the upper Catskill region of New York whenever the time was right. Some houses in that area were reasonably priced.

### **Success as a Composer—The Four Songs**

Today if someone asks if I still believe that the time for my music will ever arrive, I reply that it is already here, it just materializes randomly and slowly—a clock free to travel at its own pace. As an example, in June of 2016, as disclosed above, a graduate student at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro—a complete stranger—contacted me for the purpose of writing her doctoral dissertation on my composition *Four Songs for Soprano, Horn, and Piano* and other works. It was one of my favorite compositions among those which have been performed, having received its premiere on April 20, 1990. While many complications arose with the project, the dissertation was completed and filed in December of 2017. Also in 2017, the Noorda Theatre Center for Children and Youth Production at Utah Valley University in Orem, Utah contacted me to get the electronic score for Sandy Asher's *Once in the Time of Trolls* for their production of the play. I wrote the music for the Open Eye Theatre in Margaretville, N.Y. in 1994. The Noorda Theatre production was soon followed by a similar request from the Greta Theater in Mt. Greta, Pennsylvania.

The time seemed ripe for the *Four Songs* as a piano student at the Brussels Conservatory of Music soon got in touch requesting permission to use the piece in one of his examinations. I granted the permission but never heard back as to whether the project materialized. But next a horn player from the New York Philharmonic contacted me with the wish to perform one of the songs from the *Four Songs* at a concert in January of 2018. [He had played in previous performances of another composition of mine, the *Trio for Horns*.] This song was a setting for an Emily Dickinson poem. The concert was the vision of a famous violinist and other well-known persons who had plans for taking an Emily Dickinson program across the country and Europe. The program would eventually be recorded. I was thrilled. It looked like at last I would have some of my music recorded.

My song had been selected to lead off the program that included some highly respected composers. It would be sung by a famous Metropolitan Opera star and accompanied by a pianist drawn from the conducting staff of the Metropolitan Opera, along, of course with the horn player from the New York Philharmonic. This was a big break and it came from out of the blue, just as with many other of my performances. Alas, the euphoria was short-lived as the project was suddenly cancelled—right out of the blue, just like it arrived. What can one say? You win a little, you lose a little. That's life. And as it goes in life so it also goes for a composer.

### **Time marches on**

Twenty—or was it thirty—or so years ago a close friend of mine, Julie Beckham, from Alabama, who was a good decade or two younger than I, used to tease me about



how old I was. She knew I despised being categorized by age. "How old are you now, David?" she would ask. "Have a birthday coming up soon?" To this I would respond, "Young I am!" Whenever she or her sister, Pam, or her significant other, Ricardo Ferreria, expressed any concerns related to age, I was right there with my mantra. "Just say, 'Young I am!'" I would offer this sage advice with a superior edge to my voice. With the passing years I sought to convince Julie that while she was growing older my little mantra "Young I am" assured I was growing younger so that soon she would pass me by and be older than I was. We had a good time with our little game.

Growing older, however, and talking about it does bring up the issue of health. I have always believed that following a vegan diet, which I have done since the year 1985, gave me added protection from the ravages of age connected with nutritionally-related diseases. Still it would be unreasonable to claim with certainty that my good health over the past 30 plus years is attributed solely to a vegan diet. The facts are, though, that I have never suffered any of the killer disease health problems resulting from diet: certain forms of cancer, heart disease, stroke, diabetes, etc. The worst for me was an emergency inguinal hernia operation in April of 2011 and a corneal transplant in September of 2017, neither of which were related to nutrition.

On January 31, 2017, unfortunately, all representations of perfect health came to a screeching halt. That was the date a bone marrow aspiration revealed that I had contracted CMML, stage 0. CMML stands for Chronic Myelomonocytic Leukemia. Stage 0 is the lowest stage and 2 is the highest. At 0, one barely has the disease.

[Note: CMML is different from Acute Myeloid Leukemia, the more dangerous form of the disease associated with the word leukemia]

CMML is not nutritionally related so a vegan diet offered no protection from the disease. It is a blood disorder caused, it is thought, as with all forms of leukemia, either by some environmental hazard (chemical contamination), taking a chemo therapeutic drug, or a mutation of genetic material in the bone marrow as the result of radiation. The latter is the only cause that could apply to me, as far as I could see. So how did I end up with this condition?

I could imagine only one possibility, that I may have been accidentally zapped with an excessive dose of radiation by a nurse taking an X-Ray who was not qualified to administer X-Rays. When it happened it registered indelibly in my mind because I did not observe anyone but the nurse administer the X-Ray—if I remember correctly. However, I cannot even remember the full circumstances. It could also be that even if this transpired as I have described it, still it would not have resulted in me getting CMML.

The treatment for CMML stage 0 is a wait-and-see approach. One can live with the disease without treatment for decades. I hoped and believed this was the case for me. I longed to continue my mantra, "Young I am!"

All went well over the following year and well into the next as I looked forward to

a return to music composition following my 10 year writing hiatus. Unfortunately, health problems were not quite finished having their say. On January 17, 2018, I took a bad fall on ice resulting in a fractured rib and an injured rib cage requiring months of recuperation. This was followed a few weeks later by an incident of gastrointestinal bleeding, ambulance rides, blood transfusions, and a three day stay in an Intensive Care Unit in Cooperstown, New York to repair a bleeding ulcer. This was caused, they think, by the ingestion of the aspirin contained in Alka Seltzer. I had been taking Alka Seltzer, but only in small amounts, to relieve upper chest indigestion caused by the fall on ice.

What I could now no longer deny was the message coming through resoundingly clear. "Young though I was," the facts were that I was 83 years of age. How many of my dear friends had already departed this mortal sphere? Far too many. I had thought of writing an autobiography for years. Maybe the time to do it was now before I, too, was no longer around to share the good times, the bad times, and all that makes life so intriguing, so valuable, and so worthwhile. As a verse in the American folk song goes which I recall hearing on a recording by *The Mothers of Invention* many years ago, "Oh death, Oh death! Won't you spare me over 'til another year!"

Thus I began putting together this book. As to the year's health issues, I hardly had the opportunity to catch a breath and exclaim "What's going on here, anyway," than I had to undergo laparoscopic hiatal hernia repair surgery, the need for which was discovered during the ulcer episode. Now I did raise my voice in protest—at least to myself: "Hey, enough is enough! I'm not supposed to have these kind of health problems!" But what can anyone do except accept what comes one's way as gracefully as possible?

I would all too soon have little other choice when a dental implant procedure sent me hightailing for the Emergency Room in Cooperstown one evening trying to stem the flow of blood along the way. This was caused by a low platelet count resulting from the CMML. After transfusions, the next day a team of doctors came around. But instead of discharging me, as I expected, the lead physician announced—wrongly, I'm happy to say—that my CMML had progressed to Acute Myeloid Leukemia (AML). They wanted to send me to Rochester for treatment immediately. Without treatment, the doctor said I could live around 5 months, give or take—with treatment, 10 months or so.

I told the doctors I would need to arrange to take care of my cats before I could ever agree and also that I would want a second opinion. I lived for the next 5 days with this diagnosis before my regular hematologist, headquartered in Oneonta, New York, finally notified me that "No," I did not have AML. This was Dr. Daniele Knight, a brilliant hematology and cancer specialist, who was handling the CMML. She believed it had progressed so that I should start chemo. I didn't much like that prospect. I felt that maybe my body must be so out of balance after so many assaults throughout the year that it needed time for the balance to be restored. In any case, Dr. Knight agreed that it would be a good time to obtain the advice of an expert in leukemia and arranged for me to visit Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York City.

At Sloan Kettering I was introduced to Dr. Aaron D. Goldberg, a brilliant, young

hematologic oncologist who specializes in leukemia and knows just about everything currently identified in regard to the disease. I was pleased to note that he takes pride in treating his patients like family and considers it an extraordinary privilege to provide them with the best possible care. After another bone marrow aspiration and series of tests it was discovered that the CMML was really another disorder called Atypical Chronic Myeloid Leukemia (aCML). This is a rare leukemic condition about which little is known and for which no treatment was available for my particular condition. The worst aspect was the resulting low platelet count which requires transfusions when it gets too low. Regular blood transfusions are also at times required. Because medicines have yet to be developed to target the genetic fusions in my particular case, an unrelated growth factor medication for raising platelet production was recommended. The insurance company denied the application, but during our appeal a potentially even better medication was discovered which carried fewer serious side effects. Would you not guess, however, that the insurance company denied that application too? I felt certain we would win the appeal on that decision, and we did. Next came the news, however, that the drug was so expensive for a monthly dose there was no way I could afford it. Fortunately, after an application by Dr. Goldberg the producer of the drug showed their altruistic side and provided the medication for my use.

By the time I visited Sloan Kettering my autobiography was fairly far along. I found in writing it that as an octogenarian one could hardly avoid a face-to-face confrontation with the life one has lived with few escapes. Here one finds the good, the bad, and the ugly and to that one would hope to add as frequently as possible, the beautiful. But there is no denying that life can bring one crashing to earth on occasion. For me, upon inspection, those instances invariably proved to be my own making. While some of these were not too bad, others I found to be so personally offensive that I could not easily reveal what they were about. How could I have possibly done this or that?

I take refuge from exposing the worst of these happenings in this book with the claim that such image-shattering behavior is private, between myself and that great universal love with which I believe we are all attached. Nevertheless, I may hint or allude to some of these as we go along. This may be a cowardly way out. I remember, as an excuse, that even Henry Miller, who maintained that one of his greatest claims to fame came from exposing the full person, withheld certain things he felt were too personal to reveal. For myself, the most egregious of such acts have brought changes within none more important than the recognition that the people I admire the most and the ones I believe are the most successful of all, are those who have lived a life with the greatest kindness and goodness. To them I bow, for surely, as the Beatitudes say, blessed are the pure in heart for they will see God.

It is with the above reflections in mind that I write this memoir of my life. It will stand firmly in support of my music, my battle on behalf of our four-footed (and two-footed) warm and furry friends, and my way of viewing the world. They are the product of my life. I share these gladly to anyone who wishes to know them. As I tell my story, I will try not to range too far afield from the topics at hand and so proceed as straightforward as possible. May you enjoy the journey as we travel along together.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Early Childhood**

#### **My parents**

Frank Byron Irving, my grandfather, whose roots stem from the tiny island of Fair Isle in the Shetland Islands in Scotland, was born in Canada and migrated to the United States where he married Charlotte Emmy Gerow in Blooming Grove, New York on February 17, 1898. With Bible in hand and supported by his wife, Frank became an itinerant Baptist preacher traveling the back roads in a horse-pulled buggy, preaching in little towns and little churches wherever he could get a job. These he found as far North as Minnesota (Park Rapids); as far West as Nebraska (Tekamah), Ohio, and Illinois (Streator and Benson); in the South in Missouri; and in the East in Vermont (West Guilford) and Massachusetts (Hampden). It cannot have been a particularly easy life upon which Frank and Charlotte embarked. But, independent it was for sure, kindled by a lifelong love that had them exchanging letters of romance all their lives. Frank and Charlotte had five children together, Jean, Laurence, Margaret, Charles, and Frank Byron, Jr.

Laurence Gerow Irving, the second child, who was my father, was born on June 17, 1900 at 2507 Amsterdam Avenue in New York City. His parents spelled the usual Lawrence with a "u" (Laurence) because they hoped to have a girl who they planned on naming Laura. Laurence lived in the same towns as his parents up until his early 20s when his father took a pastor position at the First Baptist Church in Streator, Illinois.

My mother, Adeline Thomas, was born and raised in Streator, Illinois. She was described in local papers as an attractive, pretty, brown-eyed girl who competed in typing contests and won medals in short hand. It was also reported that she was popular in musical circles. She worked for the Lloyd Painter law firm as a legal secretary. (How curious that I would one day also be employed as a legal secretary.)

One Sunday morning Laurence reluctantly dragged himself to the service held in the Methodist Episcopal Church. (Why he was going there instead of to his father's Baptist church, I do not know.) Somehow, he just didn't feel like going and arrived late. He entered the church right in the middle of a solo Adeline Thomas was singing from the choir loft. Laurence knew instantly this was a greeting from his angel for it was love right from the beginning and the two were soon dating. On December 31, 1922 Laurence Irving and Adeline Thomas were married. The service was conducted at the bride's home by Frank Byron Irving, Sr. who would soon take up a new parish position as pastor of the First Baptist Church in Benson, Illinois.

During those early years in Streator, Laurence busied himself trying to build a career. For a while he worked for the Santa Fe Railroad and also as a bill collector, the latter which he could not tolerate and the only job I ever heard him say a negative word about.

By the time of his marriage, Laurence had become an Assistant Manager at Woolworth's. There he requested and was granted his longest vacation during his tenure at that store which was to take an extra day off after New Year's day in 1923. This was so that he and his new wife, Adeline, could have a short honeymoon.

After two years at Woolworth's Laurence was promoted to Assistant Manager in their Milwaukee store, a major promotion which was written up in the newspaper. Unfortunately, hardly had he begun the job than health problems forced him to leave it. This occurred even before he and Adeline had moved their belongings to Milwaukee. After a period of recuperation Laurence took a job in charge of the Grand Union Tea Wagon in Streator. He next worked for Askin Ready-to-Wear Store which, after a year, appointed him manager.

Talking their situation over, Laurence and Adeline decided to try opening their own business and took a lease on John A. Klever's Grocery Store which had an apartment on the second floor. This was where the couple lived. It was during this period on May 25, 1926 that their first child, Shirley Ann, was born.

Adeline had no hesitation in telling anyone who wanted to hear that she had sung all through her pregnancy for she wanted her child to possess the gift of song and to become a professional singer. This was also stated in a newspaper report: "...already her parents are making plans to educate the little lady along musical lines, as both are interested in that art and are members of the M.E. [Methodist Episcopal] choir." The new parents also belonged to a double quartet in the church. Little did they know how successfully their hopes would be realized. Ann Irving grew up possessing one of the great operatic voices of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. (See Chapter 11.) She married Sydney Johnstone, a night club pianist, in Chicago. They had one very gifted child together, Michael, who would become the lead singer and guitarist in his own rock groups, playing in many venues around Chicago. Mike and I and my brother Darrel keep tabs on each other and have maintained a close friendship from the time he was our young nephew.

Two years later another baby was on the way for Laurence and Adeline. This was William (Bill) Byron born on June 15, 1928. He played the clarinet a little growing up but never felt an inclination to pursue the instrument beyond school activities. Bill would attend the Devry Technical School in Chicago to prepare himself for a career in television maintenance. He married a local girl from Bluffton, Indiana, the very pretty and popular Barbara Decker. Following in the footsteps of my parents, they were a devoted, thoroughly compatible couple who shared a rich and fulfilling life together. They had four wonderful children, Sherrie, Rick, Tim, and Diana.

If anything, operating his own grocery store showed Laurence that he enjoyed retail sales in clothing much more than selling groceries. His forte was to work with people. He liked having a greater interaction with the public, and he missed working with other employees. Klever's was just much too confining. It wasn't long before Laurence had accepted the position of Assistant Manager at the J.C. Penny store in Kankakee, Illinois. This occurred around 1928 or 1929.

## Incubators

It would take another seven years before my mother became pregnant again and when she did the happy time for the baby to arrive was expected to occur in the middle of June. But suddenly on May 23, 1935 during the night a problem developed. In those days it wasn't the responsibility of patients to get themselves to an emergency ward when there was an emergency. The doctors went to their patients' homes. Adeline's obstetrician was Dr. K.N. Rayer and it was time to get him over to the house and fast. He must have arrived quickly because at 5:30 a.m. he helped deliver a baby boy. The delivery happened on the living room couch where Adeline had collapsed when the baby let her know it was on the way and no holding back.

But wait! "Something's not right!" Adeline exclaimed after the delivery. And indeed it wasn't. There was another baby yet to be born. This one would take a full four hours to make its way through the birth canal. Finally, at 9:30 a.m. the second of identical twins had arrived. It was a rough time for my mother.

Premature babies at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century had a dismal reputation because of their limited prospects for survival. Those who did make it were regarded as "weaklings" or "congenitally disabled." It was because of the high mortality rate that in the 1880s the government of France, fearful that it might impact on the number of soldiers available to fight future wars, pressured the medical establishment to bring the death rate for premature babies down. In response they developed the closed infant incubator.

In Europe fair entrepreneurs seized on the new technology and began exhibiting premature babies in their expositions. The small size of the babies, the fact that in some cases only dolls' clothing would fit them, their placement in machines similar to those used to incubate chickens on farms, and carnival barkers hawking the shows made the exhibits a popular place for fair visitors to go. Before he achieved Hollywood fame one of the early barkers for such exhibits was a young and handsome Cary Grant.

The 1896 Exposition in Berlin termed their incubator display a "Kinderbrutanstalt" (child hatchery) and put it right next to their Conga Village. Advertisements hailed the incubators as "An Artificial Foster Mother." The exhibit was so popular it outsold the sky rides and even the Tyrolean yodelers. But Dr. Martin Couney, who was present, saw a purpose in these shows that far exceeded their crass commercialism. This was a way to publicize the new incubators and get the medical world to recognize their value. At the time hospitals would not even allow incubators on their premises. Couney organized exhibits in London and then in the United States where they became a permanent fixture at amusement parks and expos.

Couney's productions lasted through the 1939 World Fairs in Chicago and New York. They were a boon for desperate parents who now had a place to bring their premature babies for this much needed special treatment. Couney accepted all applications and even helped transport the babies to the incubators in the exhibits. He did not charge the grateful parents. Today he is regarded as a major medical figure who

collaborated with some of the top physicians and leaders in neonatal medicine for promoting the use of incubators in neonatal care. Yet it has now been revealed that Couney may never even have earned a medical degree. He was not a physician as he sometimes claimed and as everyone believed.

Besides Couney's work, the popularity of the Dionne Quintuplets born on May 28, 1934 in Quebec, Canada, a year before the birth of my twin brother and me on May 23, 1935, also helped deflate public and medical prejudice against "preemies" (as they were often called) and incubators. The times were changing. Some hospitals were even setting up incubator units in their nurseries for the newborn if only to place one or two at the side of the room. This must have included St. Mary's Hospital in Kankakee, Illinois, because that is where my brother and I were taken to be placed in incubators. We remained there until our skin color (which, if I recall correctly, my mother said was somewhat blue) and temperature were judged to be normal with no respiratory problems present.

My mother and father named me David Gerow Irving and my twin brother Darrel James Irving. David was taken from the Biblical David. Gerow was the middle name of my father but also the maiden name of my Grandmother, Charlotte Emmy Gerow. The Gerows were originally Huguenots by the name of Giraud, with a coat of arms and all. They settled in upstate New York in the area of Blooming Grove in the 18th century after they fled the persecutions of Louis XV in France. Once in New York they changed the name Giraud to Gerow.

Darrel's name was taken from Darrel Ray, a close Christian friend of my parents whom they admired greatly. The middle name, James, like David, was also Biblically derived. It was clearly appropriate since the Biblical James is thought to have been the twin brother of Jesus.

As to which twin came first? The hospital record lists me as the first born. However, my mother's little booklet *Days of Babyhood* lists Darrel as the first born. Since my mother would obviously know better than anyone which twin was born first, we defer to her judgment. Darrel was the first born. He weighed 4 lbs and 11 ounces and was 17 and ½ inches tall. I weighed 4 lbs and 12 ounces and was 19 inches tall. It is not known whether these weights and measurements were pre or post incubator.

I have no recollection of any events in Kankakee, and by my 16<sup>th</sup> month birthdate my parents had moved from Kankakee to Connersville, Indiana when Darrel and I were just learning our first words and taking our first steps. There was one possible exception. This involved a bout of scarlet fever I endured which occurred either in Kankakee or Connersville. Unable to bring the fever down, the doctor engaged in a little old-time medicine, having my father hold me upside down while he punctured a boil inside my throat which bled out in a basin. A small indentation visible on my neck from the outside marks the success of the operation to this day. I do not remember this part of the operation, but the fever was accompanied by some vivid and frightening hallucinations. That part I do vaguely remember even at that age.

Darrel and I began saying words such as Bye Bye, Choo Choo, Bow Wow, and

Night Night at 16 months. Darrel's first spoken sentence at age 18 months was: "Take that!"

Without Dr. Martin Couney, who seems to have made several other exaggerated claims besides calling himself a physician—such as that he invented the incubator—who knows what the state of incubators may have been or if they would even have existed by the time May 23, 1935 rolled around when my twin brother and I were born. For certain, it would have been a much tougher ride for us and our parents without them.

### **Connersville, Indiana**

[In the descriptions which follow from here throughout the rest of the book, I will sometimes use the pronouns "we," "our," or "us" to replace the proper noun and pronoun "Darrel and I" when it is clear that such a designation is intended and obvious.]

In Connersville my father was again employed as the Assistant Manager of the J.C. Penny store. I do not remember events there sequentially or chronologically except for some school activities in the first and second grades, most notably, playing on the jungle bars in the school playground. [Our parents did not enroll us in kindergarten which was not required in those days.] Darrel and I also loved the slides and swings in a public playground near our home where we insisted on being swung as high as we could possibly go.

Daybreak in the summertime was memorable by the clip-clopping sound of the horse-drawn ice wagons that came drifting into our bedroom. If we needed ice the drivers would deposit a block in a square metal box with a lid on it which was left on the front porch. These wagons were the last vestiges of the horse and buggy era of bygone days.

Events that happened in those days often proved quite fascinating. Some were fueled by child inquisitiveness, while others just happened of their own accord, thrust upon us, as it were, from who knows what outside source. These were often great fun like riding in the rumble-seat of a yellow roadster or driving through streams of deep water and nearly getting stuck on unpaved back roads at the beach. I will never forget, either, the manager of the J.C. Penny store in Con driving us out in the country in his new blue (I think) Buick puffing away at his cigar. How proud he was to show the car off to all of us. Equally unforgettable was the time when in diapers I stuck my finger in an electrical wall socket and then could not pull it free as the electric current surged through me. My screams brought my mother running who jerked my finger from the socket. On another occasion I stabbed myself in the left hand trying to cut a door into a cardboard box to turn it into a make-believe car. Like the indentation on my neck, the scar from the wound remains with me still.

Memorable also was the time Darrel and I crept into the back seat of my father's car and remained there as he drove to work. We wanted to see where he went every day.



Alas our plot was uncovered as we kept popping up to look out the window. Upon discovering our plan, he drove us to an ice cream parlor, bought us ice cream cones, and returned us home.

Many memories remain from the family trip to the 1939 World's Fair in New York where we drove in a model T Ford that had to be cranked to start it. The crank had to be disengaged immediately once the car started or it would spin around wildly until it was freed from the motor.

Taking turns in the hammock slung in the back seat on that trip was a special treat for us twins. I remember also the Pennsylvania Turnpike, Pike's Peak, and the purple mountain range that my father pointed out looming far, far in the distance. It was a struggle for many cars to make it over the mountains in those days and our car broke down on one occasion with steam coiling from the radiator. We waited at the side of the road hoping some good Samaritan would stop and offer a helping hand. One did. I also remember driving through the fast-paced streets of New York City watching astonished at all the cars buzzing furiously around.

Besides the fair, the purpose of the trip was for our parents to introduce us to our grandparents on our father's side—Frank Sr. and Charlotte. We stayed at their home on Long Island where one night some kids came to the door wearing masks. They were trick-or-treating for Halloween. The masks were all too real to me, and I screamed in terror. I think they reminded me of the scarlet fever hallucinations. On another occasion I felt Grandpa had not been nice, and I told him I was going to tell my dad on him, which I did.

Curiously, the 1939 New York World's Fair was the last major exposition to hold an incubator exhibit. I do not recall seeing it, however, or if we even passed by it on our visit around the fair grounds. I do remember a little Charlie McCarthy type puppet behind an exhibition window tapping a stick against it. Standing on a rapidly vibrating metal plate that shook my whole body, a pick-me-up device for foot-weary fair visitors, was also a treat. I loved how it left a tingling in my toes.

### **Early friendships**

The closest friends for Darrel and me were Danny and Johnny Weaver, the sons of our family Dentist. They lived on a farm and had a pony. We got to ride it once and I always wanted to go back and ride it again, though that never happened. I also had a secret fear of the pony. Though I longed to ride it I was also afraid of it, but I kept such fears to myself—like the fear of being pitched to in a softball game because I was afraid of being hit by the ball. The same applied to a red chow dog that ran loose in the back yard of a friend we liked to visit. The chow chased Darrel and me on one occasion and was just about to catch us when a neighbor came out and called the dog back. I was so afraid of this dog that I used to dream about it.

Once Darrel and I and Danny and Johnny decided to dig a hole in the earth to the

Devil. If we didn't find the Devil at least we would arrive at China, we assured ourselves. But how should we dig? We had no shovels. Only croquet mallets were at our disposal. We used these to pound into the earth trying to dig a hole. Unfortunately, my mallet hit my poor brother in the head on one pound and he had to be treated with clamps.

Happier days lay ahead when we met a little crippled boy from the other side of the tracks. ("Crippled" was the word people used in those days to describe physical disabilities involving the legs.) Someone told us we shouldn't play with him because he was poor. This didn't bother us, and this boy brought a song with him which he taught us. "You are my sunshine, my only sunshine...." We thought it was a beautiful song and learned it by heart.

These were also the days of our first contacts with anything political. The 1940 campaign for President was underway months in advance and bandwagons for the various candidates drove around honking their horns and creating a clamor. The supporters were colorfully dressed in red, white, and blue and distributed banners and political buttons all around. I remember the Franklin D. Roosevelt and Thomas Dewey buttons, though Dewey, a republican and governor of New York, did not win the nomination for his Republican party. This went to Wendell Wilkie. [Dewey would win his party's nomination in the 1948 campaign which he lost to Harry Truman.]

### **Music influences in Connersville**

Once safely at home in Connersville, my parents quickly became unwavering members of the Baptist Church. They taught Sunday School and sang in the church choir. My mother played piano by ear and played very well indeed. But she could read music only a little. A piano was present at home and my parents often sang together after supper, mostly hymn music but also some standard popular songs like—of course—*Sweet Adeline*. My father sometimes even played the violin, though I cannot remember him playing it at any other place except in Connersville.

Darrel and I also joined in the singing. Gladys Riddle was a very nice lady who would sometimes baby sit for us so it is no surprise that one of our favorite songs was "Sing a song of Gladys." The right words, to be sure, were "Sing a song of gladness." We liked our version better.

Once a trombonist and his wife offered a special program at the church. After the program I asked the husband if I could blow a note on his horn. I don't remember what kind of sound I produced, if any, but I loved the way the instrument looked and the husband demonstrated how the slide could change the pitch.

Sometimes my parents were invited by churches in nearby towns to sing solos or duets together. By the time that occurred, my sister, Ann, and older brother, Bill, were old enough to stay at home alone so that just Darrel and I went along on these trips.

Though my mother liked to get Darrel and me to sing together when possible, she

made no special effort to turn us in a musical direction at this time. That would come later. I was intrigued, nevertheless, by Bill's clarinet which I liked to take out from its case when no one was around and try to play it. I particularly found the array of keys displayed on its shaft to be fascinating. In the same way I liked to take my father's violin from its case and just hold and study it, sometimes drawing the bow across the strings in an effort to get a sound. I was intrigued by the shape and color of the piece of resin in the case.

Important too, in connection with early music inspirations, was the influence of my sister. Every Saturday afternoon, during the concert season, Ann would declare her room inviolate, tune in the Metropolitan Opera broadcasts, and settle in for an afternoon of *Aida*, *La Traviata* or *La Boheme*. Woe be to anyone who dared to interrupt her music contemplations. But the strains of music from some of the great masters also drifted out from her room into other areas of the house. I recall asking Ann about one of these arias for which she taught me some of the words.

### **Being twins**

There was no conflict about being twins between Darrel and me except for those caused by outsiders, including even our parents who insisted on dressing us alike. We rebelled against that and refused to do it early on, even before we started school.

People seemed unable to avoid comparing us with one another. Which twin is taller? Which twin is smarter? Which twin can run the fastest? Which twin is better looking, etc?

Even so, no matter how well-meaning people were, I felt a quiver of objection arise in me against some of these comparisons in the same manner in which I disliked being put on display just because we were twins. It was the same for Darrel. Communicating this was not always the easiest task to accomplish and emotions rather than common sense sometimes took control. Once, for example, when standing in the sanctuary between the pulpits singing a duet before a Bible School audience, Darrel and I picked a quarrel arguing about what the correct words were for the hymn we were singing. The hymn was titled "When the Roll is Called Up Yonder." I was convinced the words were: "When the roll is called a' piander," whatever a "piander" might be, and insisted that these were the right words. That was the end of that performance.

The same occurred on visits to Streator to visit our relatives. They liked to gather around in the evening outside on the lawn in front of our Grandparent's home, bribing us with pennies and dimes to see how cutely we might sing together. But we didn't care about their pennies and dimes and contrived to sabotage these events by mixing up the words or not singing in unison.

Still there were many benefits to being a twin just by virtue of being twins. It was good to have a twin brother who understood you so thoroughly about everything and on whose support you could always depend. Clearly this is often the case between identical

twins because they share the same DNA. (Fraternal twins do not.) DNA, of course, was an unknown in those days.

Another great benefit in being a twin and an important factor in shaping our destiny was that while other children might struggle for acceptance and recognition, this was a given for us. Everyone knew who the Irving twins were, the other children, teachers, preachers, whoever we might encounter. Twins were special, in a category of their own, and we took it that there was something special about us, the only twins around. This also gave us an extraordinary sense of independence and would help assist in instilling in us a sense of freedom to pursue our objectives in life unconstrained by the opinions of others. For me, being different also created a certain distance between myself and other people that made communication difficult. This has always been so.

### **Getting to know myself**

In Connersville some of the deeper layers of my personality began to make themselves known through various experiences and interactions with other people even at this young age. For example, when an older child told me there was no Santa Claus, I accepted it instantly without a pang of regret. Top of the line, I preferred truth over fiction and felt superior because I knew the truth.

In school, we learned to read and write easily, though our writing was never neat nor was it artistic like the writing of some of the children. Reading so easily, though, brought with it a tendency to be impatient with some of the children who struggled over words. I wanted to interrupt the teacher and spell out the words for them. Couldn't these children who had difficulties see how easy it was? At the same time I took heed of the fact that I needed to be more tolerant of the other kids.

I learned in those early days, too, how important fairness and justice was to me. A pretty little girl named Rosemary lived just behind our house. One day Darrel and I went to visit her and brought a bag of candy along for us all to share. Rosemary was in the garage with a friend or two. She took the candy, closed the garage door in our faces, and kept the candy for herself and her friends. I fumed about this overnight. The next time I saw Rosemary she was riding her tricycle. I went up to her and without a word pushed her over. Let her take that! Did she cry? Yes she did.

Well, this was a lesson in life that had much to teach. Clearly it was wrong to do what I had done no matter how unfairly Rosemary had acted. And I had assumed that when we gave her the candy she would act justly. But people are not always fair and just. These were lessons, hard lessons, that even a child needed to learn.

Fortunately, I did not generalize the experience and apply it to all girls. Once school started I paid much attention to the female side and especially loved the older girl Janice who walked Darrel and me to school and back. She was my first crush.

Jay Beard, a Cub Scout who monitored street crossings for the kids on their way to

and from school, was also someone to admire. I loved his blue Cub Scout uniform and the special white belt that crossed his chest indicating he was a street-crossing monitor. He also would pin and unpin a special yellow (I think) large button on his uniform when starting and ending his street-crossing shift. This impressed me greatly. But when he told me that a kid who had been hit by a car deserved what he got for not being careful enough, Jay went down in my estimation. I remembered, too, the broken arm my brother Bill suffered when a car door swung open just as he was riding by on his bicycle. Did he deserve his broken arm? I don't believe I spoke to Jay much after that.

## **Siblings**

Our older siblings were kind and with them there were other lessons in life to learn. How disappointed I was when Bill bought and gave a Twinky to Darrel and me. "Who wants that," I said, observing the unappetizing looking orange-colored sponge cake. "Take a bite," he said. And when I did, hmm, how delicious was the sweet tasting cream filling inside. Lesson: never judge a book by its cover.

Bill also introduced us to Iggy, an African American boy who was a close friend of his. Iggy let us feel his hair which had a different texture than ours and was much fun to feel. Lesson: people from other races may have differences that make them special in unexpected ways.

Our sister, Ann, took us to see our first movie. I still remember the good guy and the bad guy fighting on the edge of a cliff. Once Ann and our cousin Dolores and we twins were out walking on a country road. I don't remember how we got there. But we crossed a railroad track and could see from afar that a train was approaching. I was convinced that I could stand on the outside of the wooden crossties that supported the rails and the train would pass by on the rails and not strike me. That's where I stood with the train approaching until Ann came and led me away. Lesson: Don't make unfounded assumptions. They could prove deadly.

## **Other growth experiences**

One Christmas my mother gave us a gift of some toy soldiers which I did not like. I had no hesitation in expressing my disapproval loud and clear. Perhaps it was the look in my mother's eyes, I'm not certain, but in any case I recognized that she had tried her best to please us and that my words were hurtful. And when I started to play with the toys I enjoyed them. Those were the days when my mother had to mend the tears and holes in our clothing and socks by sewing them up, besides all the other caretaking tasks mothers are expected to do. She deserved far more appreciation, and I let her know I liked the soldiers. I felt ashamed and never did something like that again.

The most profound of these kinds of experiences occurred when I was in the second grade. The classroom seats were double seats from which a single desktop extended from the middle of the seat. This meant that two children sitting in one of these seats were seated side by side and used the desktop one at a time. They were ideal for split classes in

which two grades were being taught by one teacher, such as combining the fifth and sixth grades together (which Darrel and I would one day experience in a country school).

When Halloween arrived that year (1942), the teacher announced we would have a costume party and choose seats at random so that we did not know who was wearing the costume seated next to us. I don't remember what kind of costume or mask I wore, but I selected a seat and sat down without knowing who I was sitting beside or if it was a boy or a girl. Once seated, I looked at my companion seated beside me and happened to catch a glimpse of the child's face at the side of the mask. It was one of two African American girls who attended the class. I immediately got up and moved. As soon as I sat down at another seat I was horrified by what I had done. I don't remember if I had met Iggy yet by then, but in any case, this was terribly wrong, and I knew it instinctively. My conscience was deeply troubled. Any racism that I had somehow managed to absorb by the adult world with their pejorative references to "colored" people, their use of the N word, and all the other ugly things they spoke about African American people vanished instantly. It would never return for the rest of my life.

I would like to think that I returned to my seat beside the little African American girl, and something says I may have done that, but the truth is I cannot remember. It may be that this was just one of those wrongs one does in life that one can never amend. Life is sometimes a very hard teacher and the school of hard knocks would yet have much more to teach before it was finished with me.

### **Relatives and family friends**

My parents liked to keep in contact with family relatives and old friends. This was especially important for my mother. My father gladly complied when his job permitted so that we would sometimes travel to Streator or Kankakee, Illinois where other relatives lived. These trips provided great opportunities for twin boys in search of adventure for better or worse.

My mother had eight sisters of which she was the next to the youngest, and Darrel and I knew them all along with their husbands, our uncles. Aunt May's husband, Art, operated a golf course in Streator so that Darrel and I were given free rein to prowl the grounds. Unfortunately, we prowled into the woods and weeds on the sides of the course where we managed to pick up a good case of poison ivy. But we also made some clumsy attempts at playing golf with old-style golf clubs.

Kankakee was a city of around 20,000 in the 1930s and early 40s, not too much less than its present size of 26,000. It also housed an asylum, an imposing orange-bricked complex with menacing, wrought, iron gates, on whose grounds inmates—judged insane—but perhaps just indigent or old or a little senile, as they would have been called in those days—sat on benches, or walked slowly in the company of a nurse along winding paths traversing the grounds.

The final destiny for the inmates who died there from the Asylum's opening in 1879

to around 1930, was an unmarked grave in a cemetery located a short distance away. Each inmate was bestowed with a number inscribed on their headstone from 1 to 1,118, the number of nameless people buried there today. The callousness of hard-hearted people is always an amazing phenomenon to witness whenever one encounters it.

An eccentric woman lived next door to the house in which our family stayed in Kankakee. We were told she was sometimes hospitalized in that asylum and warned not to speak with her. But at the first opportunity we went over to her home and sat there on her porch talking with her. She was friendly and much enjoyed our company and we enjoyed hers. Could she have ended up in that cemetery? If she did, at least by that time they would have bestowed her name upon the grave stone.

Those early days spent with our grandparents and aunts and uncles might be described as nearly bucolic. Our step uncle, Walt Worrel, Aunt Loretta's husband, loved to laugh. They had a daughter, Delores, from a previous marriage by Loretta, and adopted another daughter of their own, Jane. Walt had a deep, raspy voice and walked with a limp from rheumatism. But he was the most fun and the nicest of all the uncles. Walt was also a train engineer and once took Darrel and me up into the engine of his stationary train as it steamed and puffed and wheezed in the train yard. Keeping a careful watch to assure our safety, Walt showed us some of the train's operations including the fiery fuel pit into which he shoveled coal for its locomotion. This was a major thrill.

Aunt Lillian was the prettiest of the aunts. We loved to visit her and her husband, Ralph Wagner, the director of a funeral parlor in Kankakee. A game of croquet seemed always to be going on in their back yard whenever we visited in the summertime and the conversation was light and pleasant. All of the aunts seemed to exude an aura of kindness.

### **The birds and the bees**

When Darrel and I were growing up a phrase frequently heard was "the birds and the bees." Those were repressive times sexually speaking and the phrase was a popular way for avoiding the use of more explicit words related to sex including the word sex itself. Kids do learn about the birds and the bees one way or another, though, no matter how repressive the period in which they live. Whether they learn about it in a healthy manner is another question.

At the back of our yard stood a cement stone structure about four or five feet high and maybe ten or twelve feet long by eight or nine feet wide designed for burning trash. It was open at the top and had a small entrance at the base in the rear. The entrance was just big enough of us kids to get inside and play.

One day a little boy appeared along with a little girl. We all managed to get inside the structure. This little boy was very bold and before long we were playing "I'll show you mine if you show me yours." Thus we all displayed our private parts. When it came time for the little girl, she laughed a little and said, "Mine's funny looking."

After we left the structure the little boy wanted us to join him and the girl in a little game they had invented. They would climb up the outside fire escape on the school building and there, about half way up, with their clothes on, would press their private parts against each other. The boy would kind of rock backwards as he did this with the girl. They assured us it was great fun and wanted us to join in. The girl was very willing. I knew, though, that these games would not please our parents if they knew what we were doing. I declined and so did Darrel.

On another occasion when our family was visiting relatives in Iowa, a couple of aunts had gone upstairs with a cousin, a little girl, and entered a room, closing the door behind. I wanted to know what they were doing and so—for reasons which never made any sense—peeked under the small crack at the bottom of the door. It was impossible to see inside the room this way, but children try impossible things. I was found doing this and then to my great chagrin and the amusement of the people who discovered me, I was accused of trying to see my cousin naked. It appears that they closed the door because they were changing her clothes. My protests did no good, innocent though I was. They all had a good time at my expense. I couldn't have been more than five year's old.

But I was not so innocent a day or two later. Then I found myself out in the garden with this same cousin when it struck me that it might be a grand time to play "I'll show you mine if you'll show me yours," as I had learned back in Connersville. But how to present it more subtly to my cousin, that was the challenge. The word we used for our private parts in those early years at home was "birdie." But the girl didn't know what I was talking about when I mentioned birdie and she started to talk about an experience she had had with a pet bird. This was confusing. I finally did manage to communicate what I meant and what I wanted to do. When my cousin understood, she politely declined. Now I had to worry—would she tell on me? I don't remember what I said, but I tried to pretend like I had meant something else. But that was a lie and cowardly. Did my cousin tell? No, she did not.

## **War**

We started school in September of 1941. By December the country was at war with Germany and Japan. As children, we heard adults talking about the war and death and killing. Our parents would drive by homes and point out windows which had a service flag hanging in them indicating they had a family member who was missing in action or who had been killed in the war.

At school an alarm would sound to indicate a bombing drill. We were required to duck under our desks where we peered out at all the other children doing the same. The message got through. War was a very bad thing that bad people were doing to our country and would do to us if they had the opportunity.

The war was still going on when my father approached Bob Wilker, the manager of the J.C. Penny Company in Connersville, and told him he wanted a store of his own. Wilker had a good thing going with my father as his Assistant Manager and knew it. But



my father had proved his worth and it was time for Wilker to acknowledge it, which he did.

The move we would have to make would be especially hard for my sister. She had just finished her Junior year in high school and had looked forward to graduating with her school friends.

The year was 1943. It was summertime, and the family was on the way to Bluffton, Indiana where my father would take over the reins of the J.C. Penney Store. This would also be the place where he would finish his working career. Darrel and I were eight year's old.

### **Looking back**

Today when I reminisce about Connersville the first image that comes to mind is the Callahan home prior to World War II. This was a very large two story home freshly painted white which sat upon a long, rolling, freshly mowed lawn. Many varieties of carefully tended flowers and bushes were planted around the grounds. Mr. Callahan, who my parents knew from church, liked to throw lawn parties. These were extravaganzas with food and drinks aplenty and croquet, horseshoes, bad mitten, and other games to play. The laughter and the conversation of the many guests, adults and children who arrived for these affairs was gentle, if not caressing, and floated softly on the wind. At the Callahan's—and, for that matter, in other places in the town and in the country—peace lingered in the air and reigned supreme, contrasting vividly with the world that would be troubled and filled with hardship and fighting only a couple of years later when the war started. Today it is difficult to imagine the return of such peaceful times or if they will ever return. It is a pleasure to have experienced them and to remember that once upon a time they really did exist.

## Chapter 3

### Hoosier Days

#### Growing Up in Bluffton, Indiana

Sitting on the banks of the Wabash river, the town of Bluffton lies nestled among the river bluffs for which it is named. Located just 25 miles South of Ft. Wayne in the northeastern corner of the State, it laid claim to a small but steady population of just a little over 5,000 people when we grew up there. Today it has nearly doubled in size. The Main Street, like many others across the country, boasted a J.C. Penny store, a Murphy's department store, a Kroger's supermarket, a bar, a café, and a soda fountain. Local establishments completed the setting, a funeral parlor (Thoma's), a grocery store (Markley's), a car sales (Goodin's Cadillac Sales), a drug store (Young's), and other homegrown places of business. The courthouse, a stately, gray concrete block structure, dominated the center of town.

Fast food restaurants were yet to become a staple of every city, town and village in America, though A&W Root Beer stands where they sold Coney Island hot dogs and frosted root beers were popular across the state. In Bluffton, however, only the town café, the soda fountain on Main Street, and Bayless' custard stand offered much in the way of food or treats outside the home. People who wanted to dine out a little more formally relied on the Dutch Mill restaurant located just outside the town limits.

The Grand and Roxy movie theater provided movies for entertainment. The Roxy showed only cowboy movies, which was great fun for the kids. There they could feast on films like *The Durango Kid*, *Hopalong Cassidy*, and those featuring Gabby Hayes, the sidekick for Gene Autry, Roy Rogers, John Wayne and Randolph Scott. Over at the Grand Theater, which showed standard fare movies, Mr. Mallers, the owner, would sometime bring a celebrity in for a visit like Smiley Burnette (another popular sidekick of Gene Autry), Roy Rogers, and also Charles Starrett (the *Durango Kid*). The theater was packed when Frankie Lane came to town and sang his hit song *Ghost Riders in the Sky*.

Missionaries and other outsiders also visited Bluffton. One time Peggy Goodin, who wrote the novels *The Lie*; *Dede O'Shea*; *Clementine* (filmed as *Mickey*); and, most successful of all, *Take Care of My Little Girl*—which was turned into a movie starring Jeannie Craine, Dale Robertson, Mitzi Gaynor, and Jean Peters—appeared at her father's Cadillac auto sales store. There she gave a short talk before an admiring crowd hanging on every word. I worked my way forward in the crowd where I stood studying every utterance, every expression just a few short feet from where Peggy spoke. Then there were school outings at various times, including an occasional trip to Indianapolis, 150 miles south, with its imposing Soldier's and Sailor's civil war monument, a column standing nearly 300 foot high in the center of the city. A pool hall and a bowling alley also helped fill the void for enjoyable diversions in Bluffton. Otherwise, the schools and the churches served as the centers for social activities, and, of course, the Bluffton-Wells County Public Library played its important role in supplying current and historical library materials. Nor should I forget to mention the tractor-drawn hay rides in the autumn out on

country roads under a harvest moon where the kids played in the hay and a boy or a girl might get a kiss they were hoping for.

In Bluffton the adults occupied themselves earning a living in the stores and local businesses where a friendly atmosphere prevailed. Their children were busy growing up and doing things that children do. Meanwhile, the world seemed to pass Bluffton by almost as if it took no notice. But the residents still got plenty of news about the outside world. It came trickling in over the radio, on the pages of the Bluffton News Banner, or other media. My parents kept up-to-date with a Sunday purchase of the Chicago Tribune. Occasional stories of poverty and hardship out in the world also reminded local citizens that just across the tracks, Bluffton had a few of its own uncomfortable problems with the poor.

Wars were prevalent for every generation and made their presence known, like it or not, with local kids going off to fight them. Some returned with harrowing stories to tell, if they could be coaxed out of them. Others, however, never returned, like Bill Ferguson, one of our classmates, who played on the football team, was a friend and whose name now lies enshrined on the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, D.C. I last saw Bill when I ran into him accidentally in Göppingen, Germany where I had just been stationed as a soldier and where Bill was passing through on his way for paratroop training. We just had time to have coffee together, if I remember correctly.

Was the meeting with Bill Ferguson coincidence or a paranormal happening? How was it that neither of us knowing the other was in Germany would meet an ocean away? The timing had to be perfect, within seconds. Otherwise, we would have missed each other.

Whenever I think about Bluffton, the stories come pouring in for it was here that I really began life. And that is a life from which there is no divorce. It colors everything even though unseen far into the future in multiple ways no matter what the circumstances may be.

Surprises surfaced from everywhere in our little town like the time Warren McBride showed some of us kids the stuffed lamb with six legs that was on a little table stored away in a musty corner on the third floor landing of his father's funeral home. Then there were the town characters everyone knew about who, because of their unusual stories, acquired a near folk lore status. This included Bobby, a little slow, everyone said, who would take off his cap to show the lump that still remained on his head when he was kicked in the head by a mule when he was a boy. Joe, the Sunday school teacher, it was whispered, had the reputation for drinking a little too much. No one was quite sure about the man with no nose and how he lost it. But it was unpleasant to look at him as I learned on the one or two occasions in which I happened to pass him by.

For the boys who were adventuresome, it was a kind of Tom Sawyerish existence. This meant exploring everything imaginable, whether wandering out to the railroad bridge that crossed the Wabash river at the edge of town and daring to cross it not

knowing when an approaching train whistle might send you running with a rush of adrenalin to make it safely to the opposite side, or building rafts and launching them on the frog pond at the other side of town. The need to explore along the Wabash river and the woods surrounding the town where suspected feral pigs were sometimes to be seen was a given. It could also mean sneaking out to the town dump at night to shoot at rats, a horrifying experience in which I one time participated. Fortunately, I shot none nor did I try or want to.

Blanche Karnes, our 60 year-old freshman Latin teacher got married and moved away at the end of that year. But not before she translated the phrase from English into Latin Darrel and I asked her for. She thought we were so cute. The translation we requested was for the words "Aren't we devils!" (None summus Lucifer!)

On some occasions, I was far from being an angel especially when it came to procuring cigarettes to smoke which several of us used to do out under the railroad bridge that crossed the Wabash river. I first tried my luck by stealing a couple of packs from a carton my older brother had stored in his Navy duffle bag. I got away with that, but surely taking more than two would arouse suspicion. What to do? I can scarcely believe my own temerity, but at that young age it was not possible to purchase cigarettes. There was only one way: steal them from some store. This I did at a little country store up the road from our home at the edge of town and at the Kroger's supermarket right in the center of town. The total spoils amounted to 3 or 4 packs, after which I put aside the odious diversion of smoking which I did not resume until military days. How fortunate I was not to be caught during my crime spree. I can just imagine what could have happened: my parents, the church, the school, the court—possibly even reform school! None of this occurred to me as I engaged in my acts of thievery, me the perfect little Christian boy. Yet I must say, and I don't know why, I never felt guilty about my life as a thief in Bluffton.

People have their way of getting to the heart of matters, or so at least they like to think, and in Bluffton, like in every town large or small, talking about the local people and the world at large was a favorite pastime. Small collectives formed at a few favorite spots around the town to facilitate the process. This included Rick's filling station where a few locals, mostly men, gathered together around an old stove fed with wood and coal in the winter, or in the summer, sat outside on a bench in front of the store. At Rick's they could puff on their pipes, smoke cigarettes, lounge comfortably around and right the wrongs of the world if only the world would listen.

My family's first residence in Bluffton was an old and beautiful Victorian house on the corner of West Washington and Marion Streets just off the center of town. A large, wide staircase in the middle of the downstairs area instantly captured the eye. The railings on both sides swooped down and curled gracefully to the side. These were great for sliding down when our mother wasn't looking. A wide lawn spread around three sides of the house while a garage occupied the space at the rear.

Our parents were kind and loving but strict and extremely orthodox Christians. In fact, they were nearly as devoted to the church as to each other. The church was the second home for the family and we children attended dutifully going often 3 and 4 times a week. Rules for behavior grew out of church doctrines. Whatever arguments our parents may have had, if indeed any ever occurred, they conducted out of sight of the children except for the most trivial disagreements. Like their parents and with little doubt generations of parents before them, they believed in corporal punishment. Many families believed the same in Bluffton, and if they didn't they kept it to themselves. The old sayings "spare the rod and spoil the child" and "children are to be seen not heard" were widely respected in the community. Sex was never talked about openly, certainly not in the schools. It was a taboo subject.

Fortunately, our parents made no attempt to control our thought processes so long as we seemed to be following Christian principles and kept within the confines of respectable social behavior. They did not concern themselves even a little about our course work at school or what we chose to study so long as we brought home a reasonably decent report card. As it turned out, we had college aspirations and so took the academic curriculum, though I skipped chemistry. I have often sent a thought message my parents' way thanking them for the sense of freedom they allowed us in what or how we should use our minds.

Our first morning at our new home in Bluffton, Darrel and I ventured out and sat down at the edge of the sidewalk that passed by. Soon a boy wandered along. "Hello little boy!" one of us said. "Little !" laughed the boy. "You are the ones who are little." And indeed, he was larger than we, and we were small for our age. This was Carl Brown, the first friend in our new town and a year older. He had a younger brother, Larry, and sister, Linda, both of whom we would get to know.

It was in our home on Washington Street that we got our first bicycles, Christmas gifts from our brother Bill. In fact, Bill would play his largest role in my life in this house. There he showed us how to make Japanese Zero or German Messerschmidt model airplanes that would fly and which we could pretend to shoot down which seemed appropriate since the second world war was going on.

On one occasion Bill took us to watch a Lum and Abner movie with a friend of his when he was supposed to be babysitting us at home. Though we swore we would never tell, and didn't, our enthusiasm in describing the movie to our mother the next day under the guise that Bill's friend had told us all about it exposed the truth, and Bill was in hot water.

Bill could get carried away with himself and on one occasion convinced us to go out and attack a little playmate, Wayne Sprowl, who came running over happily to play. I have never forgiven myself for that to this day. Once, however, when I was quite sick Bill showed his truly altruistic side when he brought a little playmate up to visit me in bed. This was a little black and white cocker spaniel puppy. Naturally, Bill had to get permission from my parents first. The little puppy squiggled all around jumping up and

down as I sought to corral him in my arms. I think I got better from the illness almost immediately after that. We named the puppy Perky, the only pet we cared for in Bluffton.

### **Cosmic Consciousness**

Perky survived being hit by a car twice. The first time happened when we were living at Washington Street. I cried when I found out. Perky's right hind leg had to be put in a cast. Gloria Markley, Bill's girl friend at the time, was there and took me in her comforting arms to soothe my distress. She was very pretty with a nice figure so this was an experience I would not have minded having repeated a few more times as I surrendered willingly and did feel comforted. I must have been nine or ten at the time.

The second time Perky was hit happened when he was trotting along behind me while I was riding my bicycle. Suddenly I heard Perky growling and yelping. I looked back to see him under a car that had struck him. He was lying on his back battling against the undercarriage. The car stopped and Perky lay there silently behind. People gathered quickly. I was crying but then Perky tried to get up. He was alive! All was not lost. The driver of the car was very callous, but the people demanded that he drive us to the vet which he did with great reluctance.

It was during this episode that Bill experienced what today I would classify as a paranormal happening. It involves a kind of cosmic consciousness in which all life is somehow connected but in ways unseen and of which we are unaware. Becoming aware of the process and being able to tune into it in real depth may yet become a new frontier for humankind to cross, that is if we survive long enough. On this occasion the phenomenon manifested itself in the following way.

Bill happened to have migrated to a place somewhere in Bluffton where a complete stranger was boasting to some friends about how he had hit a dog with his car and a kid was there crying about it. The man complained that he had been required to drive the boy and his dog to the vet. At about six feet, Bill was larger than this man and spoke up aggressively. "Oh! So you're the guy who hit my dog!" he said with hostility. That shut the man up quickly. He said not another word.

The question to be asked in cosmic terms is, how was it that my brother happened to be at the very same place as the man who hit Perky with his car? How was it that Bill Ferguson and I happened to meet more than 4000 miles from home when neither of us knew the other was in Germany? Coincidence? I believe it was not. I suggest, rather, that it was an example of a super consciousness in operation. Working with animals in a friendly way, the great biologist Rupert Sheldrake has done some work in this area convinced that invisible bonds connect animals with their owners in what he calls "morphic fields." This explains cases where dogs lost thousands of miles away can find their way home days, even weeks and months later. Could we all be connected in the world through morphic fields?

## **Grade school**

Grade school took place at the Central School in Bluffton and aside from outside activities was mostly uneventful except for the fun of being with all the other kids in class. I did my homework expending as little effort as possible and there it ended. Mrs. Pruitt taught the third grade, Mrs. Ward the fourth grade, Mrs. Oxenryder, the fifth grade, (we attended sixth grade at another school), Mrs. Epsley the seventh grade, and Mr. MckInley the eighth grade.

Intramural sports were the most fun and in the eighth grade I found myself participating in the pole vault, at which I was fairly good. It was the last event of the annual class track meet in which one-half of the class took on the other half. The two teams were tied so the win came down to the pole vault. Excitement was in the air as only Tom Sawyer and I remained pitted against each other. He missed his final try and then it was my turn. I missed too. The two teams were tied.

We kids took such games so seriously that sometimes they changed us into little monsters. Larry Garton was a close friend and an extremely nice boy. He could get so emotionally insecure, however, that it affected his performance, whatever it might be, in extreme ways. One time, for example, in a soft ball game he was the pitcher and accidentally threw the ball in a very high arch. I was on the opposing team and we seized the opportunity to start calling out "Hey blooper ball." We did this for every ball he pitched. Soon, Larry lost control completely and every pitch did indeed turn into a "blooper ball." This was very cruel, and I was sorry I participated in it.

Larry would become the catcher on the high school team where the problem persisted. With no warning he would suddenly short-throw the ball back to the pitcher so that it nose-dived just before it reached him. You could see the inner battle taking place as Larry struggled to gain control over his throw-backs.

A couple of years after high school I somehow found myself with Larry on the campus of Manchester College which he was attending. As he toured me around the red brick buildings of the campus, he confided that he was having a hard time with his studies and wasn't sure he could make it though. I did my best to offer the kind of support I thought might help in restoring his confidence, insisting that he pay attention to my advice. He did make it through and I hoped that somehow my words of encouragement helped offset my participation in the "blooper ball" episode.

Larry went on to get his degree at Manchester and then earned a Master's at Ball State University. Later he taught elementary school at several schools in the area, including Bluffton, and was a principal at several others. He achieved legendary status as a basketball coach at Lancaster High School with which the Bluffton Tigers had an ongoing rivalry. In 2004 Larry died at the age of 68. I was glad I got to see him again at the 50th anniversary reunion of our class held the year before in 2003.

One event I did not make up for, unfortunately, occurred in an intramural football game. It came down to the very last play in which the referee was unable to determine if the ball had crossed the goal line. I was on the defensive team and saw exactly where the ball came down. The referee asked me to make the call. Well the ball had crossed the goal line and I started to say so when some of the players on the opposing team began yelling and demanding that the play was a touchdown to such an extent that I grew equally angry. I would not be controlled. And so I lied and the game went to our side. One does not win when one lies. It just makes it easier to lie the next time. The lie harmed me and it harmed others.

I rotated through many friendships in Bluffton as did Darrel, and I imagine it must have been the same with many of the kids. It just happened naturally and by the time high school arrived it seemed like you knew most of the kids in town and often their parents. One such rotational friendship happened with David Hammond. His father was a physician as Dave would grow up to be and also his younger brother Wade. I remember Dave's mother as being exceptionally kind, but this must also be said of his father.

In the fourth grade Mrs. Ward told David in front of the class that she wouldn't be surprised to see him grow up to become President of the United States. We all knew that Dave was very bright so the possibility seemed not too remote. I don't remember how we became friends. I do remember making cool aid grape ice-cube popcycles together at my house. One day the doorbell rang. Opening the door, I found a gift laying there. I glanced upward just in time to see Dave diving behind a tree across the street to which he had sprinted. I did not let him know I had seen him. Our close friendship would gradually fade though we would always remain friends. That's the way these friendships worked.

Dave married the girl he loved all through high school, Jane Thoma. Like Dave, she was one of the brightest students and also very kind. He turned to medicine for a career and became a cardiologist for Cardiopulmonary Associates in St. Louis County and the Missouri Baptist Hospital in the city of Town and Country (a suburb of West St. Louis). I last saw Dave on a home trip to visit my parents in Bluffton. He was also at home for a visit and came over to see me. That must have been around 1961 or so. He died, unfortunately, at the age of 56 of cancer.

Ward Huffman was the principal at Central School and anyone prone to mischief lived in fear of him. For to be sent to the principal's office—boys and girls—meant the likelihood that out came the wooden paddle and you would get a good whack or two. I managed to avoid that happening, though according to school standards at the time, on one occasion I easily deserved it. I observed one kid push another kid's face down as he was drinking from a fountain. They both laughed about it so I thought that seemed like a good idea. The next time I was in line at the fountain, when the little boy's turn in front of me came to drink, I pushed his head down. He turned to me and laughed all right, but he had a bloody nose. I was horrified! What had I done? I think I helped wipe the blood away, though, really, I can't quite remember. Otherwise, I kept silent and said nothing. I had yet to learn that when one does wrong one needs to acknowledge that fact and accept the consequences. Otherwise one internalizes wrong actions and builds up an inner pail



filled with guilt that cannot easily be emptied. Whenever that little boy crosses my mind today, his face with the bloody nose is as visible now as it was then.

Even so, there was no way I wanted to get sent to Ward Huffman's office. One year Ward decided he wanted to earn extra income beyond his principal's salary and so opened a donut shop. Besides selling the donuts in his shop, he would hire kids to take boxes of donuts out and sell them door-to-door. It was in this way that I became Ward's employee and got to know him in a less fearsome capacity. Suddenly he was not this ogre looming over everyone, but a fairly decent person. And he made good donuts. There were times in which I would eat all of the profits from my sales up in donuts before going home for supper—stuffed. I was surprised, though, that Ward let me get away with that.

### **Christian teachings**

Christian education began in our home with our mother reading us popular Bible tales like Daniel in the lions' den or the story of David and Bathsheba. Though I didn't understand the adultery part in the David story, I did appreciate the deception in which he conspired against Bathsheba's husband, Uriah, in order to acquire Bathsheba as his wife. I didn't think at the time, "Hmm! Being named David may not be such a special honor after all." I saw the story as one of wrong doing, repentance and forgiveness so I forgave David. Years later, though, when I decided to read the Bible completely through from cover to cover, David's so-called heroic deed in killing Goliath with his slingshot did not salvage him from a career as a bloodthirsty warrior and a murderer of innocent, men, women and children described elsewhere in the Bible. Still, it was common in ancient times for kings to brag about and exaggerate their bloody conquests as, for example, did Eannatum, King of the Sumerian city Lagash. He loved his own description of how his warriors marched over the bodies of the dead and boasted that in his conquest of the city of Umma he "heaped up piles of their bodies in the plains, and they prostrated themselves as they wept for their lives."<sup>1</sup> Was David also just exaggerating? Moreover, added to the controversy, did he even, in fact, ever exist for which no archaeological evidence has yet been unearthed with the possible exception of the discovery of a couple of references to the House of David? So for me the historical David became a subject shrouded in mystery. His mere mention conjures up a host of images for whoever happens to hear it according to their own references and so it shall also remain for me.

Bible study continued augmented with church attendance at Sunday School, the main service, and, when it came time, membership in the Jr. church choir. But the story of Jesus and his love for all people—"red or yellow, black or white, they are precious in his sight, Jesus loves the children of the world"—really took hold in my heart and mind when we began studies in summer Bible School in the third grade. I loved the community spirit of joining in with all the other children lifting their voices in song. "Jesus is real to me. Jesus is real to me. For he lives in my heart, this world has no part, for Jesus is real to me." I began to feel like I was connected to this spirit of universal love that Jesus taught

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<sup>1</sup> Bauer, pp. 90, 91. Susan Wise Bauer, *The History of the Ancient World: From the Earliest Accounts to the Fall of Rome*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2007), p. 18.

<sup>1</sup> Woolf, p. 64.

which extended to everyone in the world. Surely he was my personal friend and as well my savior though why I needed salvation at such an innocent age was a question I never quite understood. The truth is that even though later on I would pronounce that I was a complete agnostic, and though there were times when all thoughts of spirituality were far removed from the activities of my life, deep down this sense of universal love that developed in those early years has always remained with me, and for that I am thankful.

As much as I was struck with the message of Jesus' love, a certain perspicacious side of me also emerged taking note of some of the contradictions inherent in what the adults were teaching us about Christianity. It would be years before I read about the medieval Christian Crusade wars in the Eastern Mediterranean and the other Crusades, but why, I asked my mother, did we sing songs about war when war meant killing people? Was it right and Christian to sing songs like "Onward Christian soldiers, marching as to war, with the cross of Jesus going on before?" I don't remember her answer, but it must have been satisfactory because I continued to sing the song.

The question was similar to another I asked my mother, which was why we ate animals. Wasn't Perky an animal, and we wouldn't eat him. Again, the answer must have placated me because I continued to eat animals. Questions like these, though, once asked do not die if they are not answered satisfactorily. They would surface again year's later when I arrived at a point where I refused any longer to satisfy myself with platitudes and hand-me-down answers designed just to make life more comfortable about such serious questions and protect people from probing their conscience and their consciousness.

### **Race in Bluffton**

Race relations in Bluffton was not an issue by virtue of the simple fact that the town was nearly 100 per cent white. The rumor always available to which some people in the town eagerly turned whenever asked why no African Americans lived in Bluffton went something like this. An African American family did once live in the town. However, when the male household head went to the Roxy Theatre to see a movie, someone sitting in the balcony poured acid over his head. The story is extremely difficult to believe, but some locals loved to tell it.

Bluffton continues to hold little attraction for African Americans where demographics show the present African American population to stand at 0.86%. Statewide the average is 9.23%. Nationwide, 12.63%. Whether 0.86% can be said to be an improvement over the figure 0% when I grew up seems doubtful.

One would also search nearly in vain to find any Hispanics in the town except in the summers. Then Mexican migrant workers poured into the area to pick the large tomato crop which grew abundantly on area farms. Darrel and I were warned to stay away from the Mexicans. It was the same warning many of the kids got. Mexicans all carried knives, we were told, and were dangerous people. I'm not quite sure why we took these warnings so cavalierly, but we did. This was during our first year in Bluffton and we were only eight. But the very first Mexican we saw walking along the street alone,

which was the first Mexican we had ever seen in our lives, we approached and asked if he would show us his knife. The man broke out in a broad grin and assured us he had none. He was warm-hearted and friendly and we liked him instantly. Prejudice against Mexicans made no headway in our hearts and minds.

The radio was a major force in Bluffton. I listened to countless radio shows either in the evening when our parents tuned a program in or after school when Darrel and I listened to a favorite show. These shows included Adventures of the Thin Man, The Aldrich Family, The Bell Telephone Hour, Beulah, Burns and Allen, The Fat Man, The Green Hornet, Hedda Hopper, Inner Sanctum Mysteries, The Judy Canova Show, The Life of Riley, The Lone Ranger, Lum and Abner, Mr. and Mrs. North, The Philip Morris Playhouse, The Red Skelton Show, The Romance of Helen Trent, The Shadow, This is Nora Drake, Truth or Consequences, and You Bet Your Life.

The years spent at Washington Street was also the time of awakening for an interest in girls. I loved to listen to the songs on *Your Hit Parade* which I would memorize and sing when I was alone or sing them to myself in my mind. The program aired on Saturday evenings. Some of the songs fit perfectly with the new desire for romance I felt in my heart. "Put your arms around me honey, hold me tight. Huddle up and Cuddle up with all your might. Oh, oh, I never saw such a girl as you."

The most impressive of all the radio programs we tuned in to, however, was the Joe Louis, Billy Conn heavy-weight boxing championship that happened on June 19, 1946. The fight was also the first sport's event ever televised, though this had no effect on our family which never purchased a TV while Darrel and I lived in Bluffton. In fact, only very few households owned TV sets by the time we graduated high school at which time we had seen a TV program a total of twice—both Howdy Doody shows which a schoolmate invited us to see in his home.

Though the issue never was addressed publicly, Darrel and I knew that the Louis/Conn fight involved racial divisions. Racists would be furious if Conn lost. But we had had enough of negative talk and attitudes about African Americans even though a person from another race was seldom to be seen in Bluffton. When the family traveled to nearby Ft. Wayne, on the other hand, we saw the two races together all right. The economic disparity and the disparity poverty produced could not easily be missed, nor the defensiveness and fear that generally seemed to emanate from some African Americans as they withdrew within themselves when out in public with whites.

Yes, that night of the great fight we were on the side of Joe Louis. We cheered him on and rejoiced when he won. Afterwards we bought Joe Louis magazines and became ardent Joe Louis fans. We even got boxing gloves, though we never did much boxing with them. Our enthusiasm for African American athletes extended into baseball where we rooted for Jackie Robinson (1947) and other African American players who soon joined the big leagues like Larry Doby (1947) and Satchel Page (1948) with the Cleveland Indians. They made much more of an impact on culture in America than they

could ever have known. These were our heroes, and Cleveland became the team we cheered on.

### **Summer vacations**

My father and mother liked to travel, so we sometimes made trips as far north as Michigan's Lake Miles in the summer where my parents rented a cottage during vacation time. I loved the lakes especially at night lying in bed in the dark where blue lights from far out on the lake were visible through the cottage window. In the distance the dim drone of a motor boat faded or approached, and the night air was fresh and pure, smelling of ozone and lake water.

One time, during the day, a little boy fell into the lake from our row boat and our brother Bill dove in to save him. People called Bill a hero, and I was in awe of my brother.

We traveled to the far West to Rawlins, Wyoming when we were twelve to visit my Father's sister, Margaret Mudd, and her family. There we met our exciting cousin Jimmy who with his girl friend drove my brother and me far out into the mountains on unpaved, old country roads where he parked, necked with his girl friend in the front seat, smoked cigarettes, and drank beer. We had never been even close to someone who drank alcohol before and it was rather shocking. But we liked that Jimmy trusted us not to tell. He was sixteen, a James Dean-type rebel. During the week of our visit Jimmy and his girl friend broke up and then, even more shocking, she called and wanted me to take her out. Of course, I had to say no. How could she want to put me into the middle of their squabble? I told this to no one except Darrel. Unfortunately, Jimmy's rebellion would not turn out well. Decades later, alone and plagued by alcoholism, he was shot dead by policemen in Salt Lake City, Utah when he waved a gun at them.

Tragedy stalked the Mudd family. Jimmy's sister, Beverly along with her husband, Vincent Vehar, a lawyer, and their 15 year-old son were blown up with a bomb consisting of 30 sticks of dynamite thrown through the basement window of their home in Evanston, Wyoming. One son survived. The bombing was orchestrated by Mark Hopkinson, a nearby resident, as an act of reprisal against Vincent Vehar and the means for avoiding a deposition Vehar was scheduled to conduct against him three days later. Vehar was the opposition lawyer in a civil case against Hopkinson. Hopkinson was given a life sentence for the bombing and executed in 1992 for another murder.

### **A farmer's life**

Our family stayed in our home on Washington Street until the summer of 1946 when we moved to a house at the very edge of town. We were not country boys but our new home was the very first house just outside the town limits. It was as close to being a farm as possible without actually being one. A farmer, Mr. Hubner, owned the house which he had divided in two, one half of which he rented to our family. He kept his own home and barn across the road surrounded by fields where sheep grazed and pigs fed.

A huge wire-fenced field which bordered other fields extending as far as the eye could see ran along the edge of our own back yard perpendicular to the road that followed the field. The fence was all that separated the adjacent field from our yard. In that field a few apple trees grew and cows grazed along with calves and a bull. In fact a cow lick with a water trough was placed just inside the fence where it met the road and cows wandered leisurely up to make use of them. They were literally almost in our back yard. We could reach through the fence and touch them which we did.

Further to the left of the cow field stood another field filled with fur trees which Mr. Hubner sold for Christmas trees in the winter.

Naturally, a place like this provided the opportunity for all kinds of new adventures. Our explorations soon discovered that small creeks flowed freely in a woods behind Mr. Hubner's sheep meadow across the street. We treated ourselves to the blackberries that grew wild there but we also had to be alert for pigs which sometimes wandered around which were fearsome and may have been feral. We made friends with Keith Grove who lived a little further up the road in a trailer camp and a couple of other neighbor boys. Sometimes we would all pitch a tent and camp out at night in the sheep field.

In the winter patches of water froze in the cow field providing an impromptu skating rink where we could play hockey with real hockey sticks and real hockey pucks. In the basement of the house I experimented with clamp-on roller skates, trying to learn how to skate backwards but without success. I also felt the urge to learn gymnastics and got a book on the subject from the library. Really, though, one needs a teacher to learn such activities, and I was afraid I would land on my head if I tried a somersault with no assistance. I had once tried a somersault from a diving board at six feet at a swimming pool and landed on my back. Smack! It felt so much like I had broken a few vertebrae that it took a few seconds to realize I was still in one piece.

Some little huts were located out in the cow field, probably intended for calves. They made cozy places to crawl into in the winter with snow flakes falling and the wind howling.

Dwight Bender was a classmate and a very large boy who wore thick, wire-rimmed glasses and lived nearby. We invited him over on several occasions. Out in the cow field when it was cold, we could get inside the huts but Dwight could only get his head and shoulders to fit inside. He was very slow and not suited for school at all. His mother wore a caring but permanent worried expression on her face. Rumors circulated about Dwight which carried sexual overtones, but he never tried anything with us nor did he show any interest that way. When he turned 16 Dwight quit school immediately.

The Psi Ote XI Swimming Pool was an old stone quarry located about a mile outside of town converted for swimming. It boasted an outhouse and dressing rooms constructed of rough slabs of stone cemented together. Boys could often be seen

clamoring around on the outside of the women's dressing room trying to peek inside through little spaces in the slabs of stone.

A year or two after he quit school, Dwight Bender drowned at the Psi Ote XI Swimming Pool. It happened where a row of floating barrels separated the shallow from the deeper water. That's where the water was only 3 feet deep. Years later I wrote a story about Dwight which I titled *School Days*. In the story I changed Dwight's name to DeWayne.

Jet airplane travel had yet to be invented. Sometimes I laid out in the yard between the house and the cow field on my back in the warm sunshine. Eventually a bi-plane would fly along and slowly traverse the expanse of clouds and sky above and finally drift like a little speck into oblivion. This was meditative perfection.

What was not so perfect was the day Mr. Hubner hired a castration team to come to castrate his pigs with castrating pliers which they did in his driveway. The high-pitched, horrific squealing of these animals being held down to endure the torture of having their testes ripped from their bodies was blood curdling. It went on, it seemed, like hours and the screams of the pigs could be heard for blocks and blocks away. The thought of the pigs forced in line having to view what was to happen when their turn came was also an example of extreme cruelty and callousness. Didn't anyone care? How could this be allowed? But it was. And all was fine, everyone said. After all, they were just pigs. Castration was only a part of the process of getting your pork chops and bacon to taste a little better.

### **Country school**

Living in our new home meant that a big change was in store for Darrel and me. Being outside the town limits, we were no longer eligible to attend Central School unless our parents paid a special tuition fee. Our new school was located out in the middle of the country. We had to board a yellow school bus to get there. This was the Poplar Grove School, and the world was suddenly turned upside down.

Country kids have a different slant on life than town kids. For one thing, the birds and the bees are front and center out on the farm through nature and the physical realities of life. I once visited a girl on her farm to whom I was very attracted. She loved to step in cow pies because she liked how their contents felt oozing between her toes. She demonstrated the same several times as we walked around the farm yard. I couldn't quite get myself to try it.

At Poplar Grove the teachers were assigned two grades which took place in the same room. We were in the sixth grade so after the teacher taught us a particular subject, she would then teach a subject to the fifth grade which sat on the opposite side. Both grades could listen in to the other which had its positive aspects, though this also meant that the time spent teaching a particular class was cut in half.

We were not happy with the new school and complained often at home. It proved difficult to make friends with the new classmates whose interests were sometimes quite foreign to ours. For example, the biggest event of the school year was the pest contest in which the students brought in parts of so-called pests to prove they had either killed them or been involved in killing them. For a hawk's talons, 500 points were awarded. For a mouse's tail, 2 points. Everyone was expected to participate and prizes were awarded for the kids who scored the most points. By chance, we caught a mouse in a mouse trap at home. I cut off its tail, a very disagreeable task, and took it in. I don't remember what Darrel did or who won. Nor did I care. But the pest contest was a real trip for the kids. Those with the most points achieved a certain status in the class. Darrel and I were at the bottom.

A larger boy at Poplar Grove and I got into an argument. He pinned me down in the school yard and would not let me up. I was furious but could do nothing about it. For the basketball team we were expected to choose our own numbers and sew them on our yellow uniforms. I chose "00". Was this how I was beginning to feel, like a nothing?

Fortunately, our parents took note of some of the changes we were experiencing. When the school year was up, they announced we would be returning to Central School in Bluffton for the seventh and eighth grades. They would pay the tuition costs to make it happen.

### **New Coach in Town—A dangerous throw**

In the meantime, the high school hired a new basketball and baseball coach. This was Bob Dro, famed for having led his tiny Berne High School basketball team to the final eight of the Indiana state championship during his high school days. He also played basketball for Indiana University as a starter for three years in which they won the NCAA national championship. Dro was selected for the first team All Big Ten Conference and for the Look Magazine All-America team as well. After IU he played professional basketball for the Indianapolis Kautsky's in the National Basketball League and minor league baseball for the Brooklyn Dodgers. Injuries cut his professional sports' career short, and Bluffton considered itself fortunate indeed to capture this prize of an athlete for the school

To our great delight, Dro moved with his wife and their baby into the other half of the Hubner house we rented. We did not know the full extent of his background at the time and he never mentioned it. But it was a privilege to have the coach living next door.

In Bluffton Bob played on one of the local soft-ball teams sponsored by one of the town businesses. All eyes eagerly followed his play when he came to bat pounding out hits or making a spectacular play at second base. Having him live right next door was exciting. He was handsome and a very friendly and warm-hearted man whose smile has been described as infectious. Bob spoke with us often and invited us into his home to meet his wife and little boy, also named Bob. He would also play baseball "catch" with us

when he had time. I soon regarded him as a friend to whom I looked up with great admiration and respect.

On one occasion my new friend didn't hold back and fired a baseball at me with blazing speed with what must have been full major league power. I saw the ball spinning toward me with alarming velocity. I knew that I could not catch it. But I held my position as the ball whizzed past my glove and smashed into my face knocking me to the ground nearly unconscious. Bob and my father helped me to the front porch where they dressed the injury to my face, making small but concerned light talk. I knew that Bob had thrown that ball deliberately hard as a kind of challenge. He even complemented me for holding my ground. Clearly, he knew how hard he was going to throw the ball before he threw it—or did he decide at the last second?

Why did Bob Dro challenge me this way? I do not believe he intended to injure me. I do believe his blazing fast ball was an attempt to awaken me from a certain passivity he observed governing my life, and to shake me up to better prepare me to face the world of hard knocks that lay ahead. What neither of us could have known was that certain events would materialize in my life that would turn me into a fighter for right against wrong (in my battles for animal protection) that easily matched any stand that most people would ever take, including, probably, Bob himself.

Bob Dro didn't stay in Bluffton long and in 1948 when we were entering the eighth grade accepted the position of Alumni Field Secretary at Indiana University in Bloomington. I visited him there after my sophomore year in high school when I attended IU summer music camp for the first time in 1951. (See Chapter 4.) It was good to see him. By then I was pursuing my own special music interests which I told him all about. Bob left IU the same year for a stint as Standard Oil's Public Relations Director, returning to IU a few years later where he built an outstanding career as the Assistant Athletic Director and the Director of University Relations. He died in 2004 of Alzheimer's at the age of 87. I was extremely sorry to hear this news. Bob Dro was one of the first of many special people I would meet in life, and I am grateful to have had the privilege of knowing him to the extent that I did.

### **Return to Central School**

It was a relief to be back in the ranks of our schoolmates at Central School. This was where we belonged. Attendance at Poplar Grove had seemed like a visit to another planet. Whenever I see old photographs of country schools where one teacher taught all grades in the school in one room, though, I can say that, yes, we had experienced just a small taste of that antique past. This was now a part of our persona, a character-building experience that one never forgets.



## **Chapter 4**

### **High School Days**

#### **Music enters our lives**

During the eighth grade my parents put their heads together and decided it was time for Darrel and me to begin exploring our music talents. The best way to start was to take up a musical instrument and become members of the band. We offered little resistance, and they presented us with an old, silver trumpet which we were to divide between us.

Next we were introduced to Mr. Bennet, whose field of expertise was bookkeeping. But he also held a bachelor's in music from Ball State University and was the junior high (grade school) and high school band instructor. Mr. Bennet gave us some beginning lessons on blowing the instrument and matching a few of the sounds we produced with notes of varying duration on paper. We were then assigned to play in the grade school band.

The sound of the band was, as typically to be expected of beginning bands, somewhat like a state of musical confusion from which all kinds of bleats, blats and squawks of badly tuned instruments randomly emerged. Darrel and I went along, nevertheless, passing the instrument back and forth between us, bleating and blatting and trying to remember to press the right keys down to match the rhythm and the notes on our music stand. After a few rehearsals of bleating and blatting we announced we had had enough and refused to participate any further. The poor trumpet was hastily retired to its case.

My parents, however, were not so easily dissuaded and at the end of the school year presented us with an ultimatum. Either we take up a new instrument or forego participating in athletics. This was tough love all right at its worse. A good outcome, fortunately, was just around the corner.

For whatever reason, the school board had gone in search of a new high school band director. Perhaps Mr. Bennett had had enough. I no longer remember if he continued to lead the grade school band. In any case, they found what they were looking for in J. Robert Schlatter. He had just graduated from Indiana University with a B.M., was newly married, and sounded very promising in a telephone interview. By then, however, the school year had ended. The board must have feared Mr. Schlatter would get away because Fred Park, the High School Principal, gave their new band leader to be directions to meet him on the corner of Market and West Washington Street where the Post Office stood. There Park presented him with a contract. Mr. Schlatter, who was sitting in his car, looked it over and signed.

Bluffton finally had their new band director. But they had more than that. Mr. Schlatter was also a superb player on the French horn and was soon engaged as the principal hornist with the Ft. Wayne Philharmonic. As might be expected, he was anxious

to have a full horn section in his new band. When my parents learned about the new band director, they contacted him, and he brought two French horns out to the house.

I shall never forget our first meeting. Mr. Schlatter was tall, handsome charming, and friendly. He put one of the horns down on the floor and then opened the case to unveil this incredible, winding, coiled instrument gleaming like pure gold. Mr. Schlatter told us how to blow into the instrument. "Pucker your lips, he said, "as though you were going to kiss your girlfriend and blow as though you were going to spit a hair off the tip of your tongue while buzzing your lips." I don't honestly remember if he dared to say the part about "kissing your girlfriend" at that first meeting, which might have alarmed my parents. Perhaps he put it this way at the first private lesson. But whenever he said it, I liked the image, one which I could hardly block from my mind in those days of early adolescence. In any case, both Darrel and I were able to produce a tone immediately and easily. Unlike with the trumpet, I liked the feel of the mouthpiece against my lips and the ease with which the instrument responded when I blew into it even though the horn was reputed to be the most difficult of the brass instruments to play. It was the same for Darrel.

Mr. Schlatter was complimentary and supportive in the few early lessons he gave us, treating us like equals. This was not the norm in 1940's and 1950's Bluffton where children were mostly to be seen, not heard. When he left our home that first day, suddenly the prospect of having to learn a musical instrument did not seem so daunting. But now it was my parents who were hesitant, even suspicious. I had to hound them and insist they let us play this beautiful new instrument called the French horn.

Starting on the French horn helped to offset a physical condition that also started when we entered high school. My brother and I were not developing normally as we should be. We were not growing and remained at our pre-high school height of just under five feet tall. This was a devastating predicament. How should we achieve our goals that depended on physical size if we didn't grow? How was I to become a basketball star or a football hero and earn the accolades of my schoolmates and the Bluffton public, or, more importantly the girls with whom I found myself falling in love one crush after the other? Amazingly, we did go out for freshman football. Being so small, though, we were not suited for the rough and tumble struggle on the football field. I got in for one play the entire season. The same for Darrel. I did not even bother going out for basketball that year.

Meanwhile our parents had sent us to see Dr. Dorrance, our family doctor, at the Bluffton Clinic to find the cause of our delayed entrance into puberty. An underactive thyroid gland was the culprit, and after we began taking thyroid supplements we started to grow taller. We used to stand against a doorframe, put a ruler flush against the top of our heads and mark where it landed against the door frame with a pencil, elated as the marks moved higher and higher. By our sophomore year we had attained our full height, which for me was 5' 9 ½" By then, however, my dreams of excelling in football or basketball had mostly vanished though I would not admit it.

There were several places to play basketball around the town, school sports aside, and we often skirmished in games with classmates. Then to our great surprise, in our Junior High School year our father had a backboard and hoop installed on the side of our garage with gravel dispersed around on the ground for a court. The news of a new place to play basketball spread quickly. Kids came over constantly, after school or on Saturdays, for the remainder of the school year. This included members on the high school team. Our little court was one of the best around, though it could not match the indoor hardwood court with buckets on both ends that Jack Dobson's father constructed for him. But bigger, better, smaller, or worse was not the point. Somehow our father had sensed the deeper issues involved and had made an effort to do something in our support.

Now I had the opportunity to practice alone, dribbling and shooting. I spoke with the basketball coach, Coach Leroy Compton, and obtained a copy of the plays he used in his basketball system. By the time team tryouts came around in our senior year I knew the system to perfection and was an expert shot, one of the best, really, on the team. Coach Compton and his assistant, Coach Leslie Dodd (the football coach), observed my new skills and were impressed. They put me on the second team while they considered whether or not to advance me to the varsity.

The problem was that I was a senior and didn't belong on the second team which was for underclassmen. I felt out of place. Worse, because of the thyroid problem, I had become overly sensitive about my size. Though I was then at my full height, I was thin, underweight and had an image of myself more akin to one of those caricatures of men in Charles Atlas ads who got sand kicked in their face at the beach by more powerful men who made off with the girl who was there in search of a real man. Unlike the skirmishes out in the back yard where everyone played spontaneously, when the coaches put me out on the court to play in an actual game, I felt self-conscious about my body and lacked the aggression necessary to compete. After a few games, Coach Compton had no alternative but to cut me from the team kindly noting that I had not quite matched the expectations he and Coach Dodd had hoped for. I was disappointed and cried in secret, but I also took note of my own resolve in attempting to accomplish something that was very difficult to achieve.

While circumstances may have put wished-for-success in athletics out of reach—though I note that Darrel became a star on the wrestling team even pinning an opponent 30 lbs heavier in one meet—music more than compensated in several ways. For example, we quickly acquired enough prestige that teachers sometimes invited us in to give a demonstration on the horn in their classes.

Until we grew to our full height, the horn, seemed almost bigger than we. When playing from a seated position the bell of the horn normally sits on top of the thigh. However, when we tried to do that, the mouthpiece landed about in the middle of our foreheads. The solution was to open the leg stance a little wider and put the bell down on the chair inside the thigh cushioning it with material from our pants. In that manner we were able to play while seated.

Our initial lessons on the horn were free. Once we had learned the fundamentals of playing our parents would have to pay for any future lessons. This they were not prepared to do so we were on our own. Fortunately, Mr. Schlatter had got us off to a grand start and our playing developed rapidly. We went into the high school band almost immediately. Wiladene Shaffer was the only horn player in the band, but with the addition of Darrel and I and then another player, Norma Miller, we had a full quartet. (During the course of our high school years we would add Kay Bolton, Phil Tyndal, and Byril Bowman to the horn section.) I don't know who taught Wiladene to play, whether it was Mr. Bennett or someone else, but she played very well, performing the first movement of Haydn *Horn Concerto No. 2* in the Indiana State high school solo completion. She was a senior but I have no doubt she could have become a professional horn player had she wished.

### **The ethos of the times**

Unusual happenings of some sort were always going on in Bluffton and tales floated freely like the time four members of the basketball team were rumored to have got a certain girl, who lived across the tracks, into their car one night. According to the story, they got her pants down and all four were trying to get into her at once. I checked the story out a little further because I knew the players, and what I learned made me believe it to be true.

Yet another time, junior classman Paul Nelson, who was a friend of ours, once had the temerity to grow a beard. He didn't keep it long. A group of male students from the senior class, some of them top athletes, ambushed him one night, held him down and shaved it off. When Paul protested backed by his father's threats it was all swept under the rug. Boys will be boys and besides, the answer with which people satisfied themselves, surely Paul had brought it on himself by daring to grow a beard. This was the culture of the times. A crewcut was fine. But a beard or moustache—or, for that matter, long hair? No way!

I had a paper route delivering the Bluffton News Banner to subscribers for a couple of years. Half of the route was on the other side of the tracks where the poor lived. Going into their homes on collection days afforded me a first-hand look at what it was like to be poor. One customer could not afford to have her goiter treated and could not hide the huge swelling in her neck. Some homes even used kerosene lamps for lighting. When collection days came, some customers routinely hid out. Everything felt different on the other side of the tracks. A few of the homes there belonged to classmates.

### **Bluffton friends**

Jim Deming and Dick Brown were closest male friends for both Darrel and me. Jim's father was a Sunday School teacher in our church. Darrel and I and Jim just seemed to have a natural love for each other right from the start. Jim starred on the baseball team and once hit a ball so far it would have been a home run in a major league stadium. The

relay of the ball, however, held him to a triple as he raced around the bases. Jim was the comrade with whom I could talk about romance and girls in whom I might be in love.

Dick came from a poor family. He was very talented on the Sousaphone and the fastest long distance runner on the track team. But he also had a rough edge and could be extremely abrasive about expressing his opinions which deprived him of the popularity that could have been his around the school. We had many adventures together, exploring the Bluffton freight yards, the stone quarry out of town, and many other places. With Dick you felt at ease talking about anything, even sex, including masturbation, which was a taboo topic in Bluffton. In those days the adults acted like sex did not exist. Sex education came from conversations with best friends and what they had managed to pick up from other boys or dirty books.

Dick had a younger brother who had a developmental disability. I don't know if I have ever seen someone act as kindly toward another person as Dick behaved toward his brother. Every word he spoke was tender, expressed with the deepest concern, beneath which lay a foundation of the desire to comfort his brother's handicap.

Both Jim and Dick died before we had the chance to see them once again in later years. When Dick wrote his message for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary bulletin for our class reunion just prior to his death, he stated that retirement was the best job he ever had. I could easily imagine some of the conflicts he must have endured between himself and supervisors at different work places as he lived out his life.

### **Music becomes ever more important**

Regional and State music competitions are held all over the State of Indiana. After six months on the horn, Darrel and I entered our first competition. I played a little piece titled *Elegy*, and Darrel played a piece called, *Janus*, both with piano accompaniment. At that first competition I encountered a problem that would follow me throughout my career, the problem of nerves. I was quite unprepared for the experience, but nevertheless managed to play well and received a superior medal.

When our parents had guests over they now prevailed upon us to play a solo or a duet on the horn. Unlike when we sang for our relatives when we were smaller children, we gladly yielded to these requests. Indeed, I was pleased, even proud to be able to say I played this beautiful instrument called the French horn. I suddenly loved anything connected with the word French, not the least of which was a pretty classmate, Alice Ann French, though she had no idea I held her in such esteem. Then there were also the beautiful French doors which, purely by chance, I had seen in Alice Ann French's home. Other things French were the shapely curve of the geometric French curve used in drafting class and the lovely sounding French phrases my sister had taught us in Connersville. "Je vous le jaim, les plus son coeur." ("I love you the most with my heart"—I think.)

### **Being cruel and learning how not to be cruel**

At times things would happen in Bluffton that were decidedly unbeautiful, such as the night a bat flew into our home at 616 West South Street, the last home our family would occupy in Bluffton. How could we have been so stupid and ignorant, blinder than any bat could ever be, to think that we had to beat that poor innocent and defenseless animal to death, which we did with broomsticks. It's only wrong had been to wander purely by chance into a house of death. When I think of it today, it makes me sick.

When it came to animals, this was the kind of culture we inherited. As I grew up, boys all across the nation were encouraged from the time they could walk to consider a future as a hunter, because hunting was what real men did. I, too, wanted to be a hunter and hence a real man. I pestered my parents night and day for a BB gun. Finally, they got one for me and I was thrilled.

Not long after I went hunting, fantasizing that I was after big game in the jungle, a lion, perhaps a Bengal tiger. I crept up on a roof in a neighbor's yard and hid among the leaves. A little sparrow flew down just a few feet from where I hid. I took aim, big hunter that I was, and pulled the trigger. To my absolute astonishment the little sparrow dropped more suddenly and quickly than I have ever seen anything drop, profoundly dead! I could not believe that by my very own actions I had killed it. "Get up, fly away little bird, get up, fly away!" But I could not make the little bird rise up, little innocent creature that it was. It could never get up again. I had taken its life. I felt a burning sensation in my throat and chest, and an unbearable pain.

I never told anyone that I had killed the little sparrow. I was too horrified and too ashamed. But something had changed from the time we killed the bat at home and the time I shot the little sparrow. I am still horrified to this very day that the little innocent bird had to forfeit its life in order that I might begin to learn how wrong it is to take the life of another living creature except under the most dire circumstances—a creature that wants to live just as desperately as do all living beings, human and nonhuman.

"For his eye is on the sparrow, and I know he watches me," as the Christian song goes.

## **Finding culture**

There was no great demand for culture in Bluffton, so my education in music came about through chance. I first learned the name of Johann Sebastian Bach by playing arrangements for two horns on some of the pieces in Bach's *Well Tempered Klavier* with my brother Darrel. When I learned that the Bluffton Public Library had a few 78 phonograph records to lend, I borrowed some of these and played them on an old gramophone record player that we kept in our attic that you had to crank. This was how I first heard the *Nocturne* (horn solo) from Mendelssohn's *Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Sometimes I would pretend to be sick so that I could stay home from church to listen to the Boston Symphony broadcasts on Sunday mornings. On these occasions, if any of the pieces on the program being performed were listed in my excerpt books, I

would listen for the solo horn passages to come along and as soon as I recognized them, scramble to play along. One such attempt I remember was the Siegfried horn call in "Siegfried's Rhine Journey," an orchestral selection taken from Wagner's opera *Götterdämmerung*.

The radio had an important role to play in my early music education. On Sunday afternoon I would sometimes tune in to the chamber music broadcasts from Carnegie Recital Hall in New York City. Then at 2:00 p.m. I would listen to the New York Philharmonic. During the week, my parents often tuned into the Bell Telephone Hour and the Firestone hour which featured some of the greatest solo artists of the day like Fritz Kreisler, Ezio Pinza, Lily Pons, and Eleanor Steber.

Meanwhile, other music and music news filtered in. Esther Pease, the pianist at my church (First Baptist), described a recital Sergei Rachmaninoff had given in Ft. Wayne and what a wide stretch his hands could make. She played his *Prelude in C# minor* to demonstrate his music which was my first hearing of a composition by a living, classical music composer. I loved the piece, though apparently it was a piece Rachmaninoff grew so tired of playing that he almost wished he had never written it. The great hornist Dennis Brain also came to Ft. Wayne to play. Mr. Schlatter attended the recital and described the virtuosity of this great musical artist. I felt envious that I had not heard him play, but I would be more than compensated when I did hear Brain play in person a few years later.

I first heard Gustav Mahler's music when our high school class rented a bus and drove to Indianapolis where we heard the Indianapolis Symphony play his first symphony. Upon my return home I pulled out the excerpt books and played passages from the symphony. I especially loved the Frerer Jacque melody in the second movement in the minor key.

On another occasion, the Ft. Wayne Symphonietta, composed of members of the Ft. Wayne Philharmonic, played in Bluffton at the community center with J.R. Schlatter as the soloist for the program playing the Mozart 3<sup>rd</sup> *Horn Concerto*. That was especially thrilling because by then, he had long been at the top of my hero list.

Also impressive was Mr. Schlatter's description of a smuggled tape recording of an Arturo Toscanini rehearsal with the NBC orchestra in which Toscanini ruled with an iron fist, shouting out "Basta" [Enough] when he was displeased with a player. It was an early warning about Dictators of the Baton, several of whom I would encounter in my playing career.

By my sophomore and junior years in high school I was learning and performing movements from the Mozart 3<sup>rd</sup> and Strauss 1<sup>st</sup> Horn Concertos. These I played in regional and state competitions where each year I won gold medals. Darrel learned the Franz Strauss (Richard's father) horn concerto, which, for me, was more difficult than Richard's. Since we are speaking factually, I hope it doesn't appear boastful to mention that after I played the Strauss first and last movements and was on my way out of the

competition room, one of the judges called me over to speak his mind. "Do you have any idea how good you are?" he asked. I demurred. "You can really go places!" he said. I thanked him very much.

I played movements of the Mozart and Strauss concertos in several places in the State of Indiana for various occasions and also used these as audition pieces. Darrel and I were fortunate to align ourselves with Mary Markley, a member of our church and a year behind us in class, who agreed to be our pianist. Mary was brilliant on the piano and a natural accompanist. Though I wasn't taking lessons with him, Mr. Schlatter also made himself available for coaching when I needed help with learning a new piece as I did with both the Mozart and the Strauss.

Besides this involvement, I also played in the high school woodwind quintet and horn quartet. The quartet played an arrangement of the overture to *Tannhäuser* by Richard Wagner at the music competitions which I liked very much. There were also new pieces to learn and play which I somehow stumbled upon like Camille Saint-Saëns' *Morceau de Concert* written for horn and piano. (Saint-Saëns also wrote a version for horn and orchestra.) I first heard Beethoven's music when I bought the Beethoven Sonata for horn and piano at the local music store. I was amazed to find it stocked there. As soon as I played the opening phrase, I had the strange sense that I knew this piece already.

In addition, I played solos for various local events that arose such as services at church or at church conferences and community events in nearby cities.

J.R. Schlatter offered steady and constant support. He invited us to travel to Ft. Wayne to play in a Ft. Wayne all-school band concert. There we played an arrangement of Johann Sebastian Bach's *Komm Süßer Tod*, aka *Jesus, Joy of Man's Desiring*. I was enthralled by this piece. How could anything be so profoundly beautiful?

Mr. Schlatter also got permission from our parents to take us to an occasional rehearsal of the Ft. Wayne Philharmonic. These occurred at night. The drive home was an unforgettable experience. Mr. Schlatter would start to nod asleep at the wheel, and we would jar him awake as he was going off the road along the 25 mile stretch home. It was a sign of how dedicated but exhausted he was and how hard he was working. That he was not killed during the time he spent in Bluffton is amazing.

Mr. Schlatter built the high school band into a pretty decent ensemble. It could claim some outstanding players. Jim Niblick, Artie Reed, and Jim Mallers on trumpet or cornet, Armatha Hook and Joan Gebele on flute, Harriet Sprague and Everett Elliott on clarinet, Rita Gass on saxophone, Michael Ulmer and Dick Hyde on Trombone (with Hyde also on baritone), Dick Brown on Sousaphone, and Mary Markley on glockenspiel. No doubt, I have forgotten to mention some players. Artie Reed and Dick Hyde both pursued professional careers in music as did Mary. I heard Artie Reed's excellent brass quintet in New York City years later. We got together a few times before he moved to Malaysia. Hyde (aka Slyde Hyde) has toured and recorded widely with pop, rock, folk,



and jazz musicians like Count Basie, Woody Herman, Harry James, Carole King, Frank Sinatra, Henri Mancini, the Beach Boys, and Madonna. Mary would have her own independent career, referred to later.

### **School chums**

The band was a friendly place to be a part of without any of the competitive infighting that so often creeps into musical organizations. For that matter, though I may have been on the naïve side in those days, it seemed to me the same could be said for the entire school. I didn't see any backstabbing for grades or jockeying for status with the teachers to be considered as the top students. We all knew who the top students were anyway. It seemed to me—though I really couldn't or wouldn't suggest that such feelings were reciprocated—that I was awash with friends whose names I gladly mention: From the Senior class, Diane Tangeman Bleday, Richard Bracht, Dick Brown, Ned Carnall, Jim Cobb, John Conklin, Jack Dobson, Armatha Hook Green, Jane Thoma Hammond, Carol Heller, Kenneth Newman, Alice Ann French Maillett, Pat McKinney, Ann Markley, Fred Meyer, Rancie Melton, John Muster, Ann Paulin, Pat Mead Paulson, Paul Perry, Norma Lee Reid, John Reiff, Roger Roth, Ruby Rothgeb, Tom Sawyer, Marlene Beer Schlagenhauf, Terry Schott, Maurice Shady, Jean Kean Speheger, Tom Stogdill, Jane Swagart, Mary Jane Taylor, Michael Ulmer, Verna May Van Emon, Donna Venis, Barbara Weaver Wolf, and Michael Young. From the Junior Class, Rex Athan, Sue Bayless, Kay Bolton, Sue Collins, Jim Deming, Larry Farling, Larry Fryback, Joan Gebele, Mo Harnish, Jerry Higgins, Dick Hyde, Jim Mallers, Mary Markley, Max Micklitsch, Norma Miller, Jean Munson, Bill Reiff, Tom Reiff, and Harriet Sprague . From the Sophomore Class, Roger Bracht, Garland Borne, Linda Brown, Betsy Carnall, Judy Deming ,Shirley Gregg, Bob Lusk, and Pat Micklitsch, . Somehow I regarded all these fellow students as friends. I don't recall any names from the Freshman Class.

Each of these students had some special meaning for me, though I may have omitted some names. This was especially true for the girls I had a crush on at one time or another, most notably Ann Paulin, Armatha Hook Green, Alice Ann French Maillett, Sue Bayless, Marlene Beer Schlagenhauf, Carol Heller, Ann Markley Miller, Norma Lee Reid, Barbara Weaver Wolf, Shirley Gregg, and Pat Ward. I was quite shy in school and so made no effort to let these girls know that I was interested in them, other than previously mentioned, though Pat Ward and I became close friends.

### **First girlfriend**

In the summer of my Junior year I attended Lake Tippecanoe church camp as I had in previous summers. The camp lasted for about a week. After unpacking my gear in my cabin I decided to go for a swim. As I turned down the narrow trail bounded on both sides by trees and bushes which extended to the lake, probably a good 50 or 75 yards below, I could see a girl diving from the diving board attached to the lake raft. "Wow!" I wondered, as I observed her doing pikes, summersaults, and swan dives. "Who the heck is that?" This was Rilla Ellis from Ft. Wayne, Indiana, and she would become my very first girlfriend. I don't remember how it happened but soon we were holding hands and

even kissing. It would also be my very first break-up which happened just before the week was out. "You take me too much for granted," Rilla said. No doubt she was right. I think I took everyone for granted in those days. To me, everyone was good, though on occasions reality would intrude rather rudely to interrupt my innocence.

My biggest high school crush in Bluffton was for Sue Bayless. She was a grade behind mine, a cheer leader, and one of the most popular girls in the school. I wouldn't have dreamed of asking her out. But then on one occasion, as life is prone to arrange, there we were riding along together in the back seat of a car returning to Bluffton from some event. I had to speak. There was no way out. So speak I did. I don't remember what I said but it involved matters of the mind and heart. I knew I was impressing Sue, and we became friends after that.

Then, as fate would have it, South Side High School in Ft. Wayne was scheduled to play Bluffton in basketball at Bluffton for the very first time. South Side was a big, major school in Ft. Wayne which easily tripled the student body size at Bluffton, so it was a very special opportunity to play them. Unknown to me, Rilla Ellis, in the meantime, had become a cheerleader at South Side. So there I was in my band uniform in the band section (along with other members of the band), watching Sue Bayless out on the court doing her cheerleading stunts with the other members of her troupe. As they took to the sidelines, then out paraded Rilla Ellis with her troupe performing their acrobatics.

I had not spoken with Rilla since church camp. But at the first opportune moment, she came wading through the stands headed straight for me. It was fantastic to see and speak with Rilla and much fun being the center of attention posed with the Southside cheerleader. All eyes were upon us as we carried on our conversation. The next time I saw Sue in the hallway at high school we stopped to talk for a moment, and I told her a little about Rilla which she was eager to hear.

Sue and I corresponded briefly after I left high school and entered the army. I saw her once again on leave after I had just finished basic training. Then she was off to Purdue University in pursuit of her future. I never saw Rilla again, though I would contact her decades later. I sometimes did this with former women with whom I had had a close relationship just to catch up on all the years. I found her living in Georgia. She had children and grandchildren and lived a peaceful life with her husband. Her favorite pastime was to play golf. I was playing a little then also, which gave us more in common to talk about, and it was a pleasure catching up.

## **Everett**

I think it must have been in our sophomore year that we met Everett Elliot. Everett was an adopted son who lived out in the country with his parents and younger brother, Bill. Everett was a fascinating person, sophisticated, cultured, and gifted on the clarinet and piano. I don't remember how we met, but we were soon fast friends.

Wherever Everett went he had a way of making himself known instantly. This appealed to some people, to others not so much.

When he was sixteen Everett got his parents to buy him a new car. He was very good at manipulating them. Many little bands around the county gave concerts in the summer and Everett knew all of them and the conductors. With his new car he could now travel anyplace at his leisure, and soon he was taking us to play concerts with these bands. This was great fun and added to our music experience. Everett admired Darrel and me, and soon had convinced his parents that they needed to pay the tuition necessary for him to transfer from his Liberty Center School to Bluffton High School from which he would graduate. He also joined our church and sang in the senior choir.

At Bluffton Everett was very popular, and he was soon driving other new friends all around the county. He was an exciting person, up for new ventures and adventures. We once traveled to South Bend, Indiana to visit Gary Puckett, a horn player I admired (and other of his friends) who I had met at Indiana University summer music camp (to be discussed).

Everett had a keen mind but he could also go for a good round of mischievousness. Once he gave me a toy which, if you blew into it, made a huge, giant nose-blowing sound. He dared me to cover it with a handkerchief and blow into it in Mr. Hamblen's algebra class. I could be pretty mischievous myself and accepted the challenge. It got a big laugh and Mr. Hamblen was good natured about it. But he had to do his duty and so with a smile sent me to the principal's office. At least I was not expelled from the school as happened with Joseph Haydn as a Vienna Choir school boy when he cut the pigtail of a boy sitting in front of him with a pair of scissors.

Everett sat sweating for the remainder of Mr. Hamblen's class, terrified that I would divulge to the Principal, Fred Park, that it was he who had instigated the plot. But I did not tell even though Mr. Park tried to get me to.

On another occasion out at the Elliot farm, Everett revealed a side of him which I struggled to understand. He could be very dramatic and dogmatic on occasion for which there was no basis. There had been a dispute which did not involve Everett but he ordered me off the farm. I left and as I walked down the road about 40 yards leading away from the Elliot property, I turned to see Everett with a rifle pointed at me. I did not think he would shoot, but he had been irrational. Pointing a gun at me was also irrational. Would he actually shoot? I ducked behind a telephone pole and my heart began to beat a little faster. There was a standoff for several minutes with me peeking around the telephone pole to see if he had put the gun down. When he finally did, I cautiously proceeded on my way and quickly. I did not let the incident destroy our friendship, though it remained as a cautionary sign in my mind whenever I saw or was with him in the future.

There was another aspect of Everett which many people picked up on at their first introduction. In those days the word "gay" had yet to be designated as an accepted word for homosexuality. The pejorative word "queer" was. Was Everett queer? Nobody ever

overtly accused him of it, but there was something there that raised eyebrows. After high school and after a stint in the Navy, Everett would fully come out. I didn't follow his life after high school, though I often would think about him, and learned years later that he had been active in some way as an entertainer. He would eventually return to Bluffton where he died of AIDS. I learned that he had returned to Bluffton, but not that he was sick. I regretted very much not contacting him before he died.

### **The preacher's daughter**

When it came time for the Senior Prom I did not know who to invite. I couldn't invite Sue Bayless who was certain to be invited by Gordon Beitingner anyway, who she was going out with. Gordon was a star basketball player and a wonderful fellow who had come to Bluffton just for his senior year. It would come as a surprise to whomever I invited because during my entire high school career the closest I had ever come to going out with anyone was with Rilla Ellis. I finally decided to ask Garland Borne. She was two grades beneath mine, but protocol spelled out that only Juniors and Seniors attended the Senior Prom. I asked Garland anyway, and she accepted. I had the sense that she welcomed the idea of being the only sophomore to attend the prom. We were thus both breaking the rules of protocol.

Garland was W.E. Borne's daughter, the minister of the First Baptist Church. He and his wife were also close friends of my parents who sometimes invited them to dinner, a gesture that was reciprocated. I don't remember, though, Garland and her younger sister, Gretchen, ever being at our home. When I had to be rushed to the emergency room at the hospital when the stitches in a tonsil operation broke loose, it was Borne who my father called in the middle of the night when his own car would not start. Borne rushed right over. At the hospital they gave me a shot of morphine, and I went from intense pain into a heavenly blue field of space and peace.

Reverend Borne was a fire and brimstone preacher and that is what he preached, hell and damnation to all sinners who did not accept Jesus Christ as their personal savior. "Wait a minute! Let me be baptized!" I said, though solemnly not flippantly, and it was Borne who baptized me. Every Sunday was a Bible thumping drama with Borne instilling in us the fear of God. His sermons started right at our entrance to puberty when we were particularly vulnerable, and the fear of God became a stranglehold that was not easy to break, though my brother was not affected this way.

I once heard Borne describe to my father that he was burning himself up for Christ. When he learned that I would study music after high school, upon visiting our home for a short spell, he made certain to say a few negatives about composers he regarded as decadent like Giacomo Puccini. I was unimpressed and knew nothing about Puccini at the time anyway. Borne clearly did, and his reference must have been to Puccini's *La Boheme* where artists smoke and drink and engage in free love.

Aside from his Bible thumping ways, Reverend Borne was a friendly and congenial man. And his Christian enthusiasm did influence me to the extent that I

attended all kinds of church services frequently and considered becoming a Baptist pastor. But I often wondered what it must have been like to grow up in the Borne household surrounded by fire and brimstone as Garland and Gretchen had to do.

I didn't ask Garland about such matters when we went to the prom together. She would later become a TV broadcaster in Minneapolis. And then I learned that she had died young, though I never was able to learn the cause. I also found out that shortly after high school a couple of the kids I knew had visited New York City and returned to Bluffton shocked. They had run into Garland in Greenwich Village, and she was with a black man. My spirit soared with the news. I knew that her character was such that it would never have accepted any form of racism into her life. I wished that I could have known Garland as an adult.

### **Pursuing the dream**

My secret dream remained to play in a symphony orchestra. I wrote a paper for English class on The New York Philharmonic, The Boston Symphony Orchestra, and the Philadelphia Orchestra. (I may have included the Chicago Symphony and the Cleveland Orchestra also.)

I was envious of the Ft. Wayne Schools which had high school orchestras, and Darrel and I were constantly encouraging J.R. (to whom we always referred as "Mr.Schlatter" during high school days) to put classical band arrangements on our programs. Meanwhile the world of classical music continued to blossom as I learned more of the names of some of the great composers such as at high school band competitions where other bands would sometimes play a classical arrangement. This included pieces like Franz Schubert's *Unfinished Symphony* and the *Overture to the Barber of Seville* by Gioachino Rossini. I knew passages from the Rossini my solo horn excerpt books.

I longed to play in a symphony orchestra, though I continued to keep the dream to myself. One day J.R. called me into his office and asked if I would like to play a concert with the Ft. Wayne Philharmonic. I was ecstatic. The program consisted of the *Warsaw Concerto* by Richard Addinsell, *Peter and the Wolf* by Sergei Prokofiev and one or two other pieces. I played 4<sup>th</sup> horn, and though I didn't have that much to play it was one of the most exciting and formative experiences of my musical life.

The conductor of the Ft. Wayne Philharmonic was Igor Buketoff. He would make a name for himself not only as a conductor but for orchestrating Rachmaninoff's unfinished opera *Monna Vanna*.<sup>2</sup> Buketoff would also supply a new orchestration for Modest Mussorgsky's opera *Boris Godunov* which was premiered at the Metropolitan Opera in New York City.

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<sup>2</sup> Allan Kozinn, "Igor Buketoff, 87, Conductor and Expert on Rachmaninoff," *New York Times*, September 11, 2001, <http://www.nytimes.com/2001/09/11/arts/igor-buketoff-87-conductor-and-expert-on-rachmaninoff.html>, accessed July 25, 2017.

Mr. Schlatter next told me about a summer music camp for band and orchestra that was held at Indiana University at their Bloomington campus. I applied for the band and was accepted. In order to earn the fee for the camp, I worked on the Rudy farm in their corn fields pulling tassels from the tops of corn stalks which turned the corn to seed corn. This caused my hands to swell. My right hand, once swollen, never quite fully returned to its normal size ever and remains in this slightly swollen state even today. The hard work was offset, though, by the prospect of catching a glimpse of Carolyn Rudy who lived on the farm. She had just won the Jr. Miss America contest. I was madly in love with her, of course, as it seemed I was with every beautiful girl I set eyes upon.

It was thrilling to be on the striking campus of Indiana University at Bloomington, and though I was in the band, I heard the IU camp orchestra play the Beethoven 6<sup>th</sup> Symphony. This made me wish I had applied for the orchestra. Gary Puckett, a very fine hornist from South Bend, Indiana, mentioned earlier, was on 1<sup>st</sup> horn for the Beethoven and we became good friends.

I proudly wore an IU sweatshirt for the rest of the summer and frequently during the following school year. The next summer I applied for the orchestra and was accepted. I was put on third horn for a performance of the Tchaikovsky 6<sup>th</sup> symphony. Ernst Hoffmann was on the podium. Hoffmann, an American, had been the music director of the Breslau Opera and Philharmonic in Germany until the Hitler regime forced him to leave. He then conducted the Houston Symphony prior to becoming the director of orchestral music at Indiana University.

The Tchaikovsky was my first orchestral experience in which I had full responsibility over an important part. I was not nervous at all and enjoyed playing this symphony enormously. J.R., who was on hand and happened to have observed one of our rehearsals, told me that during the rehearsal at one point Hoffman was motioning frantically in my direction trying to get my attention for an entrance that was coming up. He need not have worried. My playing was so solid in those days I calmly picked the horn up at the last second and came in exactly on time and accurately as I knew I would. I think Mr. Schlatter took a little pride in his student that moment, the incidence of which was noticed by several of his colleagues.

Sadly, Hoffman and his wife, Annemarie Hoffmann, were killed in an automobile accident near Clarksdale, Mississippi on January 3, 1956.<sup>3</sup>

I had never before heard a piece that was so beautiful as the Tchaikovsky *Sixth Symphony* which is a favorite still today (along with several other Tchaikovsky works). Later, when more sophisticated people declared that Tchaikovsky was passé because his music was too sentimental, I was pleased to learn how Igor Stravinsky defended Tchaikovsky by dedicating his own composition *The Fairy's Kiss* in Tchaikovsky's honor. It was paradoxical, indeed, that Stravinsky, who claimed to hate emotion in music and made certain that, from his standpoint, it did not enter into his own work, held this most expressive of all composers in such high regard. I still think of the 1<sup>st</sup> movement of

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<sup>3</sup> Ernst Hoffman (conductor), [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ernst\\_Hoffmann\\_\(conductor\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ernst_Hoffmann_(conductor))

the Tchaikovsky's *Sixth Symphony* as one of the greatest of all symphonic movements, in particular, because he breaks from traditional form in that movement in order to introduce one of the most beautiful symphonic themes in music. Form, or no form, that theme just could not be denied. Thank you, Tchaikovsky, for allowing it in.

At the camp that summer I met for the first time a girl, a violinist in the orchestra, who avowed she was an atheist. I talked to her at some length about her views. I also smoked a pipe in public and thought I was very important—until I got up to walk away, at which point I turned pale and almost fainted. I was barely able to make it back to my room.

The French horn was the gateway to a new life. By the time of my senior year I had received several scholarship offers from universities and colleges like Ball State, but also some of which I had never heard about before. This included Indiana State University. As I recall, universities did not seem to offer full scholarships in those days, at least not in music, so I still lacked the financial means to attend music school. In fact, I did not even own my own horn but was using one borrowed from the high school. I decided my best move was to move my name forward in the draft for the Korean War in order to complete the mandatory two years of military service in effect at the time for young men aged 18 to 26. This would give me access to the GI Bill and enable me to attend college to study the horn at a later date.

I talked my mother into signing the necessary papers for me to be drafted in the army when my father was at work. When he learned, he was not pleased. "What did you do that for?" he asked my mother. It was the only time, I think, that I ever saw him strongly disagree with her. But he was too late. And from my perspective, that was too bad. I was determined that nothing would stop me from proceeding with my plans for becoming a professional symphonic horn player.

## **Chapter 5**

### **You're in the Army now**

#### **Basic training**

As I stood trying to prepare for manhood oblivious to the fascinating and unlikely journey that was about to begin, the Korean war was raging. I was scheduled to be inducted into the Army on June 25, 1953. This allowed me time to attend one final session at the Baptist church camp at Lake Tippecanoe. At camp, news circulated over the week that I was being drafted into the army so that one day all the girls surrounded and held me down as each and every one lined up to kiss me good-bye. I struggled to get away, of course, or at least pretended to, but it was one grand moment, especially when the turn came for the one I really wanted to kiss. And she wanted to kiss me, which seemed the most amazing fact of all. It was one grand kiss that I shall never forget as we reached for each other and kissed madly. Afterwards we became a couple for the remainder of the camp and corresponded through the four months of my basic training at Ft. Knox, Kentucky.

My classmates Jim Cobb, Jack Dobson, and Jesse Osborne were drafted on the same day. We traveled to the induction center together where we were put through the physical familiar to all viewers of old-time war movies. From there we were assigned a destination and separated. By this time in life I was already fairly resentful of authority, but now I was getting ordered around at every turn and there was no way out, nothing I could say in protest. As I reflected over the day's events that evening when I finally had a few moments of quiet, I actually said to myself: "You have leaped from the frying pan right into the fire."

I was sent to Ft. Knox Kentucky for 16 weeks of basic training, 8 weeks in infantry and 8 weeks in tanks. Before we even began tank training somebody ordered me into a tank and after a few brief instructions said "drive it!" Suddenly I found myself with my head poked out of the turret driving an M4 Sherman tank down a two lane highway nudging it left or right with the steering levers while cars buzzed by on the left. One slip of the steering levers and I could easily have crushed one of those cars.

In our basic training company a strong component of red necks and city street-wise African Americans lived side-by-side in the barracks but congregated outside into their respective groups with a strong sense of camaraderie. One of the African Americans was a small man no taller than me but an excellent boxer who was celebrated for his boxing skills by his friends. The racist hillbilly contingent decided to take him on one evening when no officers were around.

The fight took place in between two of four barracks on the company grounds. Cheered on by his friends, the African American out boxed and bloodied every one of the rednecks who would meet at the top of the stairs inside my barracks to try to boost their moral, wipe the blood from their faces, and then send the next one in line down to the slugfest. They were pathetically outclassed, and I was on the African American's side,



just as I had been on the side of Joe Lewis. I kept my preferences, however, to myself for obvious reasons.

Though many in the company might have been described as rednecks or hillbillies, most did not appear to be racists, and I liked and got along with them quite well. At mail call one day, one from this group, who went by the name of Red, sidled up to me when no one was nearby. He asked if I would mind reading a couple of words in a letter he had received which he could not quite make out. It turned out he could not read any of the words. He was completely illiterate. I was, of course, glad to read the letter to him which I did discretely so not to expose his handicap.

I hero worshipped all the officers in the company at first. Then one morning as we lined up for inspection in front of the barracks with the American flag flying beside the company commander's quarters, I found one of the officers I liked the most—all 6 foot four of him—looming over me and glaring down. He had come to the Army by way of ROTC at his college and was a Second Lieutenant.

“Soldier!” the officer bellowed.

“What?” I asked myself. “Is he talking to me?” Indeed he was. “Yes Sir!” I said beginning to tremble.

“Get that God damned peach fuzz off your face and don’t show up here again until you have!”

“Yes Sir!” I said, as my love affair with military officers shattered into a thousand pieces.

I went to the PX (Post Exchange, a military store) immediately and purchased a razor and razor blades. It was a humiliating experience, but he was right. A war was going on, people were getting killed, yet here was some kid dressed in battle fatigues supposedly learning how to fight a war who didn't shave yet.

I attributed the reluctant growth of facial hair to the underactive thyroid which had delayed development into puberty. I would never grow a heavy beard.

After Basic Training, I furloughed for a few days in Bluffton and then set sail from Brooklyn, New York for Bremerhaven, Germany on a troop ship—the S.S. Wasserman—if I recall correctly. The ship was filled with vomiting, sea-sick soldiers. I bordered on seasickness too but managed to resist it, though the stench of vomit in the quarters below was nearly as sickening as the ocean waves rocking the ship.

Once disembarked in Bremerhaven we were packed on a train and sent chugging across a frozen German landscape. Some of the soldiers hung from the train as we passed through quaint looking villages. Whenever they spied a pretty young woman they would

call out, "Hey Fraulein, was ist der Name?" cackling with glee and congratulating themselves for their new found ability to express themselves in a foreign language.

On the train ride an incident occurred which ranks high on my list of memorable events. Each train car was divided into compartments accessible by a side aisle which ran the length of each car, as is common on European trains. My compartment was the very last one on the train. Only four of us occupied the compartment. It was freezing cold all night long as just scant heat managed to travel from the front of a very long train to the last car. We were also the last to be fed. How delicious the food tasted when we finally did eat.

We were also assigned guard duty in rotating shifts along with a couple of other soldiers in the adjacent compartment just ahead. I took my shift around midnight relieved when it was over four shivering hours later. I gently called out to the soldier in the compartment assigned to relieve me, who was sleeping, that it was his turn for guard duty. He mumbled a few words and went back to sleep. I repeated the message, but got the same result. We had been friendly all day long, so I was surprised by his reaction. He was well educated, professional, a little soft in physical conditioning, and a super confident individual. I tried more forcibly. "Hey! I called out. It's your turn for guard duty!" But the man refused to acknowledge my presence. Several more attempts produced the same. I was at a loss, very tired, and cold. The other soldiers in the compartment were sleeping, or pretending to be, and did not want to get involved. I was stuck. To dare to abandon my post without being relieved, that would be a court martial offense for which I could be sent to the stockade.

Around this time a soldier from the adjacent compartment came over. He had been awakened and heard a little of what was happening. He asked what was going on and I explained. This soldier bore the markings of a Southern rural type, one who doesn't tolerate nonsense easily. Unlike me, who had not the faintest idea how to handle the situation, this man knew exactly what to do and did it instinctively and immediately.

"Get up!" he commanded to the half-sleeping soldier who mumbled and half turned over as if to go back to sleep. "I said get up!" he said again, prodding the man with his boot. "You're on guard duty!" Again the same. "Listen you son-of-a bitch!" the man said, kicking the soldier. He reached down, grabbed him by his shirt, jerked him to his feet and shook him hard. "You're now on guard duty! You asshole!" the soldier shouted, continuing to vigorously shake the man. "Let me hear you say it!" The man knew he had met his match and complied. "Yeah! All right!" he grumbled.

I found the self-serving, selfish display I had just witnessed hard to believe. But I was out in the big world now and the sheltered existence back home was a thing of the past. This soldier who came to my assistance was a hero to me whose actions would accompany my thoughts for the rest of my life. It would not be the last time I would find such people are sometimes around when you are desperately in need of a helping hand.

Our contingent of soldiers finally arrived at Cooke Barracks in Göppingen, Germany from which we were scheduled to be sent to Baumholder near the Czechoslovakian border. Plans were already drawn up for us to engage in tank exercises there over the next year and one-half.

The next day all the troops from the train were lined up for roll call. I suddenly heard my name called, along with another soldier, and we both stepped forward. A sergeant stationed permanently at Cooke Barracks came to us and marched us away.

"Where are we going?" I asked.

"Over to the band barracks," the sergeant said.

The band barracks? Then I remembered that when I filled out the registration form for induction, one question to be answered was whether the inductee had any special skills. I had written in "French horn." The other soldier had also jotted down an instrument on his form. He was a Sousaphone player.

At the band barracks they gave me a horn and asked me to warm up. I had not played in six months, but I played the only warm up I knew, and the horn responded fairly well. My embouchure was still intact. After a few minutes they took me into a room where a Warrant Officer and a couple of sergeants were seated.

"Play something!" the Warrant Officer commanded curtly.

I sat down in the empty chair in front of them and said, "I'd like to play the solo from the Tchaikovsky Fifth Symphony."

"I don't give a damn what you play!" the Warrant Officer quipped. "Just play something—any damned thing!"

The next day I was a member of the 28<sup>th</sup> Division Band (which would later be changed to 9<sup>th</sup> Division). The other soldier who had auditioned, Billy Lindsey, was also accepted.

### **Life in the band**

My experience playing in the 28<sup>th</sup> Division Band would change me into a person nearly unrecognizable as the young man who had grown up in a small town in rural Indiana. The first week was spent playing with the band in rehearsal with the Warrant officer, whose name was Gordon Walliman, conducting, and becoming acquainted with members of the band. The rehearsals went well. As the only horn player, I clearly was good enough to belong. Later we would bring in another horn player, an African American and career soldier, Joe Scipio.

The 28<sup>th</sup> Division Band was an active, vibrant organization of many professional musicians where music thrived 24/7. The primary function of the band was to travel around to military bases in the state of Baden-Württemberg playing for various ceremonies such as parades and reviews and to provide entertainment for the troops. Sometimes we played for German events, for example, soccer games.

The area was dotted with castles, ancient ruins, and tiny villages, and we often played in 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries towns like Geislingen, Schwäbisch Gmünd, and Ulm, the birthplace of Albert Einstein. My education was enhanced when we traveled over 150 miles Northwest one time to play in Bayreuth, famed home of the Bayreuth Festival founded exclusively by Richard Wagner for the performance of his operas. We played there in the offseason, unfortunately, so the Festspielhaus, where Wagner's operas are performed, was closed. We could only view it from the outside.

Small ensembles formed in the band which were available for various duties such as dance band events at the Officers Club. Some of the players also often spent evenings in a building called the enlisted men's club which was designed for troop relaxation. And it contained a piano and a bar. German women were allowed in the club so the troops there loved when band members played which gave them live music to dance to. The bandsmen played mostly selections popular at the time like "Oh my Pappa, to me you are so wonderful," an Eddie Fisher hit, which one of our trumpet players, who became a close friend, Bennie Corlieto, played soulfully and beautifully. Just as eagerly, some players traveled into the town of Göppingen to jam in a German jazz club. I was right there hanging on every experience wherever and whatever it might be.

The band could boast some really excellent players, Jack Ateljevich (aka Jack Sava) and Bob Knapp on trombone, Earl Jones, Bennie Corlieto and Hank Nowak on trumpet, William Mack, Archie Garner, Jim Mosley and Fred Desorbo on saxophone, Carlos Spirito on drums, Leonel Jiggets on piano, and Joe Martin and Bob Kafski on vocals. Earl Jones had a fantastic high register and played in the style of Harry James. Sava, Mack, Garner, and Jiggets could rip off dazzling improvisations, and Spirito knew how to let his sticks fly accompanied with the beats of his bass drum and crashing cymbals. Joe Martin sang an inspiring *Ave Maria* and *Our Father Which Art in Heaven* comparable, in my view, with a Mario Lanza rendition, and Bob Kafski was great on vocals for pop songs. I was surrounded with solid, professional musicians.

For me, the experience of being immersed in the scene I have just illustrated coming out of a small Hoosier town might best be described as dazzling. But all was far from perfect. We were still in the Army and subject to its idiosyncrasies and these experiences, too, were eye-opening. Master Sergeant Ed Praisner, a baritone player and second in command only to Warrant Officer Walliman, had nearly 30 years of service under his belt. He was a short man, very stern, who had a kind of stuttering manner of speaking. This made him an easy target for making fun of with Bugs Bunny imitations. "Bu duh, Bu duh, Bu duh!" The players loved to imitate him. I got along with him all right, mostly by just avoiding him. Once, though, when the band was out in the field, a new roommate, Jerry Cole, a trumpet player, got so angry with Praisner because he

thought he was mistreating me that I thought a fight was about to ensue. Several of us intervened and Jerry barely avoided a court martial. (The band on rare occasions had to go out on military maneuvers with the rest of the base where we camped out at night for a day or two. It happened only twice during my time in the band. The first time, most of the band hid out, including me, to avoid the unpleasant duty. An investigation followed but because everyone had a solid excuse for their absence, the incident was dismissed.)

On another occasion, Sergeant Praisner came into the band quarters and asked in a very autocratic way for William Mack, a tenor saxophonist, to do something rather mundane. Mack was African American and one of the most good-natured individuals one might meet. I never saw him involved in any kind of contention with anyone. On that particular day, however, Mack was busy arranging his locker and putting some of his gear away. He told Praisner "just a minute" and continued what he was doing. Praisner persisted with his request, his face growing red. Again Mack said "just a minute." Now Praisner was really angry and repeated his command. Everyone within earshot froze! This was not good! After 12 years in the Army, several under the command of Sergeant Praisner, Mack had finally had enough. "Who do you think you are?" he demanded, looking straight into Praisner's eyes. "God?" Had Mack really said what I thought he said? Indeed he had!

Praisner sputtered for a few seconds. "Bu duh, Bu duh! Consider yourself confined to quarters," he finally emoted and marched out of the room.

Mac lost some stripes at his court martial, being reduced down to private first class. But for him it was the final straw. He mustered out of the Army and lived in New York City for a while doing menial jobs at Macy's department store. Then fate smiled kindly in his direction for which I felt great relief. He moved to Breckenridge, Colorado with a female significant other and worked there as a ski instructor. With his personality he was surely a blessing to all his students who must have cared about him very much just as I did.

### **Agnosticism and liberation**

Up to this time I had one main hero, J.R. Schlatter. But now I was about to develop a new kind of hero, a hero of the intellect. That occurred in the following way. When I first went into the band I used to get on my knees and pray at my bunk before going to bed each night as was my custom and as I did all through basic training. To my surprise, however, rather than curiosity or admiration, this elicited considerable criticism from some members of the band. In turn, this led to talks about religion specifically with Jack Ateljevich (Sava), aka "Big J", and Hank Nowak, aka "Simp." Jack was Big J because he was tall and large, not muscular, but not fat. Nowak got the name "Simp" because he was always rushing off someplace, but then rushing back to pick up something he had forgotten. Both were about the same height, 6'2" or 3" or so.

I was about to learn a new word. I had already learned what an "atheist" was at IU summer music camp. Now I would learn that Jack and Hank both professed to be

"agnostics." They explained why and I quickly found their agnosticism to be seriously challenging to my own faith. A new characteristic of my own mind would also now emerge, the fact that I was more interested in truth than belief. Did it make sense that if God was a loving God he would condemn people to eternal hell just because they did not accept Jesus as their personal savior? This is what I had been raised to believe. But was it true? [This was before modern Christian scholars like Elaine Pagels were around to challenge such fundamentalist beliefs with their excellent scholarship.]

I began to question myself. Was I someone whose beliefs were nothing more than some kind of mental conditioning? Suddenly, I wanted truth, not conditioning. Didn't the Bible speak about truth? But what were the churches teaching? Was it not too often mostly creeds, canons, and beliefs? I was horrified! For weeks I went down into the gloom battling with such questions while posing arguments to discuss with Jack and Hank as well as to myself.

In the end it was agnosticism that won out. I could now join with Jack and Hank, the first two real intellectuals I had ever met. They were my new heroes and now I was one of them. We were superior beings in terms of morality over all that I had been taught. And with that superiority, many of the prohibitions against certain behaviors to which I formerly subscribed began to vanish.

(Jack and Hank and I would remain lifelong friends. But that was also true of other members in the band, to greater or lesser degrees, Jerry Cole, Ben Corlietto, Fred DeSorbo, Bob Knapp, Joe Martin, Jim Mozak, and Carlos Spirito.)

I aligned myself with the Italian contingent in the band: Ben Corlietto, Ed Lucci, Fred Desorbo, Carlos Spirito, and some others. These were my best Buddies, along with Jack and Hank, of course, except I kept them on a pedestal reserved for the intellectual elite. The Italian contingent loved to throw a feast now and then and cook up tons of pasta dishes with lots of red and white wine. We rented a dining hall with a kitchen at a Gasthaus out in the country for one such occasion. There amidst much merriment and conviviality I had my first drink, a glass of white wine—but not before I had received the blessing of a Chaplin to do so a week or so earlier when we were out in the field. It was around this time that I also began another health hazard, smoking. I continued to drink and smoke, sometimes to my detriment and sometimes in excess for the next 30 years before I finally discarded these habits totally.

Meanwhile, there was one more hurdle to overcome for my liberation to be complete. That happened in a hotel bar in Zurich, Switzerland where I traveled with Carlos, Benny, and Freddie on a three day pass. There I met a very attractive women with blonde hair and blue eyes. She was a native of Zurich. The woman was living in the hotel and allowed me to come to her room where I spent the night. We both understood at the start that distance and many other factors would prevent a real relationship from developing. I have often remembered her with great fondness.

For the next eleven years I would remain an agnostic sometimes claiming that I was an atheist. It was then that a startling and unexpected turn of events occurred which would alter the direction of my life so completely as to make it impossible to ever again think in terms of agnosticism and/or atheism—both of which are, after all, just words for expressing another form of belief. (See Chapter 12, "The Place Above the Stars.") What would not change was my firm commitment always to seek only truth born from the recognition that beliefs are not truth, nor was agnosticism, nor atheism, nor the belief that salvation was available only to those who accepted Jesus Christ as their personal savior—though what Jesus was really saying was another matter for discovery and controversy.

### **The 7<sup>th</sup> Army Symphony Orchestra**

After I had been with the band for a while, the name Abby Mayer began to pop up. Abby was a horn player and a previous member of the band who had transferred to the 7<sup>th</sup> Army Symphony Orchestra. "Seventh Army Symphony!" I exclaimed. I knew the Air Force maintained some kind of a symphony orchestra at the time, but the Army? That's right, I was informed, and it was located in Stuttgart only about an hour's train travel Northwest of Göppingen. Even more, Abby continued to visit Göppingen to see his girlfriend, making the trip in his nifty MG convertible sports car. He often dropped by at the band barracks when he was in town to visit with his old comrades. I was told I must meet him, and the next time Abby was around we were introduced. In the meantime, Hank Nowak had already left our band to join the 7<sup>th</sup> Army Symphony.

Abby and I quickly became friends. He lived and breathed the French horn. We played duets together, he gave me a couple of lessons, and we talked horn ad infinitum. Abby often took me on little trips out on the autobahn in his MG which he loved to drive and which was a great adventure for me. On one occasion we drove to Stuttgart where I heard Gian Carlo Menotti's opera *The Old Maid and the Thief* with members of the 7<sup>th</sup> Army Symphony playing in the pit, including Abby.

Naturally I wanted to get into the 7<sup>th</sup> Army Symphony and Abby arranged an audition even though there were no openings. Jim Dixon was the conductor at the time and the protégé of Dimitri Mitropoulos to whom Metropolis would bequeath all his scores. Dixon and Ken Schermerhorn held the audition. Ken, who was a trumpet player in the orchestra who had studied at the New England Conservatory of Music with Roger Voisin, was also the assistant director. He was slated to take over the reins of the 7<sup>th</sup> Army Symphony once Jim Dixon was discharged from the Army,

I was very nervous and a quaver crept into the first few notes I played. "I wish I could get that kind of vibrato," Ken joked, trying to relax me. Apparently I played well enough because it was decided that when a position opened up I could get in.

The months passed and nothing opened up for me in the Seventh Army Symphony. But then several positions became vacant with the 7<sup>th</sup> Army Band in Stuttgart, which was a bigger band than the 28<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> Division Band and one which performed more concert music. I only had about eight months left to serve and soon it

would be too late to transfer anywhere. Stuttgart was a much more cultural-based city than Göppingen with an opera house, multiple symphony orchestras, a music conservatory, a presenter of many concert series, and much, much more. Several of us in the band in Göppingen took the audition and were accepted into the 7<sup>th</sup> Army Band. Afterwards, I telephoned Abby to give him the news.

"Why did you do that?" Abby asked.

I explained why.

"I'll call you back," he said.

Within a few minutes he did.

"You're coming into the 7<sup>th</sup> Army Symphony," he said. He had spoken with Ken Schermerhorn who by then was the conductor. "There's an opening. We'll get the orders out right away."

I was elated.! But now there was a dilemma! Orders were also being cut for me to transfer to the 7<sup>th</sup> Army Band and this was already in the works. I went to see our company clerk, George Wickersham, for a private consultation. He was not a musician and did not play an instrument. But he was a friend to all of us and had our backs.

"Try not to worry!" George said. He explained that he had a friend in the office where orders were cut. He would call him and see what might be arranged. Fortunately, that was considerable. George's friend made certain that my orders to transfer to the 7<sup>th</sup> Army Symphony were put ahead of the orders for the 7<sup>th</sup> Army Band. Later, our band members who had transferred to the 7<sup>th</sup> Army Band as I was supposed to do told me that the Warrant Officer was furious when he learned I had gone to the 7<sup>th</sup> Army Symphony. Too bad! I was ecstatic! I have thanked George Wickersham and his friend a thousand times since and renew my gratitude whenever I remember the occasion.

### **A dream come true**

The Seventh Army Symphony Orchestra was formed in 1952 for the purpose of improving post World War II relations between America and Germany. It was based in Stuttgart, where it gave concerts, but also toured Germany extensively and would extend its cultural outreach to NATO countries. The orchestra appeared in music festivals and regularly on European radio and television. It grew and expanded its membership to over 100 members during its lifetime but was finally disbanded in February of 1962 when the Kennedy Whitehouse (possibly without the President's knowledge) refused to intervene in the Army's decision to let the orchestra die.

Somehow it had happened. The dream I had carried with me all through high school was now being realized. I was a member of a symphony orchestra. And not just any orchestra, a very good orchestra, many whose members would go on to fill major and



secondary orchestra positions all across America, as well as in Europe, and to occupy many important teaching posts in secondary schools, colleges and universities, not to mention many other music related positions. Though a major disagreement would sometimes happen, generally, the 7<sup>th</sup> Army Symphony was a close knit group. We had to be. We ate together, slept together in the same barracks, went on tour together, and performed together. Many close friendships developed for many players that have lasted a lifetime.

The orchestra was already on tour when I joined them, and I needed a roommate. Two African Americans played in the orchestra at the time, Harvey Adams, principal bassoonist, and Dave Moore, principal bassist. They both started calling me "new man," and we quickly became good friends. Dave, a graduate of the University of Illinois, and I were soon roommates and remained friends for life. After the 7<sup>th</sup> Army Symphony Dave played with Eddie Sauter's big band in Baden-Baden for Südwestfunk and the Hamburg Symphony in Germany. Then back in the states he played with the New Jersey Symphony, the American Symphony Orchestra with Leopold Stokowski, Broadway shows, and other pick-up jobs in New York City.

The 7<sup>th</sup> Army Symphony was housed at Patch Barracks in Vaihingen just outside of Stuttgart and rehearsed there in a movie theater. After the first rehearsal in which I was a member, which was mostly devoted to Mozart's *Concertante for Viola and Violin*, Abby introduced me to the two soloists, Gene Becker and Stanley Plummer. Gene was the principal violist and Stan was the concert master. They greeted me warmly as did other members of the orchestra. A lot of the pressure I would find later in orchestras back in the states was missing from this orchestra, and the good will fostered by players like Gene, Stan, and Abby was responsible. Only a couple of players ever deliberately set out to create divisions to suit their own egoistic needs during my time in the orchestra.

For a while when the theater was unavailable, we rehearsed in a Gasthaus. There several of the players had a mug of beer sitting on the floor beside their music stands. As we shall see, Ken Schermerhorn, the conductor, was not the kind of person who would interfere with shenanigans like this. He was learning himself. This was his first conducting job and he had been at it only a few months. Ken had far greater prizes in mind than to stir a pot that needed no stirring.

I was put on assistant first horn for my first few concerts and then moved to third horn, a better position. Abby Mayer and Jim Cook were co-principals but both left the orchestra around December at which time Chris Earnest came in as principal and asked me to take over the second horn spot. I was too inexperienced and noncompetitive to realize I could have vied for the principal spot. Ken Schermerhorn, however, who would one day tell me, as a friend, he thought I should display more aggression in my interactions with people—though it seems questionable that he could have matched my own once I began taking a stand for animal protection causes. Ken also said he thought I should have vied for the principal horn spot. In any case, Chris was a recent graduate of the Curtis Institute where he had studied with Mason Jones, principal with the Philadelphia Orchestra. He did a fine job as leader of the section. Ron Rhodes played

third and Don Button was on 4<sup>th</sup>. (Don's chief instrument was the organ but he was also a good solid horn player.)

After 7<sup>th</sup> Army Symphony days Chris played with the New Orleans Philharmonic, the Lyric Opera in Chicago, and then moved to California to specialize in computer programming. He presently maintains the 7<sup>th</sup> ASO website and continues as a friend. Ron Rhodes, upon his discharge, played with the New Orleans Philharmonic, Baltimore Symphony, American Ballet Theatre, Royal Ballet, Joffrey Ballet, and free lanced in New York City. He remained a good friend until his death. Don Button returned to his first love, the organ, but is also now deceased.

My time spent in the 7th Army Symphony with Kenneth Schermerhorn as conductor was a time of continuous inspiration and musical growth. I was the youngest member of the orchestra who now had been given the opportunity of playing alongside, listening to, and learning from some of the country's finest young musicians. Many had already graduated from some of the best music schools—Curtis, Juilliard, the New England Conservatory, Eastman School of Music, Indiana University, the University of Illinois, UCLA, etc. Some of the players would find themselves occupying prominent orchestral positions after their Army discharge, a few of which are listed here. Gene Becker, Assistant Principal Violist New York Philharmonic; Jake Berg, principal flutist of the St. Louis Symphony; Don Black (primarily a teacher), principal clarinetist, Amarillo Symphony; Michael Comins, violin, Denver Symphony; New Orleans Philharmonic; Chicago Lyric Opera; Boston Pops; Boston Opera (concertmaster); NY Philharmonic Symphony of the Air, Montovani Tour (concertmaster); plus Broadway and studio work, etc.; Norm Paulu, concert master with the Oklahoma Symphony and first violinist with the Pro Arte Quartet; Stanley Plummer (child prodigy and winner of many international competitions), concert soloist including with the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra in Hollywood Bowl and studio concertmaster for some 1500 motion picture and TV soundtracks; John Giattino, New York City Ballet, American ballet, Longines Symphonette, etc.; Al Gove (Professor of Music Cal. State East Bay), cello, Oakland Symphony, San Francisco Ballet, San Francisco Opera, played with singers like Tony Bennett, Peggy Lee and Dionne Warwick, and recorded music for *Star Wars* and *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*; Tom Crown, trumpet, Chicago Lyric Opera, Deutsche Opera Berlin, and inventor of Tom Crown mutes for brass; Don Havas, bassist with the National Symphony in Washington, D.C.); Lew Kaplan, violin soloist and founder of the Bach Virtuosi Festival and cofounder of the Bowdoin International Music Festival; Ralph Lutz, bassoonist with the Corpus Christi Symphony and the Wichita Symphony; James Mabry (principally composer), trombonist with Austin, Midland-Odessa Texas Symphony Orchestra, Lincoln Nebraska Symphony, Rhode Island Symphony, etc.; Midhat Serbagi, solo violist and member of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra; Ronald Valpreda, founding member of the Solisti Veneti in Padua, Italy on violin and 1<sup>st</sup> viola with La Fenice Opera in Venice; and Lyle Wolfrom, cellist with the Kansas City Philharmonic. This list comprises some of the orchestra members only during my time spent there. Over the years the orchestra members would occupy many prominent orchestral positions after their tour of duty in the army was completed.

The above list does not include Hank Nowak and Dave Amram. Hank had already left the orchestra by the time I joined. After his discharge, he went straight to Munich where he studied at the Hochschule für Musik. I visited him there with a friend, and he toured us around the school and the neighborhood in which he lived. It was romantic and exciting to observe a little of his life as a foreign student speaking German to the local people. He would go on to play and make recordings with too many organizations and well-known conductors to name, from the Orchestra of R.A.I. (Rome) to the American Ballet, to the Pablo Casals Festival, with conductors like Zubin Mehta, Ricardo Muti, Mstislav Rostropovitch, Yoshikazu Fukumura, etc. He also did much playing and conducting in Asia with the Bangkok Symphony, Shanghai Symphony, Myanmar Symphony, etc., a fascinating career.

Dave Amram was a horn player with the 7<sup>th</sup> Army Symphony long before his gathering fame as a composer whose works would be performed around the world with major orchestras and world renowned conductors and musicians. Like Hank, he had been discharged before my time and traveled around Germany for a while playing concerts. I met him at one such event in Stuttgart where he played the Brahms Horn Trio with Stanley Plummer on Violin and Charles Rosen on Piano. We became friends back in New York and have remained so ever since. I sometimes saw him in his apartment in Greenwich Village while visiting my friend Ralph Zeitlin, Dave's copyist, or would run into him in unexpected places. On one such occasion I ran into Dave on Fifth Avenue around midtown where he was just getting into his Land Rover. "Jump in!" he said, and we drove around a while catching up on what we were doing. I loved the Land Rover.

The orchestra introduced me to a wide array of orchestral literature from the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Here I first heard Beethoven's *Symphony No. 3* by playing it. The same for the Brahms *3rd Symphony*, the Brahms and Beethoven violin concertos, and a host of other works like Mozart's *Symphony No. 40 in G minor* or the Hector Berlioz *Overture to Benvenuto Cellini*. Now I was also introduced to 20<sup>th</sup> Century music for the first time in any depth through pieces like Aaron Copland's *El Salon Mexico*, Hindemith's *Symphonic Metamorphosis*, the Bela Bartok *Third Piano Concerto*, Paul Creston's *Symphony No. 2*, and Arthur Honegger's *Pacific 231*. The orchestra also played *The School for Scandal* overture by Samuel Barber and his *Adagio for Strings*. The Bartok instantly became one of my favorite compositions and has remained so ever since. For me, Copland's *El Salon Mexico* is one of the best pieces he ever wrote, at least among those I have heard. Second in line would be his *Piano Variations* or perhaps his *12 Poems of Emily Dickinson*.

### **A new hero**

Membership in the 7<sup>th</sup> Army Symphony also brought with it a new hero for me to look up to. This was the orchestra's conductor, Ken Schermerhorn. He had all the equipment necessary for becoming a conductor: tall, handsome, intelligent, talented, brilliant, and creative. It is small wonder that one of the country's finest orchestral halls now bears his name. As its website will tell you, the new state-of-the-art Schermerhorn Symphony Center in Nashville, Tennessee is named for Maestro Kenneth Schermerhorn

who led the Grammy Award-winning Nashville Symphony for 22 years. In fact, his ashes are buried in the base of the statue "The Flutist" in the garden of the Schermerhorn Symphony Center.

Inspired by some of the world's great concert halls, the Symphony Center's main venue, the 1,844 seat Laura Turner Concert Hall, is one of the few halls nationwide to feature natural interior light through 30 special soundproof windows. It also features a special choral loft behind the stage, the stage itself accommodating an orchestra of 115 musicians. And it features an automated system of movable banners and panels which can adjust the acoustics according to the musical genre. In addition, the hall features a custom-built concert organ, crafted by Schoenstein & Co. of San Francisco, comprising 47 voices, 64 ranks and 3,568 pipes with three 32-foot stops.

This is but a brief description of the hall's many features. They are the sort of thing Ken would have loved. I say this with some authority. When Ken was the conductor of the American Ballet Theatre, he once led Stanley Plummer and me for a little mini tour of the back stage and auditorium of the New York State Theater at Lincoln Center—the home at the time of the American Ballet. Ken took great pride in pointing out various features of the theater's construction including the color (bright maroon) and comfort of the seating. These features were important to him.

Home for the Seventh Army Symphony at Patch Barracks consisted of quarters on two ends of a very long building on the upper floor, the center of which was home for other special service army personnel. The end where I lived contained about 16-20 double bunks. (A double bunk has a lower and upper berth.) A large room on the left as you exited the room through a center door was reserved for the conductor. This was Ken Schermerhorn's home. Rather than shut himself away and put himself on a pedestal because he was the conductor, however, he almost always kept his door open and all members of the orchestra were welcome to venture in. Any subject was welcome, not just music. He loved to participate in all the fun that everyone was having, and Ken was gregarious, open, and friendly to everyone. Sometimes he busied himself there solfeging his way through a score for Ken had studied solfege with Gaston Dufresne, principal bassist with the Boston Symphony and one of the world's foremost solfege artists, at the New England Conservatory. [When I attended the New England Conservatory I would take a class with Dufresne on instrumental solfege.] Ken himself was a solfege expert. At other times he might practice his conducting, which he did not hide away. He taught himself how to conduct a rhythm of 3 against 4 for a section in Paul Hindemith's *Symphonic Metamorphosis on a Theme by Haydn*, for example, which contained a section pitting meters of 3 and 4 against each other. Ken proudly practiced the new technique with great concentration as he circled about his room which anyone looking in could see. And if someone had something on their mind they were free to interrupt. They would find Ken there available for them.

On one occasion I woke up in the middle of the night unable to move. Something had happened with my back and I had to awaken someone in the barracks to help roll me over in bed so I could sleep. The next morning I went to see Ken to ask to be excused

from the rehearsal that morning. He talked to me about the commitment necessary for being a musician, how one had to go beyond the normal call of duty, and how one had to overcome obstacles that arose. He was friendly as he gave me this bit of advice and did not say that I should or should not attend the rehearsal. But we were rehearsing the Eroica (Beethoven 3<sup>rd</sup> Symphony), and I knew he wanted me there. I went to the rehearsal. Afterwards, someone told him how much pain I had been in, and he was almost apologetic. "Why didn't you tell me how bad it was?" he asked.

Ken loved to interact with the orchestra players. On the bus when we toured he would gather a group around him and talk freely, but mostly about something musical. There was only one given in these interchanges, and this was that Ken was in charge. He loved to invent little games and had a way of drawing people in to participate without feeling threatened. Once as we traveled along the autobahn he postulated a scenario in which all compositions in the world had to be destroyed except the work of five composers. "Which five would you choose to save?" he asked. John Hitchings, a violinist and Bruckner/Mahler aficionado, put in. "Bruckner would clearly be one!" "Bruckner?" Ken responded incredulously. "How could you ever pick him?" And the conversation was off and running.

Another favorite topic was whether a composer's talents must naturally emerge when they are young, or whether it was possible for someone to go into composition later in life and create a masterpiece. No doubt he had in mind his own desires to explore music composition, which he would eventually do. Several years later Otto Luening (referred to later in more detail) told me that Ken had brought some of his compositions to him for study.

Ken loved to take a simple subject and turn it into something humorous and fanciful. On tour in Italy, someone discovered Late Caldo, which was a drink made by pumping steam into a glass of milk with an espresso machine to which sugar was added. Late Caldo quickly became part of Ken's library of things to poke fun at. On another occasion, Dave Moore, Ken and a couple of other members accompanied me to a perfume shop in Bordeaux, France where they helped me select a perfume to send to the woman I was going out with (Lilo Baumhauer) in Stuttgart. The salesman liked to spray perfume on the back of everyone's wrist and then sniff it, or get us to sniff it. But we tried out so many kinds that soon it was hard to find a dry place on anyone's hands. The salesman was stiff and condescending as he went through this ritual, spraying perfume freely. It quickly became a motif over the next few days, as Ken caricatured the salesman sniffing the perfume. (I purchased a bottle of Charlemagne perfume.)

Regis Cronauer was the orchestra's advance man for tours. He was also a percussionist, and one of the bus drivers. Some trip came up but then was cancelled at the last minute. Meanwhile, Regis had already signed out the bus. What to do with it? Let it go to waste? Hardly! Regis drove Ken, Dave Moore, another member, and me to a ski resort in Garmisch, Germany, three hours distance, to go skiing. It was a beautiful ride through the snow covered mountains of Garmisch in our nearly empty bus and we had a great time skiing, or at least trying. Clearly, this was an unauthorized trip for which the

military brass would have had a fit if they had known. Yet we did this boldly, almost as if it were second nature. Some have criticized this spirit of rebellion that was prevalent with many members of the orchestra.

The description of Ken Schermerhorn that I have made thus far should not leave the impression that I had some special "in" relationship with him. This was not what he was about, nor was I. He had close friendships with many people for which he seemed to have an endless capacity. Relationships could last a few days, they could last for years. I would also not want the reader to think that Ken was just some happy-go-lucky good-old boy let's get along at any cost type of man. On the contrary, Ken had an inner determination like steel. Yes, he was an exceptionally friendly person to almost everyone, but that friendliness went so far and there a singularity of purpose took over and loyalty ended. I have seen more than one person disappointed, men and women, because Ken did not meet the expectations their sense of loyalty assumed existed between them. For myself, I never maintained any such expectations and so I was never disappointed.

I once ran into Ken on Columbus Avenue in New York City right around 68<sup>th</sup> Street. I hadn't seen him for a very long time. [Was this another paranormal happening?] (Curiously, I also ran into Hank Nowak on practically the same block within a few months, before or after I no longer remember.) Ken was the music director of the Milwaukee Symphony at the time. We had hardly proceeded a few steps heading North together than he began telling me about a musician he had fired from the orchestra, offering all kinds of rationalizations for why he had to do it. The inner turmoil that was going on could hardly have been missed as he struggled to come to terms with the firing. No hero or heroine lives without their conflicts, nor does anyone else. Ken was no different. He was someone I loved from the very beginning and that love always endured.

### **Military antagonisms and army inspections**

Almost right from the inception of the Seventh Army Symphony, a certain antagonism arose between the orchestra, whose members often did little to conceal their antimilitaristic attitudes, and the U.S. Army, to which culture was rather low on its list of priorities. The fact that the military draft was on in the early years of the orchestra's existence surely fed the antimilitary sentiment and assisted in creating the tradition. On one occasion, for example we were playing a concert in Baumholder, Germany on the Czechoslovakian border and staying in a barracks on the camp property. (Corporal Samuel Adler, one of a small handful of people responsible for creating the 7<sup>th</sup> Army Symphony and its first conductor, was at first stationed at Baumholder.<sup>4</sup> Soldiers billeted there referred to it as the armpit of the world.) It was twilight and taps started to play. When taps played everyone was supposed to drop whatever they might be doing and stand at attention with their hands over their hearts. As soon as taps started, however, several members, including me, broke out running to get inside our barracks so that we did not have to stand at attention. The objective was not to be unpatriotic. The impetus

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<sup>4</sup> For a description of how the 7<sup>th</sup> Army Symphony was created, see "Messiah in Baumholder," John Caranina, *Uncle Sam's Orchestra*, pp. 1-5.

arose as an objection to military, autocratic authority. Of course, the incident was observed and reported.

It just happened, as I mentioned earlier, that the camp in Baumholder, the armpit of the world, was the one to which I would have been sent for 18 months of tank training if I had not become a member of the 28<sup>th</sup>/9th Division Band. The red clay of the area was ubiquitous and seemed to cover everything. It even seemed visible in the air. When I had a moment I explored around the camp and soon found some of the guys I had taken basic training with. They were dressed in fatigues and their undershirts visible at the neck were caked with this red clay which was also caked in the sweat lines of their necks and the lines of their faces. They seemed tired, almost worn out. We were glad to see each other, but our reunion was brief as we wished each other good luck. Their lives in the army would have been mine if I had not written on the induction registration form that I played the French horn. Truly, this was a gift that I believed I had been given from a higher source. Whenever I disrespected that gift I would pay for it.

On a couple of occasions someone in Headquarters decided it was time to hold an inspection of the symphony personnel. For the first of these, Master Sergeant Bob Wills, our tuba player and a career soldier, was assigned to accompany the inspecting officer and take down demerits. Career soldier or not, Bob had no problem melding into the spirit of the 7<sup>th</sup> Army Symphony in regard to such matters as inspections. I was flabbergasted at his audacity in showing up at the inspection with a tiny pad about 3 by 6 inches and a pencil one inch thick by 9 or 10 inches long with which he jotted down demerits in his notebook. Many of us were delighted by the sheer effrontery. The inspecting officer, a Captain, was perplexed but, to my amazement, proceeded with the inspection without objection.

The second inspection a few weeks later, however, was a much more serious affair as indicated by the rank of the inspecting officer. This time we had a Colonel sent to determine if we needed shaping up. It was to our advantage to pass the inspection. Then, hopefully, the military brass would leave the orchestra in peace to pursue the purpose of its existence, playing concerts and improving German/American and NATO relations with the public. The problem, in terms of a military inspection, was that some orchestra members had quite a bit of difficulty in assembling any kind of acceptable military attire close-up when it was required. For them, missing brass, oddly matched stockings, black shoes (military shoes were brown), civilian ties, missing buttons, mismatched buttons, etc., represented their usual military dress and they had to scramble to put together anything that resembled a real uniform.

Given the problem, it was no surprise to observe co-conspirators in the front line pass a hat, or other item of attire, to someone missing the item waiting in the line behind as soon as they had been inspected themselves. Picture, then, the symphony members lined up in three lines with the Colonel inspecting every member individually. But as soon as the Colonel examined one member and had moved down the line a ways inspecting others, that soldier would remove his hat or some other item of attire and pass it to someone in the line behind who then put on the hat or other article he was missing.

One of the highlights of the inspection occurred when principal cellist Al Gove just could not resist wearing a pair of wire-framed glasses missing the lenses. Nor could he resist, when the Colonel stood before him looking him up and down, reaching up to scratch his eye through the opening in the wire-framed glasses. What can I say except that it was hilarious. Some people, however, have criticized the anti-military attitudes of the 7<sup>th</sup> Army Symphony, generally speaking, as being not helpful to the purposes of the military—to provide security for America. Yet who provided more security, a military which frequently had little concern for the culture of the countries in which it had some presence during times of peace—often creating anti-American sentiments by the crude manners exhibited by some of its troops—or the good will the orchestra generated wherever it went through its performances of the world's greatest music and sophisticated interactions with the people of Germany and other nations.

### **Falling in love**

Sometimes 7<sup>th</sup> Army Symphony clan would gather at a Gasthaus in the town of Vaihingen where some members kept their own beer mugs with their names on them. I had one there myself. That is where I introduced Ken and several other friends to the woman I was going out with, Lilo Baumhauer. I had met Lilo at a small dance club in Stuttgart called Die Tübe, just off König Strasse, during Fasching season (German Mardi Gras). Dave Moore and I went there looking for a good time. Lilo was there with her sister. They both wore handmade costumes designed to help celebrate the Fasching season. The place was crowded and Lilo and I somehow got pushed together in a dance. Suddenly, there I was dancing with this beautiful young German woman and having a fabulous time. I could think of nothing but her in the days which followed, but I failed to get her contact information. Fortunately, she was there when Dave and I returned on another night and we danced some more. And then some more. She was 16. I was 19.

Lilo was the first woman I fell madly in love with. We spent time together whenever we could. When I was on tour, we wrote love letters to each other. She sprinkled hers with perfume and sealed them with a lipstick kiss mark. I loved it. In my letters I effused poetic. Back in Stuttgart we went on picnics in the woods or went out together with her sister and her boyfriend. I met her classmates and she introduced me to her father, who had been a German soldier. He and I liked each other immediately. Her mother, however—who I never met—was suspicious. All seemed nearly perfect. Finally, I popped the question. Would she marry me? Of course, she said. We went together to purchase an engagement ring. It was great fun.

Lilo gave me a bottle of Eier (egg) Liquor which she made herself as a departure gift from Germany. And it was delicious. The plan was that she would join me back in the states. We would get married and I would finish school. (Abby Mayer had convinced me I should study with his teacher, Willem Valkenier, at the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston.) Then I would get a job in an orchestra and we would live happily ever after. The plan seemed perfect.



In retrospect, I have wondered how things might have turned out if I had tried to get a job playing in an orchestra someplace in the beginning instead of attending the New England Conservatory. In fact, rumor had it that the Los Angeles Philharmonic had come around the Conservatory during my first year there and was interested in me as a player. Whether the rumor had any basis I will never know, though the person who told me, another horn player, seemed convinced of it. What I do know is that the communication between Lilo and I grew less and less. Money was a big part of the problem as the dream faded more and more. Finally, I learned that she had met someone else, a man from Switzerland named Peter Buehle. I was devastated for months and months!

Years later I would learn that Peter and Lilo had married and migrated to the United States where they lived on Long Island and operated their own business. I got in touch and Lilo was glad to hear from me. She and Peter invited me as their guest to a very expensive restaurant on Long Island. They had a daughter named Patricia who was engaged to a man named, like her father, Peter. They also came along for the dinner. It was great to see Lilo who looked fabulous, and I liked her husband, Peter, very much. Peter and Lilo wanted to meet my twin, so they extended their generosity inviting us for dinner at the Tavern on the Green in Central Park.

In these meetings it could not have been more apparent for me that Peter was the better choice as a husband for Lilo than I could ever have been—nor could I have lived the life I needed to live had Lilo and I got married. It was a good lesson in acceptance of what life brings [not to suggest that times do not exist for opposing what life brings]. I came away with a fuller appreciation of how this beautiful and thoughtful German woman had entered my life and for the youthful love that she and I were able to share once upon a long time ago.

### **European tour**

It was soon time for the Seventh Army Symphony to embark upon its first NATO tour which would also close out my career with the orchestra. We toured France, Italy, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, and England traveling by bus and military airplane.

Cities in which we played included the following. France: Bordeaux, Poitiers, Strasbourg, St. Etienne. Italy: Ancona, Ascoli Piceno, Florence, Genoa, Milano, Naples, Pisa, Rome, Torin, Verona. Ireland: Belfast. Scotland: Edinburgh, Glasgow. Wales: Swansea. England: Manchester and London.

The orchestral repertoire consisted of the following pieces. J.S. Bach *Suite No. 2 for Solo Flute in B minor*; Barber, *Overture to the School for Scandal*; Barber *Adagio for Strings*; Beethoven, *Overture to Egmont*; Beethoven, *Overture to Prometheus*; Beethoven Symphony No. 3; Beethoven *Violin Concerto*; Brahms *Symphony No.3*; Brahms *Violin Concerto*; Creston, *Symphony No. 2*; Hindemith *Symphonic Metamorphosis*; Mozart *Symphony No 40*; Persichetti *Symphony for Strings*; and Rachmaninoff *Piano Concerto No. 2*. We also presented Gian Carlo Menotti's two one act operas *The Medium* and *The Telephone*.

The tour was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to visit some of the great cities of Europe where we were often treated like royalty. In Glasgow, Scotland a band of Bagpipers in full regalia greeted us at the airport. In Manchester, England the City and the Mayor invited us to a special reception, the Butler at Arms introducing each member personally by calling out our names.

In Florence, a group of us gathered around Michelangelo's famous sculpture of David as Ken Schermerhorn sought to convey in words the awe with which we were collectively struck by the great masterpiece.

A most remarkable musical event occurred in Edinburgh, Scotland. As we entered the city arriving late in the afternoon, some of the players noticed a poster from the bus window announcing that Dennis Brain, renowned as the greatest living horn player, was playing that evening with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra. Many of us went to hear him. He played both the Mozart 2<sup>nd</sup> and the Strauss 2<sup>nd</sup> concertos for horn in that order. It was a remarkable experience to hear Dennis Brain's incredible virtuosity and tremendous sense of musicality on the horn. How fortunate I was to hear him play in person before his tragic and untimely death in an automobile accident just a little over two years later at the age of 36. He was on his way home to London after playing the Tchaikovsky pathetic symphony (No. 6) in Edinburgh—the same city in which I heard him play. His playing influenced mine tremendously just as it influenced the entire horn-playing world in only his short life-span. Many of the finest horn players today gratefully acknowledge the same

In Italy, in the tiny medieval village of Ascoli Piceno, I met a girl at a reception following our concert and we hung out together for hours late into the night. I was engaged then, so what was this behavior about? Then in Ancona, located in the region famed for its Aniseed products, the orchestra was treated to a reception in which we were offered a bottle of Anisette if we wanted one. We could have taken two or three if we liked. I met two women who were there together, both of whom seemed interested in knowing me better. Did I feel the same? I did not refuse their friendship and started a correspondence with one of the women which lasted back in America. She was quite beautiful—both women were—and the fact that I allowed the correspondence to start up may have indicated that deep down I already recognized that a future with my bride-to-be might not turn out quite like I expected.

### **Wales—Family relationship with Dylan Thomas**

The orchestra played only one concert in Wales and that was in Swansea. I was glad it was in Swansea because, though I was aware of only a little of my family heritage at the time, I knew that part of it stemmed from the area of Swansea. I wandered around the city for a while, then entered a bar, ordered a beer, and mulled over the story my family had grown up with. It seems that my Great Grandfather, the Welshman William Thomas, held down his son, also named William Thomas, with the aid of another son and beat him for something he had not done. William Thomas, my grandfather to be, was not about to take that. He took the next available ship for America. There he traveled to

Streator, Illinois where he met and married a Welsh woman, Mary Hill. Like his father, William was a coal miner. He got a job mining coal in Streator, eventually opening his own mine. He and Mary had 11 children, ten of which were girls. The boy and one girl, Beatrice, would die—Beatrice, from tuberculosis. My mother, Adeline Thomas, was the next to last girl born. She was, consequently, 100% Welsh and my brothers and sister and I were half Welsh.

This was the extent of my knowledge of my family history at the time. Later I would learn that the place where this beating took place was in Aberdare, less than 29 miles from Swansea. That is where my Grandfather grew up. I would also become acquainted with the poetry of the great Welsh poet Dylan Thomas. "Hmm!" I mused. "Thomas! Could my family in some way be related to Dylan Thomas?" The possibility seemed remote. The name Thomas in Wales is like the name Smith in America. Still, I would wonder about a possible connection with Dylan Thomas every once-in-a-while until finally, and just recently, I decided to investigate.

I expected to encounter a research project that could take months, maybe even years. The first person I contacted, however, was a David Thomas (no relation to Dylan) who happened to be a genealogist and someone who had written extensively on the life of Dylan Thomas. A movie about Dylan Thomas was even based on one of his books. Working with him and exchanging information between us just a couple of times, he informed me that I was within a whisker of being related to Dylan Thomas by blood. He put me in touch with a Welsh woman living in London, Liz Richards, and together, between the three of us, we were able to determine that I and my siblings were 3<sup>rd</sup> cousin by blood of Vera Killick, one of Dylan Thomas' closest female friends. More significantly, ancestrally speaking, we were 3<sup>rd</sup> cousins by marriage to Dylan Thomas. We could all boast of a relationship to Dylan Thomas should we choose.

My search had struck pay dirt. How fascinating it is to observe the way matters like these sometimes materialize. If I had not contacted David Thomas purely by chance I might be searching still, or else have put the project aside as too overwhelming and time-consuming to take seriously. Moreover, as a little final icing on the cake, it turned out that Liz Richards was our 4<sup>th</sup> cousin by blood. Was this more of the paranormal at work, the super consciousness, the morphic world we humans have yet to explore? I know what my answer is. What about yours?

### **A famous woman**

On another occasion on the NATO tour, Harriet Cohen, who had played the Bach *Piano Concerto in D minor* with the orchestra on December 8<sup>th</sup> the previous year, held a reception for the orchestra in her elegant apartment in London. This was the first famous person I would meet up close.

One of England's leading pianist in her day, Harriet Cohen specialized in contemporary music but also in J.S. Bach and in performing Manuel De Falla's *Nights in the Garden of Spain*, a work I would play with the New England Conservatory Orchestra

and instantly love. Composers like Bela Bartok, Sir Arnold Bax, Ernest Bloch, John Ireland, and Ralph Vaughn Williams wrote compositions for Cohen. Involved in many prominent relationships with political figures from British Prime Ministers to Eleanor Roosevelt to Chaim Weizman to Albert Einstein, for whom she performed a benefit concert to bring Jewish scientists out of Nazi Germany, she claimed close friendships with composers like Sir Edward Elgar, Jean Sibelius, William Walton, and Ralph Vaughn Williams. It was a friendship these men gladly reciprocated. She was also well acquainted with writers like D.H. Lawrence, George Bernard Shaw, and H.G. Wells, the former and the latter with whom it was suspected she had more than just a casual relationship.

Ken rose to the occasion handling the reception at Ms. Cohen's apartment with aplomb. Both he and Harriet were right in their element as the center of attention focused on them and remained there. This was where Ken was at his best and so was she, handling the conversation deftly and with grace. They both seemed to enjoy themselves immensely as did many of the guests. For me, it was a pleasure to take in the whole scene, scanning the apartment from time to time to notice the elegant furniture and elaborate bric-a-brac and figurines that spotted the shelves around the rooms setting a refined and stylish tone.

### **Final concert**

In London we played our final NATO concert on May 15, 1955, just eight days before my 20<sup>th</sup> birthday. The magnificent Royal Albert Hall provided the venue and served as a perfect place to close this chapter in my life. On the program was Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 2 played by Jacque Abram. Chris Earnest did a beautiful job on the big horn solo. We also performed Barber's School for Scandal, Honegger's Pacific 231, and closed the program with the Beethoven 3<sup>rd</sup> Symphony. This was my last concert with the Seventh Army Symphony.

My days in the U.S. Army had finally come to an end.

## **Chapter 6**

### **The New England Conservatory of Music**

#### **Music studies**

I spent the first four years following my time in the 7<sup>th</sup> Army Symphony in a conservatory environment. For the first two years I studied at the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston (NEC) with Willem Valkenier. He had been principal horn with the Boston Symphony from 1923 to 1950. Two years after I began studies with him, however, he retired. I then traveled to Europe on a student ship run by Holland America Lines to Le Havre, France and from there by train to Vienna. In Vienna I studied at the Vienna Academy of Music and Dramatic Arts (renamed The University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna in 1998) with Gottfried von Freiberg, the principal horn of the Vienna State Opera and the Vienna Philharmonic. Freiberg was also famed for having played the world premiere of Richard Strauss' *Second Horn Concerto*.

#### **Boston**

It was fascinating living in a big American city like Boston for the first time, a city filled with historic sites. I liked to explore places around the town and stumble across something unexpected like the house in which Louise May Alcott had lived on Beacon Hill. The Boston public gardens was also a favorite place to stroll leisurely about. The art fair the city hosted in the summer in the gardens was exciting and included productions of operas like Gian Carlo Menotti's *Saint of Bleeker Street*. Among the artists invited to perform on stage was Igor Stravinsky's son Soulima Stravinsky on piano, who looked much like his father.

One summer day I happened to be walking down Huntington Avenue from the Conservatory to Copley place where a huge tent had been erected just North of Huntington by the democrats who were holding a presidential rally there. The day was hot and a large flap of the tent had been opened. Looking left I saw Adlai Stevenson II at the lectern delivering a speech. (This was during a time in which high ranking politicians dared to appear in public so openly without the distinct possibility of being assassinated.) On a later occasion, I attended a political meeting in Faneuil Hall where a riotous audience shouted out their opposition to Al Capp for his extremist support of the Vietnam war. Capp was the creator of the Lil Abner cartoon.

In my first months in Boston I got to know Dick Greenfield, a very fine horn player indeed. He loved the horn and invited me to his home where we played duets together and became good friends. Like me, he would one day become a member of the 7<sup>th</sup> Army Symphony, but after my time spent there. I last saw Dick at a reunion of the 7<sup>th</sup> Army Symphony in 2001 in Manchester, New Hampshire.

The first months in Boston also saw me scrambling for a place to live, first taking a much too expensive room on Beacon Street. Other 7<sup>th</sup> Army Symphony Alumni Bill Gaffney (oboe), Freddy Hanhl (cello), and Midhat Serbagi (Viola) had the same problem.

We added violinist Hiroshi Hatoyama to our group and found a big three story Charles Adams looking house to rent on Bardwell Street in Jamaica Plain, a neighborhood in Boston. Bardwell Manor, as we called it, became a house filled with music and on occasion a grand party. Joseph De Pasquale, one of the great violists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, would sometimes come out to the house to give Midhat a lesson. Midhat eventually became a member of the Metropolitan Opera orchestra. We also encouraged his father, Midhat Senior, a fabulous tenor with a voice like Caruso, to come out and cook for us for he was also a fabulous cook. And when he did, we could hardly let him get away without singing a few arias for us. Midhat Senior had been a star with the Boston Opera Company.

At some point I also rented an apartment on Westland Avenue with good friends pianist Bob Sahagian and Ed Myers, a trumpet player I knew from 7<sup>th</sup> Army Symphony days. (It was the first of two times I lived on Westland Avenue. See Chapter 8.) Ed was one of my best friends in Boston who was able to produce one of the most beautiful tones on the trumpet I had ever heard. I often made him play trumpet solos from the repertoire for me like the big solo that starts off the Promenade in Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition* just for the pleasure of hearing him play.

### **Student performances at NEC**

Hiroshi Hatoyama, one of my new roommates, was a terrific violinist who served as the concertmaster of the New England Conservatory student orchestra. He was several years older than all of us at Bardwell Manor and had been a child prodigy on the violin. In fact, the year before he had been named the top violinist in Japan. Hiroshi hoped to be able to stay in America by getting a job with the Boston Symphony. Certainly, he played well enough. Unfortunately his visa ran out, and he was forced to leave the country before that could happen.

While at NEC I performed the Hugo Kauder *Trio for Horn, Violin, and Piano*, a work dedicated to Willem Valkenier. Hiroshi played the violin part with Linda Dunlop on piano. Linda, a great pianist, also accompanied me on the Beethoven *Sonata for Horn* for another student concert. Hiroshi hoped we would one day play the Brahms Trio for Horn, Violin, and Piano, but that never materialized. I was fortunate to eventually play the piece in San Francisco (Chapters 9, 11.)

### **NEC faculty—principals everywhere**

At the Conservatory I heard composer and music theorists Francis Judd Cooke and Carl McKinley lecture. I also studied music theory with composer and renowned musical editor for the Boston Post, Warren Storey Smith— also with composer Leland Procter. For instrumental solfege, I took classes with the principal bassist with the Boston Symphony, Gaston Dufresne (mentioned earlier) and with Roger Voisin, principal trumpet with the Boston Smphony. I studied chamber music in the class of Doriot Anthony Dwyer, the principal flutist in the Boston Symphony. In the "it's a small world" category, Dwyer had grown up in Streator, Illinois, the childhood home of my mother. In

fact my mother had heard about Doriot which was not surprising. Streater was a small town and not every resident ended up in the Boston Symphony.

Doriot wanted our class to work on the Francis Poulenc Sextet. I resisted. There were parts in the first movement *Allegro vivace* that I doubted I could play, though I was not about to admit that. We did do some work on the piece as I recall. Classmate Elinor (Ellie) Preble, an outstanding flutist who would play with the Boston Pops, the Boston Symphony, the Boston Opera Company, etc. and become an exceptional photographer of nature scenes, also played in this class. Years later we would become close friends, and I visited her in New Hampshire where she had moved to be close to her sister, Loretta Henry, and Loretta's husband. (I have several of Ellie's prize photographs in my possession.) Doriot was only the second woman ever to be engaged in a principal position in a major orchestra in America, the first being Helen Kotas as principal horn with the Chicago Symphony. Unfortunately, they booted Helen out to make room for a male hornist who happened to be Philip Farkas. That is not to put any blame on Phil Farkas, a gentleman by any measure, and Farkas would become one of the most respected horn players in the world. But by all reports, Kotas had handled the principal spot to perfection. It is difficult not to consider it an act of blatant sexism when a male-dominated organization kicks out a woman from her position in order to bring in a male player they favor. Perhaps the Chicago Symphony will one day respond to such suspicions, if not accusations.

[My brother was fortunate enough to take a lesson with Helen Kotas.]

Doriot's appointment also aroused resentment from some members of the Boston Symphony, one in particular, whose bitterness he bequeathed to his students. I witnessed this personally. The same happened with the trombone students of a certain former trombonist with the Boston Symphony when a new trombonist was hired by the orchestra and played the famous trombone solo in Ravel's *Bolero* below standards they proclaimed were required. I also witnessed this happening. These kind of teacher/student relationships sometimes formed where the students felt it nearly compulsory to follow in the footsteps of their teachers in matters that, when looked at closely, were really just about satisfying the self-serving needs of the teachers. They also created a cloud of negativity and unpleasantness.

The concert master of the Boston Symphony was Richard Bergin who was also the conductor of the NEC orchestra. In my opinion he was a little harsh at times with his criticisms which made me very nervous, though apparently this was the result of his deep concern for getting the music just right. On one occasion during a rehearsal of the Brahms *Second Symphony* when it came time to play the horn solo toward the end of the first movement, I got so angry that I swore at him under my breath as he urged me forward through the solo, me swearing, he prodding me forward at an ever faster tempo and increased dynamic, shaping the phrase as we went. When we reached the climactic point and then finished the solo passage, we had realized something together which was the goal for us both, to make music that was real, that came from our inner sense of musical understanding. Bergin stopped the orchestra at the end of the passage. "Bravo!"

he cried. "Let's do it again.!" From that point forward I had no problem with nerves with maestro Bergin. We played the Brahms First Symphony in concert and there was no further need to swear at him. I did, nevertheless, encounter conductors along the line that did deserve the sobriquet "dictator of the baton." These conductors could make life miserable for orchestral musicians. I heard firsthand, for example, how a member of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra tacked a list of famous conductors to his locker. Whenever one of them died, he gleefully drew a line through their name.

On another occasion the NEC orchestra played the Sibelius Second Symphony with Bergin. Bob Pierce, mentioned below, was playing first horn and I was playing fourth. On fourth, with no big responsibilities, I could just kind of drift and let myself get immersed in this great symphony. During the performance in the last movement I seemed to be lifted into a kind of altered state, very peaceful where beauty reigned supreme and normal concerns did not exist. It was a kind of what one might call a mystical experience.

I also had the privilege of playing Puccini's opera *La Rondine* with Boris Goldovsky conducting. It was a full on-stage production in Jordan Hall at NEC in which we set the orchestra up in front of the stage. This was my first contact with Boris. Later I would go out on tour with him and his opera company along with my brother Darrel and our close friend Harold Themmen on clarinet.

### **A musical joke**

Sometimes I would get a call for a job. One such hire occurred with a small chamber group for a performance of Mozart's *A Musical Joke*, K.522. The piece was written for two horns and string quartet, but the conductor had expanded the string quartet into a small chamber ensemble. The upper horn part was a little on the high side, but not too bad and the rehearsal went well. The other horn player was supposed to pick me up in his car in front of NEC and drive us to the performance the following day which was on Joy Street on Beacon Hill. At the allotted time, however, he did not show up. I waited and I waited nervously pacing about until finally it was just a few minutes before the concert was scheduled to begin. I had no money with me but approached a taxi driver and managed to talk him into driving me to the Joy Street address with the promise to pay him later. He agreed to do it with considerable suspicion. Thank God for good Samaritans. (I did make arrangements to pay him immediately after the performance.) I got to Joy Street with a couple of minutes to spare. The conductor was frantic. The other horn player showed up a few seconds later. I knew he had done this deliberately to make me look bad because I was on first horn, which he resented. But what was I to say? If I accused him it would only make matters worse. The conductor was not pleased by my late arrival, and I now had to play the high horn part without sufficient warm up. In those days, though, that was not that much of a problem and the concert went well.

### **A colossal mistake**



Unfortunately, that episode paled beside one in which I would play the role of villain with an action that was the worst thing I had ever done in my life to that date. This occurred as follows.

A neighborhood bar just a few steps from NEC called the Lobster Claw also served as a student bar for students at NEC and adjacent Northeastern University. I went there seldom for my first two years in Boston, though upon my return from Vienna, I would go there more frequently. But one night during my first year of study I happened to be there with the young woman I was going out with at the time, Jacqueline Young. She was a brilliant pianist who also played violin in the NEC orchestra. Dick Mackey, who played third horn in the Cleveland Orchestra under George Szell was there with his friend Art Kerr, a trombonist, who would soon join the Pittsburgh Symphony. I knew Dick from an earlier occasion when the Cleveland Orchestra had played in Boston. After that concert, Dick, Ken Schermerhorn, Myron Bloom (the principal horn with Cleveland), a couple of other people and I went out for post-concert refreshments. That evening at the Lobster Claw, however, Dick and Art and Jackie and I were all seated in one booth together with Dick and Art talking over a concert they were playing the next day for the Marlboro Festival in Vermont. After a while Dick said to me, "Why don't you come along. You can play second horn with me on the Beethoven Seventh Symphony. The Faure Requiem is on the program. You can play that too, if you like, but I'll just be playing the Beethoven." (I don't quite remember, but I think Jackie played in the concert too.)

I was excited at the prospect of playing with Dick and with the Marlboro Festival Orchestra. It would have players from Cleveland and other major orchestras around the country including the concert master, drawn from the New York Philharmonic.

The next day was a sunny day as Jackie and I joined Dick and Art for a pleasurable and peaceful trip headed North toward Vermont through the lovely fall weather. Dick was behind the wheel. I had never played the Beethoven 7<sup>th</sup> before, though I knew some of the passages from the excerpt books. They were difficult. At Marlboro, we were scheduled for a rehearsal and then the concert in the early evening. As soon as we arrived, I got ahold of my part and found a little shed out in a field in the vicinity of the auditorium where I could practice with no one hearing me work through the part. After I had been playing a while, a pretty young woman in jeans wondered through and stopped to talk for a few minutes. She played in the New Orleans Philharmonic and was looking forward to the Marlboro concert. I would have liked to talk longer, and besides she was very attractive. But I had a part to learn.

It was after the woman left that it hit me, alone in the shed out in that field. And "Wow!" when it did. I had completely forgotten, pushed it out of mind totally, but I was scheduled to play a concert myself back in one of the Boston suburbs that very day. Worse, I was on first horn and one of the starring pieces on the program was Rossini's overture to his opera *Semiramide* which contained a big solo horn quartet. This was a piece I had practiced all through high school and longed to play live one day. I was so pleased when the opportunity finally arose. Now, what had I done? The conductor was

counting on me, the other horn players were counting on me, the orchestra too. But where was I—in the middle of a field in Vermont standing there stupefied and at a total loss for what to do. I did not have the conductor's number, could not remember his last name, and had no way to contact him or anyone else associated with the concert. I was horrified, but I told no one.

Back in Boston a few days later, a Latvian viola player studying at NEC who was the only player I knew who was playing in the *Semiramide* concert, confronted me and asked what had happened. I made some ridiculous excuse, and he said, "Yeah!" and walked away. (As a point of interest, later he would become a member of the Baltimore Symphony.)

Sure, the Marlboro concert went fine. I would play there the following year, too, in Stravinsky's *Symphony of Psalms* along with Dave Allan, a very fine horn player who sometimes substituted with the Boston Symphony and was a sometimes pupil of Valkenier. I was a close friend of Dave and his beautiful wife, Barbara, from Germany. Yes, the Faure *Requiem* was a wonderful composition that I heard for the first time when I played it along with the Beethoven 7<sup>th</sup> at the first Marlboro concert, and it thrilled me. And I felt complimented when Art told Dick how well he had played a certain solo which happened to be me who played it, as Dick pointed out. But I was distraught! How could I have done what I did?

Is there a way of getting rid of the guilt and find forgiveness when one has done something terribly wrong, for even today I feel guilty about that incident. Clearly, I hurt myself more than anyone, and the opportunity to play the *Semiramide* overture never returned again as an additional punishment. Where did the punishment come from? How does life manufacture these outcomes and the punishments, or do we not do it to ourselves?

A full acknowledgement of one's wrong-doing deeply felt can help right the wrong and can even be a kind of a rebirth in that it changes one to the extent that one becomes determined never to repeat the offense again. That seems clear. But to get rid of the feeling of guilt which haunts one? How does one do that? Fundamentalist Christians claim that they find forgiveness for every sin by virtue of their belief in their savior Jesus Christ. That never quite worked for me when I was a fundamentalist practicing Christian though I claimed it did. Deep down, when I was honest, I still felt the guilt, for whatever offense I happened to feel guilty about.

There seemed to be a way, though, at which I managed to arrive after many, many years that did seem to offer some relief to the problem of guilt. And it involved one of the main teachings of Jesus Christ, though he is not the only one who has taught it. One must understand, in any case, that when he said believe in me and you will find everlasting life, that he meant believe in my way, the way of love for this is the path that leads to eternal life. That path was very clear to me as a young boy when I sang songs that expressed that love. "Jesus loves the little children, all the children of the world. Black and yellow red or white, they are precious in his sight, Jesus loves the little children of

the world." Therein lies the stream of love which extends, if I have it right, in the direction of the eternal source from which all life arises. If one can connect with that stream, there spring the waters of forgiveness. In pure love, that is where forgiveness lies. My job was to try to connect with that river of love.

### **Ken Schermerhorn in Boston**

Far from being least, another 7<sup>th</sup> Army Symphony Alumni around was Ken Schermerhorn. We had corresponded over the summer before I started at NEC so I welcomed knowing that he would be returning to Boston. But he was out of a conducting job and searching for direction. For a while he considered returning to the trumpet and got his embouchure back in shape with some coaching from his former teacher, Roger Voisin. I was able to get an idea of just how good he had been on the instrument when he performed the trumpet solo part on the difficult Bach *Brandenburg Concerto No. 2* with the NEC Orchestra. It was clear he should be able to get a job playing someplace. But he was determined to make it as a conductor, and after the Brandenburg concert did not take the trumpet seriously again.

The Dean of the Conservatory, Chester Williams, an oboist, and a very fine gentleman who befriended me, arranged for Ken to conduct a reading orchestra (which I played in). But it was not much to hang one's hopes on. Lennie Bernstein advised Ken to get a degree from a more academic institution, and for this purpose Ken enrolled at Brandeis University located just about a half hour outside of Boston. I visited him there one day in his studio decked out with rows of books and a baby grand piano. He plunked down a few notes on the keyboard to demonstrate his progress on the piano. It was clear he had a long way to go, though I understand he did eventually get fairly proficient on the instrument.

I brought Ken up to date on my happenings and he talked about his ambitions to compose. It was already apparent how important this was to him. In the Lobster Claw he made friends with composer Eric Stokes, who would sometimes hang out there, and cling almost in deference on every work Eric spoke whenever any topic related to music composition arose. Eric would make a name for himself in Minneapolis and have his pieces played by orchestras like the San Francisco Symphony, the Cincinnati Symphony, the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, the Cabrillo Music Festival, the Minnesota Orchestra, the Minnesota Opera, and many more. Sadly, he was killed in 1999 when his car collided with a highway repair vehicle parked on the shoulder of the road on which he was driving.

It may have seemed like a fine idea, but all the trappings of academia in the world could not turn Ken into something he was not, and he left Brandeis at his earliest convenience. During successive summers he studied with Bernstein at Tanglewood and was awarded the Serge Koussevitzky Memorial Conducting Award for both summers. This was the boost he needed. In 1957 he was appointed to his first American conducting job and it was a good one: the American Ballet Theatre. From that point forward, he never looked back, taking jobs with the New Jersey Symphony, the Milwaukee

Symphony, the Hong Kong Symphony, and the Nashville Symphony. He would conduct major orchestras including the New York Philharmonic, the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Boston Symphony, and the Cleveland Orchestra and conduct in Australia, Canada, Europe, China, and Japan. In opera, he would conduct in San Francisco, San Diego, Pittsburgh, Baltimore, and Milwaukee.

### **Studies with Willem Valkenier**

Willem Valkenier (1887-1986) who grew up in Rotterdam, Holland, is recognized by the International Horn Society as one of the founding fathers of horn playing in the United States. James Senigo and I were the last students to register to study with him at NEC, though James left at the end of his first year so that I was Valkenier's last official student at the Conservatory. Bob Pierce, nevertheless, a devout Quaker who was completing his time as a conscientious objector to military service in a nearby hospital, continued to study with Valkenier until he obtained his Master's Degree at NEC. Bob then took the position of principal horn with the Baltimore Symphony and later became the Director of the Peabody Institute of Music.

After his retirement Valkenier taught at the Cape Conservatory on Cape Cod in Massachusetts, where he lived in Dennis Port. The Cape Conservatory's orchestra, called the Cape Symphony, named a chair in the orchestra after him which they called the "Willem A. Valkenier Chair, in perpetuity."

Valkenier taught Kopprash, Kopprash, and then more Kopprash. (Kopprash referenced here consists of two 19<sup>th</sup> century method books on the horn by Georg Kopprash (1800-1850).) After Kopprash came Alphonse. These were a series of six method books of which the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> are particularly difficult written by Maxime Alphonse (1880-1939). Valkenier's approach was opposite that of horn teachers who favored more flexible studies like those found in Gallay. Jacques-François Gallay (1794-1864) composed a number of horn studies, chamber music, and horn concertos. I once brought in a Gallay prelude to a lesson which I had worked hard on and Valkenier was not very impressed.

With Valkenier I built up a study routine of four hours of daily practice for the study of etudes, horn excerpts, and horn solos with a full hour to close the day devoted to a selection from the first four Bach Cello Suites in the original key. The latter was for the development of the low register, and in this I followed in the footsteps of Dick Mackey who for many years played fourth horn with the Boston Symphony. I maintained this practice routine for several years.

I learned, I think by accident, that Valkenier employed an unusual method of tonguing. I have known only one other person to use it and that was my clarinetist friend Harold Themmen who came in second in his audition for first chair with the Philadelphia Orchestra and played principal with the American Ballet Theatre and other orchestras. He learned the method from Gino Cioffi, principal clarinet with the Boston Symphony, who was his teacher. In this method the player anchors the tongue against the bottom of the

lower teeth and keeps it there. The middle part of the tongue flicks upward against the passing air stream to provide the tonguing. Valkenier did not teach this method except possibly to one other student though it was the way he tongued himself. When I learned about it I copied the method with his approval. Overtime, unfortunately, I began to believe that this way of tonguing did not give me the best results. In particular, the sound I produced was not crisp-sounding enough though it certainly was for Valkenier.

As was well known, Valkenier liked to build a more personal relationship with his students. It was not exactly a reciprocal kind of relationship because his students more or less followed his lead in ways that he hoped might add to their intellectual and moral growth. It was no surprise, therefore, that several of us would find ourselves reading the same book, though not necessarily simultaneously, such as *The Magic Mountain* by Thomas Mann, one of Valkenier's favorites. Reading the book was a way of following Valkenier's example.

In the summers I traveled to Valkenier's home in Dennis Port on Cape Cod where he had a lovely property called Swan Lake. There he had had a small one room studio constructed like a simple miniature house with a slanted roof which he filled with horn paraphernalia, photos, and music, and various items. This is where we took our lessons. Many other students also visited his home on the cape for lessons, like Barbara Bloomer, who played in the Toronto Symphony. She and I once traveled to the Cape together from Boston. Valkenier's wife, Gertrude, graciously prepared his students lunch and sometimes this included ice cream with a little brandy poured over it which Valkenier loved.

After I left NEC Valkenier and I continued to correspond with the exception of the time I spent in San Francisco.

I am not certain why, but over the years I have learned that people sometimes confide in me about things they might not say to other people. This happened with Valkenier who sometimes spoke to me about more personal things. On the surface, he did not appear to be very religious. Still he told me he had been raised in a strict Calvinist home and had fought to break away from those teachings, perhaps even as I had done with my Baptist roots. I was surprised one time, therefore, when he told me he thought one of his male students had done the right thing in waiting until after his wedding ceremony to consummate the marriage. Valkenier said he found this to be "pure" and asked if I didn't agree. I replied I wasn't sure about that but did not mention that I had had several affairs. Valkenier and I spoke about subjects that ranged far afield from horn playing such as race and mixed marriages (racially). He let me know also that he felt betrayed by one member of the horn section in the Boston Symphony. This was not Jimmy Stagliano, who had replaced him there. Even so, it seemed clear that Valkenier felt like Stagliano might have been waiting in the wings just a little too eagerly as he waited for Valkenier to retire so he could take over his position as principal.

Valkenier never spoke to me about his first wife who had died in childbirth with a son surviving. I learned this in Vienna from Frau Winslow, a very old friend of Valkenier, whose name he had given me to look up during my stay in the city. As

happened, Valkenier ended up visiting Europe, including Vienna, when I was living there. We had a very welcome reunion at Frau Winslow's apartment where I played for him.

A multi-linguist, Valkenier spoke Dutch, German, French (a little less), Spanish (even less), and, of course English. Sometimes he would mix in a word from German into his discourse. This happened in a manner which would one day reveal that these two legendary horn players—Valkenier and Stagliano—might have had a little more in common than either wished. (This is my perspective speaking.) On Valkenier's side it happened at a lesson when feeling inspired and with eyes glistening—in reference to playing the horn—he said to me in almost a whisper and with implicit confidentiality: "It is a gift from Gott, you know." I was astonished to hear this belief from a man who I had thought might be an agnostic and who seldom spoke a word about religion except, perhaps, to denounce the Christian Science Church and its founder Mary Baker Eddy who he felt was a fraud.

Several years later I attended a concert at Carnegie Hall with the St. Louis Symphony. I wanted to hear Roland Pandolfi play who was principal horn there. He had also studied at NEC, where I heard him and Joe Rinello play the Bach *Brandenburg Concerto No. 1*. Pandolfi and I also played a concert together, and I was impressed with his playing. He had also studied privately with Valkenier on the Cape.

After the concert I went to the Carnegie Tavern (located in the same building as Carnegie Hall) to visit with Roland. I told him about a horn I had spotted in a pawn shop window just a couple of blocks away, in case he was interested, that looked like a descant (high) horn. To my surprise Jimmy Stagliano was there. I had met him only once before in Symphony Hall in Boston but had never had a conversation with him. The Carnegie Tavern was packed. People were milling around, some getting a little high, and I had a drink or two myself. Somehow Stagliano and I came together and started talking, about the concert, about music, and especially about the horn and playing it. Then he stopped and looked at me as though he wanted to say something very special, something very important. "It's a gift from God, you know," were the words he spoke.

Valkenier and Stagliano, strangers to each other, men who were opposites in so many ways, men who might easily be thought of as rivals...yet when it came to such a core believe as their relationship to a higher source in terms of the horn, they were both united. It was a gift from God!

I last visited Willem Valkenier in 1985 at his home at Swan Lake less than a year before his death at the age of 99. I got to know his son Paul Valkenier at this time, an artist with a very singular and individual vision in whom Francis Judd Cooke (the music composer and theorist) had taken a special interest. Valkenier was nearly blind but in good spirits and eager to know what I had been up to. I gave him a tape of some of my compositions which he listened to with absorbed attention, commenting that it was special and beyond the modern music of the times much of which he did not appreciate. What kind of 20<sup>th</sup> century music did he like? I recall a conversation many years earlier

and the way he lit up, as he did when enthusiastic about something. On that occasion his passion pertained to the music of Prokofiev which he referred to as being profound. He was especially fond of the Fifth Symphony.

Willem Valkenier was a major influence in my life . I wrote about my last visit with him to a friend two years later on May 28, 1987 as follows:

I will always remember the light in his eyes (that keen spark of interest that used to light up his entire being), when he listened to some of my music and asked for a replay, which we did the following day. This delighted me, because I felt he was bestowing his blessing on me as a composer, and it was a blessing that I had hoped for....The next morning I woke early and walked in the woods in the early morning light. It was so very beautiful, and still here was a man whose life was almost ended, who I knew I would never see again.

## Chapter 7

### Austria

#### Studies in Vienna

Gottfried von Freiberg was the principal horn of the Vienna Philharmonic. Horn study with him at the Vienna Academy of Music and Dramatic Arts followed a completely different pattern than study at the New England Conservatory or any other conservatory or music school in America. In Vienna, no times for lessons were scheduled nor was the duration. You showed up for a lesson and waited your turn with all the other students—from beginners to advanced—in an ante-room outside the main room where Freiberg taught with the door open. There in the ante-room you could converse with the other students and get to know them. You could also hear and watch them play for Freiberg when their turn came to play, and they could hear and watch you. Freiberg might spend 15 minutes with a student, he might spend 5. It all depended on what he felt the student needed.

In America the applied music departments usually accept more advanced students for study with their teachers who have impressive resumes and substantial credits attached to their names. Lessons normally last for an hour. In Vienna, complete beginners are instructed alongside the most advanced students which offers the opportunity to absorb whatever they might pick up in the process.

Roland Berger was the most advanced student. He was already playing third horn in the Vienna Philharmonic, and news circulated that he would inherit the principal position whenever Freiberg retired, though it was not anticipated this would occur for many years to come. Even so, Roland was required to come in for lessons. When he came in he would go to each student and ask for permission to move ahead of them in line. We always obliged out of respect and as an acknowledgement of his status as a member of the Vienna Philharmonic. Roland was working on one of the 10 Grand Concert Studies by Oscar Franz (1843-1846), and it was fascinating to watch Freiberg work though the study with him paying particular attention to preciseness in rhythm.

As with Valkenier, Freiberg put me on a diet of Kopprash but he added Bernhard Mueller studies with lots of transposing work. He wanted to impress upon me the Vienna slurring technique (where one goes from a lower to a higher note without a break) by demonstrating it vocally as a "doo-ee" kind of sound. It is a more gradual kind of slur. I didn't dispute him, but I did personally resist this. It was the opposite of the way Valkenier taught slurs which was an "oo—oo" kind of sound that proceeded suddenly as though one were turning on a light switch. This was, in fact, a metaphor Valkenier used to teach the method.

Freiberg also wanted me to use more F horn instead of the mixture of Bb and F I customarily used with my preference going to the Bb side. [Note for non-horn players. The modern horn is constructed with two sets of tubes one on top of the other in the front center of the instrument which are pitched in two separate keys. The F tubes are on top of



the Bb tubes with the Bb tubes being the highest pitched of the two and hence smaller in size. Pressing or releasing a valve with the thumb, the player can switch easily between the two sets of tubes. It's like having a larger horn for playing lower notes, the F horn, and a smaller horn for playing higher notes, the Bb horn, both combined into one horn, though mixing the two together to produce the best results. Some players contend that the larger F horn is more mellow in sound than the smaller Bb horn, but it is also more prone to making mistakes because of the placement of notes in the overtone series. (But that is another topic.)]

I followed Freiberg's advice with the result that my tone did soften some. I practiced diligently for hours so that I could make the most delicate and soft entrances possible on upper-middle range notes on the F horn. These notes were easy to splatter.

Hans Swarowsky was the head of the conducting department at the Academy. He had studied conducting with Felix Weingartner and Richard Strauss and theory with Arnold Schoenberg and Anton Webern. Swarowsky had already been conductor of the Zurich Opera, the Cracow Philharmonic, and the Vienna Symphony and would take up posts with the Vienna State Opera and the Scottish National Orchestra. He made many recordings in the course of his career.

Zubin Mehta was studying with Swarowsky. I met Zubin at a party and we talked together. Though good things were already in the works for him, which was apparent to everyone, he was not at all conceited, but laid back, a person who seemed to be enjoying himself. He would soon win the Liverpool International Conducting Competition.

Karl Österreichischer conducted the student orchestra which gave its concerts in the Musikverein, always to a full hall. At Swarowsky's direction, Zubin stepped in to take over the baton from Österreichischer at rehearsals on a least one occasion that I recall, with Swarowsky looking on all smiles.

One afternoon during my second year of study at the Academy, Swarowsky came in and took the baton himself. The *Overture to der Freishütz* by Carl Maria von Weber was on the podium. After an introduction, the overture proceeds with a beautiful horn quartet. I was playing third horn which, along with the 4<sup>th</sup> horn, begins the quartet. This would provide a good test for all the practice I had done on making entrances on the F horn.

Because Swarowsky was conducting, a wide space behind the orchestra quickly filled in with on-lookers listening attentively. I noticed Rudolf Frodl, the principal Bassoonist from Graz among the group, who was up visiting the city. Swarowsky was pleased by the attention. It was time to begin. I took my cue from Swarowsky, delivering the entrance softly on the F horn with only the hint of an attack and with expression. The fourth horn balanced perfectly cascading down to the lower depths of the register with his part and we then finished the phrase. The first and second horns then came in on their higher entrance with a sparkling counter balance as the quartet flowed gracefully ahead to its conclusion. Swarowsky loved it. He couldn't let that pass without a repeat and so we

played it again and then again, each time with the same effect. It was one of those magical musical moments one does not easily forget.

One day at a lesson when the door to his study was closed for some reason, Freiberg confided to me the following story. During the Nazi period because it was discovered he was part Jewish [his grandfather on his father's side], the orchestra—or whatever powers that were—reduced his position from first horn down to third horn. He was returned to first horn only after the war. I shall never forget the look of sadness and heartbreak that came into Freiberg's eyes as he told this story. Apparently he avoided more disastrous Nazi actions only because Joseph Goebbels had ordered some kind of protection due to Freiberg's reputation as one of Austria's top musicians. After all, he had played the world premiere of Richard Strauss' *Second Horn Concerto*.

Freiberg, who was related to Franz Schubert on his mother's side, was a kind and good man with the best intentions for everyone. I was saddened one day to hear that he had had a heart attack, the first of several which would eventually take his life in 1962 at the age of only 54. I saw him outside the academy (which in those days was located on the Ring surrounding Vienna's inner city) the day after his attack sitting in a car. "Ich dachte Ich würde in die Hölle," I heard him say. (I thought I was in hell.) He looked tired and worn but anxious to be there in familiar surroundings with people with whom he felt comfortable. He attributed his heart problem to too many cigarettes and too much coffee.

### **Friends in Vienna**

Freiberg's ante-room is where I met Robert Freund. He was one of the top students and a superb horn player. Freund spoke excellent English and earned a living during his study days as a tour guide for English speaking people around the city of Vienna. We became good friends. Freiberg assigned Freund and me to his chamber music class where we worked on a Mozart divertimento for 2 horns and winds which we would eventually present in concert. Freund's big break came the following year when suddenly at the last moment a highly vaunted horn player stated he could not meet his commitment to play Dvořák's *New World Symphony* (Symphony No. 9) with the Vienna Symphony. They needed a horn player and a good one fast who could handle a couple of treacherous high horn passages in the piece. Against the advice of his friends, who feared he might fall on his face, Freund stepped in. He had no doubt that he could pull it off for he was one of those rarities, a performer who never gets nervous. Freund played the piece to perfection. From then on he was the principal horn of the Vienna Symphony, an orchestra in Vienna second only to the Vienna Philharmonic. Freund occupied this position for the duration of his horn playing career. In addition he would substitute with the Vienna Philharmonic when they needed him and played in a variety of circumstances around Vienna including soloing and making solo recordings with his own orchestra, the Vienna Symphony. He also taught at the academy for music in Graz and had his own horn methods published.

Curiously, I first learned about the Vienna Symphony when I bought an LP in Paris during an army furlough of Franz Koch playing the very high and difficult Haydn

*Divertimento for Horn, Cello, and Violin*. It was a great recording and I was impressed. I would one day have the privilege and pleasure of playing this piece, but in rehearsal, not in performance. (Chapter 13.) Koch was also the first horn of the Vienna Symphony. Equally curious, Freund had studied with Koch when he first took up the horn.

Another person never to forget, who I first met in Freiberg's ante-room, was the Australian horn player Katz. Katz was a man without an ounce of professional jealousy, copacetic, a man you instantly liked and trusted, and always so very thin. One day he announced glowingly that he had got a job playing horn in the Vienna **Tonkünstler** Orchestra. He was thrilled and I was indeed happy for him. The job came too late, unfortunately. The years of poverty with which Katz had been living finally caught up with him. Not long thereafter he died from a bout of pneumonia.

In Vienna I also met Susan Chaimovitz Schlitt, who was at the onset of her university studies, a friendship that would include her visit to New York City years later where I was able to put her up during her brief stay.

Barbara Baird, a terrific American violist, also studied in Vienna at the time and became a fast friend. Back in New York she would become a member of the New York City Ballet Orchestra, playing alongside another superb violist, Susan Pray. I would get to know Susan as the wife of my violist friend from 7<sup>th</sup> Army Symphony days, Midhat Serbagi.

Another American very fine string player with whom I would become acquainted and a close friend was Nancy (Jo) White (Lee), a cellist. Our friendship, too, fortunately, has endured over the years. Now happily married and living in Ohio, she is a winner of many top awards for her creative quilting.

One of my best friends in Vienna, Darius Lapinskas, was an American Lithuanian and a very fine composer who I had known at NEC in Boston. There I played one of his compositions in the beautiful auditorium of the New England Conservatory, Jordan Hall, with Darius conducting. Valkenier heard the performance and was very impressed by the piece. Darius was studying in Vienna with Swarovsky, who, like Darius, was a Bartok enthusiast. Darius and I would eventually take the same return ship from Europe back to New York. From there we traveled to Boston where I stayed at his home for a day or two thanks to the generous hospitality of his very warm and welcoming Lithuanian family.

I also met Paul Nelson in Vienna, an American composer studying at Vienna University on a John Knowles Paine Fellowship from Harvard. I often visited him at his apartment where one day he introduced me to a guest from Paris who was visiting. This was Howard Swanson, the well known African American composer whose settings of the poetry of Langston Hughes, who was a friend of his, are considered to be some of the best written. Marian Anderson performed his song *The Negro Speaks of Rivers*, a Hughes poem, which she would eventually take on her farewell tour. Meanwhile Dimitri Mitropoulos premiered Swanson's *Symphony No. 2, Short Symphony*, with the New York

Philharmonic. The symphony was awarded the New York Music Critics Circle award as the most interesting composition of the season.

Several years later I would meet another leading African American composer of classical music in the 20<sup>th</sup> century at a party in New York City. This was Ulysses S. Kay who wrote around 140 compositions during his lifetime including 20 orchestral works and the opera (his fifth) *Frederick Douglas*. His composition *Of New Horizons: Overture* was performed by the New York Philharmonic. In fact, he was working on a commission by the New York Philharmonic at the time of his death in 1995. At the party, Barbara, Ulysses' wife, and I hit it off right away and had a long conversation. She told me that Ulysses was discouraged at the time by a lack of recognition, and that it was a real struggle to get performances. Barbara had been a Mississippi Freedom Rider during the summer of 1961. Arrested in Jackson, she was held in three jails including the Parchman Penitentiary for a total of around 60 days, after receiving a four-month sentence for "Breach of the Peace." William Faulkner once wrote that Parchman was "Destination Doom."

Paul Nelson wrote a very fine composition for horn and piano which Chris Leuba premiered at a packed hall in Vienna. Chris had made a name for himself as a member of the Minneapolis Symphony (today the Minnesota Orchestra) and was playing with the Philharmonia Hungarica which had its home in Vienna. He was also a former member of the 7<sup>th</sup> Army Symphony Orchestra. All the Viennese horn playing world attended the concert including Freiberg. It was an excellent performance, and I thought the piece would make it into the repertory. Unfortunately, I have not heard of it since.

## **Stammtisch**

My very best friend in Vienna was Don Paterson, a baritone, who had studied at NEC where I occasionally noticed him. I don't remember ever speaking to him there. He came to Vienna the same time as me and we were soon getting together often to talk over music, Austria, and women. He would eventually marry a Belgian woman studying at Vienna University. Don and I both bought bicycles and rode them all over Vienna, even all the way out to the Prater (where the giant Ferris wheel is located).

In Austria (but also in other countries) they have a tradition called "Stammtisch," which Valkenier had told me about. Stammtisch occurs when, after you visit an establishment a few times, they kind of take you under their wings and make you a part of the family. The tradition started when people acknowledged to be a part of the "in" group would gather around a "table" for a friendly get together on a regular basis. Hence the derivation of the word "tisch," meaning table, in Stammtisch. These meetings could be formal or informal.

Don and I often went to a Gasthaus where the daughter of the proprietor, Erna Amon, spoke English fluently and welcomed us warmly. We went there frequently where we could expect special service, extra helpings on food, good conversation, and the

sense that if we ever needed any help we were free to ask for it. This was how Stammtisch worked.

Erna got married to a man named Otto Gschmeidler. Once when I ran out of money, Erna and Otto hired me to do some work which really was more fun than work. One night we had worked very late so they invited me to stay over. Since they had only one bed—a very broad, luxurious bed—I slept in the bed with both Otto and Erna. In the morning Erna's mother came in and saw the three of us in bed. "Ah! Sünder!" (Ah! Sinners!) she gasped. We all had a good laugh.

Don and I sometimes picked out different Gasthauses for lunch or dinner besides Erna's. We visited one such establishment a couple of nights in a row. On the third night, the owner, a woman, and one of her waiters, a man, came around to have a little chat as we were having dinner and to get to know us a little better in the Stammtisch tradition.

After a few minutes the women said in German: "Hören Sie. Es ist nicht we sie sagen mit den Juden. All wir gemacht haben ist sie einen kleinen Patchen gegeben." (You know, it's not like they say with the Jews. All we did was give them a little pat." Don froze and then said: "Yah. Ich hab' ihren kleinen Patchen gesehen, in Dachau!" (Yes, I saw your little pat, in Dachau!) Now it was the time for the woman to freeze. That was the end of that Stammtisch.

## **Graz**

Outside it was like a winter wonderland with the snow hanging thick and heavy on the fur trees and rooftops. Inside it was dark in the magnificent theater in which I sat nearly alone in the middle of a row about half way back in the orchestra section. A few figures sat further ahead coaching the onstage activity, which was a rehearsal for Leoncavallo's opera *Pagliacchi*. The voices and the orchestra sounded excellent, though you couldn't see the orchestra in the pit below.

I was seated in the opera house in Graz, Austria and I had come there because a horn player visiting Vienna was searching for someone to fill his position as second horn in the Graz Opera and Philharmonic. He had the opportunity to take another job in South American. One of my dreams was to play in a European orchestra. Suddenly, here was a chance. Moreover, the Graz Opera was the number two opera company in Austria, second only to the Vienna State Opera. Their repertoire covered the range from operettas by Johann Strauss to operas by Mozart, Beethoven, Verdi, Puccini, Leoncavallo, Wagner and Mussorgsky and more including seldom performed operas like Christoph Willibald Gluck's *Orpheus and Eurydice*.

Someone gestured to me at the end of the row. It was time to go audition and the nerves were tingling.

Back in Vienna I was packing my bags and saying farewells. Soon I would be on the train traveling through the snowy mountainous terrain to Graz, the capital of Styria in

lower Austria, a distance of about two and one-half to four hours by train, depending on the time of departure. The audition had gone well and I was now a member of the Graz Opera and Philharmonic Orchestra. Though I had not even considered trying for a position with a professional symphony orchestra after 7<sup>th</sup> Army Symphony days, following instead the advice to study with Valkenier at NEC, suddenly there I was, a member of the number two opera company in Austria. I was 22 years of age. In Graz, the music director was Gustav Cerny. The conducting staff also included Miliadiades Caridis, a German/Greek and a Bartok specialist who would be appointed director of the Philharmonia Hungarica within a year or two. That orchestra made its home in Vienna at the time. Rudolf Bibl was also on staff in Graz and would become the conductor of the Vienna Volksoper

The Graz Opera employed two sections of horns consisting of four players each. They were very good players indeed and I felt privileged to join their ranks. I joined the company after the rehearsals for some of the repertoire had already been completed. This meant I would have to sight read some of these operas in performance. It was not an easy task to read through Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro* for the first time knowing that any bloop (mistake) would be easily heard out in the auditorium. I think I managed the task fairly well. Some of the parts in Leoncavallo's *Pagliacchi* were particularly challenging because of some difficult chromatic transpositions, as I recall, but that was now my job to do. Fortunately, rehearsals were ongoing for operas yet to be performed like Max Schilling's opera *Mona Lisa* with even more difficult chromatic transpositions.

My job included membership in the Graz Philharmonic. The repertoire there included pieces like Hector Berlioz' *Symphonie Fantastique*, Maurice Ravel's *Piano Concerto in G* for the left hand—with the high horn solo which our first horn Erdinger handled to perfection—Mozart's concerto for harp and flute, with the orchestra manager playing the harp solo, and Robert Schumann's *Violin Concerto in D*, at the time a piece seldom performed and one I had never heard of.

Erdinger lived on a farm and invited me there where I met his wife and two giant German shepherd dogs which he allowed to roam the farm at night. The dogs seemed a little on the aggressive side to me, and I would not have liked to be out in the country walking along alone at night and run into one of them. Erdinger had played in the opera in Dresden, bombed into ruins during World War II, before coming to Graz, if I am not mistaken. He was a fine horn player and a good colleague who was very helpful to me in fitting in at the opera for which I am grateful to this day.

In addition, Friederich Baltz, the third horn player in our section, was helpful in many ways. We were soon good friends and often talked or got together after rehearsals. His wife would also join us at times, or a very pretty young woman who I wanted to know better, though that never happened. Baltz' mother and grandmother had both been killed in the war. As an Austrian soldier, he had himself been seriously wounded. He would also become a good friend with my brother Darrel, after he came to Austria, when the two played in a summer orchestra in Bad Ischl in Austria.

Orchestral services in Graz included radio broadcasts. The music we recorded in those broadcasts consisted mostly of what was called Schlager Musik, a kind of saccharine pop music for mass consumption. We recorded these broadcasts in a recording studio. On one occasion, however, we got a big surprise when we arrived at the studio prepared for an easy session. Instead, on our stands stood the music for Leopold Mozart's *Sinfonia di caccia in G major ("Jagdsinfonie")* for four horns, string orchestra, and shotgun blast. The solo horn parts were difficult and quite high for the first horn. I remember well the reaction of the first horn, Fritz Mischlinger. "Mein lieber, was erwarten sie?" (Friends, what do you expect?) Mischlinger was the No. 1 principal of the two horn sections. He demanded to go home and get his high horn in G which he used for extra high horn parts. The rest of the section looked over our parts while we waited for his return. Baltz was on third horn and Herr Wastian on fourth. The recording went pretty well. At the time this concerto was little performed, but it is a fine composition which shows just how skilled a composer Leopold Mozart was. Today many recordings of the piece are available.

Mischlinger aroused my special admiration when I learned that as a soldier during the Second World War he had sarcastically asked a Nazi official if he had noticed that the Semmeln (a type of Austrian/German bun) were getting smaller. The criticism implied that the German war effort was not going as well as the Nazi propaganda machine wanted everyone to believe. For his impertinence Mischlinger was sent to the Russian front. I was glad that he survived.

We closed the season in Graz with Beethoven's opera *Fidelio* and I was pleased that the section of horns that included me was scheduled for the performance. We used the original *Fidelio* overture to start the opera and, if I recall correctly, the *Leonore Overture No. 3* to start the second act.

## **Adolph Hitler**

It was in Graz that I really began to learn German with a little fluency, though it was always far from perfect or really fluent. At its height I was able to read Hermann Hesse's *Sidhartha* and a biography on Mussorgsky, the latter which I read on train rides between Graz and Vienna. Whatever proficiency I managed to attain happened because I began visiting a Gasthaus on the corner of the building in which I lived. You opened the door and descended a stairs to the restaurant which was visible below. For this reason it was called the Keller (cellar).

The Keller was really more like a social club which a core group of regulars habituated daily to talk, play cards, have a beer or a glass of wine, order a sandwich, and just relax and have a good time. When they learned I was an American and a member of the opera, they welcomed me and soon several of us were acquainted on a first name basis. These were mostly working class people like Fritz Deller, a tailor, whom I would eventually hire to make a suit for me.

As we got to know each other better in that Keller, whatever social barriers existed between us, including those created by our respective nationalities, began to

relax. One evening a stranger entered the establishment and descended the stairs to purchase something from Frau Mitzi Hagendorfer, the proprietress. As he returned up the stairs, for some reason one of the persons I had taken a liking to—he looked a bit like Clark Gable, except shorter and a little heavier—stood up, extended his hand in a salute, and yelled out to the man on the stairs at the top of his voice: "Heil Hitler!" I was shocked! So was the man on the stairs who, I am glad to report, turned and just glared at the figure below who had dared to confront him with that illegal salute. He turned and slowly climbed the stairs glaring back at the man all the way up until he exited the establishment.

I would learn, sadly, that my Clark Gable friend was not the only one who attended these social gatherings in the Keller who held such views. Had I wandered into a nest of Nazis? I began paying closer attention looking for evidence of other Nazi leanings. Fortunately, beyond one or two people, it did not seem pervasive though I now had experienced firsthand the fact that die-hard Nazi sympathizers were around. Today, they are perhaps best exemplified by an experience I had upon a return visit to Graz I made in the year 2001.

I had gone into the lunchroom of the pension where I was staying. There on a stool at the end of the counter alone and isolated—no one would sit near him—sat a frail old man, unshaven, unclean, and drunk. "Wenn der Hitler nur noch da war," he mumbled. ("If Hitler were only still here.") He repeated the phrase over and over and over again. "Wenn der Hitler nur noch da war." No one paid any attention to this pathetic sight, emblematic as a sad leftover from a horrendous period of evil. One could only pity this wretched man.

On that return trip to Graz I was also welcomed by some of the horn players in the Graz Opera at the opera house, thanks to Peter Heckl, one of the horn players. I had contacted him before I made the trip, and once I was in Graz he went out of his way to show me around and introduce me to the horn section as a former member. Tim Purcell, an American who was playing second horn, the same position I had occupied years before, also pitched in in a very friendly way and helped me feel at home. Peter got me a ticket to hear Wagner's *Götterdämmerung* in an inspiring production. The horn section was outstanding, of that there could be no doubt. I was deeply impressed by their playing and also that of the orchestra which handled the difficult score superbly.

### **Activities in Graz**

In Graz I took a few piano lessons privately with a woman Baltz had recommended, a former concert pianist, and also began my very first lessons in composition. These I took with an elderly woman who had a good grasp of the basic rules of writing music. After a couple of lessons, she assigned me to write a waltz. I wrote a few measures, but just could not tolerate repeating the same sequence of harmonies all the way through to the end of the piece. How boring. I made a few changes in the harmonic scheme, therefore, and brought these to my teacher. "Oh no!" she declared.



"You can't do that.!" It was evident that somehow I needed to find a different way for learning how to compose music.

Looking for reading material, I discovered a small book store which sold mostly books in English. The bulk of the books consisted of romances and detective stories, with the exception of several plays by Eugene O'Neil. I read every one of those available. Years later at Columbia University when several of us were looking for a suitable departure gift for a friend, Jan Young, who was leaving our department (Economics), I stumbled upon a rare book edition of O'Neil's *The Hairy Ape*. It was offered at an affordable price because it was one of his lesser plays. I had read the play in Graz and knew it would make the perfect gift for our friend Jan who put reading at the top of her priorities and would prize the first edition play. She did. It was the perfect gift.

### **Stephanie**

Stephanie (Steffie) and her father were Yugoslavian. He had been a partisan fighter in Yugoslavia and mentioned it often. "Ich war Partisan! Ich war Partisan!" Now he managed a meager living as a shoemaker in the one-room apartment which he kept. He was lean, tough, and rough-hewed in manner. His daughter, with whom he was very close, looked after him but lived in her own place. She worked as a part-time nurse treating cancer patients, a job which she found very difficult to do.

I met Steffie in the Keller several times. She was very attractive and I was interested and thought she might be also. One night we found ourselves together going to two or three different places and getting to know each other better. After that we met often. Steffie possessed an underlying strong will and determined spirit of independence of which she was well aware, enough to know she could arouse jealousy from gossiping neighbors. She was also fully aware that she was a very attractive woman. One night we were out together and it was growing late. I found myself following Stephanie as we entered the back yard where she lived. We climbed a back stairs and then clamored silently as possible across a roof to her apartment window. "Shh!" she whispered. She lifted the window, and in we went.

Steffie and I never quite became boyfriend and girlfriend, though we came close and did many things together. For example, Frau Mitzi, the friendly, matronly woman who maintained the Keller, owned a small place in the country just outside of Graz to which she invited Stephanie and me for a visit. Kerosene lamps provided the lighting at night. It was very beautiful there with mist hanging over the mountains as we arose early in the morning from our separate rooms with the sunrise and the air crisp and cold. Breakfast was special, country style on an old country stove, and we had a fabulous time.

I invited Stephanie to a performance of Verdi's *Aida* at the opera and she was thrilled. The poverty that came with the flight of her father and her from Yugoslavia to Graz more or less foreclosed the possibility of participation in cultural events that required spending money. Without doubt, Stephanie was a highlight in my life, one of those persons I felt especially privileged to have known for her character, her inner spirit,

her strength as a woman, and her essential goodness. Here was a person who was real in a way few people ever are. We both knew, perhaps unfortunately, that when I left Graz we would be going our independent ways. When I returned to Austria in 2001 I tried to locate Stephanie without success. The place of her former employment, the Red Cross, was unable to offer any assistance in the matter. The director at the time responded to my later query by mail with an unfriendly letter that made clear he wanted nothing to do with the matter.

### **Last year in Austria**

The opera asked me to stay on as second horn. Even though this could have been a career position providing all the security and a standard of living that was appealing to many musicians—which is what I thought I might like to find when I set sail for Europe—I was feeling more and more that I wanted to return to America no matter what the benefits of remaining in Austria might be. The plan was that I would return to Vienna and stay the school year continuing studies with Freiberg which I could afford to do with my GI Bill benefits. I would then return to Boston. This is what I did.

Back in Vienna I migrated to novels by Dostoevsky, Stendhal, and Hermann Hesse. Their stories fed a growing urge to begin expressing in writing the wealth of experience both good and bad that was churning inside just waiting to come out. I bought notebooks and began going around to different coffee houses in Vienna where I would sit, drink coffee, and write out my thoughts with the idea in mind of one day writing a Dostoevskian kind of novel. This was the beginnings of my life as a writer.

A gross miscalculation in finances also had me freezing during the early part of winter. As was often the case for people who rented a room in Vienna in those days, the tenant had to supply their own heat. This was accomplished by purchasing a coal-fed stove. But I suddenly found myself without the necessary funds to purchase the stove or the coal. The coffee houses presented a welcome refuge during parts of the days. At night I dressed in multi-layers of clothing and slept under heaps of blankets. Then one morning I found a letter waiting from my former roommate in Boston, Ed Myers. It contained a refund check mailed to me from the IRS that Ed had forgotten all about. When he stumbled upon it he mailed it right off. Before the day was out I had purchased a new stove and coal. What a great pleasure it was to get up close to the stove and bask in the warm rays it produced. Ah, beautiful warmth!

Up to this point my brother Darrel and I had been corresponding all along and following one another in a kind of game of tag. It happened because he enrolled in the Air Force, which had a four year enlistment, whereas I spent only two years in the Army as a draftee. So when I was ready to leave NEC, he was ready to start there. Unfortunately, Valkenier had retired, so Darrel studied with Paul Keaney, an earlier student of Valkenier, who played 4<sup>th</sup> horn in the Boston Symphony and had taken Valkenier's place as the horn teacher at the New England Conservatory.

While in the Air Force Darrel had played in the 584<sup>th</sup> Air Force Band at Eglin Air Force base in Florida where he also played in the band's dance band, the Eglinnaires, and the Pensacola Symphony. When I first heard Darrel play after his Air Force days I was amazed at how solid his playing had become. He had turned into an outstanding horn player. Dave Batty, who would end up in the Dallas Symphony as the principal for several years, also played in Darrel's band. In Dallas, he offered Darrel the 4h horn position which would have assured him a steady playing job for life. However, just as I had done in Graz, Darrel declined the offer. We both had our own independent journeys to make that could not be held back by taking a permanent position somewhere. This is the way it often is with identical twins. Their experiences and behavior is also often identical.

I was leaving Vienna just as Darrel decided to go there. Later, our roles would be reversed. He would be living in Canada and I would follow him there, though I would be the first to move to San Francisco before he moved there. This was the kind of tick tack toe game Darrel and I were playing, though it was unintentional and there were no winners or losers, just explorations to be made.

In Vienna, I showed Darrel around the City. I was sharing an apartment with Don Paterson and his new Belgian wife, Nina, in the 18<sup>th</sup> District which was located near the beautiful Türkenschanzpark. Peacocks were allowed to roam freely through the park and it was a pleasure to meander through the park's grounds with the peacocks around.. Unfortunately, when I returned to Austria in 2001, I made it a point to revisit the Türkenschanzpark only to learn that over the years the rain flowing to the gutters had attracted the peacocks to the Strassenbahn (streetcar) where they were all run over. I was saddened to learn of their fate. Surely, it could somehow have been avoided.

One of the highlights of my return in 2001 was my visit to the hall of the Old University. There in 1808 royalty and celebrated guests in the world of music that included Beethoven honored Joseph Haydn's 76<sup>th</sup> birthday with a special performance of his oratorio, the *Creation*, conducted by Antonio Salieri. I had wanted to visit this room ever since I had seen the scene recaptured at the time by the miniaturist Balthasar Wigand. And I was in luck. It was early morning and must have been a slow day because no guards were at the entrance when I entered the Old University building. I swiftly walked up the grand, and broad sweeping marble staircase on my right wondering where I might find the room. I passed someone going down the staircase who looked at me suspiciously, but I lowered my eyes and kept climbing. And then, suddenly there it was. I entered quickly, awed by the unexpected privilege of being able to linger and mosey meditatively around completely alone in the grand hall that two centuries earlier had hosted the famous, historical event.

Darrel studied at the Academy with Freiberg and also played in the student orchestra. I introduced Darrel to my friends at the Academy, including Robert Freund and also hornist Horace Fitzpatrick. Horace, famed for his book *Horn and Horn-playing and the Austro-Bohemian Tradition*, was spending the year in Vienna working toward a degree and promoting his book. One day at the Academy, impressed upon hearing horn

excerpts being played of the Beethoven 7<sup>th</sup> Symphony, Horace came running into the room from where they emanated to see who was playing the excerpts. It was Darrel. Horace performed the Haydn *Concerto for Horn No. 2* with the student orchestra as his graduation piece. Darrel and I also played on this concert as, I believe, did Freund, which was presented in Vienna's beautiful and elegant Musikverein Saal.

Darrel decided not to remain in Vienna. He ended up studying with the great Danish hornist, Albert Linder in Stuttgart, Germany. In Stuttgart Darrel became the stage hornist for the Staatstheater Stuttgart. He also played with the Südwestdeutsches Kammerorchester Stuttgart, and the Südwestdeutsches Landesbühne, Esslingen, an operetta company that offered him a contract, which he declined.

As for me, it was time for my departure from Austria. I had by then lived in a foreign country for two years and realized that the life of an immigrant in Austria, or for that matter, any other country, was not in the cards for me. People in Austria had their own very unique situations to deal with, and the same was true for me in America. Nothing pulled at me to remain in Austria, not even the job at Graz—though Stephanie entered my thoughts—plus my GI Bill had run out. I looked forward to my return to America. Destination once again: Boston.

## Chapter 8

### Back in the States

#### Boston once more

Back in Boston I read about Sherwood Anderson's legendary search for self. He was not the only one. Everybody seemed to be talking about "self" in those days. "Self?" What was that? What did it mean? What was this mysterious "self" people loved to talk about but nobody seemed clear enough about to define. I had commenced my own search for how I could best identify with the world around me and my neighbors back in Vienna. That search had grown in dimension as had the problems that motivated the search. Who was I? Why did I sometimes act in ways which seemed out of tune with who I might really be? My search for self hovered beneath the surface but colored everything I did.

The woman I spent the most time with during this period was Joyce Gould (sometimes aka Melissa Drake), who had gone out with my close friend, the cellist and conductor Richard Serbagi. Joyce had an affluent background and loved to go out for dinner which was mostly new for me. But I enjoyed the restaurants we visited in Boston's Little Italy. Joyce was a great conversationalist and I was very fond of her. We would meet briefly years later, running into each other at a high scale rummage sale on Fifth Avenue in New York City.

I also met a Spanish woman, Amelia, who was Jewish and had grown up in Spain. Her parents told her at an early age she had to conceal her Jewishness in order to protect herself from the fascist Franco regime. The last I heard about her she had been injured in a motorcycle accident out West. I hoped we would meet again, but we never did.

The GI Bill was now gone and there was no steady salary such as I had with the Opera in Graz, so it was back to the struggle for survival. I took a position at the Boston Public Library in the Audio Visual Department where it became my job to order new LP records. In this capacity I was able to add many new and unknown works to the library collection.

An occasional playing job did come my way such as with the park band sponsored by the Musicians Union which gave summer concerts in the band shell in the public gardens. Valkenier also called once to ask if I was available for a job with the Provincetown Symphony which required an overnight stay in a hotel. I was. The Mozart *Sinfonie Concertante* for oboe, clarinet, horn, and bassoon and orchestra was on the program with Sheldon Henry handling the solo horn part. He was a terrific horn player and I learned much from his performance. Though we talked only briefly, we would be in touch again years later.

It was my first trip to Provincetown. I loved exploring the quaint resort town, its art displays and beautiful beach. Years later on a visit there, I noticed and followed along behind Norman Mailer and a woman accompanying him as they toured Provincetown's main street. It was fascinating to study this seminal figure in American literature as he

walked along fully conscious that he was being recognized by many people and much enjoying the attention.

During this period I moved back and forth between Boston and New York City trying to decide where I wanted to live. In Boston I met composer John Bevicchi who I got to know when we consulted with each other about a horn part I played in one of his compositions. In New York City a position opened up with the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra for second horn. I took the audition and was passed into the finals. Unfortunately, during the finals nerves took over and ruined any chance for getting the job.

### **An awakening to Art**

My interest in art was awakened by a visit to the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. There I entered the Pierre Auguste Renoir room and something happened that I can only describe as what might be called a kind of mystical experience. I felt expanded and lifted up filled with the full appreciation of the beauty of these paintings. This new appreciation for art which I did not have prior to my entrance into the Renoir room has never left me.

I could not resist buying some carving tools during my brief stay in Provincetown, inspired by Paul Gauguin's carvings. But I quickly discovered I did not like carving after a couple of gashes to my hands.

This was the beginnings of further explorations in art. I became close friends with some highly gifted art students studying at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, Lennie Beecher, Russell Stoddard, and Marlene Wallin. Procuring some oils, I began dabbling, including painting a mural on my wall in my apartment on Joy Street on Beacon Hill (on the side where cheap apartments were available). One day I would even take a course in drawing at the Arts Students League in New York City.

Some of the artists I met, including my friends, were so good I was left far behind. Nevertheless, I was pleased to discover that I possessed a certain amount of talent for drawing and painting. I have preserved some of my drawings. In Boston and New York I learned about and loved all periods of art from Medieval times to the present through visits to museums, galleries, and reading books. In recent years, however, I have not kept pace which is not as easy as it was in cities with many art resources like Boston and New York

### **An exceptional horn player**

The two main venues for studying music in Boston were the New England Conservatory of Music (NEC) and the Music Department of Boston University. It was generally accepted that the Conservatory was ranked above Boston University (BU). Running third in the City was the Boston Conservatory of Music which had a small staff and far fewer students. I was hired there on one occasion to come in to play the horn part for an excellent Woodwind Quintet written by a student of Daniel Pinkham, a faculty

member at the Boston Conservatory. I cannot remember the composer's first name, but his last name was "Fischer" or "Fisher." Pinkham, was a well-known composer, not only in Boston but nationally, who played organ and harpsichord and often played with the Boston Symphony when these instruments were called for. He coached our quintet ensemble and it was a pleasure to get to know him a little.

Because NEC was ranked above the music department at Boston University, it was assumed this also applied to student performance. With this in mind, I once attended a performance of the BU orchestra with the Beethoven Second Symphony on the program. I got a big surprise when the first horn player played the difficult solo parts flawlessly and effortlessly.. This was Ronnie Hebert. I went to see him after the concert and he invited me to attend his senior recital which was coming up. At his recital, I got another surprise. There was no question about it. As far as I could see, this horn player was playing better than I. Why was he such an unknown to the other horn players in town I wondered?

Ronnie's recital was the beginning of a friendship with this very mild-mannered, unassuming man. When he was playing in a production of *Carmen* and they needed another horn player, he hired me. He played the famous horn solo in Michaela's aria splendidly. Sarah Caldwell, who was already well on her way to becoming one of the most famous women conductors of her day, was on the podium. Conducting the New York Philharmonic, the Pittsburgh Symphony, the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, the Boston Symphony, and being the first woman ever to conduct at the Metropolitan Opera lie among her credits.

Hebert was a student of Osbourne McConathy, a member of the Boston Symphony horn section. I knew Osbourne, as many of the horn players in Boston did. He was a kind and friendly man who, if he knew you, would be sure to stop and talk with you on the street. Or if you didn't stop he might call out, as he did with my brother, "Hey Irving, where are you rushing off to. Why the big rush?"

Based on their many collaborations, Caldwell described Osbourne as the funniest person she ever met. He would gain considerable renown as the conductor of the American opera premieres of Schoenberg's *Moses und Aron*, Rameau's *Hippolyte et Aricie*, and the East Coast premiere of Alban Berg's *Lulu*.

Such good fortune almost never happened for Osbourne. One gray, rainy evening I saw him, apparently preoccupied, take a step forward from off a curb which brought him within millimeters of being struck by a fast-speeding bus. There was no time to call out a warning. It was a scary moment and happened right across the street from NEC.

My friendship with Ronnie did not go very far initially because these events just described all occurred a short time before I embarked for Vienna. I made no effort to contact Ronnie during my Austrian sojourn, nor did he try to contact me.

Back in Boston not long after returning from Vienna, I ran into Ronnie and we renewed our friendship. He introduced me to tenor Richard Conrad, and Richard and I joined forces in several performances at area hospital concerts of Berlioz' trio for Voice, Horn, and Piano, *Le jeune Pâtre Breton* taken from *Fleurs des Landes*. Richard would go on to win fame for his bel canto recordings with Joan Sutherland, including his collaboration with Sutherland, Marilyn Horne, and Richard Bonyng in the recording *The Age of Bel Canto*. Later he founded the Boston Academy of Music. Bel Canto was the appropriate term for describing the beautiful and delicate yet powerful (when called for) quality of Richard's voice. He was intensely dedicated, a hard-working singer, and a lover of animals, especially beagle dogs. He remains a close friend to this day.

I would soon learn that Ronnie had stopped playing the horn and was concentrating instead on the organ, at which he was not that good. I found it hard to believe. "Why?" I asked. Fortunately by this time he trusted me enough to say why. "Because I am gay!" He was living at the time with Paul Vaiginas, a lover of poetry, especially the poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins. I would get to know Paul and become a friend of his also.

It might be difficult for people to understand today what being gay meant in those days, especially the attitude of some brass players who made male chauvinism almost as important as playing their respective instruments. But it also applied to some woodwind and string players. These musicians were very vocal about expressing their beliefs in regard to any kind of alternative sexuality. The times were homophobic, and gay bashing was popular. If any homophobes were present, a visit to the Lobster Claw bar would be certain to unveil a group having a rowdy time reveling in prancing around mimicking gays. In fact, my brother once said to a friend who loved to get in a good bash at gays while mincing, "Me thinks the lady doth protest too much!"

When Osbourne McConathy learned that Ronnie was giving up the horn because he was gay, he was really upset. "It doesn't matter!" he said. "You can still play!" Ronnie was Osbourne's prize student. But Ronnie was adamant. The homophobic spirit that was prevalent among so many musicians of the day was more than he wished to contend with. His days as a horn player were finished. My days were at their best and this Ronnie encouraged.

I would soon lose touch with Ronnie again when I left Boston, but we would reconnect a few years later in New York City where he and Paul had taken an apartment in Brooklyn. We got together and then remained in touch over the telephone.

Somehow, we were together once again at a party, either in Brooklyn or Manhattan. It was good to see Ronnie again, but he said he had been at another party and felt certain that someone had laced the punch with some kind of psychedelic drug which caused him to hallucinate. He had been feeling strange ever since and found himself ranting on about the Virgin Mary. Ronnie said this softly in his usual mild-mannered way so as not to sound too dramatic or alarming.



Ronnie was about five foot six, with a modest build. He possessed a very quiet and passive personality, but he was pleasing to be around. It came as a profound shock, therefore, to learn that one evening Ronnie returned home intent on doing one thing and one thing only. This was to grab Paul by the throat in an effort to strangle him to death. As Paul would describe it later, it was as though Ronnie had superhuman strength and it was all Paul could do to break his grip. Ronnie had become a different person, a maniac who had lost control. He raced from their home to the Brooklyn Bridge a short distance away and plunged over the side.

Was there really a psychedelic drug in the punch that Ronnie drank which caused a psychotic split? Or, could it have been something lurking deep below in the shadowy depths of Ronnie's being that finally burst the passive constraints that all his life had held him in—triggered, perhaps by a drug? There is no answer available. What happened remains unexplainable and undecipherable, a sad and terribly tragic turn of events.

### **Cultural revolution**

In those times societal norms dictated a collective way of life that precluded any free flowing sense of individuality insuring that most people lived lives of quiet despair, to paraphrase Henry David Thoreau. Racial bigotry against blacks pervaded the fabric of the country and was kept alive by complacency, fear, and Jim Crow laws. Sexual behavior was controlled by conventions that contrasted sharply with the inner reality of sexuality that people experienced as the Alfred Kinsey reports on male and female sexuality brought to the surface. Personal growth was kept in check by community models which created unreal standards of behavior for which people were expected to strive. It all summed up to an atmosphere of hypocrisy pervading an American landscape controlled by the institutions of church, state, and big business.

The whole country was living in a straight jacket and bursting at the seams. But while homophobia, blatant racism, sexism, and other conventional ways of thinking may have been the order of the day, they were under assault and "the times, they [were] a-changing," as Bob Dylan would sing. The stage was set for confrontation from those who refused to be imprisoned in what they viewed as a corrupt, intolerable system in which they could not in good conscience participate.

Rising from the ranks of incipient rebellion was a small nucleus that derived from tiny towns and cities across the land searching for a collective manner in which to express their dissatisfaction. They made a refuge for themselves in the great metropolises of San Francisco and New York, but also in less publicized centers like Chicago, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Washington, and other places. They traveled from center to center and broadcast the news about their insights and beliefs. Their intention was to make their voices heard and heard loudly as they struggled to burst the bonds of convention that enslaved the country's spirit.

For the Western World, it was a time to denounce the old, tired societal and nationalistic views that had given rise to fascism, imperialism, racism, and war. But just

as the group of rebels who dared to denounce the world around them made their voices heard, they were in turn denounced for their long hair and unorthodox haircuts; beards; pants to replace dresses for women and make-up free faces; scruffy appearances; anti-social behavior; and treasonous rebellion against the sacred traditions of flag, country, mom and dad, apple pie, and white is right as is might. Their influence would lead to radical and far-sweeping cultural changes in America and the world.

I was living in Vienna when my brother wrote me about this group of young rebels that had sprung up across the country overnight to gather in coffee houses to read poetry, listen to jazz, and philosophize about society and how to improve it. They were artists, musicians, students, intellectuals, and various unorthodox individuals who shunned materialism and disrespected nonsensical societal norms. They were called Beats and Beatniks.

My hair was already on the long side in those days. I sported a moustache, and my clothes were decidedly casual. Back then to wear a moustache, not to mention a beard, was to invite censure, and worse. My very first night back in Boston, sitting around a table in Foster's restaurant diagonally across from the New England Conservatory, I conversed with some old acquaintances and a couple of people new to me. I offered the opinion that in America we were far too materialistic while ignoring things that were more important.

"What are you, a Beatnik?" one of the new persons asked, chomping down into a cheeseburger.

In the weeks that followed, I would get to know a little more about these so-called Beatniks with whom I had been identified. I learned about a little coffee house called Za Zen just off Hemenway Street in an alley and right around the corner from Westland Avenue in the area of Symphony Hall and the New England Conservatory. My apartment was located on Westland Avenue. The Beats were having a poetry reading when I walked into Za Zen, and one of the poets was reading his poem. "Balloons, Balloons, Balloons!" he intoned. "Red Balloons! Green Balloons! White Balloons!" The poem went on and on about balloons and seemed to be a kind of take-off on Gertrude Stein's line, "A Rose is a Rose is a Rose."

I continued to visit the coffee house and got to know some of these poets enough to invite them to my apartment several times just a long block away. I let them know that I, too, wrote poetry, though I was hesitant to declare that I was a poet. They were eager to talk, eager to learn, and eager to express their ideas. I liked them very much.

### **Betrayal—mental institution**

I learned that a certain teacher had prevailed upon another teacher—who happened to be a person I respected more than any other person in the world—who prevailed upon me to relate to a certain person their view that this person should consider another occupation other than music because he/she did not perform with what they

viewed to be the required necessary confidence. They put this on me because I knew this person better than they did and they felt I could present it in the best light. With great reluctance and inner turmoil lasting weeks, I finally went along with their request because I respected their position and their authority. Fortunately, the person rejected their suggestion.

Meanwhile, I felt betrayed by these teachers, especially the one I most respected because he had accepted the idea from his colleague without learning the facts for himself. That included consulting with me instead of trying to impose his opinion upon me. Worse, I had betrayed myself by doing something that had many ethical and moral implications the nature of which I wanted no part. "Who was I, anyway?" I had to ask. The fascinating thing about it was that the person who betrayed me never realized it and out of a sense of misguided loyalty, I never told him. That was an attitude I would change as I matured over the years, though I would never completely rid myself of the tendency to safeguard actions that were wrongly committed against me. It resulted from recognizing too clearly, that "there but for fortune went you or I," as Joan Baez sang. But an apology, while showing compassion, also needs to be alert for ways to provoke change in a bad situation.

At the same time I was attempting to get my head straight with this issue, certain thoughts had been intruding in my mind which had begun to make me question certain aspects of my sexuality. They were of such nature that I began to wonder if I might be gay in certain respects. While I supported gays and now even had gay friends with Ronnie and Paul, I did not want to be gay simply because I felt that was not who I was.

Added to these problems, after work I much too often headed for the nearest bar for a round of martinis—which drowned the problems all right only to have them resurface the next day with a hangover.

It all spelled crisis, which indeed it was. After seeking psychiatric assistance, which all my friends seemed to be doing as the popular thing to do, one psychiatrist suggested that I enter the Massachusetts Mental Health Center (MMHC) voluntarily to sort out these issues that were plaguing me and avoid causing myself any injury by some impulsive action which was possible in such cases. He arranged the transition.

I stayed at MMHC for two months during which I saw much that assured me I did not belong there and should leave as soon as possible. This included observing a man suffering from the effects of syphilis who seemed unable to follow any train of thought and whose loyal wife kept constant vigilance beside him. There was the young teenager with the crazy look in his eyes who just looked crazy who they kept medicated and who liked to talk with me but had to be warned to keep his hands off people including me. I couldn't help wonder if he had perhaps murdered or seriously injured someone. I felt sympathetic toward his condition and the hard life that lay ahead. Another teenager talked constantly, pacing all around. He was so tense inside that he was in a state of constant constipation so severe that I once heard a nurse tell him, gently, that if he couldn't go he might have to be "unpacked."

One young, highly educated man insisted that his doctors give him electro shock therapy because he was convinced it was absolutely the only possible way to treat his condition. The doctors finally acquiesced to his request. The result was that the shock therapy did no good and he remained the same.

Another evening the doctors and nurses came rushing into the ward pushing a man on a wheeled stretcher into a room where they treated him for a slashed artery in his arm. After they were successful and had stopped the bleeding, they made sure there was nothing in the room the patient could use to harm himself. Even so, the moment he was alone the man broke a window to obtain the glass necessary for cutting himself. He slashed his arm again so that he bled to death.

Then there was the man with marital problems who told me that with hardly even being aware he was doing it, he had grabbed a heavy knife in his kitchen when he was home alone, and plunged it into his chest, missing his heart by a millimeter. He was in the hospital because he could not trust himself not to do it again.

At Mass Mental I consulted with Dr. Gerald Adler who received his medical degree from Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons. I think I must have been the most boring patient he ever treated because I hated talking about myself. Overtime, though I did gain additional insights, the most important being that I was right. I was not gay and had no more inclinations in that direction that any other non-gay man. (For gay readers, this is not an anti-gay sentiment, rather just a description of my pursuit of my true identity.) I did discover, though, that certain transgender thoughts would appear and disappear at unexpected intervals but infrequently over time that I had to deal with.

As for the sense of betrayal, I just had to accept that indeed I had been betrayed and I had betrayed myself. It was a big step in discovering the inner self, the "who am I"—the mysterious "self." As for those who betrayed me, only their own self-serving ignorance, arrogance, and blindness could have induced them to try to get me to do something they should have seen would cause me to betray myself. So they are forgiven, for ignorance, arrogance, and blindness is a condition to which many of us are subject at times to varying degrees. Certainly, I could not exclude myself. I just needed to learn to forgive myself for allowing what happened to happen.

### **First concrete steps toward becoming a writer**

After I left Mass Mental I continued to see Dr. Adler during which I discussed the idea of becoming a writer. I soon enrolled in the Columbia University School of General Studies for that purpose and signed up for courses in Elementary French, American History (1492-1865), English composition, and Evolution and Utility of Plants (Botany).

I soon found I was in way over my head. After two weeks attending the botany class, for example, I realized that all that writing in the upper corner of the blackboard

were reading assignment so that I was already so far behind in my homework that only a herculean effort might ever catch me up. I have no memory of the French class, but I loved the history class and even learned much from the botany class. The Professor for the English class was, to me, pedantic, hardly the model I sought who might lead me in the direction of becoming the writer I wanted to become—which amounted to a mixture of all the great writers I had been reading. What I was doing, of course, was making excuses. Sometimes the right time to do something is just not at hand. Years later when I enrolled at Columbia, the time would be just right. For the present, it was time to drop out from Columbia which I did with a great sigh of relief.

I would not contact Dr. Adler again after I left Boston for many years. When I did, we were both glad to be in touch once more. I was pleased to see that he had been awarded the Arthur R. Kravitz Award for Community Action and Humanitarian Contributions and that he had co-founded the Boston Psychoanalytic Society & Institute Committee on Gender and Sexualities. He breathed not a word of his credits to me or anything else about his illustrious career. I had to discover that for myself. Clearly, his work was what was important, not accolades.

### **On tour**

I was still keeping up the horn and eventually went out on tour, along with Darrel, with Boris Goldovsky's opera company the New England Opera Theater (as it was called then). We played for 46 performances of Mozart's opera *Don Giovanni*. The stellar cast included Sherrill Milnes, Ron Holgate, Spiro Malas, and Jeanette Scovatti. Margo Stagliano, the horn player Jimmy Stagliano's wife, also sang one of the lead soprano roles. Holgate would go on to Broadway and opera fame. Jeanette Scovatti and Spiro Malas would make their mark as soloists with the Metropolitan Opera and many other top opera companies. Sherrill Milnes became a leading baritone at the Metropolitan Opera for more than 30 years. For the tour, Darrel was on first horn and I was on second. We would tour from the East Coast states to the Midwestern states of Michigan and Illinois, as far West as Kansas, and through the deep South.

The Civil Rights Act had yet to be passed. Segregation was openly flaunted in the South with separate bathrooms, separate drinking fountains, and separate schools. Touring the South, we played in many all white colleges and universities but also in some black colleges. The familiar din of white noise and clamor of happy concert goers filled the auditoriums of the white people. At the black colleges, however, the audiences were nearly silent, deadly serious, and reverent. You could hear a pin drop.

Many of the orchestra members liked to have a drink after a performance, including me. But some counties in the South were dry, meaning a local prohibition on alcohol sales. The clerks at the hotel desks could usually accommodate anyone wishing to purchase alcohol on the side, but in one county in Alabama, the only way to get anything to drink was directly through a bootlegger.

Several members of the orchestra piled into a couple of cars and, directed by our local guide, drove out into the country one night along gravel roads beneath a dark but starry sky. Just a sliver of moon hung overhead. When we arrived at the right farm house, our guide went to the door, rapped a few times, and when the farmer opened the door told him what we wanted. The farmer nodded "Okay." "I'll go down to the crick and get what you want," he said. "How much do you need?" It was like a scene out of a Faulkner novel.

### **Continuing search for identity**

What was apparent through all the turmoil of these times was that finding my true identity had become of paramount importance. Until that was accomplished to a degree sufficient to give me the sense of freedom I needed, I was living in a world of constraints that had yet to be resolved. Everything became secondary to finding the answers I needed. Even music and the horn would recede into the background for a while in my search to find who I really was.

## Chapter 9

### San Francisco Adventures and More

#### Back in New York

After the Goldovsky tour both Darrel and I returned to New York City for several months. I got a part-time job working for the Record Haven, a little record store that sold used LPs on 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue just around the corner from Times Square. I wasn't available for the interview, so Darrel took it for me and was hired. But it was I who showed up for work. When Sam, the boss, eventually found out—a co-worker with whom I had entrusted my secret told him—he burst out laughing. In fact, we had a good laugh together.

Like many musicians, my job at the Record Haven was one of quite a few jobs of a menial nature I would take in order to survive. The Record Haven at least had some connection to music. Many such jobs paid next to nothing. But though I found some of them to be almost intolerable, without doubt they kept me in touch with the struggle for survival the poor, the unsophisticated, and the undereducated live with year after year after year. For those lessons I am thankful. The very first of such jobs I took was in Boston during the first summer I spent there. This was a factory job at the Coronet Carriage Manufacturing Company where I operated a metal press machine, stamping together parts for baby carriages. This job paid one dollar an hour. Most of my co-workers were uneducated and well-conditioned for accepting a position like this for life. Some went out on Saturday nights and got drunk and spent most of their week's salary. They talked about their good times on Monday mornings. Many were extremely likeable. I worried about the future that lay in store for them. Oh, for a muse of fire!

For the reader's interest, here is a list of some of the jobs I have worked over the years. Bookkeeper, bookstore salesman, clothing associate (kept sales clothing orderly), car park attendant, coat checker, door-to-door salesman, circus worker, factory worker, farm worker (strawberry picker), house painter, house-to-house flier distributor, library clerk, library supervisor, messenger, movie usher, night cleaning crew for department store, night club doorman, post office worker, program coordinator, proofreader for fraud literary agency (one day), restaurant dish washer, restaurant waiter, school registrar, school teacher (kindergarten, elementary, middle school, high school (all substitute), college adult teacher, community school teacher, temp office worker (file clerk, typist, statistical typist, secretary, administrative assistant, executive secretary), theater cleaner, union picketer, variety store clerk, wheelchair pusher for infirm elderly man. These jobs all had something to teach like the job taking down a circus tent which was accomplished by bullying the elephants with bullhooks in order to accomplish the task.

Henry Miller's autobiographic novels made a deep impression on me for a while, but I found his sexism toward women intolerable and really disliked the way in which he would sometimes insert the word "Jew" into his writings. I felt he did this just to copy Dostoevsky. I was also reading beat poetry—Jacques Prevert, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Gregory Corso, Alan Ginsberg, Kenneth Rexroth, to name a few— and reading American

classics—Nathaniel Hawthorne, Edgar Allan Poe, Theodore Dreiser, Thomas Wolfe, etc., also Norman Mailer. I tried to read Jack Kerouac but never got beyond a few pages. The same would be true for William Burroughs whose writings I did not like. In fact, I detested them and thought some of my friends liked him just because he was “in” according to leading literature authorities.

I made frequent forays to the East Village on the lower East Side during this time, the home ground for Beats and Beatniks with whom I began to identify more and more. On one of these excursions I met beat poet, writer, and actor, Taylor Mead. For music, classic music aside, I turned to LPs of Juliette Greco, Miriam Makeba, Charlie Mingus, and many others. I also loved Arabic music which I got turned onto by my American-Arabic friends, the Serbagi brothers, Midhat, Richard, Russell, and Roger.

Midhat, a violist, and I were close friends from 7<sup>th</sup> Army Symphony days and, as previously noted, we had roomed together at Bardwell Manor during our student days at the New England Conservatory. In New York City he rented a large railroad apartment on 108<sup>th</sup> Street and Broadway with several vacant rooms which a few people, including me, came to rely upon as a temporary abode. As mentioned, he would soon become a member of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra.

Meanwhile, my brother Darrel was exploring his own various talents, including studying with Stella Adler which led him to develop remarkable skills as a mime. He was rooming with Don Plumley, an actor and also a friend of mine who would play in many movies and TV shows including the important role of Inspector McNeil in Jimmy Cagney's last movie *Ragtime*. Cancer would take Don's life at the age of only 54. Darrel and Don's close friends Roger Serbagi and Peter Boyle (*Everybody Loves Ramond*) held their own private ceremony in Roger's apartment to honor Don for which Darrel wrote a very beautiful and profound poem. I had another appointment and was able to stay with the group for only a few minutes.

While studying with Stella Adler, Darrel was required to dance with another student during a class session. His partner was Carole D'Andrea who would marry Robert Morse. Morse achieved his greatest fame in the role of J. Pierrepont Finch in the Broadway musical *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying* with co-stars Rudy Valley, Michele Lee, and Charles Nelson Reilly. Darrel and I both got jobs for the show hawking soft drinks and refreshments at the concession stands at intermission time and so saw the show many times. It was a great show.

Years after *How to Succeed* closed, I happened to be in a singles bar in the West 90s called The Library one evening when a woman passed by and spoke her mind. She said that a patron at the end of the bar near the street claimed to be a famous actor, which she highly doubted. Only a few customers were in the establishment, so a glance down the nearly empty bar revealed that a gentleman was indeed sitting there with a couple of friends drawing all kinds of attention to himself. And he was indeed quite famous for this was Robert Morse. Since he was being very open and into meeting anyone present, I soon made my way to where he sat and started a conversation. "We used to work together," I



said. "Really?" he responded curiously, and named off a few venues as possibilities. "Not quite!" I said. "How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying." Now he was perplexed until I explained that I had worked there hawking soft drinks. We had a good laugh over that one. We talked quite a while and got off on the subject of music which brought him to reminisce rather poignantly and nostalgically about Frank Loesser, who wrote the music and the lyrics for "How to Succeed." Loesser died at the young age of 59 of lung cancer, and Morse said he missed him very much.

Darrel soon learned of an opening in the Halifax Symphony in Nova Scotia. After a successful audition, he headed for Halifax where he remained for two seasons. I would visit him there the second season where I found him and a roommate and the roommate's fiancé living in a little cabin in a place called Duncan's Cove. There the waves sometimes washed in from the Cove and splashed up on the square framed window of their living room. It was a rustic, idyllic setting.

Midhat would eventually take a beautiful apartment on West End Avenue. I visited him and his brother Roger there often as did Darrel and Don Plumley. Dave Amram stopped by on one occasion bringing with him one of his celebrated friends, the actress Tina Louise who had starred in the movie *God's Little Acre* for which she received the Golden Globe Award for New Star of the Year. She would star in many more movies and TV shows. I was reading Henry Miller at the time. Tina was aware of him and we got into a good discussion about some of Miller's viewpoints.

Somewhere during this time-frame I also met Gloria Forman. Gloria worked for the city in child welfare services attending to the needs and problems of neglected children. We spent many good times together and have remained lifelong friends.

Ralph Zeitlin was a close friend, a horn player and recorder player who was also Dave Amram's personal copyist. He could often be found busy copying for Dave in Dave's first floor apartment on 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 12<sup>th</sup> Street in the heart of Greenwich Village. At times I stopped by to visit Ralph there. Sometimes Dave was present and sometimes not. On one occasion when Dave was home, someone threw some stones up against the window on the far end of the apartment trying to catch his attention. That end of the apartment looked out over the corner of 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 12<sup>th</sup> Street. Dave went to the window, opened it and spoke with the person below who had thrown the stones. They held a brief conversation. When they were finished Dave turned and announced he had just been speaking with Arthur Miller, author of *Death of a Salesman* and plays like *A View from the Bridge* which ranked him alongside other top playwrights of the 20<sup>th</sup> century like Eugene O'Neil and Tennessee Williams.

Speaking of Tennessee Williams, I might mention the time Ed Loudon (yet to be introduced) and I visited a bar early one afternoon in San Francisco. Ed was a very close friend who had come out as gay, and on that particular occasion I had gone with him to a bar which was a gay bar. After a while I walked Tennessee Williams with a retinue of three or four pretty tough-looking motorcycle types. I watched Tennessee as he sat surveying the scene. He and his friends were all very quiet, a close knit group, and if they

spoke, it was only with lowered voices. The friends seemed locked in, alert to Williams for any directions or needs he might express. Most apparent was that he was quite conscious of who he was: Tennessee Williams, one of the greatest playwrights ever born in America.

Good fortune would soon smile nicely in Ralph Zeitlin's direction. Georg Solti and the Chicago Symphony was coming to town and Solti wanted to do Bach's Brandenburg Concerto No. 2 with recorder instead of flute. They needed a New York recorder soloist and Solti's office called one of the city's top talent agencies where Connie Taylor was employed. Connie happened to be going out with Ralph Zeitlin and she took the call. "Certainly we have a recorder player," she replied. Besides playing the horn, Ralph was a virtuoso recorder player. He was the choice. It was a great pleasure to attend the performance at Carnegie Hall and see my friend and colleague Ralph seated there in the orchestra section of the Chicago Symphony as one of the soloists playing alongside the other soloists in the ensemble. These were Ray Still on oboe, Adolph Herseth on trumpet, and Samuel Magad on violin. Ralph would play the Concerto on two other occasions in subsequent years. On one of these, they were unable to locate Ralph at first and were considering hiring another recorder player until Solti stepped in. "No!" he said. "I want Zeitlin! No one else will do!"

### **Racism New York style**

One worthwhile mention of events that occurred on 108<sup>th</sup> Street in Midhat's apartment happened when Marie Hence, a violinist and one of the few African American students at NEC when I studied there, dropped in for a visit one Sunday afternoon. She had just moved to the City and was getting acclimatized. Marie was also searching for a room to rent and spied a place in the Sunday New York Times which, by chance, happened to be located in a building directly across the street from Midhat's building. I listened in as Marie called the number advertising the room rental. A woman answered, and after describing the room and stating the price, arranged for Marie to go right over and see the apartment. In closing the conversation Marie said: "Oh, by the way. I should mention that I am black." After a moment's hesitation, the woman assured Marie that was no problem. Marie asked if I would go with her to see the room to which I gladly agreed. We left immediately. Five minutes later we were ringing the doorbell of the vacant room. A woman with graying hair, slightly overweight, opened the door and we could see inside that another woman was also present. "I'm so sorry," said the woman. "But a friend just dropped by and needed a room, so I have decided to rent it to her." We were flabbergasted! This was racism, New York Style, at its typical worst during those times. I could see a wave of hurt wash over Marie's face. It hurt and angered me as well, but how could I feel the hurt Marie was experiencing? I couldn't.

Marie would earn her living in New York City mostly by playing Broadway shows. We saw each other several times over the years in a group or sometimes just to talk.

As I have mentioned, my roommate during 7<sup>th</sup> Army Symphony days was David Moore, an African American. Marga Moore was his German wife and perhaps out of sheer innocence found a way to defeat the kind of racism Marie experienced. When Marga and Dave needed an apartment, Dave felt certain they would encounter some kind of racism. Marga didn't see it that way and went searching for an apartment by herself. When she found one to her liking in a very nice neighborhood on Riverside Drive, she signed the lease with the owner and paid the additional one-month's rent security deposit. She didn't bother telling the owner that she was married to an African American. What affair was that of the owner and why should it matter anyway? This was Marga's attitude. When Dave showed up with Marga and they took occupancy of the apartment, the owner was thoroughly miffed. But there was nothing she could do about it. Dave and Marga lived happily in that apartment for several years during the time their beautiful daughter Margaret was born.

### **Westward Ho!**

Midhat's brother, Roger, was an actor who was well on his way to building a nice career for himself as he would do through major roles in Broadway plays like *Awake and Sing*, *The Cemetery Club*, *King Henry V*, and in films like *Crocodile Dundee II*, *Crawlspace*, *The Effects of Gamma Rays on Man in the Moon Marigolds*, and in TV series and films such as *Law & Order*, *Spencer for Hire*, *Ed*, and *The Adams Chronicles*—just to name a few. We were closest friends and, as with his brothers Midhat and Richard, shared many experiences and confidences together.

Roger had just been hired by the Old Globe Theatre in San Diego where he would act alongside such notable actors as Ellen Geer, Victor Buono, and Michael O'Sullivan. And, he had decided to drive there in a rent-a-car. He didn't have to coax much to get me to join him. I was anxious to get a taste of this new rebellion that was brewing in San Francisco that stirred something inside me which demanded exploration, and this was my chance to get to California. Soon we were on our way.

### **My status as a horn player**

The horn was still with me in spirit but was also taking a back seat for the moment. The betrayal, the two months spent at Mass Mental, my desire to become a writer, but most of all, my search of self—all had their effect. When Roger and I left for the West Coast, I left the horn behind. I must have sensed that I would not be playing it for a while.

The future was suddenly a great unknown. But, as Bill Purvis said to me a few years later when I told him I was a former horn player, "There is no such thing as a former horn player." He was a member of the New York Woodwind Quintet and Professor of Horn at Yale University who at the time was rehearsing my *Four Songs for Soprano, Horn, and Piano* for performance at Alice Parker's conference concert with her organization Melodious Accord. And he was right. Horn playing was in my DNA. While I was not playing the instrument when we had that conversation, it was not because I was

avoiding the horn. It was only because I was concentrated on my career as a composer. Beneath, I was still a horn player. And, as I would also learn from my trip West, the horn would always be there in the background no matter how far I ventured from the tree.

## **San Francisco**

In San Francisco my old friend Jack Ateljevich from the 28<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> Division Band kindly opened his home for me in Sausalito, just across the Golden Gate Bridge. I spent a few days there getting adjusted. Next I found a room on Pine Street just off of Polk Street in San Francisco. The most immediate problem was the little money I had. How was I going to survive? I bought a set of paints and collected some pine cones which I painted and formed into figurines. My half-hearted attempt to sell these door-to-door met with no success. The figurines were, nevertheless, quite expressive and creative.

After a few days living in my new room, toward evening I went for a walk and entered a small café around the corner on Polk Street which had just enough space for about three tables pushed against the entrance wall. A woman seated at one of these started up a conversation and introduced me to her companion. This was Ed, with thinning hair, who, I would learn, walked with a limp—a carryover from childhood polio. The woman was Audrey with red hair and freckles who laughed often. After talking a while, they let me know they were trying to find a place to stay that night. They had little money. The hour was late. Since they seemed like good people and honest, I invited them to stay with me which they accepted. Though far removed from any personal aspirations I had at the moment, that act opened the door to a long string of adventures, some welcome but others which would prove equally unwelcome.

## **Homeless in the City by the Bay**

My rent was due all too soon. If I paid it I would be nearly broke. Audrey and Ed had been staying with me a few days. Now we set out into the world together without a roof over our heads. Being homeless was a new experience for me, but it turned out Ed was a master of survival. He hailed from Flint, Michigan but had been living in San Francisco a few months during which he had made quite a few contacts.

Ed was the kind of person people instinctively liked and trusted, just as I had. Among his contacts were three young women, students at San Francisco State College, who rented a large house near Clay Street not far from the Nob Hill district. This was a very nice area of town. Ed felt they might agree to let us stay in one of their vacant rooms for a day or two. And they did.

One day as Ed, Audrey and I walked along the streets of Nob Hill, Audrey suddenly fell to the sidewalk in convulsions. I had never witnessed anything like this and was panicked. Ed, fortunately, was familiar with the experience and knew what to do, which was mostly nothing. Gradually Audrey recovered consciousness. She had had an epileptic seizure.

There were other things to learn about Ed and Audrey's mysterious relationship. Though Audrey easily appeared to be of voting age, it turned out that she was only 16 years-of-age and a runaway from an abusive stepfather whom her mother refused to try to control. This meant Ed was committing statutory rape. And, once I knew about it, that made me complicit for not reporting it. But clearly the new style of life in the counter culture did not always coincide with the normal standards of law or behavior. The real criminal in this case was Audrey's stepfather aided by her mother. Ed was Audrey's savior whom she loved. Was it rape when it could not be denied that Audrey was mature enough to make her own decisions about her sexuality? To me it was not, though in other cases the laws of statutory rape might need to apply.

Shortly after Audrey's seizure, Ed and I were out walking and he happened to take out a community newspaper from a newspaper stand. As he scanned the paper he came across an ad. "Look at this!" he said. The ad read: "Free Thinkers. Artists, Musicians. Free Rent. Fix up your own apartments!" It could not be true, could it? The address was on California Street near Fillmore Street only a couple of blocks from where we were. We collected Audrey from the Clay Street house and went over to check it out. The ad was legitimate.

Rumor had it later that the owner of the building was trying to entice artistic types to take up residence there because he thought they would fix up his apartments which he could then rent for higher prices. Whatever the reason, this was a large house with several vacant rooms cared for by a custodian by the name of Frank Fink. We were the first to respond to the ad. Frank gave us a brief interview and then okayed us to take rooms in the basement that was well cared for. Ed and Audrey selected a large room in the front, and I took a small room in the rear. A bathroom was located in the hallway. Enough furniture was stored in the building so that we could instantly make our rooms livable. We were suddenly homeless no more.

### **California Street**

Many fascinating people visited the California Street house, some just passing through, remaining a night or two as their journeys carried them elsewhere in California. Several of these people, however, took rooms there and would become lifelong friends. The most surprising of the new rent-free tenants were John and Meryl Sare (pronounced Sair). Both had just graduated from Indiana University at Bloomington. His degree was in mathematics, but he was an expert in computer technology. Meryl, to my delight, was an applied major in piano. She had played solo with the Philadelphia Orchestra when she was a teenager. (Was this another of those paranormal meetings?) We would eventually play the Brahms Horn Trio together in concert along with violinist Eric Smith, but that was in the distant future. For the present, another new friend to meet was Buddy Kellogg, who loved Jazz and followed Buddhism, the Dharma Bums (Jack Kerouac) version. His cousin, Bob Kemp, who had been a paratrooper in Korea where his chute failed to deploy, breaking his back, would also become a friend. Then there were Chris and Vicki. They had worked on voter registration campaigns in Alabama where they tried to register African Americans to vote for the first time. We came to suspect that Chris was an

undercover agent when someone met him in Big Sur months later where he was using a different name.

Some of the people who wandered in and out over the next few months would also become a part of the new community even though they lived elsewhere. This included Lonnie Hendren, a Latino, who was a career employee at the post office. He often brought in food or provided us with wheels (his car) when we needed to get someplace. Lonnie was married to a very beautiful Caucasian woman and was extremely generous. We became close friends. Eventually, when he purchased a different car, he gave me his old one.

Peter Outlaw and Bernie Green, African Americans, also became important members. Peter hailed from Philadelphia and turned out to be a very significant person in my life. Peter Outlaw was his real name.

No one except Lonnie seemed to have a regular job, but everyone pulled together and contributed what they could. For example, I worked for a few days over Christmas at the Post Office in China Town which brought in some welcome dollars communally shared.

Ed and Audrey's very large room became the center of social activity whose reputation spread beyond California Street helped along by at least one daily gallon of Red Mountain wine which sold for about \$1.40. It tasted about what one would expect a gallon of wine that sold for \$1.40 to taste. People soon learned they could stop by Ed's for a while for some good conversation, a glass of wine, and a general party atmosphere.

One night early on we heard a commotion and a women's voice calling out in the apartment directly above Ed's. We ran upstairs where we were greeted by a woman emerging from the apartment with blood streaming from her mouth. This room was occupied by Kenny, a Jamaican, and his wife. The woman was panicked because she could not stem the flow of blood and soon collapsed into semi-conscious. We called for an ambulance and ran down the street to where a nursing home was located, but they would not help. By the time the ambulance arrived the woman had expired. Kenny was distraught when he learned what had happened. "She had tuberculosis," he said. "She was one good woman!"

## **Speelunking**

John Sare became a close friend and was eager for adventure. He loved outdoor activities and convinced several of us our lives would never be complete unless we went spelunking. With Lonnie at the wheel and some spelunking equipment John had purchased, we drove North up to Angel's Camp in Calaveras County, famed geographically after Mark Twain's tale, *The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County*. We were concerned, however, only with locating the cave on the cave map John suggested we should explore. We were successful in our search and just about to enter the

cave when a group from the Sierra Club descended upon us demanding to know who we were. They were protecting the cave from vandals.

When the Sierra Club people determined we were okay, they led us through the cave themselves which extended a good 75 yards and contained at least two enormous rooms with stalactites and stalagmites which we eagerly explored. Narrow passageways, crawl spaces, and shafts were everywhere to behold including a small tunnel leading to a drop-off where you could drop a rock and not hear it land. The professional lamps of the Sierra Club members illuminated the scene. Our lamps barely make a glimmer in the black light of the cave, and we were fortunate, indeed, to have run into the Sierra Club members. John himself panicked for a few moments when the leader of the Sierra group measured the air quality in one of the rooms with an indoor air quality monitor and announced it contained insufficient oxygen.

After spelunking we left the Sierra Club people and found a camping place where we set up camp. We then stopped at a local bar to toast our adventure. One of our group, whose name I shall not mention, was possessed with the absurd American fetish for huge breasted women. We were seated at a booth when he began ogling one of the local women at the bar so endowed, to which a couple of local men took exception. Hostile glances were soon sent in our direction. It was time to leave and drag our companion with us who could hardly tear himself away from the hallowed vision of his desire. As we were leaving, the men at the bar suggested we meet them at a local event that was taking place that evening just outside of town so we could get to know each other better. We talked it over later and actually considered accepting their invitation. Fortunately, we decided against it and, as we would learn—and should have known anyway—that would not have been a good idea.

We broke camp the next morning and drove to the little town of Angel's Camp which was having a small street fair. There we encountered the men who had been at the bar. These were big, tough country types. One of them started up a conversation. "Guess you boys kind of lucked out last night," he said. The implications were clear though he said it with a smile. I was wearing a camping knife sheathed in a holster. Suddenly he reached over, pulled the knife from my holster, and held it pointed at my back. We froze. I sensed, though, that this man was not a real threat. Reaching around, I immediately took the knife back, grabbing it by the handle, and put it back in my holster. This seemed to satisfy him. We could stand up to them. After a couple more minutes of light banter which both sides sought to make sound friendly, we went our separate ways.

On another occasion, however, I faced a weapon threat that was far more real. Tom Giles was an African American who came around California Street on several occasions. He liked the spirit of comradery there and everyone liked this mild and gentle man. One day he quit his job, bought a van, fixed it up so he could live in it with the woman he had been living with, and started smoking lots of marijuana. He was very inexperienced—the word "uncool" easily applied—and the van soon attracted the attention of the police who arrested him. He was given a jail sentence for possession of

marijuana. When he got out of prison he went to visit Buddy one afternoon, who by then had married.

Buddy and his wife, Donna, were living in a new residence. I happened to be present along with several other friends that day. Everyone was glad to see Tom and welcomed him.

At some point in the conversation I said something that Giles disliked. To everyone's intense surprise, especially mine, he pulled out a pistol and aimed it right at me. I thought he was about to fire. So did everyone else. Suspense hung in the air until Donna seized the moment. She came from behind Giles and deftly took the pistol from his hand which he fortunately surrendered. "Let's not play with toys," she laughed. "I'll keep this for now." The tension was broken. Giles, too, I believe felt relief that the incident had ended without some catastrophe.

Prison had affected Tom. He was a different person. I would never trust him again nor did I want to have anything more to do with him. Donna told me later that she panicked and thought Giles was about to shoot. She felt she had to do something. It was like floating in space as she reached for the gun and took it away.

### **Hitchhiking to Mexico – Peyote encounter**

Many people in the counter culture talked about Mexico as though it were a Shangri-La. Could it be true? Bud Kellogg, Peter Outlaw, Bernie Green, and I concocted a plan to hitchhike down to the new mecca to find out for ourselves. With several people from our California house cheering us on, we embarked upon the trip.

Four people hitchhiking together cannot hope to get many rides, so we split up. Bud Kellogg and Peter Outlaw teamed up as did Bernie Green and I so that we had one white and one African American guy together in each pairing. We agreed we would reconnoiter at various places along the trip which we did first in some town near, I think, Santa Cruz. There we ran into some guys working at a local cannery. They were fascinated by our journey and eagerly put us up for the night. Our next meet-up place was at the Big Sur Lodge where we reconnoitered the next day near evening. I think we were all amazed that we had got enough rides along the way that we actually were able to reconnoiter there. But it had been tough getting rides. Rather than hitchhike through Big Sur we decided to walk through and just kind of enjoy experiencing this stretch of land first hand, up close and personal, while getting to know one another better.

It was a beautiful night with the moon shining full and bright down upon us, with a steep precipice to our right with the great Pacific Ocean some 200 feet below and the mountain side flush with the winding, twisting road on which we walked on the left. There was no traffic for a good hour or so, maybe two or three, but then the lights from a car appeared from far behind slowly winding toward us. Three kids, two guys and a girl, occupied the car and sized us up as they passed. They then stopped to ask if we would like



a ride. At first we declined, but then they invited us to their campsite nearby so we said yes.

At the campsite a large pot glowed over a small but well-contained fire beside our hosts' tent. After introductions, they left us for a few moments and powwowed together a short distance away. They decided to trust us. Did we want to try peyote which had cooked enough and was brewing in the pot on the fire even as they spoke? None of us had tried it before but all of us were aware of the stories associated with the plant. Here was a chance to find out for ourselves if peyote had all those mysterious properties reported about it. We said "Yes." We'd like to try it.

It was a kind of magical night that followed which we spent on the side of the mountain contemplating the stars and life's mysteries. The next morning our overnight peyote friends drove us back to the highway where we bid them farewell.

As we hiked along the highway I observed a patchwork of large, intricately, woven silvery spider webs that one could only describe as an architectural wonder. But there were no spiders, nor were there really any webs, just figments of my imagination left over from the peyote. Though I would try peyote on three or four other occasions, I cannot say that I personally ever experienced anything truly magical or wonderful from ingesting this plant.

From Big Sur we continued South through Ventura and then stopped at Topanga Canyon where Buddy's first wife was living. She treated us for lunch and a tour of the canyon.

Back on the highway, with all four of us together, a guy named Bill picked us up who was himself out searching for adventure. After learning our destination, he decided to join us. Suddenly we had wheels. He drove us to San Diego which was about as near to Mexico as you could get without actually being there. In San Diego we met up with my good friend Roger Serbagi acting in the Old Globe Theater.

Roger received us graciously and even arranged for permission for us to watch a rehearsal of one of the Old Globe productions. He put us up overnight and the next morning we had breakfast with Roger and Michael O'Sullivan, who wanted to join us. Michael had a certain distant air in a kind of gentle, artistic way and welcomed us warmly. For those unfamiliar with his name who have seen Clint Eastwood's movie *Hang 'Em High*, Michael played the role in the movie of the repentant alcoholic preacher, Francis Elroy Duffy, just prior to being hanged. Tragically, after many successes including a Tony nomination for his role as the villain Sedgwick in the Broadway musical, *It's a Bird, It's a Plane, It's Superman*, Michael would die of an overdose of sleeping pills, either accidentally or by choice. It was 1971. He was 37 at the time of his death.

After our visit with Roger, we had had enough hitchhiking for a while. Mexico could wait for another day—though it would not be so long in coming for me—and so could these adventures no matter how fascinating some of them might be. While they

might be construed as part of the search for meaning and enlightenment, just how far did they lead along that path? Yet for many they were an essential, intrinsic part of the search. My path toward understanding and fulfillment, however, would lead in other directions. For the time being, it was a relief to have wheels. And Bill was delighted to drive us all the way back to San Francisco.

## **Mexico – second class**

When I did finally travel to Mexico, it was far from Shangri-La that I found there. I became convinced that that fantasy arose from middle class Americans involved in the new counter culture who loved Mexico because they could purchase drugs for next to nothing there and party at will. I must add, though, that Mexico was also a good place for African Americans, other minorities, and artists to go to for some respite against the racism and other prejudices that transfused life in America.

My two months in Mexico, one in Mazatlan and the other in Mexico City, revealed a far different side than any I had heard of. I traveled by myself on the second class train and though my Spanish was extremely limited, I still managed to meet some of the people on a personal level.

The train trip was in itself something like from another century. Many on board had missing teeth. If they had a tooth ache, they bandaged their jaws like in old cartoons by wrapping a cloth strip around their head and jaw and knotting it at the top. The people brought their animals on board, chickens, dogs, goats, whatever. They were poor and boxes often served for luggage.

The streets for some of the little towns we passed through at night were lit by wires strung between buildings with a light bulb shining dimly from a socket in the middle of the wires. The houses were often monolithic constructed of gray adobe walls with flat roofs. During the daytime the train stopped in some of these little towns that were so incredibly poor. Little children with beautiful dark eyes would scramble onto the train trying to earn a few pesos and calling out: "Tacos! Tacos! Dos por un peso!"

I would get off the train to stretch when we stopped. In one little town I purchased a taco from an old woman in her shawl and ragged clothing. She reached down into the bottom of her basket carrying tacos and seemed to search for one that was distinct. I could see hatred in her eyes, and felt it was because I was a gringo. When I opened the taco back at my seat it was rotten. I hated to think what might be in it. Fortunately, this woman was a rarity. But one old man tried to pick an argument with me. I didn't know what he was saying, except that his monologue frequently contained the word "Americano." I assumed he had some political complaint to make. Several people shouted him down in my defense and smiled in my direction. This shut him up. And that is how generally I found the people to be, helpful and kind, filled with smiles though they had so much poverty to deal with in the struggle for survival. Of all the people I observed in Mexico, the Indians had it the worst. Mexico, how should I describe it? When I was there it was a country stamped with incredible economic disparity and a class structure

that kept the poor trapped inside their boxes of poverty providing little opportunity for escape.

In Mazatlan I rented a room and roamed the town. I met a down and out American who was sleeping in a poor house that charged one peso a night to stay there. He showed me the place which was just an open structure with a slanted metal roof filled with cot beds on which straw mattresses were placed. I invited him to stay with me for a few days so he could get his bearings and a little confidence back. When he was ready to leave I gave him a few dollars and wished him well.

I would soon be in nearly the same predicament myself. I had run out of money and was waiting for a check to arrive from my good brother. I looked in my pocket. One peso. That was it. I gave it to a beggar on my way out to the American Embassy which was located on the beach. It would be of better use for him than me. What could I do with one peso? When I got to the Embassy I inquired, hoping for the best, if a letter had arrived. "Just a minute! I'll go and see," said the secretary behind the desk. She returned with the letter. Inside was the check. What a relief, and there was just time to make it to the bank to get it cashed!

In Mexico City I rented a room on the top of a flat roofed building from a modestly wealthy and ambitious woman close to her forties who acted as the landlady for her property. It consisted of a main two story building in which she lived, from which four or five small one room windowless structures connected to a larger two story building on the opposite end of the property. The woman employed several people in some service capacity including a pretty young girl from the country whose people were trying to sponsor her at a conservatory because she had a beautiful voice. The girl's job was to help with the laundry in one of the little rooms in the connecting part. The landlady spoke English fairly well and seemed impressed to have an American renting the room. In fact, she seemed intimidated just because I was an American.

## **Arrested**

My room was perched on top of the flat-roofed two storied building opposite the landlady's residence which was connected by the series of small rooms. My room was nearly square, maybe about 15 feet by 15 and 7 feet in height. It was constructed out of some kind of heavy corrugated material with a flat, metal roof. About 30 feet across from me rose a concrete, rectangular structure about 20 feet across, six feet high, and maybe 10 feet in width. An open space served as a door and you stepped down into the room when you entered. This was the room which Alberto Escudero rented. I would soon learn he was a playwright who had had one play produced. He was a good 10 years older than me.

Alberto and I struck up a friendship, though he was frustrated by my limited skills with Spanish. One night we decided to go into town together. I followed Alberto's lead which took us to a rich tourists' square with tables in the center occupied by fun-loving tourists. Expensive restaurants lined the parameter of the square and were also filled with fun-loving tourists.

"Let's go in here," Alberto motioned, and we went into one of those touristy restaurants. When the host came forward to greet us, Albert began talking. He got louder and louder and was soon giving a speech. I could see that the restaurant staff and the guests were not pleased by what he was saying, which turned out to be a rant disparaging capitalism. "C'mon," I said grabbing Alberto by the arm. He allowed himself to be led outside only reluctantly.

I wanted to get out of the area and fast. But it was too late. Once outside the restaurant, we were instantly surrounded by the police who were dressed in brown, soldier-like uniforms. The paddy wagon was waiting. There was no escape. Tourists, seated at the tables looked curiously and anxiously on. "Get in!" one of the officers commanded in Spanish.

On the way to the prison where we were obviously headed, I gave a quick survey of the paddy wagon as it rumbled through the streets. How far away was the prison and how much time did we have before we arrived there? It was dark inside with little light, but I could distinguish the faces, Alberto's and three or four policemen. The police were not menacing but firm, no nonsense types. Two policemen sat in the cab in front, one driving. Horror stories I had heard of Mexican prisons came to mind, and then I remembered a resolve I had made many years earlier never to spend a night in jail.

"Alberto!" I said. "We've got to get out of here!"

"Imposible!" he replied. "No tengo dinero!" The police looked on with heightened interest.

"Quánto dinero?" I asked. Because I was in Mexico where who knew what might happen, I kept a secret stash of money in one of my socks. Someone had suggested that I do that when going out.

Alberto shrugged and mentioned a figure, around 20 dollars, I think.

"Yo tengo!" I said. I removed my shoe and stocking, and handed Alberto the money.

The policemen who were watching with growing anticipation shouted out something to the men in the cab. The paddy wagon came to a screeching halt. Alberto handed one of the police officers the money, and out we went, free as birds.

### **An act of violence**

I vowed never to go out with Alberto again, but still we remained friendly. One day I came home, climbed the stairs to the roof, and saw that Albert had invited two or three of the landlady's servants, including the girl with the voice, into his room. He was encouraging the girl to sing. I went over and listened in. She did have a beautiful voice.

Suddenly the landlady appeared. "What's going on here," she shouted. She ordered the servants out, grabbed the girl by the arm, jerking it severely, which caused her to cry out, and ordered her downstairs. "I don't ever want to see this happen again!" she shouted at Alberto. She avoided looking in my direction.

Alberto and I sat there a few moments in silence. "Just a moment," he said quietly. "I'll be right back."

A few minutes later I heard a scream, shouts, the slamming of doors and running feet. "Uh oh!" I said to myself and rushed downstairs. The sight that greeted me in one of those little connecting rooms was horrendous. Alberto had grabbed the landlady by the hair, which was red, had her bent over a table backwards and was literally pulling some of the hair from her scalp as he said words which I did not understand but were filled with malice. The woman appeared to be in a state of shock and nearly unconscious as two servants tried to pull Alberto away as did the girl. I rushed to their assistance and together we forced Alberto to release his grip on the woman. The servants pulled the landlady out and they slammed the door behind. Alberto, the girl, and I were locked inside. There were no windows in the room.

"Look!" I yelled to the woman through the door. "I'm an American and I was not responsible for this. I just helped you. You'd better tell the police that when they arrive!"

"I will," she promised, with a voice filled with dread.

The police did arrive soon and the woman kept her word. They opened the door and led Alberto and the girl away, though I did not see how the girl had any responsibility for what had happened. I worried about her and her future.

I knew that Alberto kept a play he was working on under his mattress. Since I did not know what might happen, I retrieved the play intending to save it for him. The next day, however, Alberto was back and packing his belongings. I gave him his play.

The magistrate had ruled the affair was a crime of passion. He ordered Alberto to pay a fine and released him. "Muy mal!" Alberto said of himself. "Muy mal!" He seemed genuinely contrite. I accompanied him outside to a grocery store on the corner. There, the owner, who had learned what had happened, raised Alberto's arm in triumph and cheered! Apparently the landlady had a reputation in the neighborhood. "No!" Alberto declined. He tipped his hand as though lifting a bottle. "Muy mal! Muy mal!" It was the last time I saw Alberto.

### **Farewell to Mexico—The assassination of President Kennedy**

To remain living in my room after what had happened was not possible. I had also had enough of Mexico. I informed the landlady I was leaving. "Just a moment," she said. She returned with a new looking 45 millimeter revolver and waved it wildly in the air. I wondered for a moment if she was threatening me. Having fired this weapon in the

Army, I knew it was a very difficult pistol to fire accurately. "If he comes back" the woman said, "I'm ready for him. The people are lazy. They've got to learn to work. If they don't, they will never make anything of themselves!"

On the streetcar taking me to the train station, I noticed that many of the passengers were intensely occupied reading their newspapers. One of the passengers turned toward me so that the headline on his newspaper was clearly visible. It read: KENNEDY ASESINADO!

### **Riding the rails**

Back in San Francisco Peter Outlaw and I talked it over. He had become a close friend. Lean, confident, handsome with a smooth, pretty face, a guitarist and a budding photographer, many were the eyes of the opposite sex which glanced in his direction when he passed by. We both wanted to return to New York. Since we had already hitchhiked together on our Big Sur adventure, our thumbs could serve as our mode of transportation once again. He would snap photos along the journey. I could write up a text. Together, we would produce a book. The title? "In the Wind!" The title may elicit a few chuckles, but it is "in the wind" that we were for certain as an African American and a Caucasian hitchhiking together cross country in the America of the early 1960s—an America as it existed before Lyndon Johnson's Civil Rights Act.

So there we were out on the highway, this handsome black man with a guitar strapped to his back wearing tight-fitting black jeans highlighting a lean, long gait and me, a white bohemian type with a slight beard and moustache and just as lean, though minus the long gait, looking like we had just stepped out of a Jack Kerouac novel.

Curiosity sometimes inspired people to offer us a ride for a few miles, but the further East we traveled, the harder it became to get picked up. One ride resulted in a race down the highway at close to 100 miles per hour over a two lane road set in the red clay flat plains of Nebraska with the driver fortifying himself with frequent swigs from a flask of whisky. A police car soon took pursuit and with sirens blazing pulled us over. But before the officer arrived we told the driver to chew some cigarettes to remove the smell of alcohol from his breath. That was Peter's idea. The officer commanded us to follow him into a small town where we went straight before the local magistrate.

"You boys have got to help me out," the driver whispered nervously, when he learned the amount of the fine. "I've got no money and a warrant is out on me and they'll lock me up good if they trace it. I helped you out by giving you a ride and now you've got to help me."

Peter and I consulted aside and then pooled almost all of our money and reluctantly handed it over. The driver paid the fine and the judge let him go.

When we arrived in Omaha, the man claimed he could get the money to pay us back from a bartender friend. He left us in the car and went into a bar across the street

from which he never returned. We slept overnight in the car, but by morning it was apparent that this was one man who was not coming back. The police stopped by to check us out. By now it was obvious we had been taken and they agreed. They thought the car was probably stolen. We took a couple of cowboy shirts from the car with pearl buttons with us as a souvenir. I have two of those shirts in my possession today which I have never worn.

As I have mentioned, I have always been struck by the way minds intersect and my belief that there is some kind of universal consciousness that binds us all together. As a prime example, a couple of years later I had a part-time job at the Pickwick Hotel in San Francisco as a parking garage attendant while I was trying to make it in music as a horn player. To park your car there, you had to drive down a narrow ramp that served as both entrance and exit. There a car attendant would take over the vehicle. When the driver wanted to leave, the attendant would retrieve the car and the driver would drive it back up the ramp. Parking in the garage was part of the service for hotel patrons.

Yes, it is a small world. One day, after a man had driven his car down the ramp and he and the woman who accompanied him had exited it leaving the motor running so that I could park it, I prepared a parking ticket and handed it to the man. He actually gulped, turning a sudden shade of white when he saw me. It was the man who Peter and I had bailed out who had abandoned us in Omaha. "I'll pick it up tomorrow, if it's all right with you," he stammered in a panic. I could see he expected some kind of confrontation, the nature of which could not possibly be to his benefit. "Fine!" I said without outwardly giving a hint that I recognized him yet looking steadily in his eyes with full recognition.

That night I thought it over. Surely, the man was registered under a false name at the Pickwick and would probably write a bad check to pay for his hotel bill. I had him in my grasp! All I had to do was make a phone call and it would go badly for him. What should I do? Nothing, was the decision I finally arrived at. The hotel could afford the small amount the man would cheat them out of. But when he drove away—and I was not on staff when that happened—he would recognize that he had had a narrow escape. He might even see that he escaped only because I permitted him to. He had now been confronted with his own wrongdoing. If anything can produce a change in a person, surely a confrontation with one's own evil ways is one of the most powerful tools that can be used to achieve it. Of course, I was giving the man a lot of credit, possibly far more than he deserved. As I saw it, however, it was only right to give him the chance.

At the outskirts of Omaha, Peter and I tried to thumb our way out but the hours flew by and the passing cars were few. We were stranded and spent that night in a Salvation Army barracks. The next morning, after a welcome breakfast, we made our way through some fields to the freight yards, surrounded at one point by a pack of stray, hungry dogs. That was frightening.

At the freight yards, after some hesitation and discussion about our chances and just how, exactly, you did it, we decided to try a new method of transportation. Soon we were aboard a freight car headed, hopefully, East but not sure where we were bound.

A close friend, Kirsten Sorteberg, about whom I will write later, once gave me a framed print on tan paper of a Van Gogh drawing of a train traveling across a landscape of trees and shrubs set on a desolate plain. It was an apt comparison for our train as it traveled across the broad expanse of Western lands. From the road that at times ran nearly parallel to the train at a distance of about 80 yards or so, one man stood beside his car and apparently took exception to the vision he saw of two free spirits, one black and one white, framed in the open door of a passing freight car with legs dangling over the side as though they owned the whole world. Who did they think they were?

From our position we saw this man point a rifle in our direction. He appeared to take aim. Was he really aiming at us? The puff of smoke from his rifle told us he had fired. Whether he wanted to hit us or scare us, we did not know. But we ducked back inside the safety of the box car and laid flat on the floor.

It was freezing that night. Sometime after midnight our new transient home got banged hard with loud metallic blows as it was uncoupled and recoupled to another train. Where were we? For all we knew we might be in Utah someplace.

By the next morning we were pretty hungry as we rolled into a giant freight yard where we gladly disembarked from our freight car. Some trainmen were headed in our direction and we asked where we were. Just outside of Chicago, they said and gave us directions on how to get into the city. They were curious and wanted to know something about us. "We're doing a book," Peter said. He asked the men to pose for some photos. "The book is called *In the Wind*."

### **Manna from Heaven**

We were starving as we followed the men's directions which led through a woods up to a road curving toward Cicero, a suburb of Chicago. In the woods we suddenly came upon loaves and loaves of bread scattered among the trees. We speculated that a bread truck must have skidded on the road above and the loaves had come flying out the back door landing in the woods. This was surely manna straight from heaven. We ate our fill, gave thanks in our private ways to the almighty who had blessed us with this food and took a couple of loaves with us.

When we walked into Cicero, a town that had been in the news because of racial divisions, a group of black men poured out of a bar and surrounded us. They were not pleased to see a black and white man traveling together, especially looking as we did. Their manner was threatening, but we managed to placate them and passed on through. All we had to do next was get into Chicago where not only Peter had many friends but my brother-in-law and nephew, Sydney Johnstone and Mike Johnstone, also lived and could offer their assistance. From Chicago everything was smooth sailing.

As for "In the Wind," that is one book that never got written.



Chapter 10  
**San Francisco poets and artists—the secret of life—a  
paranormal event—criminals—the self discovered**

**San Francisco, second time around**

Back in New York from San Francisco I worked Temp jobs and lived on the lower East Side in an apartment on East 12<sup>th</sup> Street between Avenues B and C. There one night the loud knocking on my walls scared a would-be burglar from off my fire escape to the street below where the police apprehended him. It was in the summertime and very hot so that I had my windows open—not a good idea on the lower East Side of Manhattan. Who knows what danger I escaped that night thanks to my good Samaritan neighbor who spotted the man on my fire escape and pounded on my wall. It was not the first time, nor would it be the last, for which I could thank my guardian angels for standing watch.

I had been back in the city a few months before I ran into Peter Outlaw in the Village. We hadn't seen each other since our cross country trip. "I've got a car and I'm going back to San Francisco," he said. "Want to come along?" I hated many of the temp jobs I was working, and the neighborhood in which I lived was crime ridden and dangerous. His offer provided the perfect escape.

A companion accompanied Peter on our trip. This was Tina Spaulding from Detroit. We stopped there along the way where a friend of Tina's, Donna McMillan joined us. She was a very beautiful and exciting woman who would eventually marry Buddy Kellogg—as previously referred to—once we had arrived in San Francisco. All would be perfect at first and they had one son together. The marriage did not last, though, as many irreconcilable differences arose. She became a Jehovah's Witness and moved back to Michigan where she married another Jehovah's Witness. Donna and I have remained close friends to this day.

Ed Loudin, meanwhile, had broken up with Audrey and announced that he was coming out as gay. Buddy could not believe the news. "That's like John Wayne turning gay," he said. But it was for real. Ed really was gay though none of his closest friends, including me, had an inkling until he came out. I pitied Audrey because she had now lost her protector. Fortunately, she soon met another man and one more her age. They seemed well suited for each other. Ed and I moved in together in a small 2 room basement apartment that was vacant in the Scott Street house where Buddy and Donna were living. There was no conflict between Ed and me because he was gay and I was not. We both accepted each other as we were.

**Artists and poets**

In the months that followed I met and interacted with a wide range of artists and poets beginning with Dan Rowan, a fine artist who became a lifelong friend. He opened a gallery reviewed by Herb Caen, who published a daily column for the San Francisco

Chronicle. Located at 883 Golden Gate Avenue, Dan named the gallery *The Raped and Strangled*. The gala opening happened on Halloween at which several counter culture luminaries showed up at Dan's invitation including Alan Ginsberg, Gary Snyder, and Ed Sanders (leader of the rock group *The Fugs*, which performed at the event). Artist Justin Hein was also present and showed some of his work. Ginsberg was in his element, warm and friendly, and it was a pleasure to meet him.

Poet Dave Bearden often came around, and he and I became good friends. Like me, he was a twin, but his twin brother had died of leukemia when he was only two and one-half year's old. Dave and I went together along with Richard White (yet to be mentioned) to a party of poets where everyone was sitting around in a large circle looking very uptight because Lawrence Ferlinghetti was supposed to appear. Richard took one look and left immediately. Ferlinghetti did in fact show up. Dave introduced me to him with complimentary remarks about a short 16 millimeter film Dan Rowan and I had put together containing some footage of a rotisserie that had impressed Dave. Dan did most of the work in making the film which contained footage of me, but as to its artistic merits, that I found debatable.

Dave later formed a close association with singer and song writer Judee Sill (1944-1979), his significant other with whom he was madly in love and with whom he would collaborate on writing songs and texts. They performed together at the Royal Albert Hall in London without a hint that she would soon die tragically of an overdose of opiates and cocaine. Dave and I were out of touch at the time, but years later reconnected. He wrote me about Judee Sill and I wrote him about Judy Resnick, a friend who took her life just a little over a year after Sill's death in 1979. Notably, Tim Page took up the cause of Judy Sill's music legacy in an illuminating biographical sketch of her life for the Washington Post in the year 2000. It was a notable and noble effort for promoting her work.

A Canadian novelist, Michael Summerleigh, author of an as yet unpublished but very fine novel entitled *Wind*, became interested in Judy Resnick's work upon hearing her recording *You've Heard My Voice* on the web which a blogger in Greece had posted. Michael subsequently discovered the existence of old tapes Judy had made during her hootenanny days for which the library in West Hartford, Connecticut has now established an archive for the preservation of these recordings and other relevant documents. He also made contact with the FolkLife Centre in Washington DC (a branch of the Smithsonian Institute) resulting in the preservation of her work in the federally-maintained national database. My visits with Michael here at my home and many e-mail conversations have built an enduring friendship.

Ed Loudon and I often took walks around San Francisco where it seemed we invariably ran into people he knew. This included Dave Haselwood, the publisher of Auerhahn Press, which published the works of many new poets. He was the first to publish *The Exterminator*, a cut-up work by William Burroughs and Bryan Gysin. On the day we met him he was in the company of Charlie Plymell, who had copies with him of

his own recent publication of beat poets which he titled *Now*. Years later Charlie and I would connect about the possibility of doing an opera together, but it never materialized.

Through Lennie Beecher, my artist friend from Boston, who had many contacts in San Francisco, I met several of the artists at The Green Gallery and eventually participated in one of their "happenings." Lennie, a very original and exceptionally fine artist, had come out to San Francisco for a visit and was instrumental in organizing the event. He was following, in some respects, his own father who was an artist and political activist. My contribution to the happening included playing some horn passages onstage with a variety of improvisational actions going on around the stage. I had taken up the horn again by that time. (See Chapter 11.)

The Green Gallery also featured the work of Jose Ramon Lerma, a world class painter of great originality. We were good friends though seldom stayed in touch. His work was featured in many solo exhibits and group exhibits locally at the Oakland Museum, and the San Francisco Museum of Art, but also nationally at the Chicago Museum of Contemporary Art and the Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery, etc.

### **The Hopis and the secret of life**

On Scott Street, Buddy Kellogg loved talking about jazz and enlightenment and what it meant. He became convinced that the Hopi Indians held the secret to life. Finally, he decided to travel to their reservation with his wife Donna to find out, hoping that I would join them. I was up for the trip.

Buddy bought an old blue station wagon in which he put a mattress in the back. This would serve as our bed on the trip. In this way Buddy, Donna and I traveled to the four corners area where the states of Arizona, New Mexico, Utah and Colorado intersect. The Hopi live in the area there mainly in two villages, Oraibi and Old Oraibi—the latter a village 1000 years old. This is where we went to investigate Buddy's idea, though I was not quite sure how we were going to do that.

As soon as we arrived in Hopiland, Buddy found the culture so foreign to everything he had imagined that he abandoned all thoughts of becoming more involved. I remember the Hopi as a gentle, peaceful people with beautiful, deep, dark eyes who seemed poor. We did speak with a few Hopis but the conversations were just small talk, very short and casual.

Buddy did not learn the secret of life from the Hopi, though we all learned a few things about ourselves. And we also traveled through Navaho country—necessary to get to the Hopis— where we visited the cliff dwellings but also the neighboring Grand Canyon which should be a "must" for everyone. One of our great moments was travelling down the very long, very straight expanse of road in Monument Valley. That was truly magnificent.

Far in the future I would enroll in Elliot Skinner's class in anthropology at Columbia University. Skinner was the first African American Chair of a Department at Columbia and the first African American tenured there. I chose as the topic of my term paper the Hopi Indians, focusing on matriarchal aspects of Hopi society, their attitudes toward competitiveness, and their spiritual philosophy that might be defined as a state of reverence, respect for all things, the desire to live in peace, and to follow the instructions of the creator of the earth. In terms of their way of life, they surely possessed the secret of life as much as any other society of people living together and probably in many ways, more so. Did the Hopis have the secret of life? No doubt they could have made the claim as much as any other people—if they had any wish to. Perhaps Buddy was not too far off the mark except he wanted the Hopi culture to conform to his visions and dreams. That was not possible.

During our visit Buddy, Donna, and I headquartered at Mesa Verde National Park where I hiked through the woods finding all kinds of pottery shards (but no arrow heads). One day the car needed some work, so Buddy and Donna took it into a neighboring town for repair. I stayed at our little camp site. Since we were sleeping in the car we didn't have a tent. It turned out the car had some real mechanical problems requiring Buddy and Donna to stay in town overnight. This was before cell phones, so they had no way of notifying me. They contacted the Forest Service who sent a Forest Ranger to try to find me, but he was unsuccessful.

When nightfall falling and my friends nowhere in sight, I made a little tent by throwing a blanket over a rope tied between two trees while there was still light enough to do it. We had taken the mattress out of the car to air, fortunately, so I used that for a base. A huge thunderstorm erupted that night. The rain fell furiously with lightning striking all around the woods where I was hunkered down shivering in my makeshift tent. I had no flashlight, and except for the flashes of light the lightning produced it was pitch black. I could not see a foot ahead as I waited expectantly dreading every new strike of lightening. For a while I thought I was a "gonner." The next morning, canvassing the area, I noticed that lightening had struck a tree just a short distance from my little tent.

### **A paranormal event**

It was during this time period that one of the most difficult to deny paranormal experiences of all those in which I have ever been involved happened.

Roger Serbagi was on a nationwide tour with the play *A Man for All Seasons*. He knew I was living in San Francisco, but where, he had not an inkling. Similarly, I had not been in touch with Roger for months and had not a clue he was on tour.

One day during the company's stay in San Francisco, Roger toured the area near his hotel with one of his actor friends, Mercer, and found himself at Union Square plaza, a major tourist attraction. He loved the square and began flamboyantly gesticulating with his arms, as some actors are prone to do, as he described to his friend a little about his own close friend David Irving who was there living in the city someplace. It was his histrionics that caught my eye from across the plaza where I had gone with Ed Loudon. I

leaped from the bench on which we were sitting, leaving Ed to wonder what earth shaking event had happened, and rushed across the plaza. The reader might well imagine the look of pure astonishment that registered across Roger's face when he spun around to see who belonged to the mysterious arm that had suddenly flung itself wildly around his shoulders.

After a joyous reunion, Roger and I and his friend Mercer and some of mine spent the next couple of days catching up and touring just a little of the San Francisco I knew. And, as I happened to be flat broke, a fact that Roger quickly suspected, the money he insisted I take could not have been more welcome or better timed.

Roger would marry Anna Stuart and Nadine Moody, both of whom became good friends. Anna, who starred in many soap operas like *The Doctors*, *General Hospital*, and *Another World*, is also a superb Shakespearean actress. Nadine, a dancer who I was never privileged to see perform, is also a dedicated teacher of dance.

On another occasion at Union Square plaza, I happened to be sitting on the grass near a young girl playing guitar. We soon started a conversation. It turned out she also played cello. She was only 16 and still in high school, and I was around 32 at the time, so I pushed all feelings of attraction aside—which was not the easiest task—as I got to know this young woman better over the ensuing weeks. She also wrote her own songs and played some of these, and I revealed to her some of my music background. This was Audrey Fernandes.

Audrey and I continued to get to know each other better through correspondence after I left San Francisco for New York a few months later. We have remained close and good friends ever since.

During this period I lived in a single room with my cat McKenzie—a cat Tysonia and I cared for when we were together—in a two story building intended only for room rentals on the South side of Geary Street. This was just up one-half block from Van Ness Avenue. Darrel also lived there in a separate room with his friend Ruth Oettinger and her cat Mange. Angelo, who was in charge of rentals, rented only to people he found interesting. This included Jim Rainey, a composer, David Barnard, an artist who painted sets for the San Francisco Ballet, Genie Moore, a dancer with the San Francisco Ballet, a jazz trombonist, and Tarquin, a Tarot reader. David Barnard did several abstract water color paintings of me which I still have.

Around this time I also met Kitty Omeara, a friend of Darrel's, who was a very creative person involved in many counter culture activities. She was especially interested in exploring Eastern spiritual paths. Though I had met her before, we ran into each other one day at the San Francisco Library and struck up a conversation. We met a few times and went out together for a while. Our friendship continues today.

## **Criminals**

Not all adventures and experiences in the new counter culture were of a positive or explorative nature nor did they have a positive outcome. Alan Ginsberg's famous lines from his landmark poem *Howl* applied on more than one occasion:

I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by madness,  
starving hysterical naked,  
dragging themselves through the negro streets at dawn looking  
for an angry fix,  
angelheaded hipsters burning for the ancient heavenly  
connection to the starry dynamo in the machinery of the night....

For those involved in creating the new counter culture, drugs and crime were often all around and unavoidable. Community dwelling assured an influx of a wide variety of people from every walk of life. One time when I was living at Scott Street (as described, the rental house in San Francisco where I shared a small apartment with Ed Loudon), when I climbed the few stairs to the entrance of the house, I passed a man who was leaning down with both hands placed on one bare foot. He smiled as I passed, and I quickly saw that he was injecting himself with a drug into his foot. This man, I learned, was so far gone on meth amphetamine he was having conversations with Egyptians in the sky.

Ed introduced me to his friend John Ruiz. John had recently separated from his wife, one reason being that he was also attracted to men. He and his wife remained close nevertheless. Without doubt, John was one of the best natured persons I have ever met such that it was a pleasure just to see him and be in his presence. Always, he wore a generous smile on his face and had something positive to say. I would get to know John better after I moved from Scott Street. One tragic night somehow he was in the wrong place at the wrong time where he met up with the wrong people. They took him for a ride some place, beat him to a pulp, and then threw his dead body from their car as they sped through the streets of San Francisco. Though his mother pursued the investigation with the police, to my knowledge they never learned who did this.

One afternoon as I walked down Polk Street, a young woman started up a conversation. After a few minutes, in which we seemed to share a few things in common, she said she lived in the neighborhood and asked if I might like to have lunch which would give us a chance to get better acquainted. She offered to prepare something in her apartment. It seemed innocent enough and I agreed. When we walked through the door of her apartment, located on an upper floor, however, I was greeted by the vision of a man about six foot tall, flabbily built, who stood smiling at me with his hand on a camera mounted on a stand. A large bright light illuminated a white backdrop placed against a wall about ten feet beyond the man. "Holy smoke!" I said to myself. "This is a porno setup!" Acting very naïve as though I did not recognize what they were up to and what they hoped to achieve with me, I beat a very hasty retreat to the street below.

It was easy to become an accessory to crime in those days while being perfectly innocent. One night in North Beach (loosely akin to Greenwich Village in New York

City) a group of people, including me, had somehow come together and were walking along having a fabulous time. I met Ann Scofield on that sojourn who had the lead in the Sausalito Little Theatre's production of Clifford Odets' *The Country Girl*, directed by Will Marchetti. She would invite me to attend a performance which I gladly accepted.

Ann was a recent graduate of Antioch College who, besides acting, went on to work as a director in Vermont, New York City, New Mexico, Nicaragua, and Wales. Coming from Connecticut, her father, a writer for radio programs like "The Shadow," was blacklisted by McCarthy.

Several year's later, Ann's Eureka moment, as she put it, came when in a flash she conceptualized the idea of creating workshops for women to help connect with their authenticity and to stop performing for the wrong reasons. She followed through by setting up workshops for women in which they could explore themes, images, and issues central to women's experience through the transformative medium of theater. Ann named her eureka moment Transformative Theatre: Creative Workshops Series for Women. She presented the workshops at the Lacolle Center for Innovative Education at Concordia University in Montreal, Canada where she had an enthusiastic following.

That night on North Beach marked the beginning of my friendship with Ann which initially lasted a few weeks before we went our own ways. Years later we picked up again becoming closer friends visiting each other back and forth from Montreal to New York City. It was after moving to Toronto she learned, that, like her mother, she had advanced breast cancer. I would do my best to offer what assistance I could as she next moved to California seeking alternative treatments. Sadly, like her mother, her breast cancer had progressed too far and was incurable.

As our amorphous group wandered leisurely along that night in North Beach, suddenly two people in the group broke into a small clothing store and emerged with handfuls of clothing. Other people followed and quickly ran into the store to help themselves. Then, in a panic, everyone started running. Ann and I ran too. Like it or not, we were now a part of this band of thieves. When we got to our destination, which was the apartment dwelling of one member of the group, the thieves happily laid out all the clothes they had stolen. They were highly pleased with their booty.

A break-in like that was not that surprising. Stealing became a way of life for some people which extended to anything they could get their hands on. In New York City, during a period in which Darrel and I rented an apartment on the lower East Side on Seventh Street between Second Avenue and First Avenues, we had to tell a couple of suspect visitors who passed through not to steal from the local grocer. He was a good person and warranted our protection.

One day a complete stranger came to that apartment in New York City and plunked down a solid brick of marijuana he hoped to sell to a friend who was staying with us. Another time someone brought in a stolen check seeking someone stupid enough to try to cash it at a check-cashing place with the promise of a percentage of the check.

Yet another time, one of our roommates, who had brought his girlfriend, Amber, to live with him in his room, slapped her around. He was a very muscular man who had a job painting the ceiling of one of the main churches on Park Avenue from scaffolds, a dangerous job. I got him alone and told him there would be no more beating women in my home or he could leave. The choice was his. He tried to justify his actions. A man has rights over his woman, he said. Not in my apartment, I replied. Fortunately, he left not long thereafter. Amber stayed with us where she was safe.

Crime sometimes seemed hanging everywhere in the air. I heard a man I knew who always seemed to be lounging around ask a friend of mine if he wanted to participate in breaking into a place. That was in San Francisco. He had the location all staked out. I knew that my friend would never agree, which he did not.

At Scott Street a man passed through late one afternoon who seemed anxious to talk. He was young, good looking, and well groomed. We were soon huddled together in a private conversation as he unveiled the plan in which he was involved. This was to hold up a supermarket the very next day. But he was badly conflicted and looking for a way out. We spoke for a long time as I urged him to abandon this plan, pointing out all kinds of alternatives and the dangers involved. He appreciated what I said and seemed impressed. He thanked me, and I believed I had won him over. The next evening splashed all across the TV screen was a scene in which two men had entered a Supermarket and held it up. They were quickly surrounded by the police inside the store. The photos of the robbers were flashed on the screen. One of them was the man I had spoken with the previous afternoon.

As I have mentioned before, it is true that people have confided in me things they would likely seldom tell another person, like the super market robber. One artist friend described his panic as he stole a wrist watch from a package he unwrapped in a toilet stall when he worked at the Post Office. It was his first day of work and he didn't have enough money for lunch. After work he pawned the watch so that he had enough money to make it through to his first payday. Another very highly respected beat artist friend related to me how he had once held up someone at gunpoint. Yet another friend, an actor, detailed how he came within a hair's breadth of being caught peeping through windows in the dark of night.

And what about me? Was I so pristine and pure? What about those days stealing packages of cigarettes from stores which some of us kids then took out to smoke under the bridge overhang that crossed the Wabash river when I was in high school? Yes, that had happened years before I became an adult, and without doubt certain adult crimes deserved and needed to be brought to account. But what other wrong doing was I responsible for, for which I had never been held responsible? Had humanity arrived at the right answers in dealing with crime? Always, it seemed to me, one needed to temper the treatment of criminality with the words of that famous song sung by Joan Baez and others I've referred to before. "Show me the prison, show me the jail. Show me the prisoner whose face is growin' pale And I'll show you a young man with so many reasons why.



There but for fortune, go you or go I." Was this not one of the central principles of Christianity? Did not Jesus identify with helping prisoners?

### **The self discovered**

One thing was clear. The lessons to be learned by what life had to present had now had plenty of opportunity to deliver their message. Many adventures of those times aroused a sense of reflection, introspection, and wonder. Others also inspired regret. But good or bad, these experiences had brought me to a place where I now had a good sense of who I was. I recognized my strengths and my weaknesses. Above all, I accepted the authority of no human being over my own no matter who they might be. I could now discern the inner quality of a person beyond the mask they presented to the world including their sometimes mistaken perceptions about their own identity. At the same time I gave the highest priority to being scrupulously and painstakingly honest about my own perceptions and motivations and who I was. I felt freed from the chains that bind people together in humanity's favorite game, the game of control people try to exert over one another. At my core, I had no desire to control or to be controlled. Cooperation was what was needed and if that concept could not be grasped by others, I could at least do my part by living life cooperatively so long as the ventures undertaken came from a place of honesty. Such new found understandings allowed me to assess the world around me in a new light and to more fully appreciate and respect the individual challenges everyone faces in their daily living. My good friend from New England Conservatory days, Carol Poppenger, who sang like a nightingale, was right when she said once upon a long time ago that life would change when I began to more fully appreciate myself. The doors to a new and greater love for life now stood open before me.

I had seen a lot, perhaps more than anyone should see. And like it or not what I had gone through was now lodged firmly in my psyche. There it would work as a source for supplying a more deeply felt sympathy and empathy necessary for safeguarding the yet to be traveled journey—one that I could never have anticipated at the time—of my life as a composer. Nor could I have guessed that this in turn would lead to my additional role as a writer whose primary theme was the protection of the non-human population of the world from the cruelty human beings impose upon one another and any living thing within their reach.

## Chapter 11

### Back to Music

#### The horn

I don't remember exactly when the realization hit me. I was still living at Scott Street when it happened, and I soon called my good and faithful brother to ask if it was possible for him to send me a horn. He responded by sending a Holton horn he owned via Greyhound bus. I was pleased indeed when it arrived and rushed home where I eagerly opened the case. Now, once again I had the glorious, gleaming instrument in my hands.

Verne Sellin, a violinist with the San Francisco Symphony and its personnel manager, was the conductor of the San Francisco Recreation Symphony, a community orchestra. One day I wandered into the Musician Union's offices to join the union and while there saw information about the orchestra posted on a bulletin board. I needed a place to play so after practicing enough to feel sufficiently in shape, I dropped around at one of the Recreation Symphony's rehearsals with my horn in hand.

To become a member of a community orchestra, you either approach the conductor or find out if there is an opening in the section you want to join. For the latter, if no one objects, you can sit in with the section. If you can handle the part according to the performance level of the orchestra, you are in. Since the horn section needed players, I chose the latter approach, and after the first rehearsal I was accepted as a member of the San Francisco Recreation Symphony.

The orchestra boasted some excellent musicians, some of whom were out playing professionally. This included Janet Maestre on flute and Myron Mu on horn. Janet and I would one day both play with the Harkness Ballet when it came to town. Myron, the first Chinese player on horn I had ever met, was first horn in the orchestra. He was a very fine player who was already playing pickup jobs alongside horn players from the San Francisco Symphony and was frequently hired to play Broadway shows being produced in the city. Myron welcomed me into the orchestra, and he and I became good and close friends. He was also completing his degree at San Francisco State University and invited me to a horn recital he presented there.

For the next 20 years Myron would continue his professional career, but then he inherited his father's bar on Grant Street in North Beach, called The Saloon. It was the oldest bar in San Francisco and one of the most famous. That became his primary focus, and today he keeps the establishment running with live bands every night of the week which assures its popular listing in the tour guides.

The Recreation Symphony was already in rehearsal for an upcoming concert when I joined. But scheduling conflicts arose for Myron and so the first horn part fell to me. The Ravel *Pavane for a Dead Princess* and the Haydn *Symphony No. 45 (The Farewell)* were both on the program. Playing these pieces helped me establish a reputation as a horn player who could handle the job.

In San Francisco I played every place possible, including the Richmond Symphony, an excellent community orchestra. I also played in a reading band only (no concerts) supported by the Musician's Union Local 6. This band met at the Union's hall and was conducted by Peter Bury. After a while Peter and I became friends. He would later get me a short term paying union job where just he and I picketed a bar at night that employed non-union musicians. This was shortly after my marriage (yet to be addressed), and I welcomed the extra income. Jan-Pierre Rampal, the concert flutist, stayed at Peter's home whenever he was in town, though I never had the opportunity to meet him. Rampal played on a 19<sup>th</sup> century 18-carat golden flute crafted by Louis Lot. He maintained that gold made the sound of the flute a little darker.

The mention of golden flutes brings back the memory of the time when an elderly gentleman showed up at the reading band's rehearsal hoping and expecting to join. His instrument was the flute, which he brought along, and, like Rampal's, was crafted from gold. He proudly showed it all around. It was a beautiful instrument, but alas, it was judged that the man did not play well enough to join the band. This was rather sad because, though he tried bravely, he could not conceal his disappointment at the outcome. Certainly, I had no objections to his joining. It wasn't exactly the greatest band in the world.

## **Tragedy**

Bill Van Sandt, a very fine horn player, also played in the reading band at Local 6. He was a veteran of many of the best jobs in San Francisco including playing the circus. Bill invited me in to substitute on the second horn spot in the circus band on one occasion. I was pleased and every little bit of income helped. It also gave me the opportunity to see just how accurate and solid a player Bill was on some of the difficult circus horn parts. One would think that, being mostly march music, these parts were easy which most march music for horn is. On the contrary, some of the music was quite difficult, especially when one had to sight read it as I was doing. And the pieces came so fast and furious one right after the other that it was all I could do to keep up.

As I got to know Bill better, I became aware—as was the case with other musicians, including Peter Bury—that he was obsessed with the death of Ross Taylor, the principal horn player in the San Francisco Symphony and his friend. It was thought by some, and disputed, that Ross had committed suicide. He had pursued a stellar career on horn playing in the New York Philharmonic, as principal with the Cleveland Orchestra under George Szell, and then serving several years as principal with the San Francisco Symphony. As reported to me by a fellow musician who was on the scene and played with and knew Ross well, the conductor of the symphony, Joseph Krips, deliberately tried to humiliate this great horn player in a rehearsal.

Van Sandt also invited me to play with the Marin Symphony, a community orchestra of high quality that paid its union members union scale. On the program was the Mahler 4<sup>th</sup> Symphony with many difficult Maler-esque horn solos. Bill played the

symphony magnificently in the concert and was thrilled by the experience. Clearly, he was one of the top players in the city of which there were quite a few.

For some reason, I once had to deliver a part to Bill's home. The woman who answered the door—I took her to be either Bill's wife or a close companion—seemed like a nervous wreck as I handed her the music. I couldn't help wonder what it must be like to live with someone as obsessed as Bill was with Ross Taylor's death. But I wasn't expecting the news I read when I picked up the paper not too long thereafter to read that Bill Van Sandt had committed suicide in Golden Gate Park by shooting himself. It seemed like such a terrible, tragic and unnecessary waste. I deplored and was deeply saddened that Bill could not somehow have seen his way through this mad obsession.

### **Playing jazz**

I met jazz pianist Richard White through poet Dave Bearden. Richard was married, but his wife worked and he stayed home to take care of their little boy and to practice piano. He was in particular fascinated by the music of Arnold Schoenberg and, at the time, I was inspired by the piano music of Erik Satie with which I had become familiar through a recording by Aldo Ciccolini. We began having improvisational sessions together in Richard's apartment and soon added Woody, a guitarist, to the ensemble. We combined elements of both Schoenberg and Satie into our improvisations.

Woody had spent several years in prison for possession of marijuana in Detroit and was deeply embittered by the injustice. This was during those years in which even possession of a single marijuana cigarette could be prosecuted as a major criminal offense punishable by years in prison. Woody reminded me of my own narrow escapes in Detroit along with my friends Peter Outlaw and Tina Spaulding. That occurred on our trip to San Francisco via Detroit when the rear license plate fell from our car someplace along the way. A police car eventually pulled us over. The officer did not seem too concerned but advised us to make a cardboard plate until we could get an official one. This advice seemed suspect, but we followed it and resumed our journey.

After a while we stopped beside a corn field that ran just a few feet from the highway in order to take a break and change drivers. One of us, I don't remember who, ventured a few feet into the corn field and discovered several marijuana plants growing alongside the corn stalks. Amidst much laughter and high fives, we cut one of the plants down, wrapped it in plastic, and stashed it behind the rear seat of the car. I'm not sure why we did that. While I had nothing against marijuana and thought the laws prohibiting its use were absurd and criminally unjust, none of us were into using or selling it. In fact, I would only partake if I happened to be in a situation where everyone was smoking, and I'm not sure I ever saw Peter or Tina smoke. Anyway, cut it down and pack it up, we did.

A few miles later not far from Detroit another police car pulled us over. This officer was not amused by our explanations for why we had a cardboard license plate attached to the rear of the car. He commanded us to follow him to his precinct in Detroit. There the desk sergeant was even less amused and seemed especially angered by our

appearance. He said that if he had his way he would throw us all in jail. None of us said a word. If any of the officers hovering around searched the car they would quickly find the marijuana plant we had hidden there. So it was a good idea not to antagonize the desk sergeant or any of the other officers any further than they already were. We were just a little nervous as we waited for the paper work for the charges to be prepared. Fortunately, the officers only impounded the car without searching it. All we had to do was get a legitimate license plate and pay a fine in order to retrieve the car.

In Detroit we stayed with friends of Tina in a ground floor apartment at the rear of a neighborhood house while we waited to get the car out of impound. This house sat adjacent to another house just a few feet away. One afternoon Peter and I and two other fellows, friends of Tina, exited the apartment from the rear and emerged from between the two houses just as a plain clothes squad car pulled up abruptly at the street curb. The car doors flew open. Out sprang two large plain clothes detectives who quickly confronted us. They thought we were burglars. After assuring them we were not, Peter took charge, inviting them back into the house with one of the other fellows to prove we belonged there. I thought that was a pretty poor idea. The scent of marijuana in the apartment was noticeable to me from the very first moment I set foot in it. How could the detectives fail to notice too?

Meanwhile, the driver of the detectives' car, who was in a police uniform, kept a watch over me and the other fellow. He asked for my identification, which I passed to him, and questioned me briefly. He wanted to know my name and where I was going. Soon the detectives and Peter and the other fellow came rushing back to the street. The detectives judged we were okay. They jumped back into the squad car and sped off. They had clearly not noticed the scent of marijuana in the house. The fellow I was with heaved a great sigh of relief. He was panicked because he was holding mescaline in his pocket and said he couldn't believe how calm and smoothly I spoke with the police officer. I assured him that any appearance of composure was far from the way I was really feeling. When I handed the officer my identification card, I could see every motion of my hand as though it were moving forward in a swift pattern of little digital-like skips.

The collaboration between Richard White and me did produce one concert, though Woody wasn't present. That occurred at the Big Sur Lodge in Big Sur. Tysonia (my wife to be) was also with us. Bob Branaman, a friend of Richard who was living in Big Sur, put us up and joined in the performance playing several percussion instruments of his own design and making. Bob, who I would get to know more back in San Francisco, was innovative and explorative in his approach to art. A so-called beat artist, today he continues his work and is considered to be one of San Francisco's finest artists.

Richard and I also made one tape recording together which was recorded by an adjunct professor at San Francisco State University. I thought it was really excellent and worth preserving, though who knows. Sometimes something seems great and then on playback you say, "whatever made me think that was any good?" In any case, I have never been able to find a copy of it.

## Neal Cassady

Richard knew many of the poets and artists in the Beat movement including Allen Ginsberg and Wichita poets like Charlie Plymell, Glen Todd, and Alan Russo. One day as Richard, Woody, and I were rehearsing in Richard's apartment (located on one of the upper floors) the doorbell rang. It was Neal Cassady, the force behind Jack Kerouac's novel *On the Road*, the man to whom Allen Ginsberg dedicated his famous poem *Howl*, and the man to whom people like Ken Kesey, William S. Burroughs and groups like *The Merry Pranksters* and *The Grateful Dead* looked to for inspiration. To that the name David Bearden may be added.

According to his former wife, Carolyn Cassady, it would be difficult to separate the real Neal Cassady from the myth and the legend today since his untimely death on February 4, 1968 beside some railroad tracks in Mexico just four days before his 43<sup>rd</sup> birthday. My knowledge of Neal comes from the two brief encounters I had with him.

On the day Neal came to see Richard, he wanted him to go to the drugstore located on the ground floor of the building and sign for a drug prescription for which he was not entitled. Richard wanted no part of the deal and argued for the reasons why he could not do it. Neal countered with reasons for why he should. In fact, he was insistent. I had the sense that Neal wanted Richard to do it just because he thought it was something Richard should not be afraid to do. I, however, would not have done it myself. At the time I was only slightly familiar with Neal Cassady's role in the Beat Generation. But he was a friend of Richard and so I told him that if he needed, I could probably obtain some pot for him. Neal politely declined, courteously and respectfully, if not in a friendly way. I felt that he did not have the same need to control me that he had with Richard. In any case, Richard was adamant. He refused to cave in to Neal's request.

The next and final time I saw Neal happened at a book signing at a bookstore in Sausalito for Gavin Arthur's new book *The Circle of Sex*. Gavin was the grandson of Chester A. Arthur, the 21<sup>st</sup> President of the United States, and an astrologer, sexologist, author, actor, consultant, educator, and well-known San Francisco raconteur. I knew Gavin because he had done an astrology chart for me, Darrel, and Tysonia Read, who I would later marry. Gavin had invited me to the signing in Sausalito.

As I was browsing in one of the bookstore's rooms, which was nearly empty of people, I spotted Neal Cassady. He was slouched low and kind of stalking around the tables of books as though he were trying to avoid detection. I knew from Ed Loudin, who somehow knew such things, that Neal and Gavin were friends. I called out: "Hey Neal!" Neal turned, saw me and put his index finger to his lips and whispered "shh!" His eyes were mischievous but flashed a friendly sparkle as he moved stealthily away. I did not remain at the signing long enough to learn what Neal's intentions may have been. That was the last time I saw Neal Cassady.

## Jobbing in San Francisco

Myron Mu invited me to attend a "horn students" get-to-together for students of Bob Tefft held at Bob's home. Bob taught at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music and was founder and musical director of the chamber group, Capella di Musica. He was also one of the biggest jobbers on horn around San Francisco and on call for the most lucrative jobs that came along. We quickly became friends and were soon playing jobs together including with the San Francisco Opera (for a children's production), and with Shelly Mann's Big Band. Shelly's name loomed large in the world of big bands at the time. We played this concert to a packed audience at San Francisco State University.

Thanks to Bob I was also soon playing along with him in Gary Old's Big Band. This was a great band filled with some of San Francisco's top professionals in the world of Jazz. Jack Ateljevich was a member on trombone so there we were playing together for the first time again since our 28<sup>th</sup> /9<sup>th</sup> Division army band days. Danny Patiris was also a member on Tenor Saxophone. He and I would become friends and even jammed together, which I was able to do only because I had worked with Richard White. Danny eventually moved to New York City where he hooked up—completely independent of me—with my close friend, composer Ivana Themmen, for some of her projects.

Legendary trumpet player Johnny Coppola also played in Gary's Big Band. He drove me to a concert we were scheduled to do which was in the amphitheater on Mt. Tamalpais just outside of San Francisco. Later he invited me to his home where we got to know each other a little. But that's as far as that friendship went.

Unfortunately, the jobs I did manage to get were all too few, and to make a living playing the horn in San Francisco was a struggle. It helped when I was hired to play in a concert band sponsored by Local 6 which presented a concert in the band shell in Golden Gate Park every Sunday. This meant a guaranteed check every week for the service. Barbara Rolland was on first horn and I was on second. Again, in the small world category, Barbara had played in the Halifax Symphony with Darrel. Now here she was playing alongside Darrel's twin brother in San Francisco.

Barbara had a unique perspective on the horn, particularly in maintaining a humorous view of the instrument's difficulties which helped keep her colleagues entertained. She loved to laugh at a recording she kept of several disastrous attempts to execute trills on the horn by some well acknowledged very good horn players. Horn players in today's world, I might add, are so good that they seem to execute trills effortlessly.

Andy Ward, a clarinet player who I met playing in the Richmond Symphony, arranged for me to interview for a teaching job at the San Francisco Community Music Center. Ben Olsen was the Director of the Center and after the interview hired me to teach music theory classes and horn if any horn students came along. At the Center I then teamed up with other faculty for some chamber music concerts which included works like the six quartets by Rossini for winds. In addition, we played Olsen's *American Woodwind Quintet* several times. This was also the time in which Meryl Sare, Eric Smith (aka Cassell), and I performed the Brahms' *Horn Trio*. Meryl and her husband John had

broken up so that she was using her birth name, Ettelson. Meryl has continued her career and currently is the pianist with the White Oak Trio in Houston, Texas.

Long after I was no longer teaching at the Community Center, I ran into Ben Olsen on Ashbury Street. He had been very supportive of my performance of the Brahms trio. We talked a bit and I showed him a sketch book I carried around to jot down music composition ideas—this was before I was actually composing pieces. He graciously invited me to his apartment where we talked about composing music. His encouragement added to a kind of general movement that was pushing me along toward music composition.

Sadly, Ben fell victim to AIDS in 1989 at the age of 61. I was very glad to learn that in recent years The Ben Olsen Music Foundation was formed in his honor and for the purpose of preserving his compositions.

## **Marriage**

The United States Post Office in San Francisco, mentioned in the introduction to this book, became a refuge from poverty for a few months. On my way to my first day of work I was astounded by the flow of Beat and Hippie types that literally poured through the Post Office gates. I understood then why the PO officer who interviewed me for the job said: "We're looking for prosaic types, not poets."

Ahead of me also walking toward the same destination was a very beautiful African American woman who I could not take my eyes from. This was Tysonia Read from Tucson, Arizona. We got acquainted over breaks and lunch periods and then started getting together after work. Before long we were in love. After living together for a period, we were married at the San Francisco City Hall on March 23, 1966.

## **Getting an orchestral position**

Now that I was married, I was faced with having to support the marriage with a job. Fortunately, the position of Assistant First Horn would soon become vacant with the Oakland Symphony. The audition was held with Gerhard Samuel, the conductor of the orchestra, and Earl Saxton, the first horn player. Earl had played principal with the Pittsburgh Symphony and the San Francisco Symphony and, as I would soon learn, was an exceptionally fine horn player. Earl was also known for developing his own "singing" approach to horn playing. This was a method heartedly endorsed by virtuoso concert hornist Francis Orval who would meet Earl a few years later.

For the audition I played a solo piece and the standard solos from *Til Eulenspiegel*, *Ein Heldenleben*, and the *Midsummer Night's Dream*. It went fairly well and I was offered the job. Besides the assistant first position, I would also play first horn on children's concerts and special events such as at presentations of Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf* and Menotti's opera *Amahl and the Night Visitors*. I would also play with the San Francisco Ballet, which Samuel conducted, on an as needed basis and with the



Western Opera Company, a subsidiary of the San Francisco Opera, also when needed. In addition, I would play at the Cabrillo Music Festival held in Santa Cruz, California.

Though I needed a job but quickly and the Oakland Symphony offered much that was positive, it was still my duty to explore all possibilities before accepting the position. A factor also, was that for an assistant first position you don't have your own part to play. Your job is to assist the principal (first) horn player. I decided to wait until Tysonia and I had returned from a planned cross country trip before deciding. The alternatives, though, were few.

Tysonia and I flew to New York City where I introduced my new wife to my brother and friends. While in the City I auditioned for third horn with the Detroit Symphony. The conductor, Sixten Ehrling, was ruthless, starting me off with the famous high horn passage from the Shostakovich 5th Symphony. I handled it expertly and everything else he threw at me. Somehow, though, I knew—though I must admit to the possibility that I could have been in error—that Ehrling had no intention of hiring me even before I played a note.

I was also writing around to different orchestras seeking a position. That effort produced a response from the Hawaiian Symphony which offered me the third horn position without an audition. I was tempted by the offer, but Tysonia and I decided it would be better for me to take the job in Oakland.

### **Ann Irving, opera singer extraordinaire**

Tysonia and I left New York City in a drive-away car which we contracted to deliver to its owner who lived in the neighborhood of Tucson. I was a little nervous on the trip. Anti-miscegenation laws were still in effect in the South, and other States had repealed their anti-miscegenation laws only in recent years—Indiana, in fact, just the previous year. The unpleasant facts were that interracial marriages were still opposed by large segments of the population. Arizona itself had only repealed their anti-miscegenation laws in 1962, just four years earlier. Fortunately, Tysonia and I encountered no instances of intolerance on our journey. I didn't mention my fears to her. Somehow, her parents had managed to raise Tysonia and her brother David as though racism in America existed only as some ungodly thing practiced by ignorant, immoral people, the unpleasantness of which had to be dealt with only if it got too close. Fortunately, it never got too close to Tysonia who grew up during her most formative years in Europe because her father served there in the Army. She had no sense—though this would change some as she matured—that anyone she met whoever or wherever it might be considered her to be anything but equal. At the time of our marriage racial consciousness was changing for everyone, white and black, with the growing civil rights movement led by Martin Luther King.

The first stop-over destination on our journey was Kansas City, Missouri. My sister Ann was living there and singing with the Kansas City Lyric Opera. I was anxious for her to meet Tysonia. Before Kansas City, where she was one of the leading sopranos,

Ann had just been getting started with the Chicago Lyric Opera. She would also sing with the Chicago Opera Theater. I refer to Ann as having been one of the great lyric sopranos of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. One has only to listen to her "*Estrelita*" by Manuel Ponce or her "*Ch'il bel sogno*" from Puccini's *La Rondine*. Anyone who thinks such praise may be mere extravagant partisanship should compare her "*Sempre Libera*" from *La Traviata* with other great sopranos. The recording quality may not be as good for Ann's recordings, but anyone who listens with an open ear will hear that she has no problem holding her own with those acknowledged to be the great sopranos of her time. Small wonder that Janice Meyerson, a singer with a fabulous and dramatic mezzo-soprano voice famed for her opera and concert triumphs around the world with orchestras like the Boston Symphony, the Philadelphia Orchestra, the New York Philharmonic, the Minnesota Orchestra, etc., and opera companies like the Deutsche Oper Berlin, the Frankfurt Opera, the New York City Opera, and the Teatro Colón, Buenos Aires, etc., with conductors like Lennie Bernstein, John Eliot Gardiner, Rafael Kubelik, Lorin Maazel, Charles Mackerras, Seiji Ozawa, and Leonard Slatkin, said of Ann the following: "Oh, my. I am alternately in tears and speechless. Ann's singing is what defines vocal artistry. What a treasure. Not a false note, ever. The beauty and roundness of her tone...the coloratura, the seemingly effortless high notes....Was there anything she couldn't do vocally? We singers could all take lessons from Ann for eternity--in technique, in phrasing. The sheer beauty of her tone. She is simply masterful." Need more be said? Some of Ann's recordings, including of those pieces mentioned above, are posted on youtube.com (See Appendix III.). She can also be heard on a CD recording containing additional works, though at present this is not commercially available.

From Kansas City Ty and I drove to Tucson sometimes gingerly on narrow cliff-side roads that reminded me of mountainous roads in Italy. After we had delivered the drive-away car to its owner, I met Tysonia's mother, Irene, and her brother, David. They held a grand welcoming celebration with relatives and friends. Tysonia and I stayed, of course, in her mother's home. I would meet John, Tysonia's father, who was separated from Irene, in the days following. All of us became good and close friends.

### **The Oakland Symphony**

My very first job with the Oakland Symphony was with the San Francisco Ballet before the Oakland season started. Having been away from the horn for an extended period of time, suddenly there I was back stage at the San Francisco Memorial Opera House observing some of the dancers in costume in the wings warming up with dance movements prior to their entrance on stage as I made my way to my place in the orchestra pit. I felt fortunate indeed.

It was the horn that had elevated me to my new status. And it was the horn that had always served as my passport through life. It would continue doing so in one form or another, whether by paving the way to some valuable musical experience or showing the way to other meaningful pursuits, whether writing, painting, or conceptualizing and/or exploring new religious concepts. It was all traceable to the horn and that included also the path it forged toward my life as a composer.

After the ballet closed, the summer season opened for the Cabrillo Music Festival which at that time was produced at Cabrillo College just outside of Santa Cruz. For the horn section we had Fred Bergstone on first, me on second, Carlberg Jones on third, and Richard West on fourth. Carlberg and I would later play together on a freelance job with the famed but short-lived Harkness Ballet when it came to town. (As mentioned, Janet Maestre also played that job on flute.)

Gerhard Samuel had the reputation as a great innovator in programming concerts which commanded the respect of musicians whenever he was around. Ralph Hotz, the third horn with the San Francisco Symphony, for example, told me he wouldn't mind playing in Oakland just because of Gary's programming. It was on display that summer at the Cabrillo Music Festival when he programmed a concert with *Songs of a Wayfarer* by Gustav Mahler for solo contralto and the *Violin concerto in D* by Igor Stravinsky for the first half of a program. The piece on the second half was Lou Harrison's one act opera *Rapunzel*. The program was as unorthodox as you could get—two solo pieces followed by an opera? Could it be done? It was, and it worked. In the season that followed in Oakland, Gary programmed the Mozart *Serenade for 13 Winds* as the feature work on one of the symphonic programs, another outrageous programming idea. But again, it worked. Gary also sought and obtained some of the best soloist for his programs like Claudio Arrau and George London.

Stanley Plummer, mentioned before as the concertmaster of the Seventh Army Symphony when I was a member, also put in an appearance that summer at Cabrillo to play Paul Hindemith's Violin Concerto –*Kammermusik no. 4*. It was exciting to see Stan again but we hardly had time to say hello than he was off almost as soon as he arrived. Stuart Dempster also played a solo trombone concert, and Betty Allen, an African American mezzo-soprano, was featured in a stage production of Mozart's all too seldomly produced opera *La Clamenza di Tito*. At the reception following the opera I made a point of introducing Betty to my African American wife. During the festival, Tysonia and I rented bicycles and rode them all around the Santa Cruz countryside.

In the season that followed with the Oakland Symphony, I was thankful for the job on assistant first but also glad when opportunities came along to play first horn as with the children's concerts or special productions. Earl Saxton also asked me to cover for him on first horn for rehearsals on jobs if he had a conflict in his schedule. This occurred with Menotti's opera *The Medium*, with the Western Opera Co., for example, and Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker* ballet which the San Francisco Ballet was performing.

Lawrence Foster was the conductor for the *Nutcracker*. At the rehearsal, he turned almost immediately to the "Waltz of the Flowers" section with the solo part for two horns which Darrel and I used to play in our home during high school years just for fun. I had wanted to play the Waltz with an orchestra ever since. Foster, fortunately, went over that section three or four times.

Once Earl asked me to take over first for a couple of arias for which Gary had engaged George London to sing. The parts looked simple enough and I said "yes." For one of the arias, which I was sight reading, I suddenly found myself holding a long high note along with London wondering how long he was going to hold it. The audience loved it and that evening London could have held the note twice as long, it would not have mattered. The next night was a repeat of the same program but when London got to that note, I failed to breathe at the right spot and wasn't sure if I was going to make it through to the end of the passage. Fortunately, London sensed the situation and eased up. It would have been most embarrassing if he had not.

I played with Arthur Fiedler on two occasions, once with the Richmond Symphony and once with the Oakland Symphony. The Boston Symphony and the Boston Pops (Fiedler's orchestra) were notorious for playing at a higher pitch than other orchestras across the country. This means that the oboe plays a higher pitched A to which the orchestra tunes just before the conductor comes out to begin the concert. Fiedler spent his first fifteen minutes of rehearsal time trying to get the Oakland Symphony to match this higher pitch, repeating the A over and over again. But what he was really doing, sly old fox that he was, was taking charge, saying "see I have the power to control you, to make you play this little game we are now playing in forcing you to play higher." The orchestra did not continue to play at this higher pitch once we started to rehearse the actual music on the program. To accomplish that, Fiedler would have had to stop and check if we were playing high enough every few minutes. But he never checked again, which just proved the game he was playing.

Henry Mancini also came in to conduct an outdoors pops concert. On the program, as to be expected, was his hit tune *The Days of Wine and Roses* with a big horn solo which Earl played beautifully. Mancini brought his own solo trumpet player with him to play the concert. That seemed a little on the condescending side, though apparently that was his habit. Certainly, though, our first trumpet could have easily handled the trumpet solos.

### **Introduction to the world of new music**

Gary Samuel was himself an exceptional composer and programmed many contemporary compositions on Oakland Symphony programs. Many members of the orchestra also held a keen interest in new music. This included clarinetist Don O'Brien and cellist Ellen Dessler. We would sometimes get together for improvisation sessions and to try creating new sounds on our instruments. This all sparked the inner urge to try writing music myself. Bob Hughes also influenced and encouraged my growing interest in this direction. I finally did try my hand which was to write a piece for Harmonium and Horn. It was performed by Father Christos and me at the Himalayan Academy in San Francisco, aka the Christian Yoga Church (to be discussed) at a Sunday Service. Christos was a yoga monk who had majored in music at San Francisco State University. He improvised his own music for the Sunday services which he did expertly. His birth name was Randall Curtis, the name he uses today as a practicing astrologist.

At Cabrillo that summer I learned that the person I replaced in the Oakland Symphony was Pauline Oliveros. She attended one of the concerts and introduced herself. Pauline had left the orchestra to pursue a career in composition, at which she built an outstanding reputation and career. She invited me to a concert of electronic music she was presenting in San Francisco. I had heard only one piece of electronic music years earlier in Boston and found some of Pauline's works to be fascinating. I maintained contact with her and attended one of her concerts in New York City several years later. She would make her biggest mark on the music world through her concept of deep listening, "an aesthetic based upon principles of improvisation, electronic music, ritual, teaching and meditation."

Bob Hughes was the assistant conductor of the Oakland Symphony and bassoonist, taking over as principal when needed. I have never been as deeply impressed by another musician as I have by him. Besides his expertise around the orchestra, he was also involved in a wide variety of music activities—far too numerous to mention except a few— including conducting the Youth Chamber Orchestra and premiering the works of many contemporary composers. He also reached into the past to premier music composed by Robert Louis Stevenson and Ezra Pound, the latter whom he personally met, and whose music compositions he researched and produced such as Pound's Opera *Le Testament*. In spite of all this, Bob's real interest lay in music composition. There, in my estimation, he ranks at the top with any list of living composers, evidenced, for example, by his present work on his Silenus' Antiphony (an on-going multi-perceptual work involving music with interrelated words and graphics).

Over the season Bob and I got to know each other better and became close friends. On one occasion he invited me on a mini tour of San Francisco with his young son where we took a cruise out into San Francisco Bay. He and his wife were separated, she living in the hills above Santa Cruz. There tragedy struck a few months later as Bob's wife and son, along with several other people, were murdered by a maniac who had invaded the area.

Bob was a close friend and supporter of Lou Harrison, one of the nation's most respected composers. I was delighted when Bob invited Tysonia and me to join him and Lou, as well as a female companion, for a gourmet dinner Bob would prepare. That was good news because Bob was also a great cook. It seemed also that Lou had been looking for the opportunity to try marijuana. Bob asked if it was possible for me to procure some. I smoked pot only infrequently, but I partook if some were around and everyone was smoking. Even so, I did have a source and so was able to get a small amount for the evening. After trying it out, my understanding is that Lou then decided to replace alcohol as the drug of choice for relaxation with marijuana.

We discussed all matter of things that evening, but I was especially attentive to what Lou had to say about composition and influences from other cultures, including the use of the I Ching. He joked that he wasn't particularly fond of the horn, at which I took friendly offence to defend my instrument. Lou would eventually change his mind and use the horn in his compositions to good effect, though I would be surprised if our brief

discussion about the instrument influenced the decision. But who knows, it may have helped a bit.

Gary Samuel and I got along well. He was also very fond of Tysonia. Once he told me I would be taking over on first horn in Oakland one day. He was referring to a time in the future when Earl Saxton retired, which, at the time was not that far away. I knew he had to have discussed this with Earl or else he would not have said it. I hope the reader will not construe this statement to be too self-serving. I mention it to show the mutual respect Gary and I, and Earl also, had for each other as musicians.

One day I was at home practicing when the doorbell rang. I looked out my window to the courtyard below where a smiling Bob Hughes, accompanied by a friend, looked upward motioning for me to join them. Bob's friend was Ned Rorem, future Pulitzer Prize winner to be and acknowledged by many today as one of America's foremost composers of art song as well as a composer in practically every other genre of music.

The two composers and I, the would-be composer, spent an enjoyable afternoon surveying the colorful scene of the Haight Ashbury where every manner of Hippie and Flowerchild were everywhere displayed, all doing their revolutionary thing of which I not only thoroughly approved but considered myself to be in near total sympathy. And, after all, I still maintained contacts there and was still a part of the movement.

## **Divorce**

While all these music activities were happening, Tysonia and I were discovering more and more that we might have different paths to travel in life. This would lead to an amicable divorce which I at first resisted but then recognized its necessity. The failure of our marriage weighed heavily on me for months to come as I sought to analyze and better understand what had happened. Ironically, the divorce ultimately helped to cement the loyalty, love, and devotion Ty and I had toward each other from the beginning. This would continue without pause throughout the decades which followed until Tysonia's unfortunate and sudden death from stomach cancer on February 3, 2017.

During her lifetime Tysonia visited me in New York several times. When she needed advice she often turned to me, as she did, for example, in asking me to research macular degeneration after her mother had been diagnosed with the disease. I did the same with her.

I paid tribute to Tysonia in a 3 page eulogy for her memorial service conducted at the United Methodist Church of Tucson. This was printed and used as the program for the service. It was, as reported to me, well received. I also wrote up a description of the service (which the pastor who conducted the service and a church member provided to me) so that a record could be kept for any friends or relatives of Tysonia unable to attend the service that day.

As I described in my eulogy, Tysonai was well-educated, highly cultured, refined, knowledgeable about many subjects, sophisticated, and a person who loved to travel. Her letters might touch on Van Gogh, Monet, or a sculpture garden; a trip to Italy or the Taj Mahal; a particular species of flower like a regal and white curl-petaled chrysanthemum; her rescue of a turtle in the road which cars were swerving to avoid; religion and a comparison of the Catholic and Protestant faiths; a show on the Northern Lights at a planetarium; a Pueblo in Taos; or a Cajun dance or stock car race she attended. Her life was filled with these kinds of adventures, far too many to enumerate, and were the consequence of a natural thirst for learning and a love of people that filled every day of her life. Even so, knowledge had its place, and, as she wrote, in regard to knowledge just for the sake of knowledge: "We are so filled with knowledge that our heads begin to swell."

Tysonia loved to send me photographs she had taken and articles to read for my enjoyment and interest including some very lovely poetry of her own. We corresponded often and in later years spoke frequently over the telephone. There was always much to talk over, our daily experiences, problems, joys, romantic interests (including two additional husbands Tysonia would marry and divorce) and we often expressed our love and care for each other. Only once did we discuss getting back together, the subject of which Tysonia brought up. I think we both sensed, though, that we were better off as we were.

### **Farewell to San Francisco**

Following the divorce proceedings, I felt a compelling need to leave San Francisco and return to New York which I did a few months after the season with the Oakland Symphony ended. I had spent a total of six years in the beautiful City by the Bay and lived through a wide variety of many experiences in life and in music. Now it was time for the next chapter to begin. Before I attempt to describe that segment of the journey, however, it is important to address another topic without which it is not possible to present a full portrayal of my life. That is the subject of religion and my relationship to a higher source.

## Chapter 12

### The Place Above the Stars

#### Is there a God?

I grew up in a Christian conservative home and community. By the time my senior year in high school arrived, I was debating whether to pursue a career as a Baptist minister, an airplane pilot, or a musician. The religious debate was serious enough to write away to college theology departments for admissions information which I eagerly devoured upon receipt. These included conservative institutions like Wheaton College in Wheaton, Illinois, and Bob Jones University in Greenville, South Carolina. I did not know then that Bob Jones, the founder of his school, was the worst kind of racist. Had I known, I would have crossed that university off my list immediately. My understanding is that this University has now itself denounced the racism of its founder.

As for my dreams of a career in music, I also wrote away to the Juilliard School of Music, the Jordan Conservatory of Music in Indianapolis, and other schools. Less seriously, I also obtained information for what was required to enroll in flight training in the United States Army and the United States Navy.

The spiritual leader of the Christian faith was Jesus who I defined in terms of compassion, sympathy, empathy, honesty, goodness, and everything virtuous. This, I felt, put me directly in touch with the spirit of Jesus who I regarded as my personal savior. The need to do what was right was connected with these beliefs but, in my opinion, also was part of a built-in system of right and wrong possessed by all people except, perhaps, certain individuals with some brain or deep psychological disorder. My concerns, therefore, about racism, sexism, anti-Semitism, ethnic and gender bias, and the plight of the poor—about which I knew little but sensed how wrong these were whenever I encountered them—were only natural.

During my eighteenth and nineteenth years while a member of the 28<sup>th</sup>/9th Division Band (as previously reported), I experienced a crisis in religious beliefs and for the next decade hovered between agnosticism and atheism. Where did that leave me?

Agnostics and atheists often maintain as one of their principal beliefs that no compassionate, loving God would ever permit suffering to be a major component of existence. This was, in fact, the central reason which caused me to adopt the agnostic/atheist belief system. A good example representative of this side is found in Charles Darwin, a man who had great respect and love for animals (as did his wife). He could at least give some credit to a theory such as that over time humankind had possibly brought the suffering they endured upon themselves. But for animals who lived according to instinct and were blameless for their actions—no, it was not possible that a loving or just God would allow such innocents to suffer. For the group of people for whom suffering symbolizes a negative factor in their worldview, God either must not exist, or, if there is a God, it is not one which could be characterized as a God of love and justice.



Many who take refuge in the camp of nonbelievers think that the belief that God is love is just that, a belief and nothing more. One can believe in anything no matter how preposterous, but a belief will still never be more than a belief which cannot ascend to the stature of truth. Those who want truth, therefore, should abandon their belief in beliefs which cannot be proved in order to pursue truths which can.

Yet questions remain such as to what extent a belief can be intimated to be true. Surely that exceeds any boundaries imposed upon belief that a belief must be factual to be true. In this respect, the maxim that God is love can be taken to be absolute truth, as it is in many religions, because it may be intuited or intimated to be true, so say the followers of such religions. Intimations and intuition, however, also do not satisfy the requirements of deep-seated sceptics who demand that truth must be provable. The question then becomes whether there is such a thing as knowing with absolute certainty whether or not God exists and consists of a state of love. Is it really possible to know whether or not another reality—God—really resides somewhere which might be loosely defined as some colossal force or being the nature of which is composed of nothing but pure love in all its possible manifestations?

The author answers emphatically and without hesitation that just such a possibility exists. Further, he states that he knows this to be true based upon his own experiences.

## **Big Sur and LSD**

The year was approximately 1964 as I traveled with four friends in an old, tan, beat-up Dodge from San Francisco to the area known as Big Sur, referred to earlier in this book in reference to peyote and a hitchhiking trip that ended up in San Diego. Big Sur is a near tropical like region which lies along the California coast just below Monterrey.

We had no difficulty in finding an isolated area since only a few people make their homes in Big Sur. It was a beautiful sunny day and after scouting around to assure ourselves that the location we had chosen met our needs, we embarked upon accomplishing the main purposes of our visit. This was to try out the new drug that everyone was talking about, LSD (Lysergic Acid Diethylamide).

After ingesting my sugar cube saturated with the drug, I wandered away from the group and found myself at the bottom of a small, green hill with woods just below and extending on both sides. Nature flourished all around unspoiled by the outside world. Flowers and bushes and full-leaved trees of many varieties and hews grew wildly yet maintained proportionality. The sounds of nature burst all around and the flight of birds, butterflies, bees and insects randomly took their flight under the canopy above of pure blue sky and an assortment of slowly drifting clouds.

The affects of the drug accelerated quickly. And then, suddenly, but effortlessly, I found myself transfixed, filled with an immense sense of love that infused everything, the hill above, the woods, the trees, the rocks, the leaves, even single blades of grass, the sky, in fact, the air itself. I knew instinctively in every sense of my being what I was experiencing. This was the direct manifestation of an omnipresent magnificence which filled everything in all directions with a feeling of pure, boundless love. There was no threat nor feeling of fear. All doubt fled and all disbeliefs about the existence of God fell to the side, gone forever. "There is a God!" I repeated the exclamation again and again with astonishment marveling at this demonstration of just such a presence. Now I knew for myself with a knowledge that could never be replaced or erased. There is a God! And the nature of that God was pure, absolute love.

Somehow I had peered into the world of God as God exists on earth [and by extension, in the universe] thriving there unseen. What I had experienced seemed to be in the same vein as the "unmoved mover of the universe" which Aristotle hypothesized about as "a supra-physical entity, without which the physical domain could not remain in existence."<sup>5</sup> The 14th century "mystic" priest, Meister Eckhart, expressed a like understanding when he wrote: "For in this breaking through I perceive what God and I are in common. There I am what I was. There I neither increase nor decrease. For there I am the immovable which moves all things."

[Incidentally, at this time my brother, Darrel, had had his own very special spiritual experience with LSD which he described in his book *Serpent of Fire*, without doubt one of the best books ever written on the subject of kundalini. In fact, our letters crossed describing the experience we had both been through. Experiencing the same kind of event though we were living in different places, sometimes at great distances apart, is one way in which twinship manifested itself between us. As another example, though neither of us knew what the other was doing and living in separate apartments in different neighborhoods, one early morning around 7 o'clock Darrel and I decided to take a walk. The purpose was to gather some inspiration, then return home to write a poem circulating in our minds. We both headed for Riverside Park, he on the upper level, I on the lower. There we ran into each other.]

One huge difference exists between Aristotle's understanding and Meister Eckhart's. In regard to nonhuman animals, Meister Eckhart expressed a unique understanding of life in relation to God where God gives of Himself to all creatures alike, human animals and nonhuman animals. Thus the divine essence of God is present in all his creatures. For Aristotle, on the other hand, animals were inferior creatures whose purpose was to serve humankind in any way they desired, cruel or noncruel. This is the philosophy which Christians follow today. They are, therefore, in my estimation, following in the footsteps of Aristotle, not Jesus (whose references to animals were always laced with kindness) and also in the belief system of the Old Testament, a system

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<sup>5</sup> *FreeEssays.cc*, "Aristotle, A Comprehensive View on Nature and Society," <http://www.freeessays.cc/db/35/prz50.shtml>

based on the exploitation of animals. It seemed to me that the message of Jesus offered the way for liberating humankind from the ritualistic, barbaric, animal-based, sacrificial system reported in the Old Testament. Jesus said, "I desire mercy not sacrifice."

It appeared to me that the early church fathers insisted on clinging to their Old Testament beliefs and in so doing created a Jesus a little different from the one who really existed. Jesus taught that what was truly important was to follow the path of love which led to God because God is love. I do believe, in any case, that the world's most representative religions, Buddhism, Islam, and Christianity—but also some of the lesser known ones (at least in the West), e.g., Jainism—are a part of a larger spiritual imperfection involved in striving for perfection, just like all of humanity. In this regard, as I indicated earlier, it appears to me that Christian scholars are helping to clear up some of the misunderstandings which are responsible for the divisiveness that has often been taught by leaders of the Christian church. From my perspective, Jesus' role was to offer a physical example for how to reach God who, by virtue of his (God's) non-physical presence, was so difficult to find. In this sense Jesus was the son of God, but not the only one. As he himself pointed out, we are all children of God. Jesus was just number one in the hierarchy.

According to the above reflections, it is not possible for God, existing beyond the universe yet being in the universe and consisting of an all pervasive love, to experience anything other than complete love. Therefore anything that is not love is distinct from God. The grand mystery, then, lies in how suffering, which seems distinct from God, can exist. Many speculative theories have attempted to answer the question including that suffering is an illusion, even that life is an illusion. Meister Eckhart said the Devil (hence evil) cannot exist. However, because I personally do not know the answer, it makes no sense to speculate on what the answer might be. I remain open, nevertheless, to the possibility of somehow acquiring greater insights into this mystery. What is clear is that though suffering may seem distinct from God, it is healed through the presence of compassion and love, the core elements of God. Therefore, to work in the direction of that which is good and compassionate for the purpose of eliminating suffering is to work in the direction toward God.

On one occasion I described my experience at Big Sur on LSD to a Christian pastor in a private meeting. He did not doubt my experience but discounted it because it was connected to a drug. Does he discount the healing properties of certain drugs we have invented for healing purposes in the cure of cancer and other diseases I wonder? Unfortunately, I did not think to ask the question at the time. To me, what I had experienced was real whether realized through a drug or not.

The problem with LSD, ultimately, from my perspective and personal experience, was that its effects were inconsistent and unreliable. I tried LSD twice after the first time but did not experience anything close to what happened at Big Sur. In fact neither of the two other trips were pleasant. LSD can also be dangerous. Reports were common at the time about people who took the drug with disastrous consequences such as people leaping out of windows to their deaths. In fact, one of my close friends had a

schizophrenic episode from which he never recovered after taking LSD. He died a few years later following abandonment of his job, prolonged abuse of various other kinds of drugs, and living penniless from day to day, a life style to which he had never been susceptible until he took LSD.

Clearly, LSD had some serious limitations as a suitable tool for finding God. There must be another way. A new subject with which the cultural revolution identified was the exploration of Eastern Religions. More generally, it covered East Asian religions like Shintoism, Taoism, Confucianism, plus the Indian religions of Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism and Jainism. Many of these used techniques of meditation designed to lead purportedly to a state of enlightenment about matters such as God and all other questions in the world.

### **Eastern religions**

My first taste of Eastern Religion began at the Himalayan Academy in San Francisco (called also the Christian Yoga Church) referred to earlier. This was an organization started by a former leading ballet dancer with the San Francisco Ballet, Robert Hansen, who was dancing title roles there in ballets like *Pyramus and Thisbe* by Fritz Berens by the time he was 18. Hansen had been inculcated with Indian spiritual beliefs by a friend of his mother who raised him from the age of 11 after his mother's death. He left the world of dance and embarked upon an exhaustive spiritual journey which landed him in India just before his 21<sup>st</sup> birthday. He was soon living in Sri Lanka, at the time called Ceylon, where he remained three years. In Ceylon he is reputed to have attained the state of enlightenment pursued by followers of Eastern thought. Upon returning to the United States he started a monastery on Sutter Street and then through an inheritance purchased an old church up for sale at 3575 Sacramento Street in San Francisco. This was in 1965. The church became the Himalayan Academy. Hansen also maintained an Ashram constructed from an old brewery just outside of Virginia City, Nevada. At the Himalayan Academy he began teaching from a Master Course which he had written several years earlier and offered classes, lectures, retreats, and a home-study course espousing the principles in his Master Course. He held a Sunday service along the traditional lines of the Christian Church and preached his message from a pulpit. Hansen called himself Master Subramunya, the name conferred upon him after it was said he attained spiritual enlightenment in Sri Lanka. Later he was referred to as Sivaya Subramuniyaswami, or, by his closest followers, Gurudeva.

I became thoroughly immersed in this organization, practiced their meditations in the search for enlightenment, and even became a student teacher of beginning Yoga. I once accompanied Master Subramunya and some other Himalayan Academy people to visit another Indian spiritual leader, A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupadan, the leader of the Hari Krishna movement. He and Subramunya conversed together as we looked on intently, surrounded by Bhaktivedanta's Hari Krishna disciples in a small cavern-like temple filled with the smoke of incense and the sound of chimes and bells.

I would learn years later long after I left the Himalayan Academy that Master Subramunya was concealing his real spiritual identity—at least during the time I spent there. While the Bhagavad Gita and the Puranas (considered by many Hindus as Hindu texts) were offered for sale at the Academy, this was without any defined purpose and the word Hindu was seldom mentioned. However, Subramunya turned out to be a devout follower of Hinduism and eventually moved his organization to Kauai, Hawaii. There he established a 458-acre temple-monastery complex and founded the magazine *Hinduism Today*. At Kauai, his followers built him up to be a great Hindu guru and referred to him in worshipful words which they continue to do even today following his death in 2001.

This was not the Master Subramunya who I knew for whom I had great but cautious affection which never diminished. But even as I left the organization I had grave doubts about the claims for spiritual enlightenment some of the monks made at the Himalayan Academy and the Ashram in Virginia City where enlightenment was primarily sought through meditation on the inner light and repetition of the Aum mantra.

My quest continued. At the University of California at Berkeley, I heard Maharishi Mahesh Yogi laughingly assure his audience in a great hall filled with the scent from thousands of flowers placed around the hall that "Transcendental meditation is the only way to enlightenment."

Many came from the East to deliver their messages of enlightenment to the West including Swami Chinmayananda, who Darrel and I heard explain that he, too, knew the way to enlightenment through his Body, Mind, Intellect chart. It did not, however, cure his addiction to tobacco which I noticed when he lit up a cigarette immediately after his talk. Alan Watts' book on Zen Buddhism was also a staple, though it failed to impress me, nor did the Gospel of Thomas bandied about as a way forward to truth in those days. (Its fascinating text would capture my attention years later.) I even attended a Gohonzon Chant session (Nichiren Buddhism) which promised to bring to fruition all matter of material and non-material desires to its adherents. (Material acquisition was never a goal for me.) Then, in New York City, a woman in whom I was interested, invited me to a party which turned out to be a huge assembly occupying several floors of the New Yorker Hotel. This hotel, I would quickly learn once inside, was the headquarters of the late Reverend Sun Myung Moon. In the hotel I suddenly found myself surrounded by thousands of followers of the Unification Church, Reverend Moon's creation. There I conversed with the wife of a composer, who I met, who assured me how much she and her husband had benefitted by their membership in the organization. For me, Moon was a complete fraud.

My friend, the last I heard, was engaged to be married to a groom chosen by the superiors at Reverend Moon's church. She was someone I liked very much, and I hope they selected someone who was a good match.

### **Other esoteric paths**

I explored other spiritual paths sometimes with just a brief glance and at other times more in depth. This included trying to learn what respected spiritual authorities had to say like "I and Thou" philosopher Martin Buber, reincarnationist Edgar Cayce, mystic Jacob Boehme, psychoanalyst Carl Jung, psychoanalyst `Wilhelm Reich (who claimed to have discovered orgone, a blue-like universal life force), psychic Eileen Garrett, esoteric spiritual leader Annie Besant and her theosophists, and the creator of Anthroposophy (spiritual scientism), Rudolph Steiner. I turned to books like the marvelous 14th century anonymous text, *The Cloud of Unknowing* and Richard Maurice Bucke's marvelous *Cosmic Consciousness*. The classic *The Varieties of Religious Experience* by William James was a must and added to the repertoire. Then there was the mysterious "self" the novelist Sherwood Anderson is said to have searched for in *Winesburg Ohio* which was a part of my own search.

It was fascinating, also, to hear Fritz Perls at Stanford University discuss his relationship with Sigmund Freud and observe him demonstrate the Gestalt Therapy method of psychoanalysis he and his wife, Laura, had developed for deeper assessments of the self. Even more fascinating was the discovery of Emanuel Swedenborg including attending a couple of services at the Swedenborg Church in Manhattan, where I sought insight into this enigmatic mystic. Of all the great "mystics," he is the only one of whom I am aware who claimed to have been given entry beyond the world of the living into the world of the deceased. And he made a very believable case to back his claims.

### **The teachings of Jiddu Krishnamurti**

I undertook these explorations as a part of my personal quest for truth which lasted many months. My brother Darrel finally provided the key to the direction I needed to take when he turned me on to the great teacher and philosopher Jiddu Krishnamurti. Krishnamurti was as anti-guru as it was possible to be and suggested, for example, that, in regard to chanting mantras as a method for obtaining enlightenment, one could easily do as well by chanting "Coca Cola." I read Krishnamurti's books, attended his lectures at Stanford University in California and Carnegie Hall in New York City, and practiced what he talked about. He stressed that one could never find truth by following the path of another person. Truth had to be discovered for oneself. Most importantly, he taught a process of going beyond the normal pattern of thinking—which is a process of batting thoughts back and forth between the thinker and the thinker's thoughts—in an effort to arrive at a place where thinking stops. At that point, one might discover something which Krishnamurti refused to describe on the grounds that people would seek what he described rather than to search for and find whatever was to be found there for themselves. The implication, though, was clear enough. At the point where thought stopped one would find truth. Essentially, what Krishnamurti was really teaching was a method for arriving at the place where there is no thought and only the "now" exists.

Following Krishnamurti's method was for me a self-imposed rigorous process which I did for hours every day on long walks around San Francisco but also in New York City after I returned there. Every day I would get up in the morning and walk for hours, return home, have lunch and a nap and then walk more hours. In the evening I

would do the same. A significant motivation behind these walks was my quest not only to actualize what Krishnamurti was teaching, but also, to a great extent, to understand what had happened with my marriage to Tysonia which continued to plague me.

### **The eternal now**

I especially liked to walk out on the wharf in San Francisco where fishermen fished and the seagulls flew thick and heavy. The seagulls would stand there almost motionless in the air dipping and rising a little, sometimes just a foot above my head or at eye level and off a few feet, cocking their heads at me, tilting their wings, supported by the air streams whipping across San Francisco bay. I would practice watching every thought as it entered my head during these walks and out on the wharf as I sought to arrive at that place where the back and forth process of thinking stopped.

One day I was walking out along the wharf when it seemed my mind was nearly empty of thought. But I could not empty it totally. Thoughts kept intruding. So I tried following with my mind the soaring of the seagulls in their flight as they soared so beautifully just above me and as they spiraled higher and higher and then slowly glided down and circled around. That was when suddenly, just like that, I was no longer thinking. Before me stood the existence of everything that I saw or heard without the sense of me being there, though obviously I was. This was the eternal now in which there was no distance between myself and the scene before me, of the bay and the beautiful blue sky, the white cumulous clouds, the soaring seagulls. It was incredibly beautiful accompanied by a sense of oneness with everything and the absolute understanding that there was no death, only eternity. Just amazing! And it lasted probably four or five minutes, maybe longer, I no longer remember. As my thoughts returned and the back and forth movement of the thoughts in my mind was restored, I was again my normal self. And as my normal self, I could not comprehend in the least what I had just experienced. It made no sense whatsoever to my thinking mind. "How can there be no death?" I asked. I could not answer the question, and I could not recapture that state of mind. But—there was no denying—I had just experienced it!

In the days which followed I was able to experience this "now" state of mind several times in San Francisco and on several occasions when I returned to New York City a few weeks later where I continued my very long walks. But then I began to get disturbed about something. Why had this experience not changed the essential me inside? The problems that bothered me did not go away.

It would take years before I began to understand the answer to this question. First, the essential me did change from those experiences, but it was a different change than I had anticipated. I began to understand better that maybe we are always this infinite self but we just don't see it because we are locked in our thoughts which we cannot escape. It is in the process of becoming more of this infinite that the changes we desire in ourselves is created. Even seeking to understand ourselves more fully allows a little of this infinite to sift in and we become larger within.

To claim, though, that I was now enlightened because of these experiences I had had with LSD and out on the San Francisco wharf, that would be a joke. I knew exactly who I was, and I was far from being enlightened. My experiences may have related directly to some nature of God, though at most, I speculated, just one tiny, infinitesimal part. But that was enough to light my life forward in many respects.

Those who do not like words like God, of course, can think of this subject in different words which I often do because the word God comes with so many negative connotations attached. The process, however, is the same whatever name one chooses to use.

Concerning achieving a better grasp of the concept of the "now" it is worthwhile to note Meister Eckhart's words that "There exists only the present instant... a Now which always and without end is itself new. There is no yesterday nor any tomorrow, but only Now, as it was a thousand years ago and \as it will be a thousand years hence." Krishnamurti, I believe, would surely point out that while we do live in the "now" in every "zeptosecond (a trillionth of a billionth of a second" of existence, we are not aware of it because we live in the world of thought which prevents us from experiencing the "now."

### **A review of my search**

As I review my quest for truth and understanding in those days described above, I can see how in most instances it involved turning to something new and unknown being taught or inspired by someone who had a specialty in that area. Krishnamurti's specialty was to try to convey a pathway to that place where the "now" can be realized. What I learned in my search (which continues) became a part of me including when it meant rejecting what was being taught because I found it to be false or associated with some kind of deception or charlatanism. The question that assumed the greatest importance then still concerns the existence of God today, but not whether God exists rather where and how to be in contact and in communion with the great creator of the universe who resides in each and every living thing— including us all. This is what I believe when I can rise to that level of belief. Mostly, however, I live below it.

### **Walking with God**

My experience of matters associated with God which I have described in this chapter was primarily the recognition of the existence either actual or intimated of that which my normal functioning mind did not permit me to see. In a somewhat comparable manner, perhaps we do not see our own inner world until we begin to explore it. Think, for example, what Beethoven discovered inside himself when he explored deep enough in the last years of his life to bring back to the world his magnificent 9th Symphony. I can only think of what special thing each of us has in our inner selves that we have yet to recognize lies there waiting for us to bring out of ourselves not only for our personal benefit but for those around us whether numbering one or one thousand and one. And it



need not be a 9<sup>th</sup> Symphony we find inside, a simple tune will do nicely, even a single note, when sung with all serious purpose, or a single word.

Nevertheless, it was in listening to Beethoven's 9th symphony in a superb rendition by conductor Riccardo Muti and the Chicago symphony—approached reverently and in great humbleness by Muti, as he made apparent in post-concert comments — that I sensed a possible more simple but nevertheless profound answer to the question of just where and how to experience the nature of God. This was not the kind of discovery about which one would boast, for if God is truly compassionate must God not be available to everyone equally great or small, the greatest philosopher and the person with the simplest mind, in fact to whomever reaches out earnestly seeking the path to God's door? There in the 4th movement of Beethoven's 9th symphony, the chorale movement, where Beethoven sets so powerfully and magically Frederick Schiller's *Ode to Joy*, lies, I believe, the answer to this question in the closing lines of the composition:

Brothers, above the starry canopy  
There must dwell a loving father.  
Do you fall in worship, you millions?  
World, do you know your creator?  
Seek Him above the starry skies;  
Above the stars must he dwell.

Schiller saw it and Beethoven felt it, that a loving God lives above the stars, beyond the world and the universe. Yet his being infuses all the universe with his essence.

To find God and God's nature, if he is above the stars, is this not where we must search for him? But to rise above the stars where God is to be found, how shall we do that? The thoughts that come my way are that if we are to be with God we should be as much like God as possible. But in spite of the great societies and miraculous inventions we homo sapiens have managed to create, surely we are as nothing beside the great creator of the universe and life itself, searching always for the answers that seem unanswerable. How then shall we be Godlike? Still, there is one attribute of God which I believe we humans all possess, that is the gift of love itself of which we are all owners.

It is not difficult to see that the only power for healing the suffering not only of human kind but of non-human kind as well, is love. The way then, to rise above the stars to that place where God and perfection lives must be to be as loving as possible no matter what suffering surrounds us or what our inclinations might be for wrong doing.

Can I say that I am capable of such love myself? Hardly, for though I am convinced that God is love, when it comes to being love itself, I am at best just a simple human being who most often lives outside the boundaries of what love really is. Love, nevertheless, is a goal worthy of persistent pursuit and always more attention.

Would a loving God make it so difficult that we could do everything conceivable and still not find our way? Or, does not each and every one of us already possess the key?

For surely we all can see that to be love just means to be kind, to be good, to be compassionate, to have sympathy, to employ our empathy. I believe there can be no greater achievement in life than to participate in these qualities for they alone have the potential for healing any problem the world can manufacture. When we allow these qualities into ourselves by just being what they are, we surely rise above the stars and there we walk with God.

## **Chapter 13**

### **Flop House—Famous People—Transitioning from Horn Player to Composer**

#### **A flop house and other living quarters**

I arrived in New York City after Oakland Symphony days with only a few dollars in my pocket and no place to stay. The day was growing dark and I feared I might be sleeping in the park before I finally found a flop house in Greenwich Village that rented rooms for a dollar a day. The rooms were literally cage-like with an open heavy wire mesh about two feet wide at the bottom and at the top of the rooms so that there was no privacy. Cries and screams often seared the nights, and I sustained a few bad bed-bug bites during my stay.

Fortunately, I passed a temp typist test and started work a few days after my arrival, though I was trapped in the flop house for over a week. With my first paycheck I rented a room at 113<sup>th</sup> Street and Broadway. This building was called the Wages of Sin building because it sported a giant mural quoting the Wages of Sin Bible verse painted on the side of the building on the upper floors. This portion of the building towered above the neighborhood buildings below. The mural was visible to anyone who looked up in that direction for a distance of easily a couple of blocks.

When Darrel, who had been living in Canada, returned to the City, he also took a room there. They were inexpensive and occupied by students from nearby Columbia University, especially from India, some of whom Darrel and I got to know quite well. A variety of colorful characters also lived in the building who we could not resist giving our own private names: Egg Nog, Rise up and Walk, and Hecket come to mind. Most of these people were kindly who had lived their lives in very independent ways but now were old, poor, with no resources, and approaching their end.

I next moved to 771 West End Avenue at 97<sup>th</sup> Street where I rented a room from Judy Schoenberg, the woman who had rented a room to Tysonia and me when we visited New York City after getting married. When Judy was just out of college she suffered a nervous breakdown and was given electro shock therapy which permanently dulled her senses. In all the time in which I rented a room in her apartment, I never saw her do other than read mystery novels, going through one right after the other. I last saw Judy several years later at St. Luke's Hospital where she had been diagnosed with some form of cancer. She was in no pain, but died within a few days of my visit.

I got to know and became friends with Faye Levine around this time, a very fine pianist who rented the apartment of Rosina Lhevinne on 72<sup>nd</sup> Street between Broadway and Columbus Avenue on the South Side of the street. Lhevinne was the teacher of Van Cliburn and other highly regarded international concert pianists. Faye, who had been married to composer William Bolcom, was focused mostly on Jazz along with several other of her classically trained pianist friends.

My next address was at 215 West Broadway at 91<sup>st</sup> Street which I found through Eleanor Page, a close friend and artist who had gone out with my brother and who lived in that building. Along with Susan and Mark Futral, a Legal Aid Society lawyer, Eleanor and other friends pooled their resources to buy a house in the countryside in the Catskill Mountains near Livingston Manor which they called "the Woofer," named after their dog. We have all remained friends over the years and I have often driven there from my home in Sidney for Thanksgiving or Christmas dinner to meet up with my brother when he went there. At 215 West Broadway, I took a room in the apartment of an eccentric woman and her two black Scottie dogs. This was, fortunately, a short stay as the atmosphere was oppressive.

Good fortune now smiled kindly in my direction when I managed to rent a one and one-half room studio apartment on the western end on the top floor of a five story tenement at 100 West 67<sup>th</sup> Street at Columbus Avenue. This building was located just two short blocks from Lincoln Center where the Metropolitan Opera, David Geffen Hall (home of the New York Philharmonic), the David H. Koch Theater (home of the New York City Ballet and the American Ballet), and the Juilliard School of music are located. It also stood right across the street from the main television offices of ABC and one long block from Central Park. This was choice real estate in New York City and was also some of the most expensive and safest. My rent, however, was very low because the apartment came under the rent control laws of the city.

I got the apartment by replying to a rental ad in the New York Times. Quite a few other people also responded. The real estate agent took a check as potential rent payment from all who were interested after inspecting the premises and said she would do background reviews and then contact the person to whom she would offer the apartment. I had just opened a checking account for the first time and had ordered checks with a peaceful, rural scene imprinted on them rather than opting for the standard, plain checks. They cost a little more, but for some reason I made that choice. I always felt that these checks set me apart from the other people who wanted the apartment and were a factor for the real estate agent who, a couple of weeks later, called and offered the apartment to me. As for the checks, I started ordering the standard plain checks soon thereafter.

This was a small building housing only about 12 apartments. Tenants Sharon Lutzi, Maritza Puello, Michael Mongno, Sherrie Vidgor, and I often joined forces to combat building problems, becoming close friends in the process. Michael set up his own psychoanalyst practice there employing several therapies into his counseling. It included Gestalt therapy, which I was familiar with having attended a Gestalt demonstration by its founder, Fritz Perls, which Michael was eager to hear all about. (See chapter 12.) Around the corner on 68<sup>th</sup> Street I managed to meet Susan Manning, a singer, who lived there, and who was a wonderful lover of animals, especially cats. We met in our mutual veterinarian's shop where we took our cats when they needed care. Susan operated her own home business but once had worked as the personal assistant of the Mexican composer Carlos Chavez.

## **Famous people**

Because of the 67<sup>th</sup> Street location, I would often spot well-known and famous people. Itzhak Perlman, for example, the great concert violinist, liked to speed around Lincoln Center plaza on his mobility scooter. Regis Philbin could also often be spied entering the building right across the street on the North side of 67<sup>th</sup> Street where I assumed he had an apartment. On one occasion, passing the Barnes and Noble book store located on the corner of 67<sup>th</sup> Street and Broadway at the time, I happened to look in, and there sat Elisabeth Schwarzkopf signing books. I went inside just to have a closer look at this singer of the recording of the *Four Last Songs* of Richard Strauss I admired so much, a woman who had seen up close and personal many aspects of Adolph Hitler's Third Reich.

In my wanderings around New York City, I spotted other well-known celebrities like Lauren Bacall, Johnny Carson, David Merrick (the Broadway producer), Tony Danza, and the British actor Peter Bull (sitting at the back of a bus). Judging by the smile that crossed his face as he walked down 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue near 46<sup>th</sup> Street, Carson seemed absorbed in something so humorous that he had little awareness of the busy, bustle of the city going on around him. David Merrick's office happened to be in the same building in which I was employed for a while. Sometimes I would rush to get inside the small elevator as the doors were closing, only to find myself alongside Merrick and 4 or 5 other elevator passengers. I always had the feeling that to Merrick I was like some kind of gnat he would just as soon flick off his shoulders. I acknowledge, of course, how judgmental, subjective, and unfair my opinion may have been.

It was no judgment when I answered the doorbell to my apartment on 67<sup>th</sup> Street one evening, it was surprise. There stood the movie actor Matt Dillan looking equally surprised. A new tenant had moved into the apartment directly below me shortly before, and I surmised Dillan had gone to visit him. It was just another example of how I seemed to have a proclivity for coming in contact in some manner with well-known people.

One morning, as I was walking half-way up 67<sup>th</sup> Street toward Central Park, a cab pulled up, the doors flew open, and out popped Geraldine Ferraro who was running for Vice-President at the time. Clearly, she had an ABC interview to attend. On another morning walking past the Tavern on the Green, which lies just inside the entrance to Central Park at 67<sup>th</sup> Street, there stood Jack Nicklaus and a consortium of golf people making a TV commercial. Exiting the same entrance one evening, I spotted Tony Bennett perched on a park bench trying to be inconspicuous while making a call on his cell phone. He seemed put out because people were looking at him, including me, though I just gave him a glance. I couldn't help think he should be thankful for the attention good fortune had brought his way. My opinion, however, I readily admit may have been purely subjective considering that I have never liked the quality of his voice.

Geraldine Ferraro was not the only politician I would find myself in near proximity when they ran for public office. Just outside Radio City Music Hall on 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue, I once stood on the other side of a hot dog stand as Bill Clinton, in his bid for the White House, ordered a hotdog, relishing (pardon the pun) the crowd that quickly gathered around. On another occasion Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, chatting animatedly with

an associate, criss-crossed 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue at 58<sup>th</sup> Street in the middle of the block as I criss-crossed in the opposite direction. We came within a couple of feet of each other. This was at the time he had made a big push to eliminate jaywalking in New York City.

My favorite sighting was of Muhammed Ali who had just emerged from a building on Broadway around 56<sup>th</sup> Street on the North Side of the Street as I walked by. This was the period in which the Government was going after him for refusing to be inducted into the army. He stood poised there at the top of a broad stairwell leading to the street below looking more like a God than any person I have ever seen. Many people were going around flashing the "V" for victory sign to each other during those days formed by their index and middle finger to indicate their opposition to the Vietnam War and their belief in "make love, not war." I have always regretted that I did not flash the "V" to Muhammed Ali.

Another fascinating sighting occurred in San Francisco as I was walking through Golden Gate Park. I noticed a band setting up on a flatbed truck. Three or four guys and a woman were testing the mics and arranging the percussion and stands. I knew the band must be Big Brother and the Holding Company because the woman was Janice Joplin, their lead singer. Janice looked at me inquiringly for a few seconds when I passed by as though she expected me to speak. I was surprised but not that familiar with her and so just kept walking. When I mentioned this happening to my brother, he said that he knew Janice from New York City. They would see each other in a bar on East Third Street on the lower East Side called the Old Reliable and exchange a few words on occasion. He learned that she was an aspiring singer. One time they were driving in a car together with Janice at the wheel. She said she was going to San Francisco in a few days and asked Darrel if he wanted to go along. He did not. When I saw her, she must have thought I was Darrel and wondered why I did not say something. Of course, she had the opportunity to speak too.

### **Peter Yarrow**

One evening around 5 o'clock in the evening as I walked home from work through Central Park I spied none other than Peter Yarrow of Peter, Paul, and Mary talking to a group of people at the 67<sup>th</sup> Street park entrance. Peter didn't know of the connection we had as I approached him and said, "Hello Peter. I've been wanting to talk to you." "Do I know you?" he asked. He was quite friendly, and the answer was, "Yes," that he did know me, but through a telephone conversation. That occurred as follows.

One day, trying to figure out a way I could avoid any further employment with law firms, I applied for a position listed in the New York Times for a personal assistant. Sometimes very prominent people would place such ads anonymously. Kirsten Sorteberg (referred to later), for example, once applied for a personal assistant position and ended up being interviewed by Judy Collins. Peter Yarrow also placed such an ad and this was the ad I responded to without knowing who had placed it. He replied by asking me for some samples of my writing. I faxed him a couple of animal protection articles I had written, and he then called and revealed who he was.

At that point he wasn't calling to hire me. He was intrigued by my articles and wanted to justify his position for not joining the animal protection movement. His daughter, Bethany, required medicine that could only have been produced by experimenting upon animals.

Now as Peter and I walked together down the North side of 67<sup>th</sup> Street toward Columbus Avenue, we continued this conversation. I stated my position that each generation lives with the past that has been bequeathed to it, including the scientific attempt to justify animal research. When Linda McCartney, an outspoken critic of vivisection, developed breast cancer many people regarded her decision to undergo chemotherapy as being hypocritical—though Paul McCartney has stated he learned it only after her death and that doctors may have told her the chemo she was given had not been tested on animals. Either way, it is important to point out that those who object to animal research did not invent the medical technology that is used in medicine today, and if they had, it would be entirely different because it would have been developed without vivisection. Those who oppose vivisection yet accept medical treatment or drugs developed through animal research when they are faced with a catastrophic illness, only do so because no other choice is available. To suggest to a terminally ill person who has no alternative, that they should forego medical treatment because the treatment was in part derived by experimenting upon animals which they fought against would be unconscionable and irrational. Peter listened attentively, as I did to him, but as we left each other that day I knew I had not made a deep enough impression upon him to cause him to change his mind.

Incidentally, the position described above is the same I took in an unpublished article I wrote in 2008 titled: "A Modern Heretic's Paradox: Rebel With a Cause. The potential impact T. Colin Campbell's *The China Study* can have on medical vivisection." There I stated the following:

When Linda McCartney, one of the most influential animal rights personalities during her all too short lifetime, developed breast cancer, she was criticized for accepting treatment for her cancer that had been developed through animal experimentation. My own view is that those who object to animal research did not invent the medical technology that is used in medicine today, and if they had, the means would be entirely different. To deny medical treatment to a terminally ill person, for example, a child with cancer, because the treatment was derived by experimenting upon animals would be heartless and unethical.

I could not have dreamed in 2008 that I would be diagnosed with a chronic leukemia condition almost ten years later, any available treatments for which have undoubtedly used mice and probably other animals in developing them. I remain unalterably opposed to all animal research. (See Chapter 17 for an explanation of my unyielding support for the rights of animals.)

## Playing the horn in New York

In New York I needed some place to play. This I found in the 92<sup>nd</sup> Street Y Orchestra, with Maurice Levine at the helm, and the West End Symphony, conducted by Eugene Gamiel. Both orchestras were a mixed bag of students, amateurs, and professionals. Levine, would bring in professionals for the dress rehearsal and performance of a concert. Gamiel did the same but he would eventually build his orchestra so that it consisted of about half professionals and some former members of major orchestras. I was fortunate to play first horn in both orchestras.

Levine, who had conducted the New York Philharmonic on several occasions and made his name initially by conducting Kurt Weill productions overseen by Weill himself, kept to the standard repertoire. He once hired concert pianist Gary Graffman to perform a Beethoven concerto. Graffman would later suffer a solo career-ending finger injury. He then pursued a teaching career leading to his appointment as the President of the Curtis Institute of Music.

Eugene Gamiel, who conducted professional orchestras around the city, was far more adventuresome. He liked to read through scores like Richard Strauss' *Til Eulenspiegel* and Zoltan Kodaly's *Háry János Suite* which contains a beautiful horn solo that many horn players seldom get the opportunity to play.

One day a highly talented high school student showed up at rehearsal for the 92<sup>nd</sup> Street Y Orchestra and joined the horn section. This was Stewart Rose who would become one of the most sought after horn players in New York City. Years later I was fortunate to have him play my Woodwind Quintet and my Trio for Horns in concert. (See Chapter 15.) I still stay in touch with Stewart on occasion.

Another horn player I would meet in a community orchestra was Julius Watkins, the great African American jazz hornist, when I was hired to play a concert with the Harlem Philharmonic. I had heard Julius before in San Francisco when he was on tour with Cannonball Adderly. Karl Hampton Porter was the conductor of the Harlem Philharmonic who also conducted the NYC Housing Authority Symphony Orchestra with which he presented concerts at Sing Sing Prison in Ossining, New York. On our program for the evening with the Harlem Philharmonic was Schubert's Fifth Symphony. Being aware that Julius was primarily known as a jazz musician, I wondered how he would fare with Schubert. He was warm and friendly and brought that warmth to his performance with a beautiful, classical rendition of the first horn part of Schubert's symphony.

Playing pick-up jobs, one never knew what to expect, and you might find yourself performing with some notable music icon such as Hubie Blake. This happened on a commencement concert with the Brooklyn University Symphony providing the music. Another very fine horn player, Barry Benjamin, a member of the Dorian Quintet, also played on that concert.

In yet another community orchestra in New York City, the Doctors' Orchestra, I met and became friends with Eileen Stempel, a soprano with a beautiful, clear voice.



This was already apparent or soon would be for the music world to hear through performances with such organizations as the Syracuse Symphony Orchestra, Syracuse Opera, Indianapolis Opera, Opera Theatre St. Louis, Amato Opera, the Bolshoi Opera and the New York Philharmonic. A strong advocate for women composers, Eileen has also shown another side of her talents and skills through her academic career as the Associate Dean of the Graduate School at Syracuse University, where she was also an Associate Professor in the Department of Fine Arts, and presently as Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs at the University of Cincinnati and Professor of Voice at the Cincinnati Conservatory.

### **Aspen, Colorado**

I continued to practice the horn diligently through these times wondering where it might lead. I went to a concert of the New York Philharmonic specifically to hear John Cerminaro play the *Brandenburg Concerto* No. I. He was the principal horn and I was impressed. I had never got back to my best playing after the hiatus from playing in San Francisco, and so arranged to take a few lessons with him. Cerminaro was very helpful. With the summer approaching he suggested I attend the Aspen Summer Festival. It sounded like a good idea and so I agreed. That was a mistake. In Aspen I was suddenly like a student again and felt badly out of place.

The mountains were beautiful in Aspen, nevertheless, and I had the privilege of playing under Dennis Russel Davis and Jacques Barzin, the latter whose reputation preceded him as a strict disciplinarian. But I saw none of that at Aspen. Philip Farkas (former principal horn with the Chicago Symphony) was around and I ran into him quite by accident when I recognized him just outside a little grocery store. I introduced myself and told him I had studied with Valkenier. He was not in a rush and spent a few minutes sharing stories about the time he spent with Valkenier in the horn section of the Boston Symphony.

I met and played with some really fine horn players in Aspen including Boris Rybka, who had played first horn in Graz and with the Concertgebouw Orchestra in Amsterdam. This also included Priscilla (Prill) McAfee who had just been appointed principal horn with the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra. Curiously, I had seen her before at Juilliard when I took a piano class there in the extension division with Eva Kovalik. Prill displayed her considerable skills in a beautiful performance of the Haydn *Concerto for Horn* No. I. Many fine students on the horn were also present including Larry Bassman, a student of John Cerminaro at Juilliard, Paul Taylor, the son of Ross Taylor (see Chapter 11), and Steve Gross, from the University of Michigan. Paul is presently the conductor of the Kirchgemeindorchester in the Schwamendingen District of Zurich, Switzerland and the Paul Taylor Orchestra in Zürich. Steve is presently the Professor of Horn and Head of the Woodwind, Brass, and Percussion Area at the University of California, Santa Barbara.

### **Transition from horn player to composer**

In New York I often visited my long-time and very unusual friends from New

England Conservatory days, Harold and Ivana Themmen, and their daughter Adina, son Paris, and twins Allegra and Tania. Harold was a brilliant clarinetist who played principal clarinet with the American Ballet Theatre. Ivana was an equally brilliant pianist and composer whose works have been presented by the Minnesota Orchestra, the Louisville Orchestra, and the Boston Pops. Once I witnessed her prepare almost overnight and take out on tour with the American Ballet Theater, Mendelssohn's Piano Concerto No. 1 in g minor after having not practiced for months. Paris Themmen would gain childhood fame which endures to this day as the character Mike Tee Vee in the first production of *Willie Wonka and the Chocolate Factory* with Gene Wilder in the title role. The twins, who had great voices, would attend the Manhattan School of Music and pursue a musical career. Adina was a burgeoning photographer with tremendous potential who, tragically, came under the influence of the wrong people. She died of a drug overdose of heroin in a Manhattan residential hotel, the Breton Hall, at the age of only seventeen. I keep a prized photograph she took which she gave to me hanging on my studio wall.

As a note of curiosity, my sister, Ann (1925-2007), spent her last years living in her studio apartment at the Breton Hall.

In later years Ivana would develop the horrible disease everyone dreads, Alzheimers. Visiting her in the Alzheimer's ward in a hospital in Brooklyn, which I did several times, was an eye-opening experience each and every time at just how devastating Alzheimer's can really be. Pathetic beyond belief is the phrase that most comes to mind, in fact, a horror almost beyond description. Yet it was touching to observe how some of the patients built their own social networks and tried to care for one another as best they could within their severe limitations, even for some who could barely speak.

Practicing the horn was often a problem in city living because neighbors would complain. Sometimes I practiced in the large apartment the Themmens rented. Unknown to me, another horn player lived in the building and heard me practicing through the walls. It was a very nice surprise when he called to talk. This was Sheldon Henry who I had played with in a performance of Mozart's *Sinfonie Concertante* for winds in Provincetown decades before where he was the horn soloist. After getting acquainted again, he called to ask if I would replace him for a rehearsal on 4<sup>th</sup> horn with the Caramoor Festival orchestra for Cherubini's opera *Medea*. Martin Smith, who was subbing with the New York Philharmonic and would soon be appointed the principal horn in Pittsburgh, was on first horn. Julius Rudel was the conductor. Though I wasn't aware of it at the time, this was the last fully professional job I would ever play.

The last professional audition I ever played was for the New Jersey Symphony. More than 100 candidates showed up. It was an experience beyond absurd. I stuck it out, however, and went up on stage where I played my role. Everyone seemed to know they weren't going to get hired that day, and how they did decide on who they wanted I'll never know. Gone were the days where you might show up at an audition for a fairly big job, as was the case, when I auditioned for the Montreal Symphony, and had to compete against only three or four other players. Those days were now in the ether. The conservatories and music schools were churning out horn players by the dozens and

many of them were very good indeed. I did meet some very fine horn players at the audition who were well qualified by their playing and experience to be hired for the job. This included one player who was studying privately with Valkenier in his retirement at the Cape Conservatory on Cape Cod.

When I look back on my career as a horn player, my priority was to play as well as possible and accomplish whatever I could in that effort. I feel blessed to have pursued this path. Wherever I failed—the reasons for which are all too clear in retrospect— that falls on me. As for that part of the total journey my life as a horn player took with all the extraordinary music events and the fantastic musicians I was fortunate to know and be associated with—especially other horn players—that part remains inestimable, almost unreal, and nearly unfathomable.

### **Becoming a composer, first signs**

Meanwhile, the great new musical interest that had been hovering in the background was making itself known more and more as the horn gradually gave ground to my desire to start composing. Two fractured vertebrae incurred in a softball game at a picnic held by a company where I worked hastened the process as I had to stop playing for several weeks while the injury healed.

At the same time I was transitioning to music composition—though I wasn't quite aware that this was what was happening— my twin brother, Darrel, was transitioning to the classical guitar for which he has written many beautiful compositions and arrangements plus two method books. This included the exquisitely illustrated *Fingerboard Foundation for the Classical Guitar* with illustrations chosen by him. He had pursued his own career on the horn, studying at the New England Conservatory, the Vienna Academy of Music and Dramatic Arts, and then, as mentioned, with the Danish hornist, Albert Linder. He met Linder while studying at the Stuttgart Hochschule für Musik in Stuttgart, Germany where he was also privileged to study with the hornist Otto Stösser. Darrel played with many ensembles and orchestras besides those, as previously mentioned, in Stuttgart, including the Goldovsky Grand Opera Company, the Atlantic Symphony Orchestra of Halifax, Nova Scotia, and Les Grandes Ballets Canadiens de Montreal. Among his many credits in the guitar world, he would become the Director of the Manhattan Institute for the Guitar.

The urge to become a composer was first planted in the 7th Army Symphony in conversations with Ken Schermerhorn and other members of the orchestra. At the New England Conservatory I dabbled a bit when I wrote a short piano piece. There was some merit to the piece in that it was expressive, perhaps in the same sense that primitive American painting is expressive. But I had little clue of what I was doing. Then, as referred to previously, when I played with the Oakland Symphony, Gerhard Samuel was intensely engaged in programming pieces of contemporary music which stirred my imagination enough so that I wrote the piece, also previously mentioned, for Harmonium and Horn for performance at the Himalayan Academy.

The final doors to music composition opened rather serendipitously in New York City. One evening I went out for a walk and headed past the fountain on the plaza at Lincoln Center which was loaded with people. The fountain is located in front of the Metropolitan Opera. Suddenly a young woman came running toward me who I knew only casually. I had met her at WBAI radio studios where I had gone a few nights before with Josie Andrews, a belly dancer friend Darrel introduced me to, who was being interviewed there for a program. (Josie danced on the borscht circuit in the Catskill Mountains and in Arabic clubs located on the streets of the lower 40s' on Eighth Avenue.) The woman at Lincoln Center had an extra ticket for a performance of Prokofiev's ballet *Romeo and Juliet* which was being performed that very evening in the Metropolitan Opera house. In fact, the audience was even then filing into the auditorium. Did I want to go, the young woman asked? Indeed, I did. The principal dancers were Margot Fonteyn and Rudolf Nureyev. That evening I heard for the first time this great masterpiece of 20<sup>th</sup> century music.

It turned out that the young woman who had given me the ticket was a Nureyev groupie. After the performance, she left quickly in pursuit of him.

I was so impressed by Prokofiev's score that I bought a ticket for another performance and went back soon thereafter. It was then in the darkness of the Metropolitan Opera with the music of Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet* swirling around me and the spectacle of the dance before my eyes, that I was filled with inspiration and an overwhelming sense that my future destiny was to write music, perhaps even to put a ballet on that same stage one day. There in the darkness of the theater I vowed that somehow I would embark upon that journey

But how could I become a composer? I didn't even have a piano. Of course, Berlioz had used a guitar in writing some of his great masterpieces, and I had a guitar on which I invented my own strums just for fun. Some of them were pretty good, but hardly the answer. How should I begin? While some beginning composers start by just diving right in, manipulating music materials according to whatever knowledge of music they might have—which, as many results show, can be a valid approach—only a solid grounding in traditional compositional practices such as possessed by the masters of composition I most admired could suffice to give me the foundation I believed I needed before I could ever claim to be a composer. How was I to achieve that?

## **Columbia University**

It is astonishing how things work out sometimes. During this period I was working for temporary office organizations and the work was drying up making it increasingly hard to pay the rent. I decided to apply for a permanent office job at Columbia University for a little additional security. After passing some initial proficiency tests, the personnel officer, a woman, sent me to the Economics department to interview for a vacancy there. The Administrative Assistant who did the hiring for the department, Nadine Seltzer, happened to be a singer who sang with the Barnard Gilbert & Sullivan Society. (At the time Barnard was the women's division of Columbia

University.) When she learned of my music background she hired me instantly. Thank you Nadine! I could never thank you enough.

It didn't take long for me to learn that Columbia employees had certain perks at their disposal. Suddenly I had access to 7 credits of free tuition for each school semester including summer school for a total of 21 free credits per year. Leafing through the Columbia catalog of available courses, I quickly discovered that the School of Music offered all the music studies I needed to become a composer. It was as if the doors for everything I wanted to accomplish had been suddenly thrown open. What I needed lay there at my fingertips, served up on a platter, as it were. All I had to do was reach out and take it.

### **Composer heroes**

I approached the study of music composition based on my foundation in music acquired as a horn player. The composers Mozart, Beethoven, Bach, Schubert, Haydn, and Chopin stood at the top of my list of musical heroes. The reasons why are easy to explain.

The musical expression of Mozart often comes as close to perfection as possible. It is especially compelling in some of his slow movements in works like the *Serenade for 13 Winds*, the *Clarinet Concerto*, the *Piano Concertos Nos. 21 and 23*, or his *Symphony No. 36*. As inaccurate and unfair as the movie *Amadeus* was to the composer Antonio Salieri, I loved the scene where Salieri, bewildered by the range of Mozart's abilities, is forced to admit that Mozart's music is like "the very voice of God himself."

The same might be said for the others. With Beethoven—and I think many will agree—it is as though he reaches the depths of the human heart more fully than any other composer. And he expanded the art of musical development of thematic material in undreamed of ways.

With Bach, on the other hand, his construction of magnificent edifices intricately woven together in a display of unimaginable intelligence are yet imbued, at times, with great passion and feeling. His music seems to show—as a religious person like Bach himself might say—what God is capable of when he desires. If such praise seems excessive, Bach himself said: "At a reverent performance of music, God is always at hand with his gracious presence."

When it comes to Schubert, who can outshine him for the absolute purity of his musical expression in all its dimensions, melody, form, harmony, counterpart, compositional technique—it's all there, the complete package presented, surely, quite near to perfection.

And among these symphonic giants how can one exclude poor old Pappa Haydn "dead and gone with his memory lingering on." Far from it. Here is a composer of great intellectual genius practically inventing single handedly more than any of his contemporaries the constructs of a new music that would serve to unify music of the heart and mind for centuries. And it would pave the way for his younger colleague Mozart to do his thing. Without Haydn, Beethoven also could not have done his thing, even though

the two composers did not appreciate each other much. For anyone unfamiliar with his genius, I recommend the Andante movement of Haydn's Piano Trio No. 23 in G major.

Finally there is Chopin, a composer in a league of his own, set apart especially because he wrote most of his compositions for piano. But he too dwelled among the stars and that is the journey where his compositions take us when we give ourselves permission to ride along.

### **First Studies at Columbia**

I took my first class at Columbia University in the spring semester of 1975 in a Renaissance Music class with Professor Joel Newman. Because of my previous study at Columbia many years earlier, I harbored a certain amount of trepidation. Would I be able to make it? Could I even obtain a passing grade? I dreaded taking the midterm exam but when it was returned to me, graded by one of the student assistants, to my amazement, there it was, a B+. "B+"! I said to myself. I had held back because I feared appearing like I was showing off. "I could have had an A!" There was no holding back after that. I ended up with a course grade of A minus.

For the rest of my studies at Columbia I followed the same path, "don't hold back." I was enrolled in the School of General Studies, the adult division, but in my entire Columbia undergraduate time, I took only two General Studies classes. All the others were interdisciplinary, meaning they were open to all divisions at Columbia. This meant I was taking classes alongside some very bright young students and here I was 40 years of age. Without doubt, they had many advantages over me, especially with superior secondary education backgrounds. But I had my own advantage with which they could not compete and that was life experience. This was especially valuable in writing papers where philosophical ideas could be raised and argued to bolster content. So we balanced ourselves out. They accepted me as an equal as I did with them. I remain friends with a couple of these students still today.

I took one more music history class with Joel. After one of those class sessions in which just Allison, another student with music composition aspirations, and Joel and I were in the room together, he confided it was one of the worst classes he had ever taught. He said the other students were so uninterested that on multiple choice questions on exams they would not even speculate to try to get the right answer. Further, he said he was thankful that Allison and I were in the class. This was a very nice compliment to receive especially since it involved Joel, the teacher for the very first class I completed at Columbia.

At the time I was still trying to keep in shape on the horn. In order to find the time to practice and keep up with my studies, I would bring my horn to work and on lunch breaks hurry over to Columbia Teacher's College. The music department there maintained practice rooms with upright pianos. I could get in 35 or 40 minutes of practice over lunch. Joel spotted me lugging my horn around the campus several times and on occasions when I didn't have the horn, he would kid around and ask where it was. This increased the bond between us.

In the area of music history, I should not neglect to mention Christopher Hatch, a Professor of Music History. He was also the editor of *The Musical Quarterly*, and co-editor, along with David W. Bernstein, of the book *Music theory and the exploration of the past* written in honor of Patricia Carpenter. (See Chapter 14.) I took Hatch's class in 20<sup>th</sup> century music history. He was as inspirational teacher and didn't mind going a little outside of the curriculum to communicate his material. For one such purpose he asked if I would meet with some of the class students a few minutes before the classes to conduct some of the pieces (in choral format) to be presented in the class. I was more than happy to do this which also gave me the opportunity to get to know some of the students better. This included Pamela Tate, widely gifted, who became a friend and with whom I would stay in contact over the years.

One day as I rushed over to the practice studios at Teacher's College I found an enormous surprise waiting in the form of a woman who stood chatting with another person at the foot of the stairs leading to the practice rooms. It was equally a surprise when she turned to see me. This was Mary Markley, my high school accompanist from Bluffton, Indiana. Neither of us knew the other was in New York. After we recovered from our initial shock, we quickly told each other what we were doing there. Mary, it turned out, was teaching a piano class at Teacher's college and was also the music director at Saint Bartholemew's Church in New York City. Teaching at Columbia Teacher's College—I was impressed indeed. Mary graciously invited me to spend the night at her home in Teaneck, New Jersey where I met her husband and two sons. I brought my horn and a stack of music with me some of which we played through the next day in a brief return to a distant past.

How curious it was to meet Mary at Columbia in that manner. It was, to me, another example of the paranormal at work, or perhaps better described as one of those morphic fields in operation which had captured Rupert Sheldrake's attention and about which we human beings have yet to learn so much. In retrospect, I also see my meeting with Mary as an indication that a major cycle in my life had run near full circle and was drawing to a close.

Meanwhile, not to sell Joel Newman short, he did more than just teach music history. He played an important role in the early music revival in New York City administratively and as a recorder player in the American Recorder Society. As a recorder player, he remained active and played at places like the Spoleto Festival in Italy. He was also the musicologist for the New York Pro Musica.

After his retirement from Columbia, Joel moved to Provincetown where he ran his own sheet music business, Provincetown Bookshop Editions, and was co-owner of the Provincetown Bookshop. He continued to play Renaissance music. I was surprised to learn that he was married to a man, Elloyd Hanson, and had been when he taught my classes at Columbia. I planned one day to write to Joel and possibly visit him in Provincetown, but I never got around to that. His class got me off to the right start at Columbia, for which I have always been thankful. Joel died in 2014 at the age of 96.

Columbia Teacher's College offered a chamber music class in which I enrolled. In this class we rehearsed a variety of chamber music pieces. We had a cello player and the

instructor played the violin, so one day I brought in the Haydn *Divertimento in E♭* for horn, violin and cello. Now was the opportunity to finally play this piece which I never expected would happen. The trio was the piece I mentioned earlier which I first heard the Viennese hornist Franz Koch play on a recording I picked up in Paris. This difficult high horn piece impressed the instructor and we played through it in several class sessions. Then at one class he brought a visitor in who he introduced as a tenor friend of his. We started the class right off with the Haydn Divertimento. It was clear that I was being auditioned for the benefit of the instructor's tenor friend who sat there judging. I felt like they wanted to consider me for playing something with the tenor, maybe the Britten *Serenade for Tenor, Horn, and Strings*. I could have been wrong, of course, but that's what I thought. The cellist also thought something like this was going on. So how did I play that day? The same way I have played many audition, not well. I think they were very disappointed and so was I.

### **Music theory**

I had taken some theory classes at the New England Conservatory, but once I was enrolled at Columbia, I had the opportunity to take the theory courses I really needed for developing composition skills. In a very calculated manner, I chose to treat theory assignments as nearly like composition studies as I could manage. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century theory classroom of Richard Taruskin, for example—who would become famous for his work on Stravinsky and as a music historian and critic—I composed a setting of Shakespeare's *Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer's Day* for soprano and piano in fulfilling an analysis assignment. Taruskin would sometimes show some tough love, going around the room while playing chords to some composition and requiring us to identify what chord he was playing. It really put us on the spot. So I didn't know what to expect when I turned in my Shakespeare song. He responded by grading the composition with an A, a smile, and a verbal aside that I was a composer of "deep passion."

For my species counterpart class with Professor Edward Lippman, author of *Musical Thought in Ancient Greece*, I wrote a motet for a cappella chorus titled *Ecce Quo Modus Moritur Justus* (Behold how the righteous man dies). I used the rules of species counterpoint which we were studying which copied the practices of the Renaissance composer Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina. The text had been set by Renaissance composers like Carlo Gesualdo, Jacob Handl, Orlando di Lasso, Georg Reutter, and Tomas Luis de Victoria. Lippman, who had played jazz and also composed, got excited and wanted to have the piece performed by the Columbia-Barnard Chorus led by Gregg Smith. Smith, however, showed little interest as he sat down at the piano with me and laboriously struggled through the piece. Then, Egads! He discovered parallel fifths! Horrors! Can't have that! Actually, I had made a last minute change which caused them. I sent the piece to Ann, my sister, who was living in Chicago. She got three friends together to record the piece as a quartet so that at least I was able to get an idea of what it sounded like.

In my orchestration/conducting class with Dennis Riley, I wrote a short orchestral study which I titled *The Nights of Big Sur*. Curiously, Riley had been a student of Jim Dixon while at the University of Iowa. In the "It's a small world" category, Dixon, as



mentioned earlier, was the conductor of the 7<sup>th</sup> Army Symphony Orchestra who, along with Ken Schermerhorn, auditioned me for the orchestra.

Riley said he was suspicious of pieces with titles like *The Nights of Big Sur* and would not allow the piece to be played through by the Columbia student orchestra which we class members conducted as part of class requirements. Certainly the piece had its mistakes. But as for the title, whether Riley thought it pretentious or not, I had been in Big Sur on three occasions, camping under the stars on two of those, some of which I have described. I felt the title was appropriate and still hope to edit and expand on this piece in the future, though it may require considerable work.

Dennis Riley was a very dedicated composer. Unbeknownst to me, he once spotted me at the Metropolitan Opera where I was attending a performance of Alban Berg's *Lulu*, a twelve-tone opera. At our next class Riley surprised me by asking my opinion of the opera. "I think it's a masterpiece," I responded. That was the right answer. It seemed to establish a certain bond between Dennis and me.

The last time I saw Dennis after he left Columbia, I ran into him on the street. He told me he was returning to teaching at the Brooklyn Conservatory of Music. Teaching, he said, was something he missed, and he was looking forward to his new position. Sadly, Dennis would die of AIDS in 1999 at the age of 55.

I took Walter Hilse's theory class in 18<sup>th</sup> century counterpoint. One notable student always brought a donut to class. Whenever Walter started to call on the class for the answer to some problem, if it looked like he was going to call on this student, a male, he would stuff the donut in his mouth. That was one trick I had never seen before or since. I wondered if he took a donut to every class he attended.

For Walter's class we would bring our homework assignments in and he would play through them on the piano, pointing out mistakes. On one occasion, I composed a short contrapuntal study and brought it in. Walter played it through after which one student, a young woman, remarked: "That sounds like Bach!" Hilse replied, "I wouldn't totally disagree." While, of course, I would never consider that I could stand even close to falling within the shadow of a great composer like Bach, the compliment warmed me, nevertheless, and added to my sense that I was on the right track.

Years later after both Walter and I had left Columbia, Walter would become the pianist for the premier performance of my *Four Songs for Soprano, Horn and Piano*.

## **Dedication**

Through much of my Columbia undergraduate days, I rented a small room on 97<sup>th</sup> Street and West End Avenue from Judy Schoenberg, as described earlier. There, I worked hard, often late into the night, trying to acquire the foundation I felt was necessary to compose music in the manner in which I wished. Not much else mattered in the pursuit of my goals except for the horn which I still managed to keep up.

One summer night as I was returning home around 9:30 p.m.—fortunately above ground and not in the subway—the great blackout of July 13-14, 1977 hit blanketing the

entire City in darkness, including Brooklyn and Queens. Thousands of people poured from buildings and stumbled along the darkened streets while thousands more found themselves stranded in subways and elevators. I thanked God this did not include me and wished them safety and comfort.

Looting and vandalism quickly spread across some of the City's neighborhoods. By the time I reached the corner of 97<sup>th</sup> and Broadway, a crowd of chanting cheering people was already ripping the protective gates of stores from their mountings while others carried away their booty from stores already broken into with leering, ugly grins crossing their faces. I waded through the unruly crowd and made my way quickly home and into the safety of my room where I put the blackout out of mind. More important matters needed my attention. Fortunately, I had some candles which I lit and in a room lit by candlelight dove into the assignment I needed to complete for Elliot Skinner's class in Cultural Anthropology the following day.

### **Brief foray into psychiatry**

During this time I also met artist Mona Mark. She had been teaching at the School of Visual Arts and, if my memory serves right, was taking specialty classes at the Fashion Institute of Technology. Mona was also taking piano lessons. We had much in common and hung out together discussing all matter of things and especially our respective aspirations in art and music. In the following years she would build a national and international reputation for her art with many group and solo shows to her credit. At the time I was impressed by what she had to say about a psychiatrist friend of hers, Simon Nagler, and so consulted with him for a while. This was a big change because I had not seen a psychiatrist since my time spent with Dr. Adler at Mass Mental. Ultimately, the good doctor's practical side pointed in directions where practicality assumed a greater role than my idealistic side had much interest in pursuing. But we had some very interesting discussions, including about other cultures brought to light by anthropologists like Margaret Meade who years before I heard present a lecture on the subject at Columbia University. This was before I began any studies there.

### **New York City, the spawning grounds**

New York City was an exciting place where sometimes it seemed almost like providence was holding the reins as momentous and fascinating events materialized from nowhere that made a significant impact in shaping the path that was beginning to form. And now the theory background to build the foundation I wanted for composition studies belonged to me, thanks to the theory department at Columbia University. The next important step I needed to take hung like a delicious bunch of green, ripe grapes dangling just above my fingertips. It was time to become totally submerged in finding out just what was required for me to begin composing music.

## Chapter 14

### In Search of a Style

#### Teachers

Mark Zuckerman was a recent graduate of Princeton University who had just been appointed as an Assistant Professor in the Music Department at Columbia University. At Princeton he studied with Milton Babbitt—one of the top advocates of the serialism method of composition in the United States and Europe—and other composers. Among his classes, Mark was assigned to teach Composition I, the beginning class for composition students. By this time I could count two semesters of harmony, two semesters of counterpoint, and two semesters spent studying orchestration and conducting as a foundation for taking Mark's class. And this did not include my theory study at the New England Conservatory of Music. If that was not enough theory background, I would never have enough. It was time to dive in.

Zuckerman taught the 12-tone method of composition, a technique based on arranging the 12 tones of the chromatic scale in certain prearranged orders. It was largely invented and pioneered by Arnold Schoenberg during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Mark began by suggesting the class members write a composition using only six notes of the chromatic scale, or, one-half of a tone row. (A complete tone row consists of all 12 tones of the chromatic scale set in a prearranged order.) Using six pre-arranged notes, or pitches as they would be called in 12-tone parlance, I learned how to use the basic techniques in 12-tone composition. These consisted of (1) a straight presentation of the prearranged row, (2) inversion (playing the row upside down), (3) retrograde (playing the row backwards), (4) retrograde inversion (playing the backwards row upside down), (5) transposition of any of the rows, and (6) in using chordal constructs such as, but not limited to, dyads (2 notes), trichords (3 notes), tetrachords (4 notes), pentachords (5 notes), and hexachords (6 notes), both vertically (harmonically) and horizontally (melodically).

Mary Jane Leach also attended Mark's class, and I would get to know her as a composer friend. She was independent from Columbia and I believe was taking the class just to increase her skills. Her pioneering work in manipulating acoustical sound phenomena to create an ethereal kind of musical landscape—especially in her choral compositions—would carry her and her compositions around the world in a variety of settings.

In creating my 6-tone composition, Mark had me write a few measures at a time for each class. Before long I had completed a first movement and then a second. They were short movements, just 49 and 48 measures each, but for me a grand accomplishment. The 12 tone method does not require following a set time signature—2/4, 3/4, 4/4, etc.—so I allowed the natural rhythm of the music being composed to dictate the time signatures for any given sequence of measures as I composed them. I did not, however, strictly follow the rules of 12 tone composition described above.

Such is the manner in which I completed my first formal composition. I gave it the rather plain title *Piece for Piano in Two Movements*. Mark encouraged me to submit the piece for a Columbia Composers' concert which I did. It was selected and performed on April 28, 1978 at the Barnard College Parlor by pianist Michael Skelly who gave an outstanding performance. It was almost hard to believe this was happening, but it did.

I continued studying with Mark the following semester. Now, though, we employed the full 12-tone row for my next composition which was for Woodwind Quintet. Though the piece begins with a 12-tone row, within a few measures I found myself straying from the row. This would turn out not to be unusual. Though I used the techniques associated with the 12-tone method for my earliest compositions, I am not confident that I ever wrote a full work that followed the 12-tone method from start to finish—except for the first movement of my *Trio for Horns*.

This Woodwind Quintet was premiered at another Columbia Composer's concert on March 29, 1979 at which I was rewarded with another outstanding performance. The players were Judith Mendenhall on flute, Rudolph Vrbsky on oboe, David Singer on clarinet, Alexander Heller on bassoon, and Stewart Rose on horn, some of the best players in New York City. Sadly, Alexander Heller died unexpectedly in 2015. During his career he recorded the Mozart Serenade K. 361 for 13 winds and the Sonata K. 292 for Bassoon and Cello with Yo Yo Ma.

The quintet received further performances eight years later, first at a Composer's Concordance Concert at Cami Hall in New York City on April 24, 1987 and the following day at the University of Delaware/Newark. Composers Concordance was a first-class new music presenting organization founded by two very fine composers, Patrick Hardish and Joseph Pehrson. I had known Pat since Columbia University days where he was the music librarian. Both performances were given by the Del Arte Wind Quintet featuring Eileen Grycky, flute, Lloyd Shorter, oboe, Peter Hill, clarinet, Jon Gaarder, bassoon, and Francis Orval, horn.

My Woodwind Quintet marked the point of no return. Like it or not, I could now consider myself what I had sought to become—a composer. I credit Mark Zuckerman as having been the perfect person to initiate me into composition studies. He helped transform a fledgling would-be composer into a legitimate composer in the space of two semester's time. Mark himself, an exceptionally fine composer who after academia invented and developed his own music language, has written for a wide variety of solo, small, and large ensemble groups; chorus and opera; and Yiddish Choral Arrangements. His choral music has been performed in the Netherlands, Great Britain, Canada, and Turkey as well as in the United States. With the formation of Phoenix (to be discussed), I would be privileged to present his composition *Paraphrases* on a Phoenix program.

Upon completion of my class studies with Mark, I enrolled for two further semesters of composition studies with Max Lifchitz. Lifchitz, winner of the Gaudeamus Competition for Performers of Twentieth Century Music and founder of North South Consonance, has appeared throughout the United States, Latin America, and Europe

presenting concerts and his work. For his class, I wanted to turn my attention to stringed instruments. This resulted in my *Music for String Quartet*.

Once again good fortune smiled in my direction. Max conducted and recorded (non commercial recording) the piece with a string quartet in a reading session for Columbia composers that included members of the famed Emerson Quartet. I viewed the piece as a 12-tone composition, but when I said this to Max, he laughed. "That's no 12-tone piece," he commented. Thinking it over, I had to agree. I was using many of the techniques of 12-tone composition in my writing, but they sounded far removed from a certain sound many 12 tone compositions sounded like. It was in moments like these that I realized I much preferred my "non-12-tone" compositions to those that were being lauded in music journals and theory treatises, especially those that looked extremely impressive on paper. Mark Zuckerman seemed to share such thinking when he said in class one day that he was convinced a recent Pulitzer Prize winner had won the award because his score looked so incredibly sophisticated that one could only think it must be brilliant beyond words. For me, such pieces often offered far less in giving the listener a rich musical experience. Because of this and related reasons, most significantly, my personal approach, I believe my early compositions, which were atonal in nature, are still of significant value today and can be put on any kind of classical music program. I wrote them using some of the most modern techniques of the day, but in their essence they were based on the music values of traditional classical music from Monteverdi to Prokofiev. This distinguishes them from real 12-tone and serialism compositions written in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. I must confess, I am pleased by the difference.

I was fortunate at Columbia in finding even more excellent composition teachers to study with as I proceeded. After Mark and Max, it was time for graduate school. Mark wanted me to apply at Princeton so I could study with Milton Babbitt. Applicants had to submit a score and I had only two that were suitable. These were my *Music for String Quartet* or the *Woodwind Quintet*. I chose the former which I had copied a little on the sloppy side and which showed even less allegiance to 12 tone methods than my *Woodwind Quintet*. What I was really doing, which I recognized after Princeton turned my application down, was sabotaging myself. The simple fact was that I did not want to attend Princeton to study 12-tone or serial composition no matter who was teaching it. That decision marked the turning point in beginning to find my own compositional voice.

Fortunately, I also applied for graduate school at Columbia and at Queens College, CUNY, both of which accepted my application. I chose to continue at Columbia which meant that I was one of six students selected for the Masters degree composition class. The first year was taught by Fred Lerdahl. Renowned for his theoretical writings, he was also an exceptional composer whose compositions I describe as exhibiting real architectural beauty and substance. Widely performed by ensembles like the Juilliard Quartet to major orchestras like the Los Angeles Philharmonic and New York Philharmonic, his works have now been chosen as finalists on three occasions for the Pulitzer Prize.

Besides myself, the other five students in Fred's class were Mark Baker, Eve Beglarian, Siji Chew, Grant Richard, and Paul Moravec. They were all highly gifted and I considered it a privilege to join them. Paul would receive important composer awards, including the Prix de Rome. In 2004 he was also awarded the Pulitzer Prize for his composition *Tempest Fantasy* for clarinet, violin, cello, and piano. I found it to be a very fine piece well deserving the award. Eve, called by the L.A. Times "a humane, idealistic rebel and a musical sensualist," would receive the 2017 Herb Alpert Award in Music for her "prolific, engaging and surprising body of work."

Falling again into the "it's a small world category," where coincidence is at the heart of the matter—which to me has more "paranormal" than "coincidental" value—I learned long after both Eve and I had left Columbia that her mother and father both played in the 7th Army Symphony Orchestra. As I described to Eve, I once attended a performance of Menotti's Opera *The Old Maid and the Thief* with 7<sup>th</sup> Army Symphony members serving as the pit orchestra. This was before I had become a member. To my surprise, I noticed that a civilian woman was playing in the orchestra, apparently because they had yet to fill the position with a male "soldier." As I recall, she was blond with medium long hair. I commented about her to my friend, Abby Mayer, who was playing horn in the orchestra at the time. The woman was Joyce Beglarian, Eve's mother to be. Eve was my future composition classmate and friend to be. Her father, Grant Beglarian and Joyce's husband, left the orchestra at approximately the same time I was joining so I never got acquainted with either him or Joyce.

During this time I became friends with Susan Abrams. Her specialty was German translation, but she was also a brilliant writer on political and social issues. She lived in Cambridge near Harvard Square just across the river from Boston, and it was fun to visit her there and return to some of my old haunts from student days at the New England Conservatory. Susan had a special love for and intense way of listening to music which she approached with the deepest respect. She would soon move to Sweden where she has remained ever since. We remain close friends and keep in touch.

Fred Lerdahl could recognize compositional value when he heard it even if others weren't paying attention. He once gave the class an assignment to write an extended solo theme which some people in the class did not take seriously, nor, as I recall, did they bother to complete it. I took it very seriously and spent considerable time writing a sophisticated, elaborate theme. Fred recognized its value and wanted the class to study it. They were not overly excited, however, but wanted to move on to another subject, which we did. This did not bother me. I knew the merits of the theme. More importantly, I would eventually use it as the basis for my Master's thesis, *Five Dances for Orchestra* [since retitled *Theme and Variations for Orchestra*] in my final composition class at Columbia with Jack Beeson.

I knew who Jack Beeson was—one of the premier composers of opera in the 20<sup>th</sup> century—long before I started my studies at Columbia University. That is because I went to hear his opera *Lizzie Borden* in 1965 at the New York City Opera.

Jack sometimes regaled the class with stories such as his meeting with Virgil Thomson in his apartment at the legendary Chelsea Hotel in New York City. This prompted Jack to pull out a score of Virgil Thomson's opera *The Mother of Us All*, and we sang (or attempted to sing) through portions of it. Jack never discussed his own work, unfortunately, which, of course, was his privilege. But *Lizzie Borden* made a deep impression on me as a contemporary opera that I continued to like as much as any other modern opera I had heard, including John Adams' *Nixon in China*, Robert Ashley's *Atalanta*, Alban Berg's *Lulu* and *Wozzeck*, Benjamin Britten's *Albert Herring* and *Billy Budd*, Philip Glass' *Akhmatov*, Shostakovich's *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District*, Stravinsky's *Oedipus Rex*, or any of the several operas I had seen by Menotti. I could never have imagined at the time I heard *Lizzie Borden* that I would one day study with the composer of this masterpiece and write my Master's thesis for his composition class.

### **Final days at Columbia University**

Following Jack's class my days as a student at Columbia University were at an end. Combining free tuition based on my employment at Columbia in addition to scholarships, I had managed to work my way through Columbia for the BA, graduating, as referenced before, Magna Cum Laude, Phi Beta Kappa in 1980. I then continued in graduate school completing my MA in music composition in 1983. Without the free tuition and scholarships, I would never have been able to attend Columbia University.

After Columbia, I wrote to Beeson, a fellow Hoosier from Muncie, Indiana, just to stay in touch. In his reply back, Jack referred to my autobiographical notes as reminding him of our "common Hoosier background" through Cole Porter, James Whitcomb Riley, Hoagy Carmichael, and Lew Wallace. Referring to rivalry and jealousy that occurred between some top composers, Jack quoted Otto Luening who said: "It's all only about peanuts & who has 2 or 3 more than the others, for a while." I was glad to see Jack take that position and couldn't have agreed more. For that matter, Otto often spoke the same kind of language to me. He thought and said we should all take our correct place in line. That line contains thousands of composers, so many that those not in current favor seldom get a hearing. Just think of names such as Benda, Henichen, Karlosovicz. Myslivcek, Popper, Rebel, Vanhal. Zelenka, etc., all very fine composers. Who has heard of them? Fortunately, dedicated, hard-working musicologists and related parties keep their music alive today.

### **Copycatting**

Looking back, Jack's most memorable and meaningful story for me was about a post concert reception after a triumphal performance of one of Lennie Bernstein's major works. Aaron Copland, one of Lennie's biggest heroes, was present and allegedly sat at a piano with the score of Lennie's new piece on the music stand with Lennie standing by. Quite a few happy concert goers idled around the piano observing what was to transpire. Copland then went through the score pointing out places to Lennie where he believed Lennie had copied from him (Copland), much to Lennie's chagrin. However accurate the

story may or may not be, my reaction was that music by its very nature is a hand-me-down procedure so to this extent all composers are copycats in one way or another.

The objection to copying from other composers appears to be that it implies dishonesty resulting from an inability to be original. While this could be true and should be resisted when it is, far bigger issues are involved worth exploring. One thing is certain, when it comes to originality, Bernstein could never have copied a piece like Copland's *E Salon Mexico*, nor could Copland ever have copied Bernstein's *Overture to Candide*. The concert-going public is fortunate that both pieces exist in the classical repertoire.

### **Learning from the masters – Developing my personal style**

Jack's story brings to mind Renaissance days where artists deliberately copied one another without a thought and would try to improve upon the subject they were copying. It is worthwhile, therefore, to note how, in subsequent times, composers have viewed the subject of copying. It also helps clarify how copying fit in as a technique in developing certain aspects of my own compositional method.

We can begin with Tchaikovsky who is said to have stolen a theme from Mozart's piano concerto, K503, to use in the pastoral shepherd/shepherdess scene of his opera the *Queen of Spades*. Should this be a black mark against Tchaikovsky? Was it actually necessary for him to resort to such petty thievery (if he did)? Any prudent analysis arrives at the correct conclusion. Let us take Stravinsky as an example who some critics have accused of "stealing" from the composer Pergolesi for his *Pulcinella* ballet suite. Unfazed, Stravinsky commented that "A good composer does not imitate, he steals." It appears, however, that Stravinsky may have even stolen that line from T.S. Eliot who said: "Immature poets imitate, mature poets steal."<sup>6</sup> In any case, what do such statements mean?

Stravinsky was unconcerned with accusations that he "stole" from other composers. The important factor for him, as he stated himself, was that in going over fragments of Pergolesi's material he discovered his "sensory kinship with" Pergolesi. Stravinsky would continue to "steal" from other composers in works like *Dumbarton Oaks* (Bach), a *Fairy's Kiss* (Tchaikovsky), and *Monumetum pro Gesualdo* (Carlo Gesualdo).

In the same vein, Gounod clearly found his "sensory kinship" with Johann Sebastian Bach when he "stole" Bach's entire prelude in C major and put a melody on top to create his beautiful *Ave Maria*. Bach himself is said to have "borrowed" part of the theme of his *Passacaglia and Fugue in C minor* from the French baroque composer and organist André Raison.

For myself, I felt that to be truly free as a composer, I should be able to employ the methodologies of any kind of composition ever invented or written, tonal, atonal, or a

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<sup>6</sup> Daniel Albright, *Putting Modernism Together, Literature, Music, and Painting, 1872-1927* References on pages 164-166.



mixture of the two. This included using simple diatonic music from which I have not shied away when appropriate. In my *Circus Variations for Piano*, for example, in the 6<sup>th</sup> variation I sustained an essentially diatonic theme with just a couple of chromatic chordal changes over a simple ostinato bass (a repeated motif) for 97 measures.

Because it would have been difficult for me not to recognize the notes in this ostinato as being similar to the opening notes in Bach's first *Cello Suite* for solo cello (because I had practiced this suite arranged for horn for many years), I was prompted to use a variant of the ostinato for the melodic accompaniment in the 7<sup>th</sup> variation. What I was in effect doing was borrowing a simple musical variant from a musical phrase by Bach because I sensed I could use it to good effect in creating a piece of music.

Speaking facetiously, perhaps Bach allowed me to borrow this little phrase from him as thanks for the countless days in which I spent an hour practicing his cello suites on the horn—which helped me develop my low register playing).

Along the same lines, I borrowed motifs from a Shaker funeral hymn for my horn sextet, *In Memoriam Willem Valkenier*, which I wrote through tears upon learning of his passing. The piece is also arranged for piano solo and may be suitable in other arrangements as well, though I have not gotten around to that task. This is a totally diatonic piece which, unfortunately, will be shunned by some musicians because it does not fit into the image of the kind of music a modern composer should be writing. I suggest that for those who listen with an unprejudiced ear, it speaks of something else.

For composers in all eras, copy-catting was found to be acceptable if the material being copied was a direct quotation from another piece of music such as Manuel de Falla's quotation of the opening theme of the Beethoven 5<sup>th</sup> Symphony in his *The Three Cornered Hat* or Giacomo Puccini's quotation from *The Star Spangled Banner* in his opera *Madama Butterfly*. Copland himself worked the Shaker tune *Simple Gifts* into the finale of his ballet *Appalachian Spring*. I used this technique in the song *Grieg Being Dead* from the *Four Songs for Soprano, Horn, and Piano* where I "borrowed" (stole) various passages from Grieg's *Piano Concerto* and his *Peer Gynt Suite*.

Taking the subject of using "sensory kinship" as a valuable tool in music composition, I have sometimes sought to emulate what other composers have done. For example, upon learning that several composers besides Schubert and Gounod had written an *Ave Maria*—the list includes Jacob Arcadelt, Johannes Brahms, Anton Bruckner, Giulio Caccini, Luigi Cherubini, Gaetano Donizetti, Ceasar Franck, G.F. Handel, Franz Liszt, Felix Mendelssohn, Sergei Rachmaninoff, Gioacchino Rossini, Camille Saint-Saens, Giuseppe Verdi, Heitor Villa-Lobos, and no doubt several others—I felt inspired to write my own version, which I did. Sally Porter Munro, Soprano, and Graham Fitch, piano, premiered the piece on June 9, 1989 at the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church (Chapel), New York City.

Similarly, I was inspired by Handel's famous tenor aria in his opera *Semele*, "Where'er you walk" with text by Alexander Pope, to compose my own version with the

same text. In the same way my piece titled *Flowers of Paradise* (2008), written for Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass, and string quartet, is modeled after Mozart's *Ave Verum Corpus*, though here the text is by me. The *Ave Verum Corpus* has been a favorite of mine ever since I first heard Charles Munch conduct the piece with the Boston Symphony Orchestra and the New England Conservatory Choir led by Lorna Cooke deVaron in Symphony Hall in Boston during my student days at the New England Conservatory.

Inspiration from composers I admire often goes beyond relying on or using portions of their music in one way or another. I have equally been able to learn much from their styles and techniques of composition. From Brahms, for example, I learned to give greater attention to the bass line as this was one of the major criteria Brahms reportedly used in judging the works of other composers. Learning little tidbits like this is like getting a personal lesson in composition from Brahms himself. In a similar manner, I sought to internalize Bach's lesson on contrapuntal writing which he described as much like having a conversation between the voices. It was a different way of thinking about counterpoint rather than regarding it as being just a painful exercise. I also took a lesson from Bach in spacing dissonant notes far apart in order to produce a less dissonant sound. Examples of this can be found in Bach's *Chromatic Fantasy*. I use this technique in several compositions, notably in the 3<sup>rd</sup> variation of my *Theme and Variations for Piano* and the second movement of *Spectra* for piano.

From Rachmaninoff I grasped the concept of a continuous line of music from start to finish to which were attached all the various components of music. And, through simple observation, by comparing the melodic sweep of composers like Beethoven and Richard Strauss, which for Beethoven could be quite narrow—as in the principle theme of the first movement of his fifth piano concerto— but for Strauss quite expansive—as in many of his tone poems, *Don Juan*, *Don Quixote*, etc., I grasped another simple concept. Separated by decades, as Beethoven and Strauss are, both are non-competitive. But why should time in terms of years play any role in determining melodic sweep except for the conditioned response people have to music written in their own times.

Perceptions like these helped me from becoming overly critical and more appreciative of my natural tendency to write vocal lines that are sometimes narrow in range, such as in the setting of my song for Emily Dickinson's *I dwell in possibility*. On the other hand, this tendency need not conflict with pieces I have written with more expansive melodies as with the horn part for *Spectra 2 for Horn and Piano*.

During my time at Columbia I was especially privileged to take a theory class with Pat Carpenter who took a personal interest in her students, hosting our entire class on one occasion, at a reception in her home. It was located in a flat wooded area of widely spaced trees separated from other homes by great distances. The area might best be described as tranquil, serene, and far removed from the busy hustle of city living. I was so glad to see that Pat had that as a part of her life. She had studied privately with Arnold Schoenberg and attended his classes at UCLA extensively. Her correspondence with Schoenberg is preserved in the Arnold Schoenberg Center in Vienna.

While studying the "Liebestod" in Wagner's opera *Tristan and Isolde* in Pat's class, I became convinced that Wagner achieved the grand harmonic climax in the "Liebestod" (the finale of the opera) by proceeding through half-step progressions until the climactic moment where the progression is by whole step. The change is as dramatic, if not more, than any climatic dominant/tonic cadence which normally controls tonal music. I presented my theory to the class which interested Pat. She asked me to stay after class where we went over my ideas. I brought this concept of half-step/whole step progressions into my own compositions, illustrated, for example, in the opening bars of *A Little Madness in the Spring* for Soprano and Piano. It is also an harmonic feature in the *Four Songs for Soprano, Horn and Piano*.

From Stravinsky, I learned his additive technique by which new musical elements can be added to musical phrases as they are repeated. In *Country Dance*, a short piece for orchestra, I added a new melodic line to each repetition of the theme. In addition, I used this technique in my *Auld Reel and Waltz for Orchestra* (2002) composed on Shetland Islands themes. The themes intrigued me partially because my great grandfather on my father's side was born in Fair Isle in the Shetland Islands. In this composition, after adding a different melodic line to each repetition of the original theme, I then subtracted them one by one, creating a near musical palindrome.

A way in which I have benefitted significantly from my study of Schoenberg and other atonal works is in the use of irregular phrase lengths. The two themes in my short *Country Dance* for orchestra, for example, consist of 7 and 9 measures respectively. In the Waltz in my *Auld Reel* uneven phrase lengths create sections and modulations in an unexpected place to produce more interesting phrases.

Having this sense of "sensory kinship" to which Stravinsky refers, or, put more simply, "inspiration" taken from the music of other composers has been vital to my compositional process. It keeps me in a state of constant learning from every piece I hear. The kinship also provides a way of establishing a personal link to the great masters of music of the past. Contrary to the efforts of many composers in the 20<sup>th</sup> century to break that link—the tendency toward which continues in the 21<sup>st</sup> century with some composers—my efforts have been to maintain it while remaining open to the many new composition techniques composers are developing—including my own.

## **Originality**

Seen in the context which I have described, the kind of copying in which I have engaged and will continue to do consists of a learning process which has enabled me to develop my own style. Otto Luening correctly identified what I was doing when he said that mine was "an original voice." While it may sound self-serving to mention this, the intention is only to accurately describe my music in a non-competitive way. And, as Marc Chagall said, for an artist there is no room for modesty. There is, though, room for being appreciative of the gifts one has been given. This I try to keep always in mind. To be sure, if my furnace goes out in the middle of Winter, as it did recently, who is more important, the furnace repair person or Beethoven?

## Chapter 15

### The State of New Music in the Late 20<sup>th</sup> Century

#### The Economics Department

The people in the Economics Department at Columbia, where I worked as the undergraduate secretary, were keenly aware of my ambitions and encouraging in helping me achieve my objectives. Professor Don Dewey loved jazz, played some piano, and liked to stop by my desk to talk over music. He often had something fascinating to report about music such as that Irving Berlin could play piano only in the key of C and used a specially constructed piano that transposed what he was playing to other keys even as he continued to play in the key of C. He and Professor C. Lowell Harriss, who was in charge of the undergraduates, attended concerts in which my pieces were being played. Harriss also invited me to a reception held in his honor at the prestigious Columbia Club. One of the world's greatest pioneering economists in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Jacob Viner, who, if I remember correctly, was also an accomplished classical pianist, also attended one of my concerts and talked over the program with me after the performance. Viner was an extremely modest man. Ronald Findlay, a native of Myanmar, whose student Carlos Rodriguez proclaimed he must be awarded the Nobel Prize, gave me the book *The Dictionary of Composers* by Charles Osborne as a gift to show his support of my music aspirations. His colleague, Stanislaw Wellisz, who dedicated his economic efforts to helping the poor during his lifetime and had not an authoritarian bone in his body, was also always there with a friendly smile of encouragement.

When Edmund Phelps was first hired as an Assistant Professor in the department and a reception was held for new faculty, we chatted briefly and learned that we were both musicians. We then had a long talk together about music. In fact, it was a toss-up with Phelps whether or not he should pursue the trumpet professionally or get into Economics. I guess he made the right choice. In 2006 he was awarded the Nobel Prize in Economics.

Not to be forgotten, Professor Robert Mundell—. From observing the pile of letters, papers, notes, and miscellaneous items on the desk in his office grow ever larger, I began to conclude it must have been nearly impossible for him find anything there. After a while it seemed he was seldom around. I used to wonder if he had other offices to go to, abandoning each one when the pile on his desk grew too large to deal with. He once showed his generosity in spirit when he sought me out to say, "Hey David, you've got to see this painting in the Metropolitan Museum. There's a portrait there that looks just like you." He told me the painter's name, but by the time I visited the museum I had forgotten it. Robert Mundell was awarded the Nobel Prize in Economics in 1999.

Other professors in the Economics Department I should mention include Professor Padma Desai, who was completely unpretentious and loved to talk to the lower staff. In fact, she asked me for a recommendation for a flute teacher for her daughter which I gave and who I believe she hired. Her husband, Jagdish Bhagwati, was equally thoughtful. I once told Padma of a cartoon I had dreamed up which I thought would be suitable for the New Yorker magazine. In my cartoon, a Juliette character dressed in

Shakespearian attire with a pointed hat and tassel stood enraptured on a balcony 20 or 30 stories up in a Manhattan skyscraper bordering 59<sup>th</sup> Street while her lover, Romeo, also dressed in Shakespearian attire, serenaded her with his mandolin from the street below. Desai loved the idea.

Lucas Papademos was born and raised in Greece where he was also educated. He came to the United States to do his Ph.D at MIT in Cambridge, Massachusetts. After MIT he was appointed an Assistant Professor in Economics at Columbia University where we met. Lucas wanted to know a little more about me and my music activities so he invited me to lunch which we had in a little restaurant on the South side of 113<sup>th</sup> Street between Broadway and Amsterdam Avenues. As we spent a pleasant lunchtime together, both of us just starting out on our new careers, neither Lucas nor I could have guessed that some 30 years later he would be named the Prime Minister of Greece. As Prime Minister he instituted a severe austerity plan that made him unpopular in certain circles. One of those circles managed to get a letter bomb through to Lucas which he opened. It exploded, sending shards of glass into his legs and lower body. Fortunately, he survived.

I would be remiss not to mention some of the special friends I made with the administrative staff. Nadine Seltzer, the Administrative Assistant in charge of the department, and a singer, was always supportive. If it took a few extra minutes to get back and forth to a daytime class, she paid no attention. I also supported her music activities and loved to attend the Barnard College Gilbert & Sullivan productions in which she sang. Other friends included Leslie Farragher and her husband Brian Ferguson, a Professor in Anthropology at Rutgers University; Gordana Harris and her husband Ethan Harris, Managing Director Head of North America Economics at Bank of America Merrill Lynch; and Sharon Wynn whose husband, sadly, a University Professor at, I believe, the City University of New York, was struck by an automobile and killed.

I still retain some of the wonderful cartoons Gordana drew of scenes in the Economics Department.

### **Uptown vs. Downtown**

At the time I was developing my own ideas and concepts as a composer, a plethora of methods and techniques were being employed by composers and circulating throughout the musical ether. In addition to tonal composition, these included atonal, microtonal, electronic, minimalist, post-minimalist, neo-romantic, improvisational, and a free eclecticism in which composers borrowed from jazz, ragtime, folk music, rock and other music sources. Some of these genres also fit into the two dominant movements of the time: (1) chance music, also called aleatoric (from the latin alea=dice, hence "chance," and (2) 12-tone composition, which often extended into serial composition. In serial composition, pre-determined orderings can be applied to various elements of music in addition to pitches (notes), such as dynamics, note duration, rhythm, etc.

The two main camps, aleatoric and 12-tone or serial composition were also sometimes loosely characterized as (1) "downtown," which implied a nonconformance with traditional European models, and (2) "uptown," which implied an acceptance of

European models. European models in this context means generally accepted music presented and accepted by the public in the concert hall.

Downtown audiences would welcome composers like John Cage, Morton Feldman, Christian Wolff, Earle Brown, La Monte Young, Terry Riley, Pauline Oliveros, Steve Reich, Philip Glass, Lou Harrison, Robert Ashley, and Lori Anderson. Opposite them, with tastes more in accord with the European model, audiences were receptive to composers like Roger Sessions, Charles Wuorinen, Milton Babbitt, George Crumb, Otto Luening, Vladimir Ussachevsky, Mario Davidovsky, Luigi Nono, Olivier Messiaen, and Luigi Dallapiccola. Some composers, like John Adams, Luciano Berio, Pierre Boulez, Bob Hughes, and Karlheinz Stockhausen, could be listed in either camp. No doubt I have forgotten many names that should be added to these lists, and for this my apologies.

Composers were additionally hard at work doing their individual thing. Philip Glass, associated with the minimalist movement, might have been busy working on an opera for performance at the Metropolitan Opera, that is, when he could get away from his taxi-driving job. Bob Hughes might have strayed from his Berkeley home to New York to show off his wares in the form of a work for piri (Korean oboe) and the Prophet 10 synthesizer along with choreographer and creative collaborator partner, Margaret Fisher. George Crumb, famed for his *Ancient Voices of Children*, based largely on fragments of poetry by Garcia Lorca, would have been creating unusual instrumental and vocal sonorities. Luening and Ussachevsky, who gained their fame for their work in electronic media, might have been experimenting in the Columbia/Princeton Electronic Music Studio at Columbia University manufacturing new and exciting electronic sounds from a piece of junk Ussachevsky may have picked up off the street—while munching on a Hershey bar for lunch, as he admitted he often did.

Even though with time there has come some softening of the rivalry between the uptown and downtown side, during this period these two camps were, at their very core, pitted against one another. This is exemplified by composer Charles Wuorinen's text, *Simple Composition* published in 1979. Wuorinen stated in the preface that his book is merely "theoretical" but then later famously asserted that "while the tonal system, in an atrophied or vestigial form, is still used today by popular and commercial music, and even occasionally in the works of backward-looking serious composers, it is no longer employed by serious composers of the mainstream. It has been replaced or succeeded by the 12-tone system." It should be noted that composers labeled as aleatoric often used tonal methods in their compositions. It should also be noted that just as famously, music critic and musicologist Richard Taruskin would later refer to Wuorinen's words and similar pronouncements as "fantasies of infantile omnipotence." To that I would personally add composer George Rochberg's statement that "There is no greater provincialism than that special form of sophistication and arrogance which denies the past."<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> George Rochberg, "The Avant-Garde and the Aesthetics of Survival," *New Literary History*, Vol. 3 No. 1, Modernism and Postmodernism: Inquiries, Reflections, and Speculations (Autumn, 1971), pp. 71-92, The Johns Hopkins University Press, [https://www.jstor.org/stable/468381?seq=1#page\\_scan\\_tab\\_contents](https://www.jstor.org/stable/468381?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents)

The influence these rivalries exerted on the lives of composers and the musical scene in America should not be minimized. For example, a close friend and colleague relayed the following story to me at which she was present. This occurred at a closed-door Pulitzer Prize selection committee meeting composed mostly of academics—hence belonging to the uptown camp—who were discussing the various compositions they were required to examine in finding the winners. When a piece by Lennie Bernstein came up for consideration, the following incident occurred.

"There's Lennie again," one of the panel members sighed. The others snickered and they all had a good laugh together. Why? Bernstein was married to traditional tonality as he related in his Norton lectures at Harvard, but accepted non-tonal systems of tonality as welcome adjuncts of tonality. A position like that—the polar opposite of Wuorinen's pronouncement—would not easily endear him to 12-tone, uptown composers and was part of the battle. Bernstein's piece was rejected by the Pulitzer Committee.

## **Composing**

What concerned me personally, however, was not the “uptown/downtown” battle, but rather just simply trying to write quality compositions using my own compositional voice.

I was already well acquainted with aleatoric methods, to which I was initially introduced as a member of the Oakland Symphony. There we played a piece where we were required to turn our mouthpieces around and blow through the wrong end and to cut up newspapers. This was a part of the composition—decidedly downtown stuff. I once attended the performance of a piece by Bob Moran for ping-pong balls and solo contra bassoon, played by my colleague Bob Hughes, in which a gadget shot out ping-pong balls into the air with the contra bassoon trying to follow their contour with musical tones—another decidedly downtown piece. Moran went on to create many large-scale works such as his first city-work for the entire area of San Francisco, described as incorporating 100,000 performers, 2 radio stations, 1 TV station, 30 skyscrapers, 6 airplanes, dance ensembles in the streets, etc. (Readers can decide for themselves to what extent such post concert descriptions may have been actually realized.)

I have personally never been attracted to aleatoric methods, but I have, fortunately, been open to hearing them. Mary Jane Leach once invited me to a small informal concert in a loft in downtown New York City where one of her pieces was being performed. I would not characterize her work as aleatoric, but there I met John Cage, credited as the inventor of the aleatoric movement. I will never forget my impressions of Cage as a kind and accommodating man who offered a friendly hand and for whom music represented a larger world view.

Cage was not the only "down town" composer I met through my association with Mary Jane. It included composer/filmmaker Phil Niblick, a very engaging and

unassuming composer. He has presented many important concerts since 1973, often in electronic media, in his Soho (an area in New York City) loft he calls Experimental Intermedia.

I also felt no attraction to minimalism and, though I admired the work of Harry Partch, famed for his microtonal pieces, I did not think in and had no interest in thinking in microtones. Similarly, while I studied electronic music in the class of Vladimir Ussachevsky and Bulent Arel, both of whom I liked quite well, and though I have heard several fine pieces of electronic music, such as composed by Arthur Kreiger, I have never felt a real kinship with this medium. Even so, Ussachevsky had studied with Sibelius. To have that connection with the great Finish composer was rather fascinating when reflecting on how things musical are transmitted. The same might be said of Otto Luening with one of his teachers, Ferruccio Busoni, and the stories Otto sometimes told me about Busoni who was so highly venerated in his own day.

Before studying at Columbia, my limited exposure to the 12-tone method came from a small amount of self-directed reading such as Reginald Smith Brindle's book *Musical Composition*, which I found difficult to grasp. My understanding of the philosophy underlying the 12-tone method, however, was that the purpose was to free the composer from the "tyranny" of a hierarchical system of tonality where the dominant-tonic relationship, particularly in regard to the cadence (the harmonic formula used to end a musical phrase or a composition), controls the composition. (In this regard, a philosophy of rejection also underlay "downtown music" in the desire to eliminate past associations with music because they were thought to be an obstacle to the creation of music in present time (the "now"). The atonal (12 tone) urge to break free from the past was also politically motivated by the desire to reject centuries of humanity's reliance on cruelty, murder, war, and oligarchy, theocracy, dictatorship, and fascism to control the world. However, the idea of using political responsibility as a basis for rejection of compositional methods when by nature composers, artists, and writers stood in opposition to diabolical political forces, I found to be deeply troubling.

Freedom from so-called tyranny in music in the 12 tone method was also to be established through note (pitch) equivalency in which each note was to be equal to any other note with no particular note or note sequence having dominance over another. I did not personally feel tyrannized by tonal music though I did feel the major/minor system of tonality imposed rules that did not coincide with what I hoped to achieve as a composer. I also felt that 12-tone and serial methods imposed their own boundaries, and I questioned some of the basic premises, especially the desire to eliminate pitch hierarchy. Acoustically speaking, it seemed obvious enough that the acoustical fact that any pitch produces overtones according to its position in the overtone series with lower notes being richer in overtones than higher notes, precluded the possibility of pitch equivalency. The note B ♭ two octaves below middle C sounds much richer than a B ♭ two octaves above middle C because it is richer in overtones. So it seemed that the only real claim for hierarchical pitch equivalency the 12-tone system could legitimately make existed on paper only, and not in actual acoustical sound.



I was also bothered by the fact that once the parameters of a composition were set up in 12 tone music and serialism, they exerted far too much control over the ordering of notes or other musical properties. Further, I disliked what seemed to be a certain essential dissonance that pervaded 12-tone/serial compositions. For me, dissonance was a powerful and necessary compliment to consonance whose relationship was out of balance in some 12 tone music. This is not to suggest that highly dissonant compositions could not be profoundly expressive. Indeed, some of my early compositions belong to this category to a certain degree.

My compositional heroes were not John Cage, Morton Feldman, et al, as much as I occasionally admired some of the work of the downtown group of composers. And though I believed that the 12-tone method could be used to produce great works of music such as Berg's *Lulu*, Schoenberg's *String Quartet No. 2*, Stravinsky's *Requiem Canticles*, and Webern's *Concerto* Op. 24, I could not evade an inescapable question. Was this the kind of music I wanted to write? The answer needed no prompting. "No, it was not!" Thus I found myself more and more in rebellion against much of the music being written, both downtown and uptown, during the time in which I was developing as a composer. I drew 20<sup>th</sup> century inspiration from composers like Igor Stravinsky, Bela Bartok, Paul Hindemith, and Sergei Prokofiev, all of whom had managed to find their own compositional voices independently of any new prescribed method of composition invented in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. I could also name many other superlative composers whose work I admired, Khatchaturian, Kokaly, Krenek, seizing on the letter "k" in the alphabet, for example, and also for many other letters, e.g., "r", Rachmaninoff, Resphigi, Rochberg.

### **Becoming independent**

The previous description of the state of new music displays the broad musical landscape that surrounded me and my ideas about music composition during the time in which I was writing my *Piece for Piano in Two Movements*, the *Woodwind Quintet*, *Music for String Quartet*, and, as well, my *Trio for Horns*. A pivotal moment arose as I began my *Trio for Horns*. I wrote the first movement of this piece to satisfy the requirements for one of the last courses I took at Columbia, a Seminar in Music Composition. The class had the choice of writing a 12-tone composition or submitting a paper as their final project. I chose the former and wrote a piece for three horns (French horns). It prompted the criticism by the professor of the class of a too "loose construction" of the tone row and that, "Regardless of how well the piece turns out, a description of a compositional process wherein the composer feels he must fight, rather than enjoy, properties of his material is disturbing."

The criticism was nearly a paraphrase of composer, teacher, and music critic Kyle Gann's description of Luigi Dallapiccola's 12-tone composition *Piccola Musica Notturna*. Gann noted that Dallapiccola "reiterates and dwells on row fragments in a languorous, non-Schoenbergian manner" in order to produce a "fresh, invigorating effect that is rare in 12-tone music." In conclusion, Gann asks, "if you have to torture and subvert a

technique that much to make it yield an effect so modestly gratifying, what is the use of the technique?"

I believed that my instructor had hit the nail on the head when he talked about me fighting rather than enjoying the process. I asked myself once again a familiar question to myself, what is more important in compositional purpose, to look good on paper and establish some new non-acoustical system of composition, or to create music the essence of which defies all attempts to define it but "turns out well?" As I imagined it must have been for Dallapiccola—the battle was not with the material being used, but the urge to bring out from the compositional material the greatest music possible. Surely this was why Debussy discarded the prohibition against using parallel fifths. It inhibited his own compositional affinities. In the same way, Stravinsky, in using the 12-tone method, invented his own methodologies, such as rotational arrays— where each successive tone row would begin on the succeeding note of the original tone row transposed at a given interval— so that he could give the best possible expression to the Stravinsky voice.

After completing my assignment by writing the piece for horn trio, I then added a second and third movement to which I added a repeat of the first movement as a recapitulation movement in order to create a four movement piece. The second and third movements provided the opportunity to start giving the best possible expression to my own voice. The third movement, for example, begins with a repeat of the opening 9 notes of the tone row employed to start the first movement. At this point, I abandoned the tone row completely because it did not allow the full range of expression I sought. Breaking from the row unleashed a more personal, powerful and expressive presentation of the musical material. I also employed repetition—anathema to the concept of 12-tone equivalency—which played an important role in this movement. In the *Trio for Horns*, in the second and third movements, I tuned into a kind of free compositional style which would be the path I pursued in the future.

After the first movement of the Horn Trio, I never employed the 12 tone method again. I did retain the right, however, to keep 12 tone techniques on my compositional palette. What appealed to me most about the 12-tone method when I first started using it was not the philosophical ideas underlying the method, but the techniques employed to produce it, inversion, retrograde, retrograde inversion, transposition of the elements and the kind of melodic and chordal constructs that could be derived from the tone row. Though I had lost all desire to write 12 tone pieces, I saw no reason not to use some of these fascinating techniques when appropriate should I choose to.

Following the *Trio for Horns* my personal method of composition began to emerge. It included allowing myself to benefit from any technique ever used by any other composer in any period as long as it fit into my own personal language. For example, I made free use of modulation by means of common tones in chords, an age-old procedure I first learned about in my theory class with Richard Taruskin. Studying various 20<sup>th</sup> century techniques I discovered in Vincent Persichetti's book, *Twentieth-Century Harmony*, also provided valuable instruction.

I wanted my style to be chromatically unrestrained, one which would allow me to move freely in musical space in any direction at will, shifting directions gradually or suddenly with ease, accompanied by a mixture of consonant and dissonant harmonic content. Though I would continue to discover and use new compositional techniques, this became the centerpiece of my compositional ideal.

The *Trio for Horns* was first performed by Stewart Rose, Bob Carlisle, and Julie Landsman at another Columbia Composers concert on April 29, 1982 and then at a St. Cecelia Society concert under the direction of Gerard Levi on May 24, 1982 at the Turtle Bay Music School in New York City. Once again I was truly fortunate in having great players play my trio. How great were they? Julie Landsman would be appointed the principal horn of the Metropolitan Opera. Bob Carlisle would occupy the principle horn chair of the New York City Ballet Orchestra, and Stewart Rose would become the principle horn with the New York City Opera for 25 years. He has appeared as principle horn with the New York Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra, Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, Saito Kinen Festival (founded by Seiji Ozawa), and is currently the principle hornist with the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, Orchestra of St. Luke's. Mentioned earlier, I first met Stewart when he was a high school student who joined the horn section in the 92<sup>nd</sup> Street Y Orchestra while I was playing there. Gerardo Levi was a flutist with the New York City Opera and New York City Ballet and was the founder of the St. Cecelia Chamber Ensemble.

Good fortune continued to be in store for the *Trio for Horns* when New York Philharmonic hornists Philip Myers, Eric Ralske, and Howard Wall performed the piece in Boston and then at the International Horn Society Convention in Athens, Georgia on May 21, 1999 to an enthusiastic audience. To what extent the enthusiasm was for the piece or the great performance by the players playing the piece, however, I did not venture a guess. I would be remiss, though, not to point out, but with some hesitation for obvious reasons, that when Phil asked the audience how they liked the piece, they cheered. For this performance I revised the trio to reduce the 12 tone influence in the first movement. Of the two versions, from a compositional standpoint, there can be little doubt that the original is far better than the revision. So the popular saying "if it ain't broke don't fix it," clearly applied.

### **An historical event for the world of horn players**

Phil Myers was a generous person. After inviting me for lunch to talk over the Trio, horn playing, horn players, and get acquainted, Myers then invited me to a special session inside Avery Fisher Hall, home of the New York Philharmonic, which was to take place a day or too later. (Today Avery Fisher Hall has been renamed David Geffen Hall.)

On that occasion the horn section of the Philharmonic was trying out new horns manufactured by the contemporary and versatile master craftsman Engelbert Schmid. If implemented, using these horns would mark a radical change as the horn section of the Philharmonic had been practically sworn to using horns manufactured by Conn for

decades. This policy deeply influenced horn playing throughout New York City where playing Conn horns was nearly a requirement for professional employment, and, in fact, exerted a strong influence on what kind of instrument to purchase all across the country whether for professional or amateur use.

Some of the Philharmonic horn section members were already on stage when I arrived which had been cleared except for 3 or 4 music stands covered with music and some chairs clad with jackets and other articles of clothing. This was an historic event. Myers was challenging years of tradition, and a few members of the orchestra and interested parties were seated randomly out in the semi-darkened auditorium observing and listening.

I found a seat a little over half-way back, stage right, in the orchestra section of the auditorium and listened with rapt attention to the treat which followed as members of the section, seated or standing, tried out these new horns. I remember Eric Ralske playing and also Jerome Ashby, who Myers had introduced me to earlier in the dressing rooms. I had actually met Ashby years before when friend and colleague Larry Bassman, a hornist I knew from Aspen days— introduced me to him at a large party in Manhattan. That was before Ashby got into the New York Philharmonic. He would die tragically from prostate cancer just seven and one-half years later. I last saw him crossing Broadway at 65<sup>th</sup> Street headed away from Avery Fisher Hall. He recognized me and courteously stopped to chat for a few seconds and extend a friendly greeting.

When Myers played that day, one of the passages he selected was from the Mahler Fifth Symphony. The sound he got on his instrument was so voluminous that Warren Deck, the tuba player in the New York Philharmonic at the time, who sat a few rows ahead of me, turned around and posed a question to anyone within earshot as to whether or not anyone needed the dents in their instrument ironed out.

Some members of the Philharmonic horn section would decide to switch to Schmid horns after that tryout including Phil Myers.

## **Closed doors**

My initiation into the world of classical music composition happened during the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in which the major cultural battle between so-called uptown and downtown composers was being waged. I was 39 years of age when I started at Columbia and 42 before I had sufficient study and experience behind me to feel confident enough to proclaim that "yes, now I am a composer." After graduation in 1983 with my Master's came the next step. Would I be able to earn a living as a composer? And if not, what alternatives were available?

While there were exceptions, it didn't take long to recognize that if a composer wanted their work to be recorded, wanted a foundation grant or a nice commission to write a composition, or, just as importantly, to have their music published, it was incumbent to belong to either the uptown or downtown schools of composition while

staking out enough territory in either camp to make a good, solid impression that one belonged there. While I knew many composers who were recipients of these kinds of awards, recording projects, etc., and admired some of these composers, after a couple of initial tries it became obvious to me that this was a game in which I was not intended to play. To be truthful, I was glad not to have to play it.

As for obtaining one of those cush teaching positions at some university offering undreamed of security and prestige, I held only a Master's degree which mostly foreclosed the possibility since a Doctorate was generally required. Even so, Jack Beeson once commented that he thought I would do well in a university setting, maybe as a Dean. I couldn't help wonder if he had something in mind. I tried to imagine myself as a Dean which made me chuckle. Maybe, though, just maybe I might have made a good one.

## Chapter 16

### My Life as a Composer

#### Surviving

In order to support myself following my graduation from Columbia I took a variety of day job positions around New York City over the next fifteen years. First, though, I continued working in the Economics Department at Columbia as their undergraduate secretary for a few more months. I then moved to a similar position in the Geology Department where Robbie Simpson, who had been a close friend of Shelly Scheps, was the curator of the rock collection. Mia Leo was the Administrative Assistant who held the complex Geology Department together with great finesse.

In Geology I met two outstanding young students, Jeremy Telman and Peter Drucker, both of whom were work study students. They both choose law as their profession. Both also loved the arts and music.

Peter and I invented a game where we would sing the rhythm of a certain piece of music in a monotone while the other had to guess what it was. We had to sing the rhythm in a way that characterized the piece. I had him laughing when I said, "Okay Peter! Guess the name of this piece: 'Bup!'" "That's impossible," he said. "You've got to give more than that." "No!" I said. "It can only be Stravinsky's *Firebird*—that part that goes: "Bup! Ba Ba Ba Ba Bup Bup! (The "Infernal Dance" part.)

Jeremy and I have stayed in touch over the years. Building on a distinguished teaching career, he is currently the Director of International Programs and Professor of Law at Valparaiso University. He is one of those special persons who by virtue of their own inherent good nature often find themselves in some kind of leadership position. Jeremy believes in doing well and helping the indigent with good works, a view with which I whole heartedly concur. His wife, Cathy Tufariello, is an outstanding poet and winner of the 2006 Poets' Prize for her book, *Keeping my Name*.

One day looking down from the Geology Department offices high above Amsterdam Avenue, I saw two women walking and skipping along the street engaged in a lively conversation almost like children. They looked like they were having a great time. One of these, the most active of the two, was the budding TV/Movie star-to-be Cynthia Nixon. She had completed her role in the movie *Amadeus* a short time before. Cynthia was a student at Barnard College at the time and, it turned out, was registered for a class in Geology. She came to my desk to sign up for the class where we talked for a while and then on subsequent occasions. Though I no longer remember the circumstances, we somehow stayed in touch after Columbia, and she invited me to see her portray Juliet in the New York Shakespeare Festival production of *Romeo and Juliet*. I last saw Cynthia after her appearance in the Broadway production of *Rabbit Hole* on Broadway. More recently, when she ran for Governor of New York, I thought her platform was far superior to Governor Cuomo's so naturally cast my vote for her, as did my brother.

After I left Columbia in 1985, my next position was that of Program Coordinator for the Bloomindale House of Music where David Greer was the founder and music director. Nancy Schmidt was the assistant director and kept the place running at peak, musical efficiency. I next took a job with the American School of Classical Studies at Athens. From there I worked as one of three Executive Secretaries to the President of Hadassah, Marlene Post, thanks to Debbie D'Angelo who helped me work up to that position from my first day on the job as a Temp. At Hadassah, I became friends with the fabulous comedian Lori Funk and attended some of the plays and appearances in which she acted. I also became friends there with Constance Benson, a theological scholar who works on counteracting the damage caused by supremacist racists in America. She and her husband, Brian, keep active in important community liberal politics.

After leaving Hadassah, I tried to survive by putting together several music teaching positions. This included teaching the Horn and Trumpet for the Spence School. As one of the top private secondary schools for girls in the country, this was a choice spot. I got this position because Catherine Luening, Otto Luening's wife, was the head of the music department and Otto recommended me for the job. Caroline Kennedy was attending the school when I taught there, though I never saw her. One of my students, Mishanta Reyes, became quite proficient on the horn. She played a horn solo, the Neapolitan song *Funiculì, Funiculà*, arranged for horn, for the entire school at a Spence convocation. After Spence she became an Obstetrician and Gynecologist.

I was able to add to my teaching hopes by teaching music history courses for the United Federation of Teachers in their Teacher Retirement Program in Manhattan, Queens, and Brooklyn. Then my hopes for putting together a complete teaching package seemed finally about to be realized when I was hired to teach a course on the symphony at Marymount Manhattan College for their adult division, followed by an offer to teach courses on music appreciation at New York University for their Adult Division and at the New School for Social Research. Though I taught the Symphony class, the other two fell through for lack of sufficient enrollment in the classes.

I was barely paying the rent and had to face the facts. Time was marching on. I was teetering on disaster and needed a job that paid something, but fast. This I found as a legal secretary, which I did for many firms as a Temp, but most notably though a permanent position in the firm of Faust, Rabbach, and Stanger, led by David Faust. I liked David and the staff very much, especially Susan Winters who took advantage of all the cultural happenings in New York City more than anyone I ever met. We developed a close friendship of many years standing. I also spent much time away from the job with Barbara Priest, a law secretary who worked there. She was completing her degree requirements for teaching. Barbara was a good friend who was up for doing many things from walks in the woods to movies to dining to exploring the city. Around this time I also got to know Carolyn Landau, an attorney I met at a Court Hearing in a landlord/tenant dispute. She became a close companion and would travel with me to Bradenton, Florida to visit my father when he was 101 year's of age. As for the landlord/tenant dispute, this I instituted against two Australian neighbors who started a loud and wild party every night at anywhere from 2 to 4:00 a.m. I consulted an attorney who told me I could never win a

noise complaint in New York, the noisy City. I represented myself, and though it would take 3 hearings, I won the case. After I won and the police had to be called when one of the tenants threatened me when I stood up to him, the landlord moved the raucous tenants out of the building. Happily, I never saw them again. This was a great relief, though I did understand their crazy youth, having witnessed and participated in so much of that myself. I wished them the best in my heart and was not blind to the possibility that there may have been some karmic payback involved in the incident.

### **Getting performances of my work**

During the first years after I left Columbia, I worked closely with Kirsten Sorteberg, a brilliant pianist with a beautiful voice. I first met her at the Computer Music Center at Columbia University—at the time called the Columbia Princeton Electronic Music Center, which was founded by Columbia Professors Vladimir Ussachevsky and Otto Luening, and Princeton University Professors Milton Babbitt and Roger Sessions. Kirsten was employed at the Center in an administrative role and worked closely with instructors Vladimir Ussachevsky, Bulent Arel, Mario Davidovsky, Alice Shields, and Prill Smiley—all top composers in electronic media.

Kirsten, a friend of Luciano Berio, with whom she had worked closely, was dedicated to modern music as much as anyone I ever met. She was also a composer, and we encouraged each other's work. Kirsten loved to play through my pieces and made very valuable suggestions such as that I should revise the beginning of *Spectra*, for piano, so that it was softer, more delicate, a piece which she thought should start at a slower tempo. I have never felt any of my compositions were cast in stone and so listened to her advice.

The first piece of mine Kirsten performed in public was the *Elegy for Shelly Scheps* at St. Paul's Chapel, Columbia University on October 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup>, 1983. During our collaboration I wrote and dedicated several pieces for Kirsten including *Spectra*, which she premiered at a Composers Concordance Concert at Bruno Walter Auditorium at the New York Public Library, Lincoln Center, New York on February 10, 1984. She also premiered my *Madrigal of Roses* for soprano and piano in her own solo recital at the Mt. Kisco School of Music, Mt. Kisco Public Library, Mt. Kisco, N.Y. on May 13, 1984. Additionally, Kirsten presented the first performances of my composition *Clouds* and movements from my *Theme and Variations for Piano* at the Museum of the American Piano in New York City on May 28, 1985 with Brooke Halpin Host. I had been invited to present a lecture concert there of my own music for their series Current Trends in Piano Composition. Kirsten also played my *Circus Variations* for piano for the first time at the Bird Coler Memorial Hospital on May 31, 1987. Finally, I wrote a piece for two violins, *I Have Thee*, for Kirsten and her husband, Jack Schweitzer, upon the occasion of their marriage in 1988. Jack was a scientist and musician who played violin, viola, and recorder and became a close friend.

Tragically, this fabulous musician, Kirsten Sorteberg, took her own life in 2011. I had no inkling that she entertained those kinds of thoughts. We are fortunate that she left behind a CD of her work, *Kirsten Sorteberg, mezzo soprano, pianist: Sorteberg: Self*



*Portrait, Haydn, Massenet, Ancient Norwegian Songs, Ives*, and also the recordings she made of my pieces which are posted on youtube.com. (See Appendix III.) I have spoken with her husband Jack, who tells me he has in his possession a couple of other recordings in VCR format which include a poor quality recording Kirsten made when she was a student at the Juilliard School.

It is worth talking about some of the above performances Kirsten made as they tell their own story about the composition of these pieces and the reception they received.

*Elegy for Shelly Scheps* was one of the first pieces I wrote after completing my Masters at Columbia in the summer of 1983. Not long thereafter Shelly Scheps drowned off the Long Island coast. He was a friend and co-worker in the Economics Department where he helped maintain the copy facilities. Shelly was working toward his doctorate in Anthropology, a subject he lived and breathed every waking moment, incorporating something interesting about some aspect of anthropology in as many of his conversations as he could. I once brought him some Native American Indian shards to examine which I had found on a camping trip in the four corners areas of Arizona, (as previously described) for him to examine.

Shelly was well known on the Columbia campus and was enormously popular with staff, faculty and other students. In fact, the Sheldon Scheps Memorial Library in the Anthropology Department at Columbia has now been established in his honor. As mentioned, I wrote *Elegy* in his memory which Kirsten played at his memorial service at St. Paul's Chapel on the Columbia campus on either October 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> that fall.

The occasion obviously called for a more traditional, more consonant sounding piece. But even so, a little atonality added a special touch and dramatic seriousness appropriate for the piece. Writing the *Elegy* helped me think more in terms of combining atonal and tonal elements in my compositions, both melodically and harmonically.

As to how the piece was received, I might add the following anecdote.

William Vickrey was a Professor of Economics in the Economics Department at Columbia University headed toward the age of 50 in October of 1983. As the undergraduate secretary in the Economics Department, I was responsible for typing up any work relevant to classroom requirements the various professors in the department asked me to do, including Vickrey. He only brought me papers to type on a couple of occasions, but these gave me a certain insight into his thinking. For example, he stressed that students seeking financial gain through their study of economics were in the wrong field. The purpose of Economics was to serve a much higher ideal. Vickrey was a friendly and very serious man. By my observations, he might have been described as almost reclusively dedicated to his work.

The day following the performance of the *Elegy for Shelly*, Vickrey and I happened to be in a hallway alone in the International Affairs Building where the Economics Department was located, headed in opposite directions. As we passed each

other, he clapped his hands together and his face brightened with the Vickrey smile everyone knew who had any association with him, and said, "Well, we've got some real talent around here!" It was the first and only personal comment he ever made to me.

Far removed from his thoughts or mine was that in 1996 William Vickrey would be awarded the Nobel Prize in Economics. Three days later he would die of heart failure. Lost was the bully pulpet that goes along with such an award that he would have loved to put to good use in furthering his projects.

Brooke Halpin, the Host for my lecture concert at the Museum of the American Piano, was a graduate of the Hartford Conservatory of Music. Like me, he was also just starting out on his career as a composer. He would work as a pianist/composer for the Alvin Ailey Dance Company, the Martha Graham Dance Company, and write music for TV and film including the Academy Award winning film, "Molly's Pilgrim." Brooke also wrote a beautiful ballet score for Rudolf Nureyev's last ballet entitled, *Cristoforo*. Throughout his career—which includes painting—he has maintained a keen interest in Pop-Rock music with his own rock bands. Today, he is widely acknowledged as one of the most foremost authorities on the Beatles as producer and host of the weekly radio show "Come Together with the Beatles" and as author of the book *Experiencing the Beatles—A Listener's Companion*.

I don't remember how I came to see Brooke in his office at the Museum of the American Piano, but there I presented him with a tape of *Clouds* for piano. Brooke took to the piece immediately and on its basis scheduled me to give the lecture program at the museum previously mentioned. My keyboard skills were sorely lacking so Kirsten agreed to work with me in presenting the program. It was a good opportunity for her, too, to showcase her piano playing which she accomplished superbly. Presenting this program gave me the confidence that I could fulfill the often required expectation of composers to give lecture-type programs such as Lennie Bernstein accomplished with such ease or, as well, my friend and colleague Bob Hughes who, among many similar presentations, gave pre-concert talks for San Francisco Symphony concerts.

In terms of performances of my piano piece *Clouds*, it is worth mentioning that during this period I met Barry Salwen, Director and Founder of the Roger Sessions Society, and a concert pianist lauded on the international concert stage through performances and master classes in the United States, Europe, Israel, and Asia. He presently teaches at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington. Barry was a dynamic, virtuoso player with a thousand flying fingers. It was a great privilege to have him play *Clouds* at the Bechsteinsalon in Vienna, Austria on December 2, 1986. He would also play the piece in New York City at a Phoenix concert (the new music presenting organization yet to be discussed) on February 9, 1988 at the Bruno Walter Auditorium at the New York Public Library, Lincoln Center, New York City.

Writing *Madrigal of Roses* for piano and soprano for Kirsten Sorteberg's recital at the Mt. Kisco School of Music opened the door for my future venture into this genre. It was the first public performance of one of my songs and only the second song I had

written, the first being *Shall I Compare Thee To A Summer's Day* (Shakespeare) for Richard Taruskin's class, as mentioned. (I would later compose a 2nd version for this sonnet which was premiered at a Phoenix concert by Sally Porter Munro and Joseph Kubera on April 28, 1992 at Christ and St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Manhattan.)

## **Otto Luening**

Pat Hardish programmed my piece *Spectra* for solo piano, as mentioned above, at a Composer's Concordance concert at the Bruno Walter Auditorium of the New York Public Library in Lincoln Center on February 10, 1984. Unknown to me, Otto Luening would also present a piece on the program, *Sonority Forms* for piano, and would be in attendance. Works by Jane Brockman, Joseph Pehrson, Carlos Rausch, and William Holab filled out the program.

My only previous contact with Luening had been when I attended a guest talk he had been invited to give to the Columbia composition faculty and music students. I was still a student then and made no attempt to meet him after his talk. Other renowned composers were also periodically invited to present similar talks like Luigi Nono and Lou Harrison. The talks were inspirational in nature given in some fairly large classroom in which there were never enough chairs. For that reason many of the students ended up sitting on the floor "at the foot of the master," so to speak. I believe the lack of chairs was intentional.

The auditorium was packed for the concert. In the slow movement of *Spectra*, I concentrated on creating lyrical lines free to soar as they might, by reducing note content and creating wide spaces where a simple melodic line could appear. Kirsten's performance was exceptionally musical and thoughtful in which she held the audience spellbound in that special silence that can only be produced in the concert hall.

*Spectra* is just a short 3 movement piece, almost a miniature, but at the reception following the concert I met Otto Luening for the first time. He was highly complimentary about *Spectra* and let me know that the piece had impressed him very much. This was the beginning of a friendship that lasted until Otto's death in 1996 at the age of 96. During his final years, he said to me on more than one occasion that he kept his bags packed. Whenever he said it, I used to reflect that maybe we should all keep our bags packed, at least maybe one or two, in certain respects.

After the *Spectra* performance, I got in touch with Otto and he invited me to get together with him in his home on Riverside Drive in the Columbia University neighborhood where he and his wife, Catherine, lived. I commented on the fabulous view over the Hudson River, which was difficult to ignore, as we sat down to talk.

Otto and I had much in common. We were both Midwesterners—Otto from Wisconsin, I from Indiana—and we both got our starts as instrumentalists, Otto on the flute, I on the horn. This was very important for Luening and he talked about several other composers who began their careers as orchestral instrumentalists, Handel, for

example, on violin, or **Dvořák** on viola, or Carl Nielsen on violin and trombone, and many others. He repeated his remarks to me that he thought I had done an exceptional job in composing *Spectra*. I nodded my appreciation prepared to go ahead, but Otto stopped and pointedly repeated the compliment staring straight at me. He did not intend to continue until I recognized the seriousness of his compliment. I then thanked him with an equal degree of seriousness. From that point forward we were equals though he had amassed far more credits and fame than I would ever expect to receive.

Otto was mostly known for his electronic works. That's where he received his fame. But he wrote some exceptionally fine and skillfully crafted works in standard media like his *Kentucky Concerto* for orchestra. I hope that he will be remembered with performances of these compositions as well. Otto also helped keep some very fine composers on the map who had been eclipsed by flamboyant youth and changing tastes like Roger Goeb (1914-1997), whose third symphony was performed and recorded by Leopold Stokowski and the CBS orchestra. Keeping one's memory alive and in the public's imagination is always a problem for composers, most notably, perhaps, in the example of Antonio Vivaldi. This great composer fell into poverty toward the end of his life for just such reasons and was impoverished when he died. I knew Roger Goeb (pronounced Gabe) through Otto and last saw him in Manhattan walking alongside Rockefeller Center. He greeted me warmly and with enthusiasm as we stopped to talk which was difficult for him as evidenced by the symptoms of a stroke which—unknown to me—he had suffered and which appeared unmistakably on his face. I recommend his very fine *Fourth Symphony*. In my opinion it should find its way into the 20<sup>th</sup> Century classical repertoire alongside other works of notable American composers in Roger's era like Howard Hansen, Peter Mennin, William Schuman, Roy Harris, and Walter Piston.

### **The new music organization Phoenix**

It had become clear to me by this time that I was not a composer who was going to rise to the top in the world of new music. My own style was far removed from either the aleatoric or the avant garde 12-tone serial side. Further to my disadvantage, I was 50 year's of age and just getting started, not what the grants organizations with money to hand out were looking for. This was fine with me. Though I was glad for any recognition which did come my way, I was not interested in becoming a big name just to view myself as a big name. My singular purpose was to write meaningful compositions with the same sense of intelligence, beauty, aesthetics, and deep inner feeling that touched all pieces of music to which I had been drawn from the very beginning when I first ventured forth on my musical journey. Even so, as my work with Kirsten Sorteberg had shown, having a purpose or reason for writing a piece was a powerful motivation for composing music. One way to continue in that direction was to present concerts myself. Thus I founded the new music organization *Phoenix* for the presentation of new music.

### **Reviews**

The formal debut of *Phoenix* took place at Christ and St. Stephen's Church, 120 West 69th St., New York City, on December 12, 1985 in a program titled Modern Music

Originals. I told my new friend Otto Luening of my plans and asked if he would like to put a piece on the program. I also inquired whether he would consider addressing the audience in introducing *Phoenix* to the public. He was glad to do both. Other works presented on the program came from Carlos Rausch, Brooke Halpin, Patrick Hardish, Darrel Irving, Tom Johnson, and Kirsten Sorteberg. Writing for the New York Times, Bernard Holland reviewed the program as a "serious, worthwhile concert," though absent the "angry rigor that used to pervade similar events in past years..." Of my composition *Three Dance Movements*, Holland wrote that the composer "gives resonant yet pointillistic effect to the combination of marimba, bass clarinet, violin and cello, and Mr. Irving has a way of holding on to brief melodic and rhythmic ideas and gradually making us care about them."<sup>8</sup> The piece was played by a terrific ensemble of Seymour Wakschal, violin, Daryl Goldberg, cello, Jim Douglas, bass clarinet, and Jerry Weir, marimba.

Seymour Wakschal was a close friend and a great violinist. The story goes that Seymour was kind of just "hanging around" with no particular purpose and one of his friends said, "Hey Seymour! Why don't you go out and get a job." He did, as one of the associate concertmasters of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra.

At the time of the Phoenix concert Tim Page aired a program "New, Old, and Unexpected" for WNYC-FM radio where he interviewed many guests composers like Elliott Carter, Vincent Persichetti, Aaron Copland, Lee Hoiby, and Virgil Thomson. Tim's field was journalism but he had a heavy background in music. I had known Tim since we took a course together in English composition during the summer term of 1976 at Columbia. In this class, the students wrote papers which they exchanged with the other students so that all students could review and learn from each other's work. Tim and I stayed in touch at the conclusion of the class and over the years became lifelong friends.

I called Tim to tell him about the concert and he invited me in for an interview on his program. During the interview he commented that the program seemed to "welcome a certain Catholicity" among composers, that it did not "seem to be one of these new music groups which takes some absolute dogmatic and never to be dissuaded stand on where music is going." He had assessed the purpose of *Phoenix* rightly. Its main function was to present quality works of new music without consideration of musical ideology. Tim's comment was curiously similar to Bernhard Holland's in his review of the Phoenix inaugural concert when he stated it lacked the "angry rigor" of similar events in past years.

Among his many accomplishments, Tim Page was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Criticism in 1997. He would also write a highly praised biography of American fiction author Dawn Powell, a fascinating account of the author's extraordinary life.

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<sup>8</sup> Bernard Holland, Concert: 8 Composers in New-Music Program, New York Times, December 16, 1985, <http://www.nytimes.com/1985/12/16/arts/concert-8-composers-in-new-music-program.html> , accessed February 6, 2017.

The review in the New York Times by Bernard Holland was not the first I had received nor would it be the last, though, in terms of number, they pale by comparison to many composers.

Earlier, in May, Christopher Rumery, writer for the *New York City Tribune*, wrote that my piano composition *Clouds* had "an almost Impressionistic flavor...beautiful music that has a strong ethereal quality."<sup>9</sup> In a 1989 New York Times review, Allan Kozinn hailed my vocal compositions as "inventive" calling my settings of *Three Emily Dickinson Songs* "evocatively dramatized."<sup>10</sup> In a later review in 1992, Al Kmist noted for Woodstock Times readers that "David Irving's *The Music Makers* celebrated music in service of poetry in service of music. The warmth was palpable even in the chilly church."<sup>11</sup> My electronic score for Sandra Fenichel Asher's play *Once in the Time of Trolls* found favor in the *Catskill Mountain News* in 1994, noting that "David Irving composer for *Once in the Time of Trolls*, has created an imaginative electronic score which evokes the magic of the play and its characters."<sup>12</sup>

On the other hand, John Rockwell, writer for the New York Times, gave a review for the occasion of the world premiere of *Spectra 2* for horn and piano in 1988 in which he referred to it and the other world premieres on the program as 'extremely arid.' I had composed *Spectra 2* for Francis Orval's New York recital debut at Merkin Hall in New York City. As to whether Rockwell had it right, every listener can decide for themselves the quality of the piece by listening to it. I recommend the second movement (posted on youtube). Tell me that is arid, or the brisk, energetic finale, or, for that matter, the distant, evocative first movement functioning as an intro. Of course, composers are going to defend their works just as I do.

Some composers seek revenge against bad reviews. Protesting to reviewer Rudolph Louis for his review blasting one of his works in the *Münchener Nachrichten* in 1906, composer Max Reger famously sent Louis a message which read: "I am sitting in the smallest room of my house. I have your review before me. In a moment it will be behind me!"

Of all the reviews I received, it would be difficult to surpass the four page feature article Beth Waterfall wrote for the *North County News* in 1986 describing the presentation of my one act opera in seven scenes, *The Witch*<sup>13</sup> She titled the article "On the Trail of a Tale of a Witch." It was awarded second place in the prestigious New York Press Association's annual contest.

## **The Witch**

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<sup>9</sup> Christopher Rumery, "Composer Irving present at recital," *New York City Tribune*, Need Source info

<sup>10</sup> Allan Kozinn, "Review/Concert; The Eclectix Impetus: New Music in Old Mode," *New York Times*, September 10, 1989, <http://www.nytimes.com/1989/09/10/arts/review-concert-the-eclectix-impetus-new-music-in-old-mode.html>, accessed February 6, 2017.

<sup>11</sup> Al Kmist, "Restaurants and Entertainment: Music," *Woodstock Times*, March 5, 1992, 9.

<sup>12</sup> "New family plays highlights trolls, wolves," *Catskill Mountain News*, July 6, 1994.

<sup>13</sup> Beth Waterfall, "On the Tale of a Witch," *North County News*, October 15-21, 1986.

*The Witch* was commissioned by The Concert Society of Putnam and Northern Westchester directed by conductor Richard Serbagi. I first met Richard in London where he was stationed in the United States Air Force and engaged to a very beautiful English woman. Though a member of the Air Force, he had played for a while in the 7<sup>th</sup> Army Symphony Orchestra as a cellist replacement. His brother, Midhat Serbagi, as mentioned earlier, was also a member though Midhat had been drafted into the Army.

The Concert Society of Putnam and Northern Westchester presented works by composers like David Amram, Michael Colgrass, John Corigliano, Ivana Themmen, David Gilbert, and Walter Hagen so the commission was a boon for me. Richard wanted me to write a composition that would relate closely to the community. In the process of researching the area, I discovered a book by the late Carl Carmer, *The Hudson*, that contained some fascinating folklore about New York State. In the chapter titled "Witches Make Star Tracks," it told tales of people living in the Putnam, Northern Westchester area in 1935. They relied on a belief system in witches and witchcraft as though it were a religion. I presented the material to Richard who became equally fascinated by the story. Its historical and cultural significance to the area was obvious, and after further discussion, and in consultation with some of the leaders of the concert society, a project began to evolve that resulted in my composing *The Witch*, a one act opera in 7 scenes based on Carmer's story. I wrote the libretto myself.

I worked directly with members of the concert society on all aspects of the opera, including costumes, make-up, staging and sets, lighting, and, of course, with the musicians, who I conducted in the performances. My friends Claudia Lunstroth and her friend and colleague Mia McDonald kindly volunteered to act as stage hands.

The principal Soloists for the opera were Robert Williams, hailed by the Christian Science Monitor as "One of the finest tenors in memory," and J.B. Davis, a great bass baritone who had completed 13 tours with the Goldovsky Opera Theater. My sister, Ann Irving, did the narration. Williams, Davis, and Ann had also been members of the Kansas City Lyric Opera. Colleen Quinn appeared in the dance sequence and Howard Meltzer, a fine horn player and graduate student at Columbia University, served as our rehearsal pianist. But we still needed a mezzo-soprano.

Coincidentally, a close friend of mine from Pittsburgh, Mary Ferguson, was living in London working on writing plays. We had shared many experiences together in New York City and, by chance, San Francisco. In London Mary met Sally Porter Munro, a mezzo-soprano, who was getting ready to travel to New York. Mary gave Sally my telephone number who called me right in the middle of our cast search. Sally sang for Richard and me, and we gave her the mezzo-soprano roles in the opera.

Beth Waterfall's article described the adventures of Richard Serbagi and me and the discoveries we made as we spent a day tracing the footsteps of Carmer through the wooded areas which provided the historical basis for the opera. Beth was right there with us on the trip and a photographer she invited along who would present us with some mounted photographs he took of our journey into witch country. We placed these around

the auditorium for viewing before each performance, I addressed the audience and related to them the genesis of the opera from its inception and what I had learned about the area in terms of belief systems in witches prior to and even after the Second World War. I also described the photogra[phs] in terms of their local geography, and their significance to the folklore contained in the opera.

The opera did convey a sense of the culture and people of the area a half century earlier. In this sense the opera was a success. Objectively speaking, however, though I have always composed quickly, I did not give myself enough time to write this opera to my satisfaction. It has always needed reworking, an undertaking I have promised myself to make because I believe the opera has yet to realize its full potential.

*The Witch* was presented at St. Luke's Church, Somers, N.Y. on October 25, 1986, and Drew Methodist Church, Carmel, N.Y. on October 28, 1986.

### **Cuzzins a Buzzin**

Sometime during this period my cousins and I started connecting. To begin, Richard Irving, my first cousin, an opera singer, actor, and the handsome, gregarious, good natured son of my Uncle Frank (now deceased), contacted me in New York City. He was on his way to visit his girlfriend in Manhattan. This was the gracious Haruyo Fujiwaki, a psychologist who had built up her own practice in the City. Years later, we would add my brother Darrel and Kathryn Busse, Richard's sister, to the entourage who (along with her husband, Richard) runs the gift shop on main street in Cooperstown called The Silver Fox. This was the nickname for their father, my Uncle Frank. We have had great times together, including in my hometown Sidney and in Cooperstown (Richard and Kathryn's hometown), exploring the local areas.

In addition, through a growing interest in genealogical matters, I would get to know some of my other cousins, first cousins Charlotte Mudd, Judy Powers, and William Richard Arnold, and second cousins Cindy Ratzeck, Cheryl Salvi, and Chris Saxton. I have already mentioned Elizabeth Richards, my Welsh 4<sup>th</sup> cousin and genealogist who was such a great help in tracing my ancestral relationship with the poet Dylan Thomas. David Wilkin, emeritus Professor in French at Wooster College in Wooster Ohio, and a member of the Gerow clan, also provided valuable information in the family tree search. Cheryl Salvi and her father, Arnold, had discovered their blood relationship with us all only recently. The family tree search in which some of my cousins dug deeply foraging through century-old documents, especially Chris and Judy, provided possible answers to the nagging family question as to whether or not my grandfather, Frank Byron Irving, was the offspring of an incestuous relationship. The available evidence suggests that this may indeed have been the case.

### **A virtuoso on the horn**

After the Phoenix inaugural concert, Pat Hardish asked me if I had a suitable piece to put on his next Composers Concordance Concert set for April 27, 1986 at



Carnegie Recital Hall. (Soon thereafter the hall would be renamed Weil Hall.) I loved the idea of having a piece of mine presented at Carnegie Recital Hall because this was the venue from which I had listened to radio broadcasts of concerts in high school days in Bluffton, Indiana. For Pat's concert I wrote a new piece, a quartet for violins, which I titled *Stars*. The performers themselves were stars for that performance, some of the top violinists in New York City, Katsuko Esaki, Michael Levin, Marilyn Reynolds, and Seymour Wakschal.

This concert would have a far-ranging impact on my future as a composer for several reasons. For one, I met David Soldier there, who was on the program with the Soldier String Quartet. I also met Camilla Hoitenga, an American flutist living in Cologne, Germany, who performed a piece on the program by Akmal Parvaz with her ensemble the Phoenix Trio, consisting of flute, bassoon, and harp.

David Soldier's string quartet specialized in contemporary music. He also had his own radio show for WKCR Radio called Afternoon Music. After we met and talked for a while, he invited me to appear on his program as a guest composer.

Camilla, called a very polished and brilliant flutist by the German media, and praised in the American Press for her technical facility and warm tone, also specialized in new music. She would eventually ask if I had anything suitable for her to play in concert, to which I responded by writing a trio for 2 flutes and bass clarinet. (I eventually titled the piece *A Summer Afternoon*.) Camilla played the piece along with Lisa Collings, flute, and Eberhard Maldfeld, on string bass at the Alte Feuerwache, in Cologne, Germany on May 5, 1990. Since a bass clarinet player was not available, she substituted the string bass which worked perfectly.

Of far greater significance for me, however, Camilla had a close friend, Ruby Miller, a very fine horn player who had concertized world-wide. (Tragically, Ruby would die of cancer just a couple of years later.) Through Ruby, Camilla was s friend with Ruby's husband, Francis Orval, also a horn player, who attended the concert at Carnegie Recital Hall on the evening in which *Stars* was performed. In reading the program notes, Francis noticed that I had studied horn with Willem Valkenier. Valkenier had been especially helpful to Francis, a Belgian, when he first arrived in America.

After the concert Francis introduced himself to me. I didn't know it at the time, but as we spoke I was speaking with the internationally renowned Belgian horn soloist and recording artist, Francis Orval, one of the truly great horn players of recent decades. He has recorded many of the most important works in the horn literature, including the 4 Mozart *Concerti*, the Schumann *Konzertstück for 4 horns*, the Brahms *Horn Trio*, Saint-Saëns' *Morceau de Concert*, Weber's *Concertino*, the Haydn *Concerto for 2 horns* and the septets by Franz Berwald and Beethoven. He was also a virtuoso on the natural horn—that is the horn without valves—which I learned when I heard him play the Beethoven *Sonata for Horn* on the natural horn in a spectacular performance at the Streitweiser Foundation Trumpet Museum in Pottstown, N.Y. (March 6, 1994) He also played a piece of mine on that program, *Spectra 2*. (See directly below.)

Francis and I got in touch with each other soon after the concert and he asked me to write a piece for his American debut in Merkin Hall in New York City. The result was *Spectra 2* for horn and piano. Francis was the head of the Horn Department at the University of Delaware in Newark at the time and this was where we had our first rehearsal of the piece with Julie Nishimura on piano. In that rehearsal I heard one of the most beautiful, refined tones I had ever heard produced on the horn, accompanied by a fabulous, virtuoso playing technique. This was the beginning of a warm friendship and collaboration which would result in me writing new works for the horn, including the *Duet for Horn and Bass Flute* and the *Four Songs for Soprano, Horn, and Piano*. Francis also played other pieces of mine in concert, such as my *Woodwind Quintet* and my *Sextet for Horns* in memoriam for Willem Valkenier.

The premiere for *Spectra 2* took place on February 21, 1988. Francis would also play the piece on some of his concert tours including at the International Bartok Festival in Szombathely, Hungary in Szonbathely, Hungary and at the Appalachian State University School of Music, Rosen Concert Hall, Broyhill Music Center, Boone, North Carolina.

## Songs

Sally Porter Munro's arrival in New York was a huge benefit for me not only because of her roles in *The Witch*, but also in the area of song writing. Her clear, high mezzo voice and exquisite phrasing and warm tone provided the perfect inspiration as a fellow collaborator for several songs I would write for mezzo and/or soprano and piano in the ensuing years. This included the *Ave Maria*, *Three Emily Dickinson Songs*, *Endless Song*, *The Ostrich is a Silly Bird* (Mary E. Wilkins Freeman), *Where'er You Walk* (Congreve—unperformed), *Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer's Day* (Shakespeare) and *Not Marble Nor the Gilded Monuments* together with *What is Your Substance, Whereof Are You Made* (Shakespeare, for mezzo or soprano and baritone). Graham Fitch, a prize winning pianist from the Royal College of Music in London, was also present to add his superb accompanying skills in working out some of these songs. In addition, Sally and I collaborated on several songs with instruments, including *i carry your heart with me* (e.e. cummings), for soprano or mezzo-soprano and string quartet; *Nuptial Song* (Lord de Tabley—unperformed) for soprano, mezzo-soprano, cello and harpsichord (or piano); *As if that God made Creatures for Mans' Meat* (Margaret Cavendish—unperformed), for mezzo-soprano, viola, and piano; and the song cycle *Four Songs for Soprano or Mezzo-soprano, Horn and Piano*.

During this period two exceptionally fine soprano soloists, Kurt Weil specialist Barbara Hess and Carol Poppenger, also included some of my Emily Dickenson songs in their concerts at Synchronicity Space and Bruno Walter Auditorium in New York City. As referred to previously, I had known Carol from New England Conservatory days and New York City where we were close friends.

Another soprano, Trudy Wodinsky, asked me for a song to present on an audition she was taking. I sent her *The Throstle*, text by Tennyson, for which she provided an

outstanding performance. Curiously, a few years later we would discover each other both working as legal secretaries in the same law firm of Weil, Gotshal, and Manges. Such jobs are often the mainstay for musicians in their quest to survive. But also, how about that morphic connection hovering over Trudy and me?

The same struggle for survival has been going on for centuries. One such example, Carl Philip Stamitz (1745-1801), a travelling virtuoso on the violin, the viola and viola d'amore, often took short-term engagements resulting in some prominent successes. Still, he never managed to gain a permanent job with one of the orchestras of his time and died, like Vivaldi, in poverty. What became of his family in those times after he died, one can only wonder? (We must improve on the way we take care of one another. Thank God for Social Security.) Today, when we listen to the Andante Grazioso movement of Stamitz' Symphony No. 5, which sounds so much on an even keel with Mozart in his greatest glory—who are we listening to, Stamitz? Mozart? Or, is it also, as Antonio Salieri described in the movie *Amadeus*, the voice of God?

### **The *Four Songs* and their first performance**

By 1990, I had established a reasonably reliable method of composing and had quite a few compositions under my belt. I would now write what would turn out to be, in my estimation, one of my best works of those which have to date been performed. This was my *Four Songs for Soprano (or mezzo-soprano), Horn, and Piano*.

The impetus for this composition is not difficult to trace. As a horn player I was aware of the near void in the repertoire for this combination when I first began composing and so always wanted to write a piece for this ensemble. (The International Horn Society also recognized the void. In 1979 it sponsored a contest for compositions for the trio, resulting in a handful of new repertoire.) Franz Schubert's *Auf dem Strom* is the best known work for this combination.

With the resource of my firmly established performing organization, *Phoenix*, I had friends and colleagues who were aware of its reputation and were glad to perform on *Phoenix* concerts. In composing the *Four Songs*, I had specific performers in mind as I began. These were, of course, mezzo-soprano Sally Porter Munro with Francis Orval on horn, easy choices, to be sure. Who to get for the piano part, on the other hand, was a different matter. I asked Sally for a recommendation and without hesitation she said, "get Walter Hilse." I knew Walter because he had been one of my counterpoint professors at Columbia, as I have described. But I was unaware of his reputation as a performing musician. Sally, however, knew Walter's work from her own solo work with the Canticum Novum (a choral group), which he accompanied on piano. I took her recommendation and contacted Walter who was pleased to join the ensemble. How fortunate we were, for in Walter I found an incredible musician—a natural—super sensitive to every nuance in a piece, plus a great organist and also a very fine composer.

I set my four songs after the example of Richard Strauss' *Four Last Songs*, written in 1948, a work which I had always admired and hoped one day to somehow emulate in some way—that is if I could do it without copying Strauss in any literal sense.

Themes of death are evident in three of the Strauss four songs. I liked the idea of addressing the subject of death and beyond death according to my own thoughts and beliefs, and so spent several days pouring through poetry examples trying to find suitable poems to set. (I made no attempt to find a text on the subject of Spring as in the opening Strauss song.) Finally, I found four English texts that, though vastly unique and different in style—contrary to the Strauss texts—reveal a certain unity in their perspective about life beyond the present. These were *Grieg being dead*, by Carl Sandburg, *There is a morn by men unseen*, by Emily Dickinson, *Song*, by Edith Sitwell, and *A Clear Midnight* by Walt Whitman. (Later, I would learn that Benjamin Britten had also set Edith Sitwell's *Song* for Tenor voice and Piano.)

The songs are ordered specifically by flow in the piece. I don't recall for certain, but I must have spent three or four, possibly five or six, weeks composing them. Not long after their completion, we presented the *Four Songs for Soprano, Horn, and Piano* in a *Phoenix* concert on April 20, 1990 in New York City at St. Michael's Church. They were also performed a year later on March 9, 1991 by Sally Porter Munro, Walter Hilse, and Bill Purvis (horn) at Central Presbyterian Church in New York City as a part of a Melodious Accord Symposium. A month later on April 29<sup>th</sup>, Melanie DeMent, Soprano, Francis Orval, Horn, and Julie Nishimura, Piano, performed the songs at the University of Delaware in Newark.

The new additions of these three brilliant musicians to the performers list, Melanie DeMent, Bill Purvis, and Julie Nishimura, just added to my continued good fortune in having some of the very top musicians play my compositions. The trend continued with another performance of the *Four Songs* by another very fine ensemble led by another very fine pianist, Julianna Hayward, at the University of North Carolina Greensboro, on March 26, 2017.

With the completion of the *Four Songs for Soprano, Horn, and Piano* in 1990, I felt I had arrived at a certain place from which the future direction of my music would be new and different. (This did not impact on the affection I held for quite a few of my previous works which I prize highly.) It had really begun probably a year or two earlier with the composition of the songs I worked on with Sally Porter Munro and Graham Fitch, and *Spectra 2* for horn and piano, which I wrote in late 1987 for Francis Orval.

### **The dissolution of Phoenix**

Around 1991 I reconnected with Tom Buckner, a baritone, I had met in San Francisco at a concert featuring some of the music of Bob Hughes. This was when I was a member of the Oakland Symphony, long before I had taken the "plunge" into music composition. Tom, a recipient of the American Music Center's Letter of Distinction, is one of the foremost promoters of new music in America who has commissioned and

continues to commission a host of prominent composers and improvisers for new pieces of music over a period of many years. After talking it over, Tom invited me to compose some songs for a concert he would present in New York's Merkin Hall on March 4, 1992. The result was a five-song cycle for baritone and piano which I titled *The Music Makers*. Joseph Kubera, acclaimed as one of the world's foremost interpreters of contemporary piano music and hailed by Village Voice critic Kyle Gann as "one of new music's most valued performers," was on piano. The cycle contains one of my favorite songs I have written, *The Music Makers* (after which the cycle is named) with a text by Arthur William Edgar O'Shaughnessy.

My new collaboration with Tom and his elegant presentation of *The Music Makers* with Joe Kubera's equally elegant accompaniment prompted me to compose *Four Songs from Shakespeare* with texts from four Shakespearian sonnets for baritone and mezzo-soprano or soprano. The cycle consists of one solo song for baritone, one solo song for soprano (or mezzo), and two songs for baritone and soprano (or mezzo)—referred to above. We presented these songs at a *Phoenix* concert on April 28, 1992 with Tom Buckner, baritone, Sally Porter Munro, mezzo-soprano, and Joseph Kubera on piano.

*The Music Makers* and the *Four Songs from Shakespeare* marked the end of a major period in my compositional life. I had spent more than ten years in the mainstream of the highly competitive New York modern music scene, so I had a pretty good idea of what it was all about. As described, this was the time of the battle between the so-called uptown (academic) and downtown (chance/aleatoric) camps. I had little interest in the fight because I saw the value of both sides and also the failure of both sides. There is little question, though, that the uptown/downtown battle impacted in some way the lives of almost every composer across the country and many in Europe, too, by virtue of its monopolistic control over the new music scene. Both blamed each other but both were responsible.

### **In retrospect**

The collaborations with Kirsten Sorteberg, Sally Porter Munro, Francis Orval, and Tom Buckner fostered several new compositions. Francis would soon retire from performing publicly, much to the disappointment of his colleagues and many horn aficionados, though he still performs at times. His other music activities in teaching, giving workshops and master classes, directing and coaching ensembles, and making guest appearances go on. Tom continues on his road to collaborating with prominent musicians and improvisers, offering concerts of many new commissioned chamber works, orchestral pieces, and song cycles, as well as to presenting improvisations (including his own), electronic constructions, and multi-media theater pieces.

Sally Porter Munro, meanwhile, moved out to San Francisco where she has had considerable success. There she lives with her husband, George Lister, a highly regarded Alexander Technique Method teacher who has taught the principles of the technique to Joan Baez and leading Metropolitan Opera and San Francisco Opera singers.

Sally made her California debut as soloist in the Beethoven Ninth Symphony with the Oakland Symphony and has given numerous recitals and sung with Bay area opera companies. This includes the role of the Duchess in the US premier of Thomas Ades opera *Powder Her Face* with Kent Nagano and the Berkeley Symphony. It also includes full-time membership in the chorus of the San Francisco Opera where she has sung small roles and covers. She has also concertized in Great Britain, Russia, and South Africa and cofounded Music by the Mountain, an annual chamber music festival in Mt. Shasta, California, and the Sunset Music and Art Series which brings acclaimed artists to the Sunset District of San Francisco.

As for me, some of my best compositions were yet to be written, particularly in regard to orchestral compositions such as the *Suite for Orchestra* in which every movement is suitable for individual performance, the *Horn Concerto*, and the several arrangements of my piece for Heckelphone and double reed ensemble for various combinations involving woodwinds, brass, and saxophones. Other works lay dormant yet to reveal their merits such as *Five Movements for Orchestra* and my choral compositions *The Lord's Prayer*, *Flowers of Paradise*, and *Prayer* with a text by Alexander Solzhenitsyn. Other pieces needed revisions including the opera *The Witch*, *Hymnposium* (for orchestra), *The Starry Nights of Copernicus* (for orchestra), and *East/West* (for Viola and Orchestra).

At this juncture, I had been fortunate to have quite a few performances of my pieces presented in a wide variety of concert settings, though I suppose from the standpoint of big name composers, the number was small. (See Appendix II.) I now had around 80 compositions in my catalog of works which included works for orchestra, a wide range of chamber ensemble pieces, vocal solos and song cycles with piano, vocal solos and song cycles with other instruments and piano, piano solos, works for a cappella chorus and for chorus with instruments, incidental electronic music for a play, a solo electronic music piece, a one act opera, a concert band arrangement, and music written to express animal protection matters. My compositions had been performed largely in New York City but also in a number of places in New York State and in several other states (Alabama, California, Delaware, Georgia, Indiana, Iowa, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Utah). This included performances in venues such as at Weill Hall in New York City, the International Horn Society Conference in Athens, Georgia, and the International Bartok Festival in Szombathely, Hungary. Internationally, my music has been performed in Cologne, Germany; Vienna, Austria; Montreal, Canada (I think); and, as noted, Szombathely Hungary.

After the presentation of the *Four Songs from Shakespeare* in 1992 I dissolved Phoenix. The road ahead would be to continue to strive always to write better compositions, but from the sidelines which offered a far less distracting place to work.

I have been perfectly content to work outside the mainstream ever since, though the performances are far fewer. They have come along, nevertheless, such as with Linda Diamond's choreography of selections from my *Three Dances* (violin, cello, bass).

Clarinet and marimba) and *Circus Variations* (piano). She choreographed these pieces for her dance troupe Linda Diamond & Company, noted for their award winning productions. The last major event was the commission by a terrific oboist and heckelphone player, Mark Perchanok, to write a heckelphone and double reed piece, referred to above. This was premiered by Mark with the *New York Kammermusiker* on March 29, 2002 at St. Mark's Church in-the-Bowery and again a year later on June 1, 2003 at the Composers Guild of New Jersey. At Mark's suggestion, I made several arrangements of this piece for different wind instrument combinations to which I have also referred above.

A few other performances of my compositions would follow. Nothing, though, could have prepared me for the unexpected turn my music journey— perhaps better stated as my "non-music journey"—would soon take. It had been percolating, beneath the surface for a number of years.

## **Chapter 17**

### **The Road to Innocence**

#### **Mentors**

Unexpected mentors have appeared from time to time to offer their assistance in certain aspects of my life's journey as I have described. J. Robert Schlatter, Ken Schermerhorn, Willem Valkenier, and Mark Zuckerman played an especially important role. Other mentors, however, were of the nonhuman variety and to these I pay even greater tribute.

My first nonhuman mentor, an all white kitty, was born from the offspring of a cat owned by Susan Treadway, an employee at Sotheby's auction house with whom my brother had a serious relationship at the time. I named the cat Valentine. My second cat, a blackish/brownish tiger cat, came to me as an orphan. I eventually named her Cloudy.

Cloudy was rescued by a neighbor from a vacant elevator shaft in a loft in lower Manhattan when he heard her crying for help. He gave the cat to his wife, Sherrie Vidgor, a friend who lived in my building. But the cat often escaped Sherrie's apartment, which was just below mine, and on one occasion climbed up on the outside of the building where I found her on my window ledge five flights up from the street. I gingerly opened the window and coaxed her in. Even though I returned her to Sherrie, who always treated her well, she continued to escape. Finally, I found her in the circular stairwell that curled up to my apartment, huddled and cringing against the hostile, threatening world from which she desperately sought escape. The little cat seemed determined that I was the one destined to be her caretaker. I gave in, and this time, with Sherrie's consent, kept her. At first I named the little cat Growly because her growl was her only defense against this fearful and hostile world that seemed intent on devouring her. Finally, I named her Cloudy after the clouds that floated in the sky.

I grew more attached and more sensitive to my cats with each passing day, experiencing their lives along with mine as best I could understand a cat. I saw how they felt, how they suffered, their tremendous sensitivity towards me, their inherent goodness, their sense of honesty, their acceptance of their being, their lack of many problems that our species, with our superior intelligence, is prone to. I saw and felt the tenderness and love in their eyes, their hopes, and their joys. I experienced how their lives were equally as important to them as was my own life to me. Like millions of people the world over, I learned to love, better appreciate and understand my animal friends and companions, and to make a home for them for whose safe keeping I had become entrusted.

Many people would fight to the death to protect their companion animals should anyone try to harm them. Yet we are mute to the harm done to animals not our own in animal research laboratories, on fur farms and factory farms, in circuses and zoos, and by hunters, trappers, and other cruel people. Why?

#### **Animal protection**



It was during the mid-1970s and early 1980s that the animal rights movement exploded onto the national scene. My first encounter with the movement happened in 1979 in the late Professor Samuel Devons' class on the Art of Scientific Experiment at Columbia University. There I witnessed four or five students criticize the contentions of another student who was presenting a paper extolling the benefits of animal research which, during those days, was generally accepted by almost everyone. I was amazed by the boldness of this group and their willingness to openly display their lack of respect for the ideas the student presented, if not the student himself. In fact, they ignored the usual manners for polite classroom conduct as though they did not exist. For his part, the targeted student held his ground and was dismissive if not condescending.

Though I didn't know it at the time, I was witnessing a microcosm of the war between the animal rights movement and the proponents of animal research with both sides prepared for battle and neither yielding an inch. This is the scene that I have observed playing out on the national (and international) stage ever since with both sides giving everything they've got to win.

The war was on. But it would not affect me personally until the mid-1980s when my friend, Julie Beckham, who attended the Columbia School of International Affairs and was more conservative than I on certain issues—I have always been very progressive politically—along with her significant other, Ricardo Ferreira (See Chapter 1), suddenly became vegans from out of the blue. Julie then said to me: “You’re supposed to be the great liberal. How is it, then, that you continue with these nutritional habits that cause so much suffering to animals and people and damage to the earth?” She was right and I knew it. Within a few days I had joined the vegan camp.

I quickly learned about Alex Pacheco and Ingrid Newkirk at PETA and other animal rights organizations like the Doris Day Animal League (as I believe it was called then) and, as well, the highly efficient and productive San Francisco based organization In Defense of Animals.

My outrage grew the more I learned about how cruelly animals were being treated. Soon I was joining picket lines in protest against animal cruelty in fur manufacture, food production, circuses, and animal research. I wrote countless letters opposing animal abuse and cruelty that occurred in places as diverse as Burger King, the Environmental Protection Agency, and Georgetown University. The Washington Post and The Chronicle Review both published letters of mine, the latter in which I denounced the efforts in 2002 by Frankie Trull and the late Senator Jessie Helms to exclude protections for mice, rats, and birds in the Animal Welfare Act. Tragically, their efforts were successful.

Because of letters I wrote in support of PETA campaigns, PETA invited me to become a correspondent for a PETA column replying to questions from the public. I accepted and for a short while was an active PETA correspondent. I should mention that I do not support PETA's present euthanasia program and have communicated that fact to PETA. I maintain the hope that they will eventually change direction. I remain,

nevertheless, a great admirer of all that PETA has accomplished and continues to accomplish on behalf of animals.

In the course of these investigations, my music study and other personal activities continued at their own pace. For example, during this time I met the Austrian born folk singer and popularizer of Yiddish songs and the music of Kurt Weil, Martha Schlamme, a friend of Judy Resnick. Martha invited me to Sunday brunch at her apartment in Manhattan which turned out to be a very elegant affair overseen by Martha with the greatest deliberation and care. I last saw and spoke with her when she was taking a break outside a club where she was performing on 67<sup>th</sup> Street just a block from my own apartment.

Over the years that followed, I often wrote directly to the perpetrators and supporters of animal abuse to denounce their activities and work like TV sportscaster Bryant Gumbel in 2001 for his support of Foie Gras, nutritionist Dr. Andrew Weil for minimizing the dangers of eating meat in a 2010 Huffington Post article, and Nobel Prize winner Eric Kandel for his callousness and support of the use of animals in scientific research on the Charlie Rose show, also in 2010.

It was also in 2010 that on my own initiative I wrote to all seven Deans at Vassar College and corresponded with Dean Begemann and Dean Chenette (a composer) in an effort to convince them that alternatives existed to a deer cull program they were planning. Vassar had hired the notorious and to what I believe the cowardly professional deer-kill organization, White Buffalo, to implement the plan. The strategy was to condition the deer to feed at a specific location at night so that White Buffalo riflemen could lie in wait and shoot them. Dean Begemann replied with a list of reasons for the cull, all of which I responded to with facts and logic showing that her excuses were baseless and suggesting we should keep in mind Albert Schweitzer's famous words that "Compassion, in which all ethics must take root, can only attain its full breadth and depth if it embraces all living creatures and does not limit itself to humankind." I also wrote to Dean Chenette informing him that I was also a composer and communicating my belief that compassion lies at the heart of all serious music. I urged him to stand up against the Vassar cull. He replied with a response attempting to justify the cull program.

Many people were involved in trying to stop the Vassar deer-kill operation, but we were unsuccessful. However, I believe no such effort is wasted and adds to the consciousness necessary for ending human cruelty and abuse of the nonhuman population of the earth.

Vassar was not my first letter writing campaign. In 2005, upon learning of animal experiments and abuses of baboons being conducted at Columbia University, I wrote a detailed 3 page letter of objection which I mailed to every trustee at Columbia. I also sent these objections to Columbia professors I knew personally through my previous employment in the Economics Department at Columbia. These were Nobel Prize winner Robert Mundell and C. Lowell Harriss, Professor Emeritus in Economics and a personal friend.

I attached a personal note to several of these letters to the Columbia trustees even though I was unacquainted with any of them. For example, I wrote the following to trustee Evan Davis: “As a person who has been awarded the Wildlife Conservation Society's Conservation Award, you surely have considerable compassion and respect for the lives of animals. Please reflect deeply on the leadership role Columbia could play if it instituted a policy that disavows all cruelty towards animals in any form whatsoever, drawing up a set of principles to guide such a policy. This would have profound repercussions that rippled all across the country, setting the standards for academic and relevant institutions and putting government funding agencies on notice that a moral component must be a part of its funding policies.”

Further In regard to trustee letters, several years earlier, in 1996 I found myself on the picket line outside of Rockefeller University picketing along with In Defense of Animals campaign director Barbara Stagno (who would become my great friend and colleague). The effort of the campaign was to bring down animal researchers Alan D. Miller and Victor J. Wilson who were conducting some very cruel and highly invasive brain research on cats. As a part of this effort, I wrote a lengthy letter to the entire Board of Trustees of Rockefeller University illustrating the kinds of cruel experiments Miller and Wilson were conducting. My letter made enough of an impact on one of the trustees, the late Brooke (Mrs. Vincent) Astor—one of the wealthiest women in America. Upon receiving my letter she had her personal assistant telephone me for additional information. The campaign was eventually successful in closing down the Miller/Wilson laboratory. I have always believed that Brooke Astor made her views known about these experiments in terms that were impossible for any official at Rockefeller University to ignore and that my letter played its part in the position she took. I would later fictionalize Brooke Astor as a character in my novel *In the Shadow of the Innocents*.

## **The Catskills**

A few years ago, around 1994, I was privileged to be the music director for a show with the Open Eye Theater, a terrific theater company directed by Amie Brockway and ably supported by her jack-of-all-trades significant other, Dick Henson (now deceased). They had moved the company from New York City to the Catskill Mountain region near Margaretville. Amie lodged me in a rustic little A Frame house along with playwright Sandra Fenichel Asher, author of the brilliant play we were doing, *Once in the Time of Trolls*, and a great actor, Scott Facher. To get there you drove down a secondary highway, turned up a gravel road for a distance, and then turned off on a grass, two-rutted lane that led through some woods for about fifty yards to where the house sat in a small clearing. A pond just below the house completed the setting with a panoramic sweep of the mountains in the background. Behind and on both sides, the house was enclosed by woods.

I roamed this property during my stay and hiked up the lane and gravel road, though I must admit my urge to explore was dampened after I discovered a bear track at the beginning of the lane one morning. Though I assured myself the likelihood was

remote, I was not eager for a surprise encounter with a bear. Aside from my adventures around the grounds, the drives into town and back were captivating. People were friendly in this territory where the surrounding green vistas could have been transported from Switzerland. The area villages were quaint and filled with antiques and a sense of history.

The seeds for a dream had been planted. In the years that followed it took more definitive shape as I investigated ever more closely the possibility of moving to the region. Finally, in December of 2002, I found a modest home in the tranquil, little village of Sidney in the upper, upper Catskills, and my dream became a reality.

In every dream, of course, a little rain must fall. My rain came in the form of a bad back injury, the result of four trips of moving my belongings between New York City and Sidney and purchasing and moving furniture from the vicinity nearby. Valentine had died in New York City, but Cloudy was still with me. She endured the final trip patiently in my new (seven year-old) 1995 gray Plymouth Van. On December 24th I dragged Cloudy into the house and let the van sit in the garage filled with junk. On Christmas day I lay flat on my back surrounded by at least a dozen unopened boxes, clothing strewn everywhere, and a few pieces of furniture sitting around in ghostly isolation. Thank God for Cloudy. What a comfort she was. I managed to pull a radio out of a box and lo and behold, we had music. It was raining slightly, but not to be outdone snow soon began to fall—12 inches of it! It was beautiful! Big fat flakes falling so gently, filling the landscape all around. Darrel and Ralph Zeitlin came up for a day and shoveled out the driveway. The day after they departed, Mother Nature, not to be fooled [which isn't nice, remember—as the margarine commercial portrayed], dumped 16 more inches of the white stuff all around. It was an auspicious beginning, to say the least, to my life in Sidney, New York.

In Sidney I loved to drive out into the country through the rolling hills that stretched in every direction for mile after mile. Often, I would turn down an unfamiliar road (even down rutted lanes deep into the woods) just because the areas seemed intriguing, trusting that the car would not break down and strand me. In the winter, however, exploring back roads was even more of a questionable practice where the wind blew the snow from the snow banks by the side of the road into swirling eddies that spiraled across the narrow roads and laid down patches of snow which I had to drive through. National Public Radio was there to turn to on the car radio and brought Mozart into the wintry landscape with the snow falling silently and softly around. It reminded me of my setting of Wallace Stevens' poem *Mozart, 1935*, some of which I remembered because I had set it to music for baritone voice. "Be thou that wintry sound as of the great wind howling, by which sorrow is released, dismissed, absolved in a starry placating. We may return to Mozart. He was young, and we, we are old. The snow is falling and the streets are full of cries."

Back in Sidney I once attended a recital given by professional cellist Stephanie Zito at the public library. I was amazed by her many natural talents. A student of Claus Adam, composer and cellist with the Juilliard Quartet, she had stopped symphonic work to devote herself to solo cello performance. She was also a composer with numerous

choral compositions to her credit—the ones which I heard (synthesized) were beautiful and deserve performance— and a member of ASCAP who composed cello compositions and performed them through a grant from the New York State Council on the Arts. A graduate of Columbia Teachers College and a retired public school music teacher, she was also an artist who painted and displayed 150 paintings of old historic churches throughout Delaware county. As well, as a folksinger, she gave many folk concerts in the area. After the concert I introduced myself to Stephanie and helped carry her gear back to her car. This was the beginning of a new music friendship that I never expected to find in Sidney, one that endures to this day.

### **New York City once more**

For two years I lived in Sidney writing words, working on music compositions and getting to know the region and a few of my neighbors. Meanwhile, another reality began to set in. The sublet of my apartment in New York City was good for only two years and was quickly running out. My cash supply was also dwindling rapidly. I needed more money. I had a decision to make, reclaim my apartment in New York City or lose it. In the end the city won out, and I returned to my apartment there in January of 2005. I kept my home in Sidney and during the ensuing summers rented a car to travel back and forth to mow the grass. In the fall the leaves needed to be raked, a job I accomplished with some reluctance. The maple tree in the front yard shed its leaves across the entire lawn covering it with a blanket of gold. I hated to be the spoiler of nature's artwork, and besides the leaves were fun to walk through.

As I left Sidney for New York City it had begun to snow. By the time I reached the town of Liberty the snow was falling heavily. I stopped there for gas and continued my trip. Just outside of Liberty the car went into an irreversible skid, colliding with the bank of encrusted snow that lined the roadway. The collision flipped the car into the air into a 360 degree sideways somersault. While in the air my exact words to myself were, "I might get seriously hurt!" The car landed with a tremendous thud on all four wheels. I was barely shook up and uninjured. My guardian angels were keeping watch. The car, though, was totaled with a bent axle. I had to rent a car and with thousands of other drivers slowly and painfully make my way into New York City in one of the worst snow storms in decades.

In the city I tried to earn some much needed money to pay down my mortgage. I managed to land a Temp assignment in the recruiting department at Weil, Gotshal, and Manges, an international corporate law firm that fostered diversity and pro-bono programs for various social causes. My work colleagues were friendly, convivial, and not afraid to have a good time. We cheered each other up, and I added my own input during one period of relaxation, singing "Love Tastes Just Like Strawberries," a song I had learned many years before from a recording by the South African singer, Miriam Makeba. I made friends with my good fellow co-workers Naima Walker Fierce, my supervisor, and Marcia Williams, as well as cat lover Kasey Voskresenskaya. The composer Andrew Shapiro was also employed in my department, and we got to know each other. He had a second job playing his solo piano pieces and improvisations at, of all

places, a McDonald's restaurant in downtown Manhattan. I attended one of his performances with my friend Barbara Priest. Andrew gave us an attic tour of the historic part of the restaurant, a look-back on "old New York" that was not visible to the public. Many of his pieces have been played on radio networks including his *Mint Green* which can boast being played more than six million times on Pandora Radio.

Sometime during this period I met the concert pianist Julie Holtzman, who specialized in performing and recording the piano music of Franz Xaver Mozart, the son of Constanza and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. She also had a keen interest in jazz and specialized in Gershwin. Edward Jablonski, Gershwin's biographer, referred to her performance of *Rhapsody in Blue* as "Electrifying and spine-tingling! ....plays George Gershwin with a glowing, sparkling authority and a twinkling humor that too many miss." Julie and I traveled around Manhattan attending different jazz events which, prompted by her observations, increased my appreciation of jazz.

I was also often running into Gene Becker, who had been the principal violist with the 7<sup>th</sup> Army Symphony and had become the Assistant Principal Violist with the New York Philharmonic. He and his wife, Rae, frequently went walking around the Lincoln Center area. Was it more of those morphic fields that resulted in us constantly bumping into each other? Each time we chatted a little, growing always closer. This eventually resulted in me writing a piece for Gene, my *Trio for Viola, Clarinet, and Piano*. Sadly, Gene became the victim of intestinal cancer which took his life even as we were talking about playing the piece in concert.

Gene and Rae and I ran into each other a final time just two or three weeks before his death. We all knew it was the last time we would see each other. Gene led us inside a little store on the corner of Broadway and 67<sup>th</sup> Street on the Northeast side. There we formed a circle and put our arms around each other for a few moments of comfort and silence. No words needed to be spoken. I have never met anyone whose inner character shone so unabashedly like a beacon visible for all to see more than Gene Becker as he peacefully and admirably lived out his life standing up for what was good and right. It was one of the great privileges of my life to have known Gene whom I esteemed greatly. He died on June 25, 2006.

It became quickly apparent that I had reaped some good karma with my new job at Weil Gotshal which was within walking distance from my apartment through Central Park. This gave me a pleasant start to the day, rain, snow, or shine. If I rushed, I could even make it home for lunch, rain, snow, or shine, which I always managed. This pleased not only me, but my cats which now numbered three: Looney, Goldie Boy, and Lewie Lew. By this time both Valentine and Cloudy had passed on.

Looney, Goldie Boy, and Lewie Lew were all strays I took in from the back deck of my home in Sidney where I put food out after noticing them coming around. Looney was like a black panther as I watched him slither up a pole in the backyard. I put some food out under the deck and crouched there under it and watched as he took hungrily to the food. He was very skittish when feeding, looking around constantly with darting

movements of his head, very alert to any danger that might approach, leaping away at any sudden movement by me, and emitting sweet, little meow-like sounds. One day he let me pick him up and carry him around the side of the house to a crawl space where I tried unsuccessfully to make a home for him. Then one very cold night with the temperature below zero and a major snow storm approaching, I heard him out on the back deck. He offered no resistance as I picked him up and brought him into the house, keeping him in a separate room from Cloudy (who was alive at that time) until I could get him inspected by my vet. The next day we had a good foot of snow. It was apparent that the cat was lost or abandoned. I placed an add in the paper, but the vet, who estimated him to be five or six years old, felt he had been out on his own for a long time. He was already fixed. I gave the new big burly boy who weighed 16 pounds the name of Looney.

I talked with the birds along the route to work in the mornings in Central Park in New York City, not that I thought I could actually speak with birds. But I liked the idea of communicating in this private way that here was one of those human animals who understood the importance of establishing a far more positive relationship with nonhuman animals.

A small, slight tree with two forks one of which reached out over the east side of the bridge overpass near the Central Park skating rink became a favorite landmark. It was winter and the branches of the tree were stark and bare, though its trunk was dressed in ivy. I watched it daily for the changing of the seasons as I yearned for Spring.

I should not neglect mentioning other animal friends I met in Central Park like the squirrels and even a hawk that I occasionally spied returning to its nest. But my attention was mostly captured by the many horses laboring against their will at the behest of the carriage industry. I often walked in the opposite direction parallel to their path as they pulled their load of carriage and tourists so that I was right up next to them and could call out encouragement as we passed each other. How sickeningly saddening it was to witness their exploitation and the burden of their travail. It is a heart wrenching experience if one only spends the time to observe these magnificent creatures closely, their spirits broken, their heads drooped low, the unremitting look of hopelessness in their eyes, the sad sway of their bodies, the smaller frailer horses with fragile legs sometimes buckling and teetering as they struggle with their load. One can only wonder what happens to them if a knee gives out so that they can no longer fulfill their function. But it doesn't take much imagination to arrive at an answer to that question.

Sometimes I would yell out at a carriage driver for running his horse at too fast a pace. One of them turned back to me thinking to intimidate me. "What did you say," he shouted down at me, menacingly. I held my ground and forthrightly repeated my complaint. He turned and drove away. "I've taken down your license number, too!" I called. "I'm reporting you!" But I did not. I did rejoice for these creatures whenever inclement weather made it impossible for their drivers to bring them to the park.

Sigmund Freud wrote that man "made claims to a divine descent which permitted him to annihilate the bond of community between him and the animal kingdom." He

called it “human megalomania.” Whether by this or whatever means, it is apparent that only by blinding ourselves to the reality of our common bond with the nonhuman animal population of the world that we can engage in their barbaric exploitation to the extent that we do. We just need to be truthful and then, like the song says, “I was blind but now I see.”

Increased observation and study, which had begun when my first cats came to live with me and had progressed from the time of the composition of *Clouds* in 1985—when I turned irrevocably vegan—continued to grow. It brought with it the unmistakable realization that the largest problem facing human beings responsible for all our violence, warring, and killing was the human disrespect and indifference for the life force that inhabits all living beings. The obvious way for reversing this destiny that was spiraling out of control even to the extent of threatening the survival of the human species through global warming (a major part of which can be traced directly to animal exploitation), was to start appreciating much more all living beings. Many prominent people—scientists, professors, politicians, philosophers, newscasters, writers, executives, artistic types, etc.—add to their prestige by denouncing global warming. But almost none of them are truthful, open minded, or courageous enough to dig down deep enough to separate the available evidence which clearly reveals that animal exploitation is the primary cause of much of global warming. Simply put, we humans need to stop excluding the nonhuman population of the earth from the love and compassion which is a major part of our nature—when we choose to use it. It seems clear enough that it is just this failure that is the single most important element preventing human beings from building societies in which they can live in harmony and benefit one another by the productive living of their lives.

Realizations like these brought with them a profound sense of responsibility to communicate such thoughts to those who either did not understand or who had never bothered to think about such matters, including some of my closest friends and associates. It was a difficult thing to know how to do, especially to some people who were resistant to and even offended by the ideas I tried to communicate. No doubt, I made many mistakes in trying to accomplish this feat.

### **Return to my home in the Catskills**

After 3 years in New York City it was time to return to my home in the Catskills. Before I did, however, I managed to interest my landlord in purchasing my lease for a modest price. It was just enough to completely pay down my mortgage. With this act I cut all ties to New York City except with friends and my brother who continued to live there.

Gone now were the visits to Central Park or a late night trip over to Lincoln Center. Gone were all the concerts and musical events. Gone were trips to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Frick, the Museum of Modern Art, and art galleries around the town. Gone was the intriguing swarm of people each adding his or her own unique story to the steaming cultural mix of the big city. Gone was Greenwich Village,



the East Village, Soho, Noho and all the other areas where I used to love to tramp around. Gone were the direct interactions with so many different people from so many walks of life. In sum, gone was the great and exciting city that meant so much for so many years.

Surely, wherever one finds oneself, it is the daily adventures one encounters which teach, as they always do, a little more about the meaning and purpose of life. What is it we are doing here in this, as Emily Dickinson described it, “great experiment in green?” (The words come from a poem I had set 20 years before, *A little madness in the spring*.) Fortunately, my relationships with all the friends, artists, musicians, composers, and animal protection advocates I knew so well across the years was not gone. They would always remain. And they were easy to connect with through the internet.

It was early summer of 2007 when I made my final move back to Sidney, and while I thought I would eagerly return to writing music again, the importance of my life as a composer suddenly seemed like a luxury I could no longer afford. A new purpose took over as I began to devote my life to trying to communicate the greater truths of which I had become aware.

Possessing this knowledge was not something negative to endure, though it often isolated me. In fact, whenever anyone local learned what I was all about, they parted company rather quickly. But this was not that troubling. I could still count dozens of my friends all across the country as I have indicated. They were not with me personally but easily reachable with an e-mail or phone call. And, frankly, I had work to do, books and articles to write. I had been given a gift of enormous proportions that was like an entirely new consciousness and I possessed it. Thank God, my twin brother also possessed it and millions of other people across the world who were arriving at the same kinds of understandings and conclusions.

### **My work as a writer**

For the next ten years I spent my time writing words in an attempt to do my part in realizing a greater objective. Even so, while I was busy writing words I was also continuously writing music in my head and on occasion would return briefly to music to sketch out a piece. In general, though, music had to sit quietly by as I put my creative energies to work writing fairy tales, short stories, essays, newspaper articles, magazine articles, and books. My work also included writing blogs, doing interviews for radio broadcasts, and making videos. This work was all related to animal protection matters.

My first book was published by O-Books, a British publisher, and was titled *The Protein Myth: Significantly Reducing the Risk of Cancer, Heart Disease, Stroke and Diabetes While Saving the Animals and Building a Better World*. 435 pages. About the book, Caldwell B. Esselstyn, Jr., MD wrote: "David Irving reveals the science which can eliminate our common chronic killing diseases. His blistering exposé of the politics, institutions, corporations, and governments which are geared to thwart this life-saving message is a powerful read." John Robbins wrote that: "*The Protein Myth* shows that compassion toward other species is not merely an act of kindness. It is what is required to

restore our health and move us toward a world without slavery, genocide or war." Dr. Samuel S. Epstein, recipient of the *Right Livelihood Award* (Alternative Nobel prize), the *1998 Project Censored Award* (Alternative Pulitzer Prize), and the *Albert Schweitzer Golden Grand Medal for Humanitarianism*, wrote that the book was: "An incisive analysis of current key public health concerns, deserving a must-read recommendation." Praise also came from important voices in the animal protection movement and health like Howard Lyman, George Eisman, Laura Moretti, John McDougall, and Will Tuttle.

I hated dealing with agents and publishers and so decided to self-publish the books that would follow. This limited their sales and was, no doubt, a mistake. Some of these books were full length, others more like booklets. They were 1) *The Cruel Science: Animal Research from Aristotle to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*; 2) *Is It Christian to Hunt*; 3) *Untying the Knot of Animal Dependency: the legacy of prehistoric humans to the modern world*; 4) *The Princess and the Maple Syrup Collector*; 5) *Where Flew the Sparrow: How the Acceptance of Cruelty Crept Into the Christian Faith*; 6) *Trappersville USA*; and 7) *In the Shadow of the Innocents: A novel About the Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act*. I also wrote the novel *The Voice in the Stone*, a biographical novel about the great 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> Century so-called Christian mystic, Meister Eckhart.

These books had their own special messages to convey, some of which follows.

***The Cruel Science: Animal Research from Aristotle to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.*** 272 pages. The book recounts the history of animal research starting with the ancient Greeks and offers a unique perspective on the impact of Aristotle's hierarchical view of nature on animal research that continues to the present day. Aristotle's theories have become the norm for thinking about animals ever since which has been a major factor in creating an animal dependent world. The book covers many topics such as showing that the claim that language is a prerequisite for consciousness cannot be maintained in light of the evidence; the credible evidence of the very possible link of animal research to the creation of AIDS and many forms of cancer; the strategy philosopher/theorists, such as Professor Peter Carruthers, who support animal research, are employing to continue animal research far into the future at the public's expense; the connection of animal research with societal violence and other major problems facing the world; and why animal research in general is most often a pseudo science bilking the public of billions of dollars every year.

***Is It Christian to Hunt.*** 65 pages. As put by Stephen R. Kaufman, M.D., Co-Chair of the Christian Vegetarian Association, this book is a "....very well-written and thoughtful book makes a convincing argument. We should be grateful to writers like Irving... for providing the arguments we need to show that oppression and abuse of nonhuman animals fundamentally violates Christian ethics."

***Untying the Knot of Animal Dependency: the legacy of prehistoric humans to the modern world.*** 125 pages. This book takes us back to the dawn of human existence based on the archaeological and anthropologic evidence to trace how humans managed to coexist with animals for millions of years. The great divide between humans and animals

began with the development of language. This led to greater technological advances in weaponry followed by hunting and trapping animals as a way of life leading eventually to the first war between humans. With their new power and weaponry, humans now easily enslaved animals to assist in the formation of civilizations and to appease the gods by offering them up for sacrifice. If that worked, why not try humans? They, too, could be put to work against their will and used as sacrificial objects for various interactions with the gods. The enslavement and sacrifice of animals and humans alike continues in the modern world in a variety of guises and concepts such as animal research, factory farms, fur farms, societal class systems, warfare, and many others. Animal dependency lies at the very core of the major problems humans face as the world skids toward disaster. We can restore sanity to our world by changing our attitudes toward animals from one of cruelty and disrespect to one of concern and respect. When humans stop killing animals they will stop killing one another.

***The Princess and Maple Syrup Collector*** 41 pages. In this fairy tale, the Princess Anna loves the deer and the quail and all of nature. She vows never to bow to pressure from her parents, the King and Queen, to marry Knight Ruppert, the wealthiest noble in the country and an expert hunter with the crossbow. The eccentric Henry sells the best maple syrup in all the land. Nobody believes his story that a parallel world exists for which he endlessly searches which is an exact replica of the real world. Those who live in this parallel world can converse with the forest creatures and are surrounded with music and joy. They experience life through the magic of truth. Henry secretly dreams of the Princess Anna.

Henry discovers the entrance to the parallel world when he frees a minx from a trap. There the animals tell him about Rupert's plans to capture and sell all the animals in the kingdom to furriers and animal researchers on the Isle of Killington. At the same time he aims to enslave the residents and abduct the Princess Anna. Ruppert intends to force Anna to marry him if she wants to spare the lives of the animals held in his dungeon. Henry must find a way, with the help of the animals, to combat Rupert and his weapons of war when he has none of his own. This is the only way he can save the kingdom, the people, the animals, and the Princess Anna.

**Where Flew the Sparrow: How the Acceptance of Cruelty to Animals Crept Into the Christian Faith.** 63 pages. This little book makes the case that the early church fathers abandoned the teachings of Jesus and adopted in their place Aristotle's hierarchical theory of nature which relegated animals to insignificant, expendable items put on earth only for humans to use in whatever manner they chose. Though it may be uncomfortable to ask, the question which hardly can be avoided is whether it is following in the footsteps of Jesus to be cruel to animals or is this not the path which was paved with the theories of Aristotle? For Christians who insist they are not cruel people, can it be considered anything other than cruel to participate in using animals for food, clothing, cosmetics, and household items, including hand soap, which have been tortured, treated horribly, and inhumanely killed in producing those products? For Christians, the correct question to ask must surely be, "What would Jesus do," not "What would Aristotle do."

***Trappersville USA*** 80 pages. As described by Marc Bekoff, *author of The Emotional Lives of Animals and Rewilding Our Hearts: Building Pathways of Compassion and Coexistence*, the book "Trappersville, USA is a well-researched, vivid portrayal of trapping from prehistoric times to the present....This short book will go a long way toward putting an end to trapping once and for all by exposing what goes on /beyond the scenes.'"

***In the Shadow of the Innocents: A novel About the Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act.*** 144 pages. Peter Jenkins is a bright and rising star in the world of academia when he learns that some very cruel animal experiments are being conducted at his university. Caught in an act of civil disobedience, he is arrested and prosecuted under the 2006 Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act. The novel addresses a multiplicity of questions concerning science and animal research and explores the meaning of the AETA for civil liberties and the kinds of actions that are required for repealing this infamous and unconstitutional act.

***The Voice in the Stone*** 180 pages. The novel is about the Dominican Priest, Meister Eckhart who lived from 1260-1328. In the year 1326 Meister Eckhart was charged with heresy by the Archbishop of Cologne, Heinrich von Virneburg, essentially on the grounds that he taught matters that could easily lead people astray. Meister Eckhart died during his trial. A year later, Pope John XXII condemned several of the Meister's writings as heretical whereupon they were removed from the church canon. The Meister was not alive to protest and his writings and good name were thereafter disgraced. Only in recent years has the Catholic Church agreed with critics that Meister Eckhart was a good and orthodox theologian, though it has not lifted the official ban on his work. The novel conveys Meister Eckhart's central message of oneness with God and his methodology for achieving that union. Because so few personal facts about Eckhart have survived, the book recounts his story by using his own writings for much of his spoken dialogue and through various interactions with different characters as they engage in a series of adventures and brushes with the law in a society obsessed with the fear of heresy.

Meister Eckhart is an important figure for the cause of animal rights. That is because he is one of the few religious leaders who believed that God's essence was contained in all living creatures. As he put it, "God gives to everything alike." This means God gave not just to humans, but to the nonhuman population of the earth as well. Today, Meister Eckhart is regarded by many scholars, theologians, and devotees as one of the great Christian medieval mystics and one of the most brilliant and important of all Christian thinkers.

I also wrote a musical spoof titled: ***So You Want to Conduct das Orchester.*** 37 pages. This is a reworking of a little story I wrote decades ago.

During my time back in Sidney, as an advocate for animal protection matters I also wrote many articles and did interviews, quite a few of which were published on websites and blogs such as Cyranos Journal; Thomas Paine's Corner; All-Creatures.org; tante mieux; Press

Action; SoulCafe.net; Dandelion Salad; Radical Noesis; thevegetariansite.com; veganviews.org.uk; kennysideshow.blogspot.com; disinfo.com; pinterest.com; wisdom-magazine.com; vegnews.com; healthfooddaily.com; davidicke.com; and others.

In an imperfect world no one is perfect and certainly not the author. But my work for animals evolved from seeing the need for taking the side of animals without the means for defending themselves against the bullying and tyranny of human beings. This meant, for example, hunters. It also included the Churches and Christians who believe they are very good and kind-hearted people but also act like tyrants and bullies in their treatment of animals. Why should they flinch, I asked myself, from considering truthfully whether or not their attitudes, customs, appetites, and routines involve them in cruelty to animals? Was cruelty to animals a trait that Jesus would condone or the opposite of what he taught? To address such questions I submitted and had articles published in the Oneonta Daily Star. They attacked hunting and Christian attitudes supporting hunting. Needless to say, I was not popular with the audience these articles targeted, though no one ever reached out to me with any harmful intent.

Remaining upon my soapbox for another moment, in my view animals are God's creatures and they are innocents. They deserve and need the protection of compassionate, caring people rising in their defense. This includes a collective Christian community pledged to reject cruelty to animals. Just think how Christianity, estimated to number 2.4 billion people (nearly one-third of the world's population), could change the world if it changed its attitudes toward animals. But a more humane world community is also needed. At the present time, unfortunately, these communities are barely in their infancy.

### **Glue traps**

I have always been extremely grateful when someone intervened to prevent some bully from accomplishing his/her objective against me in some situation over which I had little or no control. The guard duty episode on the train from Bremerhaven to Göppingen, Germany when I was in the army is one such example. (See Chapter 5.) I took such events to be a signal that I should do the same whenever I encountered some bullying against which I could offer some resistance. This became especially true for animals which have no voice with which to fight back. When I discovered that one company I worked for was putting down glue traps to catch mice, I wrote up an objection and sent it to the National Executive Director of the Company. To my amazement, she not only respected what I wrote but implemented a new policy: No more glue traps. I was not, however, too popular with the custodial staff responsible for catching the mice. To them, concerns about cruelty to mice were absurd. They manned the security entrances to the building and let me hear what they thought about the new policy whenever I left the building for the day—if no one else was around. I did not report them.

On another occasion in an office full of lawyers where I worked as a legal secretary, I listened in as a senior lawyer for the firm chastised a junior lawyer who had admitted he had caught a mouse in a mouse trap in another room in his home at night. He heard it squealing but had made no effort to put it out of its misery. Sometime later, the

squeal of a mouse sounded in the office next to my desk which was located in the main office aisle. The doors to the offices of both lawyers described above closed quickly as they submerged into the security of their offices. I entered the office where my boss worked and where the squeals of the mouse emanated from beneath a radiator. I did not ask permission, but got down on my hands and knees where I spotted a mouse glued tightly in a glue trap. I despised glue traps and their cruelty. I thought nothing could be done, but decided to at least try. Taking a very thick, plastic ruler, and working under the radiator with my hands, I carefully and gently pushed against the mouse. I didn't think it possible, but gradually I pushed the little mouse to a point where just the tip of its tail remained stuck to the trap. One more little push and it sprang free, disappearing in a flash. Can anyone doubt the gratitude and the sense of relief the little mouse must have felt to have been freed from a hopeless and fiendish situation? The elation I experienced and the personal reward to me for having done something that was so right was beyond words. This was a reward the two lawyers had shut themselves off from ever experiencing when they closed the doors to their offices.

But let me not paint myself as being too big a hero. There have been times when I, too, shut the door to rescuing some animal which would have required more heroism than I possessed. We are always here to learn and become better people, a fact I have found good not to forget.

During my hiatus from composing, I was interviewed for several radio shows including the Betsy Belaga Show; the Tammra Broughton Show; the Monique Chapman Show; the Patricia Cori Show; the Tom Evans Show; and the VegCast podcast with Vance Lehmkuhl. I also gave talks at the Sidney Public Library and the Green Earth health food store in Oneonta about the contents of *The Protein Myth*. The Green Earth is run by Dean Roberts who publishes a daily blog of his own wise philosophy crafted in his own inimical style that makes for very thoughtful reading. I call him the Buddha of Oneonta.

I also kept in touch with certain stalwart animal protection advocates and friends during this period like Barbara Stagno who had started up her own organization CAARE (Citizens for Alternatives to Animal Research and Experimentation), and Laura Moretti, the publisher of the *Animals Voice* magazine since 1985. She had also published my article *Requiem for a Bat*. Barbara and I have worked together and shared information over the years (see earlier this chapter), and the same for Laura. Veda Stram, another staunch advocate and friend, provided much needed information to the animal rights movements by publishing alerts, stories, poetry, and vegan and animal rights articles on All-Creatures.org, an important portal for animal protection matters run by the Mary T. and Frank Hoffman Family Foundation. Frank, a pastor, has devoted his life to the cause of animal protection. Betty Lininger, a Professor in the Geography Department at California State University Los Angeles and another dear friend, stays alert for incorporating important animal rights information into her courses when she can fit them into her curriculum.

In addition I made two youtube videos (with background music by me) with the help of my recording engineer friend Dan Velle. (See Chapter 1.) One of these is a video of a presentation I gave at The Green Earth health food store in Oneonta, New York (mentioned above), titled “Who Are We and Where Are We Going?” Here I discussed some of the topics contained in *The Protein Myth*. Though I eventually withdrew the video from youtube, it was picked up for viewing by quite a few websites such as cristianomusica.com, kidneystonesdiet.com, and lookfordiagnosis.com. The second video was about the horrendous cruelty on fur farms and is based on an undercover video investigation conducted by Matt Rossell, a very brave undercover animal abuse investigator. It is titled “*America, Humane or Inhumane, Our Choice.*” Quite a few websites like frequency.com, musikadisco.com, and veengle.com picked up this video for viewing on their sites.

## **Final reflections**

No doubt many people who knew me personally, or even more distantly, thought that my life as a composer had come to an end when I embarked upon the writing journey described above. But the hiatus from music was temporary. Had not the great Beethoven taken a break from composing, I asked myself? And had I not always used the example of the great composers for guidance when it came to compositional matters?

In late 2016 my work in writing words finally began to ebb. It was nearly time for me to return to music composition. The impression was reinforced by the dissertation Julianna Hayward was working on about my work, as I have mentioned, followed in the spring of 2017 by a performance of the *Four Songs* with Julianna displaying her exceptional, interpretative gifts at the keyboard, a graceful rendition of the poems by soprano Christa Cook, and an expert presentation of the challenging horn part by hornist Joy Martin Cox. The performance took place at Organ Hall at the University of North Carolina Greensboro on March 26, 2017.

The realization that the time had arrived to return to music came with the knowledge that somehow my future life as a composer would be in the service of the ideals I had been bequeathed. This was backed by the new knowledge I had acquired as the result of my work on behalf of the nonhuman animal population of the world.

I regarded the year 2018 as the year of my inevitable return to composition. Because of the health problems described in Chapter 1, unfortunately, that return has been delayed somewhat. Even so, I look forward to the years ahead where I hope for the opportunity to implement some of the compositional ideas I have been contemplating over the past decade. But first, it will be time to revise some compositions from the past, two or three of which need extensive revisions as named earlier.

I once stood on the uncertain brink of manhood, unsure, afraid, alone. Now at the age of 83, I have been through the fires. I have experienced the good, the bad, the ugly, and the beautiful. I have seen inside where I am deeply flawed. I have been amazed by the gifts life has bestowed upon me and those I have been given to give to others. I am

now fully myself, having learned that to be oneself is to be no other self and to be committed to building, caring for, and, when necessary, defending that self. The future is about that self in relation to life, to my fellow human beings, my fellow animal beings, the earth, my music compositions, my writings, those who I love most dearly, and God and existence beyond this life.



## **Appendix I**

### **List of Compositions**

(arranged chronologically according to performance category)

#### **Orchestral**

The Nights of Big Sur (Short orchestral work to be revised) (1977)  
Five Movements for Orchestra (1983), based on Theme and Variations for Piano.  
Dance Suite for Orchestra (Movement from Five Movements for Orchestra) (1986)  
Hymnposium, Variation and Fantasy on a Hymn Tune (October 8, 1987)  
The Starry Nights of Copernicus (Chamber Orchestra), orchestration of violin quartet  
(Jan. 30, 1989)  
Concerto for Horn and Orchestra (1999)  
    Arrangement of Concerto for Horn for Horn and Two Pianos (1999)  
Dance Suite for Orchestra (1999) Each movement suitable for individual performance  
    Aald Reel and Waltz (1999)  
    Country Dance (1999)  
    Grand Processional March (1999)  
    Carnival for Orchestra (1999)  
East/West for Viola and Orchestra (2001)  
Baroque Reflections – Ceremonial Air and Fugue (in progress)

#### **Dramatic**

The Witch – One Act Opera in 7 scenes (August 19, 1986)  
Once in the Time of Trolls, (incidental music, play by Sandra Fenichel Archer,  
    electronic score) (1994)

#### **Chamber Music**

Piece for Percussion (1977)  
Woodwind Quintet (1978)  
Music for String Quartet No. 1 (one movement) (1979)  
Mixed Ensemble Piece for Percussion, Violin, Clarinet, Bass Trombone and Tuba (1981)  
Trio for Horns (1982)  
Piece for Violin and Piano (2 movements) (April 23, 1985)  
Music for String Quartet No. 2 (two movements) (Aug. 5, 1985)  
Three Dances, for Violin, Cello, Bass Clarinet & Marimba (Aug. 5, 1985)  
In Memoriam Willem Valkenier for Horn Sextet (1986)  
Starry Nights of Copernicus for Violin Quartet (1986)  
A Warm Summer Afternoon, Variations for 2 Flutes & Bass Clarinet or  
    String Bass (1987)  
Spectra 2, for Horn and Piano (1987)  
Quartet for Horns No. 1 (March 15, 1988)  
I Have Thee, for two violins (for Kirsten Sorteberg and Jack Schweitzer on the occasion  
    of their marriage (Dec. 4, 1988)  
Street Song, Pasacalle for Guitar (1988)  
Duo for Horn and Bass Flute (1992)

The Road-Winter (Currier & Ives), diatonic Trio for Horns (1999)  
 Quartet for Horns No. 2 (2001)  
 Piece for Piano and Oboe Solo (arrangement of Endless Song) (After 2001)  
 Piece for baritone and piano (arrangement of Endless Song) (After 2001)  
 Trio for Viola, Clarinet, and Piano (2002)  
 Quintet for Double Reeds with Heckelphone Solo (2002)  
     Arrangement of Quintet with English horn Solo (2008)  
     Arrangement of Quintet with Tenor Sax Solo (2008)  
     Arrangement of Quintet for Brass Quartet and Heckelphone Solo (2008)  
     Arrangement of Quintet for Brass Quartet and English Horn Solo (2008)  
     Arrangement of Quintet for Saxophone Quartet and Tenor Saxophone Solo (2008)  
     Arrangement of Quintet for Saxophone Trio and Alto Saxophone Solo (2008)  
 Largo for unaccompanied violin (date unknown)

### **Piano Music**

Piece for Piano in Two Movements (1978)  
 Elegy for Shelly Scheps (1983)  
 Circus Variations (1983)  
 Spectra (1984)  
 Theme and Variations for Piano, (orchestrated in Five Movements for Orchestra (1982/83)  
 Clouds (1985)  
 Nights of Big Sur, arrangement of short orchestral piece for 2 pianos (date unknown)  
 Lullabye (December 31, 1989)  
 Etude (date unknown)  
 The Piper (2002)

### **Vocal with Piano**

Shall I compare Thee To A Summer's Day—Shakespeare, for soprano and piano (1977)  
 Madrigal of Roses (Irving) for soprano and piano (Feb. 21, 1984)  
 Homeless People – the Hag (Irving), for soprano or mezzo-soprano (Oct. 31, 1984)  
 Where'er You Walk (Congreve), for soprano and piano (1986)  
 Ave Maria, for soprano or mezzo-soprano and piano (April 23, 1989)  
     Ave Maria for soprano or mezzo-soprano and piano with horn (date unknown)  
 The Ostrich is a Silly Bird (Mary E. Wilkins Freeman), for soprano and piano (1989)  
     See also under vocal with instruments  
 Three Emily Dickinson Songs, for soprano or mezzo-soprano and piano  
     Morning (Feb. 20, 1989)  
     A little madness in the spring (July 30, 1989)  
     I dwell in possibility (July 29, 1989)  
 The Throstle (Tennyson), for soprano and piano (July 29, 1989)  
 Five songs for Baritone and piano (1991)  
     Piper (Seumas O'Sullivan)  
     The Players Ask for a Blessing on the Psalteries and on Themselves (William Butler Yeats)  
     Mozart, 1935 (Wallace Stevens)

The Music Makers (Arthur William Edgar O'Shaughnessy)  
 O Silver Trumpets (William Butler Yeats)  
 Four Songs from Shakespeare for Baritone and Soprano or Mezzo-soprano and piano  
 (1992)  
     Not Marble Nor the Gilded Monuments, for baritone and mezzo or-soprano  
     Since Brass Nor Stone Nor Earth Nor Boundless, Sea for baritone  
     Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer's Day, for mezzo soprano  
     What is Your Substance, Whereof Are You Made, for baritone and mezzo or soprano  
  
 Endless Song, for soprano or mezzo-soprano and piano (Dec. 26, 2001)  
 Arrangement of Song (Sitwell) from Four Songs for Sop., Hn., & Pno for baritone and  
 piano (date unknown).  
 Arrangement of Song (Sitwell) from Four Songs for Sop., Hn., & Pno for soprano or  
 mezzo-soprano and piano (date unknown)

### **Vocal with Instruments**

purple finch, (e.e. cummings) for soprano, clarinet & piano (Nov. 21, 1985)  
 i carry your heart with me (e.e. cummings), for soprano or mezzo-soprano and string  
 quartet (Feb. 22, 1987)  
 The Ostrich is a Silly Bird (Mary E. Wilkins Freeman), for soprano and piano with violin  
 obligato (1989) (violin part presently missing)  
 Nuptial Song (Lord de Tabley) for soprano, mezzo-soprano, cello and harpsichord (or  
 piano) (March 4, 1990)  
 Four Songs for Soprano or Mezzo-soprano, Horn and Piano (1990)  
     Grieg being dead (Carl Sandburg)  
     There is a morn by men unseen (Emily Dickinson)  
     Song (Edith Sitwell)  
     A Clear Midnight (Walt Whitman)  
 As if that God made Creatures for Mans' Meat (Margaret Cavendish), for mezzo-soprano,  
 viola, and piano (2011)

### **Chorus**

Ecce Quo Modus Moritur Justus, for a cappella chorus (in the style of Palestrina) (1976)  
 Kyrie, for chorus, piccolo, bells, contra bassoon, and basses (1984)  
 Spring Song, for children's chorus, soprano recorder, recorder and snare drum (1987)  
 The Lord is my Shepherd, for a cappella chorus (Jan. 14, 1989)  
 Voices in the Mist (Tennyson), for a cappella chorus - a Christmas Carol Sept. 26, 1990  
 Voices in the Mist, arranged for women's chorus (2008)  
 Prayer (Alexander Solzhenitsyn), for vocal quartet (or chorus) and piano (1992)  
 Flowers of Paradise for chorus and strings (2008)  
 Flowers of Paradise for chorus alone

### **Concert Band**

Circus Variations (1984)

### **Music for the Animals**

Goldie Boy, for piano (2008)

Goldie Boy, for piano with violin solo (2008)

The Feral Cat (2008)

Crowd Song, for unison voices in opposition to the AETA (Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act) (unfinished)

(See also As if that God made Creatures for Mans' Meat, listed under Vocal with Instruments.)

### **Electronic**

Piece on tape (no title)

### **Arrangements of Other Composers' works—(circa 1976/1978)**

Arrangement for orchestra of Novelette I for piano by Francis Poulenc

Arrangement for string orchestra of Mikrokosmos 66, Melody Divided for piano by Bela Bartok

Arrangement for String Quartet of Poetic Tone Picture II for piano by Edvard Grieg

Arrangement for woodwind quintet of Kleine Stücke I & II from Opus.19 for piano by Arnold Schoenberg

### **Study Works – (circa 1976-1978)**

Fugue Composition

Fugue on a Theme of Walter Hilse

**Appendix II**  
**Performance Dates of Compositions**  
**by**  
**David Irving**

April 20, 1978	Piece for Piano (1978) — Michael Skelly, piano Barnard College Parlor (Columbia University, New York, N.Y.)
March 29, 1979	Woodwind Quintet (1979)—Judith Mendenhall, flute, Rudolph Vrbsky, oboe, David Singer, clarinet, Alexander Heller, bassoon, Stewart Rose, horn  McMillan Theater (Columbia University, New York, N.Y.)
April 29, 1982	Trio for Horns (1982)—Stewart Rose, Robert Casrlisle, Julie Landsman, horns  McMillan Theater (Columbia University, New York, N.Y.)
May 24, 1982	Trio for Horns (1982)— Stewart Rose, Robert Casrlisle, Julie Landsman, horns  The Caecelian Society, Gerardo Levy, Director, Turtle Bay Music School, New York, N.Y.
October 3 or 4?, 1983	Elegy for Shelly Scheps—Kirsten Sorteberg, piano  St. Paul's Chapel, Columbia University, New York, N.Y.
February 10, 1984	Spectra for piano (1984)—Kirsten Sorteberg, piano  Composers Concordance, Bruno Walter Auditorium at the New York Public Library, Lincoln Center, New York, N.Y.
May 13, 1984	Madrigal of Roses (Irving) (1984)—Kirsten Sorteberg, soprano and piano  Kirsten Sorteberg in Concert, Mt. Kisco School of Music, Mt. Kisco Public Library, Mt. Kisco, N.Y.
May 28, 1985	Theme and Variations for Piano (1984)—Kirsten Sorteberg, piano  Clouds (1985)—Kirsten Sorteberg, piano  Lecture concert, Current Trends in Piano Composition, Brooke

- Halpin, Host, Museum of the American Piano, New York, N.Y.
- December 12, 1985      Three Dance Movements (1985)—Seymour Wakschal, violin, Daryl Goldberg, Cello, James Douglas, bass clarinet, Jerry Weir, marimba, David Irving, conductor
- Phoenix inaugural concert, Christ and St. Stephen's Church, New York, N.Y.
- April 27, 1986      Stars for violin quartet—Katsuko Esaki, Michael Levin, Marilyn Reynolds, Seymour Wakschal, violins
- Composers Concordance, Carnegie Recital Hall, New York, N.Y.
- Oct 25 & 28, 1986      The Witch, one act opera in 7 scenes (1986)—J.B. Davis, Ann Irving, Sally Porter Munro, Robert Williams, Colleen Quinn (dancer), Dorothy Happel (violin solo). Howard Meltzer (rehearsal pianist)
- Concert Society of Putnam & Northern Westchester, Richard Serbagi Director and Producer, St. Luke's Church, Somers, N.Y. and Drew Methodist Church, Carmel, N.Y.
- December 2, 1986      Clouds (1984)—Barry Salwen, piano
- Barry Salwen, Piano Evening, Bechsteinsalon, Vienna, Austria
- April 24, 1987      Woodwind Quintet (1979)—Del Arte Wind Quintet, Eileen Grycky, flute, Lloyd Shorter, oboe, Peter Hill, clarinet, Jon Gaarder, bassoon, Francis Orval, horn
- Composers Concordance, Cami Hall, New York, N.Y.
- April 25, 1987      Woodwind Quintet (1979)—Del Arte Wind Quintet, Eileen Grycky, flute, Lloyd Shorter, oboe, Peter Hill, clarinet, Jon Gaarder, bassoon, Francis Orval, horn
- Loudis Recital Hall, University of Delaware Department of Music  
Newark, DE
- May 31, 1987      Circus Variations (1984)—Kirsten Sorteberg, piano  
Phoenix Presents
- Bird Coler Memorial Hospital, Roosevelt Island, N.Y.

- February 9, 1988      Clouds for piano (1985)—Barry Salwen, piano  
  
Phoenix Presents, Bruno Walter Auditorium at the New York Public Library, Lincoln Center, New York, N.Y.
- February 21, 1988      Spectra 2 for horn and piano (1987)—Francis Orval, horn, Julie Nishimura, piano  
  
Francis Orval Horn Recital  
Merkin Concert Hall, Abraham Goodman House New York, N.Y.
- March 18, 1988      Quartet for Horns (1988) in 2 movements—The Mannes Horn Quartet of the Mannes College of Music, Sylvain Brillon, Linda Dempf, William Hughes, Stig Jensen, horns.  
  
The New York Brass Conference, Roosevelt Hotel, New York, N.Y.
- June 21, 1988      In Memoriam for Willem Valkenier (for six horns)—Delaware Horn Ensemble, Francis and Ruby Orval, conductors  
  
The Crane School of Music, Potsdam College of the State University of New York, Sara M. Snell Theater, Potsdam, N.Y.
- November 6, 1988      Spectra 2 for horn and piano (1987)—Francis Orval, horn, Julie Nishimura, piano  
  
National Association of Composers, U.S.A. (NACUSA), Christ and St. Stephen's Church, New York, N.Y.
- April 7, 1989      Morning (1989) (song, text by Emily Dickinson)—Sally Porter Munro, soprano, Kirsten Sorterg, piano  
  
The Ostrich is a Silly Bird (1989) (song, text by Mary E. Wilkins Freeman—Sally Porter Munro, soprano, Kirsten Sorterg, piano, Chen Yi, violin  
  
I carry your heart with me (1987) (song for soprano and string quartet, text by e.e. cummings)—Sally Porter Munro, soprano, Barney Stevens, violin, John Hsu, violin, Scott Sloan, viola, Yvonne Hicks, cello  
  
Phoenix Presents, St. Michael's Episcopal Church, New York, N.Y.
- June 9, 1989      Ave Maria (1989) (revised)—Sally Porter Munro, mezzo-soprano, Graham Fitch, piano,

- A Concert of Sacred Music by Sally Porter Munro, The Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church (Chapel), New York, N.Y.
- September 8, 1989      The Ostrich is a Silly Bird (1989) (song, text by Mary E. Wilkins Freeman)
- Three Emily Dickinson Songs (1989), Morning, A little Madness in the Spring, I dwell in Possibility— Sally Porter Munro, mezzo-soprano, Graham Fitch, piano
- Ave Maria (1989)—Sally Porter Munro, mezzo-soprano, Graham Fitch, piano
- Eclectix Concert, CAMI Hall, New York, N.Y.
- April 20, 1990      Four Songs for Soprano, Horn, and Piano (1990), Grieg being dead (Sandberg), There is a morn by men unseen (Dickinson), Song (Sitwell), A Clear Midnight (Whitman) —Sally Porter Munro, (soprano) mezzo-soprano, Francis Orval, horn, Walter Hilse, piano
- Phoenix Presents, St. Michael's Episcopal Church, New York, N.Y.
- May 4, 1990      Morning (1989) (song, text by Emily Dickinson)—Carol Poppenger, soprano
- The Proteus Ensemble, Bruno Walter Auditorium at the New York Public Library, Lincoln Center, New York, N.Y.
- May 5, 1990      Trio for 2 flutes and bass clarinet or string bass (1987) for Camilla Hoitenga—Camilla Hoitenga, flute, Lisa Collings, flute, Eberhard Maldfeld, bass
- 25 Querflöten und Kontrabass, Bürgerzentrum Alte Feuerwache, Cologne, Germany
- November 26, 1990      Spectra 2 for horn and piano (1987)—Francis Orval, horn, Christina Beeler, piano
- Appalachian State University School of Music, Rosen Concert Hall, Broyhill Music Center, Boone, North Carolina
- March 9, 1991      Four Songs for Soprano, Horn, and Piano (1990), Grieg being dead (Sandberg), There is a morn by men unseen (Dickinson), Song (Sitwell), A Clear Midnight (Whitman) —Sally Porter



Munro, (soprano) mezzo-soprano, Bill Purvis, horn, Walter Hilse, piano

Melodious Accord Symposium, A Song Recital. Central Presbyterian Church, New York, N.Y.

April 29, 1991

Four Songs for Soprano, Horn, and Piano (1990), Grieg being dead (Sandberg), There is a morn by men unseen (Dickinson), Song (Sitwell), A Clear Midnight (Whitman) —Melanie DeMent, soprano, Francis Orval, horn, Julie Nishimura, piano

Loudis Recital Hall, University of Delaware Department of Music  
Newark, DE

March 4, 1992

The Music Makers—Five Songs for Baritone (1991), Piper (Seamus O'Sullivan), The Players Ask for a Blessing (Yeats), Mozart, 1935 (Stevens), The Music Makers (O'Shaughnessy), O Silver Trumpets (Yeats)—Thomas Buckner, Baritone, Joseph Kubera, piano

Thomas Buckner Recital; Merkin Concert Hall, Abraham Goodman House, New York, N.Y.

March 5, 1992

The Music Makers—Five Songs for Baritone (1991), Piper (Seamus O'Sullivan), The Players Ask for a Blessing (Yeats), Mozart, 1935 (Stevens), The Music Makers (O'Shaughnessy), O Silver Trumpets (Yeats)—Thomas Buckner, Baritone, Joseph Kubera, piano

Thomas Buckner Recital, Holy Cross Church, Kingston, N.Y.

April 28, 1992

Four Songs from Shakespeare (1992), Not marble nor the gilded monuments, Since brass nor stone nor earth nor boundless sea, Shall I compare thee to a Summer's day, What is your substance, wherof are you made—Sally Porter Munro, mezzo-soprano, Thomas Buckner, baritone, Joseph Kubera, piano

Phoenix Presents, Christ and St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, New York, N.Y.

Sept. 17 & 19, 1993

A little Madness in the spring (1989) and I dwell in Possibility (1989)—Barbara Hess, mezzo-soprano, Debra Torok, piano

Barbara Hess presents Emily Dickinson in Song, Synchronicity Space, New York, N.Y.

- March 6, 1994      Spectra 2 for horn and piano (1987)—Francis Orval, horn,  
Linda Henderson, piano
- Streitweiser Foundation Trumpet Museum presents, Pottstown,  
N.Y. (Collection presently located at Schloss Kremseg, a  
1,200-year-old castle halfway between Salzburg and Vienna.)
- July 8, 1994      Once in the Time of Trolls (1994)—Electronic Score for  
Sandra Fenichel Asher's play presented by the Open Eye  
Theatre, directed by Amie Brockway.
- Catskill Center's Erpf Cultural Institute, Arkville, N.Y.
- July 8, 1994      Once in the Time of Trolls)—Electronic Score for Sandra  
Fenichel Asher's play presented by the Open Eye Theatre,  
directed by Amie Brockway.
- New Roxbury Arts and Community Center, Roxbury, N.Y.
- July 10, 1994      Once in the Time of Trolls)—Electronic Score for Sandra  
Fenichel Asher's play presented by the Open Eye Theatre,  
directed by Amie Brockway.
- Delaware County Historical Association, Delhi, N.Y.
- Oct. 27 & 28, 1995      Selections from Three Dances (vln, vc, bass. cl. & mar) and  
from Circus Variations—Tape.
- Linda Diamond & Company, High School Environmental Arts,  
New York, N.Y.
- April 24-26, 1998      Once in the Time of Trolls (1994)—Electronic Score for  
Sandra Fenichel Asher's play, directed by Bill Gerlits
- Young Footlitsers, Iowa City Iowa
- May 21, 1999      Trio for Horns (1982, revised 1999)—Philip Myers, Eric  
Ralske, Howard Wall, New York Philharmonic horn trio.
- Performances in Boston and at the 1999 International Horn  
Society Convention, Athens, GA.
- July 26 thru 28, 1999      Selections from Three Dances (vln, vc, bass. cl. & mar) and  
Circus Variations—Tape.
- Linda Diamond & Company, Worldwide Plaza Summer  
Festival, on the Plaza near Cineplex Odeon, New York, N.Y.

- September 30, 2001 East West for Viola Solo and Orchestra—Midhat Serbagi, viola solo, 7th Army Symphony Orchestra  
7th Army Symphony Reunion Concert, Lancaster, PA.
- March 29, 2002 Quintet for Heckelphone & Double Reed Quartet—Mark Perchanok, Heckelphone, John Frisch, Jeffrey Hale, Ilonna Pederson, Peggy Wiltrout,  
New York Kammermusiker, St. Mark's Church in-the-Bowery, New York, N.Y.
- July, 2002 Endless Song, Sally Porter Munro, Mezzo Soprano, Robert Schwartz, Piano, Honest Brook Music Festival, Delhi, New York
- June 1, 2003 Quintet for Heckelphone & Double Reed Quartet—Mark Perchanok, Heckelphone, John Frisch, Jeffrey Hale, Ilonna Pederson, Peggy Wiltrout,  
Composer's Guild of New Jersey, The Ruth Hyman Jewish Community Center of Greater Monmouth County, Deal Park, NJ
- June 13, 2003 The Road Winter, diatonic quartet for horns (1999)—Adam Carlson, Andi Johnson, Brandon Stewart, Adam Randazzo, Colin Dorman, horns  
Quartet for Horns (2001) in 3 movements—Travis Bennett, Tiffany Rice-Barteet, Linda Samuelson, Gerald Welker, Jr., horns  
Transatlantic Horn Quartet Summer Seminar 2003, The University of Alabama College of Arts and Sciences School of Music, Tuscaloosa, AL
- October, 2012 Ave Maria for Soprano, Horn, and Piano, Sally Porter Munro, Mezzo Soprano, Don La Voy, Horn, Laura Bahl, Piano
- March 13 thru 18, 2017 Once in the Time of Trolls (1994)—Electronic Score for Sandra Fenichel Asher's play, directed by John Newman  
Utah Valley University, Noorda Theatre Center for Children and Youth Production, Orem, UT.
- March 26, 2017 Four Songs for Soprano, Horn, and Piano (1990), Grieg being dead (Sandberg), There is a morn by men unseen (Dickinson), Song (Sitwell), A Clear Midnight (Whitman) —Krista Cook,

soprano, Joy Martin Cox, horn, Julianna Hayward, piano

Graduate Chamber Recital, Organ Hall, School of Music  
University of North Carolina, Greensboro, N.C.

August 5, 2017

Once in the Time of Trolls (1994)—Electronic Score for  
Sandra Fenichel Asher's play, directed by Renee Krizan

Greta Theater, Mt. Greta, Pennsylvania

**Concerts with dates unknown**

Ave Maria, Sally Porter Munro, Mezzo Soprano, Michael Cannon, Piano, Honest  
Brook Winter Series, New York, N.Y.

Spectra 2—Francis Orval, horn, pianist unknown  
International Bartok Festival, Szonbathely, Hungary

Other concerts, Indiana University, Bloomington, Ind.;  
Philadelphia University of the Arts, Philadelphia, PA; Western  
Michigan University, Kalamazoo, MI.

## **Appendix III**

### **David Irving and Ann Irving youtube recordings**

#### **Music by David Irving**

##### **Songs for Soprano (or Mezzo-Soprano), Horn, & Piano**

Music by David Irving: Four Songs for Soprano or Mezzo-Soprano, Horn, and Piano (1990). Sally Porter Munro, Francis Orval, Walter Hilse

##### **Songs for Soprano (or Mezzo-Soprano) and Piano**

Music by David Irving: Ave Maria (1989) w/ Sally Porter Munro & Graham Fitch

Music by David Irving—Three Emily Dickinson Songs—(1989) Sally Porter Munro & Graham Fitch

Music by David Irving—Shall I Compare Thee—from 1990s w/ Sally Porter Munro & Graham Fitch

##### **Music for Piano**

Music by David Irving for Piano—Circus Variations—(1984) Kirsten Sorteberg, Piano

Music by David Irving for Piano—Clouds—(1985) Kirsten Sorteberg

Music by David Irving for Piano—Elegy for Shelly Scheps (1983) Kirsten Sorteberg

Music by David Irving for Piano—The Piper—(2002) (Synthesizer)

Music by David Irving for Piano—Spectra (3 short movements)—(1985) Kirsten Sorteberg

Music by David Irving for Piano—Theme and Variations (1982) Kirsten Sorteberg

Music by David Irving— In Memoriam. Played by Kirsten Sorteberg (1943-2011)

##### **Music for Orchestra (synthesizer orchestra)**

Music by David Irving—Auld Reel and Waltz for Orchestra—(2002)

Music by David Irving—Carnival for Orchestra—(2002)

Music by David Irving—Country Dance for Orchestra—(1998)

Music by David Irving—Grand Processional March for Orchestra—(2002)

##### **Music for Horn and Piano**

Music by David Irving for Horn and Piano—Spectra 2—(1987) Francis Orval, Horn; Julie Nishimura, Piano

##### **Music for Horn Trio**

Music by David Irving for Horns (1982)—Stewart Rose, Robert Carlisle, Julie Landsman, horns

### **Music for Woodwind Quintet**

Music by David Irving—Woodwind Quintet (1979) Judith Mendenhall, flute; Boris Vrbisky, oboe; David Singer, clarinet; Alexander Heller, bassoon; Stewart Rose. horn

### **Music for Brass Quartet with Woodwind Solo (synthesizer)**

Music by David Irving for Brass Quartet w/ Woodwind solo (2003)

### **Music for String Quartet**

Music by David Irving—String Quartet (1980)

### **Electronic Score**

Music by David Irving—Once in the Time of Trolls (1994)

Music by David Irving—Entrance Music for Once in the Time of Trolls (1994)

### **Music for Oboe and Piano (synthesizer)**

Music by David Irving for Oboe and Piano (2002) — Arranged for Oboe 2008.

### **Work in Progress**

Music by David Irving—Baroque Reflections—A work in progress

### **Lecture Concert**

Music by David Irving – Lecture Concert, Clouds, Piano Variations featuring Kirsten Sorteberg, piano

### **Ann Irving Sings**

**Ann Irving (1926-2007) sings Caro Nome**

**Ann Irving (1926-2007) sings Depuis le jour**

**Ann Irving (1926-2007) sings Estrelita**

**Ann Irving (1926-2007) sings Italian opera and song**

**Ann Irving (1926-2007) sings Neapolitan Songs**

**Ann Irving (1926-2007) sings Sempre libera**

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