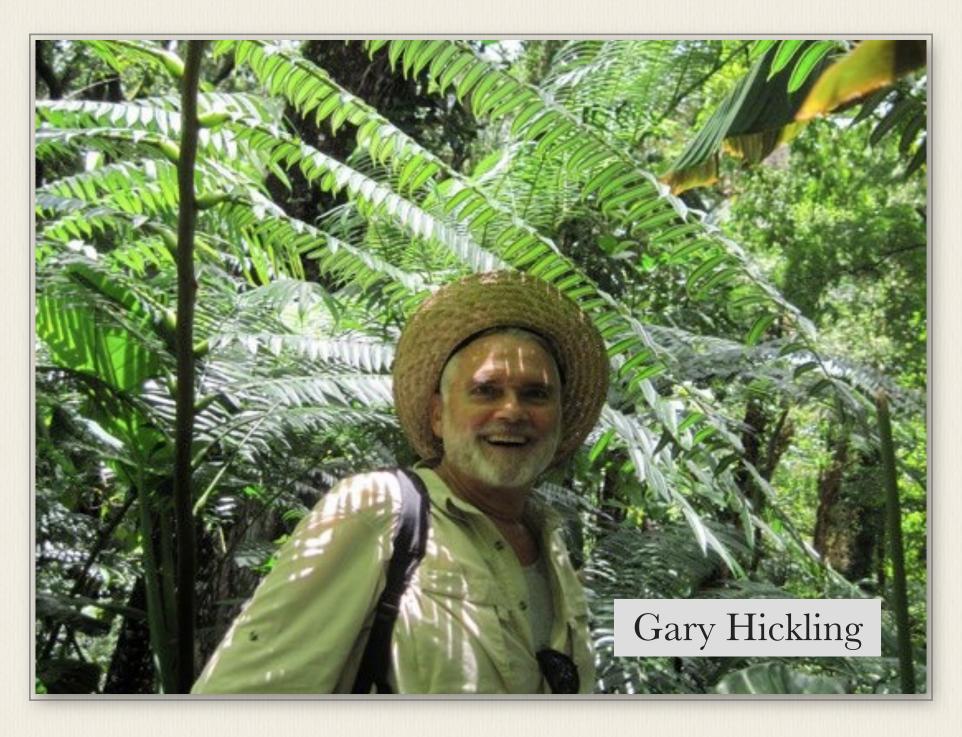
# My Livn Lovn Volume One

IS IT LEGAL, MORAL, OR HEALTHY TO HAVE SO MUCH FUN?



## Introduction & Instructions

**Instructions:** This presentation is designed to be viewed in the portrait mode, not the landscape mode, on your iPad or iPhone.

Our <u>Table of Contents</u> can be found a few pages further on. It is interactive, so just tap the chapter you want and you'll arrive there.

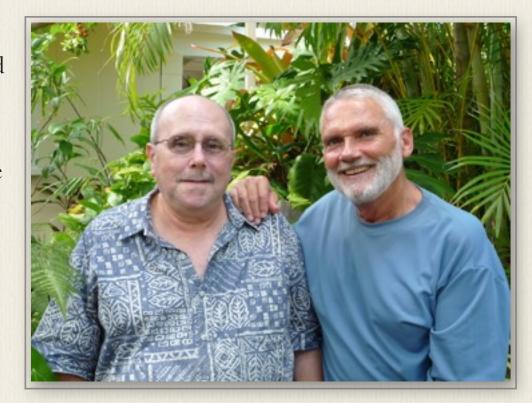
To locate the Apple internal Table of Contents, tap anywhere on the page you're reading and options will appear at the top. In the upper left-hand corner tap again on the three lines. You'll have the option of either "Table of Contents" or "Glossary." Tap "Table of Contents" and thumbnails will appear at the bottom of the page. You can navigate back and forth within the chapter that you're reading by just swiping the thumbnails. Swipe a bit stronger and you can go to neighboring chapters. Look for the white dots on a black background at the bottom of the page. All the chapters are shown there. If you wish to move to a different chapter, just tap the white dot in the approximate place of the chapter you want.

**Galleries:** You have the option of enlarging the photo or image by double-tapping.

**Pop-Overs:** There are little boxes scattered throughout. Just tap on them and they'll open to reveal another perspective or added information. They look like this.

Auditioning with a small

This whole presentation is meant especially for Dennis and me, as well as for close friends and family who'll understand and get a kick. Dennis and I are aware that we'll inevitably lose memories as we age and we've enjoyed our lives so much that we want to remember as much as possible. Memories stimulate more memories. They're mostly "fond." I'm still doin stuff, but



with 79 years of amazing times to recall, it's a stimulating experience to put all of this together.

"Recent neurophysiological studies have shown that even long-term memories are very dynamic and that each time the brain tries to activate a 'memory trace'...the nature of that trace changes. In other words, memories are altered every time the brain recalls them.... Because the memory trace changes, you can never remember the same thing twice in exactly the same way." Israel Rosenfield and Edward Ziff from the August 17, 2017 edition of the *New York Review of Books*. This is a bit sad; I want to believe that my memories are solid, sacrosanct, and reliable. Obviously not. "...the Thinker is of finite extent, it will have a finite memory, endlessly ruminating on old thoughts..." writes Brian Green in his *Until the End of Time*. The "Thinker" he writes about is a kind of infinite robot, but the sense applies to us.

My father's mother had some kind of dementia all her life. Certainly, when we were kids we weren't able to talk with her much. She repeated things with a kind of sing-songy voice and played the same hymns on the piano that she'd played in Canada, in a robot-like way. She'd get going and would be on "automatic." Added to my inheritance, my mother had Alzheimer's. She fit the profile of Alzheimer's such as a fear of falling water (in the shower); repeatedly asking the same question "what day is it today?" or whatever; of not being able to choose what to eat (she got skinny

before Dad discovered that he should only put one item on her plate at a time); and in a manic way would repeat "Al, what am I supposed to be doing?" She'd bang on his bedroom door in the middle of the night asking that phrase even after he'd literally tied her in bed (he'd rigged up a contraption with bars made of PCB and ropes). There is some evidence that one inherits a tendency of getting dementia. I fear this, even though I haven't experienced any of the obvious symptoms.

Something else about my memory: In the 1950s we had a lot of fires in the desert mountains where I grew up and at one point I was told how I'd helped by holding a garden hose against the flames that had reared up in a nearby vacant lot. I denied it then, and I can't remember doing that now. But there is a newspaper photo of me (with my name in the caption) doing just what I denied doing!

Suchi (see "Friends that Last" in Volume 2) said that she's recently attended various funerals and memorials where people tell fun stories about the dearly departed. She says this book, and especially the "GaryStories" by friends, allows me to hear the eulogies without having to die first.

Many thanks to my friends and former students for participating in this venture. And to you who are just stumbling upon this, feel free to pick and choose which chapter or section might interest you. I've put the more personal stuff (family, friends, lovers, crushes, hikes, etc.) in Volume 2.

I'm not afraid of death, but no matter how perfectly one hopes to arrange his disposition, funeral, and memorial service, nothing works out as hoped for. It reminds me that Nancy Hedemann (see "Old Ladies & a Few Old Men" Volume 2) had specifically requested a recording of Schubert's Quintet be played at her service. She had wanted the quintet with two cellos, but since that wasn't handy, a recording of the Trout Quintet was played instead.

I've filled out my health directive and cadaver donation to the UH John Burns School of Medicine, but am aware that even these documents don't assure me any control when I'm in the last throes of life. This presentation then is my way of sharing what I choose with those who follow.

Warning: there's no salacious material. I've certainly been involved with enough sexual escapades to write another such memoir; maybe next year. I kinda made up

for lost time when I "came out" at age 21 and became a real sexual adventurer, especially in New York City. I can't believe I had enough time to practice, go to and play concerts, recitals, operas, and ballets, teach a large handful of students, swim, and still go out wild-catting as regularly as I did. Somehow I managed to find time for it all and with no ill side-effects. No STDs, no AIDs (most of the sex was pre-AIDs anyway), no guilt feelings.

I'm a lucky guy. There were no bad feelings about the sex, about being a mediocre bassist, about being a less than gifted musician: I never could take music dictation, memorize, or sight-sing well. Lovers, friends, colleagues, teachers, students, and most of all MUSIC got me through the rough times. That, and an inordinate serving of self-confidence and good luck. You'll find the last mentioned in the section called "My Undeserved Good Luck" found in the chapter "Getn Started." Though during the first half of my life I did not fare well financially, the richness/abundance of my life was never in question.

My music life includes the pursuit of long-term projects that never realistically had any prospect of success or notice. Love of art song propelled me into many outlandish undertakings such as radio and recital commentary but generated meager historic significance or serious impact on the genre. Most of my Lehmann ventures have also plowed no important new ground (except for presenting her in the electronic book format). Studying voice had no goal other than singing with



Kanani is our pet Cockatiel since 2016

Dennis at the piano or in nursing homes. And perhaps the most Quixotic of all my activities: offering the double bass as a solo instrument in uncountable recitals, especially on O'ahu.

In this presentation, you won't find many discussions or revelations of sad or bad occasions or relationships. This is the place to celebrate my wonderful life and loves. Without names, you'll find a section called "Blunders" in "Getn Started" that includes more than a few of my messes.

It was a blessing to play great classical music and I also attended performances of the finest music devised by mankind. You'll join me in reliving some of my great performances in the chapter called "GodDamBass" and such concert memories get scattered throughout.

You'll find stories of or by students in "Special Bass Students" or "Mr Hickling: the Teacher." These people have given my life deep satisfaction. Other influential people in my life, whether famous people, conductors, or teachers, each get their own chapter or section. Most of these are already dead and couldn't be reached for their comments or their "GaryStories."

I especially enjoyed writing "Tales too crazy to be True." I hope you get some laughs reading them.

The important places I've lived and worked get chapters here: Manila, Mexico, Germany, Compton, but Keopuka Mauka aka Kealakekua seemed to belong to the more personal (less professional) portion of my life so I've placed that in Volume 2.

Also in Volume 2, my friends get their say in "Friends that Last." It's amazing to me how many fellows contributed to the "Loves and Crushes" chapter. Thanks, guys! Some nice photos decorate "Swim, Paddle, Hike, Bike" and not just the ones of naked me.

Here's a complete list of the chapters found in Volume 2:

My Whole FamDamly

Loves & Crushes: Dennis gets his own Chapter

Dennis & Gary from Munich to Kailua

Swim, Paddle, Hike, Bike

Keopuka Mauka aka Kealakekua

Old Ladies & a Few Old Men

Friends that Last & Some that Don't

Heart Attack & Other Fun Stuff

Vivid Moments

Since each presentation such as this volume may only contain 2 GBs, that's the reason for the two. Also, there seemed to be the obvious divide between my professional and personal life. Volume 2 should be ready for publication by August 2020. Stay tuned.

I hope you have some fun reading, viewing, and listening to the stuff of my life. If it comes close to my experienced joy then I'll be thrilled. Please overlook the repeated telling of stories. You may be a reader who jumps around and I didn't want you to miss the important (to me) tales. Please be patient.

Aloha,

Gary



### Table of Contents

T . 1	. •	1 1	T .	. •
Introd	uction	and	Instru	ctions

Table of Contents

Copyright

Acknowledgments

Chapter 1	Getn Started
	A bit of everything to get you goin
Chapter 2	Tales too crazy to be True
	Miscellaneous fun stories from my life
Chapter 3	GodDamBass
	My cursed and blessed instrument
Chapter 4	UCLA: Music was only a fraction (3/4 time?)
	Big time, big campus, big mistakes
Chapter 5	MSM (sounds like a drug)
	Growing into a musician
Chapter 6	Manila
	Teacher/Bassist/Adult
Chapter 7	Germany
	Munich/Berlin/Dennis
Chapter 8	Mexico
	The amoebas won
Chapter 9	Into Compton-with a thrift store
	Gary the businessman
Chapter 10	Mr. Hickling: the Teacher
	My true profession
Chapter 11	Special Bass Students
	Talent/Hard work
Chapter 12	On the Radio
	WBAI & KHPR
Chapter 13	Studying Voice at 65
	Easy to carry my instrument

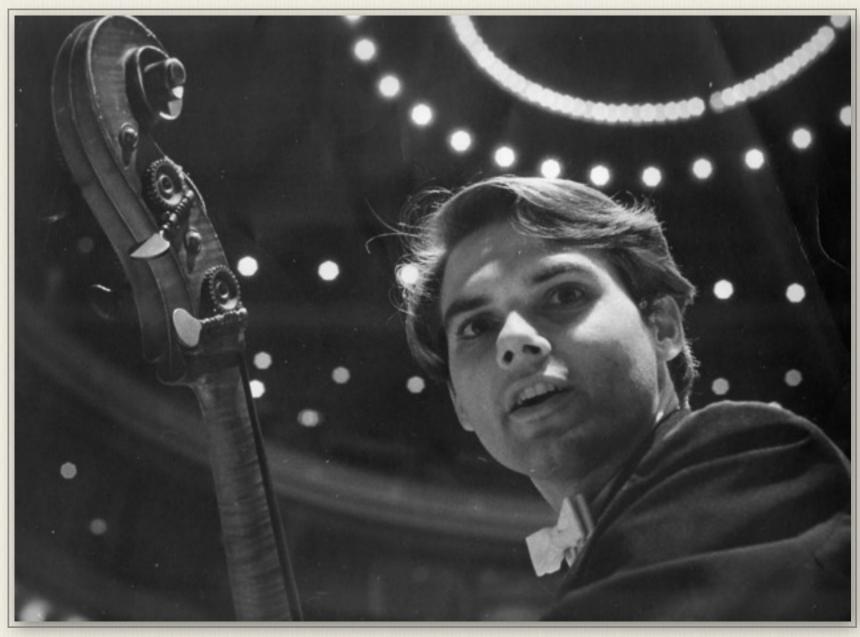
Chapter 14
 Lots to learn at any age

Chapter 15
 The Famous Ones
 Important in my World

Chapter 16
 My Conductors & Teachers
 Some Fine Ones

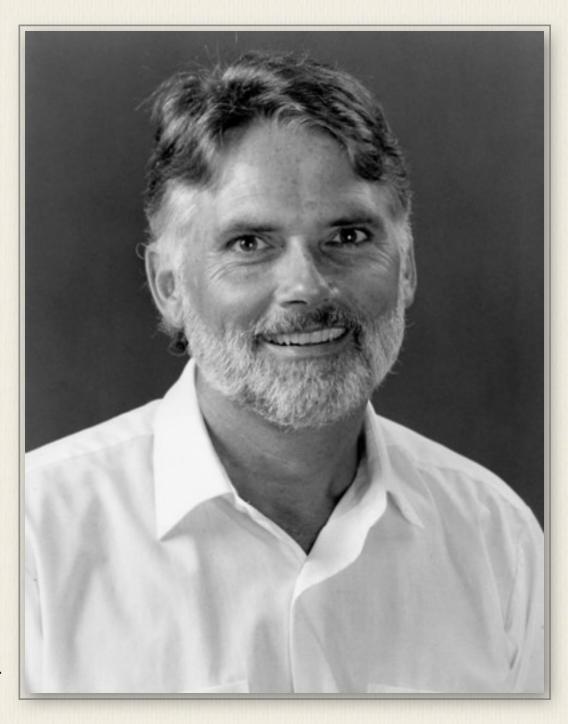
Chapter 17
 Lotta Fun with Lotte
 She changed my Life

Chapter 18
 Epilogue
 A Few Last Thoughts



I called Carnegie Hall my home for five years.

## Copyright



Copyright © 2020 Dengar Publications

Published by Dengar Publications, 801 South King Street, Suite 1604, Honolulu, HI 96813

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form or by any electronic or mechanical means, including information storage and retrieval systems, without permission in writing from the publisher, except by a reviewer, who may quote brief passages in a review.

## Acknowledgments

Many thanks to Dennis Moore for helping make decisions and contributing stories to this presentation. As he did for the eight volumes of *Lotte Lehmann & her Legacy*, Dixon Smith's technical skills have been crucial to the success of this creation. Thank you, Dixon.

My friends and students have been kind in sending me their memories, photos, and recordings. This sort of sharing makes a memoir/autobio like this come alive because it's not all my writing. My warm thanks to you all.

Speaking of writing, I must give credit to the Writers Retreat at Windward

Community College in
Kaneohe and the
Mokule'ia Writers
Retreat. The teachers and
fellow writers at these
gatherings have greatly
raised my consciousness as
to what good writing can
be. Thank you.

This is Volume 1 of two such presentations. Apple doesn't allow more than 2GB per book and with the audio and video, that number is quickly reached. Volume 2 offers more personal stories: family, friends, etc. It will be ready by August 2020.



Filipina bass student Aurora Sahagun sent a photo of me and my students in the audience for her piano recital. Angel Peña's daughter Irma and grandson Joseph sent the video of my recital of Angel's bass works. Ernie Endrina proofread and corrected my spelling of the chapter "Manila." Maraming Salamat!

My hope is that as you read this you'll get to know me and share in some of the satisfaction, joy, adventure, and even excitement that has graced my life. These Apple books are easy for me to update and re-publish, so if you have photos, videos, recordings, stories, or suggestions, I'll consider including them in the next version. I thank you in advance.

Aloha,

Gary

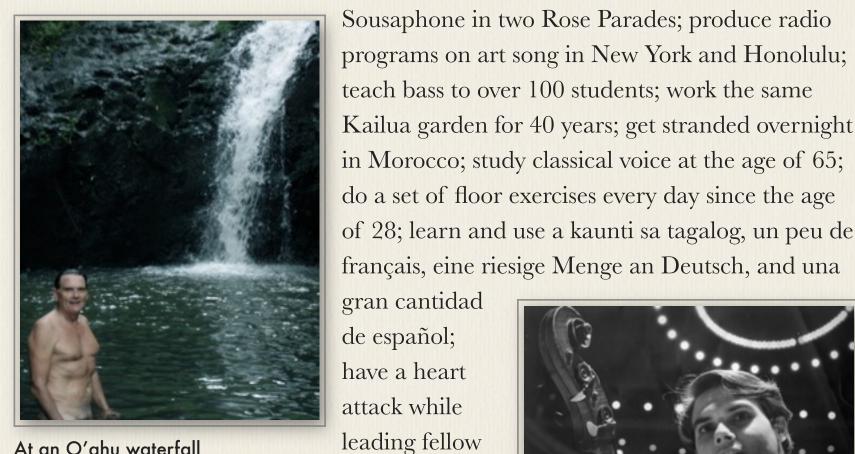


Conducting the junior high school orchestra in Farmingdale, Long Island.



## Getn Started

I'm just going to pre-amble along here: Lotsa guys play bass; fall in thrall of Lotte Lehmann; are fanciers and promoters of art song; kayak from Kailua Bay to Kaneohe Bay and back!; hike the Seven Waterfalls of O'ahu to Ka'u Crater; farm a four acre ranch on the Big Island; swim naked with dolphins; snorkel the coral at Honaunau & Kapoho; sweat in the natural volcanic steam rooms of Puna; play in Stokowski's American Symphony Orchestra in Carnegie Hall; teach music from elementary to university levels; give bass recitals at Lincoln Center, Manila's Phil-Am Life Auditorium, and Munich's Amerikahaus; run a thrift store; play



At an O'ahu waterfall

in Morocco; study classical voice at the age of 65; do a set of floor exercises every day since the age of 28; learn and use a kaunti sa tagalog, un peu de français, eine riesige Menge an Deutsch, and una gran cantidad de español; have a heart attack while

through a lava tube; are mugged uncountable times in New York; play Bach cantatas in their



At Carnegie Hall

yogis on a hike

original format during
Lutheran services; BUT,
who does *all* this? ME!
and if you get tired of
hearing about Gary, go
to a different chapter or
book.

Someone of my generation would normally have dropped LSD, danced at



Lincoln Center recital



Woodstock, loved the Beatles, joined a cult, burned their draft card, drunk lots of beer, marched in gay pride parades, or at least joined a commune.

None of these things interested me. Perhaps

I'm a boring guy, but I've enjoyed my trip, even if I followed my own path.

You'll see that I've saved a lot of photos, programs, and other memorabilia that make this presentation possible. Maybe I'm also a packer.

This memoir offers some stories, vignettes, and sketches of my life. I've arranged it in chapters and sections so that you can choose what you want to read about. There's no real traditional narrative, chronological order, rhyme, or reason. First, some non-chapter bits follow.

#### One-Offs

Strange, weird, wonderful, audacious, and unusual stuff that I've done (in no particular order).

- \*For John Corigliano's Symphony, I showed him on the bass the difference in pitch between a harmonic b natural and a pressed one, causing him to rewrite that note.
- \* I wrote one review for *Opera News*: on Meyerbeer's *Les Huguenots* performed at UCLA.
- \* I wrote LP liner notes for a famous pianist's recordings for which he received the credit and I was paid!
- \*Within the same year, two conductors berated me for playing bass too loud when I hadn't played at all.
- \* I read (badly) for the books for the blind.

#### LOS ANGELES

On May 9 the UCLA Opera Workshop presented Les Huguenots in the University's Royce Hall. This ambitious undertaking, the most lavish in the group's twenty-four-year history, was made possible by an anonymous grant. Director Lotfi Mansouri, a UCLA alumnus, created active, well-motivated staging, bringing the chorus into the drama, notably in the first act when the assembled Catholics grudgingly accept and later fawn over Huguenot Raoul. This scene also displayed the colorful costumes of Gail Bixby and the realistic sets and lighting of Archie Sharp, which aimed for the visual opulence of a Zeffirelli production.

Walter Burg prepared the revised version, which reduced five acts to three and tried to make the libretto more convincing. For instance, he has the Queen command Raoul to go on a mission, instead of inviting him to participate in some game or joke, as in the original. Michael Mitchell smoothly adapted the source to the textual alterations. By cut-

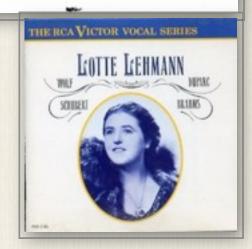
24 OPERA NEWS/JULY 1973

ting the overture and shortening various arias and recitatives, the drama was maintained and the playing time was reduced to less than four hours.

Jan Popper conducted the well-rehearsed student orchestra, emphasizing Meyerbeer's colors without covering the singers. Outstanding among the soloists was Harold Enns as the rough Huguenot soldier Marcel. Enns possesses a secure bass voice and enough dramatic intensity for the "Piff, paff!" aria in the first act. UCLA student Sue Patchel, the Valentine, displayed much vocal and visual beauty while creating the sensitive Catholic daughter caught up innocently in the web of events. The extreme top notes of William DuPre's Raoul were strained-but these were full-voice high C's and a D-flat! Less important to the action are the coloratura roles of Marguerite de Valois and her page Urbain, sung by Emily Derr and Diane Thomas, respectively, both with reliable pitch and convincing style but without punch. Alan Gilbert as Valentine's father and Roger Ardrey as Nevers did justice to their roles.

No "seven stars," perhaps; but then Meyerbeer's opera, on the evidence of this performance, seems hardly as difficult as legend has it. GARY HICKLING

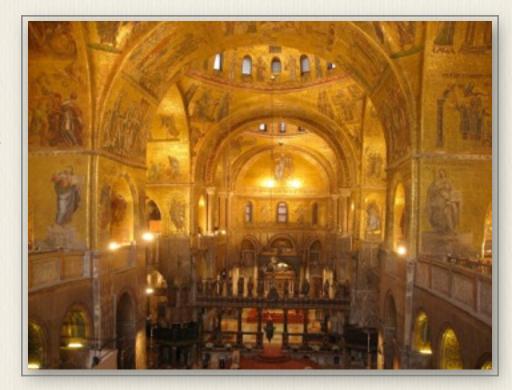
- \* I sold clothes (also poorly) at the New York City Brooks Bros.
- \* RCA's John Pfeiffer asked what I would recommend for their forthcoming Lotte Lehmann CD; I was able to request original metal masters from their archives,



resulting in a release that was of both historic and sonic consequence.

\* I made the headline of the Compton newspaper when a reporter quoted me as saying that all Compton officials were corrupt (they were).

\*What a privilege to play bass in a chamber orchestra that accompanied antiphonal choral music in Venice's San Marco, for which it was written! In the photo, you can see the balconies on both



sides. Walking up the winding stairs I saw Dragonetti's bass in a glass case.

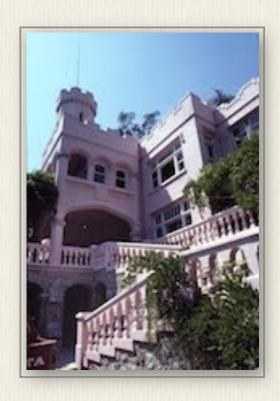
\* I marched with a Sousaphone on my shoulder in two Rose Parades (Glendale High School and UCLA). Marched, but how much did I play?

\*While studying/practicing yoga in a Munich center (and cooking for them), I traveled to yoga centers in Paris, Spain, and London to relieve their cooks (have a free place to stay/eat) and see their cities.

\* I went boating in a little canoe on the ocean off Long Island with Jerome Robbins and encountered the vacant Robbins Island (no relation).

\* Though lawyers could find no solution, after studying the California law that seemed to threaten the thrift store endeavor I owned, I was able to find a way to operate within the law.

\*As kids, my brother and I played in a castle in the desert mountains behind our house in La Cañada. The "Pink" castle, built in 1911 (how do I remember that when I can't remember my doctor's appointment?) was unoccupied. It had so many doors that they never locked them all. Steve and I thus ran through the place with glee.



We never damaged anything (after all, we were planning to return often to play there!) and always locked the door behind us. Our neighbors often joined in the fun.

- \* I did my one and only swan dive (into a river in Baguio, Philippines). If I hadn't done such a dive, I would have hit the bottom of the shallow river.
- \* During my L A substitute teaching days (with no training) I taught deaf kids. Or they taught me.
- \* Also with no training or experience, I wrote a script for a movie about art songs and produced it: (Three American Art Songs).
- \*Again, with no experience, but with the help and direction (and forbearance) of the discographer William Moran, I compiled the discography for Beaumont Glass' Lotte Lehmann: A Life in Opera & Song.
- \* I brought a mini-bouquet to Marilyn Horne's Waikiki hotel room singing the first line from Wolf's "Auch kleine Dinge können uns enzücken" (Small things can entice us). She answered without missing a beat, the second line "auch kleine Dinge, können teuer sein" in my same key. So I can say, MH sang to me!
- \* While on a guided tour, a friend and I were accidentally locked in the catacombs of Vienna's St. Stephen Cathedral with the bones of plague victims.
- \* At four different times in my life, I've saved people from drowning.
- \* I coached soprano Beverly Sills. Well, in 1970 when the ASO was performing a benefit for the UN at Lincoln Center's Philharmonic Hall, she rehearsed a song with harp after the orchestra left the stage. I remained behind to hear her sing and was the only person in the hall. She asked me if the balance was ok; I said "yes."
- \* I was on the board of Laura Crites' Family Peace Center, in Honolulu. The center worked to support not only women in troubled relationships (read "battered"), but also helped the men and children of the families.
- \* Philippine composer and bass student of mine, Angel Peña, wrote two bass sonatas, one four-movement piece, one bass concerto for me. The last, while I was teaching him in Manila was a surprise.



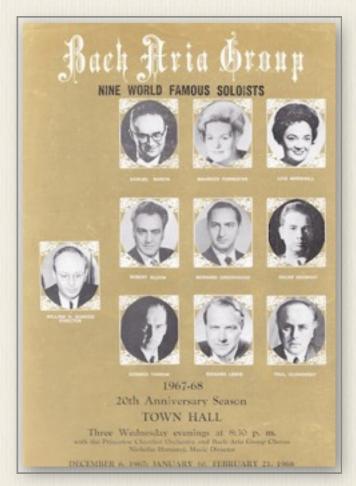
\* I turned pages for pianist Paul Ulanowsky during Bach Aria Group

performances at Town Hall, NYC, and got paid!

\* I was for a short time co-chair of the Hawaii Green Party.

\* I played bass for the UCLA jazz band in Hollywood Bowl. After a long rehearsal, my pizzicato-finger-blisters broke. I went to a hardware store and bought gloves to play the performance. I also snuck over a fence there to see Dorothy Kirsten's *Madame Butterfly* and *Tosca*.

\* I taught Hermann Prey. Truthfully, after I interviewed him in Munich, he asked me to help his English for the role of Aeneas that he was preparing for a recording of Purcell's *Dido and* 



Aeneas. He was surprised that I knew the role from memory; I'd coached Katsuumi Niwa's English in the aria years before. Though I sent the tape of the interview with Prey to WBAI in New York, it was never broadcast and when I asked for the tape, they'd misplaced it.

\*When I was putting together the advisers for the Lotte Lehmann Foundation, I invited Birgit Nilsson and she wrote back that she thought she was too old to be of any use to the Foundation. I responded that Hugues Cuénod had joined and he

was 99 at the time. Mme. Nilsson answered immediately that she would be happy to be listed and that she had always been a fan of Lotte Lehmann's singing.

☼ In 1966 I met with Imelda Marcos in Malacañang Palace, Manila.

\* One of the great happy surprises of my adult life was inviting internationally famous singers and



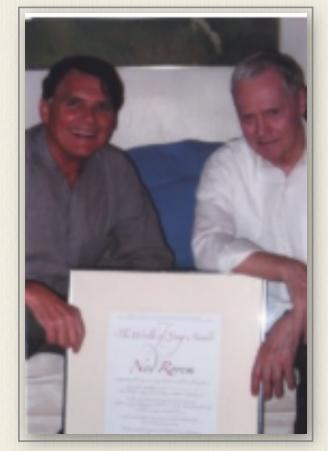
pianists to record for the Lehmann tribute CD and discovering that not only did they do a great job of it, but that both the singers and the pianists recorded without charge. And with very few exceptions the recording engineers also volunteered their time!

\* My best "one-off" may never be matched for being unique: in 2011 I enjoyed meeting with Joseph Gosalvez, who was the same age (26) as I was when I taught

in Manila. Now for the real "one-off": he is the grandson of Angel Peña and Johnny Gosalvez, my two most advanced students in Manila during my time there in 1966–67. Joseph is interested in music.

\*As President of the Lotte Lehmann Foundation, I was able to personally present the World of Song Award to world-famous composer Ned Rorem.

\* His only Munich recital of the season being sold out, a German buddy (Frank Manhold) and I devised a way of sneaking into Herkulessaal from back-stage to hear Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau with Wolfgang Sawallisch at the piano. We had to retrace our steps at the end of the event and ran



With Ned Rorem

into DFD. Frank was completely tongue-tied; I stammered "Vielen herzlichen Dank," and we disappeared happily into the night.

During my year of playing bass for operas at Mexico's Bellas Artes, I spent my night "off" in the university concert hall to hear the touring Brooklyn Philharmonic perform. I arrived early and was looking over the program and the names of my many NYC friends in the group when I got a tap on the shoulder and an invitation to play in the orchestra...right now! The bass section had been decimated by amoebic dysentery; they supplied someone's ill-fitting tails, a bass, and a bow. I sight-read the concert, under my UCLA-days conductor, Lucas Foss.

\* In 1972 I was preparing one of my radio programs for WBAI in New York City; I approached one of the most art song-knowledgeable experts I could find,

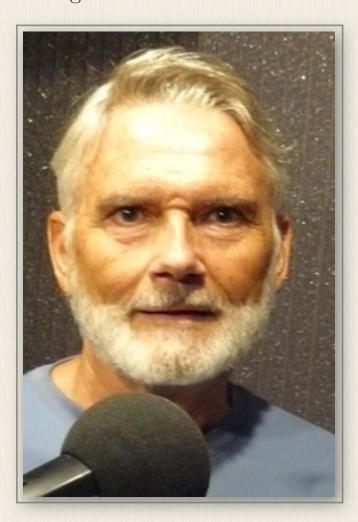
Philip Miller. The program was to be the "top 40" Schubert Lieder by 40 different

singers. He helped tremendously. When Beaumont Glass began his Lotte Lehmann biography in 1985, he asked me to provide the discography and I contacted Mr. Miller for help: he immediately suggested Bill Moran who became my mentor on the project. Contacts!

\* I shared a talk on Lehmann with her last student, soprano Jeannine Altmeyer.

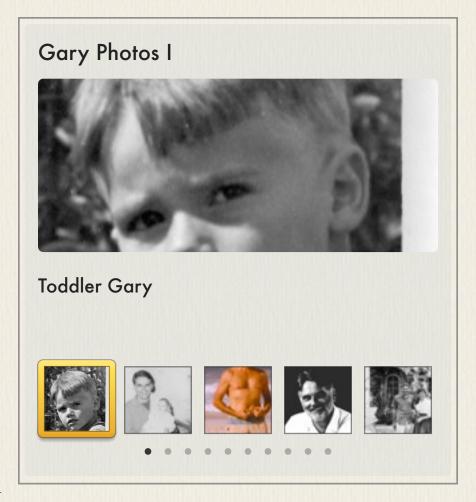


\*Annette Johannsen, then a voice teacher at UH, invited the retired, but still famous contralto, Lore Fischer to give a master class at HPR's Atherton. I was to translate! That's not the end of the story; during her class, Mme Fischer used the term "Interkostalmuskeln" that I translated as intercostal muscles. She was so surprised and pleased that I knew the term, she thought I must be a singer and asked to hear me. I may have already started lessons with Annette, but I was in no position vocally to sing for the great Mme Fischer.



#### Surprise!

Though one always has a share of bad luck, missed opportunities, and paucity of time, money, or connections, it seems that my life has been blessed with just enough amazement. This has often shocked me, in spite of my high level (and most would declare undeserved level), of self-confidence. There are also the negative surprises that are of long-standing and almost historic import, such as my expectation that by my old



age the nations would have figured out the way to live in peace. Or that the quaint but outmoded notions of religion would have been replaced by the spiritual enjoyment of nature, music, art, dance, literature, plays, as well as the bonds between friends, lovers, siblings, families in general, and of course between married partners.

- \*Even rather superficial ideas that have *not* changed have surprised me. When my father, born in 1910, was a young man he was forced to wear a top when swimming or sunbathing. I have been surprised that women are still forced to wear tops in 2020! The horror of nudity in this century shocks me.
- \* It seemed only further cold war politicking when JFK said the Americans would soon stand on the moon. It took a while for it to happen, and he didn't get to witness it, but surprise, it did happen. And the world took note. The newspapers had reactions from all kinds of people from around the world, even musicians!
- \* I assumed that the US would support the arts in the same way that most other advanced nations do. Another negative surprise.
- \* The same negative surprise concerns our view that only hated Commies and pinkos offer universal health care. As if health, or education, or sanitation were

not a right! We still haven't caught up with the rest of the world in so many areas: an embarrassing disappointment.

\*After I became a vegetarian in about 1970 I began to study the possible results or reasons: I'd only really started for aesthetic reasons. It seemed ugly to look at a slab of meat and then cook it. Anyway, after studying the many arguments and results it seemed so obvious that I can't imagine these many decades later that most people still eat meat! What's amazing is that more and more are: China, Japan, and many other growing countries. Talk about a negative surprise!

## The following are the less grand, universal, or national aspects that have been (largely) happy or at least amusing surprises in my life.

- ₩ My tour roommate John and I swam across Lake Bled (Yugoslavia) in the summer of 1968 on the Smith/Princeton Choir Tour of Europe. Luckily for me, they took a chamber orchestra with a bass player. We aimed for an island in the middle of the lake. When we arrived we decided to hike up to the top for the view. It was rugged. Though tough on the feet, we were young and determined. The surprise: when we reached the top there was a café with elegant people eating pastries and drinking coffee. They'd arrived by ferry on the other side.
- \*For a school year (1970–71) I taught a string orchestra at Howitt Junior High School in Farmingdale, Long Island. After our last concert, the students surprised me with a party. At the door, the concertmaster, Fred Fehleisen, offered me a cold V8 juice can and the whole spread was a vegetarian's delight.
- \*When Mark Bagley became my Kailua roommate he said he loved to kayak. I believed (and said) that I preferred to be IN the water (swimming) rather than on it. I tried kayaking and loved it! It became my preferred sport.
- \*My best Munich bass student was Mani Rössl. After studying with me at the gymnasium level, he went on to the conservatory there while I had returned to the States. When he finished the conservatory he arranged to study with me (again) during the summer while I was still working at the thrift store in California (a pleasant surprise). He stayed at my place and took daily lessons, practicing both

the solo and the orchestra repertoire with his usual diligence. After that summer he returned to Europe and got a good job after his first audition (no surprise).

- \* In contrast to my dismal junior high and high school studies of Spanish and then university French, it seemed German was easy for me to learn. It's probably not a surprise when I acknowledge that I was living in Munich at the time. The same thing happened with Spanish when, in 1979, I studied in Mexico City.
- \* On one of my 1994 flights from Honolulu to Kona, my seatmate was a young man, Ryan Hunt, who I discovered was an artist, hiker, and computer expert. We got to know each other, stayed in touch, and when we were both on O'ahu again, I proposed that he help me design the first Lotte Lehmann website. He became the webmeister for a creative, beautiful, and oft-visited Lotte Lehmann Foundation site.
- \* In my first week in Manila, Dr. Herbert Zipper, the conductor of the orchestra, came forth with a letter that had arrived for me. The flowing signature of Lotte Lehmann graced the back of the envelope. The Viennese conductor was amazed that this 26-year-old bassist would receive a letter from the great artist. (As was I.)
- \* In the thrift store in 1960, my father sent me to the lamp section to cull the ones that hadn't sold in a long while. There was one that was especially ugly that hadn't sold for the marked price of \$1.99: it seemed to be cov-

As I was taking it to the trash I noticed a bit of a break in the tar. I started cleaning and discovered a

ered with black tar.

beautiful cloisonné vase which I treasure

to this day.

\*My Munich tuba pal, Horst, came by early one morning in 1977 and said: "Let's



- go to Venice." He had a car and we did. No reservations, no plan, and we had a blast. I'd been there on several orchestra tours so I knew the best churches, etc.
- \*When we four Rockefeller fellows (and one wife) arrived in our big house in Manila all had been arranged for us: a maid, a cook, a laundress, a houseboy, and a gardener. That was surprising enough for us Americans. We also watched amazed as the gardener poked sticks in the ground: they not only sprouted but quickly became beautiful shrubs. I have done the same for plants all around the Kailua house and it never ceases to surprise me how they become beautiful plants.
- \* Dad said that if I earned money to buy a piano he'd get it to the house and I could take lessons if I also earned money for that. Both were accomplished, but when we got the upright piano home it wouldn't fit going down the stairs to the basement. Surprise: my father completely disassembled the piano and reassembled it in the basement. It worked fine.
- \*When I decided to buy a house on O'ahu my realtor prepared five places for me to see beginning with 161 B. North Kalaheo. After I'd seen the house, the garden, the cottage, and the five-minute walk to Kailua Bay, I said that it was perfect. She already had appointments, so we looked at the others, and returned to Kalaheo, where we got serious about making an offer. If the house/cottage/location weren't enough, the sellers were eager enough to make an "arrangement" for the payments.
- \* I was the only bassist in MSM's production of Mozart's *Entfürung*... and had such a runny-nose cold that I decided before the performance to line up many Kleenex where I could easily grab them to stop the flow. To my amazement, the moment the opera began the cold symptoms stopped.
- \*\* One day I visited the former JDR III director Porter McCray in his beautiful Princeton retirement home. Either he knew he was dying or that he'd be living in a smaller apartment, but in either case, he asked me to choose a piece of art from his collection that I'd like to have as a memory of him. I was too overwhelmed to choose: there were Picasso prints, dancing Shiva statues, original artwork by Stella, etc., and I couldn't decide. He chose an American Indian basket, which I kept with me for many years, and donated to the Honolulu Museum of Art in 2015. Friends Denis and Tom drove down from New York to pick me up and brought

along a box big enough to hold the basket. As we loaded the box into the car Denis remarked that its contents were probably worth a lot more than the car.

\* In 1973 I arrived in Munich with no German, no contact, no bass, and little money. I tried to ask about lessons at the conservatory (Hochschule für Musik) but it was difficult to make myself understood. The receptionist put me in touch with Robert Moats, a fellow American bassist. He met with me, introduced me to his teacher (with whom I later studied), and told me where to study German. Because he was working in another orchestra he recommended me for his spot in the Symphonie-Orchester Graunke. He told me where to show up for the orchestra bus that would take me to a run-out performance. All this happened in my first week in Munich. Another surprise: I found a decent bass I could afford and with no audition played for a total of three years with the orchestra. Best surprise: I met Dennis Moore on that bus.

When I took the Manila bass teaching and bass playing job in 1966 I had no idea what it would offer. I was fresh out of the conservatory and besides the private teaching I'd done in NYC, there was no way to know if I'd be a successful tutor in a foreign land. It ended up being one of the most important years of my life: responsive students of all ages; playing principal bass in the Manila Symphony Orchestra; arranging group solo recitals for my students and myself;

seeing the sites/
sights of the
Philippines;
making deep
friendships with
many of my
students.



Some of my Manila students

#### Blunders

In the previous pages and the section at the end of this chapter of proud moments, I've had the wonderful opportunity to advertise my great successes, moments of pride, and some real accomplishments. Now it's my chance to confess my big mistakes and they'll just be listed as they occur to me. They're not in either chronological or immensity order.

\* In September 1963 after my first lesson with David Walter, he telephoned to tell me that he didn't want to continue teaching me. I wasn't a "master basser."

His little joke: I was just beginning to work on my master's degree at Manhattan School of Music. He suggested that I study with the then-principal bass of the New York Philharmonic, James Brennand. I should have followed his advice. Instead, having heard that Walter was a great teacher, I pleaded with him, saying that I'd practice diligently and he reluctantly let me continue to



Fellow bassist, me, David Walter, my pianist, Alex Farkas, bassist, Michael Ann & her husband, oboist, Barry.

study with him. He knew my technical weaknesses, but for some reason never told me to practice scales and arpeggios. Walter gave me assignments of rather simple, boring etudes, nothing demanding. He was interested in developing my response to the notes: adding my own interpretation. This was augmented by a steady stream of works that had originally been written for bass. David Walter didn't want his students to play "arrangements." Except for Baroque sonatas. And I enjoyed playing these and found the stories that DW told fascinating and even of historic interest. He'd played with Toscanini in the NBC orchestra, with Casals in Puerto Rico, and for a thousand years in the pit of the New York City Ballet. Instead of a demanding lesson, he'd tell wonderful tales and write out a list of what I should prepare for the next lesson. He wasn't above belittling me and not

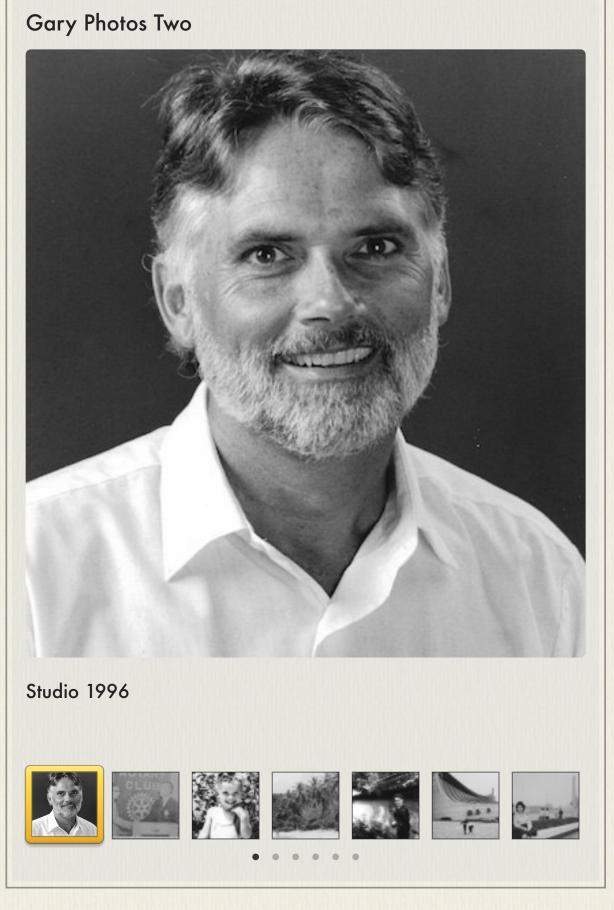
just as a bassist. He took joy in finding any weakness: music, vocabulary, math, history, etc. You can follow bassist/friend Michael Ann's response to this in my chapter "Goddam Bass" and in her segment in "Friends that Last" in Volume 2.

But DW was charming and knew everyone in the music world of NYC. He helped me find the right guy to sell me my first bass and bow. He got me gigs including touring for two seasons with him and the Princeton Chamber Orchestra. There he recommended me for the librarian position which added to my pay. These jobs culminating in 1972 in arranging an audition for the Stravinsky Festival with the NYC Ballet! So, although I didn't learn any bass technique from him, had to listen to him insult almost every other bassist in NYC (and beyond), have him criticize me in front of a room full of fellow bassists after my Lincoln Center solo recital, hear DW constantly draw attention to his "illustrious" past, and more; despite all these huge deficits, here's what the trade-off was: Besides the bass jobs noted above, DW wrote glowing letters of recommendations that helped me land positions at Howitt Junior High and the next year, at the University of Northern Colorado. His rich vocabulary in the recommendations had noted my "probity" and he had enough clout (teaching at both Juilliard and Manhattan), that if he thought I was a good bassist, that meant that I could be an asset to any institution. I didn't learn technique until 1973 when I started to practice the scales and arpeggios that a former student of the Vienna Philharmonic's Ludwig Streicher gave me in Munich. My bit of technique was honed in consultation with many fellow bassists throughout the years and most of all with Honolulu Symphony Orchestra's bassist Mark Kuraya. Though he was humble, his suggestions are what helped me to become a reasonable bassist.

DW was anything but humble, but even though there were many reasons to dislike the man, he became a friend that I visited regularly, sent my students to, and followed through three marriages, and a drawn-out death. A big blunder that had its compensations.

\* It seemed like the perfect opportunity. For a whole school year (1969–70) I'd been teaching junior high school strings and two days a week beginning strings at the local elementary school. Though the administration was iffy, the kids were great and I enjoyed teaching, conducting, and motivating. Then without me

applying for it, the chance to become a university teacher dropped into my lap. When the chairman of the music department at the University of Northern Colorado decided that they needed a full-time bass teacher he called to his California connection, my former bandmaster and head of the **UCLA** music department, Dr. Clarence Sawhill. There was only one person who should be considered, Dr. S. opined. The UNC administrator then called to the most famous bass teacher



he knew and that was in New York. He reached David Walter who said that there was only one name that he'd recommend. That coincidence resulted in my being invited to fly out to Greeley Colorado for an interview. They never interviewed anyone else and I was offered the job.

September 1970 rolls around: I've quit my job teaching on Long Island and packed up everything in my trusty station wagon and have driven to Colorado. I

was assailed by a smell I hadn't previously noticed: the largest feedlot in the US of A! And this was a meat-eath town. The first week I was invited to a barbecue at which I could only eat the dinner rolls. Other than music, I had nothing in common with most of the people I met in Greeley.

I taught freshman music theory and enjoyed the theory department, but the head of the string department didn't like the way I taught bass, and in front of my students questioned my methods. I gave two solo recitals at the University and several in Denver as well. The music department asked me to do some recruiting which was fun, but the city of Greeley offered nothing that I could enjoy. I was bored and depressed, but had made the acquaintance of a curator at the Denver Art Museum and went on some fun art buying excursions with him. I had the unique (in my life) opportunity to play the Denver run of *Fiddler on the Roof*. I was initiated into Denver's gay life and even smoked my first (and only) hash. On one of my trips to Denver, I picked up a hitch-hiker who turned into a friend whose parents owned a cabin in Estes Park where I spent many a weekend hiking, even in snowshoes! These out-of-Greeley contacts helped, but I was constantly reminded of being in the wrong place each time I returned to campus.

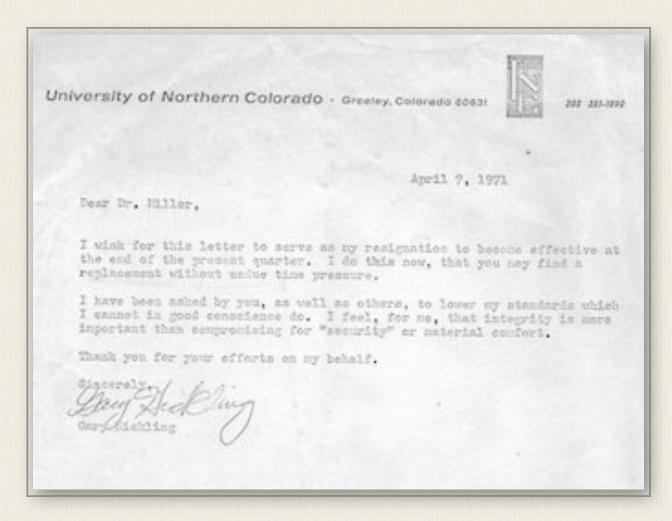
On my vacation/trips to NYC, I'd been able to find basses for Greeley players including my predecessor Lois Bartlett, who as far as I know is still enjoying her bass.

During one of my UNC recitals, someone got into the light booth and started flashing lighting gels across my eyes as I was playing. I get nervous enough playing solo bass and this got to me. I knew I was on my way out of the job already. Greeley was a small enough town that everyone knows what's happening to everyone else. I was paranoid enough to believe that the UNC administration was just trying to torment me during the recital. After I finished the work I was playing I confronted the hoodlums in the light booth from the stage and one of my friends (a large guy) went up to stop the fun and games. The incident still rankled.

The final stroke: one of the bass students (a bass major) never came to a single lesson with me, so I failed him. The chairman of the music department said that I couldn't do that. The student was a senior, had to graduate, and so my grade was changed by him from an F to an A. I wrote up the whole business and posted it to

my office door for all to read. Included was my resignation. I probably would have resigned anyway.

After I returned to NYC and the freelance life there, I was offered about six weeks of substitute teaching work with



Farmingdale High School, where I met many of my former junior high school students. We had a full orchestra (with woodwinds, percussion, and brass) and gave concerts both at the high school and at various other schools in the district. I had a great time and understood what a blunder I'd made by going off to Colorado. But somehow, I never considered going back to full-time school teaching. I still don't know why. Returning to the very active free-lance life that included Stoki, the Lutheran church Bach cantatas, and the Hudson Valley Philharmonic, as well as teaching at Rutgers, privately, and the Prep Division at MSM must have provided their seminal attractions.

In the Spring of 1977, I toured Italy as the only bassist with the Munich Chamber Orchestra. The tour was fun and I was able to see a lot of the country that I'd missed on previous trips. We performed in smaller cities, each with its own character. My roommate, Rainer Seidel, a bassoonist, was a great traveling companion. We laughed a lot, met with people after concerts, and generally had a jolly time. Like friend Horst, he laughed at the seriousness of his fellow Germans. We organized a running tour of the major sites of Rome which neither of us had seen. As our train waited in the station, Rainer and I set out literally running (we were both in good shape) with our map. We saw the Colosseum, the Forum and

Palatine, the Pantheon, and the church of San Pietro in Vincoli which houses Michelangelo's Moses. We made it back to the train with time to spare and stories to tell. After the tour, which I'd assumed was an extended audition, the conductor chose someone else (a German) to fill the full-time position. It seemed to be an omen, but I'd made no approach to the conductor with my interest in the position. A Blunder in itself! I also missed out on the principal bass position with the Gärtnerplatz Oper to a German friend. I decided, since young German bassists were getting the jobs, my future lay in my birthplace, LA. In the summer of 1977, I went "home." Two short old people met me at the airport; hardly recognizing my parents I could barely speak English to them. I planned to play bass in the smaller Southern California orchestras and film-studio groups. The former paid hardly anything and the latter had long waiting lists just to audition. Various substitute teacher jobs were my lot. Though I finally taught music full time at a junior high school, it came without any benefits or security. There was no money to help pay for the chiropractor that I needed to keep me conducting all day long, so I resigned before the semester ended. With nothing but a summer festival in Oregon (Chamber Music NorthWest), it was dispiriting. That festival led to my new position in Mexico. But returning to LA and expecting to be welcomed with confetti and parades was misguided and another big blunder.

- \*After I'd established the Lotte Lehmann Foundation in Hawaii, gained 501c3 status, assembled a board, gotten funding, run local and national contests, and distributed newsletters and bulletins, I thought the Foundation would take off if it were located in an international city like New York. I was badly mistaken. It died there and has never revived. I'm too old to take it over now.
- \*When I was saying goodbye to good friends who'd stayed at the condo just before their wedding on Maui, I inadvertently let out "Congratulations on your first marriage." !!! They're still together.
- \* David Walter had been in the NY City Ballet Orchestra for so many years, had played so many \*Nutcrackers\* that he couldn't stand the piece, and accumulated enough leave time to invite others to fill in for him during the season of joy. I was one of those people, but no one had told me that there were spots in the piece that one can't sight-read. I don't know what I must have sounded like when we got to

the "Trepak"! Even with a lot of practice that section is extremely challenging for the bass. I don't remember ever playing the piece a second time! Can that be?

- \*When I gave my big recital in Lincoln Center's recital hall I invited Don Robinson, the violinist with whom I'd performed a bass & violin modern duet work in Greeley. He quite reasonably asked, upon arriving, if he could also play a Beethoven *Romance* with the pianist. I replied that it was my recital and refused. That was petty. He was a good violinist and he should have been rewarded for his trip to NYC with more than a duet.
- \*Perhaps not a big blunder, but a blunder nonetheless: I was page-turning at the Hawaii Performing Arts Festival, as I often did. The piece was Schubert's "Der Hirt auf dem Felsen," so it involves the pianist, singer, and clarinetist. Well, I turned two pages at once and only noticed a second after the deed and the pianist was so thrown that she couldn't fake as fast as I turned back and so right in the middle, all ground to a halt as they figured out the best place to start again.
- \* There was one blunder that I needed to be told about, weeks after it occurred. Evidently, I'd agreed to a chamber music gig and rehearsals at the little Carnegie Hall. From the stage, one of the players used my name and said that I hadn't come to the rehearsal and wasn't there for the performance! When I heard about this I wondered: why didn't they call me when I missed the rehearsal? I looked in my little black book and there was nothing there. It remains a mystery all these years later!

#### I Remember When:

- \* There was a time when I was taught to say "you're welcome" even though as a kid I thought it sounded like "your walk gum." No one says anything now at that point of social interaction. In 2018 when I was on my mini-vacation with Manilaborn Ernie he asked me to take his photo in the mochi store and I did. He said thank you and I automatically responded, "walang anu man." Though we hadn't practiced *that* word, we'd been reviving my nascent Tagalog and so this "you're welcome" response just blurted forth.
- \* There was a difference between "can I?" and "may I?"

- \* We didn't begin each answering sentence with "So..."
- \* We said "why?" not "how come?"
- \* We said "he said..." not "we went..."
- \* I heard our friends call their mother "mom" and it sounded so much better than when we called ours "mama." Steve & I quickly changed to saying "mom."
- \* When counting we learned "One, two, buckle your shoe" and never wondered why "buckle" instead of "tie."
- \* We thought of the president of the United States with respect.
- \*My brother and I were driven by our mother to the "10 cent store" and we could buy a huge choice of little toys for 5 or 10 cents. I sometimes saved my allowance and thus bought a more valuable trinket for as much as 25 cents.
- \*At 6 or 7 years of age I knew nothing of sex, though I had some sensual feelings; just pulling up the satin-edged blanket was enough.
- \* We called our mother to wipe us with no shame or embarrassment.
- \* At the age of four hearing "hubba hubba hubba, hello Jack" I asked my folks what "hello Jack" meant. Actually, the way they remember it, I said, "What dat mean, 'hello Jack"? I was probably actually baffled by the "hubba hubba."
- \* Steve and I called it "Fibber McGeeMcGolly" and wanted our folks to turn the radio off because we didn't get the jokes of this long-running comedy.
- \* Each time my folks drove into the sun they'd remember doing that as young marrieds in Woodlake, and encountering friends driving the opposite direction shouting angrily at them: "It's the wrong time of day to drive to Hanford!"
- \*My parents had other family stories that they loved to tell. One was about one of my great uncles who always told long and complicated stories. If there was an interruption he'd just return to the part of the story where he'd left off. The most famous example: "...and she picked up the suitcase..."
- \* My great aunt Eva thought that electricity would drain out if you didn't have a light bulb in the socket.

- \*We burned our trash in the incinerator (which my father had built of rocks and cement) in the back yard. We had no trash pick up and I guess the things that didn't burn (like tin cans or glass jars) just got buried.
- \* When the Helmsman drove down the street and my mother would go out to buy the bread or donuts.
- \* We had milk delivered in glass bottles (which my mother would wash and exchange/return) every day of the week (not weekends).
- \* At the gas station, a man came out to "pump the gas." We knew his name and he ours; he also checked "under the hood" and washed the windshields front and back.
- \*When the stoplight wasn't a light but a sign that popped out that said STOP or GO. This was when I was really young. Even regular lights didn't have the amber color till later. Our car directional lights also didn't have amber till much later.
- \* Our adding machine wasn't electric or electronic: we hit buttons, pulled a lever, and things got added and printed on a roll of paper.
- \* Though the cash register at the thrift store was electric (not electronic), we had a handle to crank it when the electricity went out.
- \* I bought a little contraption that attached to the steering wheel of my first car so that it could signal for turns. A new California law demanded it.
- \*My grandfather Arthur was hauled into court for painting flowers on his side of his neighbor's fence; it was so dumb we could hardly believe it. The judge advised them to put in two fences back-to-back; of course, nothing was done.
- \* In 1981 when I first swam in Kailua Bay I could see many great-looking tropical fish, even close to shore. Every night I saw lights of fishing boats on the horizon of the Bay. And of course, there were often fishermen along the shore. Now and for many years, one must swim far from the beach to see even a single fish.
- \* In his old age (probably his 60s) my grandfather Arthur was the first in our family to appear on TV. He played his musical glasses: wine glasses filled with water and laid out in the same pattern as piano keys. He played this set-up (which he'd made himself, so it was easily portable) in various old age homes, etc.

- \* My grandmother Grace became the first in our family to fly. She and her friends took a trip to Hawaii. They did all the touristy things and had a blast.
- \*My female relatives gathered around my grandmother Edith Hickling and laved her with makeup for the first time in her life in honor of her 50th wedding anniversary party. We were surprised at the huge difference, but because of her dementia or Alzheimer's, she hardly knew what was happening. It was sad.
- \* We didn't have a TV and all our neighbors (there were only two other families on our street) did. "I Love Lucy" and "Your Show of Shows" with Sid Caesar were popular.
- \* One of those neighbors got pregnant and curious brother Steve and I were awkwardly told by my father something about chickens and eggs. We were left as ignorant as before he began!
- \* I had Steve sit very still on the formal living room overstuffed chair so that I could try to take an indoor time-lapse photo (we didn't have flash); it worked.
- \* We bought an air conditioner for the back of the house in La Cañada. Those rooms faced the sun and were hot, but we weren't allowed to use it except on especially hot occasions.
- \* The four of us (mom, dad, Steve, and I) had no trouble taking turns in the single bathroom of our house on San Gorgonio Road.
- \* We had no plastic anything; somehow glass, "tin" foil (actually aluminum foil), and wax paper sufficed. Our phone was made out of some kind of hard black stuff.
- \*Our kitchen calendar had naked women on it, but they didn't show their crotch. I didn't understand why not and innocently asked about that. If we ever came in the bathroom when my mother was in the tub, she hunched over so that, should we look, we wouldn't see any of her female parts.
- \* Our father always cut our hair until we left home. And even when I visited from UCLA I still got a free haircut. They must have been good; no one noticed.
- \* Dad also did all the sewing that used the sewing machine. Nana taught us how to sew on buttons etc.

- \* Dad cooked waffles, the only thing he cooked; a special Sunday morning meal; we never had barbecues.
- \* We had no freezer section in the fridge for anything but a tray of ice cubes.
- \*My mother ironed with a mangle every sheet, pillowcase, etc. When Nana lived with us she helped with the ironing but my mother wasn't satisfied and always "touched up" her work.
- \*Our 1950s washing machine on San Gorgonio Rd. was not automatic: it had a wringer and when my mother found clothes that were washed clean enough, she ran them through the wringer to dry them before taking them outdoors to hang on the line in the sun.
- \*Our family's clothes weren't "dirty" from a little under-arm odor: my father worked with cement and his clothes were dirty with mud, concrete, sand, and sweat. Steve and I played in the mountains which made our clothes ripe with smells of sage, dark with dirt, and strong odors of poison oak.
- \* We finally got modern and replaced the wringer washer with an automatic. No dryer. It so often got unbalanced that it would bounce away from the wall into the room of our large back porch.
- \* Our sweet dog, Pokey, had the same meal all of her 18 years. A can of dog food. She didn't see a vet until Steve took her to be put down when she started having strokes.
- \*\* We all sang folk songs such as On Top of Ol' Smokey or did Sid Caesar/
  Imogene Coca imitations in the school bus that took us from the desert mountains
  of La Crescenta/La Cañada to Montrose Elementary or Anderson Clark Junior
  High. Melissa Morgan was Coca, I was Sid. I also played harmonica on the bus.
- \*For high school there was no school bus, so my first year I hitched a ride with a neighbor, Ford Dixon. His son, also a Gary, was in my class so obviously, he came along. Though we'd grown up together we weren't close: no problems, just different, I guess. We met when I visited his mother in La Cañada in the 1990s. He told me that his favorite thing was "tractor pulls."

- \* I returned to the US in 1977 and hadn't seen TV since leaving home in 1959; I didn't have a credit card, my driver's license was one that I'd gotten in St. Thomas Virgin Islands, and I knew no one in the LA area other than my family.
- \*Also upon my return to the States, I bought "hair conditioner," thinking that meant shampoo and wondered why it didn't clean my hair. Imagine: we'd all survived all those years without using conditioner.
- \* I said "must" instead of "have to."
- \*My father said: "un-under" (for something way under and hard to get to) and "acrosst" (sort of past tense for across).
- \* We all said "nother" for "another."
- \* The 1965 Northeast blackout that hit NYC when people got out to direct traffic and my neighbors put candles on the stair landings. No looting.
- \* The 1966 NYC Transit strike. Cabs took full loads of people. The 12-day strike began on New Year's Day. There was snow and still, people got around and were jolly even without subways and buses. The supervisor of my student teaching told of witnessing a celebratory couple bent over a post office box making it in full view of the smiling public. Afterward, as she "dressed," she pulled the man's handkerchief from his suit pocket to wipe her private parts and with a flourish returned it.
- \* The NYC signs that said, "Curb Your Dog." This was ridiculous for so many reasons! The theory was that if the dog shat in the street then we wouldn't walk on it. But we still sometimes needed to walk in the street. And also the street then smelled bad until \*supposedly\* the automatic big machines came along to sweep up the shit. Of course, they missed some and so on. I wonder when it occurred that everyone started to bring a little plastic bag to gather the stuff up? Anyway, now there aren't the signs or the signs.
- \* In the early years of the thrift store, the sorters would save clothes that were worth mending and give them to Nana to sew/fix. She was paid a bit for her work and we received back some special clothes we could offer for sale.

- \*\* In 1963 in NYC the Frick Collection, the Metropolitan Museum, Guggenheim, etc. were all "free admission." I took advantage of that to educate myself from their fabulous selections of Western (and at the Met, even Eastern) Art. Almost every Sunday morning those places (walking distance from my East 88th Street apartment) became an extension of my conservatory education.
- \*We'd go to the Thalia Theatre in the Upper West Side off Broadway (now called Symphony Space) to watch the Marx Brothers, Mae West, and other cult favorites. Joints were freely passed and I was so often loudly laughing that one time Denis arriving late and in the dark, could find where I was sitting by my merry mirth.
- \* In my first year in Manhattan, I'd locate a discarded New York Times and read it with a dictionary handy to improve my vocabulary.
- \* In my first years in NYC, I enjoyed a rare (for me) interest in a musical comedy: *Hello Dolly!* There was the chance to witness the Ethel Merman phenomenon in her last years (and she could still kick with the best of them, not to mention fill the hall with that voice with no microphone needed) and then just a year later, in 1968, an all-black cast featuring Pearl Bailey.
- \* In 1950s elementary school (Montrose Elementary) we had a "rainy day" schedule. Since we lived in the desert mountains, it rained very infrequently and when it did, all us kids got so excited that they had to let school out early.
- \* In Compton, as soon as we saw the band of gypsies enter the thrift store, every employee was called from their work to follow them around. Even the kids. The women wore flowing dresses that reached the ground and though we kept them under surveillance the whole time they were at the store, we were sure that they'd still made off with stuff!
- \* Upon leaving NYC for Munich I sold my best bass to my student Nick Bayak. That sounds like such an easy statement and in 1973 it was. Nick planned to mail me checks each month to make the payments on the bass. There was nothing written or signed. Just a gentlemen's agreement. He kept his word, as I knew he would.

- \* In the 1960s Ann and I were dining out in a kind of half-outdoor café and a young man came up to our table to compliment me on my hands! Today (2020) they're veined, old-age spotted, and ugly!
- \* On San Gorgonio Road, I planted lots of succulents, as well as roses, margarita daisies, purple chrysanthemums, and plenty of geraniums around the two big oleanders close to the road. But camellias were the real amazing flower. We enjoyed huge bushes covered in these great blooms. I enjoyed gardening there, planting trees (magnolia, Brazilian pepper, Monterrey pine, tulip tree, and fruit trees), but not mowing the lawn, which was dichondra, not really grass.
- \* On the 1960 UCLA band tour, we didn't gossip about Kelly James, one of the conductors, taking as a roommate a good looking young band member. We knew what was happening and just accepted it as we did the fact that timpanist Nancy was "roommates" with her clarinetist boyfriend. Everyone else was paired up in (at least we assumed) non-sexual situations.
- \* In Inglewood where I grew up during the 1940s, my mother planted blooming things that I appreciated and remember the joy of their colors and odors over 70 years later. There were such flowers and plants as gladiolas, carnations, lantana, nasturtiums, sweet peas, snapdragons, stock, pansies, marigolds, petunias, asters, morning glory, zinnias, fuchsias, ivy, begonias, and hydrangeas (with a rusty nail shoved into the soil the flowers turned blue). We also had the standard pink hibiscus.
- \* I was enjoying a performance of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra on tour in Munich with Solti conducting the *Rite of Spring* when, after only the first few minutes of the piece, a well-dressed matron in high heels clicked her way out in disgust down the wooden floor of the Deutsches Museum auditorium. This over 60 years since the supposed riot upon its first performance in Paris!
- \* They were building H3 through the Ko'olau and the workers decided on a temporary off-ramp that allowed one to get onto the H3 going to Kailua directly from the Like-Like Highway. It worked wonders for me while I was regularly teaching/conducting at Kamehameha, but it only lasted about a year. That connection wasn't in the plans, wasn't permitted, etc. and had to be demolished when the H3 was finished. You can't see it today, even if you look closely.

# My Undeserved Good Luck

There are a handful of my good luck moments that annoy Dennis to this day. Not only were they fortunate events that inadvertently left me dumb with amazement and joy, but they were signal changes in my life's course, and were definitely unwarranted.

- 1. Compared with all the years of Dennis' practicing to get into Juilliard, I waltzed into MSM with little real preparation. By the time I arrived, it was already too late to audition, but I insisted on it and didn't take no for an answer.
- 2. Finding a rent-controlled (\$42.50 @ month) apartment in a safe neighborhood (East 64th Street) where I could practice and teach was enough to annoy envious friends, but then, during my last NYC year, a second one for \$55 @ month opened up and I was doing well enough that I had two! The first I kept for my basses and as a teaching studio (it was on the first floor) and the second one, which had a window out onto the street, became my living quarters. Neither had a shower, the bathtub in the kitchen had a metal cover which acted as the kitchen counter.
- 3. My entering the Symphonie-Orchester Graunke without an audition still bothers Dennis. He and I now reason that the "Vorstand" (orchestra players who acted as managers) was keeping an eye on me when I substituted for Robert Moats (as the only bass) in the Eggenfelden operetta performances of *Der Vogelhändler* and this allowed me to join the orchestra on a regular basis (but with no contract) back in Munich and under Graunke himself.
- 4. I was sick and tired of substitute teaching in LA and was able to get the job in the Bellas Artes orchestra in Mexico City talking by phone to Luis Berber, the conductor and music director of the opera, while I was still in Oregon and he in Texas. A month later when I'd arrived in Mexico he overheard me in the pit practicing the bass part to *Marriage of Figaro* before the first rehearsal and he'd stolen onto the stage. He was obviously pleased that the telephone "audition" had borne such ripe, seasoned fruit.

- 5. When I called in to WBAI in NYC to complain (when they performed the whole set of DFD's Schubert LPs) that the world already believed that there was only one Lieder singer, they said, "Then put together your own program!" and thus began my many decades of radio work.
- 6. Through no intention of mine, I met Lotte Lehmann and though I wasn't a singer and originally knew nothing of Lieder or opera, she still communicated with me, allowed me to interview her, and finally wrote a letter of recommendation that persuaded German orchestras to audition me.
- 7. With the money I inherited from my father, I bought the condo One Archer Lane. Now, in 2020 it has doubled in value!
- 8. By chance, I attended a Honolulu lecture about investing. Sophie Hoffdahl gave a great presentation: when you invested you were either a loaner or an owner (bonds vs stocks). She became my first financial planner (at IDS, that was bought by American Express and finally split to become Ameriprise). My money has done well and provided me with a secure old age (with the help of Dad's nice investment in Six Flags Over Texas). I invested some extra money for our neighbor Eva's university education and now (2020) there's plenty to cover her room, board, tuition, and books!
- 9. It was sheer luck that Suchi rented the cottage. She's become a close and trusted friend who helps with the website & who'll work as trustee for our estate.
- 10. When Mr. Mac looked at my 15-year-old hands and said that I would play bass next week, little did I know that my fate as a musician was sealed. If I'd played any other instrument, the competition would have been too much for me to match and I could never have had a career in music.
- 11. I met Kent Pachuta (who became a long-term friend) on the beach in Cancun while I was recovering from the amoebas I'd picked up in Mexico City. His pal Jack taught business and when later I began to work as a manager at the thrift store, Jack gave me books and encouraged me to study. I took business night courses at Long Beach Community college. I was able to begin thinking like a manager or even a businessman. He had me make a list of the elements

of the thrift store business that were lacking and used it himself in his course work.

- 12. When Katsuumi Niwa got a Fulbright to study at UCLA, the result was a lot more (for me) than his education. Through him, I met Lotte Lehmann, came out, decided to study at a conservatory after graduating (Katsuumi had said "Gary-chan, you not so good bass player."), met lifelong friend Ann, and opened my ears to mélodie (his specialty). P.S. I noticed him first when he emerged right behind us bassists to ascend to the stage as Don Giovanni.
- 13. Finding our Kailua house in 1981 at a price I could afford and a cottage where I could stay to escape Compton from time to time, was not just luck, but good fortune. The house could be rented to pay the mortgage while I had the chance to visit Hawaii regularly, discover O'ahu hikes, and swim in Kailua Bay.

### Ol' Jokes that still make me Laff

\* How was golf today, dear?

-It wasn't good.

Why?

-Harry died on the eleventh hole.

That's terrible!

- -Yeah, it sure was terrible: from then on it was hit the ball, drag Harry.
- \* This is a true story that seems like a joke that rapper/friend IN-Q told. He had bought food at a McDonald's in LA and as he left noticed a homeless man lying next to the building. He offered him the plate that included french fries. The man rejected it saying: "Too many carbs, man!"
- \*Another true (or purportedly true) story. When Francisco Hernández de Córdova first landed on the Mexican peninsula he asked a native (in Spanish) the name of this place. The Mayan replied: "Yukatan." Which in Mayan meant, "I don't understand you."

- \*After my year in Mexico this joke held real meaning: God was making a beautiful land. He put grand mountains, shimmering deserts, dense jungles, sparkling waterfalls, roaring rivers, glorious beaches and thought "This is just too perfect. I'll put the Mexicans here."
- \* There's an elegant lady's tea party and she goes around offering Lady Fingers to her guests. One says "Oh, I couldn't, I've already had two." The host replies, "Three, but who's counting."
- \* David Walter told this joke and I've always loved it. There was a convention of the composers who write commercials for the radio and TV. A lot of guys were gathered in a conference room and the organizers had the brilliant idea of putting together an endless tape of their past year's ditties. This tape played along as they were eating and talking. Some smart aleck inserted the first movement of the Beethoven Op. 59 No. 1 string quartet. When this played, the talk among the composers subsided and as they listened, one of them was heard to remark, "Oh, if I only had the time."
- \* The masochist and the sadist met up: the first pleaded "beat me!" and second growled, "I won't."
- \* The NYC police are just covering up a body lying on the street. An ol' lady appears and watching the procedure speaks out, "Give him an enema!" The sergeant in charge in a measured, soft voice replies, "Ma'am, I'm sorry. It's too late." Again she cries: "Give'm an enema." Again the reasoning voice in a gentle reassuring tone says, "He's dead, you know." "It won't hoit any."

# Here's a piece I wrote for the Writers Retreat:

#### Music or Gardening?

When I was 11 we moved to the desert mountains of Southern California and I discovered two fascinations: music and plants.

We had a neighborhood orchestra in Barbara and David's basement. Every kid in the scattered homes for a mile around all participated. I played snare drums. Later string bass. The other focus of my pre-pubescent life was gardening. Oh, we kids saw plenty of live oaks, yuccas, sagebrush, and cactus on our hikes in the mountains, but my love was the plot of land around our house. Though I didn't know it at the time, the rocky soil was fertile and would grow whatever was planted. I quickly discovered that even small cuttings from the neighbor's plants would grow, whether succulents or geraniums. Ivy worked, so did various shade-loving philodendrons.

My folks weren't impressed with the noises we basement virtuosi made, but they fed my love of plants at the local nursery. We planted camellias, roses, fruit trees, and pines. The magnolia tree was the only one that didn't take off. Everything else was eager as I was to grow. It was the desert, so we needed to water everything regularly, but that was it. Oh, and the neighbors thought it was cute that I'd ask to take cuttings from their yards. A few years later they paid me to tend their plots when they went on vacation.

At the end of sixth grade, we all made little books that listed the names of our folks, siblings, etc. and the last line asked what we'd like to be when we grew up. I wrote: "own a nursery." Music was fun, but I didn't know anyone making a living at it, so it wasn't an option.

When everyone else in high school was dating girls I was playing bass in the orchestra and tuba in the band. But besides hiking after school, I cared for the garden: trimming dead leaves and now gone glorious flowers, weeding out the vigorous volunteers, and even designing gardens. Once, when my folks took me to the vast cactus and succulent grounds that surrounded the Huntington Museum I feigned a fall and picked up a few pieces of rare-to-me succulents that I could coax into abundant life back on San Gorgonio Road.

Now, at 78 years of age, with a lifetime of great classical music-making and teaching behind me, I revel in playing in the yard around the Kailua house. Miracle of miracles, the sand seems to grow everything abundantly. Too abundant, after 40 years of planting (lots of sticks that grew greatly!), there's a lot to trim. I need to work on the tunnel around the driveway or we can't even get through without scratching the car. The mangoes on the huge ancient tree are a

delicious blend of sweet and sour, the orchids bloom with only occasional fertilizing, and the yuccas, yes a plant from my childhood, grow over 20 feet tall.

## Here is another piece I wrote for the Writers Retreat:

But never submitted.

A Minority of a Minority

I didn't start out that way. In fact, as a white male born to middle-class Christian



parents who did all the American activities (in moderation), I was initially on the road to being as majority as one could be. But as a young Christian, I skipped the Sunday-school charade and sat in the front row of church to watch Gaylord Carter, the organist at work. As soon as his part in the service was over, he'd join me and we'd read his *Times* while the preacher preached. Mr. Carter knew just when to slip back onto the bench for a rousing Doxology. I trace my militant atheism to his silent approval of my reading over his shoulder.

What else went wrong, you ask? Well, my road to cultural perdition continued with love of classical music (4% of the acceptable American music market). It got worse: instead of playing a respected, beloved instrument like the violin, I played bass and not the good kind found in jazz, but with a bow. As if that weren't enough, I further alienated myself from the mainstream by being gay, vegetarian, not watching TV during most of my life, being a teetotaler, (also no coffee or tea), and living in foreign lands, learning their languages and customs and thus further becoming suspiciously suspect.

The orchestra music, of which I was so fond, was expanded by a love of art song (1% of classical music's 4% bonanza) in which an unamplified singer joins with a pianist to sing the poetry of Goethe, Verlaine, and Dickinson, set by composers like Schubert, Debussy, and Aaron Copland. Oh, and for over 40 years I broadcast this art song genre on public radio. To further dispel any hope of being a respected real American I began interviewing, researching, writing about, and producing CDs of the forgotten operatic soprano of the past, Lotte Lehmann.

You remember that I played bass, right? Well-hidden behind the orchestra's cherished cello section and not known for performing on solo recitals, the bass is the also-ran, but not puny, runt of the litter. I developed a solo bass repertoire and played recitals in Germany, the Philippines, Colorado, New York City, and a lot in Honolulu. These solo recitals were not successful on any level: I was too nervous, there's no audience for such things, and even my friends didn't care to attend.

How could I further alienate myself from the majority? No interest in pop music or pop culture generally is a solid basis for not relating to most of mankind. Why not do solo exercise in the gym, or swim, or kayak? Sometimes friends join me in these exploits, but generally not. And being fit is an outsider's game.

Instead of a glamorous, respected business like stock trading, I fell into the thrift store field. I took college night courses in business, read books on management, and ran the second-hand store by day.

This was certainly not enough. I grew up wearing clothes but dropped that bad habit whenever possible. The US Post Office even wrote a note that the letter carrier, who brought packages back to the house in a jeep, objected to me meeting her naked. At least greeting Jehovah's Witnesses in God's attire kept that group away.

The majority all-American guy played sports in his spare time or at least watched them on TV, but I spent my downtime in museums, art galleries, and concert halls. Yes, when I wasn't playing Prokofiev I was hearing him.

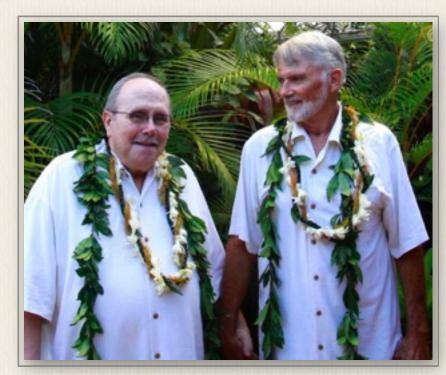
Now, during the 2020 pandemic, when we're all supposed to be good toilet paper hoarding Americans, I am still in a minority of minorities, using a bidet.

# Proud

There are many proud moments and some are very personal and so may not mean much to others. But when I try to balance this with any spiritual work there's the thought: Ego, ego, ego. I still have a lot to learn!

\* It gave me great pride to join
Dennis, my friend and partner of 40
years, in marriage in 2013. That's easy
to write in a sentence. A lot preceded
and followed the event. You can read
all about our relationship in "Dennis &
Me From Munich to Kailua" Vol 2.

\*\* Two young women, took my advice and developed new and demanding careers. Kayaking with Susan Duprey (then McCreary) she said she wasn't



On our happy wedding day

looking forward to teaching Spanish in September. She'd really like to be a choral conductor but didn't like the idea of just following in the footsteps of her father. Before reaching the Mokulua, we turned the kayaks around and she called Westminster Choir College to request an enrollment form. Now she happily conducts the Windward Choral Society on O'ahu and the Kona Choral

Society on the Big Island. Suzie recently emailed: "Awesome story and I share it often. Both [choral groups] are bursting at



Suzie conducting the Windward Choral Society

the seams with great music-making, singers, and audiences."

\* The other woman is Susan Deaver, a flutist who was studying the other instruments to become a teacher while I was teaching the rudiments of the double bass at the University of Northern Colorado. I suggested that



Susan Deaver conducting at Carnegie Hall



Susan Deaver conducting the University Orchestra at Stony Brook University

she spread her wings: Go to NYC, at least as a flutist. She now teaches flute at Long Island University, conducts the North Shore Symphony Orchestra, and the Orchestra at Stony Brook University. Way to go! Susan responded to this with: "How wonderful that you remember that you completely

CHANGED the course of my life! Thanks so much for thinking of me! AND thanks for influencing my life in a very good way!!!!!!"

\* Just after the intermission of a performance in my senior year with the Glendale High School Symphonettes, the conductor, Mr. Balzer, presented me with a present and thanked me for my work as orchestra manager. He wrote "they don't make guys like you" in my yearbook. Balzer has his own section here.

\* My Brooklyn bass student Vinny Gioia has recently told me his studies of classical music on the bass and finally getting into Mannes accounts for him being

alive today. His generation of friends are mostly dead of the drugs and violence of the 1960s and '70s. You can hear a longer version of his GaryStory in "Friends that Last" Vol. 2.

Message from Vinny

- While I was teaching at MSM I was always pleased to see Leopold Stokowski enter my studio with encouraging words for my bass students. Another StokiStory: I brought the students of my junior high school string orchestra to an American Symphony Orchestra rehearsal at Carnegie Hall (in which I was playing), and during intermission they gathered at the podium to meet Stoki. He was gracious and when he learned they were my students, first asked if all 30 of them were bassists. I clarified that they were all string players (with one bassist) and he invited them to any rehearsals they wished to attend. He was cordial and as always a little distant. Many of those students remember that excursion. See "Mr Hickling, the Teacher."
- \*\* It was extremely gratifying when my former bass student Jaime
  Austria joined me for a duet in my
  Manila and New York recitals and then became a member of the
  American Symphony Orchestra,
  while I was still in the bass section.
  See "Special Students."
- \* I was Randy Wong's first bass teacher and now I see him as the successful executive director of the



Jaime at Lincoln Center's Bruno Walter Auditorium (at the time just called Lincoln Center Recital Hall).

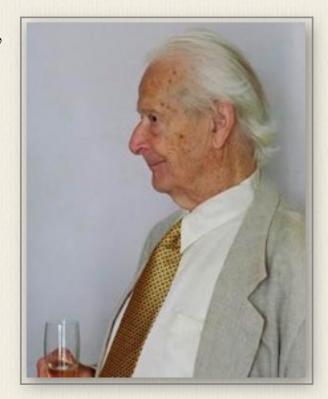
Hawaii Youth Symphony and a bassist in the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra.

\* At the beginning of our telephone interview the great Christa Ludwig said "Hello, Gary" in a tone that was so kind and friendly that one might assume that we were long time friends.



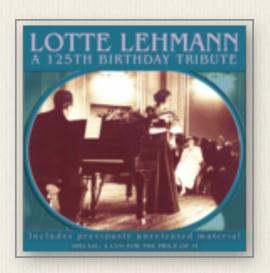
\* It has always been a source of great pride for me that Lotte Lehmann was so generous with her time (interviews, letters, photos, letter of recommendation, etc.) to a non-singer, non-student. She gets a whole chapter in this memoir.

- \* In a similar vein, it always impressed me that the great piano accompanist, Dalton Baldwin, was always so helpful and supportive, especially with Lehmann-related projects.
- \* Certainly one of my proudest accomplishments was the gratis participation of the many great artists, pianists, and recording engineers who participated in both Lehmann Tribute CD projects.
- \* Though we only knew each other by mail and phone, the legendary tenor Hughes Cuénod always treated me as if I were a colleague or friend.
- \* I associate a prolonged period of pride with the accomplishments of the young Enrique Arias, who took over the management and later purchase of Alameda Thrift.
- \* I ran in late for the final art song master class of the season given by Martial Singher. The Music Academy of the West director stopped me, saying that I couldn't enter barefoot. Lehmann, who'd overheard the commotion, called for me to sit with her.
- \*\* One of my proudest accomplishments is the three year project that culminated with the release of the "Lotte Lehmann: A 125th Birthday Tribute." The Gramophone Magazine wrote of it: "...you could justifiably claim that the set's highlight is a quite magnificent CD-ROM... producer Gary Hickling's commentary on the tracks themselves, the sources, accompanying artists and actual interpretations, are models of what one needs with 'historic' sets such as this." This project followed a CD tribute to Lehmann by her students and colleagues "To



Cuenod the lively host at his own centennial b'day party

My Interview with Cuenod (he was 106)



Honor Her Legacy." My eight Lehmann volumes published by Apple include

three that focus on her master classes. Two Lehmann CD sets that I produced for Marston record add to my Lehmann legacy efforts. .

\*\* I was shocked, surprised, and pleased (and of course proud) when the famed conductor (and former bassist) Jonel Perlea arrived for my graduating bass recital. I was only the second bassist at MSM to give a solo recital in fulfillment of the master's requirement. The first was Frank Proto. Maestro Perlea conducted us at MSM and has his own space in my chapter on conductors





With Perlea after my MSM recital

her hotel room) and the other support that she has shown me, has made me feel very appreciated by her. For her appearance with the Honolulu Symphony Orchestra I suggested that she sing *Nuits* 

Orchestra I suggested that she sing Nuits d'ete and Songs of the Auvergne (which she did) rather than the scheduled operatic arias. This photo was taken after that performance. Elsewhere in this memoire you'll see other photos with her. It's with pride that I mention this artist whose friendship I value.

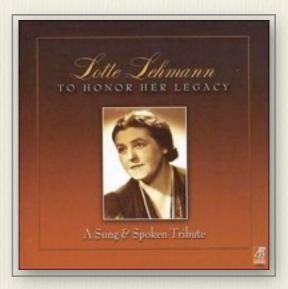
\* Pianist Beebe Freitas, one of the leading lights of the Honolulu vocal scene, always supported me in whatever project I undertook. She recorded the



With Flicka

accompaniments for the <u>Three American Songs</u> video, took part in my HPR radio programs (demonstrating from the piano), played for the Art Song Contest recording sessions, and often for the Winners Recitals. From the collection of her performances I was able to assemble two memorial programs for broadcast. See "Friends that Last" Volume 2.



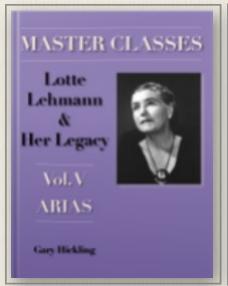


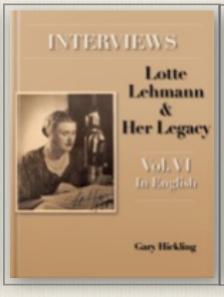
\* Here are the CDs mentioned earlier in this section. Each one has been a challenge and for which I feel a certain pride. As I am remembering these challenges this is the place to show off the covers of the eight Lehmann books I've written/produced/published. Here's a link to the Fanfare reviews of Volume I.

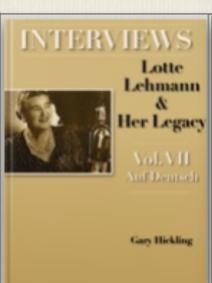


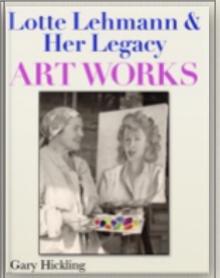












#### Proud Accomplishments Cont.:

- \* In Hawaii we held local art song performance contests for 13 years. Here's a link to videos of two Winners Recitals, singer's entries, and Hawaian hapa haole songs.
- ₩ My proudest personal accomplishments are the young people whose lives I influenced: my first student at the MSM Prep Division, Tony Scelba, went on to study with David Walter there and then at Juilliard. He was the first bassist to get a doctorate at Juilliard. He played free-lance in some of the best NYC orchestras and as far as I know, he's still playing. He is now (2020) Professor and Chair of the Department of Music at Kean University, Union, New Jersey, where he teaches Music History and Form & Analysis in addition to Double Bass.
- \*\* Some of my Filipino students went on to good jobs: Norben DeLaCruz and Delfin Calderon Jr. played with the Hong Kong Philharmonic. Angel Peña played with the Honolulu Symphony Orchestra until he retired. Cecinio Ronquillo became principal bass of the Philippines Philharmonic Orchestra (after also studying in Berlin). One of the De Los Reyes brothers played there as well. Jaime Austria came to the US to finish his bass studies and went on the play free-lance in NYC, and finally, in the bass section of the New York City Opera. Angel Sicam followed Jaime a year later, and after graduating from MSM joined the Rochester Orchestra for the rest of his playing career.
- \*\* Three students from my junior high teaching went on to professional careers in music: Fred Fehleisen has taught for years at Juilliard; Ted Grille played bass in the San Antonio Symphony Orchestra and later taught music in the public schools of Texas; Ellen Olson has played viola for many years in the Jacksonville Symphony in Florida. Though he didn't go on to a professional cello career, Howitt student Mathew Abrams has enjoyed playing cello in community orchestras, as did several other students of that group. In "Mr Hickling, the Teacher" you can read what these former students (and others mentioned below) have to say about their esteemed teacher.
- \*You can hear what bass student Vinny Gioia has to say about the ways that I changed his life both in music and otherwise in the "Friends that Last" chapter,

Vol. 2. Nick Bayak, another student, credits me for his basic instruction; has played mostly jazz bass until recently retiring and selling the bass he bought from me. He writes,

You influenced me and opened my mind in several ways. First of all, you were my first bass teacher who actually was a bassist. I would not have gone to MSM (a very eye opening experience) had I not had you as a teacher. You are the first vegetarian that I ever met. While I didn't become a vegetarian myself, you certainly made me aware of the benefits of healthy eating, and I also became more adverturesome and fearless in regards to trying different foods (which helped me during my 10 week gig in Jakarta in 1990). You also inspired me to think in terms of seeing the world. While I haven't been to nearly as many places as you have, I'm more aware of the importance of learning about different cultures, and the value of knowing how to say (at the very least) yes/no/please/thank you/sorry/excuse me, in the local language.

- \* My last student at MSM Prep Dept., James Martino, went on to study bass there, but in the end became a cabinet maker and thanks me for "life lessons."
- \* One of my Greeley bass students, Mary Kelly (Hinman), who continues to play in many Colorado orchestras says that she often thinks of me.
- \* My best Munich student, Mani Rössl has played principal bass and taught bass in Bielefeld most of his adult life. See "Special Bass Students."
- \*My foster son Sean Donahue believes that I led him on a good path. It took some detours, but I am proud of all that he's doing, especially in counseling kids on life choices as they join the workforce. See "Friends that Last" Vol. 2.
- \* At Punahou I influenced the life of Alton Clingan. He went on to study bass and composition at Eastman School of Music and composition at Columbia and Harvard. Sadly he died before his prime.
- \* Toma was 12 when I began teaching him bass, and I'm still his mentor at the age of 44 (2020) not in music, but in life advice. See "Friends that Last" Vol. 2.
- \* I first met David Higgins as a renter in the Kailua house. He quickly became a friend and I must have given him good advice. His LP shelves in the cottage are a reminder of his good workmanship.

The pictures remind me of a time in my life when you helped me return to functioning in the world which continues to be a great joy. You surfaced from my memory bank the other day and after reading some of your on-line info I called your 'old' phone number, to no avail. One of the reasons for calling was to thank you for a piece of advice you offered that helped me find true happiness. You may remember in my rather 'raw and sensitive' condition at



the time, I was concerned about pursuing a relationship with Mary. I felt that without financial security and career direction it was questionable to pursue a serious relationship. You offered that the appearance of different financial standing was of no importance and to follow my heart. As you know, I took your advice. Mary and I are together all of the time, we are happy together all of the time and although it seems impossible, fall more deeply in love each day. It also turned out, that I have been able to contribute to our financial stability. I will always thank you for your clear vision and support.

\* Though I didn't change lives with my four year "in-home" history of music, many of the regular adult "students" said that they always heard classical music with more understanding and joy. Natalie Mahoney mentioned this just recently and I was amazed, because so many years had lapsed. See "Mr Hickling: the Teacher."



# Tales too crazy to be True



Piatigorsky, Heifetz, Benny

The following stories are in no particular order, either chronologically or logically. They appear just as they occurred to my febrile brain. Please don't try to link one to another. It just won't work!

Another element you need to remember while reading is that these are stories that interest me. You'll quickly learn if they're too personal or otherwise not your favorite subject, and I promise I won't be insulted if you quickly move on.

#### Heifetz Plays UCLA

We, enthusiastic music majors, knew what treasures roamed our halls at UCLA in 1961; two of the most famous musicians were teaching right here! The incomparable violinist Jascha Heifetz, who'd set standards of excellence luckily preserved in recordings that spanned the century taught privately. And world-class pianist/composer/conductor Lucas Foss, though German-born, was now actively writing American classical music, with everything from opera to chamber music, and conducting our student orchestra. Us music nerds had longingly anticipated the recital of Schubert and Brahms trios with Foss, Heifetz, and guest cellist Gregor Piatigorsky. At this time in the world of classical music, those three names conjured up the highest levels of artistry, accomplishment, and, that ugly word, fame. The 1950s-modern recital hall accommodated only 528 and on this warm Spring evening, we saw that every seat was filled for this historic event. The

playing was thrilling; every note was in place, their ensemble was seamless, and the overall Romantic-era sound reverberated to our ears and our hearts. Since the recital was performed at an educational institution, just before intermission the audience was encouraged to pose questions. After a few



forgettable inquiries, from the back of the hall came a voice as inimitable as it was recognizable. We heard a wheedling and accusatory "Mr. Piatigorsky." Jack Benny, instead of posing a real question in his favorite field of violin, feigned that he intended to torment the cellist. Nothing more from Benny; the amazed laughter from the audience and the performers on stage was so uproarious and prolonged that, to bring about some degree of order, we were directly dismissed for the intermission.

#### Morocco Adventure

I'll leave it for later as to how in 1977 I got on a Spanish tour bus to the ferry taking us yogis to Morocco. As soon as we landed our group was engulfed by local guys offering to guide us. Our tour leader chose a supposedly reputable person to



take us to the kasbah. The tour was predictable and it seemed to be just another marketplace for tourists. So I peeled off to see this exotic place on my own. No map, no knowledge, no background history of the country. Just out for adventure. I quickly found myself in a slum with families living in mud

domed dwellings with open sewers carved into the hard clay. Lots of naked kids running loose. Soon, another of the many young men who offered to guide tourists ("You can't see Tangier without a guide" they chanted) seemed more or less reasonable. In the blazing sun, he did show me some unusual buildings and even the inside of a steam bath in which boys for sale were sitting. Unsettling but exotic. After a while, I became hungry and thirsty and asked if he could take me to a traditional restaurant. He asked if I had any Dirham but I only had German Marks; we needed to exchange some. The bank that we encountered offered too low a rate, he said, and he knew of a place with something much better. We walked and walked. I got thirstier and worn out. We found ourselves in the center court of a large (six or eight-story) building, he saw I was tired and grabbed my 10 Mark bill and ran off (supposedly to exchange it for Dirham). Of course, he never returned. So there I am in the periphery of Tangier with none of its money. I hopped on a bus and rode toward the port for a while before the driver noticed I hadn't paid and kicked me off. All I wanted to do was get back to the ferry and return to Spain. When I got to the dock I showed the ferry ticket that all of us were given. The guard said that it was the wrong hour and reminded me that Europe and Africa had different time zones. Now, in retrospect, I know that Spain is one hour ahead of Morocco, but at the time it was confusing and I thought that I had hours to spend in Tangier. Another "guide" assured me he could show me

around (I must have still had some small bills of Marks and some small remaining trust). He soon cornered me in a secluded spot, stripped me of my nice linen jacket, and ran off. In despair, I returned to the port figuring that I'd just sit on the ferry and wait until it left. Well, it had already "sailed." Still undeterred I began to walk along the smaller docks trying with my weak Spanish to find someone, a fisherman or whatever, headed to Spain. The workers that I spoke to were shutting down and they told me that the Harbormaster would be able to tell me if any boats were still heading out. Not far from the docks I located the office and met the young helpful Harbormaster. He assured me that no boats were leaving; I needed to wait until the morning to catch the ferry. We conversed in my mediocre French, and he determined more or less what had already happened and said it was too dangerous for me to sleep on the beach as I'd suggested. "They stab you in the back and then turn you over to see if you have any rings or money to steal," I figured he was saying. He kindly told me that after the port closed I could stay behind in his office, sleeping on his little cot. I played cards into the night with the guard and as soon as it was light I ran down to the docks to be the very first one on the ferry. When I showed my "ticket" I learned that it had no value and was just a voucher to be used with the whole group's trip. Returning disconsolate to the Harbormaster offices I meekly described my situation to a different, older, and more imposing official, just as the young guy I'd met the previous day, was entering the office. I needed a loan to get to Spain and I'd send back the money. The young man immediately brought out the requisite Dirham and believing that my French was so poor that I wouldn't understand, the senior Harbormaster contemptuously warned the young man that he'd never see that money again. "Il a un visage honnêtte," he countered and gave me the needed bills. I quickly wrote down his name and address; when I returned to Munich I exchanged enough money to refund him his generosity and sent a gift of a small book of paintings of Redon, because of the French connection. His wife replied with a sweet note saying that I should have considered the money a gift and the book was an added kindness on my part.

On the ferry I located a couple going my way with their car and was able to return to the yoga group, who hadn't been the least concerned about my absence.

#### Munich Herkulean Chore

Munich of 1976: the sophisticated, culture-rich city I'd called home for three years. Frank Manhold, a music-fascinated young friend of mine, told me of a forthcoming Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau recital, but already sold out. It was about a month away and that gave me time to figure out a way to sneak in to hear this most illustrious of baritones. Fischer-Dieskau had long been considered one of the 20th century's greatest classical music treasures, never mind that he was a singer! I'd heard his voice on FM since the late 1950s and already bought his LP recordings of almost all of Schubert's 605 Lieder.

How could the two of us sneak in? Knowing that the Germans are as strict as any in taking tickets at the entry, I needed to hatch a plot: the recital was to take place in Herkulessaal, where I performed regularly with the Symphonie-Orchestra Graunke. The backstage guards knew my face and I began my plan by "stopping by" with a bogus question: had my bass from Berlin been delivered? They said "nein," and I waited a few days and asked again, with, of course, the same answer. I arranged on the day of the DFD recital to add to my question: maybe the bass had arrived on another shift and could I run upstairs to the backstage area to see if it was being held for me there? I held my breath. Skeptical, they did allow this, so I ran upstairs and looking around to make sure that no one would notice,



The interior of Herkulessaal as seen from standing room. If you look carefully there are doors at the end of the balcony leading to the back of the organ pipes.

opened a small window onto the balcony of a facing building. This second building housed the lockers and dressing rooms of the Munich Philharmonic that also performed regularly in the hall. My pal Horst, who played tuba in the Phil, loaned me his dressing room key and that chilly, clear night Frank and I entered those dressing rooms which had windows facing the connecting balcony/roof. After removing our overcoats and leaving them in the Philharmonic's dressing area, we slipped out the window as surreptitiously as possible, creeping along the balcony to the already-open window backstage of the hall. We climbed down and made our way to the area back of the organ pipes (see photo) that included a small door that opened onto the balcony of the hall itself. Already in recital dress we immediately chose two random seats in the balcony, praying that the ticket-holders of these two seats wouldn't show. Of course, they did and we quickly and rather calmly reassured the usher that we were just checking out the view and really had standing room places. Those spots also required tickets, but thankfully the usher didn't ask for ours. We moved as confidently as we could to banked steps of standing room at the back of the balcony, which was filled with young people impatiently waiting to hear DFD with pianist/conductor Wolfgang Sawallisch. It was a sensational, satisfying recital with the ringing voice and piano in complete harmony. Now over 40 years later Frank revealed that he hardly remembers hearing any of this historic recital, he remained so nervous.

The story isn't quite over. The orchestra's dressing room still contained our overcoats (this was after all Munich's winter season) and so we retraced our steps through the organ pipes and this time, after carefully closing the window, we jauntily walked by the dressing rooms toward the lockers. Who should emerge than DFD himself, who we learned later, was shy and didn't like to greet his audience after a concert to sign autographs and all. He was tall, well over six feet, and though neither Frank nor I are short, this giant baritone's mere presence seemed to dwarf us. Frank, the native German speaker, was mute; awestruck. I stammered out something to the effect that "Wir haben alles sehr genossen" (We thoroughly enjoyed everything) and we fled, closed the second balcony window, retrieved our overcoats and dignity, and escaped the buildings undetected. But both filled with the uneasy memory of an unforgettable adventure.

#### Mindanao on My Mind

Over a half-century ago, while I was teaching/performing bass in Manila on a John D. Rockefeller III Fund grant, we four American "Rockefeller Fellas" regularly joined leading Filipino musicians on chamber music gigs. We flew South to the remote island of Mindanao. Back then Islam and Christianity fiercely contested for power; now it's an autonomous Muslim province.

We'd only just begun the matinee concert in the sweltering overcrowded auditorium of the dusty rural town of Maguindanao when a blackout occurred, forcing us to stop. Enough light shone through some high windows that I went ahead and played a contemporary solo bass piece I'd memorized that included some odd-sounding taps and other special effects, receiving more applause than usual. It could have been the strange nature of a piece, the heightened expectations of someone playing in the obscurity, or the fabulous performance. I prefer to believe it was the last. Soon the lights returned and to the relief of both audience and musicians we finished our regular program. The Filipinos are always effusive in their appreciation, even if the music is new and weird to them. This occasion was no different and we shook a lot of enthusiastic hands.

Afterward, I escaped to the nearby neighborhood beach. It was a blazing clear day and the water even clearer. After swimming straight out, I eventually looked back to enjoy the lush beauty of the bucolic landscape. But I also noticed an outrigger



canoe headed right in my direction. As the young hunky paddler reached me he asked if I needed help. The villagers on the beach had noticed the white guy and since they only used the ocean for bathing or fishing, they assumed that I was drowning. Reassuring the athletic-looking man that all was fine, I saw that in stopping to try to aid me, he'd

gotten parallel with the waves and was in trouble himself. He'd accumulated a lot of water in just a few waves, so I jumped in and bailed like crazy as he paddled toward shore. By the time we arrived half the village was out on the sand to celebrate the "G.I. Joe" who'd rescued their star paddler. Shouting kids climbed the trees and the men carried me on their shoulders for a bit, before bringing me to a hut where the imposing obvious village chief offered me his own brew of fermented coconut water. A pretend gulp was all I needed to determine that it was dangerously high proof, at least for my innocent teetotaler palate. After the feigned drinking ritual, I wanted to thank them all for their hospitality and affection. English was spoken by a few younger adults, but my Philippine communication was limited to Tagalog. They're taught that language in school but speak Maguindanao or Iranun. The whole gathering did seem to understand my sincere "Maraming salamat" as I left for town to rejoin my oblivious musician-colleagues.

# Arriving in the Big Apple

When my JDR III stellar student Jaime Austria and I drove across the U.S., we shared the long drive with both of our basses and all of our belongings in the back of my huge old Plymouth "slant six" station wagon. In the middle of the night, I was dozing while Jaime drove too fast through one of the flat states. He woke me with a question, something about the dashboard light that showed high beams, and I was just aware enough to realize that he was headed at high speed into the back of a slow-moving truck. I screamed and he swerved and nobody died.

When around midnight we finally arrived in NYC we were exhausted and just left everything in the car except the basses. The next morning we discovered the car had been broken into: my bow (in a hard case), my suitcase, my passport, all my Filipino souvenirs, camera, etc. all gone! It was far more than a financial blow, for all my photos and other memorabilia of the momentous Filipino year just past were taken. I immediately filled out a police



report there in Midtown, but the officer in charge didn't hold out much hope that anything would ever be found. I left the phone number of the apartment where we were temporarily staying and we went out looking for the stuff. For most thieves the car's contents were worthless, so we looked in trash cans and even the East River, all in vain. We had appointments to keep: Jaime needed to register at Manhattan School of Music, meet his new bass teacher, David Walter, and find his own place to stay.

But a few days later I got a message that the Uptown police station had my passport and I should go there to retrieve it. What a miracle I mused! When I breathlessly arrived there and presented myself to the policeman in charge, he knew nothing about it. He couldn't even understand how I'd gotten such a message. It was a dead end. None of the stolen things ever turned up, but my Filipino friends back in Manila did everything they could to get copies of the photos and my mature master student, Angel Peña, even sent one of the beautiful woven fisherman hats which I liked so much. I have it today, over 50 years, and countless moves later.

#### **Guiomar Meets Gary**

During my three years studying at MSM, I had many responsibilities and was paid for them with cash or a scholarship. I knew the main auditorium well; that's where our orchestra performed. That's probably why I was called upon to help set up for a recital/master class of the well-known Brazilian pianist, Guiomar Novaes. She

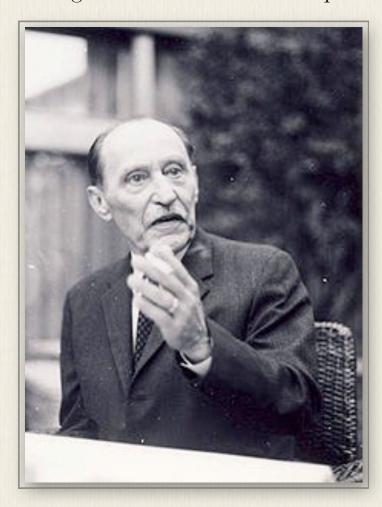


arranged to meet me ahead of time because she wanted the piano placed just so. Ms. Novaes demonstrated for me the only safe way to move a piano: backing up to the keyboard and pushing with your rump. Anyway, after quite a few "placements" of the piano, she seemed satisfied and I went out into the hall to wait along with

the assembling audience. After she'd been introduced, she sat down at the keyboard to play, and before a single note was heard, she screeched: "Eeee, the lights." There was evidently a light shining in her eye she hadn't noticed before. I jumped back on stage and changed the angle of the piano just slightly, using my rump of course, and she was delighted and the rest of the afternoon proceeded without further eruptions.

#### Maestro Perlea

At MSM I earned part of my scholarship as orchestra manager, a job that somehow morphed into getting a cab (it seemed no one in NYC owned a car) and riding it down to Midtown to pick up our handicapped maestro, famed Rumanian



conductor, Jonel Perlea. He'd had a bad stroke which paralyzed the right side of his body and had to wear metal braces down his leg. We'd built a protecting wooden box around the conductor's podium where he sat on a swiveling stool. He conducted with his left hand, turned pages with his left hand, cued entrances with his left hand, and in rehearsals at least, banged his left hand on the edge of the wooden rail, shouting "pianissimo, pianissimo, pianissimo, pianissimo, pianissimo!" He had a fantastically accurate ear and could catch and correct the slightest student musician's error or misprint in our music. Perlea was a noted (or notorious), internationally recognized

conductor and we worshipped his musicianship in spite of his temper. He didn't pretend to be nice and scolded us students fiercely in his vain attempt to make the music sound the way he imagined it.

In the cab before the rehearsal, we didn't really talk. Because of the stroke, he'd lost his ability in English and could only speak in his native Romanian or German, which at the time I didn't speak. His assistant conductor, Richard Kapp, was present for most rehearsals and translated the German. When I took Perlea home

I'd help him to the door of his apartment. Even with his cane he was very unsteady and blamed gusts of wind for almost blowing him over. He'd curse and bang his cane against his metal braces and then laugh a kind of hoarse chortle. Sometimes his kind and worshipful wife would invite me in for a few minutes of cookies during which she'd tell me about a composition that Perlea was writing or a forthcoming recording session for RCA.

Maestro probably asked Kapp to take him to my graduating recital. It touched me deeply that he, a really famous person with extreme movement difficulties, would attend my double bass performance. It still does 60 years on.

# Retirement Homes Before My Retirement

Pianist pal Dale Hall, soprano neighbor Kazuyo Takagi, and baritone Gary volunteered in the nursing homes of Honolulu for a bunch of years. Sometimes the many rows of wheelchair-bound people had enough space for me to walk along and sing directly to one or another patient. As I was singing one of my most impressive songs, one of the denizens shouted out "Shaddup!" amusing Dale and Kazuyo and shocking me almost to silence. At another such home, I remember passing along one of the rows while I was singing and a man yelled out to me



"Nice ass." Just as in the first case, I just kept singing. Once I spotted a rather dejected, perhaps demented woman, and sat next to her while singing "The Maui Waltz." She lost her almost frozen appearance and began weeping. A nurse came up to me and whispered, "She's from Maui." In another facility, there was a pronounced sound echoing my pitches as a sang. I followed the voice and discovered a wheelchair stroke senior kinda humming along. Dale and I started the song over and with hardly a movement, the guy "sang" along.

# Hiking with Alma

It was the 1980s and I was often hiking with my usual trail expert Alma McGoldrick. One time we were joined by another couple (Tim & Laura) and were bushwhacking our way far into the deep, dark green jungle of Kamana'iki, the next valley over from Kalihi on O'ahu. A brilliant, cloudless, sunny day found us far from any respectable trail and the density of the undergrowth sometimes even required me to fall full-body with my torso acting as a machete to clear the way. Suddenly we saw, heard, and felt a helicopter over us; a bull horn shouting



Lower section of Kamana'iki

something. Though the steep hillside was rather overgrown and isolated, we tried to signal back that we weren't in any danger. The chopper moved away and we kept on our trek when what should appear but two rangers with rifles drawn! They told us the reason for the chopper: there were two armed escaped cons and the authorities didn't want us held hostage. During the comradely chatting among us we learned the

names of the rangers assigned to accompany us back down the mountain and we thanked them for their service. But when we came upon an open section that they didn't feel they could cover, we had to crouch down in the brush with them as they awaited the walkie talkie "all clear." After about fifteen minutes of impatient hiding, we left our protectors and made a break for it. When we finally reached



Tim and Laura

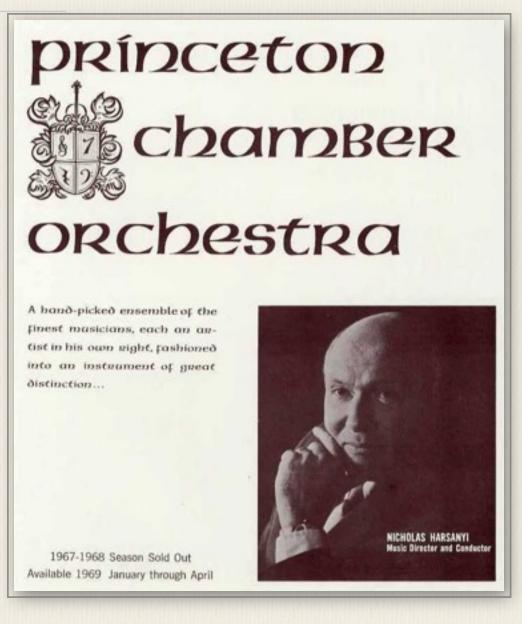
seasons during which I played bass with the touring Princeton Chamber Orchestra (no connection with the university). One evening we were performing in a community auditorium packed with an appreciative audience. As we were playing a Mozart piano concerto with a wellknown French pianist she reached the point in which the second theme occurs (in a different key) and mistakenly went to the same point in the recap when that theme occurs

the trailhead (sans rangers) there were many police who'd already heard all about us.

Alma told them that there were some caves high up on one side of the trail ahead and that's where cons would choose to hide out. We read in the paper the next day that's exactly where they found them. She really does know every inch of the trails.

# "I'm Sorry"

We, classical musicians, know that our live concerts could always include a mishap.
Such a greatly feared train wreck occurred during one of the 1968–69



in the original key. This put her in a different key than the orchestra. The brilliant concertmaster and a few bright others immediately caught the error and jumped to the right spot in the score. But too many others (including me) were clueless and the piece ground inexorably and discordantly to an embarrassing halt. The pianist looked up from the keyboard and in a sweet voice and all sincerity said in her charming French-accented English, "I'm sorry," and we began the piece again (with no further mistakes).



Not as Stupid as I Look

For the two seasons (1967–69) while I was assistant principal bass, (second bass, or last bass, but not shortstop) I was also the librarian of the Princeton Chamber Orchestra (nothing to do with the university, just the town). As librarian, I filled the musicians' folders with the music that we were going to play for each rehearsal or performance. On tour, I also arrived early to set up the stage, the chairs, the music stands, and place the correct music folders on the right stands. During the first season, the conductor, fiery Hungarian Nicolas Harsanyi, invariably found fault with something that I'd done (or not done) and would loudly accuse me in front of the orchestra during rehearsal. He'd ask (no, scream) for an explanation,

for my supposed error. At the end of the season, I told him that I objected to this reprehensible behavior (without using those words). If he wanted me to return for a second season I'd only sign the contract if he signed an agreement that he wouldn't harass me. Not only that, but also that in advance of each rehearsal or performance, he'd list every piece of music that we'd be playing. He did actually write out such an understanding and I signed for a second season.

During that second season while on a Spring tour through Georgia, we needed to rehearse new music for upcoming performances and in the middle of the rehearsal, Harsanyi decided to play something that wasn't in the folders. He started his harangue, shouting and deprecating me for not including the piece. I replied in a restrained tone of voice that "I'm not as dumb as I look" and had in my hand his exact list of what he'd requested and I told him that he'd broken the accord. I wasn't going to be his whipping boy (my words) and that I quit, storming out in a huff (or as Groucho Marx would say, in a minute and a huff). An hour later, back at the motel, with my bass and clothes now packed, I began to muse on how I was going to get home to my 64th street NYC apartment from Atlanta. In those days, no credit card. Despairing, I decided to call my former bass teacher David Walter, who was principal bass in this orchestra as well as its personnel manager. Using the motel's phones I was connected to David's line, but by mistake could overhear that he was already talking with the orchestra manager, Colonel Gordon Andrews back in NYC. The manager was saying words such as "blacklist" and "I'll see that he never works another day in New York." I quietly put down the phone and waited a few minutes to call David to ask to rescind my quit notice. He allowed as that might be a good idea, making no mention of the call he'd received from New York. That night on the way to the performance every member of the orchestra came to the long bench in the back of the bus where I collated the music for the folders and each one picked up his or her own music. No word of the day's events. I was deeply touched.

#### My El Greco

When I lived, loved, free-lanced, and taught in NYC, the museums that I most often frequented, the Met and the Frick, were walking distance from my Upper East Side apartment. They were also free. You just walked in, stayed a few



minutes, or a few hours, and walked out, having viewed some of the greatest art in the world. I took advantage of this and somehow became enamored of the El Greco "Christ Expelling the Money-Lenders," aka "Purification of the Temple" at the Frick Collection. I was often deep in contemplation of this masterpiece (but rather small-size, just 16.5 inches by 20.5

inches). There's so much to observe, so many emotions, so much action and so much vibrant color, the framing of Christ's head, the angles of the fraught ones, all makes for one of the most compelling paintings I know. Anyway, one afternoon as I was lost in my admiration for the work, I felt a tugging at my sleeve. This is an unusual sensation when one's so involved in a museum moment. I looked around and saw my bass student Ralph. Wow, what a coincidence that he was here in the Frick! He said, "you're supposed to be teaching me a lesson." I'd obviously forgotten and while walking back to my apartment/teaching studio I asked Ralph how he knew where to find me. He thought in a silly question, of course I'd be at

the Frick looking at the El Greco.



# An Art Song Miracle

In 2016 I'd endured some tough health issues and cast about for people to take over my radio program *Singing and other Sins*. Maya, who had replaced me for a few years was now too busy to return. The soprano Rachel Schutz and her then pianist

husband Jonathan Korth seemed like a good alternative, but they were touring with Lieder recitals too often to make it work. In Spring of 2016 the president and general manager of HPR, Mike Titterton, was training his successor and called a meeting of all the HPR local music producers to discuss our work and meet José, his soon-to-be replacement. We all had our hopes, wishes, fears, and opinions. Mine was that since I was in my 75th year it was time for me to find a successor. The program of art song on the radio was now unique in the world and I didn't want it to disappear. No one had any suggestions and thought that it would be difficult to find someone with the necessary background to handle it. It looked rather bleak.

In June, the pianist/accompanist to the great ones, Dalton Baldwin, wrote me a letter telling me that a friend of his, an art song expert was moving to O'ahu and would be contacting me. Sure enough, in July I received a nice card from Blair Boone-Migura asking to meet. We had lunch and by August he had created his first SaoS program. By January 2017 he was doing two programs each month. I was much relieved to imagine that he would be taking over completely one day. I couldn't have conceived of a more perfect person for the position: he knows and loves art song; he's a singer and a pianist of art song; the founder and president of the Art Song Preservation Society of New York; teaches Art Song and Vocal Pedagogy at the University of Hawaii, Manoa; and is a consistently nice guy, easy to work with. If I had personally designed the perfect replacement for me, I couldn't have conceived of anyone as perfect as Blair. In the Fall of 2019, Blair decided to spend more time back in NYC and stepped back. I'm ok; my health has improved and each week it's still fun for me to create a new program on my own.

# Attractive Girl/Angry Guards

In 1975 I was smitten by a beautiful young woman who happened to be a lifeguard at one of the big outdoor pools of Munich where I swam. We flirted at a party and made arrangements to meet the next night for a swim at the pool after it was closed. It was late, dark, moonless, and deserted when I climbed over the six-foot chain-link fence with no problem and began swimming lengths nude. On one of my turns, I saw a white blur in the distance that I believed was the young lady in question. Swimming toward the whiteness (without my contacts), it soon became apparent

that it was actually two night security guards. When they saw me they said "Pfui" in Bavarian, implying that I'd somehow besmirched the pool by swimming in it naked. They wanted to take me to the entrance and file charges, but I convinced them that my clothes and bike were next to the fence and I quickly exited as I'd entered. I never encountered that beautiful young lifeguard again.

#### Pounded on the Pavement

In 1973 I lived in my famous rent-controlled building (\$42.50 @ month) on East 64th Street in a rather good part of Manhattan. After a tough day of bass playing, bass teaching, and usually some swimming for my back pain, I'd go down to the East River Walk and enjoy the relative peace of a late evening stroll. The path was



East River Walk

fairly well-lit and made to be used for just the reason that I was there: individuals sat on benches and looked out over the East River, couples walked hand-in-hand. One could be quiet, walk, and cogitate. I was doing just that when three big white guys came up to me and obviously wanted some kind of confrontation. It was so surprising that I hardly had time to respond when one of them got behind me and put me in a headlock (half nelson?) while the others started beating me up in front. They'd

obviously planned this a bit because at this point there were no other people in the

vicinity and they could do whatever they liked. At one point I believed that these thugs must have observed that I'd been hit so much, was bleeding and screaming out loudly in pain, that they'd obtained their goal of a quick torture. But they weren't through: as I dropped in agony to the pavement, they surrounded me and that's when I noticed that they wore combat



Clockwork Orange scene

boots or big hiking boots. I recognized that as they started kicking me. They were in the same kind of circle that occurred in Kubrick's *Clockwork Orange* and to complete the movie's scene they were spouting Slavic-sounding syllables. Now, I

thought, they've finished their sport and will leave me in a humiliated, bleeding mess in a fetal position. But they still weren't through: I had been tormented physically but there was at least one more thing they could do. They searched my pants, found my keys, and threw them into the East River.

### **East River Recovery**

As an adjunct to the above story, I need to add a few sentences to complete the saga. I lay in my blood, pedestrians passed seeing only a dirty street person and avoided any contact. I finally tried to stand and walk, but the thugs had kicked me in the back so much that my kidney area hurt terribly. If I pushed both fists into my kidneys it would dull the pain enough that I could walk. Thus I arrived back at my apartment (I've forgotten how I got in without my keys!) and fell into what seemed a drug-induced sleep. My body just wanted to escape the pain and trauma of the brutal beating. When I woke the next day I discovered that they'd kicked my head so much that they'd given me a concussion, bloodied my lips, and I could only move my mouth only in a kinda crooked manner as if I'd had a stroke. I was a busy freelancer and as soon as possible got on the phone to line up people to play rehearsals, gigs, etc. Jaime took over my teaching in New Jersey. Other colleagues could take this assignment or that and after the morning was over I made it to the police station to report the incident. I walked bent over because of the kidney pain. The police weren't very interested. This occurred at a time when mugging was a most common occurrence in the city. A few weeks later the police called me back and had me look at mug shots to try to identify the guys, but it was too late. My memory of what they looked like had faded and no photo reminded me of them.

## More than Physical

Though I'd been mugged before the brutal affair described above, this one seemed to take a toll. Not only physically, but also leaving a kind of baffling insecurity. Now we'd probably say PTSD, but in 1973 I just felt confused. I remember that a bass student helped me over to a YMCA pool, my face still swollen from the mugging, and walking bent over like an old man. When we got to the pool's edge I just let myself fall in and float there inadvertently catching the attention of the

lifeguard who thought I'd had a stroke or something. I reassured him and moved around a little and thus began my slow recovery. Swimming was one of the things that I could do, so I did it a lot. It never occurred to me to see a doctor; in those days we didn't have medical insurance and somehow we just paid our individual doctors whatever they asked us for. Actually, I usually paid cash right in the doctor's or dentist's office. But back to my tale of recovering from the Legend of the Three Big White guys. Since I couldn't play bass and thus didn't need my car to drive the bass out to the Queens Symphony, Westchester Philharmonic, etc, I loaned my VW to my neighbors. After their trip to the beaches of Long Island, they contacted me to say that my car was totaled. I've forgotten the story of the accident, but alloversudden I had no car. It was kinda beat up anyway, so when the insurance adjuster called I agreed to whatever he said. The check came through and it wasn't enough to buy another car. I continued to improve, meet with friends, and try to figure out when I could return to my normal life. It was at this time that Diane left a message on my telephone tape recorder telling me that Nana had died. Alone. Though my parents knew that she was on her deathbed, they had scheduled a cruise and that took precedence. Mom had been so close to her mother; I was amazed that she didn't stay. But she wasn't all that nice, so it was, as usual, Helen first. Next catastrophe: as I ran or lunged across an avenue I somehow lost my wallet: ID, money, the works. We didn't have credit cards then, so it wasn't that tragic, but between the death of my grandmother, the brutal mugging, the loss of my car, and wallet, along with my psychological dismay at everything, I felt that the universe was telling me to leave NYC. But I was ensconced there: I was doing the radio programs, had bass students at Ryder College in New Jersey and at MSM, along with my private ones. I played in a lot of freelance orchestras and that could continue when I recovered. I even had two cheap places to live (that story later).

So I began asking people where in the world I could go. My criteria were: the city had to have good orchestras, the people should like Americans, their central park had to be so safe that their citizens strolled it at night with impunity, and the country allowed foreigners to play in their orchestra (which I knew eliminated London where you needed to stay for over a year before you could even apply for

a work permit). Well, it may have been a coincidence, or maybe the truth, but everyone I asked said only one city: Munich. I knew nothing of the place but quickly made it my goal, went to the library to borrow a book on German, and began to study. I knew a few words from the Lieder I loved so much, but without a teacher, my progress was really limited. Little by little, as I regained strength, started practicing bass again, read a travel book on Munich, and got over some of my psychological fears, I became excited about travel, adventure, and Munich. For the stories of my first days there, please go to the Germany chapter.

#### Bass on the Bus

It was 1964, I was a serious student at Manhattan School of Music working on my masters of music. I lived on East 88th Street and took the bus on Second Avenue up to 105th Street where the school was located. Besides bass, my courses were music history, theory, ear training, and choral conducting.

I practiced bass in my apartment, annoying my neighbors who pounded on the walls (not in sync to my playing). Every day I needed to haul the bass on the city bus to rehearsals at MSM. Part of my scholarship demanded that I not only play principal bass but also manage the orchestra and make sure each music stand had the right music for the day's rehearsal.

A bass is larger than a person, even in its cloth carrying case. The bow fit inside

the carrying case and sheet music was held in a zippered pocket.

Textbooks filled my bulging backpack.

Carrying the bass to and from bus stops was all the exercise I needed.

The fare was 15 cents, which had gone up from 10 cents, the year I'd moved to NYC.



One snowy morning I was waiting for the bus in my down jacket, gloves, and earmuffs. As soon as a bus arrived I jumped aboard, but this time the driver put his hand over the metal machine that received our coins. "Not on THIS bus," he said sternly. I was so taken aback that I said nothing and stood there in the well with the bass. We were at loggerheads. Exasperated I just leaned on the familiar bass and the heartless driver just kept his hand in place.

A chorus of the full bus started agitating; they needed to get to work. "Let him alone!" "Be nice." "Let him on!" But he'd have none of it and in a surly tone let them and me know he was in charge. I wasn't traveling on HIS bus with that bass!

Then a strange thing happened as if choreographed or scripted in a movie: the enraged passengers left en masse by the back door (in the falling snow) to wait for the next bus. Bass and I also disembarked; when the next bus arrived the passengers explained what had occurred and we weren't charged anything. We all got on together without incident, except now we all felt like comrades at arms.

## Driving on the Sidewalks of New York

From 1970–1973 I played bass in the Municipal Concerts Orchestra of New York conducted by Julius Grossman. In the winter we played for retirement homes, prisons, insane asylums, and other "special" places. This was supported by NYC and was thus a union gig that had a regular schedule. I was the only bass until the summer rolled around when we grew to more than just the string orchestra. A whole Mozart/Haydn/Beethoven-size orchestra played in the parks of the boroughs; Central Park already had plenty of classical music attention.

Two stories stick in my mind. Since we played in many strange, out-of-the-way places I couldn't use public transportation, so my VW was put into use and I usually picked up another orchestra member who needed the ride. One time, I believe it was in Queens, we got stuck in no-move traffic. Barry Finclair was my passenger and he was not only a member of the violin section but also played solos with the orchestra. I was the only bassist. It was getting closer and closer to "curtain" and we weren't moving. I told Barry to hold on and drove up onto the sidewalk and got around the traffic and we made the concert in time! He never forgot that experience and told it in my presence whenever he could.

Another time, on the freeway on the way to a Bronx concert the hood of my car flew open. I couldn't see, so I opened the window and stuck my head out, all the while honking my horn like crazy till I could pull over to the shoulder and shut the hood. Barry liked to also retell that one. In the Julius Grossman obit, it mentions that the orchestra was named after him in 1980 and he continued to conduct it almost until his death at the age of 90 in 2002. He was a lovely, likable guy and I wish now that I'd stayed in touch after leaving NYC for Munich.

#### West was West

When I lived in Berlin it was the 1970s, so I actually lived in West Berlin. That was the zone that was occupied by the Americans and Brits. Berlin itself was an island within communist East Germany and the German Gestapo mentality had infected the police and the regime that had built the Wall to keep its people from leaving East Berlin.

That made it all the more humorous one time when I was traveling from Munich to Berlin with my bass and the armed guards came aboard the train to inspect. My bass straddled from one luggage rack to the other above our compartment and they made sure to have me open the zippers to make sure that no one was hiding inside! As if someone would want to sneak *into* East Germany!

### East is not East

Getting into East Berlin from West Berlin was accomplished with the elevated old rail line that was suspended on noisy trestles. The view from above of the two halves of Berlin made the rickety nature of the ride worth it. In the 1970s there was a kind of musical war between the two Berlins: which orchestra or opera company could present the best productions thus showing that capitalism or communism was really better. That's also the reason that I went as often as I did to East Berlin. *Die Frau ohne Schatten* is rarely produced anywhere. Mahler symphonies were another enticement. But once inside the East Berlin border the Gestapo tactics were employed. They "caught" me bringing in a book by Krishnamurti and took me aside for further searching. The guards lectured me fiercely that there was to be no spiritual material brought into the DDR (Deutsche Demokratische Republik). I did bring back to West Berlin musical scores which were a lot cheaper

to purchase in East Berlin. When we performed SOB concerts in the Philharmonie we walked through the bombed-out rubble from twenty years past and also saw the famous Checkpoint Charlie which appeared in the movies.

#### Black Terror

In about 1972 I was visiting Denis Lund's Lower East Side dreary apartment which was in a dangerous part of the city. It was such a primitive building that there wasn't even have a lock on his door, but the price was right. He rigged up some rope designs on the outside of the doorframe that would show him if someone had gotten inside and he'd call the police before entering. It hadn't happened, and besides, he was as poor as his neighbors and there wasn't anything inside to steal. One time we were entering his apartment and obliviously chatting away when three rather tall black guys pushed us inside. They'd come up from behind us without our noticing. Once inside they wanted whatever we had that was valuable: they took a wristwatch from Denis and then discovered a large jar of herbs that they hoped was MJ. Denis and I were pushed around, intimidated, and even given a light beating before being tied up to chairs and gagged. They opened his large glass container and pulled off his muzzle so that he could ID the contents, which much to the robbers' consternation wasn't pot, but rosemary. While he could talk, the ever-observant Denis noticed that they wore military boots, the same kind that he'd worn in Vietnam, and tried to establish some rapport: a bunch of guys who'd all served in Nam. It didn't work. And they got more violent when they discovered I didn't have money, (neither did Denis), and now they feared we'd call the cops and they'd get arrested. They ripped out the telephone line and said they'd be watching the place and if we came out soon to get help they'd kill us. The thieves didn't seem high or drunk, and we agreed not to report them if they just left. After a bit more bullying they did leave and we untied ourselves, grateful that we hadn't had our cheeks sliced or slashed, which was happening a lot in NYC when black muggers worked over white victims. We emerged after an appropriate time of waiting and I returned to the safety of my apartment on West 64th Street. The next morning I had a Bach Cantata Lutheran service and as we were warming up I felt a poke in my back and looked around and almost screamed: a black friend who was a member of the chorus had come

up to pretend to hold me up and scared me so much that he was shocked at my response. I quickly explained what had happened the day before and he apologized, not for the entire recent sins of his race, but for sending me into such a panic. A few minutes later we were both enveloped in a soothing, spiritual, ethereal, moving, but demanding Bach Cantata.

### Jamgocian to the Rescue

When I was in fifth grade our teacher, Mr. Jamgocian (he was Armenian and made sure we learned to spell his name), had us draw with crayons. We'd already done our patterns and geometric shapes. Then one day he put up in front a rather large painting for us to copy. I was sitting in the back of the class and I drew exactly what I saw: interesting configurations of bright color, completely abstract. As we were coloring Mr. J. walked around the class and when he saw what I'd drawn, took me up to the front of the class to get an up-close look at the painting. It was a simple still life painting! He immediately understood that I needed glasses and told my parents who followed up. I soon had one more reason to be picked-on: fatty, fatty four eyes. When I first got my glasses I begged to sleep outside: I'd never seen stars before and they were too beautiful and thrilling for me to miss.

# "Gary, What have you done?"

I was preparing my important (for me, at least) Munich Amerikahaus solo bass recital in 1977 and needed to rehearse with my pianist from MSM conservatory days, Alex Farkas, who was living and studying in Budapest. I hadn't been to that country so I eagerly agreed to go there to rehearse and stay with Alex, his wife Toni, and their new baby. They asked if I could bring them some health food items that weren't available in the rather limited stores of the communist regime then in power. No problem. Bass, bow, luggage, and an extra bag of seeds, soy flour, and nuts all boarded the train that was still called the Orient Express. Everything went well. My bass, as usual, stretched from one side of the train compartment to the other, above the seated people and still left room for bags, etc. When we entered the socialist republic of Hungary new guards arrived. Strict and demanding. They had us open our suitcases and bags and when they saw my clear plastic bags filled with various powdered grains they were immediately suspicious.

With weapons drawn they demanded that I go with them to their interrogation cabin. My bass, luggage, and especially the bag containing health food all went to the security guards' enclave. Among languages, we settled on German and the guards were reasonable about everything except a rather large bag (perhaps two pounds) of soy flour. They were dubious that it was what I said and for what seemed like a very long time grilled and interrogated me as if I were a real enemy of the people. After telling them about soy as a good alternative to meat, especially for vegetarians such as myself and my American friends in Budapest, for some reason, they became quite intrigued to learn about vegetarianism. But they still seemed suspicious about the plastic bag of light-colored meal. In an unguarded moment, I grabbed the bag back from the head guard, opened it, and licking my finger stuck it into the flour and then into my mouth. They let out a chorus of a whoooshing sound of disbelief but were immediately convinced that it wasn't cocaine, or whatever they anticipated. In retrospect, I supposed that if you did that with a real drug you'd collapse or die. After all the tension that we'd been through, they now started to relax. The two rather rough-looking men and a woman guard put their rifles away and we all sat around their cabin and told our stories. Why was I headed to Budapest? Why did I play bass? By the time we pulled into the Budapest train station we were like old buddies. I loaded my stuff down onto the platform and the uniformed guards handed my bass down to me as Alex came running up crying out, "Gary, WHAT have you done?!"

### Control that Vibrato

Now it would be taboo, frowned upon, a felony, a fireable offense, but back then these two 15-year-old boys somehow found themselves visiting their orchestra teacher's local apartment. During the school year (1969–1970) of my teaching stint at the junior high in Farmingdale, I became close to violin students Fred and Ted. As usual, we played LPs and talked music. The subject came up of my nervous, too-tight vibrato on the bass. I demonstrated and they shook their heads in disapproval but had a plan: they got me to smoke some of their pot. Being high helped me improve my vibrato: Control, relaxation, steadiness, all the elements that make up good vibrato on any string instrument. They even recorded me

playing long-held tones on my reel-to-reel before and after. I continued to have that vibrato under control for the rest of my playing career! Thank you, guys.

## Spontaneous Dislocation

A rare (for Bavaria) picture-perfect sunny day found Tubaist pal Horst and me swimming in a lake. Here's what he writes:

What a frightening experience...I don't even want to remember that day. You suffert so much, shaking and waiting for help...terrible. The name of the small lake: Poschinger Weiher, also known as Unterföhringer See. In 1913 the Isar-Channel was built and they took material out of the environment so the hole became a lake...By the way, at that time Thomas Mann build a house (villa) in the vicinity of that lake: on Poschinger Straße Nr.1. He loved the house and called it "Die Poschi."

Horst and I kidded around a lot when we swam and on this day he decided to scare me by swimming up from below to tickle my belly while I was in mid-stroke. I jerked and my right arm spontaneously dislocated with a jolt of pain. I immediately stopped and he and I looked on in shock: I had no shoulder! It looked ghastly and felt worse. Horst quickly swam off to get help. I struggled to shore with one arm for what seemed hours but was probably more like ten

minutes where some kind people wrapped me in a blanket. I was shivvvvering from pain. Finally, Horst arrived to take me to a hospital. I was in unimaginable pain during the whole trip. When we arrived I was in too deep a trauma to check-in or even say my name. Horst took care of



all that and in a few minutes a doctor's foot (with his sock on) was under my armpit and my arm popped in like a magic trick. Thanks, Germany for universal

health care. But from then on, until an expensive operation in California a year later, the shoulder would dislocate easily. And painfully.

## Fame in One Day

When I returned to the States in 1977 I wasn't known, didn't have free-lance work, and took whatever playing opportunity presented itself. A letter from my former Manila student Angel Peña, who was playing in the Honolulu Symphony Orchestra, asked if I'd like to cover for a missing bassist in an outdoor concert. I've forgotten who was missing. At the time they only used four bassists. Anyway, I jumped at the chance. It was great to see Angel and his family again. The gig

turned out to be a fun concert: playing in the outdoor Waikiki Shell with Van Cliburn and his Tchaikovsky piano concerto, among other things. While staying in Angel's little apartment on the side of Punchbowl I decided I'd like to see a waterfall. He volunteered his daughter Irma to take me hiking on the Manoa Falls trail. She wasn't very sure of the way and at that time very few people hiked it. Nowadays it's like a parade of walkers, hikers, tourists, and children going along a very well-maintained gravel path. Anyway, we lost our way and I tried to regain the original trail by scaling a 90-degree cliff, that nonetheless had plenty of bushes growing out as



well as stone outcroppings to catch onto. But at one point only my bad arm was holding me and the shoulder popped out again (for only the second time). Since I knew what was happening, some of the psychological pain was absent, but it was still horrible. Irma kept repeating over and over, "I did not know that would happen." A hiker saw us and ran for help. The dislocated shoulder looks very weird. I hobbled along toward the trailhead and another young man came by and saw my plight. He offered to help me walk and supported one side with my left arm over his shoulder while I let the bad arm just droop, which lessened the pain. Exhausted from the ordeal, I begged to stop for rest and hung limply on a branch

with my good arm. That allowed the dislocation to right itself and it popped back in on its own. The pain immediately disappeared and Irma, the lad, and I arrived at the trailhead to see a huge firetruck with emergency help available. We told them that I was ok, but they were also there for someone who had fallen over the Manoa Falls. The next day I was in the headlines (along with the really badly damaged hiker who fell) and the musicians in the orchestra kidded me that I was only in Honolulu a day and made the front page. Though the right arm still hurt, I was still able to play the rehearsals and concert.

# "How Will I Recognize You?"

A professor at the University of Hawaii at Mānoa called me because she wanted help in setting up a small vocal recital for a visiting lecturer. She wasn't a musician and needed my input for this. We agreed to meet in the lobby of Orvis Auditorium on the UH campus. I asked how we were going to know each other, "do you have magenta hair or something?" "Yes," she replied, "that's how you'll recognize me." Talk about Too Crazy to Be True, that is indeed how I found her.

### Two Letters Cross in the Night

In 1967 I was in Manila teaching a large group of students of all ages (from 16-67); there were women bassists,—unusual for the time—and even a nun. The outstanding student was 19-year-old Jimmy Austria, who had already studied with Johnny Gosalvez, who taught bass at the University of the Philippines. As soon as I saw that Jimmy was unusually talented I began to plan for him to do advanced work when my one year contract expired. My idea was for him to begin first at the Music Academy of the West for the summer and then attend Manhattan School of Music to finish his degree. I wrote two deceptive letters, one to the JDR III Fund (which had financially supported us Americans teaching in Manila) saying that MSM was offering Jimmy a full scholarship if he could get support for his living expenses. The other letter, sent to MSM, said that the JDR III Fund was able to provide his living expenses if Jimmy was assured of a full scholarship from the conservatory. I made a tape of his playing and even interviewed him so that the supporting institutions could get to know something of his personality. Both institutions provided the financial support Jimmy needed and he got both his BA

and MM in New York. I never found out if either institution had ever compared my devious letters.

### We're Pill-Takers

In 2007 I was biking in Honolulu and stopped at a red light. When it turned green I began to pedal but a taxi started up faster than I, hit me hard, throwing me into the air, wrecking the bike's back wheel, and landing me hard on one shoulder. I got the name, etc. from the driver and carried my bike back to the condo. My shoulder really hurt so I decided to go to the Kaiser ER which was then still available at Pensacola Street within walking distance. When I arrived the receptionist had me fill out a short form. After I gave it to her she said that I'd forgotten to list the drugs I was taking. I told her that I wasn't taking any and she said, "Just sit down there for a while and you'll remember." She couldn't believe that a 66-year-old man wouldn't be taking any drugs at all.

#### **Tuff Marine**

From a distance, it looks like a human face profile and the Hawaiians have named it in the honor of the loser of a terrific fight between two demi-gods that laid this one on his back. Some friends and I were hiking Olomana on the Windward side of O'ahu. I'd done it many times and enjoyed the whole experience, especially the views from the summit (Olomana's nose). About six Marines were



This gives you the idea of the steep rock at Olomana

inadvertently hiking in tandem with us. Some really hunky guys. At one point you come to a 90-degree sheer rock face that's only scalable by using the cables and ropes that some friendly hikers have secured. All the Marines but one got up easily but that one (the buffest) was freaked out and kinda left behind. His buddies kidded him a bit and then went on without him. He was mortified but too scared

to do anything about it. I took him aside and walked him out of view of everyone and told him that it wasn't dangerous and that he could either watch me (an old fart of 60) climb with the cables, or I'd stay behind to push him up from the bottom if that would help. He chose the first option and was beaming with joy when he met me at the top, had overcome his fear, and was able to join his pals.

#### Mokulua Madness

One beautiful sunny morning my young friends Mark & Mike, joined me to kayak

out to the Mokulua in the middle of Kailua Bay. The night before had been stormy and when we landed saw gigantic waves intensified as they pushed their way between the two islands. They were immense. I threw off my swim trunks and rushed into the crashing torrent. It was too exciting to miss! The others stood mute watching me, accustomed to me doing crazy stuff. Once in the



turbulence, I discovered that I couldn't control myself. As soon as I'd start to swim another big wave would come and throw me to the bottom. All I could do was catch a breath between the sets and then get tossed down again. I just wanted out! At one point I thought about my bass playing commitments and who'd be available to cover for the deceased Gary. Then I started a kind of stroke that's like a windmill. It takes a lot of energy and you can only do it for a short time but it was enough to get me out of the whirling water and I was able to swim to shore. After I caught my breath we paddled home. Mark commiserated; Mike didn't speak a word. Later he told me that I should have taken his silence as a compliment.

### Ruined Vacation

In 1985 my parents came to visit Miguel and me on O'ahu. They stayed at a nearby b&b and we had a good time. While we were walking down to the "From

Here to Eternity Beach" it started to sprinkle and my mother cried out "Oh, Al, our vacation is ruined!" This became a kind of running joke ever after. All my friends would call that out at the first sign of rain. But this story is also about my father. The next day, artist Miguel took my mother (a fellow artist) to a life drawing class at UH so Dad and I were free to hike. We began the Kalawahine trail which ends up at a lookout where you can see both sides of the island. As we were returning my father asked if we had time to do two hikes. I said that we were supposed to meet Mom and Miguel for lunch but we still had time. He suggested that we run the rest of the hike to leave us enough time for a second one. Dad was 75 but wasn't even panting when we reached the car. I took him on that second shorter hike and we were still able to have lunch at the appointed hour.

# Overhead Nailing

My father's strength and endurance never ceased to amaze me. The warehouse in Compton had a rickety roof and he decided that if he hammered nails into the crosshatching support it would be more stable. The problem was that you needed to climb a very high ladder, put down a supporting piece of plywood on the beams, and then lay on your back and hammer over your head. This he did for hours at a time. Hammering is hard enough, try it hitting nails overhead! The building is still standing.

# Dueling Frugal Guys

I mentioned earlier that my father and I had duels to discover who was the more frugal. I'd always found clever ways to keep costs down (that's another way of saying that I was a skinflint). These contests were in good spirit and we never were at a loss to tell one more story on ourselves demonstrating how we'd saved a penny here or there. He was always strict about turning off unused lights and liked to let the car coast whenever possible. He liked to print up greeting cards from his computer. This allowed him to be creative and save some money. I finally topped him when I said that I didn't like to check the car's oil frequently because one needed to clean off the dipstick, thus losing a bit of oil each time you checked.

### Bassist Lifeguard

I've saved four people from downing; two in the ocean and two in pools. When I was an adult I was swimming with my mother who was a good swimmer. A wave surprised her and took her under and out. I saw it happening and swam out to grab her; the water wasn't deep and it was easy to bring her back to shore.

Years later I was swimming with my pal Denis Lund at Jones Beach on Long Island. A rip current caught him and he was swept out so quickly we both were hardly aware that it occurred. It wasn't difficult to help him; he was in good shape and the current just disoriented him and he kinda panicked. He didn't fight me when I arrived and we got back easily.

When I was in my 20s I was in a private home's pool with my UCLA roommate and his fiancée. It was a party announcing their wedding. His girlfriend and I were in the pool and she wasn't aware that she was in the deep end and went down to the bottom flailing. I got beneath her and pushed off from the bottom and easily brought her to the surface. She told me that in those few seconds she imagined the newspaper headline announcing "Fiancée Drowns."

The final story was in a YMCA in California. In those days of the late 1970s, we swam naked. It wasn't optional. I was doing laps when I saw this rather large black guy at the bottom of the deep end of the pool. He seemed to be in control so I did another lap but noticed he was still there. I interrupted the lifeguard who was reading a paperback novel and asked if he'd seen this guy. He hadn't, so I went down immediately to push him up and the lifeguard was at the edge to help drag him out of the water, completely unconscious. I ran (naked) into the lobby to call for paramedics. The lifeguard was applying CPU and the emergency guys arrived quickly, put him on a stretcher, and carried him off. I was afraid that he might have been under too long and have suffered brain damage, but he got my number from the Y and called a week later to thank me for saving his life. He had an illness that caused seizures and that's what had happened. He sounded fine.

### Getty Finds Gary

It was about 1990 and I was watering the yard in Kailua when Dennis called out that I had a phone call. The hose was still running when I answered and amid its din, a very professional sounding voice told me that the Getty Foundation would like to contribute to the Lotte Lehmann Foundation. I was flustered. One may NOT apply to the Getty for funds; they must seek you out. They had, but I'm afraid that the secretary knew that I was at no desk, running a huge enterprise. It was the only Getty grant we received.

### Moving Lotte

I've made plenty of mistakes in my life as you read in "Blunders." But the biggest error was thinking that the Lotte Lehmann Foundation ought to have its headquarters in NYC. It had been active and growing here in Hawai'i and it was just my East Coast snobbery that made me think that all good things occur there. It took a lot of work to move the Foundation. I flew out innumerable times meeting with people including two honorary positions: Former Lehmann student, Benita Valente, and the world's premier art song pianist Dalton Baldwin. Philadelphia stationed Valente arranged to meet me in NYC and hesitantly allowed the Foundation to use her name. Baldwin was a big Lehmann fan and had no trouble joining. A new East Coast board and their brilliant ideas seemed to auger well. Besides the on-going CyberSing international art song performance competition, they added an art song composition contest. This seemed like a great idea until I learned that the entries were NOT going to be anonymous. "We all know who the good young composers are," the new president told me. That should have been a warning.

# Meaning of "Giving Back"

When the Lotte Lehmann Foundation moved to NYC the new president hired a friend of his as CEO who would act as secretary and fundraiser. After a few months of paying him, I noticed that he'd done nothing and asked the president about that. He replied that the CEO was being let go and that he'd "give back" his salary. In the next financial report, I saw that there was no money came in

from the former CEO and asked the president. He said, and I quote: "That's not what 'give back' means."

## Ocean Memory

Friends have asked me for my very first memory. It's vague and almost more a feeling than a real memory. We were at the beach and my folks had made a little sand boat around me at the edge of the water. I remember the gentle waves sloshing over the edge. I felt secure.

### Almost Japanese

When Katsuumi and I were first lovers he always included me in the outings of his Japanese friends. They didn't bother translating for my benefit and I generally understood what was happening. One New Year's Eve they all got together and decided to make me a real Japanese. They'd already decorated the tables with the traditional mochi balls and somehow they had assembled a complete kimono outfit for me: all the layers, the obi, etc. It took time for several of them to dress me. I felt a part of the group in a special way. Can you

imagine that no one took a photo!

### Horst, Me, & Venice

One early Friday morning in Munich I was completing my ablutions when I heard a call from the street. It's Horst. Would I like to go to Venice? I'm on the third floor so I can't believe what he said. Please come up! When Horst arrived he said that he had the whole weekend free, did I, and if so, let's go to Venice. OK. We'd already had week-long vacations in the Virgin Islands (there's a story!) and Yugoslavia. It's a simpler time: 1977 and Horst had a car. Packing just a change of clothes and my passport we're off; we stop in the hinterlands of Munich to get a



Horst took this of me on the balcony of our hotel in Venice

haircut in the backyard of a friend of his. Then it's on to Venice. We'd made no plans for a place to stay, but found a small hotel that had space for us for two nights; we left our few things there and went about exploring. I'd been to Venice a few times so I knew what I wanted to be sure to see again and what I'd missed. Horst hadn't been before so I was his guide. We found treats including the honeycomb chocolate candy they make so well; a church concert of Baroque music; and more Veronese paintings than I remembered from before. I'll never forget this Venetian impromptu.

### St. John, Horst and Me

When Horst and I were staying with a friend of mine in Charlotte Amalie on St. Thomas of the U.S. Virgin Islands, we were free all day to use his car after we dropped him off at work (a bank). BTW they drive on the left side of the street there! We'd already driven like



crazy around St. Thomas, especially the then unpopulated beaches (even now there are only 18,000 inhabitants) so we decided to take an excursion to St. John. On the map, it looked like the whole island was a national park. We saw beaches with names, campsites, and other official-sounding spots, so we packed a liter of water, our swim gear, and took the ferry. Upon arriving we got out our map and headed for a spot that seemed to have a beach and went down along a beautiful jungly path until we did reach the shore. But there was no sign of civilization! No toilets, no drinking water, no building of any kind. Not another human! No worries, we'd find something, but for now, let's swim. We jumped in the beautiful water only to discover the infamous "no-see-ums." And they bite. We swam up and down the coast till we found a spot that wasn't covered in the mini-monsters, got out with the appropriate curses, grabbed our clothes, and hiked back up toward the road. We did start to notice that, in our belief that there were public services, we'd drunk our liter. Now, all we wanted to do was to get back to civilization and find some water. It was now very uphill and hot and we were thirsty. We tried not to think about our dry mouths and yet both of us would

immediately start to talk about something to drink. We couldn't control our subconscious craving. It seemed like hours until we finally reached the road. No cars were driving along this almost deserted island. We walked along but no one came by and there were no other people or buildings to be seen. It was 1975 and the place hadn't been developed yet. Finally, a VW appeared and we didn't bother trying to thumb a ride, but just stood blocking the road. The guy stopped but didn't have any water with him but would take us to a park. When we arrived we drank at the public drinking fountain and bought a quart of ice cream which we greedily devoured sitting on the ground under a coconut tree. I'm not sure about Horst, but I am sure that no other ice cream has ever tasted so good.

#### Never Need More

Here's a short, crazy, unbelievable story. In 1988 I bought a new computer. The young techie came to the house to set it up for me. "Wow, Mr. Hickling" he said, "this baby's got a whole megabyte, you're never gonna need anything bigger than this!"

### Recital Letdown

In 1972, just back from a punishing year teaching bass and music theory at the University of Northern Colorado, I prepared a recital for Lincoln Center's Bruno Walter Auditorium. I'd coached with my former teacher, David Walter who lent me his prized small-size "Botti" bass. I'd thoroughly prepared with my pianist and one of the composer/pianists on the recital. Two days before the performance the baritone who was singing Mozart's "Per Questa Bella Mano" with me got laryngitis and had to be replaced. NYC is awash in vocal talent and a young man was recommended who learned the work quickly and did a fantastic job. Violinist faculty member Don Robinson came out to play a bass/violin duet and my former student Jaime Austria played a bass duo with me. The exhaustive preparation was rewarded with a large audience. Just before we were about to play my recording engineer told me that the tape recorder for the hall was deficient! Afterward, David Walter invited many of the professional bassists in the audience back to his apartment for an after-recital party. When everyone was gathered he tore apart my performance work by work, my choices of repertoire, and highlighted every error

that I had made. He even objected to my choice of encore! Humiliation.

#### Ukulele Concerto

In 2014 my pal Bruse came up with a great idea: his hero, ukulele virtuoso Jake Shimabukuro, should play a ukulele concerto written for him and the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra. I thought bassist/composer/ukuleleist Byron Yasui would be the perfect match and brought the idea to the musicians' union. They liked the inspiration, so I approached Byron, a personal friend. He was also happy with the thought of writing the world's first ukulele concerto and getting a nice commission from the HSO (he'd already retired from years of teaching at UH). Byron just wanted to make sure Jake could read music. Jake had played some with the HSO concertmaster Iggy Jang, so I contacted him and was told that Jake could read, just not fluently, like a classically-trained musician. I talked to the HSO management and they were also



bukuro. "The people I grew up listening to."

The album also largely was inspired by Shimabukuro's recent ... well, travels. He has spent the last few years touring in other countries. This, he explains, helped to bring a "diverse" sound to Travels.

It's been three years since his last album and a lot, he says, has happened.

This past summer, for example, he per formed alongsade Hawaii Symphony Or-

some maturity - not too much, but a little bit more than my previous record," he adds

with a laugh." Up next, Shimabukuro will host his fourth annual Jake Shimabukuro & Friends Concert, set for 8 p.m. Dec. 12 at Hawaii Theatre. Tickets cost \$30-\$60. For more information, visit jakeshimabukuro com.

-Jaimie Kim

agreeable. It would take raising the commission money, getting the music printed, scheduling the rehearsals and concerts for the next season, and of course, most importantly, having Jake's approval. Through Iggy, I knew we already had that, so it was just getting everything else going. Each time I approached the HSO management they said that they had board approval, as well as that of conductor/ advisor JoAnn Falletta. They'd raised the money and were just waiting to actually commission Byron. Month after month I'd contact Byron and he'd tell me that

he'd heard nothing. Finally, I emailed Falletta and we spoke by phone. She assured me that she would get things moving. After another month passed with no commission, I called her and she was upset, saying that she'd get to the bottom of things. Soon the commission/contract was written and Byron told me that he'd already been writing music specifically for the concerto. Everything was turning out well. I suggested to management that members of the local ukulele band community be invited, but that fell on deaf ears. Months later Bruse and I were invited to the dress rehearsal and were impressed. Though not the typical "licks" that Jake used in his pop concerts, we heard an exciting ukulele concerto with a huge orchestra. Byron met Bruse and thanked him for the original idea. I attended both concerts and saw the positive audience reaction. Jake was interviewed and spoke of the joy of participating in the whole event.

#### Break a Rib

My trainer said that she'd noticed that one of my legs seemed to be shorter than the other and that I should see a chiropractor. The weekend before my 2017 Puna trip seemed a good time but while I was lying facedown on his table, the chiropractor "adjusted" my hips and broke a rib. I cried out so loud that I'm sure all of his patients in the waiting room fled in horror. He taped the rib area and I still had to pay for the session.

### Rent-Control Rescue

After my Manila year, I returned to NYC with no place to stay. I crashed in the one-room basement rented by Denis Lund, but knew that it was too small for one, much less two people. This was in 1967 before CraigsList, so I began to check the newspapers and bulletin boards for any apartment for rent. There were many such places, but so far beyond my finances as to be ridiculous. I asked everyone I knew, but no help. Finally, I decided that everywhere I went I'd loudly announce my need. At one point I was in an East Side health food store and when I made my announcement this woman came up to me in a conspiratorial fashion and whispered: "Let's go outside and talk." We did and she told me that she was leaving a rent-controlled apartment on East 64th street and that if I continued to pay the rent to "Matjov" there would be no change in the cost. I would never meet

this Matjov person and was to ask nothing but just pay a check every month for \$42.50. Even at that time, it was a bargain. It had two rooms: a small bedroom (I could touch both walls with my hands if I stretched out) and a small kitchen/living room/bathroom. Typical of the time, the toilet was separate and, to save space, the tank high up on the wall behind/above the toilet itself. The bathtub next to the kitchen sink had a metal cover and that served as a place to dry dishes. From the street, I was able to find a table and two chairs and that served as my living room furniture. A piece of foam was my mattress and friends supplied bedding. The "windows" looked out onto the wall of the next building, but a shaft allowed light to enter from six floors up. Whenever I discovered a discarded light globe, especially colored ones, I wired them up to the single one in the middle of the living room as a kind of street-art chandelier. I had no qualms of teaching my many students there, bringing all my pals for meals, as well as famous friends Jerome Robbins and Speight Jenkins.

# Matjov + 1

A related "Matjov" story: After I'd lived in the dark place for a few years I discovered that in the same block of buildings there was another place available. This was a three-story walk-up, had large bedroom windows facing the street, and was twice as large as my studio. It cost \$55 @ month. By that time I was earning enough with my freelance playing and teaching that I could afford it while still keeping the Matjov place (which being on the first floor) was a convenient place for basses, bassists, teaching, and practicing. The second place served as my living quarters. It was much less depressing and had beautiful brightly sanded hardwood floors. I also was able to pass this on when I left for Munich.

### Bowels vs Vowels

When I was in the third grade I wanted to skip the next day's class because it seemed to me the teacher said "tomorrow we're going to study our BOWELS!" I thought that was awfully personal. Of course, we were taught the vowels.

## Sinking Kayak

Eric and I had kayaked Kailua Bay many times, but one of my kayaks had been stolen, so I borrowed one from a friend who lived in front of our Kalaheo place. We got out past Bird Shit Island when I noticed that it was taking on water. The kayak (and I) were slowly sinking. Just as I was about to go under I reared back twisting my bad shoulder and almost dislocating it. I jumped out and slowly swam back to shore with one good arm. Eric wasn't such a good swimmer or he'd given me his kayak. He kept circling around me to make sure I could make it. When I finally arrived on shore I was so beat that I could only lie there recovering. Hours later the bad kayak floated up to shore and we dragged it back to its owner.

#### Mother's Intuition

In about 1950 my father was building our home in the desert mountains of La Cañada. At each stage of the actual construction, there'd be an inspection from

the bank to determine if there was enough collateral that they would release the next amount of the loan. On one occasion my father took my mother along to the bank meeting. My father was asking for the next installment when my mother pipes up with, "Why not just give us the whole amount?" This, my father told us later, demonstrated my



mother's complete lack of understanding of the whole process, but in her naïveté, she got the bank manager's interest and he said, "Why, not!" and made the rest of the construction process a much easier financial endeavor for my father.

### Bernstein Notices

On one occasion I was performing with the ASO under Stokowski and we were participating in some fundraiser or gala with Leonard Bernstein as guest pianist, not conductor, which was Stoki's job. When he entered for his solo he walked out between my stand partner and me who opened up space for him to enter. This was about 1972 when I was good looking; my stand partner was a little younger

and a knockout beauty. Anyone would have noticed his good looks. After Bernstein had finished his solo and taken his bow (and maybe said a few words to the audience, I forget the occasion) he left the Carnegie Hall stage the same way he'd entered. But this time as he approached the pair of us on either side of the stage door, he paused, looked at me then took in my stand partner, shook his head in jovial approval, and then left the stage.

### "Debbie Got Married"

I hadn't yet discovered my true sexual interest, so when I began my studies at UCLA I thought it would be fun to date a violinist from the Glendale High School orchestra with whom I'd gone to a few parties and proms. I called her home number and her mother answered and recognized my voice. "Gary [her voice falls an octave], I don't know how to tell you this, but Debbie got married in Las Vegas last week."

## Christianity Explained

I have two stories that by their telling explain a lot about things we take for granted. One day I was "babysitting" Eva. She was already a teenager but her mother had an appointment for PT, so we walked in the Roman Catholic cemetery next to my condo at One Archer Lane. Since both her parents are atheists she hadn't learned anything about Christianity. There were many Christian references on the tombstones that I tried to explain. I soon discovered that to an outsider, these things sound absurd. Mary flying up to join Jesus was just one of the difficult aspects of the religion. There are words written on tombstones that can seem ridiculous to someone hearing them for the first time.

### Baseball Explained

I was confronted with the same conundrum when in St. Thomas with Horst. He'd never seen baseball before and there was a high school game going on as we traversed the city of Charlotte Amalie. But try to explain baseball to someone whose basic knowledge of sports is centered on the balanced teams of soccer. "The winning player runs around a square only to return to where he started."

"It's him against the whole other team!" Well, you can see that it's a difficult concept and may have the same hold on most American minds as any religion.

Sports has always been a conundrum for me. I like doing things. Sports seems to be men watching other men do things that they don't do.

BTW I just saw a bit of the World Series broadcast on TV; the guys are wearing beards! The whole Gillette industry must be turned on its head!

### Last Yoga

My last nude yoga sessions at the Big Island's Kalani were "last" because it was the January 2010 of my heart attack. Before our first yoga class, I met a young man at dinner who was obviously being shepherded around by one of the instructors. I learned that he was from San Francisco and it was his first time visiting Hawaii. Though he looked nice, I could tell he was socially uneasy. At that point in my life, I still wore glasses or contacts, but not while doing yoga. So when we were all together and nude I didn't notice anything out of the ordinary. Only later when walking with him and finally swimming did I notice the recent surgery. He'd been a woman who'd undergone a sex change to become a gay man. It still boggles my mind. He turned out to be one of the really helpful, caring guys in the hospital, helping to send me off to O'ahu for the care I needed after the heart attack with my wallet and other ID stuff I'd left back at Kalani.

## **Boys Dancing**

I was 16 years old in 1957 and I used to attend dances held off-campus. They often played rather lively jitterbuggy music and the girls kinda held back and everyone just stood around. I found a guy and we "danced" together. This wasn't the kind of dancing in which we held each other, but we did hold hands as we flung ourselves around the dance floor. We were the only ones dancing and the rest of the crowd just looked on. The next morning a neighbor called my mother to report this and I was told that I should no longer dance with boys.

# Boy Dances with Girl

At a Halloween dance held at about the same time in our neighbor's basement, I'd been persuaded by my mother to go as a girl. She found the clothes (no bra) and

mostly used makeup to achieve the effect. I was too innocent to know how this must have been perceived by my group of other high schoolers. When I appeared at the door, the father let out a gasp and laughed. I quickly doffed the dress and wiped off as much of the lipstick etc. as possible, because Wendy, my crush, was there and I wanted to dance with her. As it happened, several guys got into a tussle about who was next to dance with her and I stepped gallantly in. I was in heaven. Later I sent her a secret letter. She never mentioned it. It was typed and unsigned, how could she? Another time Wendy and I were together; it was also a really wonderful moment for me. The two of us headed the youth choir walking into the church singing "Holy, holy, holy." She and I had hardly spoken; I admired her from afar. The only time I remember her coming up to me to initiate a conversation was when she asked that I help our class gather ferns from the mountains (where she knew I hiked) for the Shangri-La-themed junior prom.

#### IRS Doubts Me

I was a poor free-lancing musician and bass teacher in the 1970s and living in a tiny apartment. Two years in a row my Federal income tax was audited. The second auditor was a woman, who really believed I'd lied about how much I earned. "How can anyone live in Manhattan with as little as you report?" And I told her that I paid \$42.50 @ month for my little place, I was vegetarian (she asked for some of my money-saving ideas and recipes), there was no TV or even a radio in my room, my bed was a piece of foam found on the street, and there was little time for the luxuries of movies or vacations that most people experienced. In both audits, I ended up paying nothing.

Strangely enough, when I was earning a regular salary at the thrift store in the late 1980s, I was audited again. This time it was for declaring the cost of dry cleaning the tails I wore for concerts with the Honolulu Symphony Orchestra. The auditor did NOT consider this a uniform "After all, you could wear this in other than the orchestra setting" and I had to pay a small fine for a disallowed deduction.

# Seeking Lotte in Europe

Though Judy Sutcliffe and I had been active participants in UCSB's 1988 Lotte Lehmann Centennial, an unknown circumstance put us on a jet to Frankfurt a year later with a grant to unearth new Lehmann material. The flight began auspiciously enough with the sounds of the *Rosenkavalier* Trio soaring in our headphones as we were bumped to first class. Judy and I looked at each other incredulously, knowing that the music was almost a Lehmann theme song. Among other such serendipitous occurrences included our discovery that Lehmann's former sound engineer from her Berlin recording days, now 90, wanted to divulge his long-term affair with her.

One of my goals was to discover metal masters of Lehmann's that were never released. We'd found such masters in Columbia and RCA archives that had been recently published on LPs and CDs. There were lists of such unpublished German recordings, going back to the acoustic horn days, but I could never discover if the metal masters still existed. This was my chance! So I called to Odeon, which is the company that recorded Lehmann, and somehow was finally able to talk to an engineer or archivist. And I learned that during the war, all the metal masters had been requisitioned by the Third Reich's war machine. I had then to picture Lehmann's beautiful sounds made into bullets and rocket casings!

### Crawling New York Sidewalks

I'd already seen a back specialist and he'd done some tests. This was 1970 so his method was actually lightly hitting the soles of my feet with a needle attached to a paddle. His diagnosis: bulging disc; he probably said "herniated." The cure: swim as much as possible. I liked that because, for me, swimming was fun exercise. A month or so after the doctor's prescription, I was swimming laps in one of the city's indoor pools when a young man dove right into the center of my low back. Wow! He just looked dismayed when he saw me writhing along the pool's edge; I'd gotten in the way of his dive. With that degree of pain, I don't know how I made it home. Anyway, when I woke the next morning I couldn't walk. But I could kinda crawl. So by this method of dragging myself along, I made it to my doctor's office. When he got me on his table and administered the same needle testing technique, this time he proclaimed with rage and accusation, "Goddamit! Now you've gone and ruptured it." He said I'd need surgery. I didn't want to consider that and with no such thing as health insurance that was not something that I could afford anyway.

Ann had already suffered back pain and suggested a second opinion from her orthopedist. I called my big black bruiser roller-derby friend, Billy, who came by, swooped me up like I was a rag doll, and drove me to the second opinion doctor. The alternative to surgery was to spend the next two weeks flat on my back (except for bathroom breaks), to let the body absorb the ooooze that had been squeezed out of my disc and pressed on the nerve. My friends outdid themselves. They brought meals, games, new LPs for me to hear, books, and magazines to read. I remember Ann bringing a pen that I could write with upside down. Though I couldn't play bass, I still needed to earn money, so I continued to teach lessons but now lying on my back. If a demonstration was needed, the student would lay the bass on top of me and I'd play from the prone position. Billy was especially attentive and, when the two weeks were up, he carried me down the steps to his car and to the second orthopedist. That doctor said that the cure had worked, but that to maintain my back health I should, in addition to swimming, do daily exercise of stretching and strengthening. He gave me an illustrated list of basic positions that have been elaborated over the years, but that I still do religiously every day of my life, even after fifty years, in spite of regularly developing "rational" excuses to avoid the boring repetition.

I've had some flareups of back pain from time to time. But I learned to play bass standing (no more stool) to keep an erect posture for most of the orchestral work that I did for the next four decades. I could even stand while playing solos, though a lot of high position work demanded that I bend far over the instrument. As I write this in 2020 the back pain is minimal and I've seldom needed to take any pain meds.

People often express admiration for my perseverance in repeating the daily back exercise routine. The real reason is not some kind of great will power, but rather routine and remembrance of how piercingly painful the back pain can be. Anything that one does every day for decades, at a certain point becomes a habit that's difficult to break, even if one wants to. I still swim as much as possible and have added weight training and the use of other equipment at the gym which has added to my flexibility and strength. Warm compresses, a TENS unit, ibuprofen, hot tub stretching, long careful walking, tennis balls strategically placed as I drive

or sleep, and of course swimming, have all contributed to some degree of pain control and avoidance. No more crawling to an orthopedic appointment.

#### Heart Attack Advice

The stents installed, the cardiologists who'd been attending me after the heart attack gathered round my hospital bed for the "talk." Yes, Mr. Hickling, you must make some lifestyle changes. Cut down on the red meat. I've been vegetarian for fifty years. Get plenty of exercise. I swam two hours in the open ocean the day before the attack and was leading a second hike with fellow yogis on the day of the cardiac event. Well then, be careful with alcohol. I'm a teetotaler. Think about doing something that will help with stress. I do yoga and meditation. Whew! Then it must be in your genes; just take the pills we'll prescribe.

### Quite a Coincidence

This story took place in 1979, on my first full day in Mexico City when I found a nice looking restaurant that had a cafeteria so that I could choose the food without saying the Mexican names. As I was checking out and paying for my breakfast I noticed a couple behind me speaking English. We struck up a conversation and they turned out to be Sam Agres, my future stand-partner in the Bellas Artes Orchestra, and his wife Nancy, who would lead the viola section. They were on their honeymoon. They were both vegetarians and I soon learned that Sam had studied with the Sivananda Yoga people, just as I had in Munich and Los Angeles. To this day, Sam and I recall the coincidence of that first meeting which has resulted in a friendship that has endured until today (2020). Sam and I share the same birth year and one further item that ties us together: he was the first to be offered my Manila job.

## Singing German in a Chinese Restaurant

At a point when the interest in the Hawaii Public Radio's art song contest was waning, I held a meeting with Big Island choral directors, voice teachers, singers, pianists, and supporters. About ten of us gathered in a downtown Hilo Chinese restaurant and before the actual meeting began I asked that we sing the art song anthem, Schubert's "An die Musik" A Hymn to Music. Without hesitation, a

cappella, the group held hands and sang (in German) both verses. Unexpected: they knew all the words to both verses.

## Nothing Happens After December

In a quiz in my elementary school, the teacher called upon one or another of us to tell her the name of the month before or after one she named. She asked me what came after December and I said "nothing." The class laughed.

### TIA Story

During 2016 and '17 I suffered a series of what I figured were TIAs, knowing their symptoms from my father's experiences that led to real strokes. In December 2016 one attack was so severe that I went to the ER and stayed overnight. In the morning I couldn't walk normally! My will and my brain had to signal which foot should move. The hospital provided a walker that kept me from falling over. A handsome physical therapist arrived to help, but nothing changed. Panicking and thinking that I was to remain thus handicapped I collapsed into a solid nap (the night before I was awakened every hour for blood work, etc.) Soon afterward I demonstrated to the PT hunk that I could walk (again) and was discharged. But throughout 2017 there were the symptoms: headaches, dizziness, and loss of balance after bending over. By mistake, I left my meds behind in Kailua the first week of 2018 and so took nothing that the neurologist had prescribed (B vitamin and magnesium oxide), nor the aspirin and statin that my regular doctor prescribed. No TIA symptoms! I decided to continue this new regimen. As I typed this in June 2018, I was still taking nothing (also no vitamins, supplements, etc.) and had no TIAs or other symptoms. I increased my daily exercise and restored some of my lost endurance. Now, it's June 2020, I'm on high blood pressure meds, baby aspirin, and statin but still have avoided most of the obvious TIAs. I'm not sure if this is a tale too crazy to be true or just a story without a real ending.

## Key to Carnegie

Dixon says that there should be a chapter called "I had the key to Carnegie Hall." Well, it's true; and so did the other bassists who stored one or another of their instruments in the Bassment. The key would have allowed me to sneak into

performances that I didn't play, but I never took advantage of the privilege. Remember, those were different, more trusting times. No security guard. I removed my instrument and turned in the key when I left for Munich in 1973. BTW in the 1980s there was also such a Bassment at Blaisdell Concert Hall in Honolulu where the Honolulu Symphony Orchestra performed and one of my basses was always there, so I could arrive for whatever rehearsal or performance with no hassle. No key needed because the place was open! Again, at that point, no security guard. Definitely simpler times.

## Christian Bullying

It may be hard to believe that a person like me with a high degree of self-esteem, could let myself be bullied. In Junior High, there were words: fatty four eyes, faggot, queer, etc. Those last words didn't mean anything to me except that anyone could tell that they were negative, shouted with angry smiles, uncomfortably close to my face in the showers of the gym, or upon boarding the school bus. In Sunday school, while the teacher was talking of Christianity, the guys who sat around me delighted in tormenting me in ways the teacher never noticed (or pretended not to notice). I stopped going to Sunday school and instead snuck into church, sat next to the organist (the famous Gaylord Carter) who read a *Time* magazine during the sermon and knew just when to slip onto the organ bench to play out grandly, "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost." Is that the Doxology? Anyway, growing thinner, and more self-possessed, the tormenting stopped and high school was free of it.

### Going to the Sunset

The first time I arrived in Provincetown, at the invitation of clarinetist pal Ted DeColo, he and a group of his friends came up to my car and almost in unison, called out "You wanna go to the Sunset?" For some reason, it seemed as if they were talking about a restaurant or club. They were all way cooler than I and that was what only cool people did. When I hesitated, searching for some excuse to avoid such a place, they were incredulous that I didn't want to join them on the dunes to watch the sun set.

### **Brainy Pokey**

Sometimes our neighborhood gang would hike with Ford Dixon, father of three of the group. He sounded like a rough guy and even looked tough, but he was kind, gentle, and was the guy who said that when people cursed, it was because they had a limited vocabulary. Anyway, we were hiking along one of the fire breaks rather high up in the desert mountains behind our homes. Pokey, our faithful dog (and sort of the dog of the whole neighborhood) was, as usual, loping along with us. She was an independent sort, always running off after different adventures. One time we saw her discover her first horned toad. Being curious, she tried to lick it and of course, that made her tongue bleed and she yipped away from that one. On this trip, we hadn't paid attention to where she was and only noticed her kind of calling to us from way down at the bottom of a steep slope. It was decomposed granite, and as much as she tried to climb up, she kept slipping back. Ford looked over the edge with sympathy and tried calling to encourage Pokey, but she'd try and slip down again. Then he looked around at the gang of us and asked all of us (except the only girl, Barbara) to take off our t-shirts and he tied them all together to make a kind of rope and threw it over the edge. Without hesitation, Pokey bit onto the improvised rope and Ford easily hauled her out.

As long as I'm on a Pokey, Too Crazy to be True story, I'll tell another, that was often repeated as we played with our neighborhood gang. Hide and seek was great fun outdoors but we had some limits. Whatever lot we were on (where we lived, or the Bruces, or the Dixons, etc.) was the limit. Even so, there were plenty of good places to hide and when the seeker got tired of finding the last person, he'd whisper in Pokey's ear, "find Jimmy" and off she'd go with the seeker in pursuit and soon enough, she'd sniffed him out. This was considered unfair, but we did it anyway, just to prove to ourselves how clever Pokey was.

Another Pokey story that always amazed our family: we seldom had reason to take her in the car. She was healthy, so no vet. She was too wild to accompany us on most trips, but once in a while, there was a reason for her to go. I remember once we were going up into the Angeles National Park, which was only about an hour away from our house to play in the snow. The "crazy story" part is that somehow

Pokey knew when we were planning to include her and she'd get all excited and dance around the car until it was time for her to join us.

My parents decided to buy Pokey when I was a three year old and scared of dogs. I picked her out of a pet store window full of puppies. She was a mix of cocker spaniel and spitz. She was sweet, allowing me quickly to overcome my fear. She was part of the family and healthy from running around our desert mountains. She'd come home smelling just like we did: of sagebrush. One time, during the noise of Independence Day, she ran off and we didn't see her again for weeks. She returned on her own, no worse for the adventure.

As she began to turn grey, my folks thought that she'd stay young and healthy with a youthful companion. They bought the poodle puppy Finnette. She respected Pokey as her elder and Pokey would chase her around the huge front lawn with all the renewed vigor of a young dog. It worked: Pokey remained active.

When I was about 19 and at UCLA, Steve called to tell me that she'd started having strokes, falling over, drooling, etc. and that he'd taken Pokey to the vet to have her put down. I cried.

#### **Best Intentions**

Seigi Ozawa was conducting a special Philharmonic concert in Berlin. As usual, he wanted the realization of the score to fit with his interpretation. In this case, the piece was the Berlioz *Requiem*. Of course, the tenor soloist had to sing from a balcony, making him sound like a god/angel on high. In his desire for the best sound of the pianissimo cymbal "shusshes" Ozawa brought in every West Berlin percussionist he could find and even recruited the tympanist to softly bring the two cymbals together for a sound that made me think of angels' wings in the Sanctus. Anyway, this effect was coming along beautifully, each player barely touching the edges together, when the leather thong on one of the

tympanist's cymbals broke: the cymbal banged down on his tympani head and then crashed to the floor.



# Summary of Too Crazy

The many coincidences and other oddities that have graced my life would seem crazy if it weren't for the fact that they have occurred so frequently and continue to do so. Just imagine someone with the background and knowledge of art song that Blair has moving to Hawaii, just at a time that's appropriate for me to train him for my replacement! And such amazing people and events have consistently immeasurably enhanced my life. After the rocky start with the wrong parents, the other actors have appeared just when appropriate. I could not have designed my life to be more fulfilling, fun, adventure-filled, and satisfying. Of course, there have been negative elements, but that's like putting a bit of pepper in the recipe. The whole life-serving has been this gourmet's delight!

## A Mediocre Enjoys a Stimulating, Satisfying Life

It's time to consider this glorious, delirious, and rewarding life that anointed an average talent: except for natural teaching skills, I have NOT been blessed with anything else but endurance. I can honestly access my musical limitations. No great motor skills on the bass, no natural musicality, no improvisational skills, no ability to memorize, and all this balanced only by the motivation to practice like crazy to fulfill the needs of the orchestra music that I played. My nerves got the better of me every time I played solo bass recitals. Why I did those is an enduring mystery. Was it actually fun? Did I achieve some level of fame? Was there a developing fan base for the bass or me? Of course not. Sheer dogged determination to keep my limited skills at their most refined and developed.

My business acumen was sketchy at best, always wanting to avoid becoming the typical capitalistic pig who took advantage of his employees. There were people at the thrift store whom I should have fired when I discovered their duplicity, dishonesty, or thefts. But there was also the difficulty of getting anyone to even apply for a job in Compton. So I kept people on the payroll who were working more for themselves than for the store. The munificent bonuses that I paid and even personal gifts to support young marrieds in their first home purchases, were misguided. As our CPA Wm Lipkowski warned me when he saw the numbers, "They're just gonna ask, 'what have you done for me lately?""

I've never really been a researching historian so that my efforts on behalf of Lotte Lehmann have been motivated by an appreciation of the person and artist, not supported by academic abilities or credentials.

My foreign language knowledge was never thorough. I cannot fluently speak, write, or read in anything but English. There are people with natural gifts in foreign languages; I am not one of them. I can get along in German and Spanish, but I can't read their great writers or seriously converse.

My radio personality has never matched the "live" teacher who could captivate an audience in person.

Art song has been a deep love, but I must admit to sometimes having trouble deciphering the words/poetry at the same time that the beautiful voice and piano are so wonderfully captivating my attention. Even if the words are in English! I've never studied art song at the deep, analytical level that would provide me with insights that a real academic would discover. There are many books on art song that I've never deeply studied; access to these sources has been motivated by the needs of a particular radio program, but never by a desire to be fully informed in this field that continues to suffer a limited appreciation even by the larger classical music audience. My lack of "radio voice" study and my ignorance of ways of captivating the radio listener have limited my goal of bringing art song into the lives of a broader public.

A limited circle of friends denotes my social inadequacies. Perhaps I've been too frank and have alienated potential friends. My lack of interest in sports has certainly curtailed a male cohort. My vegetarian definition challenges many potential social activities, as does teetotaling. I can't even share a coffee with people!

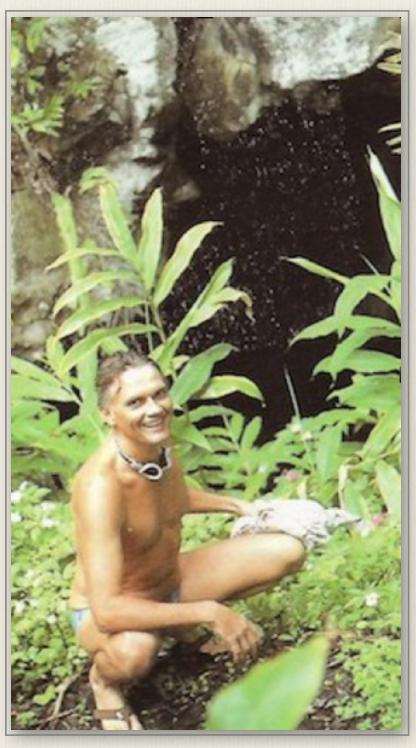
Finally, my lack of creativity feels like a basic limitation that has haunted my life, career, and hobbies. Taking the idea of opera supra titles and applying it to art song recitals, hardly qualifies as creative or imaginative. The script that I wrote for *Three American Art Songs* is primitive. This presentation mode for Lehmann was suggested by my then webmeister; I've just continued something initiated by him.

My artistic skills in flower arranging, furniture placement, gardening, or my choice in clothes, is imitative at best.

As the title of this section suggests: despite these limits, I have done what I loved to do in many fields of endeavor. Satisfying.

I have no regrets. Working within my limits has had its rewards. Of course, there are days when I don't feel great, but in general, I'm a happy guy. There are enough friends in my life to get me through. These many years with Dennis have also been rewarding. I've made mistakes, but they've been few in comparison to the many good choices. As the song says, "Who could ask for anything more?"





After swimming in the Wainapanapa Caves, Maui



# GodDamBass



GodDamBass: Do you wanna make sure that every time you travel you have huge, annoying, but predictable problems? Play bass, also called (mistakenly) bass viol; (correctly) double bass (cuz we double the bass line played by the celli but an octave lower); contrabass (same reason for the name); string bass or stand up bass, usually in pop or jazz to distinguish it from the bass guitar (electric) or (earlier) from the tuba. I'll just call it "bass" or in my mind "goddambass," the reasons to be found in some of the bass stories that follow. Despite these problems, I loved its sound and playing/teaching it paid the bills.

I started in a basement neighborhood orchestra. Here's the first photo of me with bass at about the age of 16. We were "on tour" to a neighboring elementary school where we gave a concert. You see Mr. Mac in back and just in front of him is my brother Steve with the violin. We were too large a group to fit on the stage.



I had a half-hour lesson with Mr. Mac that sufficed for all my playing throughout high school. You can see a section of this presentation devoted to Mr. Balzer, my

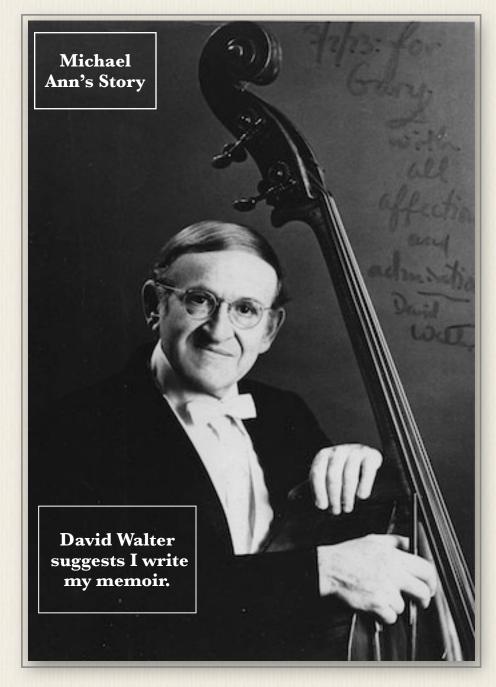
high school band and orchestra teacher. At UCLA I studied bass (no intense interest) with Peter Mercurio. The only photo I have of him is when he was teaching me at the Music Academy of the West. I was an enthusiastic participant in the orchestras there and at UCLA, but practicing just wasn't all that important for me. I'm not sure why.

You can read about how I got into Manhattan School of Music in that chapter. It was there that I met the huge



personality, bassist, raconteur, and teacher David Walter. He'd played under

Toscanini and Casals and had the stories to prove it. After a rocky start we got along well and there was mutual admiration. Only later did I realize that I hadn't learned how to play bass. I acquired the technique that one needs on the instrument from fellow bassists and sheer trial and error. I enjoyed/ suffered the lessons with David Walter. He'd put me down so much that when I went back to the subway with my bass I'd stop and get a candy bar. I also traveled and played next to him in the Princeton Chamber Orchestra. Years later I was a friend while he was in bad health. He was a brilliant guy.



In Munich, I studied with the

premier bass teacher and former principal bass of the Bavarian Opera, Franz Ortner, and a bit with Georg Hörtnagel. It wasn't until I began to regularly play scales and arpeggios that I finally developed some technique.

I played principal bass (that means leading the section) with the Manila Symphony Orchestra, the Westchester Symphony Orchestra, the Hudson Valley Philharmonic Orchestra, the Greeley Symphony Orchestra, the Municipal Concerts Orchestra, and as a section member in the Symphonie-Orchestra Grauke, the Honolulu and Hawaii Symphony Orchestras, the Munich Philharmonic, New York City Ballet Orchestra (especially memorable: Stravinsky Festival), the ProArte Orchestra (of Long Island, New York), the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, the Princeton Chamber Orchestra (had nothing to do with the university of that name), the Queens Symphony, the opera orchestras of Munich and Mexico City, and lotsa pickup ensembles. You'll read about the



A faded photo of Sam Agres and me with the Bellas Artes orchestra on tour in a beautiful small opera house in Juanajuato. The orchestra pit was too small for us, so we played in one of the boxes usually used by audience members. Read more about my Mexico year in that chapter.

difference between

orchestra playing and

solo playing in that
section of this chapter.

Despite my musical/ technical limitations, I became a relatively good bassist. I could play most of the music that was written for solo bass and certainly all of the orchestra parts. I sightread well and could play as a valuable member within a section. I was proud to be a bassist, to perform in orchestras that featured world-class soloists, whether Henryk Szeryng, Rudolf Serkin, Sylvia Mc Nair, or Marilyn Horne. The conductors sometimes

inspired me by their musicality and leadership. There was the comradely feel of shared triumphs and disasters within the bass section or with the other members of the orchestra. Many of these co-conspirators became dear friends who ended up hiking, swimming, or kayaking with me. Finally, it was the great orchestra music that made all the problems of my instrument lighter. The canon, even the pieces that get too much exposure, is varied and superb, inspiring us orchestra members to outdo ourselves in concentration and old fashioned hard work (either in preparation for the rehearsals or in the actual performances). It was a pleasure

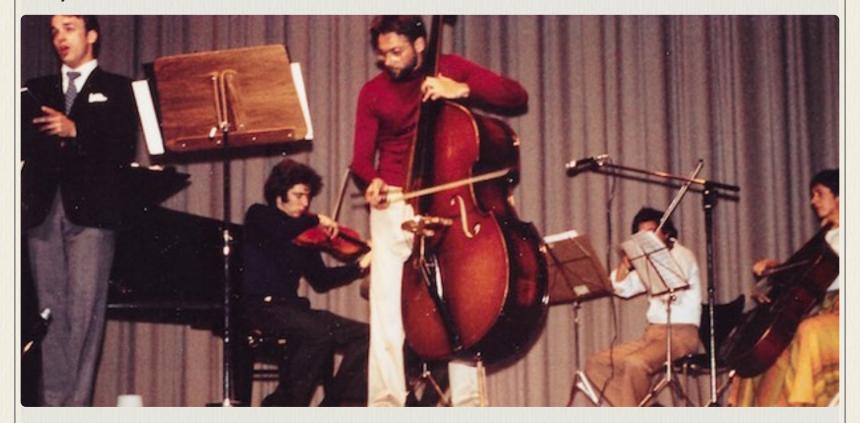
to have landed on the bass and the laughs I shared with stand partners, and the joy in daily music-making was a portion of my life for which I feel blessed.

Here are some recordings of my playing, sometimes in duets, others with piano. See page 130 for full recitals, etc.

Frank Proto Sonata Schubert An die Musik with Grant Mack Bartok Duets Mike Becker Bass Trombone

My performance of Beethoven's Horn Sonata on Bass 1986 My rehearsal of Beethoven's Horn Sonata on the Bass 1986 My rehearsal of Beethoven's Horn Sonata cont. + Misek Sonata 1986

### Gary with Bass



Playing Mozart's "Per questa bella mano" in Amerikahaus, Munich





















### **Bass Stories**

In no particular order, I'll tell you some of my fun, sometimes painful bass stories.

\* Plane in Buffalo: On the way back from an audition for my student Alton Clingan, we'd boarded and with the seatbelt used for obese passengers, secured his bass. We'd paid for its bulkhead ticket and I was to sit behind the neck. This had all been approved by the airline's administration. We were on our way back to NYC for the next auditions Alton was to take there. It was close to takeoff when the head stewardess (yes, that's what they were called) came to us and said that we (Alton, Bass, Gary) needed to disembark. The bass was not allowed. I showed her the ticket on which it was clearly printed "bass" but she would have none of it. We refused to leave. The plane just sat there until the captain came to speak to us. He said that it didn't matter if we were right or not. The head stewardess could prevent him from taking off. The plane was not going to leave until we did. So, in a kinda panic Alton, the bass, and I left, knowing that the next day he had an audition scheduled. We ran (if moving quickly with a bass can be called running) down the airport corridor, checking to see what other airlines might be flying to NYC that night. We found a small airline that we soon learned specialized in black passengers. They accepted the ticket for the three of us and we quickly boarded a plane that was about to take off. As we did, the mostly black crew and passengers greeted us with jokes: Can I have the bass' drinks? Where you gonna hide that big thing? Can you play us some music on the way? Sooo different from the other airline. We arrived in NYC without further incident and were helped off the plane by the courteous crew.

When I traveled on the 1968 Smith/Princeton European choral tour as the only bassist, it was agreed that my bass would not have a seat, but would be the last loaded in the cargo and first off-loaded. I was permitted to be the first one off the plane when we landed and got good at jumping from the tarmac to the cargo's locks, could open them, and jump inside the hold, and be ready to hand down the bass when the cargo crew arrived. That worked until we landed in Paris. Evidently, I'd violated some written or unwritten rules, perhaps union regulations, but in any case, a very surly and burly ground crew threatened me with physical harm if I

didn't dislodge myself from inside the cargo hold. They handed me the bass and all was well. It did take a while for the negotiations (in French with threatening body language thrown in) and so the bus which was to take us from the field to the terminal was delayed. One of our fellow passengers was a rather impatient Vanessa Redgrave, who, upon my finally entering the bus said in her lovely modulated Queen's English, "Well, I see you've finally gotten your bass."

- \* While living in NYC I usually taught bass as part of the MSM Preparatory Division. That gave me free access to lessons that were provided to teach the repair of string instruments. David Walter joined me for these classes which were taught by the foremost Luthier of the city. There were plenty of do's and don'ts and we could also commission his crew to build the exact-size clamps for gluing our instruments. Of course, I took advantage and never missed a class. As if on cue, while traveling in the bus with the Princeton Chamber Orchestra the overwhelming humidity of the South (was it Georgia?) loosened the glue holding my fingerboard to the neck and it kinda slid off. I saw it happening and loosened the strings. The ebony of the fingerboard piece adds considerable strength to the neck; the whole thing could just bend forward with the pull of the fully tightened strings. Well, I needed to play in a day or two, so I asked the driver to stop at the next auto parts store. I ran in and bought the round clamps that are used for radiator hoses. Then the driver stopped at a hardware store for some quick-drying glue. I laid the bass atop a bunch of seats, glued the whole thing together (wiping up the runoff glue with restaurant napkins), and tightened the clamps around the neck. Sure enough, it was ready to go for the next day's concert.
- \*\* Before 9/11 things were looser in airports, but there were still x-ray machines that allowed the guards to view the contents of our carry-on luggage. Traveling from Honolulu with my good bass for a series of chamber music concerts on Maui, I discovered that the guards were insistent that I cram the bass into the machine, even though it was obvious it wouldn't fit. Because I'd experienced previous run-ins with such inept guards I had had the airport administration write me a letter which I could present security clearing me to pass. These guards wouldn't even read the letter, and the plane was about to leave, so I walked briskly passed them with the bass and took the escalator up to the concourse floor with

them yelling in my wake. As I reached the second floor I was greeted by another set of guards with guns pulled. They listened to my story, read the letter, furiously reprimanded the first set of guards, and courteously ran ahead to hold the plane which was indeed about to leave. Bass and I arrived without further incident.

\*\* Soon upon arriving at the University of Northern Colorado I met Lois, the woman who'd been teaching bass before they hired a professional. She was (and is) a kind and lovable lady. We got along, played duets, and when she learned that I was returning to NYC during the Christmas break, pleaded with me to buy her a good bass while I was there. I did have connections with some good Luthiers there and others who had basses for sale. I located a really elegant sounding Italian instrument that I immediately fell for. Its sound, its ease of playing, its healthy body, and the great overall look of the instrument made it seem to be worth a lot more than the Luthier was asking. I brought it back to Greeley and was torn. It was far better than my bass in every way. It sounded good in the orchestra or as a solo instrument; I wanted to keep it for myself. But I'm a good person. Lois would never get to NYC, I let her have the instrument and to this day, many decades later, she's still grateful and plays the bass regularly.

\*In 1961 the UCLA Marching and Concert Band toured Europe. I played Sousaphone in the first, and bass in the second. There was no provision for carrying our basses, so arrangements were made in advance that each venue would supply us with the two basses we needed. That worked pretty well. We would get accustomed as quickly as possible to the size and quirks of the new instruments. However, one institution handed us two brand new, unassembled basses. The strings, bridge, etc. were all just loose. We set about quickly to "string" the strings and stretch them out by tuning them (over and over). During the first piece on the concert I'd obviously tightened the strings so much that the bridge tilted over and without me noticing (and with a great bang!) hit the top of the bass and shot out under and through the woodwind section. The band played on. And little by little the clarinet players passed the bridge from one to another until it arrived in my hands. As soon as the piece ended I lifted the bass over my head, exited, and set up the bridge and strings during the second work. I entered during

its applause and had no further trouble, though I was constantly aware as I tuned to make sure that the bridge remained upright.

\* Playing church gigs (called Mücken or mosquitos) in Munich I quickly learned what ones to favor. The large Catholic churches (and the majority of Bavarian churches are Catholic) were not heated. The congregation (and the musicians) bundled up. I did play Protestant services and these were in cozy, heated, small churches. But back to the icy ones: the violinists wore gloves with the fingertips cut

out. The small orchestras (these were Mozart, Schubert, and Haydn masses) assembled in the choir loft above/behind the congregation. The "conductor" was usually the organist who just nodded his head to lead us. We kept our overcoats on and without rehearsal played the mass as it was originally intended:

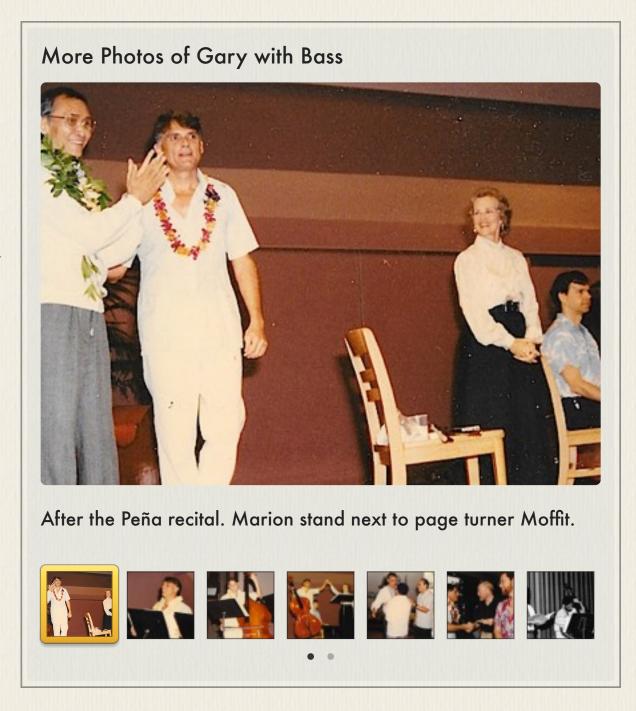


St. Sylvester in Munich, close to Jungwirth Strasse where I lived.

not as a concert piece, but as an integral part of the service. That meant that we had to sit quietly while the priest spoke, or the offering was collected. The money for our service was already in place in an envelope behind the music. One service that sticks in my mind was at St. Sylvester in Schwabing just a few steps from our house. The reason that I recall this gig, is that I played Silvesterabend (New Year's Eve) there. It's called that owing to the fourth century Pope Sylvester whose feast day was the last day of the year.

\* During my final years as a free-lancer in NYC, I bought several basses that I'd leave in various halls so that the subway crowds wouldn't crush one. I left my best one in Carnegie Hall's "bass"-ment and even had a key to the Hall. No security

guard ever intervened or even noticed when I entered to retrieve it for a gig other than Stoki's American Symphony Orchestra which performed there regularly. Another (rather smaller) bass had its home in the Lutheran Church on Central Park West where I rehearsed and performed Bach Cantatas every week. Of course, I had a decent bass in my apartment so that I



could teach there. That's the one that traveled with me in my VW station wagon to out of town rehearsals and concerts. I left another bass at MSM so that I could teach there. After multiple muggings in NYC, I decided to leave for a safer place (Munich) and that meant that I had to liquidate my bass holdings. I sold one to MSM, another to a student, and a third, called "Mittenwald" went on loan to Jaime with the hope that I'd land a job and have money to have it packed and sent. Well, I did have a part-time gig in Munich (see that chapter) but not a lot of money to pay for shipping, so when my friend Denis Lund visited, he brought it with him. He experienced the problems on planes and trains that my stories had hardly prepared him for. Though I'd bought a bass in Munich, it wasn't great and I used it for practice and left the Mittenwald with the Graunke Orchestra which moved it from one rehearsal hall to another and on to the next concert hall, along with the other basses, all with no problem.

- \*When I traveled around Europe by train I discovered that the bass (in its cloth case) would fit nicely hung between the overhead luggage racks and we passengers could sit comfortably under it. When entering East Germany the tough-looking guards (with guns) boarded and checked our papers etc. When they saw my bass they demanded that I open the zipper so they could look inside. As if anyone would want to sneak *into* East Germany! But they were tough and no one laughed.
- \*Backstage during intermission in Honolulu, my orchestra friends as well as audience members, would ask about my habit of putting my ear on the neck of the bass while playing. Since the bass section plays as a unit and the sound of the instrument isn't piercing, there's no way to know if I'm playing in tune unless the sound transfers from the bass to my ear.
- \*\* One of the older, crazier percussionists in the Honolulu Symphony Orchestra was a closeted gay. I knew that he didn't like the fact that I was "out." When I first auditioned for the HSO he warned the jury that they were letting "a furniture salesman" into the orchestra. We never exchanged a civilized word. On the day of the big Peña recital I arrived backstage at the Neil Blasidell Hall to take my bass by car over to the UH campus' Orvis Auditorium. The hard case which housed my bass had been tipped on its side. These trunks are very stable, so someone had to purposely do that. I guessed that it was the percussionist. When I opened the case I found a hole in the lower bout that was large enough for my fist to enter! There was nothing to do. It was a jagged opening; I found some saran-wrap to cover it so it wouldn't snag things until I could have it professionally repaired. I thus played the most important recital of my life with that gaping hole. No one noticed.
- \* I've already told a story about playing in the churches of Munich. A bass was provided in each place, but I had to bring my own bow. The conditions of the catholic churches were primitive: the spaces were so large that there was no attempt to heat them. In one of these places, I found that the bass that awaited me was made of aluminum! It was certainly hardy, having withstood years of cold winters. With a bit of tuning, I was able to use it and considering my original shock it didn't sound bad.

## My GodDamBass Life

In about 1955 I'd played a season of snare drum in the basement orchestra established and conducted by the friendly neighborhood musician J. Hobart McGlaughlin. What else do teenagers do? It didn't seem at all strange to us that we gathered on our precious Saturdays to rehearse. And nearly everyone in the neighborhood participated. I look back on this as a kind of strange miracle. Since he was the supervisor of music for the Glendale Unified School District, he could borrow instruments and music. We had fun! I had arrived at the first rehearsal with a harmonica in my pocket, not sure how I'd fit into the orchestra. I was never embarrassed by demonstrating my ignorance because Mr. Mac needed a snare drum player, showed me how to hold the sticks, and set me to work!

After a year of such "music-making," he looked at my hands and said that for a boy of 15 they were big so now I would play bass. I thought me meant bass drum, but he said to come to his house next week and he'd teach me to play bass (meaning the double bass, the naming only became important to me later, when I phoned David Walter in NYC asking to study with him when I entered MSM and said that I wanted to study "bass viol." He was very disparaging and let me know that the instrument so-called was an ancient instrument and was quite sure I didn't mean to study that. My first put-down, that he would extend for years.) Anyway, I walked over to Mr. Mac's house, he gave me a half-hour lesson (showing me where ½ position lay), then demonstrated how to carry the instrument. We put it in his car and he drove the one block over to our neighbor, "the Bruce's" basement for the first rehearsal with a bass. It didn't seem difficult and though afterward, I carried the instrument two houses away to leave it in our house, I never picked it up to practice, but just carried it back and forth every Saturday.

I didn't seriously consider taking lessons. (Brother Steve had a visiting violin teacher.) It was easy enough to play the simple music that we performed. Mr. Mac got us some gigs and we played in school auditoriums, and even gave little concerts for our friends and neighbors right in the Bruce's basement. This should have been enough! But though I didn't play in the junior high orchestra, when I arrived

at Glendale High School, for some unknown reason I joined their orchestra and that's where I met Mr. Balzer (see his section).

The first rehearsal included an excerpt from the 20th-century American composer Howard Hanson's second symphony. In Balzer's section, you'll see a list of the repertoire we played: sophisticated, from Baroque to the latest tonal music of the 1950s. Talk about being in the right place at the right time. But all of this wouldn't have gelled so perfectly if it weren't for the fact that the principal bass player was Barbara Park (now Blankenship). She was a Junior (I, a lowly sophomore...this was a three-year high school) and she knew what she was doing. I didn't understand basic music theory, the sharps and flats, and all of that. But I didn't expose my ignorance and just followed what she was doing. My first crush: Mozart and Barbara. We played harmoniously. She encouraged me to volunteer for the job of orchestra manager/librarian. A momentous moment in my life that yielded nice results of confidence, organizing skills, and feelings of accomplishment. Later, having done the same service at UCLA I was granted a scholarship at Manhattan School of Music as orchestra manager.

Oh, high school orchestra was fun, real deep penetrating musical fun. Everything from playing real music (we'd played arrangements in the basement orchestra) to the sound of a full orchestra (the basement group hardly had a full complement of instruments). And there was the added feeling of a real group experience. The others knew their instruments, took lessons, understood music theory, and yet they accepted me as one of their fellow musicians. This was all important stuff to building the foundation on which the rest of my life was to rest: MUSIC.

The basses that we used were not plywood but, as they say, "carved." That doesn't mean that they were great sounding: they cracked and opened at the seams. When either of those things occurred, they emitted an unpleasant buzzing sound. So when one or another bass got sick, I'd go out during lunch break and pick up popcycle sticks. I made a tool out of a coat hanger and with Elmer's glue, stuck pieces of the sticks on the insides of the cracks, and stopped the buzzing. Only later did I learn that, though I'd accomplished my goal, I'd done it wrong, using Elmer's instead of what the Luthiers used: rabbit-hide glue. But that's another story.

After three years in both the orchestra and the band (playing Sousaphone which marched during football game half-times, and a Rose Parade, as well as string bass in the concert and jazz band) I graduated GHS and entered UCLA. Balzer gave me a good recommendation so I got into the UCLA bands with no audition (and continued to be librarian, etc.)

The assistant conductor of the UCLA orchestra, Richard Dufallo, wanted to hear me play bass alone as an audition to enter his august ensemble. On the strength of that one half-hour lesson at Mr. Mac's home I miraculously played the pieces Dufallo set before me. I remember that it included the difficult finale from Beethoven's third symphony. Since it lay mostly in first and 1/2 position, I could do it well. Anyway, not only did I enter the prestigious orchestra, but became its manager. We played very sophisticated music because the internationally recognized pianist, conductor, composer Lucas Foss was the primary conductor. By sophisticated music I mean some standard works such as

Debussy's Afternoon of a Faun and



Tchaikovsky's Fifth, but a lot of rarely performed 20th-century music of Ives, Ruggles, Mennin, and Chavez. The opera performed Stravinsky's *Le Rossignol* and Dallapiccola's *Il Prigioniero*. We combined forces with the chorus to play the biggies with Roger Wagner (a very charismatic conductor). Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*, Bach's *St. John Passion*, and Mozart's *Requiem*. I've never recovered from the *Missa* 

Solemnis. I've loved the piece ever since and consider it one of the world's masterpieces. We had good soloists and lots of rehearsal time. At the conclusion, the Royce Hall audience cheered; Roger Wagner turned toward them with the score in his hand so Beethoven was thus amply rewarded. It was a turning point for me: great music was possible. Possible for me; I could make GREAT music. Or at least be a part of the making. It was over 50 years ago and I'm still worked up by the thoughts of that performance.

All this time I had used basses and bows that were school property. That meant that at most I had to carry the

## 'Missa Solemnis' Done Superbly at UCLA

By RERBERT DONALDSON

In the repertoire of the Hosts of Heaven must be Beethoven's "Missa Solemnis." When it was performed Wednesday night at UCLA's Royce Hall, Roger Wagner conducted the University A Cappella Choir and the University Symphony Orchestra. Maralin Niska, soprano: Katherine Hilgenberg. contralto; David Poleri, tenor; James Tippey, bass; and Laurence Petran, organist, were the soloists.

A large audience filled almost every seat on the main floor. It was a memorable occasion, for Beethoven's "Missa Solemnis" is one of the transcendental monuments of music, filled with deep and sincere religious feeling; powerful, wonderfully prophetic in its inspired musical inventiveness.

Roger Wagner brought forth the best efforts of the splendidly equipped and admirably prepared choir. Incisive attacks, forte-piano and sferzando effects, long crescendo lines and other niceties of interpretation added up to enviable choral work.

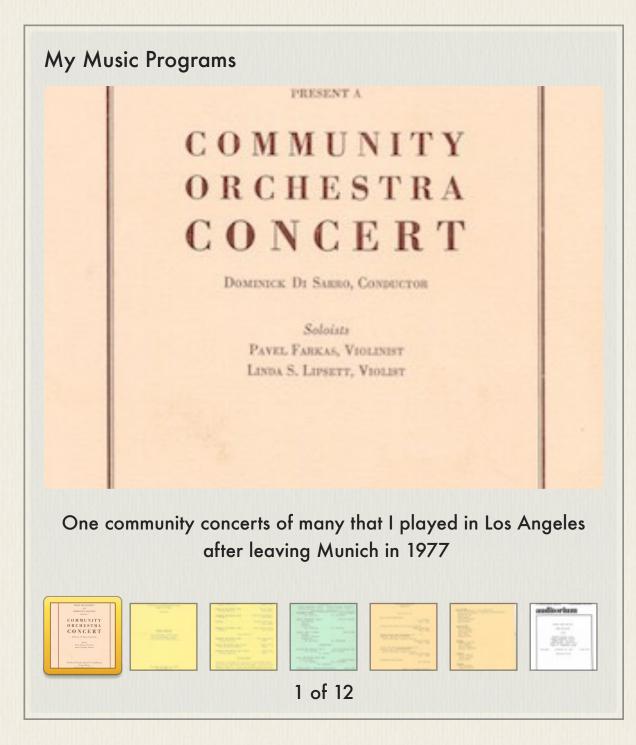
Of the soloists, Miss Niska and Miss Hilgenberg were in the best voice, surmounting the flendishly difficult and exhausting solo assignments. The orchestra gave adequate support and frequently, as in the long ascending scale near the close of the Credo, played brilliantly.

bass across the UCLA campus to Royce Hall for performances. I never took one home to practice; I spent much of my days and nights in the Music Department building and had keys to the orchestra and band rooms, so I could practice any time I needed to. That was almost always in preparation for difficult pieces we were performing; rarely for lessons.

Every year I gained more power at the music department and began to coordinate everything between the various instrumental programs. This way there'd be a celeste in the right building for the rehearsal, and the correct musicians for a piece; a little like a commercial contractor in the outside professional world. I began to report Music Department news to UCLA's paper, the *Daily Bruin*. Luckily for me, I was paid for a lot of this extra work. Not much, but when my parents disowned me, it became my only source of income. But that's a story for a different chapter. Here's one from within the confines of UCLA's music world: As I mentioned above, while I was at UCLA I played in both the orchestra (bass) and band (bass, tuba, and Sousaphone).

Dr. Jan Popper (a great opera conductor, deserving his own chapter, and another European refugee whom we greatly respected) prepared Dallapiccola's difficult Il prigioniero opera for the West Coast premiers by rehearsing us individually! There was only one bass, and so that you can follow my story, you'll need to know, also one tuba player (not me). I was also the orchestra manager. Early (4:30 am!) one morning I arrived to meet the truck that was to take all the equipment, music, big instruments (harp, celeste, tympani, bass, tuba), etc. from UCLA to UC Berkley where we were to rehearse that night. I then rode with the other instrumentalists in a bus up to Berkley. The next day we had a second (morning) rehearsal; as soon as that was finished the tubaist and I ran to a pre-arranged car that drove out to the airport. We jumped on a plane back to LA, where we were met by another pre-arranged car that held our uniforms which we changed into during the ride to the LA Colosseum, where a nationally-telecast UCLA football game was already in progress. We were integral, moving parts of the half-time show. By the time we arrived, the band was already marching down the field to begin the show. Our Sousaphones had been left behind on the corners of the field. We ran out, dove under them and them goose-marched/ran down to meet the group, as if it had been an arranged joke. I only noticed after beginning to play the (memorized) music that I'd got my buddy's B flat tuba and not my E flat. Different fingerings! I only managed a few right notes but did the turns and lateral movements as choreographed and memorized. As soon as the show was over, we grabbed our ride back to the airport for that evening's performance of the opera. It went well. After it was over, I packed the instruments, etc. back into the truck, and then we rode in the bus back to LA where I waited until the truck arrived to open the doors of the Music Department (luckily they trusted me with the keys) and placed everything inside. It was after 3 am when I finally dropped into my bed for a good (and well-deserved) sleep. I was in good shape and was 21 years YOUNG.

Music history professor Dr. Dan Jacobson's response to this story: "I am laughing out loud!!! I could see you doing that—especially at 21. Even more impressive that you re-fingered it on the fly—while marching! Just shifting from 'double bass on a Dallapiccola piece' to 'tuba/Sousaphone/marching in a nationally-televised football halftime show' would be crazy enough for most music majors. You never



cease to amaze me." Thanks, Dr. Dan.

Sometimes I need encouragement to write these words in my 79th year. I did enjoy the emersion in the music, the camaraderie, the excitement of recently composed, really contemporary music (We also did the West Coast opera premieres of Barber's Vanessa and Foss' Griffelkin and standard works like Pelléas et Mélisande, Fidelio, Don Giovanni, and

Paisiello's *Barber of Seville*. On the next page, you'll find some of the programs that I've saved all these years. Note that the American composer, Roy Harris, conducted us. These were very exciting concerts, especially in LA when back then there was no music conservatory, so our audiences were large and appreciative.

I've lost the thread here: back to the bass(ics). When I graduated from UCLA Katsuumi suggested that I follow him to NYC and go to Juilliard. He said "you not good bass player." And he was right. Though I took lessons at UCLA, I wasn't committed, didn't practice, and Peter Mercurio, the bass teacher, didn't mind. Sometimes when it was obvious that I'd do poorly in a lesson, he'd suggest that we'd go down to the student union for pancakes. He was a gentle man.

When we arrived in NYC I accompanied Katsuumi to check out Juilliard, in the buildings that Manhattan School of Music ultimately moved to. As I walked down

the long, barren marble corridors, the whole venture felt threatening. I looked at their requirements for a bass audition and freaked. I'd heard about bass teacher David Walter at MSM over on the East Side, so I went there. It was all knotty pine interiors, warm and friendly. When I asked to audition the administration said: "No problem. We'll be holding auditions in a few months for the Spring Semester." No, I'm here now and I want to study bass now. "Sorry, but it just isn't possible." I kept pestering and they finally relented and allowed me to audition. I asked to go to the library to get a solo to practice. They were alarmed that I didn't have my own bass. I lied: It's on its way from LA. I also needed to borrow a bow: That's also coming with the bass. No music, no bass, no bow. They must have guessed I was a liar but I was either so charming or pitiful that they let me go ahead with the whole thing. I practiced in the stairway for hours learning a solo piece (Baroque, I remember) and my fingers were almost bleeding from the unaccustomed workout. When I appeared before the audition committee it was probably obvious to all of them that I was not on the master level, but with the advocacy of the famous violist Lilian Fuchs, I was admitted to the program. You can read more about MSM in that chapter.

After graduating from MSM I spent 13 months in Manila teaching bass and performing as principal bass of the Manila Symphony Orchestra. I also gave a full recital at the PhilAm Life Auditorium, the same hall that the orchestra used. You can read about my Philippine adventure in the "Manila" chapter.

Upon returning to the US (with my best student Jimmy/Jaime), we drove first to the Music Academy of the West, where I'd arranged for him to play/study. After that we traveled East to NYC, Jaime to study at MSM and me resuming my freelance life. I auditioned for Stoki twice and finally landed the ASO job which helped my finances a lot. I taught bass privately (many students preparing to audition for Juilliard, MSM, or Mannes) and the Prep Division of MSM. I toured for two years with the Princeton Chamber Orchestra and was also its librarian. I recognized that my playing wasn't as good as fellow bassists and even considered studying with Alvin Brehm, who often sat principal when the Municipal Concerts Orchestra was expanded during the summer months. He acknowledged that we couldn't tell David Walter, and we finally assumed that the word would get back to

him, so I never took a lesson. I could play, but not as well as a professional should. But I muddled through: performing in great as well as mediocre freelance orchestras, some amazing musical experiences, and seldom did I make a fool of myself.

Decembers were a stellar month because there were so many *Messiahs* to play. My depleted bank account was stuffed and the day after my last *Messiah* I'd fly to St. Thomas, Virgin Islands (with a stop in Puerto Rico) to stay with my friend John, who also looked forward to my stories of the classical world. He worked in a bank; I'd drive him to work and have his car for the rest of the day. The non-city side of the island was almost completely free of people. Great beaches, clear water, fun mountains to run naked in (of course naked was all I wore...I never saw anyone) and my Tarzan vine-swinging dreams were realized.

Later I was offered the job teaching strings at Howitt Junior High on Long Island living both there and in NYC where I continued to freelance. See the chapter on teaching: "Mr Hickling: the Teacher." After one year I had a better offer to teach bass at the University of Northern Colorado, where I played in the local orchestra and gave bass recitals in both Greeley and Denver. (See "Blunders")

When I returned to New York I gave a big recital in the Bruno Walter Hall at Lincoln Center. The place was full! It returned my name to the free-lance world in which I played until I was so frequently mugged that I decided to move to Munich. The number of NYC orchestras in which I played is quite amazing, even to me!

In Munich, I played for two years in the Graunke Orchestra and seriously began to study and practice: even scales & arpeggios! I took a ton of auditions and, after with the help of a recommendation letter from Lotte Lehmann landed a full-time job with the Symphonisches Orchester Berlin (in West Berlin). I'd already changed to German bow and steadily improved my playing. After the season I was offered a tenured position in the SOB, but since I didn't like living in Berlin, I returned for one more year of Graunke and other free-lancing in Munich. Those included: the Munchener Kammerorchester, the Bavarian Opera, and the Munich Phil. Then I returned to LA, where I thought a ticker-tape parade would welcome my homecoming. There's something that has only recently come to my mind: I played

and auditioned in Germany on a small, mediocre instrument. No orchestra committee could ever judge my level of musicianship based on my cheap bass. Without enough money to invest in a decent one makes this epiphany sad: too poor, too little, too late.

Though I free-lanced a bit in LA it wasn't enough to live on, so I substitute taught, even teaching theory again, as I'd done in Greeley, at the LA Community College; played the Chamber Music NorthWest in Oregon and finally got a job in Mexico's Bellas Artes opera orchestra. The amoebas had their delight in me, as they had in Manila, and I returned after a year, this time working full-time at the thrift store and free-lancing at night. There were a lot of fairly good orchestras of mixed amateurs and professionals in the many cities that surrounded LA. I remember some rewarding concerts and even a chance to play with violinist Ruggiero Rucci!

When I arrived in Honolulu I joined the HSO; I'd bought a good (modern) instrument and played some great music, while also teaching at the private schools Punahou, Iolani, and Kamehameha. I gave many more recitals in Honolulu than ever before. Still so nervous during each solo performance that my playing wasn't near the level I achieved at home. After a few years in the HSO, my stand partner Mark Kuraya and I exchanged lessons. I did have a few tricks to teach this good bassist, but he had even more, to share with me. I never attained the bow control, easy ability in complex rhythms, sweet sound, or concentration that defined Mark's playing, but there was a definite improvement.

Without ever achieving the level of bass playing that I yearned for, it's now clear that my lack of dedication and early weak instruction doomed me to a lifetime of mediocre performance both as a soloist and as a section player. Better than a lot of colleagues in orchestras in which I performed, which is just a sad indictment of the level of bass playing back in those days. Talk about a fish in a small pond!

In the 1990s I began playing bass solos with Dale Hall in the nursing and retirement homes of Honolulu. Lugging the bass around wasn't easy, but with Dale's support, we were able to play a broad repertoire and with a bit of introductory talk between numbers, able to entertain. When I learned to sing we

went around the same places with, I believe, greater success with songs that they usually knew. Neighbor soprano Kazuyo joined us in the final years.

After retiring from the HSO and the retirement homes, Dennis and I continued making music with bass and piano to great contentment for us both. When that period was over Dennis expanded the one movement solo bass piece he'd written for me into three movements. We worked hard together improving it as a composition and a demonstration of what a solo bass can do until we were satisfied enough to enter into the International Bass Society competition. I learned the work, recorded it myself, edited it, and sent off the music and my recording. We didn't win, but that signaled the end of my bass playing and I returned this last bass which I'd borrowed (back) from Toma. I donated my good Dupuis bow to MSM. You can experience Dennis' music on the Lotte Lehmann League website.

You can hear and see me playing bass on the Big Island in 2009, or watch me introduce a concert in Hilo also in 2009.

## Memorable Concerts/Operas/Ballets

\* In 1968 I was invited to join the Smith-Princeton Chamber Chorus European tour. Obviously, they took along a chamber orchestra with one bass. In five weeks we first visited Copenhagen and played in Horsholm Church. On to Berlin, which at the time was West Berlin and inside communist East Germany. Under the auspices of Amerikahaus Berlin, we played in the Hochschule für Musik and were broadcast on the radio. Nürnberg was our next stop. On one of the castle tours in Nürnberg, I saw my first real double rainbow over the city. Exquisite! There we performed in Sebalduskirche. We arrived in Prague during the "Prague Spring" when for a short time the citizens could leave the country. They pestered us to exchange their money for anything international. We did some exchanges and were able to buy elegant souvenirs. There we played in St. James Church. Our next stop was Bratislava at a time when Yugoslavia was held together by the dictator Tito. We performed for Bratislava Radio. Vienna heard our concert in the Stephansdom. Next, we played an open-air concert in Graz, Austria. On to Ljubljana where we performed in their Festival Hall; it was on this leg of the trip that my roommate John and I swam in Lake Bled and hiked its island. (See story

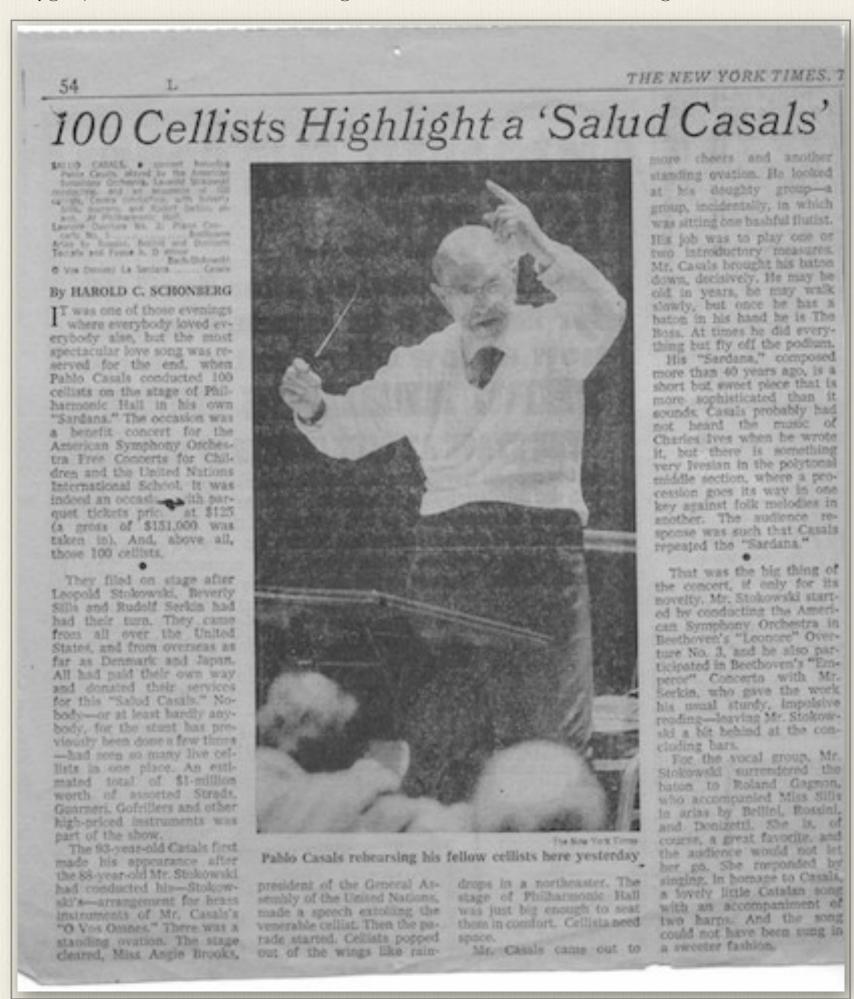
in the "Blunders" portion of "Gettn Started.") In Venice, we performed the highlight of the tour in San Marco. The Gabrieli brothers and other composers had written music that took advantage of the huge second-floor balconies where instrumentalists could play across to each other (antiphonal), so that was the focus of our concert in this beautiful basilica. Lucca was our next stop where we played at the Duomo San Martino. You can imagine how excited the young college students (and us fairly young instrumentalists) were by this time. But Florence always seems to hold its fascination. The sights there in museums and on foot never disappoint. We gave a concert in Barga and headed to Milan for a few days, then Paris for three days and a recording at the RTF studio. We spent a day in Chartres and played in the famous cathedral with its dark blue stained glass seen to great advantage at twilight. I do also remember its reverberant acoustics.

\*\* Talk about reverberations: I like to recall a concert at NYC's St. John the Divine. It's the largest cathedral in the US but when you enter Rome's St. Peter's its mark on that floor shows just how small it is in comparison. It doesn't matter. For this American bassist, it was huge. And here's how I knew it was. We played the Berlioz *Te Deum* with two (antiphonal) organs, orchestra and two large adult choruses, a children's chorus, and a tenor soloist. It was thrilling: we had to wait until the second organ's chord had finished its echo before we replied.

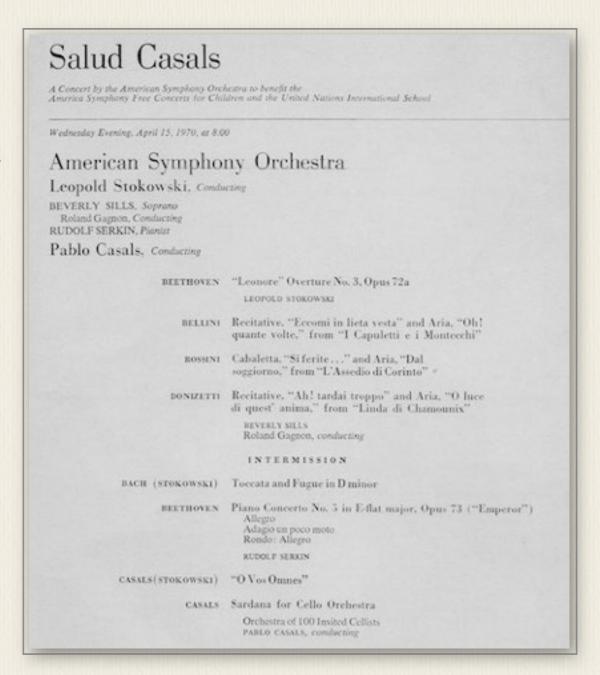
\*\* There was another factor that made music sheer bliss for me: "a series." For instance, playing a Bach cantata every Sunday with essentially the same group came to signify with each passing week that I was sharing a magical event. The cantatas were conducted by John Weaver just as they would have been in the Lutheran churches of Bach's time. During the offertory and the recessional, the organist played a Bach prelude or other piece that was inspired by the chorale of the cantata so that it all worked as a single musical event. There was the same number of players and singers in the choir loft that Bach had used. The cellist/gambaist was Lucy Bardo of the Waverly Consort, who was already familiar with historic performance practice in 1972 when that phrase was barely known! And the church was packed each week. That same cumulative experience pervaded the Handel organ concertos paired with his choral works in another NYC church

which had great acoustics. We did about 10 of these services before the money ran out. The harpsichordist was none other than the renowned Albert Fuller!

\* Another concert that I remember well was a benefit for the United Nations. It was called "Salud Casals." The 94-year-old Casals (having taken a whiff of oxygen) came out and sat in a big chair and wielded a think, long baton over 100



cellists from around the world to perform two of his works. Stoki conducted us ASO members and Sills sang Bellini, Rossini, and Donizetti, as well as an encore. Rudolf Serkin played the Emperor Concerto and people paid a lot of money, dressed up in their best celebratory clothes, and were a part of history. Since I didn't play during the Casals portion, I went down into the audience, and right in the first row, next to high-class men in shiny black tuxedos, found a seat from



which I witnessed the Casals phenomenon. This was history and I wanted to be part of it. BTW, though while conducting Casals was seated, at a climax of the piece he got excited and stood up continuing to conduct. The audience gasped because before this moment, he'd seemed so frail.

Sometimes the soloist made the performance great for me; other times it was the conductor; there were also concerts when the orchestra seemed to be working as a team and succeeded despite an only-adequate conductor. When Serkin, Szeryng, or Ricci played with the pick-up Hudson Valley Philharmonic, it was pure gold. After a series of Bruckner 4ths with Graunke, it didn't matter when a dentist hired our orchestra so that he could conduct the same piece; we played it with the same verve, concentration, and Romantic feeling with which Graunke had imbued it. I didn't know what to expect when Seiji Ozawa conducted the HSO, but I don't believe that the Beethoven 7th nor the Bartok *Concerto for Orchestra* was ever more vibrantly

performed by that group before or after. Though there's no doubt that Stokowski was past his prime in the years that I performed with him in Carnegie with the ASO, he was still able to inspire us to heights of frenzied playing: "Don't keep your fortissimos in your back pocket" he told us.

\*\* Once the conductor was so fascinating that we played under his direction for fun (no payment, no concerts). Upon returning from the Smith-Princeton Choir tour I played in an orchestra at The State University of New York at Binghamton, organized to allow choral conductors the chance to learn the techniques they'd need when dealing with instruments. Called "Choral Institute '68," the conductor/teacher was Otto-Werner Mueller. The Chicago Symphony Orchestra Chorus conductor since 1958, Margaret Hillis, organized the event and presided, but never challenged the instrumental conductor. We played under the student conductors who would be instructed (and improved) before our eyes and ears. Mueller was a motivating teacher. After a few days of this, we asked if he'd just conduct us in some standard (non-choral) rep for the fun of it. He agreed and it was everything we hoped for. Mueller went on to a career mostly as a teacher of

conductors, not famous for actually conducting orchestras. Here's a quote from an article about the Institute:

"Mr. Mueller's lectures and demonstrations revealed the many ways in which conductors abuse, thwart, present, and discourage players from doing their best. Whether through ignorance of instruments and the score, or insensitivity to music and human beings, conductors can—and do—force music to go in ways contrary to what the players know it should. Directing his ire toward choral conductors in general (and his class in



Otto-Werner Mueller

particular) Mueller observed that 'the second violinist can read his one line of music better than you can the full score. This must not be!' It is impossible to capture in print the vitality, wit, insight, and tenacity with which Mr. Mueller adhered to the goal of 'honest to the music and the musicians.' Over and over again he would say, 'Don't interfere,' 'Let them play,' 'Respect their intelligence,' and 'Don't make the beat more important than the music.'"

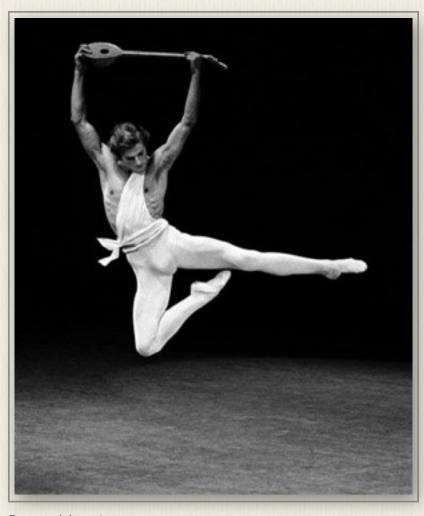
If all this weren't enough, the presence at the university of the Guarneri Quartet in their initial year, made the summer in Binghamton amazing. One could watch master classes from violist Michael Tree and his father Samuel Applebaum, a noted string clinician. The whole young quartet rehearsed and performed there; meeting them at this point allowed me to become a recognized person when I appeared years later in a recording session or backstage after a concert. They always treated me with jovial recollection.

- \* The opera performances that I'd played over the years made me long for a full-time job in the pit, so when Bellas Artes dropped into my life, it was thrilling. Not that there were many memorable performances, but compensations did occur: Plácido Domingo, a few outstanding conductors, and *Tristan*, an opera that I never expected to play. We may not have been a large or expert enough orchestra to play the Wagner masterpiece—and with only two of the four bassists able to actually play,—just to be a part of something so important in the history of music, was thoroughly satisfying.
- Though not a series, it was certainly the intent of HSO's music director Donald Johanos to play many of the Mahler symphonies, including ones that I'd never had a chance to play and thus learn. The sixth and seventh Mahler symphonies made a great impression on me. And the HSO played unusual works of Shostakovich, Bartok, Hindemith, and Rachmaninoff. In the 13 years I played with the group I enjoyed many performances, even if Johanos wasn't the most inspiring conductor. We also had many visiting guest conductors of great merit.
- \*\* I remember playing the Stravinsky Festival of the New York City Ballet in June of 1972. Mr. Walter had a conflict and recommended me to audition to fill in for an extended period (both before and after the Festival). I played for the music director/conductor Robert Irving who seemed satisfied and I became DW's substitute. The work I did before the Festival has vanished from my memory, but when rehearsals began for that special event everything seemed exciting. We rehearsed in the daytime and performed regular (non-Stravinsky) ballets in the evenings. Then, when the Festival began on June 18, we continued to rehearse forthcoming works and in the evenings performed the Stravinsky ballets that we'd prepared during the previous weeks. From June 18–25 we played 35 Stravinsky

scores, 31 ballets (21 of which were newly choreographed). But let me back up a bit. On the opening night, as the sold-out audience was called to their seats by a Stravinsky fanfare for trumpets, they were met at each door with metal trays filled with shot glasses of vodka. Before we played a note, the original supporter and director of the New York City Ballet, Lincoln Kirstein, along with Balanchine,

spoke a few words: Stravinsky would be 90 today and he was here in the hall, so let's toast him. The audience stood, lifted their glasses, and drank to Stravinsky. Do you know what that meant to me? It was so amazing that so many people not only knew that a great composer had walked among us, but were there to honor him. In my life as a classical player, musician, teacher, and fan, I've never been so moved. It brings tears to my eyes even as I type this.

During the rehearsals the size (or even the non-use) of the orchestra allowed me to go out into the hall and watch the proceedings. I sat with Jerome Robbins



Peter Martin

(we were already well-acquainted) and listened to his musings when the work on stage was his. In the pit, whenever I wasn't playing, I'd go to the wall to be able to look up at the dancers. For some reason, my stand partner, Barbara, thought this was not good and would put her bow across my path. I'd quietly lift up the bow and go to the place I liked. She wasn't pleased, but I didn't care. I was there to observe history. She was there to make money. Friends and colleagues came for the rehearsals: Ann was a thrilled rehearsal visitor as was Stravinsky fan and fellow bassist, Orin O'Brien, who was working just across the plaza with the NY Phil. I found myself sometimes standing in the area near the pit with the heroes of my ballet pantheon: Peter Martin, Edward Villella, and for god's sake, Jacques d'Amboise! They were nice enough, along with various conductors, to sign my



Festival program. The thrill of this series of ballet performances still reverberates in my musical/mental image.

While I sat with Mr. Robbins during rehearsals I brought various dancers' moves to his attention. He didn't consider my suggestions, but he didn't shut me up either. He was consistently kind and sharing. When, during rehearsals, he received an invitation to attend the 1,000th performance (or some such number) of *Fiddler*, he just sniffed and politely said no. He told me he'd seen enough of it already!

As usual, during a break in a rehearsal, I had the gumption to go up to Robert Craft, the conductor of one of the Stravinsky pieces, (now I forget which) suggesting that Bernstein had used "that exact lick" in *West Side Story*. He agreed.

I was thrilled to hear Silverstein play the Violin Concerto. A new piece for me, but it was one of Silverstein's standards. The Violin Sonata, played by the orchestra's concertmaster was also exquisite. He and the pianist were on stage and the dancers moved about them. Another tribute to the choreographers' inventiveness and respect for the music.

It was especially touching that the final music of the Festival was Stravinsky's *Requiem Canticles* and *Symphony of Psalms*. No dancing. There was a chorus; Douglas Hill, the baritone who'd substituted at the last minute for my Lincoln Center recital of Mozart's "Per questa bella mano," sang in the group and I was able to get him aside and thank him. It showed class when the Festival honored Stravinsky with just his music; no distractions. An added holy touch to the proceedings.

- Another concert I want to remember is one that I performed with the Honolulu Symphony Orchestra. We'd been on strike and when we resumed playing it was with Yo Yo Ma playing the Dvorak Cello Concerto. He was young, handsome, and when he leaned back playing with his head near the instrument's scroll, he looked like he was in heaven. In the second movement, there's this moment when the slow theme returns and he took his time preparing the entry, and when he finally played the first notes of this juicy melody we heard a scream from the audience. At first, we thought it was heckling or someone making fun of the music. We soon recognized that it was a woman who'd achieved orgasm.
- \*My stand partner, Mark Kuraya, and I decided to go backstage after the concerto to thank Ma for the wonderful performance. We hardly said a few thanks when the ever-courteous Ma was telling us what a joy he'd had playing with such a fine orchestra. Mark and I returned to the stage shaking our heads in astonishment that such a famous soloist could remain so humble.
- \*As long as I'm remembering important HSO concerts, I'd like to dwell on the Shostakovich Symphony #9. Not a work that was familiar to me, but we were playing it under the direction of the composer's son, Maxim. There's a long exposed bassoon solo in the work that was beautifully played by Paul Barrett. When the work was over Maxim Shostakovich brought Paul to the podium for a solo bow. He deserved it! Here's how Paul remembers it: "Yes, two nights in a row—he had me walk down to [receive the applause] in front of the violins. Maxim called me 'the Rostropovitch of the bassoon' so I'm assuming that he liked it...."
- \*At the MAW in 1962, I had the pleasure of playing in the orchestra that accompanied the young Judith Blegan as Massenet's *Manon*. She was beautiful and her light, silvery voice was just right for the supposedly teenage Manon. Abravanel

led the orchestra with his usual authority. Since this was Singher's first opera to stage direct at the MAW I knew that he put every ounce of his considerable creativity into the whole thing. Katsuumi had a small role (everything was sung in English) and many others in the cast also sang very well.

- \* In 1976 I was playing as an extra bass with the Munich Philharmonic with Rudolf Kempe conducting us in Bruckner's 5th Symphony. I had played numbers 4, 7, and 9, but the 5th was new to me. The orchestra sounded wonderful and Kempe knew the work thoroughly. We recorded it in the Burgerbräu Keller shortly after the Herkulessaal concerts. I already knew the Keller from rehearsing and recording there with the Graunke group.
- \*\* The Symphonie-Orchestra Graunke was hired to perform in the Bayerische Staatsoper while that group was on tour. We played Donizetti's comic opera *Don Pasquale* which was fun, funny, and satisfying. But the real winners were our performances of Prokofiev's *Romeo & Juliet* ballet. I couldn't see the dancing on stage; it didn't matter. We were making beautiful music down in the pit. There are one or two places where the bass section has the tune and we soared beautifully to the end of our fingerboards.
- \*\* One performance that will have a secure place in my ears' memory is the HSO's playing of the Rachmaninoff *Symphonic Dances* with André Previn conducting. It was his specialty and he knew how to make us sound our best. This was at the point that we had excellent French horn players, the usual good low brass, fine percussion, and an excellent string section. Our regular oboist, clarinets, and bassoons made every section of the orchestra a balanced, harmonious organ. It was exciting from beginning to end. He played/conducted a Mozart Piano Concerto on the same program. Mike Becker and I sat in the balcony to hear the Mozart. A lot to enjoy!
- \* The Honolulu Symphony Orchestra had just begun rehearsing when I looked behind me and spotted a disreputably dressed young man who looked homeless until I noticed he was carrying a violin case. He asked me in a strong English accent where the Green Room was and I recognized our soloist: Nigel Kennedy.

\*\* Another concert that will live in my memory is the huge Berlioz Requiem with four bands on portable stages on the sides of the airplane hanger in which we performed with the ProArte Orchestra (Long Island, NY) with the inspiring Eleazar de Carvalho, conducting. Not only are the instrumental forces larger than anything I'd ever played, but they included a giant chorus and a touching tenor solo. Here are just a few of the requirements: 8 bassoons, 12 horns, 16 timpani, 10 pairs of cymbals, etc. There are supposed to be 18 basses, but I believe we were more on the order of 10. The audience was so large that there were huge signs to help them find their seats. At the point when Carvalho was going to cue one of the brass choirs on the side, he encountered one of the signs that would have blocked their view of his baton. He quickly stepped down from the podium and in a fell swoop, threw the sign to the ground and gave the needed entrance cue. Everything about this giant of a concert was meant to etch itself into one's memory and the grand sound of the combined forces certainly did not disappoint.

\*\* For operas, we were accustomed at MSM to playing in the "pit" (just an area in front of the small stage) in the old upper East Side buildings. During my years there (1963–66) when the baritone John Brownlee was president, we performed some memorable operas. One was written for Brownlee, who came out of retirement to sing the lead role. Nicolas Flagello, a composer who taught at MSM knew



Coppola conducting.

how to use an aging voice in the role of the saint in *The Judgement of St. Francis*. Our opera conductors included Emerson Buckley, Anton Coppola, and others of similar rank. The other operas that we performed at MSM that stand out in my memory are Ravel's *L'heure espanole*; Gounod's *Hamlet*; Mozart's *Abduction from the Seraglio*. Playing orchestra music with Jonel Perlea was a combination of terrifying and thrilling. He had a short temper and yelled at us for falling short of his demands for perfection. Nonetheless, Perlea introduced me to many works I'd



Brownlee as St. Francis

never played before: Mahler #5; Prokofiev #6, and his Lt. Kije with the bass solo for which I was extremely nervous. We played the Richard Strauss Death and Transfiguration (Tod und Verklärung), but I remember best our performance of Bruckner's Ninth: probing, elongated lines that allowed our principal horn, Sharon Moe, to show off her dark, vibrant sound.

\*\* Every chance we (the SOB) had to play in Berlin's famed Philharmonie, that still looks and sounds great even though it was built in 1963, was a memorable event. The Bach Christmas Oratorio with chorus and soloists stands out for me. At that time, 1976, we walked through the rubble remains of WW II bombing to get to the elegant building.



### Documents, letters of recommendation, etc.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

This is to certify that Mr. Gary Hickling was one of four musicians selected by the National Guild of Community Music Schools of the United States to raise the standards of quality of the performances of the Manila Symphonia Orchestra during a one-year period in 1966-67. This program was totally supported by The JDR 3rd Fund.

Mr. Hickling performed as principal bass player in this fully professional orchestra, developed over a period of years under the direction of Maestro Herbert Zipper. Both Dr. Zipper and the National Guild recommended Mr. Hickling for the distinction of his performance and for his remarkably effective success in training young musicians in the Philippines who on more recent scholarships from The JDR 3rd Fund have attended New York's leading music schools where they have demonstrated exceptional competence.

Sincerely,

#### I'm proud of the letter of recommendation from Porter McCray





















Amerikahaus Recital 1977

Lincoln Center Recital (Half)

Greeley Recital 1970

Mozart Osiris with Grant Mack

Hahn Sie mes vers with Grant Mack Audition Tape: Various

Handel Bass Duet with Mark Kuraya Bruce Thomson "Statement" written for me, with Grant Mack at the piano

## I Play Peña's Works

I performed a recital devoted to Angel Peña's bass works at Orvis Auditorium with pianist Marion McKay. It was professionally recorded.

You can sample as much or as little as you like.

Peña Concerto

These are excerpts from the Peña recital in good sound.

Peña Trio I

Peña Trio 2

Peña Trio 3

Peña Trio 4



The bass trio which played the Peña work: Gary, Mark Kuraya, and Tracy Dullea

Peña Ist Sonata Ist Mvt

Peña Ist Sonata 2nd

Peña Ist Sonata 3rd

Peña 2nd Sonata Ist Mv

Peña 2nd Sonata 2nd

Peña 2nd Sonata 3rd

Peña Rehearsal



Talking between Peña's works.



After the all-Peña recital, Angel accepts leis and applause.



A nice reception with plenty of food afterwards.

This video has been retrieved from a VHS tape and so doesn't have the good sound that you can find on the previous page.

First half of a film of my big Peña recital. Sound is so-so.

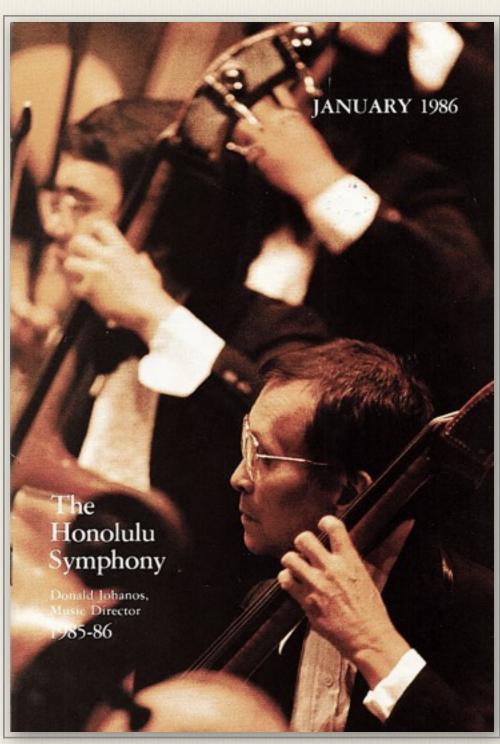


Second half of a film of my big Peña recital



Here are some songs recorded late in my solo bass-playing career. It was an evening at Louise Emery's house with Louise at the piano. The piece for bass duet features David Chiorini and me. Though we'd played the Telemann duet many times for ourselves, we still got nervous in front of an audience. The tape ran out on "None but the Lonely Heart."





My favorite HSO cover with Angel in front and Mark Kuraya behind.

These pages from HSO programs will give you an idea of our rep and the guest conductors and soloists we could boast of.

#### **Guest Artists**

Philippe Entremont's musicianship and style, both at the piano and on the podium, have won him acclaim on five continents. "Clearly he revels in Ravel, pushing, pulling and molding the music into a big, splashy whole." Denver Post

San Francisco Ballet features Agnes de Mille's masterpiece Rodeo, set to Copland's music; plus Balanchine's Serenade and Peter Martins' Calcium Light Night.

#### Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg

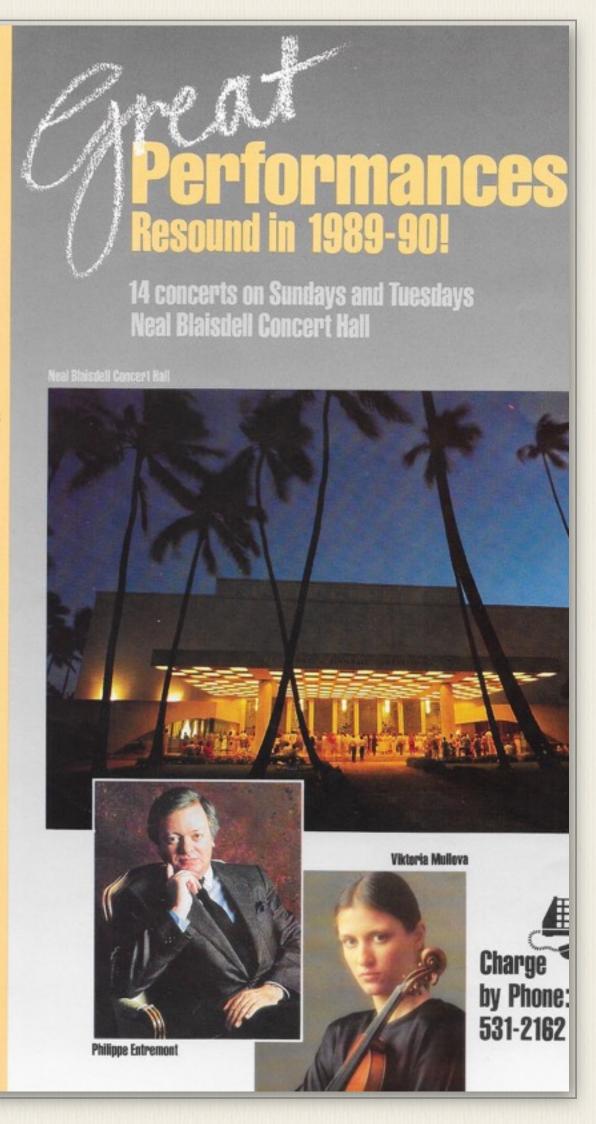
ignites a concerto with the
"blinding intensity" and
"highly individual stamp" of
her violin-playing. "Exhilarating
... a true original, one of the
bravest and most creative artists
of her generation." Newsday

Jon Kimura Parker, winner of the prestigious Leeds Competition in 1984, is considered to be a music phenomenon. "He plays like a prince." NY Times

Viktoria Mullova defected from the Soviet Union in 1983 after winning the Gold Medal in the Tchaikovsky Competition. "Here are 10,000 of the most beautiful sounds the violin has ever made." London Times

Pianist Peter Serkin's affinity for Beethoven is "like dreaming ... in its softness, clarity, terror, unpredictability, rigorous logic, unexpected connections and disconnections ... an extraordinary journey." Boston Globe "America's pre-eminent young pianist." NY Times.

Subscribe to 6, 9 or All 14 Great Performances and Save Up to 30%!





Series HONOLULU SYMPHONY - 19	92-9	3 SE	ASO	N St	ında	ys at	4 pm • Tuesdays at 8 pm • Neal	Blai	sdell	Cor	icer	Hal	1
eries Sumber of Concerts Day	A 16 Sun	B 16 Tue	C 10 Sun	D 10 Tue	E 7 Sun	F 7 Tue	Series Number of Concerts Day	A 16 Sun	B 16 Tue	C 10 Sun	D 10 Tue	E 7 Sun	F 7 Tu
Donald Johanos, conductor Ionolulu Symphony Chorus lendelssohn: Symphony No. 4 in A Major, Op. 90 "Italian" trauss: Till Eulenspiegels Lustige Streiche, Op. 28 'alton: Belshazzar's Feast	Sep 13	Sep 15	Sep 13	Sep 15	¥ / {		Donald Johanos, conductor Young Uck Kim, violin Grantham: Fantasy on Mr. Hyde's Song (premiere of orchestral version) Hindemith: Mathis der Maler (Symphony) Beethoven: Concerto for Violin and Orchestra in D Major, Op. 61	Jan 17	Jan 19	6	, th	Jan 17	Jan 19
Oonald Johanos, conductor GI Shaham, violin odfrey: Mestengo (Wild Horses) rokofiev: Concerto No. 2 in G Minor for Violin and Orchestra, Op. 63 eethoven: Symphony No. 7 in A Major, Op. 92	Sep 20	Sep 22			Sep 20	Sep 22	Donald Johanos, conductor Elmar Oliveira, violin Dvorak: Concerto for Violin and Orchestra in A Minor, Op. 53 Berlioz: Symphomie Fantastique, Op. 14	Mar 7	Mar 9	Mar 7	Mar 9		
Donald Johanos, conductor Bella Davidovich, piano cossini: Overture to Semiramide lcKay. Concerto for Orchestra	0et 11	0et 13	0ct 11	0et 13			Raymond Harvey, conductor Winner, 1992 Naumberg Foundation Piano Competition TBA	Mar 14	Mar 16			Mar 14	Mi
(World Premiere) rahms: Concerto No. 1 in D Minor for Piano and Orchestra, Op. 15  Pacific Northwest Ballet	0ct	Oct.	0ct	0ct	Oct	Oct	Hiroyuki Iwaki, conductor James T. Decker, trombone Takemitsu: Dreamtime Tomasi: Concerto for Trombone and Orchestra Shostakovich: Symphony No. 5, Op. 47	Mar 21	Mar 23	Mar 21	Mar 23		
Stewart Kershaw, conductor rogram A (see page 5 for program listing) rogram B (see page 5 for program listing) ahja Ling, conductor Stuart Chafetz, timpani lozari: Overture to Marriage of Figuro.	B Nov 1	B Nov 3	B Nov 1	B Nov 3	24 Sat A 2pm	26 Mon B	Donald Johanos, conductor Sarah Chang, violin Respighi: Gli Uccelli Welcher: Symphony No. 1 (world premiere) Tchaikovsky: Concerto in D Major for Violin and Orchestra, Op. 35	Apr 4	Apr 6	Apr 4	Apr 6		
K. 492 frafi: Concerto for Timpani and Orchestra flgar: Symphony No. 1 in A Flat Major, Op. 55  Oonald Johanos, conductor	Nov	Dec			Nov	Dec	JoAnn Falletta, conductor Acqualis Turina: Danzas Fantasticas Ung: Triple Concerto	Apr 11	Apr 13			Apr 11	A
chifrin: Concerto No. 2 for Piano and Orchestra, "The Americas" Chaikovsky: Symphony No. 5 in E Minor, Op. 64	29 Dec	Dec	Dec	Dec	29		Dvorak: Symphony No. 6 in D Major, Op. 60  Donald Johanos, conductor Takako Nishizaki, violin Weber: Overture to Abu Hassan Hao/Gang: The Butterfly Lovers (Violin Concerto)	Apr 25	Apr 27	Apr 25	Apr 27		
fush: Pacifica chubert: Symphony No. 8 in B Minor, D. 759 (Finished)	13	15	13	15			Mahler: Symphony No. 4 in G Major  Donald Johanos, conductor Garrick Ohlsson, piano	May 2	May			May 2	M
Gerhardt Zimmermann, conductor fon Kimura Parker, piano chumann: Concerto in A Minor for Piano and Orchestra, Op. 54 Janlon: Lullaby of My Sorrous	Jan 3	Jan 5	Jan 3	Jan 5			Rachmaninoff: Concerto No. 2 in C Minor for Piano and Orchestra, Op. 18 Brahms: Symphony No. 2 in D Major, Op. 73						

#### Everything I learned about playing the bass

Pizz vs Arco; the first sounds right away, the other takes some time to speak: be aware of the difference; also be able to switch back and forth quickly

Learn some theory; not a lot, just enough: order of flats (sharps backward); also know the notes across the strings (all the strings)

Use enough resin; not too much

Use different strokes for different strings: the lower strings take a lot more energy (not speed) to set into motion. Be aware of that!

Fingers get closer together the higher you go, even in the second position...; get precise with tuning every note you play; use an electronic tuner to check yourself

The bow gets closer to the bridge the higher you go

Practice bowing without the notes; can you write your name in the air with the bow? Be able to play at the tip with control

You can use an up bow from a lower string to a higher one, not vice versa; notice how far apart the strings are, making it harder to cross

Use short bow strokes for short notes; really short bow strokes for really short notes

The fingers never leave the hand (joke)

Watch the conductor, he'll begin to follow you sooner or later (no joke)

Practice scales and arpeggios. Really!

Practice scales l ll ll ll ll and ll ll ll ll with different fingerings so that you don't need to shift under the slur.

Tune before and during playing (in the breaks, of course)

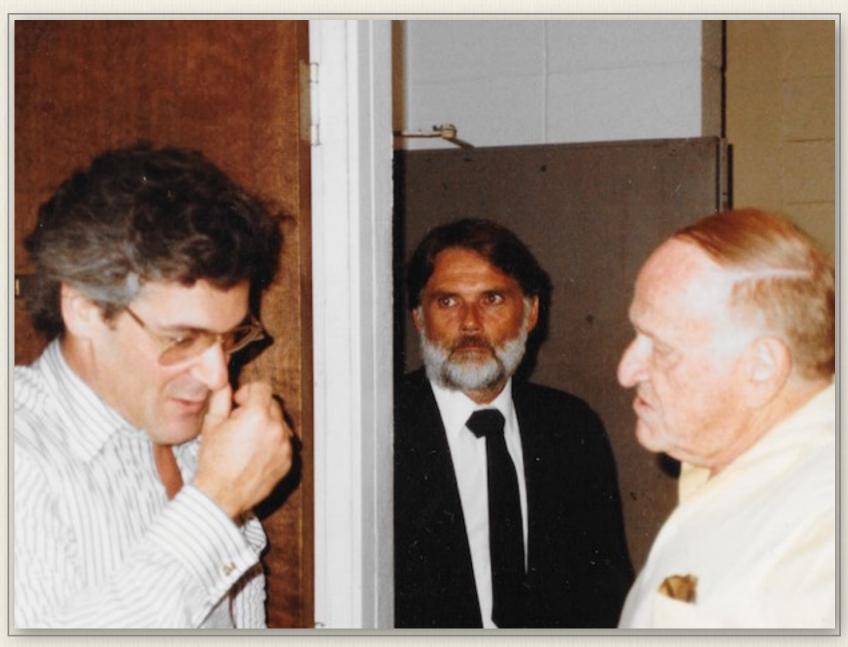
Be able to play equally well at the tip or the frog

Don't worry about vibrato in the band or orchestra, save it for solo playing, or orchestra solo or where the bass has a tune. It's a waste of effort otherwise

Try not to sit on a stool; you get hunched over and have a bad back. There are ways of standing that allow complete freedom of movement of both hands.

Play duets with your bass buddies

Have fun



Pinchas Zuckermann, GH, and David Walter backstage at Blaisdell Auditorium, Honolulu

# Solo vs Orch Bass: a mini-talented musician



Jaime and me at Lincoln Center

For most bassists, there's not much need to think of "solo" bass. Bassists may play a jazz solo, or the composer may write a few minutes of solo bass within a piece, but otherwise, we stay out of the solo register. David Walter, my bass teacher at MSM, thought otherwise and instilled in me the drive to play recitals featuring music written for bass. I wasn't gifted in any way as a musician: I couldn't

memorize easily, my pitch wasn't always accurate, my rhythm was suspect, I didn't have the hand/finger coordination that makes finding notes on the bass easier for some, and phrasing and other aspects of my musicianship were negligible at best. But I persevered. And against a huge nervousness (stage freight). Whatever I'd developed in practicing on my own and then with my pianist, was lost or at least

undermined by distracting nerves. After my graduating recital at MSM I played such affairs in Manila's PhilhamLife Auditorium; halls in Denver and Greeley, Colorado; Lincoln Center's Bruno Walter Auditorium, New York; Amerikahaus in Munich; mini-recitals in Los

Boismotier duet with Mike on trombone

Angeles; and multiple recitals in Honolulu, the last often shared with other musicians such as violinist Sheryl Shohet, bassist Mark Kuraya, or trombonist, Mike Becker.

The biggest, most important recital I performed was to honor Angel Peña and so it included only his music. He and his wife were about to leave the Islands and I prepared diligently with Marion McKay my pianist. My HSO friends Mark Kuraya and Tracy Dullea joined me for a set of bass trios. It was a gala event with

a huge reception outside of the University of Hawaii's Orvis Auditorium. I played better than I expected and had fun. You can hear and read more about that at the end of the chapter.

There must have been an element of masochism that kept me playing solo recitals. Duets were fun, but just piano and bass somehow triggered in me a stage fright that wasn't pleasant. The audience must have noticed and certainly, the playing wasn't excellent. What kept me at it for so many years? What did I need to prove? There were real musical choices to be made; my pianist and I (there were many different pianists) put a lot of work into the preparation and that was satisfying. Playing new, modern, and even



With Mike after playing a Mozart duet in Kawaiha'o church

world premieres was challenging and gratifying. It was an ego rush to play works that had been written specifically for me. The fulfillment of some desire to break out of the orchestra bass section must have been a motive. It's hard for me to analyze all these years later. Can you imagine that I was shaky even when playing bass solos for the nursing homes of Honolulu? But singing for those same people was no problem. My singing was never so good as my bass playing, but the anxiety that began the moment a solo recital started never improved.

I did enjoy orchestra playing: no nerves. My favorite moments include the grandeur and inevitability of Bruckner's 9th at MSM under Perlea. His aggressive interpretation of Mahler's 5th also at MSM retains a high estimation in my memory. My stand partner, Frank Lomolino, and I practiced our parts together. I visited him at his home in Hoboken on a weekend and we *lived* this difficult music. The result was a satisfying performance. Other memorable concerts include a crackling hot Beethoven's 7th with the HSO and Ozawa; a smoldering, romantic Bruckner's 4th under Graunke; a sensitive and detailed Bruckner 5th with the Munich Philharmonic under Kempe (which we also recorded); a dazzling,

rhythmically charged Rachmaninoff *Symphonic Dances* with the HSO (never sounding better) under Previn; the gigantic, overpowering, yet beautiful Berlioz *Requiem* (with four bands on the sides of the airplane hanger in which we performed) with the ProArte Orchestra (Long Island, NY) with Eleazar de Carvalho, conducting; the musically complex and demanding *Missa Solemnis* with Roger Wagner and the UCLA Symphony Orchestra and Chorus at Royce Hall, Los Angeles; and finally, the massive Berlioz *Te Deum* with an antiphonal organ, orchestra and two large adult choruses, a children's chorus, and a tenor soloist performed in NY's huge St. John the Divine. The space was so reverberant that we had to wait until the organ's chord had finished its echo before we (the orchestra) replied. Berlioz wrote of this piece: "the final movement surpasses all the enormities of which I am guilty up to now."

For some reason, after playing for years with the American Symphony Orchestra in Carnegie Hall under Leopold Stokowski, no particular concert or work stands out. I remember his particular style, demands, even words. But no single piece! We had many guest conductors as well, but I don't remember any names. Ainsley Cox was the assistant conductor, but he was there to make sure that Stoki could conduct; handy with meds for his low bp. There were impressive bassists in the section, people who went on to permanent jobs in the NY Phil and other leading orchestras. Stuart Sankey, who taught at Juilliard, was the first principal I played under, but there were others of equal stature. And we made good music! It's sad that I just don't have any music in my head from those five years.

There were series of concerts that have stuck in my mind: performing all of the Schubert symphonies in Herkulessaal with Kurt Graunke; the Handel organ concertos (and other Handel works) in a New York church; the series of Bach Cantatas that I played in a church, following the Lutheran practices of his time, with soloists of historic stature; the Stravinsky Festival with the New York City Ballet deserves a chapter all its own. The dancing, the conductors, the music, the choreographers, and finally, one of the most appreciative sold-out audiences I've ever played for. You can read more about that also in the chapter just ended.

Playing the Bach Brandenburg Concertos (three one night and the other three the next) on an Italian tour with the Munich Chamber Orchestra was satisfaction that

never tired. The group was good, the audience attentive, the halls or churches quaint and historic, and just performing the whole set of these concertos so regularly offered us a deeply revealing experience.

For two seasons I toured with the Princeton Chamber Orchestra led by Nicolas Harsanyi. He wasn't a good musician or a good person. But we played a broad range of music for string orchestra that I enjoyed. Some of the pieces that I especially remember include the Romantic *Introduction and Allegro* by Elgar; Bartók's *Divertimento* which was thick, rich, and satisfying; the conductor's wife, Janice, sang Britten's *Les Illuminations* with superb diction and musicianship; the principal cellist played a Vivaldi concerto and another solo work splendidly. But we got sick of Mozart's *Eine kleine Nachtmusik*.

For years in NYC, I played in a string ensemble (in the winter) and a small orchestra (in the summer) conducted by Julius Grossman called the Municipal Concerts Orchestra. He was genial and undemanding. We played nursing homes, prisons, psychiatric hospitals, and other places that needed music during the winter. In the summer we played in the NYC parks (other than Central Park). We hit all the other boroughs except for Statin Island. There were appreciative audiences and we played some excellent concerts. The Tchaikovsky *Serenade* was one of the string orchestra's specialties. The violinist, the late Barry Finclair, who often played solos with the orchestra, became my friend and he often rode with me to the concerts. I remember one in which we were in completely stopped up traffic, he was the soloist, and we were getting late. I drove up onto the sidewalk (there were no pedestrians) and around the mess and we arrived on time. On another trip, we were on the freeway and the hood of my car blew open. I quickly opened the window so that I could see, started honking like crazy, and drove into the median to close the hood. The life of a musician is not just making music.

In Graunke's orchestra we played the Beethoven symphonies 1-8 in Herkulessaal. Each one was stamped with the late Romantic treatment that Kurt Graunke brought to these symphonies, that even in the 1970s were often conducted and interpreted in a more Classical manner. We felt that we were part of a dying tradition, and looking back on it, I guess we were. Even us hard-boiled lifetime

musicians often had tears in our eyes as we performed. We also played Graunke's own works, especially his often loud symphonies and a good violin concerto.

Though the orchestra and singers weren't always the greatest, I had a lot of fun performing the spaghetti operas of Verdi, Bellini, Donizetti, Puccini, etc. at Bellas Artes in Mexico. You can read more detail about this in that <u>chapter</u>. In the <u>Manila chapter</u>, you can read about my performances there. Though they weren't of great technical merit, the pieces that I played with my high school conductor, <u>Eldred Balzer</u>, have stayed with me in a satisfying way.

Dennis and I enjoy remembering our favorite moments of orchestra playing. We often note that non-orchestral musicians can never have the same experience. Also, non-bassists can't imagine the sound I heard, just as non-trumpeters can't fathom the sounds that Dennis enjoyed. There are also problems, acoustic annoyances within an orchestra. For years we bassists suffered a tuba player who thought that he wouldn't be heard if his bell weren't pointed out towards the audience (and thus also towards us). Stand-partner Mark Kuraya and I hid in a second row almost behind a part of the proscenium arch to get out of the direct blast. And we wore earplugs as well!

Sometimes the soloists were the fascination, sometimes the conductor, and most often really, the good orchestra that we were playing with.

When rehearsing a piece we orchestra members have a chance to hear the preparation needed for the interpretation the conductor has in mind. We also get to know unfamiliar music because we've practiced it at home, listened to a few recordings, participated in at least four rehearsals, and then performed it, often twice. Is it any wonder that we get excited by each performance, believing it to be the best of our musical lifetimes?

I played longer with the Honolulu Symphony Orchestra (13 years) than with any other group. During certain seasons the makeup of the orchestra was extraordinary. The French horn section included people who went on to be principals in major orchestras. The woodwinds have always been excellent and there were times that I believe I'd never heard a better percussion or trombone section. Though there were some good string players, the majority didn't practice

their parts and so the intonation and ensemble suffered. The principal strings were superb musicians, but that only accounts for so much.

For most of those 13 years (interrupted by return trips to run the thrift store), the conductor was the acceptable but limited Donald Johanos. He didn't have a strong leader personality but was gifted with musicality and programed an interesting mix of pieces from war-horses to world premieres. I played my first performances of Mahler's 6th, 7th, and 9th. No particular concert with Johanos stands out. We had amazing soloists that were probably available to the HSO because they were on their way to or from Japan: Violinists Kennedy, Gil Shaham, Elmar Olivera, and pianists such as Garrick Ohlsson, Awadagin Pratt, cellist YoYo Ma. Conductors included Vladimir Ashkenazy, Seiji Ozawa, Maxim Shostakovich, Zdeněk Mácal, Eiji Oue, André Previn, Karl Anton Rickenbacher.

I'd written LP jacket notes for Garrick and so we were almost friends. I went up to him as he sat down at the keyboard for the first rehearsal and asked why he'd chosen to play the Rachmaninoff second, an overexposed piece. He asked for me to just wait and see what he did with it. And I was thrilled. Garrick had his individual interpretation of the piece making it sound fresh and brilliant. He joined me and my friends for some excursions and I have photos of the group at the Molokai Lookout.

The same different take on a warhorse was provided by Pratt. The Beethoven third piano concerto never sounded so alive and renewed. The challenge that soloists and conductors alike face when performing well-known works was made especially clear when Mácal began the first rehearsal of the Dvorak New World. He's Czech so he knows the world of Dvorak and even more so the New World Symphony. He showed us his score where he'd kept track of how many times he'd conducted the work. It was astounding! But he did a good job and, though he broke no new ground, he wasn't the least bit boring.

For several years Dan Welcher was composer-in-residence. He wrote pieces for the HSO that we played and even recorded. He became a personal friend and Dan and I hiked together on O'ahu and the Big Island. He now lives in Texas so our contact is less.

Sadly, after Johanos left, the board hired Sam Wong to conduct. He brought nothing special and was not a good person. I left the orchestra during his tenure.

My relations with fellow HSO bassists were a mixed bag. At first the often drunk and unprepared Herb Ward was principal. Tony Monaco followed him; a good player, but a flawed mind. After he left, Kirby Nunez became principal. He was dedicated and solid but took umbrage at being questioned. We didn't have a close relationship. Kirby knew I gave a lot of recitals in Honolulu and perhaps was envious. BTW he gave an excellent solo recital at a hall on the Kamehameha campus. He never attended any of my recitals. Some of the other section members became close friends: I already knew Angel Peña; I enjoyed sharing the stand with Mark Kuraya; Byron Yasui was a stable, solid musician who was also easy to like; Peter Askim, Mike Gorman, John Kennedy, John Moore, were all excellent players and good people. These people became personal friends with whom I also hiked, swam, and kayaked.

After retiring from the HSO I played solo works for Honolulu nursing homes with Dale Hall, piano. It was a lot of work lugging the bass around (as usual) and so it was with pleasure that I began studying voice and had only to carry around my vocal cords for these performances. You can read more about that in "Studying Voice at 65."

My last efforts on the bass were to record the solo piece Dennis wrote for me. He'd begun with a slow movement that I played in at least one nursing home. I was nervous, as usual. Later Dennis wrote first and final movements for the work and I recorded it and entered it in the international Bass Composition Contest. No prize, but I have the recording of my playing (that, because I was alone, didn't suffer from nerves) at the end of my career. I returned the bass that I'd borrowed from Toma and haven't played again.

Earlier in this chapter, "GodDamBass" you'll find a gallery of photos of me with my goddambass.

# Mr. Balzer

This is a memorial and/or tribute page to my high school orchestra and band conductor. My time at Glendale High School was especially important to me for the musical experiences that Mr. Balzer provided.

Despite the intonation flaws, and a few train wrecks (remember the recordings found here were "live" concert performances with no editing) there's always good spirit and,



thanks to Balzer, musicality to our LPs. (In the Calypso Carnival below, you'll even hear Balzer's voice, shouting [appropriately] "tequila!")



I played bass in the jazz band as you can see in the photo which includes a pal, Dick Eastburn, trumpet, with whom I'm still in touch. See the text for all the names that I could track down.

Many instrumentalists from those groups went on to important careers in music. I'm attempting to get in touch with them, and so far have a few responses which I provide below.

At the end of this chapter, I list the repertoire that we played in the 1950s. They are works that I'm proud to have played. The music we performed and, in particular, Mr. Balzer, put me on my path of music. We also played dance band music, usually arranged by Mr. Balzer. Here are examples from an undated yellow 33 1/3 rpm 8-inch disc. Bailey, Won't You Come Home/Cinnamon Kisses and Solid Blue. Here are the names of the players in the 1961 dance band above:

Gary Hickling, bass; Lee Breitbarth, drums; Steve Hunt, trombone; lower right: Bob Stewart, middle: Bob Maline, left: David Shostac, saxes; Jack Collier, piano.







Drum Major (and trombonist) Delgado with Balzer.

Emilio (Milo) Delgado, Glendale High Class of '59, recently wrote:

I did very much want to contribute something about Mr. Balzer because I remember him fondly and so vividly.

I remember Mr. Balzer one day during Symphony Orchestra practice, urgently tapping his baton and pleading with us, "Don't just read the notes; play the music! Huh#\*!

It wasn't until much later that I began to understand the profound implications of that puzzling remark. I asked myself, "Are the notes one thing and the music another? "Yes pendejo!" came the answer, "The notes are your 'map', but your depth of feeling and unique interpretation are what bring the piece to life! Go beyond the notes and release the music! EUREKA!

I remember Bud's dedication and seriousness of purpose and lurking mischievously underneath, a hearty sense of humor. I never hung out with Bud;

never went to his home or met his family but I remember him as a decent human being with a generous and accepting spirit who taught me to not only "read the notes," but to see beyond the obvious. His sage advice has served me well throughout my life. Thank you Bud, you did good.

[Milo Delgado also did good: he was picked up by Sesame Street and played a Hispanic character until just recently. In GHS Milo was usually part of every stage production and in the Calypso track, you'll hear him playing the bongos. Talent!]

Richard Eastburn, who played principal trumpet in both band and jazz band, writes the following:

I think that he was the finest rehearsal technician that I ever played for, ever. It was just a gift. I think that he had a genius IQ, perfect pitch, and a photographic memory. Unfortunately, he was a sailor and from time to time, talked like one. We never had much dialogue on a personal level. I came in played, departed, and he seemed to trust me. I did things musically that he trusted. But I didn't have the close personal relationship that he had with [Ron] Logan. I am sure that relationship went on far beyond 1956. I am sure that Ron can fill you in on more

PROGRAM	SYM	IPHONIC BA	AND		
Pantasis on the Alieluis	Eldred L. Balzer, Musical Director Jim Phypers, Associate Conductor				
January, February, March	PLUTE	TRUMPET	BARITONE		
Concerto in D Major for Flute and Orchestra Mazert Louise Di Tullio, Soloist	Louise Di Tullio Ann Pappers Diano Peter Mery Baker	Stone King Dick Eastburn Som Clement	Pat Colegrove Jim Woodraff		
Symphony No. 2	Welter Theurer	Jerry Smith Cary Hodge Rch Perrett	Jock Moulton		
Madrilenes I Adagic - Allegro F. M. Torroba	Honey George	Borbara Bunter	John Cope		
1. Bolero		Bil Mertin	Ken Temple		
	CLARINET Jim Phypers	Bcb Swatton	Poul McCertney		
II. Copla	Ron Bostman	Gory Mens	Bob Felani		
JII. Tirana	Ton Tucker Terry Curry Ton Briggs	Fred Sabaugh Jim Szullia Reger Kirkhom	Hin Linnemayer Pout Filliper		
INTERMISSION	Reland Kirstoln John Tidmarah Gary Petro	Diam Thompson Stove Dringenberg Biohard Tepper	PERCUSSION  Bob Minor		
Suite for Brass Leonard Le Best	John Glaser	Bob Seria	Frank Straight		
Trumpets: Joel Miller, Leonard Backus, Jerry Smith	Marilyn Gilleran Carol Humanet	Mine Glass Kermit Hodel	Bob Rae Roger Mercier		
Trombones: Tom Clark, Ken Day, Emilio Delgado	Les Wilkins	Market 110000	Steve Fitch		
Herns: Joel Kotin, Ralph Pollack, Ray Carison	Mariel Brown	FRENCH HORN	Don Foley		
Boritone: Barry Gerken	Don Treptou	Joel Kotin	Harold Basghman Ron Coleman		
	BASS CLARINET	Rolph Polleck Bruce Hill	Charles Benefiel		
Tuba: John Cope	Hob Blover	Roy Certson			
Percussion: Carol Messmer, Irene Sparks, Tim Harris, Don Foley	ALTO SAXAPHONE  John Dooley	Richard Lover Bernard Realer	TYMPANI Dole Morquis		
Jim Phypers, Conductor	Aios Troffer	John Gay	BELLS		
	Larry Maranville	TROMBONE	Sheron Word		
Toccotta for Band Frenk Erickson	Kay Vieregg Dick Hooper Wilbur Bereins	Tom Clark Ken Day	CELLO		
Navy Log March Fred Steiner	Marilyo Baker Drazin Burt	Don Walsh Dove Voralik Emilio Delgado	Derothy Tugby Susie Schroeder Diame Tombia		
ligh Tor	TENOR SAXAPHONE Gary Brooks	Charles Localt John Brown	Jane Kendall		
Calypso Holiday	Bernard Camp BARITONE	Bob Denton  Een Anderson  Kent Graham	STRING BASS  Ukaries Mentgeme Gary Rickling		
Sea Portrait	SAXAPHONE Gary Loggs	John Eedfern Ken Keeler	Ruth Watson Kathia Oulum		

matters, and he probably has a recording of the 1956 Spring Concert [on which he played an arrangement of the Mendelssohn violin concerto on the trumpet].

Ron Logan, trumpet, (who went on to a great career with the Disney folks) sent the following:

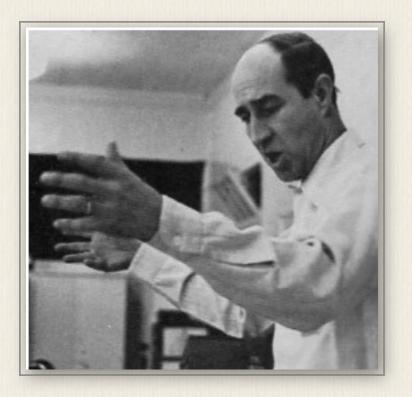
- "Bud" Balzar
- a very influential teacher for me
- always presented himself as a friend as well as a "mentor"
- -a jazz fan, as was I. I played in his nitetime rehearsal band for several years after I graduated was a way to "keep my hopes up" as a young L.A. musician
- I played jr. high "Sock Hops" with Bud. (He was a good tenor player, knew the standards, had a decent stock small "book")
- -I kept in contact with Bud and Helen through the years—always invited him to my Jazz/Band concerts when I taught at Long Beach City College (12 years).
- -He always enjoyed my introducing him to my L.B.C.C. audience.
- -My brother Gary (sax) and sister Brenda (percussion) were also members of the Glendale H.S. Band.
- -I did play a band version of the Mendelssohn Violin Concerto for my graduation in 1956 (on the football field was really tough!)
- -Bud introduced me to Kelly James and Dr. Clarence Sawhill at U.C.L.A. where I ultimately received my B.A./M.A. degrees.

This following memory by Jim Phypers was sent to Barbara Park Blankenship, a bassist in the GHS Symphonettes, etc.

It was wonderful to hear mention of Bud Balzer. We had it soooo good then with you and Gary and [flutist] Louise DeTullio and Emily Shockett — doubt he ever had a better group of kids. The Concert Orchestra really sounded good. I liked playing in the Concert Band too, getting to play the more challenging violin parts on clarinet.... He was a heavy drinker—how heavy I am not sure.

I always stayed after school and waited till I could get a ride home with Bud. He drove a most wonderful old Model-T Ford. He had painted it green. I will never forget those rides home with him. He would always hit the nearest liquor store to buy some beer—holding the can between his legs and drinking surreptitiously as we slowly made our way up the hill to La Crescenta. These rides continued throughout most of my years at Glendale High.

I was very fond of him, and he was very warm and open with me. It was well known how much he hated the marching band. He blew off steam more than once about how he dreaded having to march at those games. He always showed up pretty drunk. He confided in me once that he had studied at Juilliard and very much wanted to be a concert pianist but "I was never good enough" he said. I can remember that moment like it was yesterday. There were tears in his eyes as he reached for another sip of his beer. The depth of his pain about this was clearly very deep. I feel sad to this day about what he told me.





About 15 years after graduating from Glendale High I called him on the phone while I was visiting my parents in Menlo Park. I said "hello, this is Jim Phypers. Do you remember me?" He replied: "Of course I remember you—the CLARINET VIRTUOSO!!". [Jim went on to play many ancient instruments related to the clarinet.] His speech was slurred and he was obviously three sheets to the wind. A substantive conversation was not possible. I told him that I had many fond memories of those years playing in the concert orchestra and band and riding home with him every night. He got very quiet and he didn't really reply that I can remember. I finally said good bye, feeling very frustrated and sad.

Barbara asked me if I could remember any of the pieces we played in the Concert Orchestra. I am very embarrassed to say that I can't—just one piece from the

Concert Band, Ketelby's "In a Monastery Garden." Oh, it all comes flooding back to me. I can remember playing many of these pieces now, reading this amazing list you have been able to reconstruct. Good work! We were soooo lucky to have been introduced to such an awesomely fine repertoire!! Bud knew the literature so well!!! Lucky kids, we were to have him as our conductor!!

#### Fellow bassist and stand-partner Barbara Park Blankenship wrote recently:

The point was that we were playing real music, not just "educational" pieces. That gave us challenging goals and a more advanced kind of training. A surprisingly large number of us ended up as music professionals, and I'm certain that the ones who didn't are among the world's best audiences. [Barbara went on to sing opera, play viola, and piano and many non-music careers.]

In the two years I was there, the repertoire included music from the sound track of "Victory at Sea" by Richard Rodgers and Robert Russell Bennett (I hated the piece), Copland's El Salon Mexico—we may also have done Rodeo the other year. Probably a medley from The King and I. Oh, there was a slow romantic piece called "The Dream of Olwen." Enesco's Romanian Rhapsody (It must have been a simplified version) and Eine kleine Nachtmusik. It was a very good orchestra.



A jazz band photo with me holding the bass and Balzer far right.

We played a medley from My Fair Lady. Balzer let me conduct it one day in class, while he sat in the clarinet section. At one point I glanced his way and saw him gesturing me to conduct the other direction: I had everything reversed—beat 2 to my right and 4 to my left—as it looked when I sat in the orchestra.

One of my happiest recollections was that during the lame-duck week of each semester, when we had already played our concert and had nothing more to rehearse, he would sit at the piano with a lead

sheet, playing pop tunes and letting us jam with him. I put that experience to good

use earning money in a dance band in San Diego during my senior year.

#### Richard Slavett writes:

I had the pleasure to play in the GHS Band and Orchestra. Mr Balzer was my teacher. He also was my employee. For eight years I led my band called "Dick Slavett and his Band" and Mr. Balzer played the Saxophone and Clarinet.

Now I, Gary Hickling have the chance to weigh in on Mr. Balzer.

The inspiration for this Eldred Balzer tribute page is simply a way for me to

when Barbara Park left, I became principal.

Barbara Park Blankenship playing bass

Though I was hired by him to play a few dance band kind of gigs while I was still in GHS, I never knew him well enough to call him "Bud." I was an untrained bassist. I'd never had a bass lesson (or for that matter a tuba lesson, but played sousaphone throughout high school and college!) and didn't understand the basics of music theory (keys, etc.). But I must have played better than the others, for

thank him (and memorialize him) for heading me in the right direction.

Quite aside from the playing aspect of my relationship with Mr. Balzer, was the fact that he allowed me to exercise leadership qualities that I didn't know I possessed. The first day in orchestra he needed a librarian and Barbara encouraged me to volunteer. Thereafter I managed the orchestra and was librarian as well. The school basses rattled with loose seams etc. I asked Mr. Balzer if I could fix them. He always greeted my requests with a kind of smirk, like "why the heck not?" Anyway, I scavenged pop-sickle sticks from around the lunch room and used Elmer's glue (bad, I know now) to hold the old instruments together. The list goes on. He put good music in front of us and I took it seriously, enjoyed it, and music, especially classical music, became the joy of my life.

After I'd studied music theory at UCLA (where, thanks to Mr. Balzer's recommendation, I was able to join the band), I returned to GHS and met up with him. I told him how much I'd enjoyed playing in the "Symphonettes" and the bands, but that I would have played much better if I'd understood some theory. He got a bit defensive and said that there just wasn't time to teach anything like that. With the experience I've had, I know he was right. My brother Steve played

violin with Balzer for two years after I left. Steve's dead or I'd ask him for his memories. Though he wasn't into classical music then or later, I know he was proud of his time in the orchestra and was aware that we had a dedicated teacher. I have lots of other Balzer stories and will tell them later.

Here's some of the rep we played back in the late '50s.

#### Orchestra:

Alleluia

Alleluia (Fantasy on the Alleluia), Gordon Jacob

Andante and Scherzo, J. Edward Barat (arr. Remsen), trumpet solo, Richard Eastburn

Cello Concerto, Lalo (Beverly Lauridson, solo cello; later played in many great orchestras, shifted to gamba and died in 1994)

Cello Concerto, Saint Saëns (Lauridson, again)

Chorale and Finale: Die Meistersinger, Wagner

Concerto for Oboe and Strings, Corelli (arr. Barbirolli)

Eine kleine Nachtmusik, Mozart

El Salon Mexico, Copland

Fantasia on the Alleluia, Gordon Jacob (same as above)

Flute Concerto, Mozart (Louise DiTulio, solo flute; she went on to play in the LA Philharmonic and studio orchestras, and a solo career that continues to this day)

French Horn Concerto Op. 4, Strauss, (Ralph Pollock who is later listed with "Jeff Sturges and Universe" 1971)

Great Gate of Kiev, Mussorgsky

Hary Janos (Intermezzo), Kodaly

Hopac, Moussorgsky

Horn Concerto III, Mozart

January February March, Don Gillis

Madrilenas: Adagio/Allegro; Bolero; Copla; Tirana, F.M. Torroba

Offenbach's Gaité Parisienne

Pavanne for a Dead Princess, Ravel

Prelude and Fugue in d, Handel

Psyche and Eros, Franck

Romanian Rhapsody, Enesco

Secret of Suzanne Overture, Wolf-Ferrari (we played this in one of the competitions)

Symphony #40, Mozart

Symphony # 2 (excerpt), Howard Hanson

The Dream of Olwen, Charles Williams

Toccata, Frescobaldi

Victory at Sea, Rodgers/Bennett

Wedding Day at Troldhaugen, Grieg

#### Band:

Brass Aflame, John Cocovas

Calypso Holiday (Carnival?), Edward McLin

Cha Cha Cha, Glenn Osser

Dialogue for Four, J. Val. Hamm (included Dave Shochat)

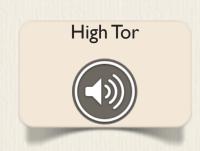
Evocation, Franck

High Tor, Harry Zimmerman

In a Monastery Garden, Ketelby







Latinata, Bennette

March Heat Lighting, Bowles

March of the Steel Men, George Belsterling (we played this marching in the Rose Parade)

Navy Log March, Fred Steiner

Piece Heroique, Franck

Psalm for Band, Persichetti

Scherzo, Erickson

Scipio, Handel

Sea Portrait, Homer La Gassey

Suite for Brass, Leonard Le Bow (see the program for soloists, conducted by Jim Phypers)

Symphony for Band (Finale), Erickson

Symphony for Band (First and Fourth Movements), Persichetti

Tamerlane, Frank Erickson

The Sinfonians, Clifton Williams

Timpat, Robert Leist

Toccata for Band, Erickson

Tubby the Tuba, Kleinsinger

Twinkle Toes Ballet, Don Gillis

Vermont Suite, Cobine

Wormwood Scrub March, Farnon

Combined Band and Orchestra: Gigi, Loewe; King and I, R&H; My Fair Lady, Loewe









#### I have another musician's story:

After she graduated from GHS and already making her way in the professional flute world, Luise DeTullio came along on one of our orchestra or band competitions. I don't remember her playing (but why would she have tagged along otherwise!). She was so kind and supportive of Balzer and we all recognized her as a real talent and thought that it was wonderful that she would still support him (us).

I asked her to contribute a memory to this Balzer page and she declined. We were lucky to have her around GHS. She won a high school beauty contest and as well as contributing to the sound of either the concert band or orchestra. There were other fine musicians in the groups who went on to professional careers in music, thanks to the encouragement and leadership of Eldred Balzer. We are all grateful.

P.S.

I promised to tell a few more Balzer stories. It turned out that my brother Steven appreciated our conductor with the same fervor as I. We'd both been around enough drunks working with the solicitors our father used at the thrift store that we could relate to Balzer's problem and understood when he was off for a few days (especially after a weekend), that he was just getting over a toot. Steve and I banded together to improve things. We reasoned that if Balzer was engaged in preparing us for competitions he'd have less time to drink and be so impressed with our abilities that whatever compelled him to drink would not be so compelling.

It seemed to work. When we were active in rehearsals for concerts or competitions we could depend on Balzer to be there for us.

When he and his wife bought a home near us, Steve and I biked by to check it out. The yard was quite barren, so at the end of the next concert we presented him with a pair of lawn chairs and some potted plants. I believe this was my last concert with Balzer and he presented me with a present for being manager of the orchestra: a pair of tight warm pajamas (though it was hot in the desert mountains, the evening could be cool).

The last I heard of Bud Balzer was actually from Mr. Mac (my first conductor and the head of the Glendale School District music department) who told me that the pressure of keeping up his standards with the band and orchestra were too much and Balzer now was teaching Senior Problems or some such course. Sad!

As we age nostalgia becomes more active in our minds. Some of those memories are spruced up a bit in the remembering or re-telling. Not so with Mr. Balzer. No one disparages his musical talent, his leadership abilities, or his contagious enthusiasm. As others have mentioned, he was well educated and I remember the shouted admonition "SEPARATE" as the violins were playing the main theme of the Handel piece. He knew the Baroque style even back in the 1950s and though he was never pedantic, passed his knowledge on to us.

There's another aspect worth mentioning. Most school conductors must content themselves with light or "arranged" classical music. They wouldn't touch contemporary or any modern music. Mr. Balzer knew enough about classical music's repertoire that he had no qualms about using all sorts of music. Of course, for our audiences' sake, we played arrangements of the musicals of the time, but they were easy and what we definitely wanted to play were the good, challenging things.

Mr. Balzer entered us in various competitions (both band and orchestra) and we did ok. After playing the Secret of Suzanne Overture and getting less than stellar marks, he mentioned that it would be better not to play pieces that the judges may have just heard the night before on KFAC, our local classical radio station. Another response to these competitions came when we surreptitiously heard a recording of one of the judges' comments as he was listening to the concert band. "Don't I see some cellos in the group?" Mr. Balzer always wanted

the richest sound possible and did use a whole section of cellos to bolster the midrange sound. In orchestra we were short of violists, so he had alto sax players come in. He was always after the best sound possible and the expected way was not always the way Mr. Balzer chose.

Though as mentioned earlier in this section, he did hate marching band, he was always enthusiastic and demonstrated how we should lift our knees while marching, so we'd look as good as we sounded. He also chose interesting music for us to play while marching. Nothing like Stars and Stripes for Mr. Balzer; we always played modern music, whether marching or not, meant for our times.

Mr. Balzer was so proud of our groups that he went to a lot of personal expense (and trouble) to have us recorded. They were live, taped during our rehearsals or performances. In one case he wanted to demonstrate to the audience what huge progress we'd made on some piece and had an earlier recording played in the hall (over decent speakers). We, as well as the audience, wanted to hear the difference that only sophisticated listeners might notice. But we tried our best to improve over that past recording.

And that is in the end what made my three years at GHS with Mr. Balzer so important. We didn't goof around, we didn't complain about the music. We just played with all the concentration we could muster. I still remember, when I was just a lowly sophomore, hearing a senior, who played piano behind me in the orchestra, complimenting me on my vigorous playing in the Mozart 40th symphony.

But speaking of Mozart, I still have the embarrassment of listening to Louise play Mozart's Flute Concerto beautifully, but hearing me enter with the bass section and quite clearly playing an 'f' natural when an 'f sharp' was required. I didn't know enough (anything) about theory and those sharps and flats just didn't mean anything to me! Oh, the shame. There were probably so many of us making such errors that Mr. Balzer didn't have the time to correct us. Maybe for the best. I went on to enjoy a rich career on the bass and I thank Mr. Balzer for instilling the enthusiasm for the genre that now, even in my 79th year, has never waned.

# Program of Music

# Symphonettes

PRELUDE AND FUGUE IN D MINOR Handel—Kindler
ANDANTE AND SCHERZO J. Edward Barat—Remsen Dick Eastburn, Trumpet
DIE MEISTERSINGER
CONCERTO FOR OBOE AND STRINGS Corelli—Barbirolli Honey Gecse, Oboe

## Brass Choir

V	ERMONT SUITE	Largnetto—Allegretto		Attert Coots
	Leonard Backus	Bruce Hill	10-37	Milo Delgado
	Dick Eastburn	Ray Carlson		Ken Anderson
	Sam Clement	Jerry Smith		Art Duncan
	Susan Linder	Tom Clark		John Cope
	Ralph Pollack	Tom Denton		Tom Johnson

#### INTERMISSION

## Concert Band

PIECE HEROIQUE .		 . Cesar Franck
TUBBY TUBA		 Kleinsinger
	John Cope, Joel Miller, No	
TWINKLE TOES BALL		Don Gillie
TAMERLANE		 Frank Erickson

# Combined Orchestra and Band

GIGI . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Loewe

#### -00

# UCLA: Music was only a fraction (3/4 time?)

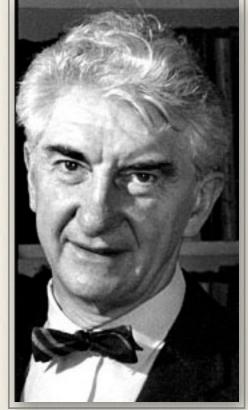


At UCLA music wasn't even my major in my first year! And I failed College Algebra. What was Subject A? My spelling was so bad, I had to take a non-credit spelling course. No theories, just memorization. A waste. The first year I took all the required courses: American History, World Literature, French, ROTC, Psychology, etc., but I always played in the bands and orchestras. We had some amazing musicians leading us: conductors Lucas Foss, Richard Dufallo, Wolfgang Martin, Jan Popper. Natalie Limonick was the opera piano coach. We hardly knew how blessed we were, though there were times when even us students noticed.

From my first year, I also studied bass. I killed off my first bass teacher in one year. I bored Peter Mercurio, my second one, for three more years. He'd often suggest that instead of our lesson we could go down to the student union and have lunch. I didn't practice and that must have annoyed him but he never let on. He suggested that I spend my summers at the Music Academy of the West and that was what changed my life. He was the teacher, so that was the same but all else...

I do have some fun stories of my time at UCLA, some of them can be found in "Tales too crazy to be True." But now the highlights.

Tr. Jan Popper, a great opera conductor, deserves his own chapter. He was another European refugee who we greatly respected. Dr. Popper prepared Dallapiccola's difficult *Il prigioniero* opera for the West Coast premiers by rehearsing us individually! We also played unusual operas or premiers right there in Los Angeles. You can read the list in the chapter "GodDamBass." Dr. Popper also comes in for his intervention in my personal life. He'd brought five Japanese singers over on Fulbright scholarships. One of them became my lover and when my parents threatened deportation I had to meet with Dr. Popper whose work on the international arena was threatened. He



remained a supporting person and I took a course in Verdi operas from him and found him just as good a teacher as he was a conductor.

- \* Two UCLA musicians joined the Los Angeles Philharmonic at the same time: David Breidenthall, bassoon and Barbara Winter, oboe. I interviewed them and wrote up their story for the *Daily Bruin*. At the time I was the liaison between the Music Department and UCLA's newspaper. I posed the inappropriate question as to what might be their next orchestra move, implying that I didn't think that highly of LA's orchestra. I didn't, but that's another story.
- \* The orchestra had never had its picture taken professionally. It took some doing: to convince the UCLA Music Department that it would be a good thing and then to get the money budgeted. The biggest hurdle proved to be just keeping

the musicians on the Royce Hall stage after a performance, but we did get a photo. Nancy Daniel, the timpanist, had already covered her instruments. Who's peeking in from the door on the right? I'm sitting next to Pat Patterson. Mercurio is second to last in the section. Roger Wagner had just conducted.



\*\* Playing in the UCLA Symphony Orchestra as a symphonic orchestra, or accompanying operas or choruses was always a fascinating endeavor. I was well aware that having Carl Sandburg read his own words for Copland's *Lincoln Portrait* was of historic import. You can imagine that being a part of some of these grand moments, whether performing world or West Coast premiers (Barber's opera *Vanessa*), having ample time to rehearse the pieces (that no professional group can afford!) or just playing the almost standard repertoire (Beethoven's 4th) in the great Royce Hall could regularly feed my devotion to music.

\* In 1959 the latest fad in foreign language teaching was to hide the written language from the beginner as long as possible. Our French textbook included a small LP record that we listened to and memorized. Our teacher only spoke in French, but he wasn't a good enough teacher to make it work. I creaked through to the next semester, but there we read a Jean Anouilh play that was far beyond my ken. I loved the language but learned to speak/read very little. What I did learn served me well enough when I visited France, where the locals were very patient and responsive to my efforts.

\* My minor was psychology and I enjoyed some of the classes. But the large lecture class of Psych 101 used trick multiple choice questions on the frequent

quizzes and final exams. I needed to go to TA's to have them teach me, not psychology, but how to analyze the trick questions. In my final year, I was a Psychology of Music minor. I developed a test or questionnaire to see if there was a psychological difference between a group instrument (bass) and a solo instrument (piano or organ). The concept was flawed. Both players can enjoy social approval and integration while playing their chosen instruments. There was no discernible difference between the two groups of people who answered the questionnaire. I learned very little about the psychology of music. The field was in its infancy.

- \*After I'd divulged my sexual preference to my parents and they'd disowned me, they gathered my professors together for a meeting at UCLA to tell them what kind of reprobate they were teaching. There were plenty of gay professors in attendance at what must have seemed to all of them a petty exercise in vengeance. I found this out years later, from one of those professors, after I'd graduated.
- \* The UCLA Band (both marching and concert) went to Europe in 1961. The tour was an important trip for an impressionable provincial like me. We flew on the last propeller planes to cross the Atlantic; it was my first flight of any kind. For the trip, we were randomly assigned roommates. I hardly knew the guy I was paired with. When we arrived, cold, tired, and hungry our Danish host family offered us only a bit of sweet aspic and sent us to bed. They were friendly, open,



and kind the next morning and showed us real hospitality. In another city, we were housed in army barracks that were vacant during the summer. Their showers had no hot water; we were accustomed to bathing daily. Uncomfortable bunk beds, but hey, we were in Europe to share with them the wonders of our concert band. The band sounded good and after performing the *Stars and Stripes* as an encore in Salle Pleyel in Paris the audience stood and cheered. Many who came backstage were crying. It was this, as well as the piles of war-debris we encountered in London, that helped us to recall how close we were to the end of WW II.

- \* Playing in the UCLA Concert Band offered many other opportunities. We represented the University at graduations and played many interesting concerts in Royce Hall, just like the UCLA Symphony Orchestra. The programs were varied and often included surprise guests, as the review on the previous page attests.
- \* I should never have taken College Algebra. No one counseled me. I knew I was deficient in math and thought that sounded like sort of a refresher course. No way! It was a serious course that potential engineers etc. were required to take. In no quiz nor exam did I get a single answer right! The teacher suggested that I drop out before it was too late. He had my best interest at heart. I thought that would admit defeat and stuck it out. He'd also suggested getting tutoring, but again, I imagined that would show a sign of weakness. Of course, I got an F and that was on my transcript and lowered my overall grade average. I'm not sure I learned anything in the class or from the debacle. I was too proud (and stupid).
- \* UCLA charged \$94 each semester. That meant that I could take up to 18 credits and did. I felt that doing any less would be wasting money. It never occurred to me that I might concentrate my studies on fewer courses and learn more.
- \* Until they disowned me at the beginning of my senior year, my parents paid the dormitories for room and board. I bought my books, which weren't as expensive as they are nowadays. Also, you could buy used ones. We were housed in state-built high rise (10 floor) buildings that were just going up as I entered in 1959. The men were in separate buildings from the women. You can guess that I never snuck into the other buildings. And yet, I wasn't interested in the guys either. Difficult now for me to figure that one out. My first roommate was Joel Miller, a

trumpet playing theater major friend from high school. He ended up with a film career in Canada. After that first year, I thought it would broaden me to have a different roommate each year. Maybe I was subconsciously hoping that one of these unknown guys would bring me out of the closet that I didn't know I was in. One of my roommates was a cellist in the UCLA Symphony Orchestra, Robert Nishimura. We



Dykstra Hall (the first dorm I stayed in) and closer, Sproul Hall (the second one).

got along fine, but again, I changed each semester! One of my roommates (also Asian) had been born in one of the World War II Japanese camps. Of course, he didn't remember anything from that. He wanted to listen to Rock music and I wanted Classical, so we had a kind of sonic war each morning. In the evening, to wear ourselves out, we'd wrestle. He was a weight-lifter and much stronger than I, but I still made him work to win. I never got aroused; wasn't interested, I guess.

\* When my parents stopped paying room and board in my senior year I found

an inexpensive co-op. That meant that we guys who lived there had to do the work of the place. I've forgotten what I did. I remember the first room had three bunk beds. I was invited to stay in a narrow one-bunk room, but the guy was religious and wanted sex; I was devoted to Katsuumi so I moved back to the first room.

\* Almost every night I'd bike across campus to where Katsuumi was living. A



patron of the arts (especially music) had a mansion with guest quarters. That's where he (we) lived. To make sure that no one would hear me bike up the

driveway to his door, I'd carry my bike. I'm sure everyone knew anyway. Certainly, when my parents hired a private detective he must have followed my travels after I pretended to fall asleep in the co-op. Somehow my folks found out and further tried to humiliate me. But that was toward the end of my senior year and I was already making plans to leave Los Angeles.

\*No matter what my parents had tried to do against me at UCLA, I was on excellent terms with my the Music Department and my professors. I didn't request this letter,

written by the assistant conductor of the Symphony Orchestra, I was librarian, manager, and made sure that the required student musicians were at the rehearsal or performance, as needed. I also coordinated the placing of the big instruments

July 10, 1963

Dr. Jan Popper
Chairman, Music Department

Dear Dr. Popper:

I would like to take this opportunity to mention the enormous assistance that the Symplomy Orchestra has received for a Cary Hickling this past season. Gary's contribution in enthusiass, organization, and plain hard work has helped make the season the success it was.

Sincerely,

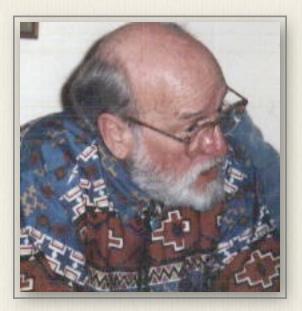
Richard Dufallo

in the correct hall. Percussion, timpani, celeste, piano, etc. all need to be available when and where needed. Someone needed to do that. I did.

\* I was busy at UCLA. I always took the full load of 18 credits and worked like crazy to handle the homework, quizzes, and exams. The end of semesters could get to me: I'd have major papers to write, research to accomplish, and listening. The last meant that I needed to spend time in the listening rooms of the Music Department Library attending carefully to all aspects of the assigned works. This

all took time. At one point I felt as if I could never accomplish all that was needed by a certain Monday deadline and contemplated suicide. I'd already been disowned. I wasn't working at the thrift store on the weekends as I'd been doing the previous years; I felt overwhelmed. Then I decided: If I stayed up all night with the pile of references, a pile of blank paper, and my typewriter, I could fulfill all these assignments. Since I had a key to the orchestra rehearsal hall, I set myself up in there and worked through the night. I could use the toilet when needed and there was a water fountain to keep me hydrated. I completed everything; exhausted I attended my 8 am class with no sleep and no breakfast; no suicide either. Only one paper's title stays with me: "Leitmotifs in *Pelléas et Mélisande*."

\* For a music history class, I remember one trick question on a "drop the needle" test that Dr. Robert Tussler gave: he played the opening cello solo of the second



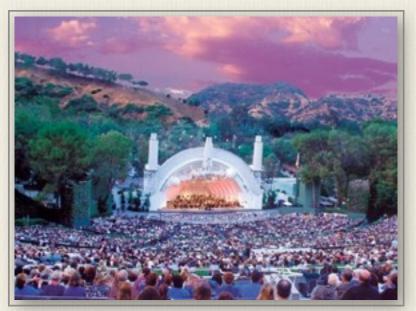
movement of the Brahms second piano concerto. He stopped before the piano enters and everyone was trying to guess the romantic cello concerto, but we'd recently played the piece so I didn't have a problem. In one of his final exams, he used a quote from each of his students made at the beginning of the semester and asked us to defend it now. Mine was: important world events directly influence important musical compositions. Or was it vice versa? (Does History

influence great Musicians or do Great Musicians influence History?) In any case, he made us think! We were often challenged; we learned a lot.

- \* I remember another final exam question, this one from Dr. Popper's course on the operas of Verdi. Which opera is your favorite? Defend. I chose *Falstaff*. It was the last one we'd studied so it was fresh in my mind, and I did like it! But it was the defense of my choice that was the work of the final.
- \* There are also negative memories. Some professors seemed to have us "study" a work in such detail that was senseless: copying out a full score of *Nights in the Gardens of Spain* by Manuel de Falla to thus help understand his orchestration. Our professor for music before 1750 had literally written the book on that period. He stood before the class with that book on his desk and proceeded to read from it

without comment. When the class was over, he put a marker at that place and resumed there for the next class. We were all to write a final report on some aspect of early music, but we weren't allowed to choose ourselves: he gave each of us a topic. Mine was "the Anthem" which triggered no interest. A final angry memory, but from a different professor: While studying the music of Bach we were assigned one of the two-part inventions. We were to write the interval between each melodic note and the interval created with its counterpoint. Tedious! And I'm not sure I learned a thing from that exercise. But I did complete such dumb tasks.

\*At one point the UCLA Jazz Band was to perform at Hollywood Bowl. I wasn't the regular bass player, but whoever was, couldn't do it and I was requisitioned. Not an experienced jazz player, I tried to get out of the assignment. The conductor, Kelly James, said that there was no improvisation, I was just to read the notes and play them all pizzicato. That sounded fine and I arrived with a UCLA bass and played the rehearsal at the Bowl. But my fingers weren't calloused for jazz and they soon developed blisters that broke and bled. I had a concert to play that night! I went to a hardware store during the break and bought soft leather



gloves that I used for the performance. No one noticed. I sounded fine.

More about the Hollywood Bowl: In my senior year money was tight. Dorothy Kirsten, who'd been giving special classes at UCLA for the drama aspects of opera performance, was performing both *Tosca* and *Madame Butterfly*. A pal showed me that the fences around the periphery of

the Bowl were easily jumped and I attended both operas without a ticket. I remember sitting with Natalie Limonick, who was amused and guessed what had happened. In both operas there were dramatic moments to watch out for: in *Tosca*, when she says at the very end "Scarpia, we meet before God" and jumps off the Castel Sant'Angelo parapet, Kirsten had the staging arranged so that we could actively watch the descent. Usually, the soprano rushes to the back of the stage and jumps a foot or two down. Not Kirsten: she was going to fall some twenty feet!



But she ruined it by throwing her legs in the air so that she'd land on her butt. Snickers from the whole audience! The other huge moment was when Butterfly commits harakiri, the ritual suicide. She'd seriously studied how the Japanese did it and instead of going behind a sogi screen as is usual, she stayed out in front and faced the audience. The way she went at it looked like someone trying to crank start an ol' Model T Ford. We laughed again! P.S. I forgot to say

that she did sing well.

\* Another course I liked was studying all the brass instruments as taught by trombonist Paul Tanner. He was funny, fun, and also a good, motivating instructor.

He'd played with the Glenn Miller Orchestra. He lived until 2013, his 95th year! We were assigned an instrument for only a few weeks, learning the basics, so that we could teach it when needed. Most of the class were future music/band instructors. One of the students, a violinist, had perfect pitch, which helped her a lot. At one point he asked her, quite honestly, how did people with perfect pitch know the pitches? Who named them at first? She answered with disarming candor, "The people with perfect pitch." We laughed for days at that. I'd like to believe that some of my good teaching ability was learned from Tanner.



- \* I was as fascinated with science at UCLA as I had been in high school. In those years we had to drive over to CalTech, but at UCLA I could just walk down from the music building, and there I was. As usual, these scientists were always eager to explain whatever experiment they were working on. Nothing huge, but fun nonetheless. I remember a machine that analyzed the components of a gas.
- \*My mother had attended UCLA but she never showed much interested in my studies there nor in the place itself. They came out to hear our performance of *Don Giovanni*, which seemed to me so melodic that anyone would love it. They said that they didn't understand why everyone sang. It might be a good play without all that music! You can imagine that I didn't ask them again.



This is what UCLA looked like when my mother attended.

\*\* Here's a story from "Tales too crazy to be True." We were in for a special treat at UCLA in 1961 while the incomparable violinist Jascha Heifetz and world-class pianist/composer Lucas Foss were teaching there. We, music students and faculty, were invited to a recital of Schubert and Brahms trios and the cellist was to be Gregor Piatigorsky. The recital hall accommodated only about 500 and every seat was filled for this historic event. The playing was as

thrilling as we expected. Since it was an educational institution, before intermission, the audience was allowed to question our famous performers. From a voice inimitable as it was recognizable came a wheedling and accusatory, "Mr. Piatigorsky." Jack Benny, instead of positing a real question in his field of violin, was going to put the cellist on the spot. Nothing more from Benny; the amazed laughter from the audience and stage was so great that intermission had to be called to bring some degree of order. No serious question was asked.

\*My junior year at UCLA was made brighter because of my contact with Katsuumi and the other Japanese singers that came with him. They invited me to their parties, recitals, and concerts. They didn't bother translating and I understood enough from context that I didn't feel left out. I saw them in many house concerts as well as operas given at UCLA. They brought a higher level of vocal expertise to the music department. I'll never forget the first time I heard Katsuumi shout/sing out the first angry cry of "Awaaaa" in Ravel's *Chansons Madecasses*. His other favorite set was Japanese folk songs which he hammed up to everyone's delight.

One evening he and his friends had especial joy in dressing me up in traditional kimono (many layers) in readiness for a New Year's celebration. The rounds of mochi or pounded rice and other elements were all part of the traditional festivities. There was also a game that paired Japanese and non-Japanese in how

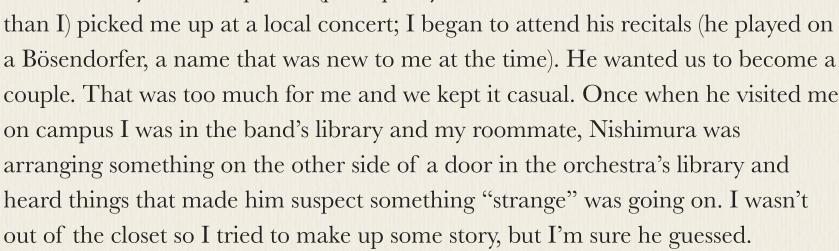
quickly each team could pick up a nut (with chopsticks) and put it in a second bowl and pass that on. Surprising my Japanese friends I was good at it!

\* The course on Western world literature was taught by an Italian who spoke sections of Dante in the original Italian that made it sound like music. We were introduced to all the classics and that was important for me. I knew nothing: tabula rasa. The same could be said about my knowledge of US History. I'm glad these were required. It was at UCLA that I learned the basics of music theory.

\* Though I enjoyed my time at UCLA, my college friends were mostly just that:

I lost track of them after leaving California. Clarinetist Damian Griego studied at MSM, so I saw him from time to time and we're still in touch, though he lives in Vienna. Barbara Park (Blankenship) studied voice at UCLA, I'd known her as a bassist from high school, and she's still an almost friend. But that's about it.

\* While at UCLA I also met my first other-than-Katsuumi boyfriend. A pianist (perhaps 5 years older



- \* My UCLA important conductors' stories are in "My Conductors & Teachers."
- \*\* During my first year at UCLA, I had to take ROTC. That meant uniforms, spitshining black shoes, marching, and studying about war. I protested to my instructor, but there was nothing to be done. I also wrote a paper on the groundless, useless nature of war, but he dismissed it. He said I'd missed the point. The goal wasn't war. Anyway, when I began to march with the UCLA band this somehow got me out of the ROTC, or maybe it was just a semester. I don't remember, but I know that we

band members practiced a lot of marching formations on the football field. The Sousaphone was a heavy burden, but I'd suffered under its weight in high school. We marched in a Rose Parade, as well as the Rose Bowl football game that also occurred on January 1. Boy was I tired after all of that. Though I took tennis the first semester, marching band was all the exercise I needed to keep in skinny shape. At the time, though my back hurt once in a while, I didn't swim or do other sports. Though I had a car, I walked everywhere on campus; about 30 minutes from the dorm to the music department. Weekends I worked at the thrift store and that was a workout!

- \*For some reason, I decided to join the music fraternity. Besides studying music, I needed to prove I was a musician by playing a solo. I found a single movement from a Baroque sonata and without a pianist, performed that for the handful of guys already in the fraternity. They accepted me and the initiation proved to be nothing more than a group meeting that covered their goals. These seemed so puny to me that though I'd been admitted I didn't participate further.
- \* I played in the UCLA Concert Band during my graduation in 1963. No one came; I was already disowned. Of course, our graduating class was too large to parade up to a stand with someone handing out diplomas. Instead, all the bachelor graduates stood at once (I stood inside the ranks of the band) and they mailed me the diploma which you can view along with my transcripts in "MSM."

Dr. Sawhill conducted and one of the Japanese sopranos that Dr. Popper had imported sang "Un bel di, vedremo" from *Madame Butterfly*. It's strange the odd things that I remember. A day later I was on the road with Katsuumi. We traveled for days in my old car and I remember it was very late when we got to New Jersey, but I didn't want to stop until we saw Lincoln Center (about 2 am!). We stayed just across from it in a cheap hotel with a silver-painted Statue of Liberty copy on top.

\*\* During my last year at UCLA, I was completely on my own. I'd been disowned, so I didn't work anymore at the thrift store. My parents emptied the house of everything that reminded them of me (which included childhood dolls!). I trashed most of what my father brought me. He was so distressed (my brother was having problems in the military and of course my situation didn't help) that he showed me that he'd broken out in sores on his back.

I'm surprised that I didn't have more problems. I don't remember being the least bit bothered: I had a lot to do. It was my senior year and I hadn't decided what I was going to do after I graduated. I studied hard and got straight A's which meant that I made "Dean's List" which was marked by a letter I was supposed to give to my parents.

They were doing all they could behind the scenes to get revenge for me hurting them: I've mentioned the talks with my professors, the lawyer they hired to deport Katsuumi, and the private detective to check on my behavior. They also changed their will to exclude me. I've seen that version of the will and it hurt me that they were so angry that they would go to all that trouble. It's nice that years later they agreed to accept my lifestyle, as my father wrote: "if I'd accept theirs." That change in my father's thinking occurred after his brother's death. He began to notice how few people were left in our family and even offered me a job at the thrift store if I wanted to return from my life in Munich. I thanked him for the job offer (he'd even mentioned a dollar figure) and wrote that I was happily involved in my orchestra life in Germany.

Looking back on this I'm amazed that I didn't suffer some short or long-lasting psychological trauma. The only answer is that I was involved with wonderful friends and lovers, thrilling music study and performance, and busy earning enough to keep me alive. I even saved enough to be able to make loans to friends. And it was on these savings that I was able to go to Europe with no connection there, without speaking German, and with no plan on how I was to survive. I guess I found the whole thing challenging and that kept me positive and happy. Depression, fear, anger, or uncertainty were not issues for me. UCLA had allowed me enough opportunity to develop my leadership and independence.

\* I do have a P.S. about one of the UCLA friends who, after we'd graduated, invited me to his wedding. I was already studying in NYC, but it wasn't a problem for me cuz I was headed to the West Coast for another summer at the MAW. Anyway, it was fun to meet up with him and his brother. I participated in the wedding rehearsal and other preparations. Suddenly I was invited to join them for a bachelor party that was to take place in a huge cabin up in the woods. I've forgotten the name of the park, probably Big Bear. After a good meal (no booze)

this huge bunch of guys went off to the bedroom, which I hadn't even scoped out. It turned out to include a bunch (maybe 10) double beds with two guys in each. I'd stayed up late playing chess with one of the guys and so everyone else was in bed when we arrived. He wanted to have sex but I objected, whispering that everyone would know what we were doing. He whispered back that that's what they were all doing anyway! I'd never guessed that my pal was bi! Later, one of the bachelor party gang, a policeman, arranged to drive up to visit me several times at the little place that I rented while attending the MAW.

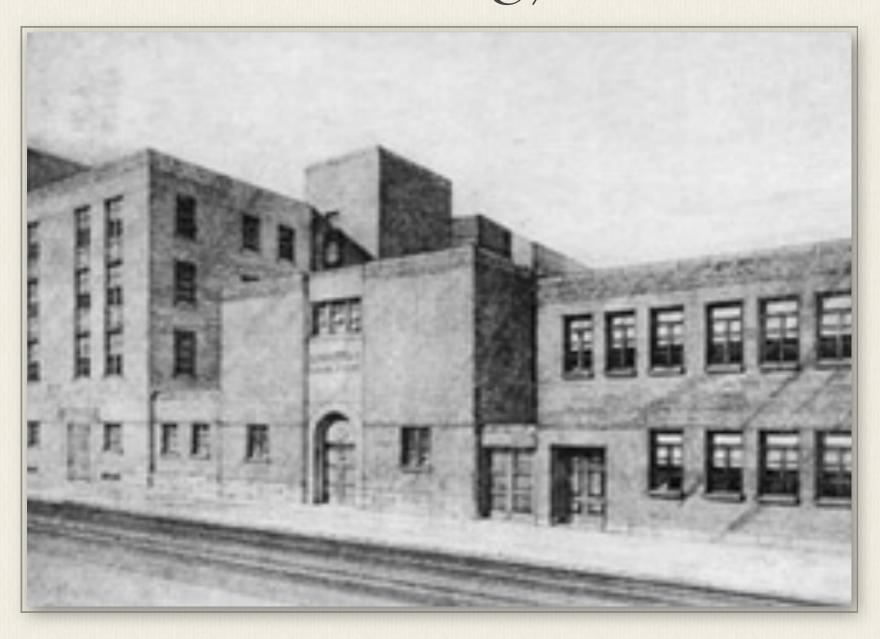
\*Now over fifty years since I graduated, I regularly receive invitations for various reunions, mostly of the UCLA band. I recognize a name or two on the planning committee but would have so little in common with these people that it would be a waste. No UCLA former friends have looked me up, nor have I them.



UCLA's iconic Royce Hall in whose auditorium we played our biggest concerts

#### -00

# MSM (sounds like a drug)



Since my parents had disowned me, after graduating from UCLA I just sort of tagged along with Katsuumi in his move to Juilliard. I thought I might study there, but the place seemed sterile, cold, and impersonal. Manhattan School of Music was warm and welcoming with its wood-paneled interior and friendly open door administration. Dean Whitford, when asked about that, said there were so many books in her office she couldn't close the door if she wanted to. She was also the person who welcomed the entering classes with the admonition: "Don't worry



Dean Josephine Whitford

about practicing, dears. Just remember, that if you don't practice someone else will!"

I asked to audition for the master of music program and they replied that they'd already held them and that I could audition in the Spring. I pushed and said that I was here now and wanted to study. Somehow they found a place for me in some late audition placements and surprise: I was allowed to take an audition (on almost no notice). They asked where my bass, bow, music, etc. were and I lied and said that they were on their way from

California and surprise: they believed me and loaned me all of that and I practiced hard for the first time. UCLA's instruments were all that I'd used and I was very unsophisticated about all such things.



Fuchs instructing with her Tourte bow which she accidentally broke over the head of one of her students.

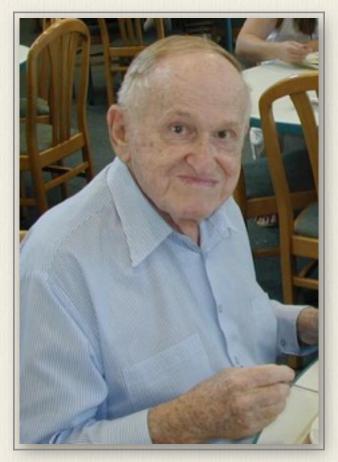
There were three famous string teachers on the panel of my audition and two of them rejected me, but violist Lillian Fuchs, bless her heart, thought I



MSM on East 105th Street, that I attended for three years

sounded musical and she outvoted them. She was like that; in a master class, she once broke a very expensive bow over the head of a cellist whom she was coaching. Further surprise: I got a scholarship: became orchestra manager, taught preparatory bass, and was superintendent of the buildings on Saturdays. I went on to earn my M.M. (master of

music) and M.M.Ed (master of music education) degrees. BTW the other two cringing at my lack of technique at the audition were Stanley Bednar and Rachmael Weinstock (both of whom became friends while I was at MSM.)



**David Walter** 

After my first lesson with David Walter (all the way out to Queens with the subway/elevated) he called and told me that I wasn't a "masterbasser" (his joke). He didn't want to teach me because I wasn't advanced enough and certainly not on the level of a graduate student. David recommended that I study with Mr. Brennand (then principal bass of the New York Philharmonic). I should have done that. As intelligent, charming, and full of interesting stories as David Walter was, he didn't care about teaching technique. We students probably should have gotten that elsewhere, but I certainly hadn't and that's what I needed. Instead, he wanted me

to prepare various solo works (especially those written for bass or the transcriptions of Baroque sonatas by Vivaldi, Corelli, etc.). This was fun and his stories were great (and took up a major portion of the lesson) but I really couldn't play bass well. If it weren't for the help that I got from my fellow students I couldn't have advanced as I did. I was also extra busy because for the first semester I didn't have a full scholarship and needed to make some money. Thus: Brooks Bros.

I'd never heard of the store. The name, august in many men's minds, meant nothing to me, but they needed a salesperson for the College Division and they hired me. Except for Christmas sales, there was little to do. I chatted with another young student and fought for the few customers that did arrive. We were on the "up" system which meant that only when the first more senior salespeople had customers could I help and thus earn some commission money. There was no A.C. There were some very hot days and on one occasion I took off my jacket. The manager came running up to me with it as if I were naked and made sure that such a sin was never repeated. I did earn a regular hourly salary and soon started playing free-lance gigs which helped supplement my income.

These first few free-lance gigs were due to recommendations of David Walter. He may not have appreciated my bass playing but we were on very good personal

terms. David got me interesting jobs; not only the orchestra work which you might expect but also some avant guard and chamber music. My name got around and I was invited to play in many orchestras. When I returned from Manila it was David Walter (principal bass and personnel manager) who suggested that I play in the Princeton Chamber Orchestra. You can read some of my stories about touring with that orchestra in the chapter "Tales too crazy to be True."

I took all the required courses for a master's in music degree, working especially diligently to avoid being drafted into the Vietnam War. My grades weren't spectacular but my broad success at MSM was. I taught bass for the Preparatory Department, for which I was also the assistant conductor.

In November of 1963 when I'd only been attending MSM for a few months I tried to enter the building and discovered Dean Whitford outside saying that all classes were canceled: "The President has been shot." I went across town to Juilliard and met Katsuumi to talk about it, at Grant's Tomb, which sat opposite the school. Since it wasn't his president, it didn't make a big impression.

As I was finishing my second year I decided to give a master's recital. It wasn't required: I could have played for a panel. With David Walter's help, I put together a solid, demanding recital and, in keeping with Mr. Walter's philosophy, all music

written for the bass. In other



Some of my audience: Richard Kapp, his wife, Damien Griego (a clarinet friend from UCLA studying at MSM), Ermela Esslen, K's friend, Rainer Esslen, Alan Birnbaum, Katsuumi Niwa, and another of his friends.



It was unnerving to have Maestro Jonel Perlea in the audience. This photo was taken right after and is one of my proud moments.



Fellow bassist, me, David Walter, my pianist, Alex Farkas, Michael Ann with her then husband Barry Fader.

words, no transcriptions. Alex
Farkas was already a friend and
his excellent pianism added to
the success of the afternoon,
given my shaky nerves. I
remember beginning the first
piece that started on a "C" and
thinking, "I don't have any idea
where that note is!" But no one
threw over-ripe tomatoes and
with Katsuumi singing Mozart's

"Per questa bella mano" I knew I had a good program.

The Vietnam War wasn't over when I finished my MM, so I decided to get the MMEd which would give me a good teaching credential, valid in every state but California. The courses designed to instruct us, future teachers, weren't consistent in their quality, but we learned the instruments of the orchestra (which I'd already studied at UCLA) and the basics of conducting. In the choral conducting class there was no mention of warm-ups, vocal technique, or even ranges of the voices. We were all expected to organize our mutual choral class friends into choruses that we'd conduct to demonstrate for the professor. I did get my MMEd.

Student teaching in NYC was an eye-opening experience. We were assigned to music teachers who were to offer us the actual "before the classroom with a baton" experience and not only guide us but write up criticisms that would be sent to our Music Ed. director, Dr. Raymond Le Mieux at MSM. At the junior high that I "taught" in, the bandmaster was a white guy (at a time that his students were mostly everything else...a real mixture) who'd learned to control the enthusiasm of 45 male adolescents with a lot of tricks. For instance, he'd pick a particular guy who'd seemed to have instigated one of the constant near-riots that occurred and bring them into his office. He'd blocked out the windows so no one could see what went on during his discipline. The teacher would bang things around in the office that made it sound like he was beating the kid when actually he was just throwing

things around. The kid got scared but not touched. He returned to the classroom chastened and the others, fearing similar treatment, would be calmer (for a time).

This teacher was burly and in a way athletic: from the podium, he could throw a piece of chalk across the whole band and hit an inattentive student on the temple with it. Impressive.

One particularly embarrassing moment for me when conducting this band occurred when a bassoonist raised his hand and asked me for the fingering for a G flat. I certainly didn't know, but immediately said, "the same as an F sharp." He was thankful and I saved my reputation.

I also "student taught" in an elementary string program. Again, the major battle was between the kids' desire to goof off, and their almost equal wish to play music. They would chatter and fight and play their instruments at random when I was trying to get some control and finally begin a piece of music. I devised the system that they quickly grasped: I'd point my finger up to the fluorescent lights. They learned that they couldn't even begin to have the fun of making music until it was so quiet that we all could hear the hum of the lights. It was something between a joke and a command, but it worked and we could usually play music.

During this final year at MSM, I worked with some indigent bass students (mostly Puerto Ricans or blacks) at the 3rd Street Settlement School. Its director, Harris Danziger (a highly respected violinist), also taught at MSM. He and I got along and one day he drew my attention to an announcement on his bulletin board offering employment for a bass teacher in Manila. I followed up on that and you can read that experience in the "Manila" chapter.

It was also at the 3rd Street Settlement that I began my "after school" music project. The quotes are to let you know that the crime at that time (1966) was just too horrible after school. I was organizing professional instrumentalists to visit various schools to teach classes in their field. We found that the gang members and other criminals just didn't cause problems (robbing students of their money or instruments) in the morning, so the teaching occurred before school. Each student paid a small amount and since there were usually 10 or more kids, it made it worthwhile for the poor professional.

My last weeks at MSM were a bit of a letdown. I had missed some lessons with David Walter and wanted some help on some concertos that I might be asked to play in Manila. He declined, saying that he didn't make up missed lessons. I didn't have the money to pay for any, so I just let it drop. Another disappointment in DW. The love/hate relationship I had for him continued until the end of his life.

The positive aspect of the last weeks was the chance to write my Master's Thesis. I'd met a young man who was getting his Ph.D. in Communications at Columbia University. He was fascinated with the (pre-computer) automated learning called Programmed Instruction. At the end of each section of the text, there was a test to see if the reader understood what had been presented. If that mini-test were passed the student went on to the next section. If not, remedial work was undertaken. I thought some of the same principles could be applied to aspects of music education and that became the core of my thesis. I assembled the note cards in order and typed from them using the lid of my bathtub as a desk. Ann sat next to me and took each page and re-typed it on her typewriter, correcting my questionable grammar and punctuation. She may have even tried to make the whole thing cogent. It was accepted and received an A-.

When I walked up onto the stage to receive my diploma, the head of the string department, Stanley Bednar, who was a real frenemy of mine, said, as he lowered the Master's sash over my head, "Shall I choke him with it?" My relationship had included some requests for this and that to improve the school. I remember saying that I thought the old grand piano legs would break being rolled on and off the

stage; I recommended the metal support on wheels that most grand pianos had. They immediately bought that. The administration and the faculty were part of a friendly family at MSM. Add to that a bunch of good friends (mostly bassists) and the Manila adventure brewing in my future and you'll have an idea of my constant level of excitement.

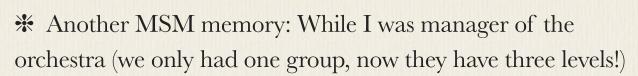


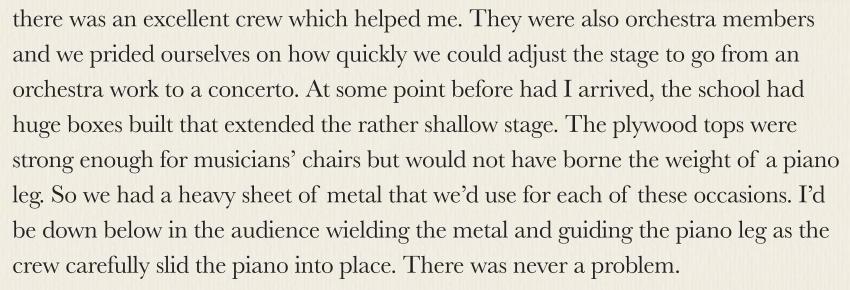
Mr. Bednar

\*Ann (and her always gracious mother) decided to give me a going-away party at her mother's Park Ave apartment, where I had already enjoyed and participated in many evenings of music. Katsuumi had already returned to Japan, but a mutual baritone friend, Muneo Ohkawa, attended and sang "On the Road to Mandalay," forgetting words here and there. With his Japanese accent, the whole song became a special treat and a great lot of fun!

\* A random MSM memory: The area in which the school was located was called

Spanish Harlem. The name is deceptive: it's not in Harlem and it wasn't Spanish. There were lots of Puerto Ricans and luckily for me, it had also been called Italian Harlem. There was one remaining Italian store just a short walk from MSM. There I could buy fresh cannoli and Cel-Ray soda. Both of these things were new to me. The cannoli were little roles of crisp dough filled with sweet creamy stuff. The soda actually had some celery juice flavor in it and somehow was that combination of sweet and edgy that appealed to me.





\*When Jonel Perlea conducted we needed a specially-built surround for his podium so that while seated on a rotating stool, he could hold on with one good arm to keep his balance. It was agonizing to watch what he went through: he didn't memorize scores so with the same (left) hand that he used to conduct, he turned the pages. During rehearsals, he'd bang on the wooden surround while demanding in his loud, angry, rasping voice: PIANISSIMO!

- Yet another MSM memory: I decided that since this was a school orchestra the training aspect was more important than anything else. After Frank Proto graduated I became principal bass and led the section: my bowings, my orders. After a year of this, I let my assistant principal lead and I moved to the very back of the section. At the first rehearsal of this new line up, Maestro Perlea looked around and gestured with his one good hand. He pointed to the front of the bass section (where I usually stood) and to the back (where I was now ensconced) and back and laughed as if I'd been demoted (he spoke no words). Perlea knew I was a good player: I'd already handled (nervously) the solo to Prokofiev's *Lt. Kije Suite*.
- \*\* Though not directly associated with MSM, I need to tell of the relationship with Katsuumi. Neither of us had pledged to be faithful and when I met a cutie while working at Brooks Bros I asked Katsuumi to move out. We were living on the East Side which was convenient for me to get to MSM, but when he moved, he stayed at the International House directly across from Juilliard (where the school was located in those days). He dressed up nicely and met me at work at Brooks Bros to try to convince me to let him stay, but knew it was better for him logistically and so he moved. We stayed in good touch (literally and figuratively). We went to concerts and operas together and saw a wonderful Gérard Souzay recital at Hunter College. In the audience during intermission, Katsuumi pointed out Pierre Bernac, with whom he'd had a few lessons. Also with Katsuumi I saw one of my favorite recitals, which luckily was recorded. Victoria de los Angeles accompanied by Alicia de la Rocha. What a combo!
- \*Also with no direct connection to MSM, I need to tell the story of Katsuumi inviting me to Juilliard for a master class with Hugues Cuénod. He'd told me of the almost mythical status that this man had in the world of mélodie, so I was in rapt attention to everything Cuénod suggested. He was dressed elegantly and his manners were so refined, I just knew I was witnessing one of the world's civilized people. At one point there was some doubt in his mind as to what he was telling a student about a Debussy mélodie and he said, "Mme Tourel..." and she stood up and knew exactly the answer to give. There was my holy world: Tourel and Cuénod in the same auditorium. Others might not get the thrill, but it was that for me. Katsuumi studied with Tourel until she was convinced that he was a tenor.

Unless he studied with her as a tenor, she wouldn't teach him. He wanted to remain a baritone, but upon returning to Japan, his voice teacher there convinced him he was a tenor and he changed to that voice for the rest of his career.

\* MSM was the perfect conservatory for me. It was small enough that I could make my mark, sneak into classes that interested me to audit, perform a wide variety of classical music, work with teachers and students who excelled in their fields, and learn to find a balance between the various aspects of a musician's career. That included keeping track of classes and fulfilling their requirements; enjoying contact with musicians both bassists and non-bassists; learning to handle the demands of managing the orchestra (there were a librarian and a crew to help), and at the same time begin my freelance life outside of MSM. At the very week of my graduation, I needed to liquidate my meager possessions to fly to Manila. I didn't have much, so it wasn't a huge problem, but now I was completely going to be on my own. I was headed to the Philippines: The mandate of my contract was to teach as many bassists as I wanted to (not paid by the student or hour) and perform as principal bass of the Manilla Symphony Orchestra. I'd accumulated a lot of experience as principal bass at MSM and all the freelance orchestras in the NYC area in which I played. Between MSM, teaching private lessons, and performing in orchestras and chamber music, I had developed enough self-confidence to handle any situation. You'll see how I applied all of this in the next chapter: "Manila."



With Ann during my MSM years

### Fellow Students From My MSM Years 1963–66

Many MSM Orchestra members went on to successful careers on their instruments. Our principal viola, Martha Strongin, and cello, Paul Katz went on to be half of the Cleveland String Quartet. Martha and Paul married. The second violinist of the quartet was Peter Salaff whom I new from the Yale Summer School of Music and Art.

MSM's first horn, Sharon Moe, and first trumpet, Jim Stubbs, became active NYC free-lance players and both joined me in the American Symphony Orchestra at the same time I did. The latter went on to play with the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra for over 25 years. In the ASO I also met a MAW and MSM violinist, Tom Buffum. Jaime Austria joined the bass section there, which was thrilling for me.

There were many others that I ran into during my free-lance days and it was like an extended family that we greeted with rather casual awareness of our common studies. One of them was Lenny Hindell who first played with the New York Philharmonic and then moved to the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra.

I shouldn't forget Frank Proto, who was principal bass during my first year at MSM. After graduation, he played in the Princeton Chamber Orchestra and the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra (1966–97) as both bassist and composer-in-residence. During that tenure, he and the orchestra visited Manila and he gave a special class for my bass students. He has written many bass works, some of which I've played on solo recitals. Frank even wrote an opera based on the life of Joe Louis.

My good friend pianist, Alex Farkas, went on to play in the studio of Jennie Tourel and later on his own for many singers. For many years he taught at the Hartt School of Music. But his greatest fame may be his advocating of the Alexander Technique. He's even written a book with that title and the subtitle: *Arising from Quiet*. Now he's working with clients in Europe for the Alexander Technique while maintaining a NYC vocal studio and teaching also at the Bard School of Music.

#### Archival Photos of MSM



The MSM auditorium, here set up for a piano recital. This is the same stage where the whole orchestra played (with an added apron) and operas were staged with the orchestra in the "pit" in front of the stage.

• • • • • • •



## Manila



This photo, from a local Manila magazine, was taken in the living room or our shared house on Manga Ave. We were rehearsing a Bach cantata at this point.

My thirteen months teaching bass in Manila on a John D. Rockefeller III grant was a pivotal time in my life; Gary Hickling finally became an adult. And one who recognized his potential and built on that. There was media attention that led to many good bass students applying, in a wide range of ages, and from various islands. Some students were beginners, others, teachers themselves with professional experience in orchestra and jazz performance. We Americans taught

in studios that were built under the home we lived in. Everything was foreign. I got along with the cello teacher, but the other two (teaching oboe and bassoon) weren't

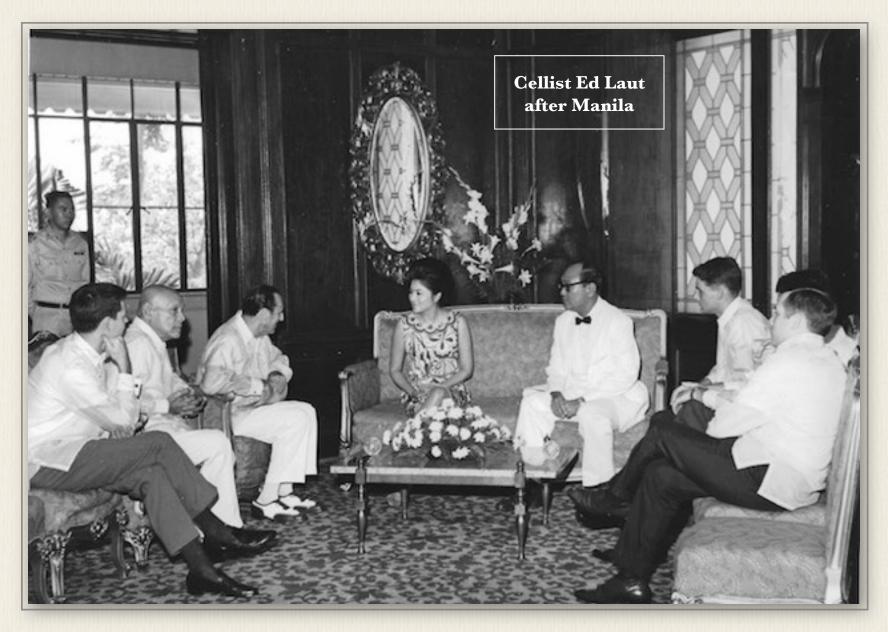
friendly. It was disappointing to me that the others had twoyear contracts but the powers that decided such things had decreed that one year was all that would be needed to teach the bass! The others didn't have many students, but as



you'll see in the photo album, I had a many and we had fun together. There are many stories to tell that will help illustrate my Filipino year. I will say right now, that upon leaving I thought I'd miss the amazing variety and quality of the fruits and veggies, but it was my students and other friends that I missed most. Luckily, one of the best students, Jaime Austria, came with me to study first at the MAW and then with David Walter at MSM. (You can read how I managed for JA to receive a full-tuition scholarship and a grant for room and board in the chapter "Tales Too Crazy to Be True." Later you'll find programs of my students performing solo bass. In these recitals, all my students performed solos with piano. These appearances were arranged by the American Embassy and various educational institutions.

My whole time in Manila was a wonderful chance to experience a new culture, language, customs, and history. It was my first adventure of living outside the U.S.

We were given a week of orientation in San Francisco in which we learned the basics: a bit of history, the main cultural aspects: Catholic, family-oriented, poor.



And that we should treat the elderly with respect. It turned out that some of these older people we met were actively supporting the Manila Symphony Orchestra in which we played. Treating them well was also politic.

When we arrived and stepped off the plane onto stairs down to the tarmac I thought I'd entered a hothouse. Both the temperature (it was summer) and the humidity were so intense as to make me feel I was physically assaulted. Friendly people saw us to our mansion on Manga Ave in the city of Manila. The studios below the main floor had yet to be built, but I taught in the building itself until they were.

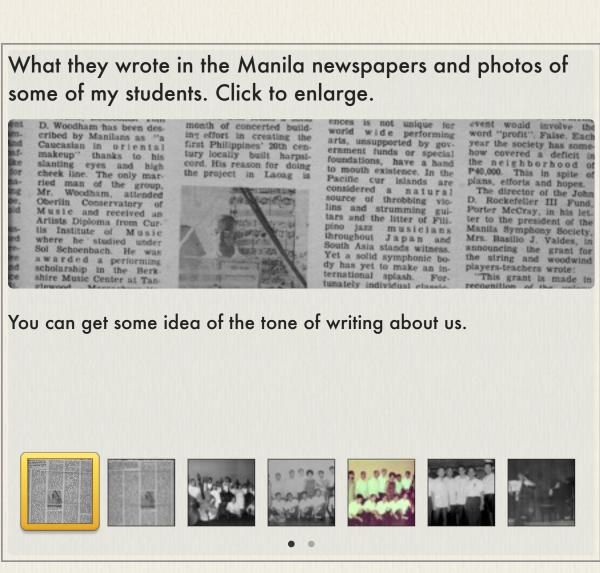
We were immediately taken to tailors and shoemakers to have Barong Tagalog (long-sleeve formal piña-cloth shirts) designed and created. Shoes and pants were also made to order. When we were thus presentable we met with Imelda Marcos, then first lady, (Ferdinand was in his first term as president and wasn't yet a dictator). We met in Malacañang (their White House) and in the photo above you see Dr. Zipper conversing with Imelda. The two Filipinos were important people

in the support of the orchestra and the one seated with Mrs. Marcos was in the president's cabinet (Treasurer?). It was all formal and rather meaningless, but it did stamp our project with the highest kind of imprimatur. Radio and newspaper interviews followed. It was this kind of publicity (mentioning that the lessons were free for the students) that drove so many to study with me. You can read about some of these students in the "Special Bass Students" chapter.

Besides actually teaching (I had by far the most students), I was able to get out and see the city, swim in pools, and even Manila Bay, and eventually travel beyond the capital. Most of that was facilitated by my students (some of whom had wives and children, as well as mistresses). I took advantage of the opportunity to see how these people lived. Not all were poor, they wouldn't be studying classical double bass if they were: they'd be selling chewing gum or their bodies on the street. I remember one family lived in an all-bamboo house a good ten feet off the ground. Underneath roamed the chickens and other animals. The bamboo floor was split halves and was shiny clean: all the dust/dirt just fell through to the ground. When I joined Norben De La Cruz, an advanced older student (he was perhaps 29), we went to his home outside of the city and I joined him in the nearby river. He was spearfishing for his family while swimming

strongly against the current. A sight I'll never forget: his strong body, deep under water, throwing his spear with one hand and swimming with the other.

Norben and another older student took me out to wonderful waterfalls, coconut plantations, and mountain hikes. You'll



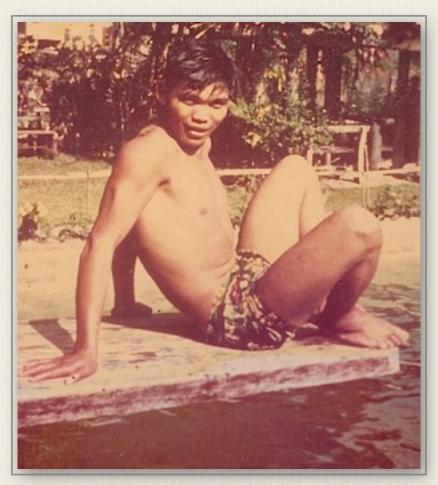
read details about all this from my Journals, later in this chapter.

I decided at one point to see the 8th wonder of the world: the rice terraces of Banawe, near Baguio. It wasn't an easy trip. The "bus" was just a flatbed truck with long benches with little padding used on "roads" that were seldom paved, always rocky, swurvey, and of course to me, seemingly dangerous. On the trip, I sat next to a Baguio local who invited me to visit his family compound after I'd seen the famous terraces. I thus spent one night in a mosquito-infested hotel and the next day did see the terraces. But from a distance. There didn't seem to be a way to get up close and personal, and besides these were workplaces, not really tourist sites. Anyway, I wanted to meet up with the cute guy who'd invited me to meet his family. How I found their compound I'll never know! Once there I saw that it consisted of well-constructed often two-story unpainted wooden buildings with corrugated metal roofs. After the basic introductions were made, the young bachelors (brothers, cousins etc.) invited me for a swim in the local stream. It was wonderful. They were healthy young guys; their friendliness and beautiful bodies



thrilled me. At one point they were executing expert swan dives from the cliffs above and invited me to do the same. I'm not a diver, but the reputation of all American men seemed to rest on my one dive, and there was a reason for the

swan dive. The stream wasn't deep. To survive you needed to dive just skimming the surface. I did. They applauded. Afterward, I joined a lot of the family (not all: it was probably over 20 with grandparents and babies) for lunch. We sat on the floor in a circle around a metal pan that contained cooked white rice. No one had bothered to remove the sandy soil chunks, so we got our dose of minerals with



My Baguio boyfriend

each bite. There were no utensils, everyone ate with their hands not dropping a single grain. They laughed at my feeble attempts to imitate them. During the day, all the able-bodied people carved the beautiful local wood into tourist stuff: water buffalo and other local items. The carving took place on the ground with the simplest of tools, the wood being held in their bare feet. One of the family took me to the local market where their tourist items, along with fruit, vegetables, and fowl (tied together by their legs and held that way so that it looked like an

inverted bouquet) were all available. When night came we bachelors all slept together. But nothing sexual! We were tired and slept on the second floor (literally on the floor,) that was covered by a thin mat. There was one blanket for all five of us and that was probably enough when I wasn't there. Baguio sits at a high altitude and so is cold at night. As the new guy, I was on the end and though we slept in all our clothes, I got exposed many times as the boy on the other end rolled over and took the blanket with him. I got stung by a spider causing a huge blister to form on my shin. Painful and ugly.

The next day I asked if I could take a picture of everyone in the family. I had a big Polaroid camera with me. They'd none of them had their picture taken, so they were all excited and gathered on a knoll slightly away from the buildings. It was difficult to get everyone to stand close enough together to fit inside my viewfinder. I kept having to move back. Remember that there were children of all ages, fidgeting and running around. When I finally seemed to have all of them in the frame I didn't need to ask for them to smile cuz they were laughing a lot. I didn't get the joke until I felt the joke. One of the toddlers had escaped the group and curious about me was peeing on my leg. They enjoyed the photo of their

whole family that I was able to leave with them. This was one of those photos which were available only minutes after the photo was taken. I made one for me.

These and all of my Polaroids were stolen when I returned to NYC. One of the losses that I regret to this day over 50 years later.

I should tell you about our mansion on Manga Ave. I'm not kidding about its size: there were three bedrooms (Ed and I shared one) and a huge living/dining room with a baby grand piano (which you see in the cover photo for this chapter). There was a kitchen (that I wasn't allowed to step foot in) and of course several bathrooms. We had servants: a maid, a cook, a cook's assistant, a gardener, a laundress, and a houseboy. This wasn't considered excessive and it didn't cost much (between us) to pay all their salaries. We ate wonderful meals, our clothes had never been washed cleaner, and the garden was constantly being planted, pruned, weeded, and beautified. The driveway was a terror, but none of us had a car, so it wasn't that important. After Porter McCray (director of the JDR III Fund which paid our salaries) visited, the driveway was graded and made quite respectable.

At one point I joined the gardener and worked hard to clean up the front garden that went all the way to the road. Now from Google, I see only tall walls, but in 1966 this was an open, friendly, upper-middle-class neighborhood. My students would often warm-up for a lesson in the back yard.

The students were my pride. They hung out with me and walked (male Filipino tradition) hand in hand on either side of me. When we'd go to a concert they'd sit on either side of me holding hands. They were straight and I always figured that the contact was needed because they couldn't touch the females until they were married.

The students were also enthusiastic learners. They knew that they had to study as much as they could, as quickly as possible in the one year that I was contracted to be there. The oldest, Mr. Malagnit, was 61 and had rather arthritic hands. He had taught himself and was the most difficult to improve. There were students of middle age who were more open to new things. I mention Johnny Gosalvez and Angel Peña in the chapter "Special Students." There you can also read about the fine young ones: Jaime Austria and Angel Sicam.

I want to speak about the brothers De Los Reyes. Their mother had read about free lessons and was so enthusiastic that it almost made you laugh. She was a skinny old lady who looked like everyone's conception of a witch; she even spoke that way. But she was good-hearted and wanted her two sons (who were about 18 and 20) to become professional bassists. They were just as serious as she was and made excellent progress from an almost beginner status. They invited me to their house for one of the holidays, perhaps New Years. I ate with them and celebrated by observing the fireworks going off in the street, with my fingers in my ears. It appears that one of them still plays in the Philippine Philharmonic.

I took almost all applicants who wished to study, no matter how basic their backgrounds. A nun from a local Catholic university taught strings and wanted to be able to teach bass. She was sweet and I remember at one point asking her to raise the habit that covered her arm so that I could show her how to use her arm's weight on the bow. She very carefully and discreetly rolled back the sleeve. I may have been the only man to have ever seen her arm!

Our houseboy, Sergio Pagador Jr., didn't have all that much to do and would hang around my teaching studio watching the lessons. One day when I was alone I asked if he'd like to study and he said "Sure" and in no time at all, he had learned ½ position and could play a little solo ditty (that only required the ½ position) in one of the student recitals.

I thought it wise to present the students as frequently as possible in group recitals. It gave them deadlines to advance their studies and it also added to the publicity of the whole JDR III project. The recitals were well-attended and the audience asked questions. We found several pianists who didn't charge too much (or anything!) and you'll see a photo of me at the end of one of these recitals conducting the students in the recitative and choral from Beethoven's 9th.

Tagalog is the Filipino national language. I did my best to learn it, especially those words which were useful in teaching and of course polite words. The other Americans didn't bother, one of them saying that he'd make a mistake like saying in English, Shit for Stop, both single-syllable words beginning in S. But as in all languages, the native speakers applaud the beginner and do all they can to help.

The extra problem in the Philippines is the varieties of language. I had speakers of Visayan, Ilocano, Ifugao, and something from Mindanao. The non-Luzon students knew that it was to their advantage to study and thus arrived from all over the country. They stayed with relatives and never missed a lesson. So in the end, the common language was English, which is what the president used when addressing the people on radio or TV.

Jeepneys are a special mode of transport in Manila. Made-over jeeps from World War II, they're painted bright colors, have added seating room, and fringe around the edges. They sport a sign in the front window that tells where they're headed. As soon as I'd spot one going my direction (Sta Mesa) I'd put out my hand, they'd stop and I'd climb aboard with all the kids, babies, chickens, and groceries. When the driver got to my destination I'd call out "para na," he'd stop, and out I'd jump. The fee was ridiculously cheap. One time while returning from a concert, a storm hit and in no time the street became a river and the engine stopped. We all got out, took off our shoes, and walked to higher/dryer land, and eventually got home that way. There were several times during my 13 months there that I'd witness a nearby street turn into a temporary river, with kids swimming in it!

After I'd been in Manila a few months I discovered that I was woefully short of basic study books, solo pieces, and even bass strings. I wanted to visit Katsuumi in Japan anyway and so I took a 10-day vacation. Katsuumi, his mother and sister did everything to allow me to experience the wonders of Japan: temples, gardens, museums, Noh. I went to various music stores and stocked up on all the teaching needs I had. It was a great trip and I met Katsuumi's brother, who later visited me in Manila. Their father was dying in the hospital; I visited him as well. His sister invited me to be part of her graduation tea ceremony. I was dressed in the proper Kimono and well-trained for the event. It was an impressive occasion and I felt honored to be a part of it (despite the awful tasting foamy tea).

Several of my students studied at the University of the Philippines and one of them taught there, so I met various music professors and was finally invited to visit the place. Modern buildings and good teachers. They offered to teach me kulintang, which is the modern term for an ancient row of small gongs laid out in a row and hit with a stick of wood. Its origin is probably the area now known as

Malaysia or Indonesia. The "tunes" that I tried to learn involved immediate ornamentation and improvisation. I enjoyed the process but didn't make progress. I also tried a native flute, of which I remember less. UP bass students Jimmy Austria and Angel Sicam joined me for the kulintang lessons. This experience offered yet another way to integrate me into the broader music-academic community. These were the people whose teaching levels I'd come to improve. Their basic program was a rather random approach instead of the regulated, standardized, Western method. I taught from a method book written by Simandl, a bass teacher from 19th century Austro-Hungary. This allowed one to learn, step by step, the positions, the fingerings across strings, and of course various bowings.

At the University I also met several conductors. There were many orchestras in Manila, some associated with Catholic colleges, others seemingly unaffiliated. There was a lot of envy from one conductor to another. Maybe animosity is a better word. They didn't like their players to perform in rival groups. But there were only so many classical musicians to go around, so most of them played in many orchestras. After I'd been in Manila over six months this silly battle for supremacy began to annoy me. I learned from Johnny that the constitution called for a Philippine cultural center with support for a national orchestra. With chutzpah that astounds me when I look back on it from a 50-year perspective, I decided to fulfill the constitution's mandate!

With access to the orchestra's typewriter, I put together a meeting with an agenda that I duplicated (carbon paper, remember?) and mailed to all of the conductors. We all met at a suitably neutral site and after I called the meeting to order, reminded them of the large important issue to be addressed, etc., I left to allow them to make their own decisions. I later learned that it wasn't fractious and that they had agreed to many of my suggestions, including the formation of a youth orchestra. The vision didn't come to fruition for years, but at least there's now a national cultural building that houses its orchestra. And there's also a youth orchestra.

During my time in Manila, my parents (who had disowned me years before) visited as part of an Asian cruise/tour. It wasn't a pleasant time for us, but my students treated them with great respect and made sure they had a great time.

Besides the excursions mentioned in my Manila journal below, I had the fun of seeing and hearing the famous Las Piñas bamboo organ. When we visited the organist was playing Schubert's "Ave Maria," changing the rhythms arbitrarily, and perhaps



unintentionally. The sound was sweet and the impression was of Western music happily meeting with the bamboo culture.

When Katsuumi's brother visited Manila I took a trip to La Union, Pangasinan, and the 100 Islands National Park. We rented a canoe paddled front and back by locals. They constantly jumped out into the beautiful water to cut huge chunks of coral to bring to the surface and dump into our canoe for our admiration. We



tourists weren't encouraged to swim or snorkel. It was strange even then before I knew how important (and slow-growing) coral was. I brought back a small piece of blue coral to our house, not knowing that it wasn't some kind of rock, and it quickly turned grey.

Our house was on Manga Ave, a street that also boasted the Club

Filipino on the corner. We had some kind of official connection that allowed us to use the pool. I'd often go and invited my students (which was considered odd because the place was obviously for European stock people only). At one point I overheard the American bassoon teacher threaten to beat me up for "abusing the privilege." His wife dissuaded him.

Our house was a two-story place with the bottom open for air circulation. That's where they built the studios for us to teach in (months after we'd arrived!). We had a huge garden front and back that I happily worked in because it was so foreign to the desert landscape that I'd grown up in. It was also a way for me to work with the gardener, one of the few people we were allowed to speak to. It was seen as improper to have social contact with our servants, so I tried to abide by that rule, until I found Mercedes, our laundress, coming around the studios with a little notebook that she was writing in. At one point I grabbed it from her and learned that she was reporting on our activities to Dr. Zipper, who didn't think we were writing enough letters describing our teaching. It was a sad breach of trust, and not the only one. Indeed the oboist and bassoonist didn't have many students, but their instruments were soloists in an orchestra, not like the bass or cello section. And I definitely liked teaching, which wasn't the case with the others. At that point in my life I was not a vegetarian and so ate whatever our cook prepared. It was all new, interesting, and sometimes delicious. I was dared to eat balut and had no problem, after all, I was still eating duck, so the little crunchy embryo in the eggshell that had been cooked in its own juices tasted fine.

My students also took me to a carnival where, besides the usual rides, etc., I saw my first freak show. The only image that has remained, painfully, in my memory is a tabletop enclosed glass box with humans that were only about 10 inches tall. They were adult in proportions and were wearing doll-sized clothes and had a kind of house with tables etc. to live in. They bumped their heads on the walls from time to time and were obviously without any kind of mental ability. I've since learned that their condition is called "primordial dwarfism." The ghastly memory has haunted me after all these years. There my students also pointed out to me the "binibini boys" which I took to be either gays or drag queens. It wasn't part of a freak show, but just some of the other customers of the carnival.

You'll find my journals, some written when I was in Manila others when I'd returned, in the section called "Philippine Journals." Because the photos that go along with the following journal excerpt are beautiful or fun, I've included this portion.

To Pagsanjan
Falls – Upon
ending a long
day Sat.: instruction, lectures &
more instruction—left to Divisoria [a big commercial market
district] for a
crowded, stuffy
dinner, then on a
provincial bus
packed seven



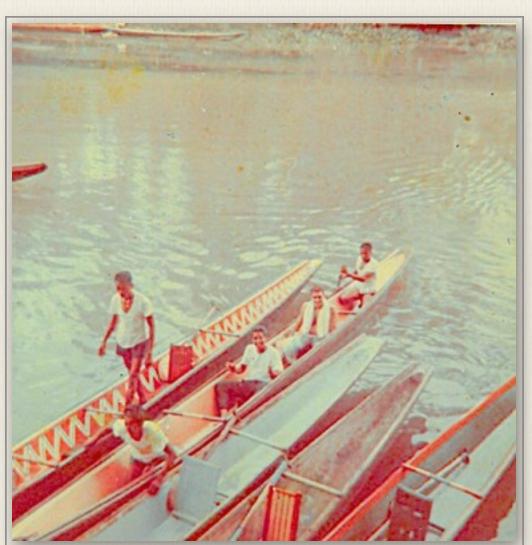
across to Santa Cruz—besieged with venders (mostly successful), for the long trip was apparent to all. Only shadows of jungles & mists visible but the good company of Cruz & Peping more than made up for the length of the trip & the hardness of the [wooden] bench. Arrived Sta Cruz then looked around to various hotels to find one that would admit the 3 of us to a single room. It was found (no toilet seat, paper—shower w/in the set up) to a room just big enough for 2 single beds & Cruz on the floor in the middle. A noisy early beginning to the life in Sta Cruz had us showered & downstairs by 7 am—breakfast & a small excursion to the paylenke of Sta Cruz. Bustling—more strange fruits (some [even] strange to my companions!) and fish hanging unrefrigerated. Bought rice & some sweet cakes & returned to join the nice big lady on a jeepney trip to Pagsanjan. More wrecked than any previous jeepney. A ride across a river & a march through the jungles past the most picturesque of huts (all less than 4x4). Then a deal with experts who would take the 3 of us up to the Falls. A stop at the lodge for a picnic—beautiful fields & hundreds of

coconut palms and mounds of their products. (Waste of these filled the river). On to the trip w/steep canyons of exposed rock—with showers of tubig—splashing, falling spraying, and we hanging on for dear life as we passed up the rapids—scraping, twisting, turning. The experts jumped in & out making "Mercury" poses & dragged, paddled, and carried us up to

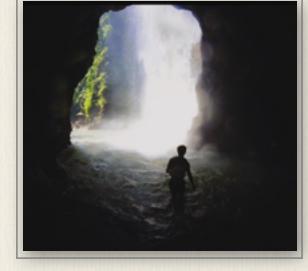


the Falls. At the falls, swam, but Americans [tourists] soon made us uncomfortable, and quieter more unpretentious areas were found. In spite of warnings to the opposite, I proceeded up the canyon. All is delighting the eye. Green of every shadeferns, palms, cobwebs, falling water & logs—all in the profusion that paradisical

dreams are made of. After the lunch I returned to the less crowded falls—to the anger of my satiated natives and swam under the falls to the cave behind—and to a new vantage point displaying a 2nd tier falls. Now for the trip back. The speed of downstream rapids, the name "shoot the rapids"—we shot them—filling the bangka w/tubig often. Reversing our original undressing I entered the bam-



Old faded photo, but preserves a bit of memory of the trip to the Falls. Peping is sitting in front of me



boo shack—you can see the ground well [probably through the cracks between the split bamboo floor]— and changed.

De Los Reyes—who was late originally—met us (to our surprise here) and joined us in a trip back to Sta Cruz & our bus trip again crowded to N. where we continued seeing the fascinating stuff now under the guidance of a relative of Peping, walking in jungles—often hand in hand w/my companions [my male

students often walked with me, one on each side, holding my hands]—and watched coconuts cut down. We ate and drank from the young ones—sweet, wet, squishy white & pure. Sunset over the mountains then clouds, trees, palms—now these palms seem more than just beauty [because I'd seen them as a commercial crop for the first time]— we saw weavers of baskets of the [same] trees they use. Writing this in the house of our hosts we hope soon to sleep again & return via 2 am bus to Manila.

#### Days later:

But now to the South Cemetery. Even on the bus people had flowers—real & fake—

for their dead. When we arrived it was a bustle like a big celebration. Some had been there since midnight & planned to stay the 24 hrs. In that time they painted the cement headstones & coffins [sarcophagi] which rest above ground usually. Candles are burnt around them & the lawns etc. are tended. Many vendors of Cokes,





candies, flowers, candles, etc. took advantage of the gigantic crowds. Buses, police, jeeps & private autos jammed the streets. No one was faking sadness. Nothing religious or deeply moving about this gathering. It was force of habit, tradition—a party. A guard (Army group) protected a past president's tomb.

Now, in 2018, I look back on my Manila

experience with joy, satisfaction, and the knowledge that during those 13 months I grew into a real adult. I was on my own (JDR III, MSO, Manga compound, notwithstanding). I felt free to experiment, be my own person, and try to accomplish everything I could within the short time. That included my trip to Japan (I wanted to experience the country with Katsuumi's guidance and buy the strings, solo bass music, etc. that were so lacking in Manila), my organization of solo recitals for my students, the forays into the musical politics of Manila with my ideas for the Philippine National Symphony Orchestra (not realized until after I left), my many excursions with my students, and arranging for Jaime and later, Angel Sicam, to further develop their talents in the US. Returning (triumphantly)

from Manila with Jaime with stops in Taipei, Tokyo, and Honolulu, was like palpable evidence of my success in Manila. My self-confidence had grown, as a person, as a bassist, and as a teacher. I later learned how little I knew about the bass, but at the time I was proud of my abilities. For many years I missed some of my students. Some stayed in touch, but I moved a lot and letters probably got lost. There was no such thing as email. I still have a feeling of nostalgia appreciating my Manila experience, and the deep love I developed for the place, the people, and especially my devoted students.

Here are some more of my 2018 Manila memories.

Another story with a Filipino twist. Our pianist, Lakambini Zaguirre, and I were headed to PhilAm Life Auditorium to rehearse for my farewell recital. As the traffic cleared I grabbed her hand so that we could cross quickly and safely together. She pulled back as if bitten by a tarantula. "Filipino custom: no touch."

The gay life in Manila was always a surprise to me. In the building next to our performance hall, I'd seen a tall, handsome Filipino man and we made eye contact that convinced me that he was as interested in me as I was in him. But I saw no way to arrange a contact. About a week later at a rather casual party to which I was invited, the host told me that he'd concocted a surprise for me: there was the handsome man! I had no idea how it was all figured out. We had a bit of a fling, remained friends, and he visited me in New York City.

Here are some of the foods I remember: right from the start we tasted "mille feuille" or thousand layers: a cake made of many thin layers of frosting and cake; lemonade made from the little limes called "calamansiado"; lanzones, the tasty grape-sized fruits of light tan color which grow close to the stem; bitter melon; mango, papaya, and the treat they called the best-tasting fruit: mangosteen.

One of the enduring Manila Memories is my long-lasting relationship with Angel Peña. He was a devoted student in Manila; during the last months, he wanted to prepare audition material so that he could leave the country of his birth. He felt limited there and had already spread his musical wings playing jazz in Hong Kong. Anyway, we put together the standard list of bass audition materials and when he came to Honolulu a year or so later, he played for Maestro LaMarchina. He was still playing with the Honolulu Symphony Orchestra when I arrived in the 1980s. Our friendship had continued through correspondence and my commission for a bass sonata that I played while teaching at the University of Northern Colorado. So it wasn't as if we'd been out of touch at all. Dennis and I commissioned a non-demanding piece that we could play together and that piece gave us a lot of joy.

When he retired from the HSO he was brought in front of the orchestra for recognition, not only for his years of bass playing but for his many arrangements (usually of Hawaiian or pop or semi-pop music) that he'd written for the orchestra. They assembled a huge book with the scores in them and presented it to Mr. Peña. One of many proud moments for this dignified guy.

The largest personal Peña event occurred when he was leaving the orchestra and the Islands and I played an all-Peña program for him at Orvis Auditorium on the UH campus. The video of the recital can be found at the end of the chapter "God-DamBass." He and his family were there and it was a gala occasion. I'd prepared well, as had Marion McKay, my pianist, and the other two bassists, Mark Kuraya and Tracy Dullea who played trios with me.

We stayed in touch until his hearing was so bad that the phone provided neither of us any satisfaction. He died, after having been feted for years, back in Manila. His wife died a short while later.

I've found a list of some of my Manila students. Here they are, in no particular order. There are listed in my notebook the names of many others who applied, appeared, took a lesson, and for one reason or another, didn't participate in further lessons. These are the ones who studied for the whole 13 months.

Delfin Calderon Jr (Peping)

Alberto de Guzman

Gregorio B. Manlangit

Cpl. Alberto De La Cruz (Norben)

Juan (Johnny) Gosalvez

Edgardo Costodio

Fidel Ronquillo

His son 17 year old Cecinio

Angel Peña

Aurora Sahagun

Cezar Delos Reyes

His brother Ernesto Delos Reyes

Jimmy Austria (Jaime)

Milo Cristobal

Angel Sicam

Edwardo Guerra

José Sosa

Danila Bueno (mistress of Norben)

Sr. Stella

Roberto Robledo

# **GALLERY 6.1 Manila Bass Students**



Norben or Alberto De La Cruz (he was in the military, so he got short haircuts)

















Two of my Filipino students after retirement: Angel Sicam and Angel Peña

Angel plays his own concerto with the Manila Symphony Orchestra

On this page, you'll find excerpts from the solo recitals shared by my Manila students. These have been discovered on reel-to-reel tapes recorded in 1966. The sound can be disturbed by bleed-through. Sampling may be the listener's best recourse. The warm feeling I maintain for these bassists isn't dimmed by sonic problems. You'll even hear Cecino Ronquillo play during the first months of study. He went on to work with teachers in Berlin, returning as principal bass of the Philippine National Symphony Orchestra. He died of diabetes as a young man.



Special thanks to the hard working pianists: Lakambini Zaguirre and Regelado José. Many thanks to my Filipino/American friend Ernie for proofing this chapter. He corrected my spelling and even helped locate Manga Ave where I lived.

As of 2020, I'm now in touch with pianist Lakambini Zaguirre (who lives in the US) and former bass student Aurora Sahagun. The latter sent a photo of the audience for her graduating piano recital.



I'm sitting behind Aurora's father (he's got a heart) and on my right is Jimmy (Jaime) Austria; on my left is Alberto de Guzman and next to him another of my students, whose name I've forgotten. Behind me is the cello teacher Ed Laut. Lots of memories in one photo.

# Philippine Journals

From a notebook that I kept during my time in Manila, I find:

Thoughts on the end of my 25th birthday. [August 29, 1966] Did morning chores at R. Hidalgo [I believe that was the MSO office.], P.O., bank, etc. only after being greeted with a warm HB from the servants. Ordered [bass] music from Germany –\$ [Marks?] provided by Goethe House.

Returned and talked and taught J[ohnny] Gosalvez. Visited Reg[alado] José who will accompany my students w/out charge & even refuses to consider a gift for his services. He will get something besides our respect and thanks (I hope).

Met the good & kind Alberto De La Cruz & had dinner at a Chinese restaurant—eating too much—we returned, uncomfortable to our R. Hidalgo 7:00 pm reh. where we were greeted by a half-sung & -played a version of HB again in my honor. [BTW, it's a Filipino custom that the birthday boy treats his friends. I thought they were just taking advantage of me at the time.] So many friendly faces and hands! I was greatly pleased! Both Cruz & myself felt poor, he w/a headache & I w/my bad l. arm. Met afterward the pianist Reyes, who helped me get a taxi home. Then to Legarda's for a discussion of what is or isn't included in our "lease." It turns out we have no lease. Dr. Zipper has one [for the institution that governed the whole project] that provides living quarters & downstairs area for teaching [studios were being designed and built in the coming weeks]. No furnishings, studio or utilities are included in the agreement. We have no inventory of what we are responsible for or what Legarda is responsible [for]. He seems almost willing to provide for some of our wishes but this isn't pleasant. No freedom, no legal protection, no privacy. I hope I can take it well for 1 year—only 9 ½ months to go-but it's a shame to look at it that way. I love my students & the Phil. and they know & appreciate this. By the way, after returning from one of my trips a present was left by the De Los Reyes family—who I love dearly. Such a friendly & kind bunch. The thought was so kind-he also brought a camera-for they are pro. photographers—but the gift he left was most practical—a leather briefcase to hold my music, etc.

Since I didn't eat dinner here [at Manga Ave.] I was unable to taste the birthday cake Mercedes made to surprise me. All green swirls & beautiful. Tomorrow is here already, so I begin my 26th year. I look back on the last 5 years—since I first

knew love & left my parents—w/joy and tho somewhat prisoned here—at least independent at the end of this year.

Sept 18 [1966]—Impressions of the past week—[bassist] Frank Proto and the Cincinnati Orch. [on tour] We make plans during the party here at Manga Ave. for a demonstration of the German bow for my students after the reh. of the next day. About 10 students show and after the reh. group around Frank & his French bow playing friend Dave. He first said that tone conception dictated how the hand held the bow-he [also] played some classical music and jazz pizz. We took measurements of his good bows to apply to blocks of [pernambuco] wood ordered from the US. [Later local luthiers would make many bows for my students using these blocks.] Afterward lunch and a trip to Las Piñas Bamboo Organ wherein Frank began to learn how/why I love it here. Peping, Austria & Sicam joined me for the [Cincinnati Orchestra] concert Wed. night-and Peping, Cruz [joined] Thurswhen Frank gave us used strings and many of his duet books. Dave sold 2 bridges and gave new string sets and resin. We parted w/ a great deal of good will on all sides. Strike a blow for [bass] brotherhood! Now to today: Sunday. Up early enough to be in Sta Mesa around 9 am to give a "surprise" visit to Cruz. Peping had told him but he feigned surprise nicely. He's a great and kind fellow. Anyway, I saw his house and children (4) and wife (looks pregnant-rather pretty). In a wedding photo, they are both very beautiful. He looks especially young—at the time he was 23 or 24. And in the house (which was scantily furnished) I said where do you sleep. He pointed at the boards that were the floor and then showed me the thin palm-leaf mats which are placed on the floor. I used more of my Tagalog than I knew[!] Off to his father's and then through the rice fields where Alberto (or, as he is known in Sta Mesa--Norben) worked until joining the Army Band. Swimming in the very deep river—which looked muddy but tasted A1—fun and exhilarating. Back for lunch and the long jeepney & bus trip home. He to Camp Crame & Luneta; me to Manga [Ave. our house], bass repairing, nap, and Luneta—where he declined to eat w/me or offer his companionship w/his [girl]friend. Parents due in Nov. [This turned out to be a disaster!] Impressions: To Pagsanjan—On ending a long day Sat. w/instruction, lectures & more instruction—left to Divisoria [big commercial market district] for a crowded, stuffy dinner then on a provincial bus packed seven across to Santa Cruz-besieged with venders (mostly successful), for the long trip was apparent to all. Only shadows of jungles & mists visible but the good company of Cruz & Peping more than made up for the length of the trip & the hardness of the [wooden] bench. Arrived Sta Cruz & met by D.'s mother then around to various hotels to find one that would admit the 3 of us to a single room. It was found (no toilet seat, paper—shower w/in the set up) to a room just big enough for 2 single beds & Cruz on the floor in the middle. A noisy early beginning to the life in Sta Cruz had us downstairs showered by 7 am-breakfast & while

waiting for D.'s mother—a small excursion to the paylenke of Sta Cruz. Bustling—more strange fruits (some [even] strange to my companions!) and fish that came hanging unrefrigerated. Bought rice & some sweet cakes & returned to join the nice big lady on a jeepney trip to Pagsanjan. More wrecked than any previous jeepney. A ride across a river & a march through the jungles past the most picturesque of huts (all less than 4x4). Then a deal with experts who would take the 3 of us up to the Falls. A stop at the lodge for a picnic-beautiful fields & hundreds of coconut palms and mounds of their products. (Waste of these filled the river). On to the trip w/ steep canyons of exposed rock-with showers of tubig-splashing, falling spraying, and we hanging on for dear life as we passed up the rapids—scraping, twisting, turning. The experts jumped in & out making "Mercury" poses & dragged, paddled, and carried us up to the Falls. At the falls, swam, but Americans [tourists] soon made us uncomfortable, and quieter more unpretentious areas were found. In spite of warnings to the opposite, I proceeded up the canyon. All is delighting the eye. Green of every shade–ferns, palms, cobwebs, falling water & logs– all in the profusion that paradisical dreams are made of. After the lunch I returned to the less crowded falls—to the anger of my satiated natives and swam under the falls to the cave behind—and to a new vantage point displaying a 2nd tier falls. Now for the trip back. The speed of downstream rapids, the name "shoot the rapids" -we shot them-filling the bangka w/tubig often. Reversing our original undressing I entered the bamboo shack—you can see the ground well [probably through the cracks between the split bamboo floor]— and changed.

De Los Reyes—who was late originally—met us (to our surprise here) and joined us in a trip back to Sta Cruz & our bus trip again crowded to N. where we continued seeing the fascinating stuff now under the guidance of a relative of Peping, walking in jungles—often hand in hand w/my companions [my male students often walked with me, one on each side, holding my hands]—and watched coconuts cut down. We ate and drank from the young ones—sweet, wet, squishy white & pure. Sunset over the mountains then clouds, trees, palms—now these palms seem more than just beauty [because I'd seen them as a commercial crop for the first time]—we saw weavers of baskets of the [same] trees they use. Writing this in the house of our hosts we hope soon to sleep again & return via 2 am bus to Manila.

Impressions of a Recital: In a converted gym among enough flowers for a well-loved departed, a girl with hair piled high upon her head (in puffs) plays quite badly the solo selections of her [piano] recital. She is well dressed & well prepared to make happy the eyes of the audience—but alas the ears suffer. After intermission, a symphony orch assembles on stage & serves a rich accompaniment for Liszt's 2nd piano concerto.

Impression: How the Fil. honors the dead: My first experience was on Nov. 1—All Saints Day. First a visit to the historic Paco Park cemetery. A circular wall enclosed the park. Niches—coffin-sized— used to hold the dead. Now all is sealed up & quiet.

But now to the South Cemetery. Even on the bus people had flowers—real & fake—for their dead. When we arrived it was a bustle like a big celebration. Some had been there since midnight & planned to stay the 24 hrs. In that time they painted the cement headstones & coffins [sarcophagi] which rest above ground usually. Candles are burnt around them & the lawns etc. are tended. Many vendors of Cokes, candies, flowers, candles, etc. took advantage of the gigantic crowds. Buses, police, jeeps & private autos jammed the streets. No one was faking sadness. Nothing religious or deeply moving about this gathering. It was force of habit, tradition—a party. A guard (Army group) protected a past president's tomb.

Now to funerals: For an important general–Ed Laut reports: a string quartet, the Army Chamber group, a baritone solo, his (Ed's) cello solo, with organ acc. and Tulegries[?]. 2 ½ hrs.

I've seen 3 funeral processions. #1: On a battered 1950 Chevy the deceased (pictures on front & the coffin inside w/a few flowers). Close by people walking along touching the auto, looking sad—women in black—but none well-dressed. Groups of 25 behind—none very serious.

A second procession [that I witnessed] only a little more elaborate. A third here on Manga Ave. A real old hearse w/people touching it as they walked sadly behind. A record blaring a tenor's rendition of "Overhead the Moon is Beaming" from *The Student Prince*. Behind, chuck full jeepneys & jeeps w/none too serious or well-dressed people. A few clean polo barongs.

Christmas & New Year's: Maligayang Pasko at Manigong Bagong Taon sa inyong lahat! Paper & bamboo decorations on all the houses. Begging carolers downtown, shopping bustle, but the poor don't mention S. Claus or presents—their presents are that day's food. On Xmas even, there were a few fireworks. On New Year's Eve, despite the ban (in Manila) a very noisy time was had to welcome 1967. For my part, I saw nothing amusing, amazing, beautiful, or exciting in the celebration & sat for the better part of an hour with my fingers in my ears [nothing has changed 50 years later!]

Here's a letter from one of my students: Dec. 17, 1966

Dear Mr. Garry,

At this day I reached your home, but some body told me that you are in La Union so I take my lesson together with Jun Pagadon. On this coming Saturday I'll be here again to take up my lesson at 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm- can I sir?

Till then Sir and Merry Christmas to you,

Yours,

Jose Sosa

I've discovered more Journal attempts from a year after my Manila adventure.

I began my year's stay in Manila at a bass sectional of the MSO. There were basses with cracked and glued bridges, cheap warped bows coated with sticky resin, old steel & gut strings broken and tied many times. Outside of Manila were basses missing sound posts and for strings: nylon parachute cords stiffened with clear nail polish. The sound was more a thump that a real note! These bassists weren't necessarily naive about equipment. In the Philippines, there is a 100% import tax on such things as instruments, strings, music, etc. Their standard of living often doesn't permit the purchase of these commodities at the initial cost, much less the imported cost plus mailing. These material problems were solved to some extent by shipments of pernambuco wood and horse hair [ordered by me] which the local luthier made into respectable bows. Wholesale amounts of steel strings, resin, bridges, and music were imported and because of the JDR III Project were passed duty-free. Luckily I'd had a class in bass repair [in NYC] and that came in handy as I glued buzzing instruments and adjusted sound posts and bridges.

The bassists were self-taught and often lacked confidence. It was necessary to give even the most experienced some instruction in hand positions, scales, etc. Position & efficient fingerings had to be given to all students from the beginners of 17 to the established performer of 61. One had to be very careful not to offend with too much or too harsh criticism.

Almost everyone in the Philippines speaks some English, so learning the national language, Tagalog, is not necessary. But once I introduced some Tagalog words into lessons and conversations, rapport, and trust developed with the usually shy & [otherwise] uncommunicative Filipinos.

After two months there were twenty bass students and a group of solo recitals was scheduled. Many were shocked not only by the brief study before a solo performance but also by the idea of bassists as soloists. The beginners prepared pieces

from David Walter's *Melodious Bass*—the most advanced performed Telemann, Vivaldi, and Marcello sonata movements.

The first audience consisted of friends, family, and music education students gathered for the occasion. There were three more group recitals plus my own solo recital. The audience grew at each one with help from radio, TV, and press coverage. The final student recital received a review in part because Angel Peña, an advanced bassist/composer, had written a concerto (dedicated to me) which he performed with a piano reduction. After I left, in Feb. 1969 he played this concerto with the MSO, receiving five good reviews.

The recitals provided many opportunities for the students to hear each other's progress, sound, and interpretation. The students were motivated to practice for the events and the tapes allowed them close examinations of their own playing and provided a record of their progress. A beginner played the shortened version of the second movement of the *Dragonetti Concerto* at the first recital. By the final one, he was able to play the movement complete with cadenza, and all in the solo register.

The solo performance helped create esprit de corps, motivation, and respect for the instrument. There was still a need for standard exercises, and abstract work in vibrato, bowing, and fingering. Often this need grew naturally out of difficulties encountered in the solos or orchestra rep.

I believe that bassists also need to gain ensemble experience. The chances for solos are limited and ensemble awareness, so important in the orchestra, can be taught. We did Peter Nero's *Pizzi-Cats* for violin & bass, *Gavotte* by Frank Proto for two basses, and a trio for basses by Peña. Two girl bassists played from Fred Zimmerman's *Duets Classical & Modern* in the third recital. Two trios transcribed by Zimmerman and a quartet of a Bach chorale were included. For the grand finale, ten bassists participated in a memorized "Recitative and Chorale" from Beethoven's 9th with piano accompaniment (and me conducting!) This final student recital occurred one day before I left Manila.

Though instruction on a string instrument for only one year is insufficient, some work was done in methodology with the local teachers. Records, tapes, books, and music that I left behind have formed a library of material for bass. Three of the younger students are now contracted members of the MSO. Two others took advanced study at MSM.

At the final recital, I distributed "certificates of merit" that I'd had printed. On each, I indicated the total hours of lessons & coaching each student had received. One student, knowing that only a year of instruction would be available, stopped

studies at the university and took three lessons a week, often memorizing the assignment. He had a total of 96 hours, another 84. I had given close to 1,000 hours of bass instruction and coaching.

# From yet another Journal:

The Philippines have had concert orchestras since 1926. European & American teachers have developed fine vocalists, pianists & violinists who now teach in the Philippines. For years Dr. Herbert Zipper, who had conducted the Manila Symphony Orchestra since 1936, had hoped to bring teachers of other orchestral instruments and in 1966, as president of the National Guild of Community Music Schools, received a grant from the John D. Rockefeller III Fund. It was jointly administered by the Manila Symphony and the National Guild of Community Music Schools. The idea was to raise the level of orchestra playing. Dr. Z wanted experienced teachers, as well as performers and auditioned people throughout the US. Since the project was set in a foreign country with a severe climate, these factors were also considered in the selection. People had to be healthy and adaptable. It was Dr. Z's plan for these teachers to play as principals in the MSO, to lead the sectional rehearsals, and serve as on the job instructors, without replacing any local musicians.

Thus it happened that I began bass instruction in Manila. Encountering dilapidated instruments was the first shock. Horrible string setups included ones that had broken and been tied together many times. Instruments were cannibalized sections of Kays [commercial plywood instruments] combined with local woods. One bass played in a music teachers' conference (by a teacher) had no sound post and only three strings, one of which was a telephone wire, tuned G-D-G.

It soon became clear that there was a need to train not only the bassists already playing but also to teach beginners and teachers to continue my work after my one year was up.

When the teachers in the conservatories and universities learned that they weren't to be replaced and that I was well-trained, they began to send their students and even came for instruction themselves. Before long there were over 20 bassists enrolled and they participated in group solo recitals. The gathered bassists also heard what I had to say to the others, shortly before their solos, so it worked as a kind of master class each time. The students themselves often gave suggestions to each other.

# The "final" Journal written after returning the US reads:

I laughed in scorn and ignorance when first I heard of an opening for a double bass instructor in the Philippines. I only imagined palms, grass huts, and white sand beaches. I didn't even consider it. At the time I was just completing my second master's degree at MSM. Harris Danziger, director of the Third Street Settlement School where I taught and organized an after school music instruction program, didn't take my disinterest seriously. He asked Dr. Z to audition me while he was in NYC. I was very busy and scheduled a 6:30 am audition, thinking that he'd refuse to meet so early even if it *was* in his hotel room. He did accept and offered me the position right that morning. I used the hotel phone to call and cancel my other appointments to learn more about the job, the money, the responsibilities, etc. But I only had one day to consider; one month later I was in Manila.

The MSO made arrangements for our arrival in Manila that included an informal meeting with the press, TV, and later Imelda.

We were on our own to develop approaches to teaching and raising the level of performance on our heretofore neglected instruments. There were six or seven orchestras in Manila in 1966 (that number included college, military, university, conservatory, and city orchestras). Essentially the same group of symphony musicians filled all their ranks. They also played night clubs and recording orchestras. The groups tried to accommodate each other but one outstanding day may illustrate the tight schedule: One of my students left after a noon lesson to attend an MSO rehearsal and evening performance; at midnight a studio recording and at 6 am band "inspection" at the Army post.

There was a growing need for orchestra musicians but our free lessons didn't guarantee students. The people are often shy, ashamed, or under-motivated. I tried to divorce myself from any restricting relation with any single [orchestra] group. I attended rehearsals, concerts, and recitals of the various institutions. I also tried to learn and use Tagalog which helped bond me with musicians of all ages. My contact with UP's bass teacher Johnny Gosalves was seminal. Besides sending me all his students, he became a personal friend (and student) and enjoyed analyzing the characteristics of the Filipino musicians and the professional world they operated in. The union was so weak as to be considered dead. The salaries low, but instead of walking out, en masse, many will simply undercut the others thinking only about his pressing immediate needs. I came to know many of my students, visited them in the provinces, traveled, ate, swam, and concertized with them.

The solo recitals received a lot of attention from the press and this served to raise the bassists' opinion of themselves.

During my year there I led bass sectionals for the MSO and coached other orchestra bass sections. I performed works on radio, TV, in chamber music programs, and my solo recital.

As of summer 2018, I've discovered yet another notebook that contains Manila impressions. Upon reading and transcribing them, I became again nostalgic.

# First Impression:

Everything New/Foreign

Upon arriving: Leave small unkempt airport still under construction, pass outskirting cities--all corrugated roofs--unpainted windowless 2 story h---- stores. Few traffic lights--much traffic. Horns & jeeps--made over w/ much paint & chrome w seats for about 10--provide public transportation. Lots of people in the early (8-9:30 am) sweaty morning. If one has ever stepped into a heated & humidified greenhouse with the sun on it, you needn't fly 8,000 miles to feel the weather of Manila--rather turn up the humidifier. But there is a breeze. First to the sponsor's house surrounded wa thick rain forest jungle. Good breakfast in opulent surroundings and 2 quiet servants--also Filipino. Cricket chorus constantly. On to our home--lg. cross ventilation, modern w new appliances, spacious rooms, many w glass &/or screens. Got some Phil. money & went to buy soap etc. at a "super" market. Small, ill-lit, with personal attention. Return to hear carpenters at wk on partitions for practice rooms below our living quarters. Out again on my own exploring. Sandals, kids loose, drainage ditches along roads--clothes drying in pinches on chicken wire or grass--little cabin stores w purchasing through wide bars--garbage littering streets, decaying, eaten by flies--left to smolder with great stench. Other foundation teachers friendly & intelligent. [Later oboist and bassoonist turned out to be unfriendly to me.] Many poor people about. English spoken to some extent by all. Not many non-Filipinos in this area so I attract attn wearing leather shoes & being 6 ft. & foreign. "Hi Joe." New foliage to my eyes. Exotic plants like what we grow indoors for a few leaves--climb like Jack & Bean-Stalk vines over [Banyan] trees with air roots 5 feet long. Brown People--Black Hair Green Environment--Wet Clothes. People sit all over town: feet flat, posterior down & talk & think & relax. Shelves & floors of mahogany!

# Second Impression:

#### **Public Transportation**

We 4 [probably us teachers] taxi to R. Hidalgo for 95c or 25c w tip. I returned after purchasing Zori for 25c in an open market.) The jeepney stopped one block from Manga Ave. 10c. Afternoon to JD----------to Cubao 10c then UP Balara Bus to the Balaya[?]--swam for 2 hrs. I'm the only non-Filipino. "Hi Joe. Are you in the Navy?" Most common expr. Very friendly "without a companion?" "How did you get here? "Not here even 4 days?" I recruited a musician's nephew who will tell uncle about R. Hidalgo [where the MSO rehearsed]. On bus to pool met MSO [member] on the way to UP to play in a reh for another orchestra. The orchestras abound--but one set of players move from one orch to the next. Zipper reports ranks thinning: to the night clubs. Steady, more money, but being a musician is still not a living here.

Pool: people interested in the whole thing [JDR III project] & amazed at FREE! Returned, made mistake & took wrong bus so 3 busses to Cubao--bought bass stool 8.50 & took cab home--practice before Valdez's spread.

# Third Impression:

#### Displaced Americans & Rain

Party at Valdez--Sp/Eng/Ger/American/& Filipino. Ami's were gaudy & boorish & loud. Nothing recommends them except friendliness. They are generally either stupid or unsophisticated. They try w/ all their will to be hip in clothes etc. but come out only in bad taste. It was wonderful when we parted.

Today it rains. It was duly announced w/ a clap of thunder or two and some wind. Then the torrents fell! All the while the sky rumbling as if trying to digest something undigestible. A constant sheet of water flows down past our window and a feeling of isolation sets in as traffic & other communication slows to a crawl. Across the street, two boys ride two carabao in the vacant lot. Why or Where are they going? Who knows?

# Fourth Impression:

Sights: A many-headed bird peers at me from both ends of a bamboo pole. They are ducks tied--behinds together & suspended by their legs w/heads bent up to catch the sights. I [must have] looked strange to their upturned faces. --I am still a loner & foreign as a nun in a nudist colony.

[By the time my 13 months in Manila were finished, I had either become so Filipino in my clothing or attitude that I felt at home, felt Filipino, and no one called

me "Joe."] Baskets also hang in balance on the bamboo pole 'cross their shoulders. Its bearer uses a sombrero or Easter sloped hat as bamboo straw protection from sun & rain (which can occur simultaneously). Baskets often balance heavy and tall on the heads of both men and women. Good posture. Squint and grimace, parasols, portfolios, or Manila folders, all protect against the sun's glare.

Buses painted red, blue, green, yellow & wood color all at once. many of the buses also hand painted w/geometric shapes half moons etc. Gaudy.

Men asleep: in packed cabs, official cars, telephone pick-up trucks, and inside cement drainpipes on the back of a truck. Men seem to sleep as they work. A towel on their head, a hammer in their hand--staring vacant, sweaty & exhausted, underpaid, undernourished, under-motivated--no reason to try harder than he can get by with. Truck with sides no higher than a foot loaded perfectly level with sand, rocks or cement. Reason?

Some Filipinos are as black as negroes but with all the other Filipino characteristic traits: black straight hair,...

# Fifth Impression:

Sounds: Now at Mrs. Steinberg's dinner etc. party. Lots of people & musicians too--playing on the piano--pieces too often heard & not really appreciated as indicated by the absence of attn paid by the "audience." Then Ed [Laut] somehow got out his cello, adding the essential member to a quartet-- "performing" unrehearsed before a semi-attentive audience. The other (older) members play sometimes with conviction but sometimes like a dull habit. The sound is sometimes not only dull, but irritating (for intonation reasons). Ed's tone & intonation both fine-he also reads well, holding the group together. Otherwise, a typical cocktail party plus food. Mixture of Filipinos at about 1/3 to Americans 2/3. I spoke with hardly anyone---enough babble occurred without my assistance being necessary.

Hard to sight-read quartet music, or that's what it sounds like.

[now a sub-impression] This is my 2nd impression written today--I have time to write one on food--but I'll postpone that 'till I become a bit more of an authority. My 1st imp. of course were of things: exotic & (over) abundant---but a more detailed account of this after our encounter with the "natives" and my Tagalog movie followed by a ride back with Reynaldo.

But back to sounds--should people make sounds: 1. to provide their own pleasure. 2. to provide others pleasure as well as #1. "Others" of course means other than ego pleasure, which is a dissertation in itself. 3. in a quartet a certain group spirt of cooperation, antagonism, competition, etc. all vie for importance. 4. Service mu-

sic? Ha! that's a good one---if God is dead certainly so is St. Cecilia! More sounds--now the quartet has substituted Tom [Woodams, bassoon] for the 2nd violin. His sound is one that makes all wish they either played bassoon or knew more about its literature at least.

### Sixth Impression:

"He's Our Uncle!"

Every Filipino knows or is related to every other Filipino. Or so it seems. We have met the niece of President Marcos, who dances with the Bayanihan Folk Dance Troupe. Reynaldo met an aunt quite by accident as a fruit vendor in downtown Manila. We Foundation teachers visited Orlando Garcia, one of the Cultural Affairs ministers and a fairly important man at the Department of Foreign Affairs. Reynaldo and his brothers & Manuel paid us a visit this evening. In recounting our day's adventures we mentioned the Foreign Affairs officer and finally the name Garcia. "Yes--he's our uncle." That was lots of fun.

# Seventh Impression:

Strangers Acting as Friends:

"I'll swim along with you!" Let's go to the Cine tonight. Have some [whatever], it has vitamin C. Take Project 4 (said as 'por') Bus to Cubao then UP Balara. It's already paid. Get off here and walk ahead. We are going that way, we can accompany you. We can see more sights on foot, sir, if you like. How long are you in Manila? Do you mind the weather? It was good to meet you. Enjoy your stay here. In Tagalog it is said: [then the word or phrase]. [In this journal I've found a list of body parts with their Tagalog names, written by one student or another. There are also useful phrases, counting up to ten, etc. But in the end, I used mostly English.]

# Eight Impression:

Public transportation hardly stops--one just hops on & off at a run unless there is a great number [of people also getting off at the same time]. Vendors hop on also & shout prices (in Tagalog [of course]) and run up & down the aisles with newspapers, candy, chickenwire, cigarettes, and gum.

# Ninth Impression:

Family Ties: Large families that stay together: all the children & grandchildren return for Sunday dinner when possible. They may live with grandparents or parents if no home is readily available. Children who work & live with parents give them half their wages. Ramon has a joint savings account with his girlfriend (perhaps future wife) and that takes care of the second half of his money.

# Tenth Impression:

Baguio and Teacher's Conference: At a high altitude in the cleanest city is the Teacher's Conference of Music, Math & Science. The last two have the assistance of the Peace Corps. This is not romantic work. This is work with Filipinos that involves organization of curriculum in math & science. It looks like a daily grind. Deadlines to meet, papers & forms to complete. Little or no notoriety. The level of performances of the Music Educators is very low. They wish to study---for many are already in their 40s & 50s without formal instrumental instruction. They can come to Manila, receiving their salary as they study---encouraging them to come from the provinces, but they can hardly plan to leave their family and homes-having to pay travel, board & room. The reward of one year's study on the bass or two on the other instruments [being taught as part of the JDR III project] is not great. They would return to their province facing the same disinterest in these instruments. Not just disinterest in standard Western instruments, but actual lack of them. Even at this conference, the bass has three strings. The A is a make-shift from old telephone wire. Even the "regular" strings are the bad white nylon, useful only for pizzicato. Of course, it isn't adjusted. It was played last night tuned a step or more high. Hand-clamp, ear methodology with out formal instruction--this is the performance of the bassists.

# Eleventh Impression:

In Baguio: I just walked on a quest--it was a total one hour up to a real crest of a hill with nice homes and down the side of this same hill seeing cliff-dwelling homes: more primitive living. The children noticed me immediately. I approached in stages, down the pine tree covered, clay (orange) slippery slope. There were about 8 children, 2 dogs & chicken & roosters. Their house was thatched on top but looked like metal sides--on stilts. They all stared at me. One sister carried a child (papoose style). An older boy had a four-wheel go-wagon which he rode down the slope (with dogs in merry pursuit and battle). An older sister was gathering large-leaved greens & then on the ground in front of the dwelling on a round large thing, she tore it up, evidently preparing for the evening meal as I was there around 5 pm. They talked a lot---some perhaps to me---I couldn't tell. As I turned to go, I said "magandang gabi." The girl played with tied greens as with a ball. (Only much later have I learned that since they speak Ilocano or Ifugao up here, the children would probably not understand [especially MY] Tagalog.)

# Twelfth Impression:

#### Trip to Asin Hot Springs

Bus station Bajo. Some old, some new, all painted--yellow, red, green-grey (olive drab). Many loaded with baskets on top--more popular busses women & children-baggage thrown in the windows, yelling and screaming. Other buses waiting with loads of people in open-sided (half) buses. Venders here as everywhere. It is Saturday so there were many Caucasians in the market. Here again, I am different. Jeepney offered the round trip for 12P, bus 50c. Sulfur Spring baths apx. 5ft/3ft very hot in dinky rooms--no strong sulfur smell. Pool cloudy---not that...A river is nearby: attractive with whirlpools, falls, rapids, deeps, narrows. Beautiful bluegreens, whites, splashing together. Fun to float & swim with the current, though it becomes too strong & I fight it back up. It is so cool & refreshing. Mountains on either side covered with tropical foliage, ferns. Palms around the pool all make it ideal and it isn't crowded. So I went back on the morning of the next day. We met Ernie who took us upstream to a suspension bridge over the river. Exciting to cross for the first time. Further upstream was another grotto. Water rushed in from several sides forming a whirlpool. Once inside this, we got into an open grotto. Warm sulfur water dripped from the high dark cliffs. Again these were covered with beautiful vegetation. What fun to throw ourselves against the rushing current, having it twist and turn us. Trying to swim against the current was a great challenge. The people here are generally more beautiful than in Manila. They look healthier and many well-kempt. On the streets of Baguio I saw an Igorot man. He had the fringe of his G string visible--no pants or shoes, but over his waist flapped the tails of a "Cardinals" baseball jersey. Around his waist was a belt with a knife in it. He passed too quickly for me to notice tattoos or hairdo. Again on the road to Asin, I saw children, adults & ancients in constant toil over their wood-carving. Polishing, chipping, carving, sawing. Often holding it between their feet. Some wore G strings--young boys were naked from waist down or completely--most wore conventional clothing.

# Thirteenth Impression:

#### Carabao to be sent to US

My letter: "Enclosed are hand-carved carabao. One for you Ann and one for you Frank. You must choose--I don't like decisions." The carabao is the water-buffalo here. It is ridden, eaten, milked, and used as a beast-of-burden. Most handy is the use for plowing the rice fields. The fields are under water & the carabao come up to their knees in water & mud. They have no pores, so after so much work, the plower splashes down the animal to cool it. Left to its own resources, the animals

will sink in a deeper pond, so only their eyes and nose are visible. Thus they pass the hot noon. I am on the excursion to Baguio. The mountain communities carve a lot of souvenir trash as well as beautiful stuff representative of the islands." [Missing: the whole story of meeting a guy who invited me to his compound, where I did my swan dive into their stream, along with the other guys, slept overnight on a mat with about five other guys and one blanket. I was on the end, so when the other end guy rolled over, I got cold. We were all wearing clothes: this is the mountains and it was very cool. I took a photo of the whole "family" (about 20 people counting the kids and babies). That (along with my bass bow, camera, and many other photos) got stolen the first night I returned to NYC.

# Fourteenth Impression:

#### Sunday & Luneta

From the grandstand, I listen to the Army band play Western music while watching the colorfully dressed Filipino families parade (inconspicuously) around the Luneta grass. Balloon salesmen abound, making the view even more colorful. Healthy green grass,--pitch black heads above, colorful garbs--hand in hand & arm in arm. Traffic on the streets just as heavy and this festive mood is present each Sunday, I'm told. Perhaps today is special, for tomorrow school goes into session again.

# Fifteenth Impression:

# Jeepneys

Now I've been here 1 month & ½, perhaps I can sum up my impressions of jeepneys. They say no new jeeps come here. Only new parts that replace worn or broken ones of the WWII vehicles. But how these relics of over 20 years have been preserved! The backs extended, bench (padded) seats rest length-wise under a plastic &/or leather &/or canvas roof reinforced with welded metal. Inside & out colorful pin-striping of rainbow bands (narrow to wide) with chrome ornaments & reflectors adding frosting to this outlandish cake. The flat front windshield has a light that allows the prospective rider to read the window sign giving a destination (or 2). Religious &/or silly naked girl decals fill the front right window. A mirror that allows the driver to see the inside & back of the jeep is usually carved with religious icons. God protect us signs, etc., as well as what insurance company covers the drivers, add to the reading matter.

So you decide you want to go downtown--Quiapo. Out on Magsaysay Ave. you can jump into a jeepney if they have stopped behind a bus or at the light. Otherwise, walk to the nearest public vehicle stop. You can jump inside or up front. The

seat is deep & view is better up front, but you can watch the travelers' faces inside. If you have a companion you pay for "dalawa" as soon as possible. Otherwise, he will [pay]. If alone you pay just before you want to get off. This serves two purposes. If the thing is incapacitated for some reason you haven't lost your 10c.

Secondly, the driver will listen thereafter for a "sst" or hand-signal indicating your departure point. [I also remember "para-na."]

The drivers come in all ages & generally don't own their own jeep, but rent it. They pay a certain price for the rental & keep all that is given by passengers. This is why they are so careful to look for the prospective traveler, often slowing down at stops & holding up fingers indicating how many vacancies he sees in his mirror or knows he will lose from recent passenger messages. No tickets, etc. but he knows (I guess) who has paid & who hasn't. [I also recall there being a young helper who collected the fees.]

The things rattle a bit but still, have good power. The tires are often ragged (flats are common on the rutted roads) but they are generally dependable.

Since we see the first lady [Imelda] this morning I may be writing another impression today.

# Sixteenth Impression:

# First Lady Imelda

Well, one might guess I wasn't terribly impressed. Now it is two days since we saw the First Lady. The palace was big & ugly--nothing Filipino. She was bright eyes & pretty, but hardly presidential material. Lots of pictures taken, but nothing has yet appeared. [The photos I finally obtained are some of my proudest possessions.]

# Seventeenth Impression:

#### Humor

Now here seven weeks, I already feel like an old native! I know so much Tagalog that people don't laugh at my well-placed few words. What can I say of these people? What generalization can anyone make of any group of people? And yet, some national traits bear mention. I have since the beginning of this week worked or visited the post-office. Here I met poorly paid nice people, who tolerated & even appreciated me. Here's one trait that appeared in abundance: kidding, joking, on simple repetitious subjects. Play with words, imagination. They were looking for a Manila Symphony Society box of music [that was sent to me]. Some of the guys would say "Manila Symphony come out" etc. as they shook the bags. Or "there you are Dr. Zipper." "Come out now!" To pass the time & make work light. So

one characteristic is mirth in every possible activity. Perhaps in another month, another so-called trait will make itself apparent. I have a feeling it will be pride.

# Eighteenth Impression:

#### The Army Band Barracks

My good friend [later I had a crush on him] De La Cruz let me come with him via bus & jeepney to the Army post. Grounds are spacious & quiet on this Sunday afternoon. Old run-down wooden two-story barracks. Fairly good food served by ladies. Then to living-sleeping quarters. Broken screens, metal bunks sans mattress & trunks & wood lockers in semi-disorder. Rain-soaked wooden ceilings, peeled paint, unkempt general appearance yielded a depressing atmosphere. Very few live or even sleep here. There is guard duty, touring & band--perhaps I'll learn more. A drunk man drove us back with brass basses in a large canvas US Army-Surplus truck, back to Luneta for the Sunday concert. A good size crowd gathered early for the sounds.

Now, in 2018, I have another jeepney impression. I'd gone to a concert (maybe not one I was playing in) at the PhilAm Life Auditorium and afterward took a jeepney home. As we were traveling through the city streets it started raining. And I mean RAINING! It poured, but the passengers didn't seem upset and we just kept moving even as the water level rose to the middle of the tires. But at a certain point, the water did hit the engine and with the spark plugs out, the beast finally died. The passengers continued to seem completely unfazed by this; they'd evidently experienced such occurrences many times. I joined them as we disembarked. Since I'd been to a concert I had on leather shoes, which I took off and waded to higher ground: literally a hillside without buildings and made my way thus on foot using back roads to Manga Ave.

Some day Ann will tell her story of trying (and succeeding) in contacting me by phone (from NYC). It wasn't easy for her and demonstrated both her pluck and interest in me.

As of 2020, I'm now in touch with my Filipina pianist Lakambini Zaguirre (who lives in the US) and former bass student Aurora Sahagun. The latter sent a photo of the audience for her graduating piano recital.

I have discovered the following of Angel Peña's emails: 2002

Publishing is not easy because since major publishing institutions are only interested in publishing music that will generate millions of dollars, the small fries, on the other hand, are the ones publishing their own music, resulting in what is called "vanity" or "vanity book" if it is a book. I'm not an "angry young man" but face it, our American society is digressing to the point that we no longer know the difference between gold and copper. (pardon me). It makes me sad because I am an American too, and I love America; I acknowledge the blessings of music I have enjoyed during my musical life in Honolulu and here in California. But that was during our (your and my) heyday in Hawaii.

What more can I say except the wish that we can still keep our noses above water in the realm of musical arts. I still pursue my composing. Last week the U.P. Jazz Band performed my compositions (including the one.recorded by Stan Kenton) before a huge appreciative crowd. In another scene, Maestro Barbieri performed [a Peña work] in different cities of Europe with the Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra and my piece was the highlight, and all their concerts were very well received. (source: Maestro Barbieri's letter to me.) I do hope that the world premiere of my "TRINITY" on May 18 in Sacramento would be successful. I haven't heard it yet. Wish you could come.

Nice to hear from you! Louise Emery sent me a program of that concert in Kaneohe. I'm so happy that my little piece you and Dennis commissioned has been finally performed, and by excellent performers for that matter. Do send my thanks and regards to the Gormans and Herb Mahelona, Jim Moffit and Masaki (Nancy or Karen?) Benny Villaverde and the Emerys.

I had a number of receptions, interviews and press releases plus performances of my jazz compositions by the University of the Philippines Jazz Band. I am engrossed in composing and arranging jazz or Pinoyjazz as we call it here.

Jo and I are doing fine. We feel healthier here [in Manila] than when we were in California.

#### 2005

I have two excellent students. One of them is a lady who just got her Artist Diploma and will continue with me for her BM degree. Her major pieces were Sonata by Cesar Franck, Concerto in Bm by Bottesini, and Bach Suite (can't recall which) and my bass trio published in London.

For her BM, we will be working on Hans Werner Henze Concerto, Bach Suite No. 4 and "Little Things for Bass Fiddle and Piano" and Scherzo for cello by van Goens which I played in my recital there.

I still need the piano part of Hertl and will appreciate your kind effort in sending it to me.

My other student is a T.A. and taking lessons with me for his Artist Diploma. His Sonata is our [one of my commissions] Sonata No 2 Three Movements, Concerto in one movement by Bottesini etc

My other students are still in the intermediate level..

We are on a summer break from April to May. Classes starts on June 7 but I start in July.

I will be in California from May 19. Give me a little time to contact some very good voice students here in U.P. I'll be glad if they can participate in the contest.

Thank you for writing. So keep in touch. I always receive your [Lotte Lehmann Foundation] journal.

#### 2006

Merry Christmas and happy new year. May this email reach you in your best of everything.

I am not well. I have been suffering from emphysema and asthma attacks and having episodes of night time breathlessness, the greatest ordeal for me ever.

For your information, my Concerto No. 2 which was from Sonata No. 2 will have its world premiere on February 9, 2007 by the PPO under the baton of guest conductor Oscar C. Yatco. The artist will be Lou Ortiz, a young Filipino who studied with Ludvig Streicher and now based in Spain. As a concerto it has a long introduction and longer cadenza.

I have to sign off with my best wishes for all the best for you this coming year.

When Angel passed away, it was as if I'd lost a brother. We'd grown close, shared so much and enjoyed mutual admiration. I'm still in contact with his daughter Irma and her son, Joseph. The video from my all-Peña recital at the end of "GodDamBass" was sent to me from them. Many thanks!



# Germany



After my brutal NYC mugging, the death of my grandmother, the loss of my wallet, and my car (it was totaled in an accident when my neighbors borrowed it), I wanted to leave the city so I began asking people where I could go. My criteria were: the city had to have good orchestras, the people had to like Americans, their central park had to be so safe that their citizens strolled in it at night with impunity, and the country allowed foreigners to play in their orchestras (which I knew eliminated London where you needed to stay over a year before you could

even apply for a work permit). Well, it may have been a coincidence, or maybe the truth, but everyone I asked said only one city: Munich. I knew nothing of the place but quickly made it my goal, went to the library to borrow a book on German, and began to study. I knew a few words from the art songs that I loved so much, but without a teacher, my progress was really limited. But little by little, as I recovered from the mugging, started practicing bass again, read a travel book on Munich, and got over some of my psychological fears, I became excited about travel, adventure, and Germany.

I landed in Frankfurt, took the four-hour train trip to Munich, arriving there late at night. I knew no one, spoke no German, had no feeling for the city, but needed a place to stay. Walking with my suitcase, bass bow, and traveler's checks in the rather seedy area around the Bahnhof (train station), I found a run-down hotel for the night. The next day I sought out the music conservatory. How I found it, I'll never know. Once inside the lobby, I tried to speak with the receptionist but she found my English too difficult to understand. She did discover that I was a bassist, an American, and she could tell that I was kinda lost. Kindly, she provided me with the name of a fellow American bassist who was studying there saying she'd keep an eye out for him. Robert Moats did, in fact, pass by, invited me to join him for lunch, and in his cheerful can-do attitude had answers for a lot of my anxious questioning: lodging, bass lessons, language study, instrument, work.

Robert lived on the top floor of a row house in Plannegg with Karl & Gisele Banner, a couple who occupied the main floor as well as part of the second floor. They didn't use one of the bedrooms there so with Robert's prodding, they rented it to me (not inexpensively). There was a little supermarket nearby as well as the S-Bahn which served suburban Munich. The German couple was friendly towards classical music and us two Amis. I got along well with Robert, which was unexpected: he was younger, trying to get a full-time bass job in Germany. He'd already studied German at the Goethe Institute becoming almost fluent. We often rode together into town and sometimes back at the same time like a pair of brothers, sharing the whole fascinating German culture. He introduced me to so much of that culture, including how to handle the Nazi army veteran and his wife with whom we were living. They were amazingly open about the past. Karl, who'd

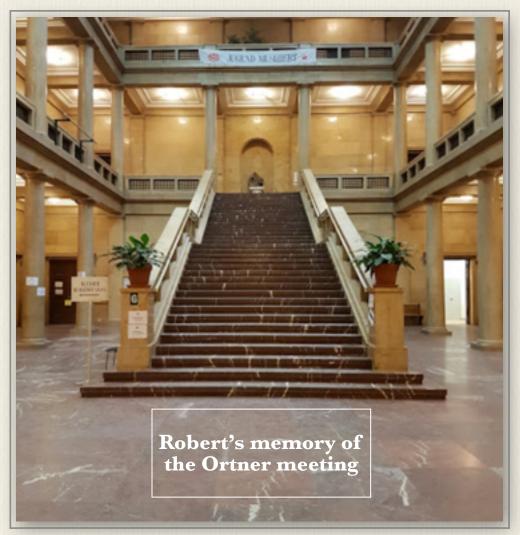
served in the army, told the story of being forced to attend Wagner operas coming out singing "Wasserman positiv" to *Der Fliegende Holländer* themes. The German words referred to the syphilis test. When I started studying German myself, they were helpful even light-hearted about my errors. I vividly remember visiting Robert in his upstairs garret when he hurt my feelings about my German pronunciation. I thought I was doing well! He pulled out his tape recorder, had me say some of the phrases that I was learning, and then played it back to me. I was astounded and humiliated. My American accent was so strong that it sounded like a joke! What a lesson in really listening to myself.

The Goethe Institute was probably a great learning environment, but way too expensive for me. Robert knew of the Deutschkurs für Ausländer (German course for foreigners) that was as demanding, successful, and a lot cheaper. As I recall it had some university affiliation. Anyway, I showed up with the required books and was astounded. The whole course was taught in German. We students were Amis, French, Turks, etc., so really all the teachers could do was point at a map saying "Das ist ein Kontinent." Our books were also only in German. We had three hours of class with three hours of homework five days a week. But we were living the language. I well remember after only a few weeks into the course when leaving the practice room, saying to myself "Ich habe meinen Bogen vergessen." I astonished myself. My first thought in German, in the right order, in the correct declension even, according to my mind at the time, in good pronunciation. I'd forgotten my bow.

What about a practice room? Robert told me that though I wasn't a registered conservatory student, I could still take lessons with their famous bass pedagog, Franz Ortner, paying him privately.

Without Moats: an Impossible Move

He didn't know if Herr Ortner would take any more students, so he arranged for me to meet the great professor in the same lobby of the conservatory where I'd originally met Robert. It was my third day in Munich, I hadn't begun German studies so I had to rely on Robert to translate our meeting. Herr Ortner would say something to me then Robert would translate, I'd ask another question so back and forth it went. Finally, Robert said that the professor agreed to take me on as a private pupil and instead of asking Robert to translate my response, I used one of



The interior of the music conservatory in Munich and the marble floors on which Robert pounded.

the few German phrases from the Lieder I loved, thinking that the final phrase from "An die Musik," would be appropriate. So I spoke directly to Herr Professor Franz Ortner saying "Ich danke dir dafür." Well, Robert broke into laughter so violent that he fell on the marble floor hitting it with his fists. Herr Ortner turned red with anger and reproach. I stood in the thrall of ignorance. What had I said? The "dir" in the phrase is the intimate you: I thank you, my dear friend, for that. It was

completely inappropriate in this setting. When Robert was back on his feet he

explained to the still fuming maestro that I was quoting the Schubert song and the veil of disgust and incomprehension lifted from Ortner's countenance. His response in translation: "Tell him that I encourage him to speak as much German to me as possible." In our lessons that was all I spoke always careful to always use "Sie," the formal you.

I met trumpeter, Ami Dennis on the bus headed to my first gig with the Graunke orchestra and we



The Finke family. The mother sang Bach while doing the housework & the father played Chopin on the piano when he returned from teaching law at the University. They loved to hear us practicing; Dennis upstairs and me in their garage (unheated!).



The Isar in the Englischer Garten

more than hit it off. You'll read all about it in Volume 2.

Dennis and I found the Finke's house from a newspaper ad. We were able to rent the whole top floor; I rented out the garage as a practice room. We had access to their washer and dryer in the basement. Our apartment had a small fridge and stove. At one point Dennis

covered the walls of the walk-in closet with egg cartons to dampen the sound of his practice room. We held parties for our colleagues and friends sharing a piece of foam on the floor as a bed. We also had guests who stayed with us: a trumpet friend of Dennis, my friend Denis who brought my bass from NYC, etc.

The place was located in upscale Schwabing not too far from the U-Bahn and buses. We were also only a one minute walk to the Englischer Garten, Munich's Central Park. It had a rushing river (Isar) as well as a huge lake with swans. There was an outdoor Beer Garden and along the Isar, north of the garden itself, we could hike in closer-to-nature settings, climb trees, or swim in the river (which I did). Dennis especially used it for biking. I biked through the Garten itself to get to rehearsals or performances. I recall wrapping my tails around me so that they wouldn't get caught in the spokes while holding my bow-case under my arm.

In that same September 1973 arrival week of mine, Robert Moats discovered that he had a conflict: he was scheduled to play for both the Symphonie-Orchester Graunke and the Pro-Arte Orchestra. He was hoping for a full-time position in the latter, so he wanted to fulfill that commitment, offering me his part-time gig with the former. Earlier in the week, Robert had taken me to a Luthier who had an inexpensive bass for sale. I only had a bow with me, so I bought it immediately. It was this bass that I was able to take on the out-of-town operetta job with the Graunke Orchestra. Dennis will tell you all about how we met waiting for the bus in the chapter "Dennis & Gary from Munich to Kailua" (Volume 2). When we

arrived in Eggenfelden, the little city of the operetta performance, I discovered that I was the only bassist. The conductor only spoke Bayerisch (Bavarian dialect) but my German was almost non-existent anyway. Luckily the last chair cellist was an American so whenever a rehearsal number was called out, he'd whisper the number to me in English. Music is otherwise an international language so I had no trouble playing Carl Zeller's *Der Vogelhändler*.

It was thrilling to play in Graunke's orchestra. He was a violinist, composer, conductor, whose favorite music tended to be the great German Classical and Romantic repertoire. He was a romantic himself wanting to generate by his conducting, the same response to the music that he had. Graunke came from Pommern so had a distinct accent. When he'd stop rehearing, he'd tell us stories in this dialect that even my German stand partner couldn't understand. His favorite topics were biking tournaments (he biked himself); how he had founded the orchestra after the war, carving a niche for himself in Munich. At first, his orchestra performed for the ballet, then he was able to record for a lot of Hollywood films. That continued into our time; besides films, we also played for commercials, TV programs, and classical recordings that made it to the U.S. through the Decca label, Readers Digest "50 Greatest Romantic Works," and other such promotions which were recorded by Graunke's orchestra. Dennis remembers that as a first year high school student, he'd bought an LP of Rafael Mendez playing the Haydn Trumpet Concerto (among other things) that used the Graunke orchestra.

When the other bassists in Graunke's orchestra saw that I was playing with the French bow they were horrified. What if we were on TV while the camera showed me? (The prejudice wasn't against the French, but somehow the Germans felt squeamish: it looked effeminate to them.) The German bow (played underhand) is not of German origin but probably evolved before Germany even existed from the more ancient viols, which are still played this way. The French bass bow evolved from the violin bows of much later eras, was/is used in about half of the orchestra bass sections. Just not in Germany or Austria! So I had my French bow (actually made in Paris) refitted with a German frog forcing me to practice this method with

the help of my new teacher, Ortner. I eventually came to prefer that style continuing to play that way until the end of my career.

One of the joys of the Graunke orchestra was that their trucks hauled our basses (as well as the other large instruments) to wherever the rehearsal or performance took place. We rehearsed frequently in the foyer of Prinzregententheater as well as in front of the little stage in Bürgerbräukeller, whose acoustic was so good that EMI-Electrola had a recording studio there. I remember recording Von Suppe's *Bocaccio* and Bruckner #5 with the Munich Philharmonic in Bürgerbräukeller.

During the intermission of a concert at Herkulessaal I met Frank Manhold who for all his 18 years acted very mature. He, as well as his family, became a wonderful source of friendship for me. You can read his GaryStories in the chapter "Friends That Last" (Volume 2). There's a photo gallery of Frank at the end of this chapter.

Other friends accumulated mostly from the orchestra. Stopsi played cello; she was especially close to Dennis. Walter played timpani; I had the honor of being invited to his parents' home outside of Munich. German hospitality. Tuba playing Horst has a section in "Love & Crushes" (also Volume 2).

Most of my free time was spent either swimming with Horst or practicing for auditions in the Finke's garage. It was cold in there, even with the carpets I hung on the wall. Like so many in Munich, it wasn't a heated garage. But it was handy so I made the most of it. I practiced a lot!

Auditioning with a small

In Germany, if you were invited to an orchestra audition, your round trip train ticket was paid for. I sent out my CV to many orchestras but until Lotte Lehmann wrote a letter of recommendation I didn't receive invitations. After that letter, however, I was invited to everything I applied to. Usually, these were principal bass jobs that did not get filled by any of the applicants. I finally got a full-time job in the Symphonisches Orchester Berlin, derisively known to us Americans in the orchestra as the SOB. This orchestra (in West Berlin) was the third of three: Berlin Philharmonic, RIAS (Radio In the American Sector or the original German: Rundfunk im amerikanischen Secktor,

aka Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra), then finally the SOB. So we played the less prestigious gigs or halls. We did perform in the beautiful Philharmonie.

Berlin was divided between East and West but the whole city was within East



With my fellow bassists (& Randy's wife) at a party in Berlin-Zehlendorf May 1976. Randy was the other Ami of the bass section and principal.

Germany, which was strictly communist. On the train from West Germany, the East German guards boarded with rifles and frowns. When they saw my bass in its cloth case suspended between the two overhead racks in a compartment, they had me open up the zipper to be sure there wasn't someone hiding in there (as if anyone would try to sneak INTO East Germany!). They may have also been looking for

contraband; there was a lot that wasn't allowed. These guys were not friendly; it was as if the Nazi spirit had been reborn in these East German communist guards.

Living in West Berlin had a few advantages. There were beautiful museums (Dahlem for one), great classical music (orchestral as well as operatic), up-to-date Olympic size indoor swimming pools, as well as a huge park (the Tiergarten). Horst had given me his best friend's contact, the trumpeter Gerd Greif. We became friends, swimming companions, and he was a needed support for this Ami. I well remember him inviting me to stand behind the timpanist in the pit of his Berlin Opera for a *Tristan* conducted by Mehta with Gerd playing the shepherd's tune on a wooden trumpet, as requested by Wagner. I was honored and though I couldn't see the stage, enjoyed the opera anyway. I re-initiated contact with Gerd after over 40 years and this is what he wrote:

Ich habe mich sehr gefreut, nach so langer Zeit von dir zu hören.

Komischerweise kann ich mich mehr an unsere Münchener Zeit, ich habe bei den Münchner Philharmonikern gespielt, erinnern, dass wir (Horst und du) des öfteren in ein vegetarisches Restaurant gegangen sind. Auch habe ich in Erinnerung dass du für uns vegetarisch gekocht hast. (Bohnen und Reis). Damals waren wir noch nicht so gewöhnt an vegetarische Ernährung. An die Berliner Zeit mit dir habe ich leider wenig in Erin-



I have no photo of Gerd from our time together in Berlin, so the present photo must do.

nerung. Das ist so lange her und es ist so viel in der Zwischenzeit passiert.

Ich bin seit 1984 mit Monika verheiratet und habe mit ihr 3 Kinder die jetzt alle schon erwachsen sind. (Julian 32, Maximilian 30, und Constantin 26) Ich bin seit 2 Jahren in Rente und genieße mein Rentnerleben. Spiele aber immer noch Trompete in der Bigband der deutschen Oper und Bühnen Musiken. Auch habe ich noch 4 Trompetenschüler.

Ab und zu spiele ich auch mit meiner Steirischen Harmonika in den Tiroler Bauernstuben Tiroler und Bayrische Volksmusik.

Das macht richtig Spass!!!! [A kind of button accordion]

Gerd's bio (in German)

Sportlich bin ich auch immer noch, zwar nicht mehr im Schwimmbad, dafür drehe ich draußen meine Runde mit schnellem Gehen. Und zwischendurch einige Liegestützen.

Horst war schon ein paarmal mit seiner Freundin in Berlin und wir haben über alte Zeiten gesprochen.

Ich wünsche dir eine schöne Zeit auf Hawaii und würde mich freuen wieder von dir zu hören

Gerd [Greif]

Living in West Berlin had many disadvantages. You were living inside a cage or bubble within enemy territory. Going to East Berlin to enjoy a concert or opera was a major event. Our newspapers showed dead people who were shot climbing over the wall to escape East Berlin's privations. Once I went inside the infamous

supermarkets there observing the almost empty shelves. At one point I saw a line of Hausfrauen waiting to get into a place that must have just gotten a delivery of something nice. Wanting to take a photo, a rifle-armed policeman warned me against such a rash move. Once when I'd taken the old elevated train to East Berlin, the guards at the border ransacked my backpack discovering a spiritual book (probably from my Munich yoga studies) so took me aside. They had me wait for over 45 minutes while they decided what to do. Later, after keeping my book, they told me to go on with my trip, with the warning that this was a communist country that didn't allow spiritual books. I usually went there for an opera or concert. There was a wonderful *Frau ohne Schatten*; I remember another time with Horst who was in Berlin to see his girlfriend Naoko sing Mahler with the East Berlin orchestra. It was fun seeing him! Jan Longo Morewood (from NYC days) visited a few times ending up playing with the SOB for a time. She was a mixture of the familiar and the complex: she thought I neglected her (was jealous) when she saw me having lunch with the SOB female flutist.

Theodore Bloomfield was the accomplished American SOB conductor; he was a joy to play under. His German was excellent, his music-making satisfying to both the young and older orchestra members. He and I got along well. The older German bassists found his tempi more like those of the past, even before the war. They were happy that he didn't rush things also paying attention to the details.

At the end of the season, the acting assistant principal bass and I auditioned for the assistant principal bass position. I knew that he didn't play as well as I did, but I also knew that he was German so that the orchestra members (mostly Germans) would vote for him. He won of course. But then they offered me tenure. It was an honor, but one I'd already decided to reject. The few German friends I had in the group could not understand this. Financial security was for them important. But I didn't like living in the cage of West Berlin. Munich and the Symphonic Orchester Graunke, even as a Stellvertreter (substitute status) beckoned. Perhaps returning to Horst was a pull. Dennis less: he'd returned to a lot of drinking and I was repelled by that.

Back in Munich I once again felt at home, enjoyed the company of many good friends, even teaching at three Gymnasien. How they contacted me or even knew

of my existence is lost to my memory. I did not apply for the work. This was also true for the other orchestras in which I played: why did they engage an Ami for a few concerts/operas? I've always liked teaching; with the German students' seriousness and musical backgrounds, it was especially enjoyable. You'll see the story of working with one of my best students, Mani Rössl, in the chapter "Special Bass Students." I rejoined Horst for swimming, concerts, and excursions. Dennis as well as his circle of friends contributed to my happy return. I rented an apartment three floors up! Bassists will understand the exclamation point. I had a large room, a small kitchen area, with a side room for sleeping. Windows looked out onto a sunny street. Access to the toilet and bathroom was shared with the family. I also could use their laundry facilities. Though I wasn't close to them, we got along fine. It was convenient walking distance to the downtown area where I played so often. I borrowed the Manhold family's extra bike again. Yoga with Dennis and Durgananda (the yoga center's leader) became an important aspect of my life. You'll read about the yoga center from Dennis' point of view later.

It was during this last season that I began to play backstage bass for a few operas at the Bayerische Staatsoper. It was great if irregular employment. I was able to hear/see the whole operas that I played in

Dennis has an NYC experience with Böhm

for only a few minutes. Knowing the security guys was also a plus. I could sneak in to hear such dress rehearsals as the Mozart dream cast of *Marriage of Figaro*. Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, the Count; Gundala Janowitz, the Countess; Hermann Prey, Figaro; Reri Grist, Susanna; Brigitte Fassbaender, Cherubino; and Karl Böhm, the conductor. After her rendition of "Porgi Amor," Böhm shouted "Bravo Janowitz"

then without missing a beat, continued the rehearsal. When he'd entered the pit the whole orchestra stood in his honor.

One of the many things I loved about Munich was the splendid singers I heard at the Bayerische Staatsoper. Robert had alerted me to the fact that I was lucky enough to arrive at the tail end of



several international stars' careers: Hans Hotter (whom I saw sing the Grand

Inquisitor in *Don Carlos* and *Winterreise* in Herkulessaal with Dennis) and Astrid Varnay, who sang many important mezzo roles with great character. I remember fondly her Nurse in *Frau ohne Schatten* and Klytaemnestra in *Elektra*. In the latter, I remember her coming out during the dress rehearsal when she sings "Ich habe keine guten Nächte" while comically moving her head side to side. She loved to goof around using her overweight status to add to the joking. Oh, but there were

so many great performances that I heard, not just in the German rep. There was a fine *Pelléas et Mélisande*, *Tristan*, *Siegfried*, and others with Nilsson; once I took the train from West Berlin back to Munich just to hear Nilsson! Of course, there were many standards like *Lohengrin*, *Marriage of Figaro*, etc. But the chance to witness operas that I knew I'd never hear outside of Germany was important: *Parsifal*, *Frau*, even



Cuvilliés Theatre and above, Bayerishe StaatsOper

Rosenkavalier. There was a Capriccio at Cuvilliés Theatre where I also heard chamber music in all that ancient elegance. I lived frugally enough to buy such tickets. No TV, radio, camera, (cell phones hadn't been invented), etc.

I enjoyed many operas in the company of Frank Manhold with whom I resumed our friendship. I also had a good time with his family, taking up our previous relationship which was rich with German culture, humor, and kindness.

Without having had any contact with the orchestra or Maestro Hans Stadelmeier, the conductor, I was invited on an Italian tour with his Münchener Kammerorchester. (Who got me this job?) The tour wasn't to major cities which allowed us to enjoy some of the smaller mountain towns. I made the mistake of swimming in the Adriatic shivering so much afterward that I filled the bathtub with hot water soaking until I revived. My roommate was the Bayerische Rundfunk Orchester bassoonist Rainer Seidel. We got along like ol' pals even wrestling before sleep. He was the great companion who joined me for our run

through Rome. We'd had a lot of fun planning this romp that was accomplished while the orchestra stopped for an hour or so in the downtown train station, waiting for the next train to Munich. He was also great fun with the girls that we'd pick up during the intermissions of our Brandenburg Concerto concerts. Since there are six concertos, we always stayed in the small Italian cities for two days. Our concerts were sold out. Rainer and I would look for jolly ladies during

intermission. They'd meet us afterward, take us to home-cooked meals (but really kinda restaurants) where Rainer would entertain us with his humor. Neither of us spoke Italian, but that seemed to only add to the hilarity. He was great fun. We'd be driven back to the hotel, late at night, by our new



hosts/friends marveling at all the other orchestra members who'd never left their rooms. I also enjoyed playing in this chamber orchestra becoming disappointed when they hired someone else to fill the vacant bass position for which I wasn't even invited to audition. Of course, on tour, many strange things happened. I remember playing in a church in a Sicilian city: it was raining so hard the roof leaked badly. I wondered if the audience heard anything of our music above the din of falling water.

It may have been my last year in Munich that I heard a recital by Hermann Prey. I was always a fan and he was right there in Herkulessaal singing just for me. There was a line in one of the Lieder that he forgot, instead of just faking it, he stopped and started the Lied anew. At the exact same spot, he had the same memory slip, this time slapped his hand down on the piano and walked in back of the pianist to see the music (along with the words) to get it right. He got great applause for this. Even great artists can be human beings!

My Gärtnerplatz audition was my final such in Germany. Robert Moats appeared. I hadn't seen him for years. Lothar Ulrich, also a friend from my first year in Munich, and I were the semi-finalists. One of the judges got right down on his

haunches to watch our bows bounce for the opening of the *Magic Flute* overture. Lothar deserved the job, but quickly moved on to the great Bayerische Rundfunk Orchester (after I'd already left Germany. See "Blunders").

Years later I returned to Munich on vacation, once with Miguel. I found my way back to Schornstr. where Graunke was rehearsing for a recording. At the break, he came rushing up to me with his usual soft, but fast talk, asked: "Wie geht's den Herr Moore, Wie geht's den Herr Moore???" Not a word of interest in what I'd been doing in the intervening years. Of course, I'd only played with his orchestra for a total of three years, whereas Dennis had played for over a decade leaving in bad shape. Stopsi, Richard, Walter, and his girlfriend/wife asked me for a home-cooked vegetarian dinner made by the last mentioned. It was such a friendly atmosphere, but I soon realized that I was just a proxy for Dennis. They all wanted to know how he was doing, what he was doing, was he completely recovered, was he working, etc?? He was, in fact, working at the thrift store, a happy guy, news that they welcomed. I just felt weird, because, again as with Graunke, they didn't want to know anything about me or my life.

On this trip, Miguel developed a crush on Frank (which was mutual) so I left him in Munich and flew to West Berlin to meet up with Horst who'd had some problems: drink, accident, bad job (taxi?). He welcomed me to his bare, ugly apartment. We slept together (only sleep) on his mattress on the floor where I remember that it was cold, but we enjoyed reminiscing. While he worked the next day I bought some small indoor potted plants to liven up the place. He was thrilled. Years later when Judy and I visited him in Berg (outside of Munich) those same plants had grown long trails in his kitchen. I took it as a sign that he continued to remember my Berlin visit. I don't recall anything else about that earlier trip. I asked Horst. Here's his answer:

Grüaß Di mei liaber Bua, [he greets me in Bavarian because he's helped me with research into Lehmann's dialect singing]..same with me, too long ago..not much left in the memory-box. The first years in Berlin was the poorest time in my live, very depressing. All I remember was that we heard Schumann's 4th with the Berliner Phil. and the virtuous ending of the piece. Leider alles weg, sorry...servus h.

Since the 1989 visit to Europe with Judy on the Lehmann trail, I haven't returned to Munich. I've stayed in contact with Frank, a bit with Horst; now Dennis and I recall the concerts, churches, and plain everyday events that we enjoyed there. It seems to fade now...

Here are Judy's impressions of our trip of 1989.

A critical period of our May 15-31 Lehmann trip to Europe was spent in stuffy phone booths in Munich, Frankfurt and Vienna. [pre email or cell phone days!] These are special booths one finds at post offices, from which one can make numerous calls, paying for them all at the end. Gary Hickling tied those phone lines in knots, making connections with people he had formerly only written to, chasing down one tip after another, finding the sought-for person "on vacation," checking home phone numbers or talking with other people in the same department, on and on, one referral leading to another, all of this almost impossible to have done from the US.

We went to see as many people as we could, so when we were not in phone booths we were running to catch street cars or trains or we were running up stairs. The stairs were always marble and the person we were scheduled to see always seemed to have an office three stories up. Gary galloped the stairs two steps at a time, and I jogged after him, feeling like a short-legged dachshund only able to take one step at a time.

Our first day in Vienna we went up and down the stairs to the third-floor Austrian Radio Archive at least seven times, always at a dead run. (Yes, there are elevators, but why wait when you can run?) In between, through streetcar windows we caught glimpses of cascading lilacs and chestnut "candles" in Munich, enjoyed the Vienna inner city full of people spooning Italian ices while lounging about in the pedestrian malls, and we smiled at the green expanse of hills and forests we saw from train windows as we journeyed from city to city.

Everyone we met was extremely helpful, very interested in the UCSB Lehmann Archives, and more than willing to give us their cooperation and suggestions.

Gary and I are [were] both 48 and many of the older people we talked with expressed pleasure that a younger generation who had never heard Lehmann on stage could be crazy about their beloved Lehmann. We, too, were pleased to find along the way a number of Lehmann enthusiasts who are younger than we are. Our intentions, of course, are to assist in bringing the voice of Lehmann to the ears and hearts of generations yet unborn. Tapes, records, writers, TV, radio and record producers and announcers, vocal music teachers and the supporting ar-

chives are the means to do this. Interconnections need to be woven, so that enthusiasm can be shared with more people.

What did we come back within our carry-on luggage? Little note-books full of scrawled names, addresses, phone numbers, two large open reels of German language interviews of Lehmann, a cassette containing short interviews from the Austrian Radio Archive, several rare 78rpm records, a charming autographed note, an interview on tape with Horst Wahl (Lehmann's recording technician from 1925-35), a phone interview with Martha Mödl about Lehmann, and copies of two of the four new Lehmann CDs we found in record scores.

And not in our baggage but forthcoming: 150 photos of Lehmann from Salzburg and Vienna archives; more taped interviews and off-the-air performances; archival materials from the Theater Collection of the University of Hamburg and from the Hamburg Opera Archives; tapes from the German Radio Archives; a second filmed interview by Werner Baecker; The Leo Slezak Centennial Celebration tape with Lehmann; a missing BBC interview; better copies of rare live performances; invitations to join ISIA and Friends of the Vienna State Opera; Lehmann data from Korngold expert Berndt Rachold and from the Richard Strauss Institute in Munich; private films of Lehmann; two filmed interviews, TV memorials and celebrations from Austrian Television and suggestions about two out-of-print books about the Vienna of Lehmann's time by Otto Strasset and Hugo Burghauser. We ordered a recent book on the history of the Salzburg Festival and bought another detailing the history of the Hamburg Opera. Both books include generous sections on Lehmann. Great numbers of photos, critical comment, theater announcements, programs and letters await further research in Vienna and Hamburg.

Among the people whom we met and talked with (and whom we deeply thank) include: VIENNA: Marcel Prawy of the Vienna Opera, who has produced many TV and radio programs and articles relating to Lehmann; Robert Werba, Austrian Radio producer, author and Lehmann record collector; Gottfried Cervenka, record collector, producer and distributor who ordered Lehmann Centennial Albums for his Da Caruso record shop across from the Opera; Erwin Heidrich, retired bookstore owner, a Lehmann enthusiast who has donated several rare items to the Lehmann Archives; Hertha Schuch, collector and friend of Lehmann since the '30's who provided many important names for our research; Dr. Robert Kittler, head of Photo Archive of the Theater Collection of the National Library; Dr. Rainer Hubert, director of the Austrian Phonotek; Herr Neuwirt, most helpful at Austrian Radio. FREIBURG: Horst Wahl, recording technician at Odeon in the early days. MUNICH: Frank Manhold, classical radio announcer/producer at Bavarian Radio; Dr. Hejak, Archivist of the Bavarian State Opera; Jürgen Grundheber, sound archivist, record producer/distributor; Andreas Dürrwanger, young

lawyer/researcher; Walter Schwarz, Munich Philharmonic percussionist/
researcher; Kevork Matouchian, sound archivist/dealer. FRANKFURT:
Mechthilde Brüning and Anke Bingman at German Radio Archives. BY TELEPHONE: Berndt Wessling, author of *Mehr als eine Sängerin*; who has many letters
and interviews of Lehmann which he is sending; Hans Landgraf of EMI Records
who is sending a tape of the out-of-print LP of Lehmann which he produced;
Otto Preiser of Preiser Records, who provided the name of an American distributor of his Lebendige Vergangenheit series; Jürgen Schmidt of Preiser Records,
who gave us much valuable information; Fr. Cordes, Archivist of the Hamburg Opera, who is sending printed matter on Lehmann; Peter Aistleitner, record collector,
Toscanini expert and researcher, who told us of relevant Lehmann people; Gunther Walter, editor of the magazine *Stimmen die um die Welt gingen*, who is sending
Lehmann material such as copies of letters and contracts, and Christopher
Norton-Welsh, record collector and vocal expert living in Vienna, who has promised us help in our on-going Vienna projects.

Did we miss anything? Yes, we missed a rendezvous with music critic Alfred Frankenstein, who arrived in Vienna two days after we left, which we much regret. He had written two delightful letters to us after receiving the first LLL newsletter, and we had hoped to meet. But you will hear more about him later. We were not able to interview as many artists as we wished, but some have expressed interest to do this on their own and send us the tapes. We plan to contact: Otto Edelmann, Eric Werba, Hans Weigel, Sena Jurinac, Hermann Prey, Jörg Demus, Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, Elisabeth Söderström, Regine Crespin, Christa Ludwig, Birgit Nilsson, Judy Beckman, Dalton Baldwin, Erna Berger, Joseph Witt. We tried without success to contact André Tubeuf in Strasbourg, France. He wrote to us just prior to our trip and was most anxious to provide information or material from his vast collection of Lehmann recordings and letters.

As we finished our work in Vienna towards the end of our trip, Michael Schuch took us to lunch at Kahlenburg, overlooking the city, and then dropped me off at the railroad depot cafe with all our baggage and a large plate of cakes to wait for the train to Munich which would leave in two hours. Michael meanwhile went home and Gary took off to Da Caruso near the Opera to pick up an amazing list of Lehmann live recordings. From there he ran to Austrian Radio for a second meeting with Robert Werba, trying to get everything discussed in 10 minutes, then he grabbed a taxi back to the station. Michael Schuch meanwhile had come back to the train station to check on me and the diminished plate of cakes. It was 15 minutes to departure time. I told Michael not to worry, Gary would arrive at the last minute. So he waved goodby.

When Gary loped in a few minutes later he said he'd been running up the stairs to the cafe when he heard clapping. He looked up and there stood Michael Schuch applauding the long distance runner.

# Dennis' Yoga and Departure from Munich

Dennis got into yoga when he was in the pit of Graunke's orchestra playing an operetta (Czardasfürstin). He had a long rest before his next entrance and was reading the local newspaper. There was a small announcement that caught his eye. It was for yoga relaxation (which he needed!). So a few days later he walked up the five flights of stairs in the Munich winter cold. When he entered, Durgananda was sitting at the registration desk and he immediately felt a connection. She was teaching that night so Dennis took her class. He stayed for the vegetarian meal that was served after every evening class. He repeated this for five days and for some reason he was very limber, He already knew breathing from the trumpet so Durgananda asked him if he'd be interested in helping her teach, cook, clean, and live there full-time. Without a second thought, Dennis turned his back on all of his drinking bouts, got rid of his apartment, and began residence on the sixth day. The head of the European branch of the Sivananda Centers liked him as well; also feeling a spiritual connection: "A great capacity for spirituality." After D. coached him, she offered him the afternoon class to see how it would go. It went well with him teaching in both English and German, demonstrating what was needed. He also cooked, for which he had an aptitude, which was also included in the "yoga of service." After a few days of the afternoon class, he began teaching/ sharing the evening class duties along with meal preparation. Dennis was calmer, even his trumpet playing seemed to improve. The bond between D. and Dennis was deep: something special. They well worked together. She now also had someone to help carry the heating oil or groceries up the five flights. After three or four weeks Dennis told me about his new experience. I remember walking in the Englisher Garten with D. and Dennis while they were talking about yoga. I was especially interested in the meditation aspect but joined in everything. Even cooking.

Dennis lived there for about 10 months during which he fit in the important sixweek intense crash course in the Bahamas. This included advanced breathing, cleansing, but most important, meeting Sivananda's direct acolyte Swami Vishnu Devananda himself, who initiated Dennis, giving him his mantra. This initiation was the most important aspect of the six-week stay. Dennis expected to be recognized by him as the next spiritually awakened being. That showed Dennis how big his ego was. The second most important aspect was his taking the vow of brahmacharia (orange clothing, celibacy, anointing with the red paste, with a spiritual name.) Dennis was a Shiva, his name was Chandrashekar. This was a life-changing experience for him. The power and holiness that emanated from Swami Vishnu were evident. There was a daily routine of hatha yoga, chanting, eating little, sitting in meditation, and playing ancient chants on the harmonium, which of course Dennis as a pianist, was adept at.

When the six weeks were over he returned to Munich with the bond between D. and Dennis even tighter. Unfortunately, about a month later D. and Dennis were talking while facing the window in his room and heard a loud cry. Seconds later a woman committed suicide by jumping, which they both witnessed. It was so toxic



Graunke standing in front of his orchestra. Hard to see, but I'm in the bass section and Dennis is in the trumpet section. Our friends Stopsi, cello; Walter, timpani; Richard, oboe; and others.

they had to take a long walk to discuss the event. The center never seemed to recover from that incident. They began to look for a new place; the group had grown too large in any case. They found a Goethe Str. townhouse where Dennis stayed for about six months, after which he found his own apartment. When D. began her affair with a hornist from the Munich Philharmonic, Dennis didn't return to the Center but kept up his practice at home. He continued playing with Graunke for another season until the fateful day when he damaged his upper lip and couldn't play trumpet, not even a buzz. They were rehearing Messiah for a performance that evening. In the middle of the "Glory to God," his playing just STOPPED! Friends took him home where he had a nervous breakdown, wrecking the place in front of his friends. Oboist friend Richard called his father to tell the story, asking him to send a ticket for the easiest way to get to Texas. His family met him at the Houston airport with their bravest smiles. Dennis was crying for shame, thinking that he was a failure. His parents had worked so hard to give him everything he could ask for in music but throughout the following months they never once said a word about the whole situation. No one gave him a disapproving word; showing only love and support. He stayed in Texas for almost exactly a year.

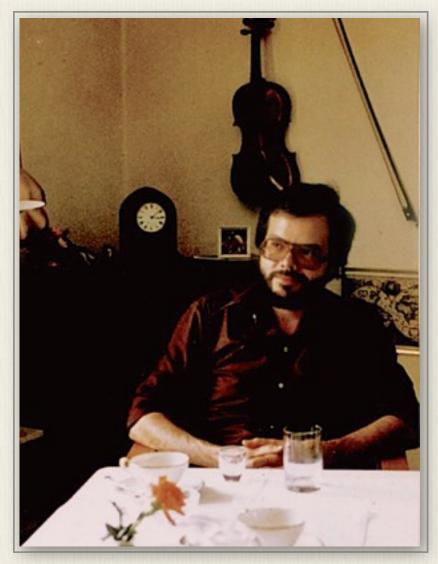
At that point, having been in touch by letter, I called him up to offer a job at the thrift store and the rest is history. (See the chapter "Into Compton.")

## Robert Moats, P.S.

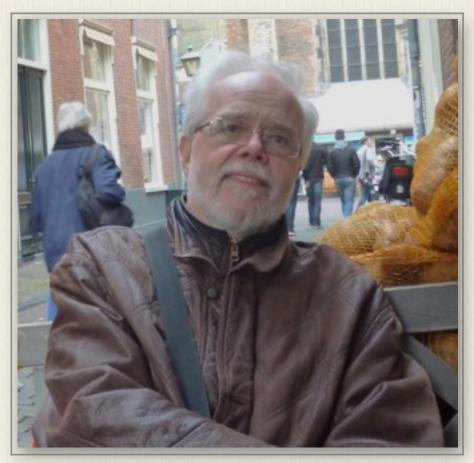
In 2018, after some international sleuthing, I was able to discover the whereabouts of Robert Moats in Germany. He has proved to be just as kind and helpful as he was in 1973. He's sent these "before and after" photos that you'll find on the next page. You can read many references to him at the beginning of this chapter.

# Frank Manhold, P.S.

You'll find a gallery of Manhold photos after Robert's. It's hard to know where to place these, but because they're so much a part of my Munich experience, they're here, while Frank also belongs in the chapter "Friends that Last" in Volume 2.



Robert as I knew him in Munich.



Robert in the 21st century.

# Frank Manhold and his family



In 1974 I frequently visited Frank when he was at gymnasium and living with his parents.

Frank interviews an opera star





# Mexico



We didn't get to see this huge glass mosaic screen, but we did see the beautiful hall where we played mostly operas every night.

I'd always wanted to play full-time in an opera orchestra. I didn't know the repertoire well but when I had the opportunity to play in the Orquesta del Teatro de Bellas Artes I jumped at it. The chance to join this orchestra was rather peculiar. Usually, one would see an advertisement about an opening, send a tape (or now CD or DVD), and hope for an invitation to an audition. In Europe, I auditioned for around 40 different orchestras before landing in the SOB.

In 1979 I'd been substitute teaching in California schools, playing bass in community orchestras, then finally, a joy of a summer job, performing with Chamber Music NorthWest in Portland, Oregon on the recommendation of hornist, Julie Landsman. Though I had my problems with its director, the music-making was wonderful, the hiking as well as river swimming was thrilling, but the only unsettling thing was considering what I would do in September. I certainly didn't want to return to substitute teaching!

My fellow musicians knew of my situation, one of the violinists telling me about playing in the opera orchestra of Mexico City. I already spoke some Spanish and since opera playing was something I wanted to do, I called the conductor Luis Berber, who spoke excellent English and learning about my performing experience, he hired me! No tape, no audition!! The pay was going to be excellent considering the low cost of living there, and the violinist told me that the orchestra was a good one. What wasn't there to like!?

When the festival was over I packed up my stuff in the pickup truck, drove the long distance down to Mexico City from Portland, with just a stop to say goodbye to the parents. Beware Sciatica! One shouldn't drive so long on a bench (not a bucket) seat. I also didn't stop enough, not sharing the driving with anyone.

Julie Landsman's French Horn colleague Jerome Ashby (1956–2007) was playing

in the UNAM Orchestra in Mexico City so he was the first person I called to get my bearings there. He and his wife were friendly and helpful but they forgot to warn me about the pickpockets on the subway, so I lost my wallet/passport/ID/\$ on the first day! The American Embassy was useful so in a few days, I was able to resurrect my identity, etc. I found a decent hotel downtown and in that first week met Miguel Ronquillo, a young Mexican who became one of my good friends, companions, and connection with the Mexican people and culture. (A year or so later, when he came to California he worked at the thrift store, then moved to San Francisco, where I visited him



Miguel Ronquillo



We played in this historic building in the heart of Mexico City.

frequently. He died of AIDs there.) He was learning English to help fulfill his goal of working in the hospitality industry so we traded lessons. I also met Sam and Nancy Agres at a fancy cafeteria. They were also just-arrived Americans there to play in the opera orchestra, bass and viola, respectively. They were on their honeymoon! I quickly learned that they were vegetarian,

that Sam had also been a member of the Sivananda Yoga group! We've since wondered what the odds were! We've remained friends, first sharing cassette letters, now regular phone calls. Here's a portion of one of Sam's recorded letters from about 10 years ago.

Sam Agres on tape

On the first day I was in the pit practicing the music for the first opera, Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro*, when Luis Berber, the music director/conductor arrived, heard me playing and thus was convinced that he'd hired a good bassist. We began and remained on good terms. I was astounded by the other two (Mexican) bassists that rounded out our section. Neither of them could play the instrument. They probably wouldn't have been allowed in a youth orchestra in the U.S. But they were friendly and in sectionals, Sam and I tried to teach them some basics. But it was too late; they weren't motivated. It was up to the two of us to BE the whole bass section. And it wasn't just Mozart. We played all the spaghetti operas, even Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*! I'm sorry that I don't have any programs from the year that I spent in that pit, but I do have a few stories.

At one point the whole orchestra arrived at the airport for a tour to Mexico's second-largest city, Monterrey. As we arrived we heard the word "huelga," quickly learning that the airlines were on strike. We reassembled at the train station, taking that mode of transportation. The accommodations in the industrial city were

more than adequate. The major opera that we performed in Monterrey was Puccini's *Tosca* offering none other than Plácido Domingo with Gilda Cruz-Romo as the stars. The audience was so enthusiastic that Domingo had to encore his aria. He did sing well! In Monterrey, we also played: *Coppelia*, *Il Trovatore*, the Verdi *Requiem*, *Madama Butterfly*, and a "Gala" that featured excerpts from *Les Sylphides*, *La Bayadère*, *Le Corsaire*, *La fille mal gardée*. *Coppelia* was conducted by John Lanchbery.

In Mexico City, we also didn't just play operas. There was a whole series of performances of Tchaikovsky's *Sleeping Beauty* ballet that we enjoyed a lot. John Lanchbery, the English conductor, was a welcome change from some of the poor Mexican conductors that we'd suffered. Quoting from Wikipedia: "Lanchbery was widely considered to be the greatest [ballet] conductor of his time..."

La Orchesta also played some symphony concerts right on the opera stage! These were the exceptions, but it did offer some variety. There were times when the basses were exposed so Sam would just ask the other two bassists to fake playing so as not to hurt the music.

I've asked Sam what we earned because I remember that they treated us well. He received \$1,200 a month, so as a section member I probably got \$1,000. You must remember that first, it was 1979/80, second, the cost of living in Mexico was considerably less than the U.S. I found a nice place to rent in the Zona Rosa, which was known for many embassies. I even had a maid who came each week to clean up. Sam reminds me that he and his wife stayed there when I needed to return to the States when they found it extremely noisy. I didn't notice the problem, slept deeply, or it was quieter in the back room where I slept? My bed was a piece of foam on the floor, as usual. Within walking distance of my place was a tortilleria where the smell of freshly made tortillas drew you in to buy a small bag, allowing us to eat them hot out of the machine. Oh, they tasted sweet!

The orchestra was a mix of nationalities. Some recent Russian immigrant musicians didn't speak Spanish but did speak German. The administration asked me to translate their contract negotiations. At first, I'd just repeat the German in different words. They management laughed until I was able to do the tricky thing of moving between two "second" languages.

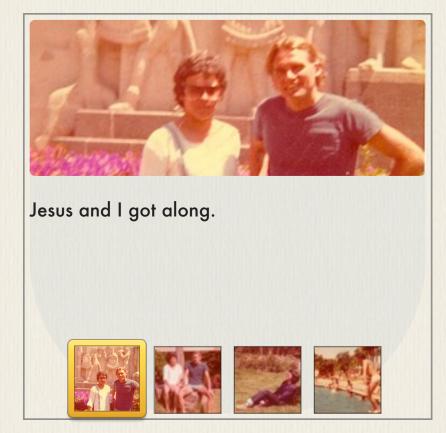
I got to know the principal flutist, Jody Meese who was also American. We clicked. She lived close to my place so we generally walked daily to rehearsals. Maybe to performances as well. I'm foggy on that. Anyway, we became great close friends so she shared her love-life story with me. She was going out with a handsome American French horn player, Bruce Roberts, who played in yet another Mexico City orchestra. They'd fight, break up but always get back together, finally marrying after leaving Mexico. They had two kids, are still a couple after all these years! Here's what Jody recently sent:

We were pretty dedicated to walking the two miles each way to and from Bellas Artes, for both rehearsals and performances, even when there were two services in a day. I loved our conversations about anything and everything! I remember walking home through the park adjacent to the hall very late at night after performances, sometimes on the quincena (national semi-monthly payday)—meaning anyone might correctly assume we were carrying envelopes of cash—and not be worried at all. No crime, just rats scurrying around.

I remember being amazed that you had brought your extensive collection of vinyl recordings all the way down there, and enjoyed many hours of listening with your knowledgeable commentary. Although I had a couple degrees in music, my knowledge of opera was limited, so it was enlightening and helped me enjoy my job more. We had a common interest in yoga, and at least once you organized a class in the apartment of another American musician. I also recall you introduced me to the sweet young man Rolando, with his excellent British English. He studied flute with me for much of the time I was there. [I, Gary, met up with him again in

NYC and had some good conversations.]

The other important person was my boyfriend, Jesus Rosales Samperio. We were walking in opposite directions in downtown, were both immediately interested in the other, wasted no time, turned around, and introduced ourselves. He helped me tremendously. I was usually fighting amoebiasis so was sometimes too weak to shop for food or prepare my meals. Jesus was there when needed. He was studying at the



university, living at home, but he spent lots of time with me too. Once I had a weekend free so he took me by bus to a resort where we swam and enjoyed the outdoors. Jesus also took me shopping, introducing me to the Mexican varieties of produce that I should buy. Cooking nopales cactus for lunch was certainly new! He also helped me with my Spanish. He'd gone off to study in Europe shortly before I left so we never got to say Adios. We never had a disagreement so the only

sadness is that I lost touch with him when I left Mexico. It still bothers me!

The orchestra enjoyed another tour: this time we spent a few weeks in Guanajuato, the home of the Festival International Cervantino. There was music of all kinds (including Ella Fitzgerald!) as well as ballet, film, art exhibits, and legitimate stage works. The city was fascinating. Traffic was funneled underground (in the former mining tunnels) leaving the streets automobile free and the ancient buildings undisturbed. Diego Rivera was born there so I was able to see his murals, as well as those of his contemporaries. Playing in Teatro Juarez was like performing inside an antique jewel box. But the pit was so tiny that Sam and I had to perform in one of the boxes on the side.



Kent Pachuta, who worked out enough that he was used as a model in the Playgirl magazine!



Teatro Juarez



Sam and me in Teatro Juarez

that I'd leave the city each chance we had for vacations. The first time was Cancun. I was so weak that I just let myself fall into the lagoon to float around. The water, air, and food were good so soon I was walking miles down the beach to a Club Med, where huge speakers played Mahler on the

Back in D.F.,

my amoebas

were so bad

beach to the guests. The next day I met Kent Pachuta on the beach. Later he and his friend Jack took me with them on a trip to see one of the ancient Mayan pyramids. When I first met him I described my walk to the Club Med, not knowing if he liked classical music tentatively mentioning "Mahler." He sighed, repeating the name. Kent has remained my friend since.

Back in LA we saw many concerts and recitals together. He also loves vocal music; he's a painter.



Club Med along the Cancun coast

While in Mexico I received a letter from a fellow bassist who played principal in the national orchestra of Costa Rica. He was leaving at the end of the season and thought I might like his position. When I had a break I went there, taught a master class, swam on a beach on the Pacific Coast, where I spent the equivalent of \$8 for a cottage literally on the beach! I was especially interested in playing/living in Costa Rica because they don't have problems with amoebas. The air and water are clean. I stayed with an American bassoonist. I was enthusiastic about the country until I heard a rehearsal of the orchestra. It was just too bad to consider. Any junior high school orchestra would have sounded better. I figured that I'd take my chances in California when my Mexican contract was up.

From the first week in Mexico, I took courses in Spanish. My Mexican friends helped, but I didn't have TV, which would have been useful. But living in the Spanish-speaking environment, reading restaurant menus, visiting museums, churches, all surrounded me with the language so soon I was thinking in Spanish. I had a Mexican-Spanish/English dictionary that I wore out.

My long-time friend Ted DeColo visited while I was there. I've forgotten what we did together, but I do remember him leaving with his pal to explore the hinterlands. They seemed destined to get into trouble so when, after weeks, I hadn't heard from them, I jumped to the conclusion that they were rotting in a Mexican jail some place. One day, when I returned from having a spider-bite lanced, there they were, all happy, dismayed that I had worried.

Janet Cannon, an American woman who had been hired to replace me, arrived before my contract was up but before her contract began. I taught her some lessons, beginning a friendship that has lasted for years. Years later I observed her studying with Francois Rabbath in Paris. Back to Mexico: luckily for the orchestra, she was there when I was just too sick to play. I paid for her to cover my last week. I had gone off to Guadalajara for a cure but a storm that prevented buses from running, so I couldn't return to D.F. After the storm, I did return strong enough to pack up and leave a place for which I'd developed a love/hate relationship. Here's what Janet recently wrote:

I came to Toluca after graduation from MSM, I think 1976. Pretty sure I transitioned to the Opera after about a year. [1980] We had done a disastrous tour of southern States with Batiz, where the orchestra's treasurer ran off with the cash box after the final concert, leaving the orchestra stranded in a motel in Florida! Our concertmaster and I pooled our viaticos and booked buses to get us to the airport. I know I have a letter of thanks from the orchestra somewhere, that should give me the date of coming to the opera, if it's important. I remember coming in for you, and looking forward to building opera chops with Sam—who also had family issues and left me as de facto principal with no experience and a really difficult section. But that would be my memoir, to get into those stories!

I remember being so happy that you did recover your health and that I was able to get to know you, and sorry that you left. Actually, I also left after battling continual intestinal issues.

I was so thrilled when you came to Paris, and I will always remember the wonderful concert by Hermann Prey that you treated us to.

The corruption and dumb bureaucracy were maddening. The people were wonderful, if undependable. The buildings and mountains surrounding the city were spectacular. The air was polluted, the traffic hardly moved (luckily I walked or took the subway), the petty crime was rampant. The music-making had been a mixed bag. Sometimes the productions included the very best singers, sometimes the orchestra played well. Other times this wasn't so. Except for my friends, who I'd come to love dearly, I never regretted leaving Mexico, haven't returned since.

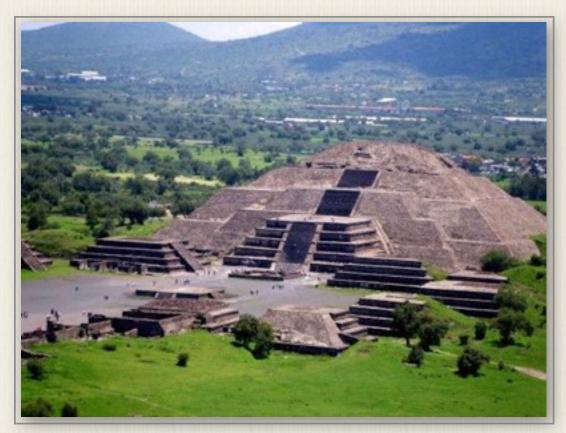
Here are some highlights from the operas I played: The *Tristan und Isolde* was quite respectable, even if the orchestra was too small. I remember Sam and me trying to sound like eight basses! We'd play (saw!) on the bass as hard as we could but still

not be able to fill the needed bass register. I can tell you that we were very tired after the many hours spent in this vigorous manner.

Madama Butterfly was another opera that I enjoyed getting to know intimately. The singers were decent, the orchestra parts not too demanding, but at the tragic ending, I had to memorize my part because I always cried.

We performed all the standard operas including *Carmen* and *Tales of Hoffmann*. The latter has such a spindly story that it didn't matter when two ladies in what looked like senior prom dresses came on stage in front of a bower of plants to sing the famous Barcarolle.

Sometimes our conductors would arrive late, very drunk. We musicians held the



If you look closely you can see people and get some idea of the scale.

performances together,
even if we did start late.
There was generally a full
house of enthusiastic
patrons, we gave them what
they liked. There were no
weird stagings, no modern
operas.

I should tell of some of my excursions in D.F. where I liked to discover old churches, going in to soak up the ambiance. Mexicans are very devoted so there

were always worshipers inside. After months in the city, I finally made the not-so-far trip to the pyramids. Though it was close, I only went once. If I'd had more visitors I would have taken them there. As it was, my favorite place to go when I had some time was the Museo Nacional de Antropologia. This was a perfect combination for me of ancient history as well as artworks. It was close to their central park that added another reason to visit.

One might assume that being a vegetarian in Mexico would be difficult, but very close to Bellas Artes was a little cafeteria-style place that offered excellent fare. There was a real sitdown restaurant that Sam, Nancy, and I often frequented; though the meals weren't that good or interesting, they were



Museo Nacional de Antropologia

ok. Of course, the farmers' markets were filled with vegetables (many new to my eye and tongue) which I washed like crazy to protect myself from amoebas (in vain). Visiting a market with Jesus was the best: he knew which vegetables, fruits, cheese to buy. When I was too weak he'd cook authentic Mexican meals for me.

The orchestra schedule of rehearsals and performances was demanding, but we also had free time. Since I was so bothered by amoebas I chose my trips with clean air and water in mind. Besides Cancun (twice!), I also went to Guadalajara because I was considering their orchestra. I didn't like the city at all, never even pursued an audition. The other city I visited was Puerto Vallarta because it also had nice beaches with a clean ocean to swim in. These weren't long excursions: Sometimes only a long weekend, but it helped my health. Upon returning I was stronger and could tough out the coming month in which I'd ingest, inhale, or somehow catch the amoebas again. I never had the runs, but they happily ate all the good food I could find: the amoebas were also vegetarian! I was thin.

Miguel Ronquillo helped me with my Spanish: he'd bring over a pop record, we'd listen carefully, especially noting the colloquial use of the language. "¡Que honda!" was current and just meant that something was excellent or in our present argot, "awesome." He also made sure I discovered the best swimming pools, saunas, steam rooms, and other fun places. The last-mentioned place offered massage. It

was done on a marble slab with warm soapy water. I never tried it, but had a lot of fun in the steam room, even meeting some guys who became friends. But my major exercise was the walk to and from work that Jody describes earlier in this chapter. I remember her complaining about the aggressive sexual attitude of the Mexican males. They'd block her way when getting off the bus, trying to touch her or rub up against her. She was young, thin, blonde, pretty! Once while she was walking with me in broad daylight on a sidewalk full of pedestrians, a guy ran up from behind and goosed her! He ran off quickly so it was all over so fast that Jody hardly had a chance to get upset. But she was. It added to the threatening macho annoyance that she often felt. Walking with this gringo may have saved her from many other such attacks.

There was yet another macho level of attack. That was their delight in calling me a maricón. I don't know how they knew. A single, skinny, gringo. They'd call out, "where's your girlfriend?" (in Spanish: "¿No tienes novia?")

Speaking of "friends:" I often took the subway home late at night. I never felt any danger. My area was safe, and before Jesus entered my life, I often was approached by a young man interested in gringo sex whom I took back to my place. After a "quickie" he'd invariably say, "Ya me voy" (I'm outta here.) And that was that.

When I'd moved from the States to Mexico it had been in my pickup truck. It was handy to move my bass, clothes, and other stuff, but once in D.F., there was no need for it. In fact, it was so difficult to drive in the non-moving traffic that walking was easier, definitely faster. Also, their modern subways were useful. So I quickly decided to return to the US to sell my truck. The closest trip was to Texas so I made an excursion to San Antonio, enjoyed the beautiful, clean city; sold the truck in one day, returning without even an overnight stay. I needed to take the money and run: there was an orchestra rehearsal that I needed to play.

Now it's 2020 so I can look back on my time in Mexico with mixed emotions. As in Munich, there were smokers on the orchestra bus when we toured. I felt disliked by the orchestra manager, who didn't make my life easy. But the orchestra administration treated all the members well: we received brand new tails, they bought the bass section new strings, we were paid regularly. While driving in D.F.

there were the run-ins with the police who always wanted bribes to supplement their meager salaries. The national bureaucracy was maddening: any time we needed papers it was a tough couple of hours that took patience. One day Sam arrived at one of these appointments bringing a bottle of booze and a bouquet for the female secretaries. It did no good. In Munich (as foreigners) we also needed work papers, but in Germany, their efficiency had made the whole process a breeze. But probably the main reason that Mexico leaves me with bad memories is the amebiasis. Often I was so weak that I'd rest or even sleep in the green room before a performance as well as during breaks. Sam would hold my bass ready for me as someone else would push me up into place. The demands of the opera performance distracted me from my distress, but in the end, I didn't renew my contract, happily returning to the chlorinated water of California. The next chapter will detail my transition from Mexico to Compton.



Mexico City: the most traffic-congested place on Earth

### -010-

# Into Compton—with a thrift store



An early photo of the building. If you look carefully you'll see Dad on his make-shift rig with me above helping. The "castle with portholes" needed basic work before we could open.

My many years either working at or managing the thrift store are fraught in my memory with conflicting emotions. I'll get to these after you read the background of how we started a thrift store and why Compton. Dennis, who worked at the store for years has helped with many of the stories. This following history of the opening of the thrift store in Compton is also found in my father's bio in Volume 2.

My father didn't get more than a third grade and a few months of a fifth-grade education. When he was mature he took a correspondence course in math, geometry, trigonometry, including the other fields needed to support his drive to become a contractor. He wanted to build homes. In all these things he was successful but even while working at Northrup during the war, he did odd jobs of carpentry, cement, especially concrete blocks (aka hollow tile). When we moved to the desert mountains (La Crescenta/La Cañada) he built a lot of concrete block walls because the land was steep needing retaining walls. He also poured concrete patios and laid flagstone. Dad built our house: everything.

In about 1956 he added a major extension to the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Thrift Store in Glendale. We lived in the general area: Steve and I went to Glendale High School. The owner of the business, Mr. Benson, was thrilled with my father and his work. To us, it was just another job, but we'd never visited a thrift store, so we all went down when the work was finished finding some bargains. We later learned that the owner told his wife "If anything should ever happen to me, contact Al Hickling, he's an honest man." He was that.

Hardly were the words out of his mouth than Mr. B. has a heart attack and dies. His wife, who has never been active in the thrift store business, immediately contacts my father asking if he'd like to manage the thrift store. Dad calls the first family conference we've ever had. We sanctified it by gathering around the dining room table that was only used for Thanksgiving or Christmas dinners. Dad reminded us that he was in his forties, his painful knees were getting worse, and he didn't know how much longer he could keep up cement work. What did we think about him trying business? Heck, our father was all things to us, so of course, we all gave him our encouragement, voting for him to immediately start work at the thrift store. Mrs. Benson had him sell his pickup, she didn't want even this honest man taking home thrift store items for personal profit.

My father never did things by half measures! The former owner/manager had a little desk in a corner of the store as his "office" so immediately Dad took the large ladies' bathroom as his office, building another bathroom. He had a quick mind that matched his work ethic. He streamlined many aspects of the business and I well remember the day that we were invited to join Mrs. Benson and my father,

when it looked like they'd have their first \$600 day. The employees joined in the celebration. Mrs. B. was so pleased she gave my father a raise. We were still poor; Steve and I both earned our own money with paper routes; I drove kids in our neighborhood to high school but charged them 25 cents for it! There was never any money to spare, but we didn't buy stuff at the thrift store. Stigma?

But the story took a dark turn. Mrs. B. found a new husband and he wanted to run the store so my father lost his job! But Dad had discovered a new profession and in a complicated way, that's way too long for this story, he put together a bunch of DAV chapters around Compton, so in September 1958 we opened the Disabled American Thrift Store there. Of course, we'd rented a building. The whole bankroll that my parents had to buy a truck, pay the rent, the utilities, insurance, the first employees, etc. was \$10,000! That amount of money is equal to \$89,000 in 2020 dollars. We all knew that we had to live off of that, as well, because no business pays its way immediately. There was still the mortgage on our house, its costs, our food, clothes, etc. Remember that it had taken about a year to open the thrift store for business.

Steve and I were brought into the whole process. My father's brother Bob, as well as their father Arthur, came to our house in La Cañada to help build the racks, bins, counters, etc. Steve and I helped by painting. I remember Uncle Bob also coming to Compton working on the pipes for racks in the store. He'd been in the same airplane work as my father, but at a different company so knew metalwork.

The original store was quite a bit smaller than what it developed into. The side buildings were rented out to other businesses so it was only the center area that we had for processing and displaying everything. Dad built a wall out of plywood to separate the working area from the sales area. One of the workers from Glendale, Stella, joined us to train a few women in sorting and pricing. She called the building seen in this chapter's cover photo "My castle with pooortholes!" You need to hear her Boston accent.

We bought a huge station wagon (with the back seat open, it could seat 12) and would go down to skid row to pick up winos to be our solicitors. We offered them a shower (next to the floor-level urinal), shave, clean (used) clothes, some basic

amount of money, and if they came back a second day, even more, to try to get them to become regular workers. It didn't work out well. Every Monday we needed to go downtown for new winos (solicitors). Some became known to us, returned on their own, or would be easy for us to pick up for a few days. But few lasted. Some were well-educated brilliant fellows. Others had a gift for gab, could tell stories or lies, charming the women homeowners into putting out their used stuff for our truck. After a while, the winos got to know me so I'd see them approach me knowing what they were going to say. With an arm slung over my shoulder, pulling me close so that I'd clearly hear the private message they were about to deliver: "Gary, I tell you one thing: Don't drink." I took the advice to heart and didn't/don't. But after all of the winos, the years, the time, and, can I even say, Dad's moral commitment, the rehab plan (with the added element of saving the store money), collapsed. It was one of my father's few failures. It hurt him deeply when one of the winos who'd reformed, was a trusted employee in the store got caught for a parole violation and sent back to jail in Chicago.

My father lost a lot of his faith even courage at that point, giving up on the winos but, since women's lib was happening, we could offer the solicitor job to women, who worked while their kids were in school. Dad found a good worker named Pauline who organized that end of things so that he didn't need to think about it. She made maps of the various areas for which we paid each city to solicit in; she'd drop off the women, go solicit by herself, then she'd pick up the women in an efficient manner, returning to the store. These solicitors were dependable. We had so many donations coming in that we sometimes had to put out two trucks to handle everything. The drivers often, but not always, had helpers who'd ride outside holding onto the door, jumping off to pick up the bags of clothes tossing them into the truck. Of course, if there was something large the driver got out to help. We were blessed by some excellent, dependable drivers who stayed with us for years. But when Steve took over the store, Pauline found him fooling around too much so quit. She liked my father's work ethic, which matched her own.

On our first day open—in September 1958 after preparing the building, hiring workers, gathering stock, painting, painting, more painting—my mother went out to the other Compton thrift stores to whisper to the other shoppers that there was

a new thrift store in town that they needed to try out. Then she'd return, change into different clothes from our racks, then go out again saying the same thing. If memory serves, she did this three times! We took in a bit over \$120 the first day (a bit over \$1,000 in 2020 dollars.) You can imagine that there hadn't been any money available for advertising. We needed a telephone, a cash register, hangers, racks, bins, signs, price tags, staplers, a strong steel baler for the rags, tools to make things work. We'd had to pay for the rent, the insurance, the wages, and the gas to run the vehicles, all out of that original \$10K!!!!

My mother became
the regular Saturday
cashier (we didn't
open on Sundays at
first). Steve and I also
worked weekends as
well as daily during
our summer break.
We did work hard. We
had already been
allowed (no, ordered)
to paint the bins and
anything else that
looked like it needed
it, so now we became



salesmen, repairmen (lamps, electric cords, etc.) and cashiers. We priced furniture, toys etc....everything but the clothes, which the women tagged. Steve and I both baled rags; in those days it was by hand, with a large bar that pressed the clothes in the big steel plate machine. We'd tie the wire around the bale and pop the machine, rolling the bale over to their pile, waiting for the rag truck to come. But Dad never asked us to do work that he didn't also do.

Compton was an hour commute each way to and from La Cañada through some tough commuter traffic. Steve and I worked at the store all summer. There were times during the summer when we stayed late with Dad (we were open till 9 pm

on Mon, Wed, and Fri). We built a bedroom in the upstairs mezzanine so that we could sleep there overnight, thus avoiding the commute back to La Cañada. It was a time to feel closer to our father. Eating at greasy spoons, we had a little fraternity. We worked hard, slept well, were ready to work again the next day at 7 am.

When Steve and I were sleeping on the Saturday mornings during the school year in La Cañada, Dad used to enter our bedroom to kick the soles of our feet shouting "God's work to be done!" He wasn't religious, though he was baptized Salvation Army, which we considered ironic since they were often our thrift store competition! It was just another aspect of his Calvin-like work ethic. Dad kept saying that he wanted to move, but Steve and I wanted to graduate from Glendale High School, so he stuck it out. Both parents came to my graduation in 1959 (they did not, for UCLA or MSM graduation ceremonies). After Steve graduated they moved to a rented house in Compton. The city developed a tough reputation, but that was later. In the early 1960s, it was a congenial mixed-race community. No race being dominant, there weren't such things gang warfare. It was only later with crack, corruption, and PCP that the place developed its deserved rep.

Later, in about 1962, when Steve had trouble with the Marines, their honorable discharge was contingent on Dad providing him a full-time job. They didn't get along at the store, so Dad semi-retired, but still had a say in the business decisions. I was away in Europe during most of this time only receiving hints; when I returned I learned first hand what had gone on.

When I first returned from Germany I did some work for Steve such as new furniture inventory or price checking. Then after substitute teaching, I went for the year to Mexico, playing the Bellas Artes Orchestra. I had a year of fun, opera, Spanish, but it came with a lot of amoebas, so when my contract was up, I flew back to LA to begin working at the store. I'd arrived at LAX in the middle of the night/morning so I walked with my bags to my Aunt Mary's house in Inglewood. I slept in her back yard so at daylight began to hang around her front porch waiting for her to wake up. I heard the phone ring and knew that a neighbor had spotted me so I knocked so she could assure her friend that it was only "Bob's nephew." I always considered them both my Aunt and Uncle, so that was a surprise. Anyway, Bob was already dead. She let me use her phone (pre-cellphone



days) so I called Steve to see if I could stay with them. He gave me complicated instructions on how to get from Inglewood to Huntington Beach where they lived. Many of the freeways had been built since I'd lived there, so it was all new to me so I had no way to rent a

car anyway (no credit card). Finally, Steve came to pick me up from Aunt Mary's to take me to their place, eventually to the thrift store. I hadn't moved my stuff out of Mexico City, so I just checked-in at the store, borrowed an extra truck, and began to drive down to D.F. to retrieve my stuff. But it used so much gas that I soon discovered that it would be more expensive than me flying down to ship everything back. When I returned, Steve let me stay in his previous house in La Palma, which he was planning to sell. It wasn't far from the thrift store so that worked out fine.

Steve didn't tell anyone that I was his brother; I didn't work in the new furniture portion but stayed with the thrift store division. Though no one was informed of our relationship, looking back, "working incognito" wasn't probably feasible as one of the only white guys there. That first day I went out with the solicitors; the second, with the truck picking up what we'd solicited; the third, receiving and processing the donations. By doing that I refreshed my knowledge of that aspect of the business. Thereafter I reinvigorated the department, began to study business as well as Spanish at Long Beach Community College's night school, and at one point, about a year later when Dad, Steve, and I had lunch together I offered a bunch of ideas on how to improve the whole store. I'd been working out

the concepts of planning, meetings, inventory, as well as other aspects that I'd been studying in the business classes. Steve was reluctant to make changes.

Dad and I worked well together so when, about a year after that lunch, he offered me the chance to be overall manager I took it. I was already the de-facto manager of the thrift side of things. Steve was away so much it didn't make much difference. His M.O. was to arrive at 7 am to start everything going. Then by 10 am he was off to visit one of his girlfriends or ride with his Compton police pal. He finally left altogether (in anger). We'd become closer in my first years at the store, but that evaporated when he felt pushed out.

I called to my clarinet friend, Ted DeColo, who had also advised me on things philosophical. How could I be a manager, still keeping my feelings of fairness and equality? He assured me that if I went at it with my fresh ideas but kept thinking about the employees' feelings, I'd be successful in business and be satisfied spiritually. I had my doubts but wanted to give it a try. Here's what Ted wrote in 2017:

There was a time when Gary was managing the store in California and he had doubts about himself on the job. I don't remember exactly what I said but I know what I would have said .... "Just be you. You have such a kind, open, honest, caring way with people that those around you would sense your positive attitude and respond in kind to it. You have the kind of personality that encourages others to do their best, be their best, and care about things the way you do. If you lead, they will follow."

Here are some of the things that I tried: management meetings, whole store staff meetings, work reviews, raises, inventory tracking, computerization, storing "layaways." Steve was paying the women considerably less than the men, justifying it by saying that the men were responsible for households. I gradually brought about parity. People are proud and pleased when you take their photos, whether posed or at work, so I kept a camera handy. We had employee dinners when everyone dressed up, bringing their significant others (in those years it was only husbands or wives). The pension plan that my father and brother had initiated was weak. At one point I discovered that it didn't meet Federal standards. So one of our big employee dinners included my second cousin, lawyer, Jim Ackerman, who by that time was my regular legal consultant. He explained the problems of the pension to the workers telling them that I'd begin profit-sharing which would be greatly to

their benefit. They were satisfied at the meeting and ended up earning a lot extra each December!

But I made the mistake of being too strict. I shouted at the male employees, trying to get them to work as hard as I did. It wasn't a way to improve anything and may have hardened workers against me as well as the store. There was certainly enough theft or other tricks that they all tried at one point or another. I'm still not sure what I should have done differently; perhaps just a more professional distanced approach that would have inspired respect would have been better. I worked with the men in every capacity: loading furniture, pricing used merchandise, unloading the truck of the donations, etc. Maybe that was an error.

Our staff had fun putting together special community events such as Christmas, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, and Cinco de Mayo. Here's a sampling of some of the fun things we organized: fashion shows using store clothes, pie-eating contests, baby crawling "races," music, authentic Mexican food, games with gifts of new merchandise such as mirrors, paintings, lamps. We always had good customer turnout so this was good for both the community relations and our workers, who were proud to be involved announcing the events, preparing, serving the food, or otherwise participating in the fun. My father had built boxes that were hooked together to form a stage. There was always appropriate music and fun for all.

The adage "A New Broom Sweeps Clean" applied to me when I began to manage the store. I concentrated our expenditures on improving all aspects of the main building. This included new flooring, paint inside and out, new awnings, signage, including many other elements that made the store more attractive to a broad range of customers. I wanted to correct the horrible parking lot. It was just chunks of broken concrete that were difficult even dangerous to drive over. That meant hiring a company to remove the concrete to pour a new slab. But they did a poor job. Later my father wondered why I hadn't asked him to do it! He was retired so I didn't think that it was something he'd want to do. Especially finding workers in Compton whom he could handle. In the end, the contractor had to jackhammer off a huge portion and re-pour. It was better than before, but not great.

As I began to spend more time in Hawaii I hired on-site managers for the day-to-day running of the store. There were periods of success in this. I wanted to sell.

But we needed to determine how to run the store legally after the California laws changed. Even before Steve took over, my father received several "cease and desist" orders from the State Attorney General, even applying a kind of grandfather exception wasn't possible. This was a big deal. Jim Ackerman, our lawyer, was impatient to find a way to operate within the law, telling me that I could never sell it until it was all legal. I'd read the law several times but finally photocopied it so that I could memorize every clause and could discover a way to abide by the law. When I did, I immediately called Jim (it was nighttime, but no matter). He was thrilled with how few changes were needed to completely comply. It's too technical to tell about here, but it made everything easier when the store was finally completely legal again.

When sometimes I questioned my capitalistic fervor and acknowledged my angry feelings of betrayal by our employees, here's how I felt that things balanced:

- 1. We had hired many marginal people who otherwise wouldn't be working.
- 2. The solicitors walked outdoors alerting the homeowner that we'd be on their street the next day. At first, this was done by speaking, but later when the occupants were out working, by hanging a notice on their doorknob. In the final decades, this was done mostly by Mexicans.
- 3. People donated items they no longer needed, stuff that might otherwise have gone into landfills. What clothing we didn't use was baled and shipped to poor countries in the Pacific.
- 4. We collected, sorted, priced, hung, and sold the clothes to rather poor people who were able to benefit from the clean well-organized merchandise.
- 5. We paid generous bonuses to our employees.
- 6. The inexpensive new furniture we sold provided the people of Compton with good looking, useful furniture. We offered layaways for those who didn't have the money right away, we tied the merchandise on their cars or delivered it to their homes for a nominal rate.

- 7. We regularly paid our bills, taxes, rent, insurance, payroll, CPA, etc.
- 8. I never took an exorbitant salary, usually only \$5K more than the next highest-paid employee.
- 9. I sold the business to an employee who'd worked himself up from sweeping the floors when he was a teenager.
- 10. The store's environment was kept clean, we often painted and otherwise kept the old buildings looking good.

We held many parties for the community, as you'll see in the following photos.



# Thrift Store Stories

Our family often said that we should write down the nutty things that happened before we forgot them. I've forgotten many of these tales, but here are the ones I can remember. Dennis has helped with some of them.

I've collected the stories that include riots, killing, beating, stealing, cheating, as well as other negative aspects of our many years in Compton, putting them all in the section called "Upsetting." There are many aspects of the thrift store that I liked, but the sad side of mankind was not one of them. Most of this memoir is uplifting even light-hearted; you can choose to read the "Upsetting" section if that doesn't annoy you. It does bother me, so that's why I've separated it from the rest.

- When we first took over the building it had most recently been used as a kind of warehouse for airplane parts for Howard Hughes so had its windows "whited" out. We certainly needed the windows clear for a retail establishment so my father went about trying to locate the correct solvent to wash off the "paint" that was on them. We tried some of the basics such as turpentine, of course, paint thinner. Nothing touched the stuff. Really mystifying for us. Now it's buried in history, but one of us tried water which took it off easily!
- \* The building's owner, Mr. Jasper, wanted to see us succeed. He negotiated a reasonable rent and after he experienced my father's dependability, arranged for him to first rent the adjoining buildings, finally renting all the buildings on the block. The first day we'd opened Mr. Jasper appeared with a potted plant for good luck. It worked. My father always kept a piece of it in his gardens; I have a bit of that very plant growing here in my Kailua garden. After Mr. Jasper died, his widow sold the whole block of buildings to my father.
- \* One day my father was walking along the mezzanine going to his office when he glanced down and saw a very overweight woman take a radio from the window display, pull down her underpants, and hike them up with the radio inside. She waddled out to her car with my father in pursuit. But when he arrived to confront her he decided he didn't want the radio back, knowing where it had been.

- \*A similar story occurred with Steve. He saw a cross-dresser stuff a bunch of women's clothes in a bag then run out of the store. Steve ran after, catching him/her on the railroad tracks which ran between the two sides of Alameda Street then (it's in a concrete trench now). As the bag popped open, the man snatched at a corset which Steve also grabbed. Then in an epiphany, Steve noticed himself in the middle of Compton, on the railroad tracks, trying to rescue a stolen corset from a transvestite. He let go, not looking back as he returned to the store.
- When I'd returned to the store after my Mexico sojourn our first head woman, Stella, had either died or retired. Her replacement, Virgie had thoroughly trained Artie, who was on the verge of retiring when I arrived. She was proudly preparing Luz to take over. It was so sweet to see the traditions being passed along. There were proper ways to display the dishes (price them, of course), what clothes went on which racks, what was to be displayed at the front of the store, what combination of clothes stapled together would sell, how were shoes to be hog stapled. Every detail was proudly shared. Processes evolved, but there were basics.
- We often had employee meetings at the restaurant across the tracks/street in front of the store. Everyone dressed up, bringing their husbands or wives. It was always a festive occasion. One time I'd stayed behind to close up the store, was just preparing to walk over to the restaurant when a kindly, homeless black woman pushing a shopping cart, said to me in a most solicitous tone, "Lawda mighty! what's a white boy like you doing out at night in Compton?" Compassionate. This could stand as a signal for the race relations we enjoyed/suffered in Compton. When we began the store, Compton was white with a mix of other races. By the late sixties, it was mostly black with a mix of others. By the nineties, it was mostly Hispanic with a high percentage of blacks. This brings me to the next story.
- \*\* One of the sad stories you can choose to read in the "Upsetting" section led to me being desperate to hire enough employees to keep the business open. A young Hispanic man kept pestering me, saying in the most broken English imaginable, "I speak English." His persistence impressed me so I did hire him. Jesus/Hector (the illegals always had someone else's ID) was obviously crackling with ambition and intelligence. He soon asked me if he could study English somewhere so I took him to Long Beach Community College where he enrolled for free. He learned English at a

rapid rate. Before long he had a wife, a child, a home, had become a superb salesperson, even a manager before he left the store.

- \*At one point in the 1980s, it seemed that computers could help control a lot of elements of the new furniture side of the store as well as take care of billing and other statements. We computerized everything. But nothing worked as planned. The salespeople didn't enter the catalog numbers that belonged to a piece of furniture: the old saying "garbage in" proved to be true. This all came to a crashing conclusion when we had a huge electric surge that fried the components of everything down to little adding machines! Afterward, we de-computerized.
- \* The building that housed the store was several buildings that were open and connected. The last-built section was the Summerbell style which used a halfround roof that provided good drainage with not too many leaks. Some skylights leaked a bit, one of them was broken through by thieves even through the thick wire mesh was supposed to prevent such break-ins. The flat roof portion was built from left-over, scavenged lumber of the Long Beach Earthquake of 1933. Because it was only slightly inclined there were plenty of leaks. Besides having roofers repair and replace portions (over and over), Dad and I became expert at finding and repairing leaks. He also added beams as well as posts on some of the sagging areas of the old portion of the building. The leak situation wasn't helped any when the various fighting or celebrating gun enthusiasts shot into the air. What goes up..... The foundation of the concrete block wall that supported half the warehouse roof wasn't correctly constructed so we had huge bars connected to the floor at 45-degree angles to keep it from leaning out any further. All these old buildings needed regular maintenance so this, along with rats and mice, kept us active a lot more than just running a thrift store.
- We did occasionally have huge downpours in Compton; one of the rains filled the roof's drains overflowing into other openings. I was told there were about four or five inches of water throughout the store. Dennis says that it occurred in the night, that when he and the other employees arrived in the morning they were faced with a shallow lake in our store. We didn't open but there weren't customers anyway. Everyone was at home taking stock of their own losses. Dennis remembers brushing out the water with push brooms, but where the water was

deeper in lower-lying areas they needed to shovel out the water. There was so much water that all 30 employees worked almost until night. Part of the work was removing sofas from the store to bring down to the warehouse to dry out. A lot of merchandise needed to be moved. Luckily we were able to dry out most things. A few sofas had to be sold as damaged.

- When I began working at the thrift store full-time in 1981 Steve had years before begun the Discount Furniture Outlet (DFO). He was never that interested in the thrift store aspect of the business but had an affinity for new furniture. I was non-plussed that he had chosen a site only a mile from the store. It seemed that DFO was in direct competition with ATS. Of course, when Dennis became buyer he was much more involved with DFO. We decided to limit competition between ATS and DFO the latter would offer a different, higher-end line of merchandise. Though rebuilt mattresses were there at the beginning, Dennis limited it to only new ones. The other low-end furniture were the Danken pressed-wood chests, which sold just as well there as they did at ATS.
- When Dennis first arrived Les and Steve co-managed DFO. After they left Lenard was in charge (we learned from one of the drivers that he was having sex with a customer in the back of the store). Dennis bought for both stores. He'd manage the layaway slips, entering on them each payment that was made. Every once in a while if no payment was made we'd pull the merchandise. We didn't store (one-of-a-kind) layaways at either store, but rather in the warehouse. Dennis also helped with displays at DFO; what was to be seen in the windows: something that would be nice enough to attract people into the store. To keep the prices down he put one-of-a-kind things in the window, then would replace them as they were sold.
- \* For safety, we always tried to have two people in DFO. Lenard would rather have been there on his own so he could act the big-shot as if it were his store.
- \*When Dennis first worked at DFO it had black-only clientele but that changed reflecting the city and because we didn't offer credit. Just a few blocks down Long Beach Blvd. there were plenty of furniture stores that did offer credit. We tried credit but the hurdles that the customer needed to overcome were so burdensome

that few qualified. This made them angry, so we felt that we lost them as customers. We did this at ATS as well. We canceled it after a few months at both places. It HAD brought in new customers. Only one of ten qualified.

- \* Dennis had an affinity, a rapport with older black ladies. They trusted his word as well as his good taste. They knew he wouldn't steer them wrong; they never complained. They habitually asked for "that white boy." That may have irked floor managers, Larry and Lenard. If they were buying a sofa, they'd ask what Dennis thought about one or another set. He'd ask what kind of room or the color scheme of the room. "Is there limited space?" The sale that took the longest was deciding on lamps. He'd choose lamps that linked well with a particular sofa. Sometimes Dennis didn't approve of his own choices, but since he didn't try to sell them the first thing they saw, this helped develop trust. Dennis was unhurried, taking his time with these grateful clients. They didn't remember each others' names, but certainly recognized and appreciated each other. If they came on his day off they'd wait until the next day when he could wait on them. Dennis felt empathy with them. They recognized and understood that.
- \* The standard markup was 50%, but when business was good we raised that to 60% but lowered it again during a weak economy. Other furniture stores consistently marked up a lot of merchandise 100%. When I first arrived I learned that Steve and his floor manager Les would just eyeball a sofa and thus devise the price. They had such a good feeling for what their customers wanted that they usually more than doubled the cost. The store was doing well financially before I stepped in a brought the prices in line with the cost. Bad move. I had no "feel" for what our customers appreciated, didn't like new furniture, so there was no way that I could imitate the success that Les and Steve had.
- \*Rag buyers deserve a chapter unto themselves. What a bunch! I dealt with a woman who'd killed her husband who was the original rag buyer that my father knew. We haggled over quarter cents of a pound! I'd change buyers over a halfcent. It added up because we were selling tons of rags in each shipment. My father had engineered and actually built our hydraulic rag baler which worked for years. I remember buying a new motor for the compressor after the first one had served for over a decade of daily use. But the price of rags got so low that, by the time I

sold the business, it wasn't worth the time or energy to bale and store the bales. We threw the rags directly into the trash. That hurt. Especially when I knew that a lot of "rags" were very good, useable clothes. Originally rags were used in good "rag" paper, but by the time we sold them, they were sent to poor countries where they were sold as clothes. Since we were on the West Coast our rag bales went to Polynesia. It always amused me to think about the heavy overcoats, long sleeve shirts, and other warm clothes items that were wasted on the sunny climes.

- \*When I first started working full-time at the store I began to get a sense of how strangely the pay scales were determined. At one point Steve, who wasn't known for generosity, told me that after many years at the same salary, Bert, our night manager, who was getting on in years, deserved a raise. Steve said that he had to breathe deeply to add ten cents an hour to Bert's salary. Dennis tells of the time that Steve gave him a raise of five cents without even cracking a smile.
- \* It made me feel good that, as the women sorted the incoming merchandise, they'd separate boxes of Xmas, Easter, Halloween, storing them in the loft above their work area for the appropriate holiday. Just after a holiday people would donate a lot of that holiday's material rather than store it for a year. That meant Xmas tree lights, tree decorations, plastic trees, and of course wrapping paper with ribbons. That same thing occurred for each holiday. This drew many customers who could save big.
- \*We worked to make Christmas in the store a festive occasion. The employees joined in the fun of decorating; we usually set up a little cozy stage in front that could house a Santa. Of course, he was usually black, which to the outside world might have seemed strange. We set up a Polaroid camera on a tripod and for a few dollars would take the kids' pictures sitting on Santa's lap. Remember back in the 80's Compton was so poor that there were no other places with Santas. You can see some of our Xmas setups (including me with my parents as well as Santa) in the gallery of thrift store photos.
- \*After the difficult chore of opening the store in Compton from nothing, my parents wanted a vacation. We'd all worked hard, both physically and mentally. There'd been a lot of pressure, so by the time summer rolled around they decided

that I could manage the store for a week or ten days while they drove up to June Lake for relaxation. I don't remember if Steve went along, but he wasn't at the store. For some reason, even at the tender age of 17, it didn't bother me to be left in charge. There was no new furniture; it was just a thrift store. All the employees knew what to do; I didn't need to worry about laziness, theft, or even absenteeism. Things were too tenuous for anyone to do anything but their whole job. Not wanting to drive the long commute back to La Cañada, I slept in one of the mezzanine rooms, using the break area downstairs to store and cook my food. In those days (1959) there was no service to handle the employees' payroll checks; I used a chart and the hand-cranked adding machine to figure out the withholding, etc. But it worked out fine; I also appreciated the wholehearted support from all the employees who wanted to show my father that they could handle the job. Those employees included solicitors, drivers, the women who sorted, priced, and hung the clothes, the cashier, as well as a young woman who was the secretary. Not much older than I, she counted the money, made the bank deposits, got change, and answered the phone. I was still happy to see my parents return: I wanted a break before I entered UCLA in a month.

- \* One of the things I enjoyed seeing for sale in the store were small plastic bags full of little toys. For 99 cents one could buy enough toys to keep a whole baseball team of boys and girls happy. The sorters would also prepare bags for boys as well as separate ones for girls. They'd also offer, for the moms and dads, bags of tee shirts which made excellent cleaning rags.
- \*When I was in California working at the store as manager I'd not only sign each employee's paycheck, but on the stub write a personal note, thanking them for something specific that they'd done or wishing them a good weekend, holiday, or birthday.
- \* The sorters would hold back items that they thought might have extra value for me to see. I had a downstairs office that was always full of antique dolls, jewelry, pottery, old books, records, other rarities. I had a nice library there of books that had lists of recent prices obtained for these various products. We'd make special signs for each valuable item, carefully placing them in the showcase at the register.

This was one of the fun jobs that I did. These days we'd probably sell this stuff to the highest bidder on eBay.

- \*\* Pricing books was another fun thing that was my "chore." I enjoyed going through them. The paperback books weren't priced separately but were charged at the register in standard pricing. But the hardcovers were my specialty. Some of them interested me enough to take home to read. Others that I deemed valuable joined the antiques in the glass showcase. But most of them I priced at a value that a reading person would pay. Compton may not have been the most educated community in Southern California, but the store's book department brought many from outside our community. Book dealers knew about our selection. It hurt me once when we were asked to sell hardcover books by the foot to be used in TV or movie sets. When Dennis was manager he enjoyed this task, but when we were both involved otherwise (Dennis as buyer, me as a hiker on O'ahu) standardized pricing went into effect for books. Only especially large ones would get hand priced. In the last years, the books didn't sell well. We'd mark them by color and cull them, the same way that clothes were culled by their price tag color. It hurt to throw out boxes of books.
- \* The employees weren't allowed to price items for themselves to buy. That could be too self-serving. There was always a large box of merchandise that the manager (when I was available, that was me) would price, returning everything to the box with the implied agreement that the piece not be stolen, but paid for. There were usually many new items with their tags still on them. I was never sure if these things were bought for the employees themselves, or just to take to their own yard sales!
- \*For years I would carry the cash from the previous day's sales across the parking lot, through the alley to our bank about a five-minute walk away. I was aware of the danger so changed the times of day that I walked, even sometimes asking for a larger, stronger looking employee to accompany me. When Dennis was manager this continued, but at one point it just seemed too dangerous so we hired a security company to pick up the cash and drop off the change that had been ordered. It worked well, adding a level of security to the store: during their presence, their armored truck was parked in front of the store with an armed

guard. The guy who entered the store had a visible weapon and of course, wore a uniform.

In all the years the store had been active the floor was exactly as we inherited it: there were cracks, different levels, it was the bare cement that had been used as the floor of the auto dealership and later the storeroom for airplane parts belonging to Howard Hughes. It was a daunting task, but I had a company come in to fill the cracks, smooth out the different levels, install good looking vinyl floor tiles. It disrupted the store (we did it in sections), costing a lot at a time when the nation was in recession. Our customers didn't have much money to spend, but in the end, it made the store look decent, was easier to keep clean.

The next item I tackled was painting the interior walls, which were ugly, dingy, not having been painted for years. We made the mistake of choosing too bright a yellow color, but it did cheer up the place.

The exterior of the building had chunks of plaster falling off, paint peeling, the signage wasn't appealing, without a word in Spanish. We then tried different arrangements of signage, as well as the color of the exterior. Some I liked better than others, but we kept it maintained. You'll see photos of the building being sandblasted. Layers of paint meant that when new paint was applied it quickly peeled off. So we had to get down to the plaster. At the same time, we removed the little blue glass tiles that led into the openings (only one was active, but the curve with the tiles had to be addressed). The tiles were replaced with plaster and the whole building repainted.

Every morning we went out to crank open the awnings, of course, repeating the process in reverse as the store closed. It was the original awning that my father had used so it was getting pretty tacky. I had a framed awning installed that looked nicer, didn't need opening and closing. Before I left, the canvas on that frame had been changed several times (often to reflect the new color scheme of the building).

Friend Denis Lund came out to California to design and build an office for me at the end of the mezzanine. Behind the dividing wall, there was a sleeping loft, a mini kitchen with storage beneath the loft. He also designed and painted the signage at DFO. The whole color scheme was attractive, as you'll see in the "going out of business" photos. As so often happened with projects that Denis worked on, he got caught up in the details so I finally had to say "enough," doing the finish work myself. Mostly joints and painting. It turned out nicely, making a more appropriate place for the boss to hold meetings.

In general, it was difficult to get workers to come to Compton. Plumbers, electricians, carpenters, etc. just laughed when they heard where the job site was. Sometimes I was able to bribe workers with a bonus for working in Compton. One person called it "combat pay."

A few years before I sold the business to Enrique, a lighting contractor came to me with the proposal to change all the interior fluorescents to energy-saving ones. It meant a large outlay of money, but the savings in electricity bills were impressive.

We always wanted to air-condition the store. It got HOT in the summer, but with the open ceilings, it would have been prohibitively expensive first to install something strong enough to cool such an area, second, to pay the increased electric bill. Heating wasn't such a problem. We closed up as many skylight vents as possible, using a gas heater in both the front and back of the store that warmed the place nicely. There was also a heater for the women's work area that was useful when the overhead doors were kept closed. That needed reminding!

\*\* I want to tell Val's story. When I arrived to work full time, going out the first day with the solicitors, Val was head solicitor. There were only a few others: Sharon, a mentally retarded woman, who nonetheless showed up every day and for whom the women homeowners did put out bags; Ed, a deeply troubled alcoholic, who despite his affliction worked hard between toots, also bringing in the merchandise; as well as Val herself. After letting off the others (other different solicitors came and went), she'd valiantly go into these white suburbs, doing as well as the other (white) solicitors. She was a down to earth, funny, solid lady whom it was easy to like. Val told me later that she suspected that I was Steve's brother when I went out the first day with her. Remember I didn't go out with them on the second day, but traveled with the truck, checking on the incoming merchandise that we'd solicited the previous day. Val and I got along well; she helped me build up a larger staff of solicitors. I was trying to convince Pauline to return (she'd

been head solicitor, having trained Val) when Val discovered she had advanced cancer. She had to take time off for radiation therapy: there was a growth in her neck that looked like half a tennis ball. I found another solicitor with a valid driver's license, but she had no idea of the various city areas, how long it would take for a particular worker to cover a section, how she could walk her area circling back to pick up the ones she'd dropped off. Val volunteered to come in when she was strong enough to draw up the maps on 3x5 cards. She sat in the conference room upstairs for hours each day working methodically city by city. She even drew little stick figures that showed where the solicitor was to begin, where to end and wait for pick up. Copies of these cards could be given to each solicitor with a page for the head solicitor that showed all the cards for a day's work. Of course, I paid Val for this, but it didn't matter to her. She was doing it out of respect for her job and the store. A good person. She died shortly thereafter.

\*\* Rose was another affable black lady employee. She'd begun working for my father at the register. She knew how to handle even the most recalcitrant or annoying customers. Rose was a person of the world: in her youth, she'd been a professional baseball player in, of all things, the black women's league! She worked for Steve and they got along too. I continued to use her as much as her advancing age would allow. Rose was there through the riots and afterward. Something was reassuring about seeing the same familiar smiling face at the register that the customers appreciated. Dennis tells me that she was good at spotting thieves even from up front at the register. She'd go right up to them (and call them by name if they were from her church), demanding that they empty their bag of the stolen merchandise. The pension plan my father and brother had instigated didn't meet Federal standards, was costing more than it could offer, so we dropped it. The few plans that had already been funded did pay and, in fact, did pay Rose when she retired, for which she was grateful.

She had diabetes and the last time I saw her, she was in bad shape. The constant dialysis had beat up her arms which were stiff, almost paralyzed. Hector, who was another Rose fan, joined me visiting her. She was almost housebound and appreciated our few visits. Hector and I would come back feeling sorry that we were losing her but at the same time, were uplifted by her cheeriness. Rose would

always tell us a story or two from her life or memories of her many years at the store. Another one of the good people I had the privilege to know via the store.

If you don't mind the grittier, grubbier, graftier side of life, go ahead and read the "Upsetting" stories found in the following section.



Alameda Thrift as it looks now

### **Upsetting Compton Stories**

I've sequestered the brutal, unsettling, horrible, or just annoying Compton stories to this section. There was no reason to contaminate the pleasant, even fascinating, stories of the main portion of this chapter. Read on, but you've been warned.

These stories are in no particular order. Some of the following neutral stories deal with new furniture, inventory, and sales reps that bored or bothered me.

- \*None of my ideas, generosity, or philosophizing did any good. The employees stole, cheated, taking advantage of every chance that was offered by my lax oversight. I'd ended up running the store from a distance (Kailua), leaving the manager in control. Whenever I did check on what was happening I was disappointed to find that there was malfeasance. When we started working in Compton, Steve and I were free of any particular prejudice. Compton was just barely, but predominately white, the varieties of "others" was appealing, with the gypsies, even exotic. By the time I'd lived through two race riots, the crack epidemic, the white exodus, the black corruption, and the Hispanic influx, my feelings for blacks had changed to fear, revulsion, pity, and sometimes downright hatred. One can have their life threatened only so many times.
- \* After years of disappointment here's a typical note I wrote to myself:
  - Now my feelings of trust have once again been violated by someone who I've known and respected for eight years! Intelligent, sensitive, yes, perhaps too ambitious, which might have led to greed. I felt sad at having to fire him when he was about to leave on his own anyway in a few weeks!
- \* After I'd moved "full-time" to O'ahu, I could be the owner/manager with the help of the fax machine and phones. I kept my Compton time down to covering major employee's vacations. I covered the secretary's job, the manager's work, as well as the grind of the head delivery truck driver. But generally, the store ran through tough times or better times making a profit. I tried to compensate the long-time employees with good bonuses. When I lost faith in the

employees I wanted to sell. Now that we were legal that was a real possibility. We advertised, had a few interested people, but the reputation of Compton wouldn't allow anyone to even low-ball an offer. Not a single buyer in over a year of advertising! I'd just about given up when one of my smart employees showed real interest in the business. Enrique was the son of our forewoman Luz and had been working at the store in one way or another since he was in junior high school. He'd begun to manage, learn the financial books, so finally, he and his family offered to buy the store. There was a transition period of more intense training as well as the requisite loan agreements, but at last, the store belonged to someone else! I remember the first day Enrique had the store all on his own: he called me in Hawaii early in the morning to say that our truck driver had been arrested: what should he do? But he soon found his way so things have probably worked out for him. Sadly, he didn't finish paying the loan and without notice canceled the agreed-upon health care.

\*One Christmas Eve when we were open till 9 pm our plump, short, white-haired, Caucasian cashier was confronted with a gun held by a black man demanding that she turn over all her cash. Later she told us that she'd said that it wasn't her cash to give which made him confused even angry. Then she told him that he shouldn't be doing this sort of thing, that it could ruin his life. She told him that if he left the store, promising not to hold up any other store, she wouldn't call the cops. It worked. So well, in fact, that later the man showed up at the store, telling us the story of that Christmas past. He'd been out of work and wanted to buy his kids some presents. He took seriously what our cashier had said, finally got a job, and went straight. He thanked her profusely for steering him away from a tough life of crime, jail, and, in the end, the loss of the family time he so cherished.

### \* Dennis has a story to tell:

I was in my office in the warehouse which was at the end of the block away from the store. As I walked to the front of the store I heard what sounded like firecrackers going off. It seemed to be a lot of them. About ten feet in front of me three little boys maybe six or seven years old, suddenly dove down onto the sidewalk laying flat. I stopped because it looked like such unusual behavior; all the time hearing more firecracker noises. One of the little kids looked back at me seeing me stand-

ing there and said, 'What the hell's the matter with you? Can't you hear those gunshots?' I of course immediately joined them down on the sidewalk and waited for the popping noises to end. When they did I found out of course that they were indeed gunshots from two security guards working across the street in a small shopping center. They were shooting at two teenagers who had stolen a pair of shoes from PayLess Shoes (a store where shoes are very cheap). We found ten holes in the front of the building; they were of course from bullets. There was one hole about six or seven feet behind where I had formerly been standing with a couple literally in the frame of the main entry door to the store. Usually, this was a spot where some of our older women customers stood to chat. I can only thank God that this was a day when no one was standing there or even going in or out of the store. I suppose I should consider myself lucky, because, in sixteen years of work in Compton, it was the only time that gunfire played a place in my life in a city where it was common.

- \*\* For a reason that's vague to me now, a reporter for the local Compton newspaper interviewed me right in the store. At some point, I said something to the extent that everyone knew that all of Compton was corrupt and it's that, along with my photo that made it to the front page of the paper. I immediately got calls from City Hall as well as the Compton Police Department causing me to go over to each department to smooth things out. But it was hardly surprising when various Federal, State, and County stings were launched on City Hall. So the mayors, one by one, were either jailed or relieved of their positions. The police department was finally disbanded and the L. A. County Sheriffs took over. The same thing happened to the Compton School District. The State of California ran it.
- \*At one point when I was spending a lot of time in Kailua, I received one of the regular reports from the CPA which included the profit & loss statement as well as the balance sheet. When I compared the numbers with the faxes that I'd received I could tell there were huge discrepancies. I flew back with Miguel to discover that the new secretary was hiding some of the invoices that came in, skimming money off the daily register tallies. We weren't paying some of the important bills, there wasn't money in the bank account to cover them anyway. But there were other problems that I uncovered. After the secretary was fired, I learned that the driver along with his helper were selling crack out of the warehouse, that furniture was being delivered to friends and family who

obviously hadn't paid for anything. Also, salespeople would write up an invoice for a piece of furniture, take the money personally and never put it in the register. They'd load the merchandise onto the customers' cars so everyone (except the store's bottom line) was thrilled. After letting a lot of employees go (we fired 7 in one day!) there were a lot of positions to be filled, but luckily a lot of eager Hispanics were available and eager to work. Miguel helped a lot too!

\* Of losses: I must tell the story of the Rodney King riots and looting. After the trial of the white officers resulted in acquittal, the blacks of our area started street riots that included looting even burning of buildings. Dennis had been watching TV in the store waiting for the verdict. He said that as soon as the verdict was announced he "hightailed it out of there." He was a few blocks from his apartment when he heard the riot news on the car radio. Later when our black floor managers saw a group of rioters, having just torched the shopping center, cross over the tracks headed toward the store they went out in front, Larry shouting something finally talked to the crowd. He said that he was the owner of the store so the mob moved on to other nearby buildings. Larry and Lenard stayed overnight, even using a hibachi to barbecue in front of the store, with loaded weapons on their laps. The violence and burning continued for five days. Even after everything seemed to have calmed down, martial law and curfews were declared. The National Guard with drawn guns patrolled. On the advice of our employees, Dennis stayed away from the area for another five days. He found out later that there was a group of our employees that were armed: a rifle with one, others with pistols in their socks. Here's what I wrote at the time from the safety of Kailua:

The store was in the epicenter of the riot. During its worst, my male employees (black and Hispanic) were in front of the store protecting it from looting and arson. When other businesses around us would be lit, customers would come running saying to my people, "Oh, we were afraid our store was hit" standing with my employees protecting the store. Larry, my black operations manager, said that he'd never had such days in his life: depressed watching such craziness as people setting a car on fire because it went too slowly through an intersection where no traffic lights worked. And elation at watching our employees and customers working to save the store. In the end, we lost nothing except our trust in the people who had gone crazy. There's still a lot of racial mistrust so that's the reason that I haven't

returned yet [it was June 16 and the actual riot had only lasted from April 29–May 4, 1992]. People still ask if it's a black-owned business to which my employees reply either "yes" or that the employees own it. I thought I'd have to go back to oversee a "going out of business" sale, but we're doing about the same recession level-income as before the riots. I do have reasons to go back, but I don't want to put the store or myself in jeopardy. I may return for just a day or two, visit my father for his birthday (July 11).

- \* Speaking of violence. Each year Compton had a Christmas Parade. One year someone shot at Santa Claus, so that head float continued on without Santa sitting on his throne. He survived.
- \* One late afternoon I took a short cut across an empty lot near Compton Blvd. I wasn't paying attention, suddenly almost stepping on a dead body. I called the police.
- \* Another time I was out by our trash container trying the shoo away a vagrant who was pulling out stuff, making a mess. One of our black managers saw what was happening, pulling me back just as the guy lunged at me with a knife.
- \* I was on the mezzanine level and looked down just as a thief walked out with a large bundle of clothes. I began to run after him but, since I hadn't done any exercise that day, my quads froze, stopping me in my tracks. They hurt for days.
- \* Dennis and I laugh now, but it was no joke then: since we didn't actually "lay away" layaways, there was no way of knowing if the object (especially sofa) was actually in stock when paid off. So after months of making regular payments, a customer who came in to make the final payment would often be told that we'd order the merchandise and let him know when it was available. Another unhappy customer!
- \* Dennis began working the ATS nightshift with ol' Bert. It was deemed so dangerous when the staff left at around 9:30 pm that they all left in a clump together from the front door with nobody departing until all the cars had turned on their lights. There was never a problem, which Dennis attributes to either good luck or the fact that they were all looking out for each other. As soon as all the lights were on everyone sped off as quickly as possible. Dennis was the only one headed south towards Long Beach. Until he got out of Compton he was terrified

that something would happen to the car: a flat tire or the engine would go out. This was before cell phones.

- \*For years Dennis went to DFO to pick up the money, (risky business), check inventory, look through the sales tickets. We have no idea how much went out the door without being paid for. There were rumors... There were also rumors that this was happening at ATS, even at the warehouse. It seemed to Dennis that almost everyone was involved.
- \* After Dennis covered the nightshift for a while Steve decided that he should work at DFO in sales. There was parking space next to the store where he parked, not knowing that it would be better to park on the street. So on the very first day that he was there, right after they'd opened the store, a 14-year-old black kid came in the back door; Dennis saw that he had something in his hands, but couldn't tell what. He was the first person that the kid saw, saying: "Hey, man, you wanna buy some amazing speakers? Just look at these!" At first, Dennis said "no" but then he looked more closely, realizing that they were his car speakers (from the back window) and yelled for him to put down the speakers because "they're mine." He called over to Steve to call the cops, but Steve thought the kid would run out the front door, so he blocked the door. The kid threw the speakers on a sofa and ran out the back door. When Dennis went out to check the car he found that the kid had completely busted out a rear window. Steve felt so bad for Dennis that he called a friend who worked for an auto repair and in a few hours, the window was fixed. Dennis' brother had bought the good speakers for the car [around \$300] each], so it bothered Dennis that the kid was only asking \$60 each. It made Dennis nervous for a long time. He felt even more unprotected down at his office in the warehouse or walking back and forth in the open between the warehouse and the store. Being on the day shift helped his paranoia. The nightshift had been awful: drunk women came in screaming obscenities in front of their children. It seemed that half the customers were horrid. At one point they called the cops because a woman entered with a child on a choke collar leash.
- \*For some reason, floor manager Les invited Dennis out to his home. On the driveway, Dennis saw Good Tables, both in and out of boxes just waiting to be sold on the next "Garage Sale." He was surprised, knowing that this was

merchandise that Les had stolen from the store but assumed, correctly, that Dennis wouldn't tell me. In the end, his stealing became so egregious that Dennis did fire him.

### \* Dennis tells the following story of cute Rick getting beaten up:

It was a well-known fact that Rick was screwing around with married and unmarried women (he was married himself). One day I was taking inventory on the floor away from the back entrance when this guy came in and I could tell he was angry. He asked Lilly "Which one is Rick" and she pointed to him. This guy runs up to him yelling "Are you Rick Barbosa?" with his fists poised, and instead of running for his life, Rick said "Yes, I am" when the guy started hitting him in the face and head. The guy was really hauling on him so from the other side of the store I yelled "Stop it!" Though I was certainly no threat to him, it broke his concentration and he yelled "If I ever hear of you f...ing around with my wife you'll be sorry." As he was saying this I was on my way over but by the time I got there, Rick had been badly bloodied and was crying. That made him feel less of a man so I took him into the small office and with wet towels that Luz brought in we cleaned him up. It turned out that whenever I was on the floor he'd been taking this girl down to the warehouse where he used a sofa to have his fun. He said it would never happen again and knew it looked bad for the store (everyone was looking). I told him to go home but he said he didn't want to because he'd have to explain to his wife what had happened. He finally did leave for home returning the next day with a huge black eye. He did not learn his lesson.

We made a lot of money from crack, but who knows, maybe there was other drug money mixed in. I was at DFO with large Larry and one of the Hispanic workers when we heard honking, seeing a bunch of cars stopped in front of the store. We ran out to see what had happened, finding a large, really large...tall and strong...black man had run up to a car at the stoplight, opened the passenger door, throwing himself across the lap of two Hispanic women. They were screaming in terror while men from nearby cars were coming to their rescue as we did. We got that big guy onto his back on the street but he was so high that he had the strength of all of us. I was given the task of banging his head onto the pavement, while others were holding his legs and arms. Finally, the cops arrived with handcuffs to take the raging man away.

- Dennis believes that even with the computer, someone like Rick could buck the system to steal. I caught Rick red-handed having 'sold' merchandise, taken the money, loaded the dinette set on the car without writing it up. I decided to fire him (it wasn't his first offense). But when I thought about having to train someone else to replace him (he knew a lot, was good with customers,) I kept him on. But in the end, he rented his own store just down the block on Compton Blvd. that I was sure he used our merchandise for. By the time I sold the store we'd fired Rick. He only got so many chances. He was cute, however.
- \*\* Tricking the computer inventory: When a salesperson sold something they entered the catalog number that was on on the price ticket. There were times when there wasn't a stock number so we'd devised a catchall number. At the beginning the sales staff was scared of the computer, taking advantage of this number to relieve them from looking up the correct number. So when Dennis would receive that number he'd first try to connect the price with the particular piece of furniture. Dennis couldn't get good information which made inventory control impossible, unless he individually counted the pieces in the warehouse, on the floor, as well as at DFO. Every salesperson had access to the book with all the inventory codes but they didn't avail themselves of them. A lot of the mistakes were simple errors, but Dennis suspects that a lot of it was stealing.
- \*In the later years when Dennis was the buyer, he sometimes bought closeout sofas, but otherwise, he could choose from photos in books. Sometimes there'd be a huge variety of swatches that he could choose from, other times not. After a while, the reps knew our price points and didn't bother trying to pressure him into buying things that he knew wouldn't sell.
- \*\* Customers came down to the warehouse for "one of a kind" items or sofas. The sofa selection offered different colors and styles than we could display on the floor as well as dead layaways. There were times when Dennis would ask our salespeople to call their customer before releasing a dead layaway. Most of the time the phone had been disconnected and Larry said they were probably in jail. The racial makeup of layaway customers followed the makeup of Compton. When I first got there we'd layaway bags of clothes. We built racks in the break

area to hold the many such bags and would retrieve them when they were paid off. This told me just how poor the customers were.

- The following are memories that Dennis has of sales reps. One man, Bill Miller, became a personal friend. They exchanged life stories and he gave Dennis a Xmas present of a recent translation of the Bible, which Dennis still has. There were many such relationships that Dennis developed over the years. Xmases meant bottles of wine, whiskey, gift baskets of cheeses, chocolates, nuts, fruit, etc. that would accumulate in Dennis' office. It demonstrated to me what a close working relationship Dennis developed with these guys. Dennis was told that these gifts came out of their own pockets. It all went away in one year when there was a change in the tax code so they had to be extremely accurate in their tax forms. That was also the year that they didn't allow mileage for deductions. Dennis estimates that he dealt with 20–25 reps. Some were fly by night, but some regulars lasted for years.
- \*\* Sales reps would go into the store to see if they had enough space for their company on the floor. There were some companies, like Good Tables, to whom Dennis was almost exclusively loyal. They were close by, the rep was truthful, and the line was as complete as he needed. If they were bringing out new lines the rep would pick up Dennis, taking him to the factory where there was a wonderful lunch provided. That put him in a better mood. Other companies also invited him to their offices. Quite a few reps would routinely take Dennis out to lunch when they didn't necessarily talk business. Instead, Dennis learned about their families.
- \*\* Dennis tells of trying to keep the inventory on Coaster (coffee tables, plant stands, sofa tables, three-piece coffee table sets) and never getting it right. He believes that when he checked trucks while a sales rep was there, he'd make sure that the right sofa, etc. was on the truck, but guesses that an extra Coaster set could be included to be sold later by the driver. Dennis reminds me that he wasn't the only one to check the delivery truck. Lenard, Larry, Hector, etc. also checked, and sometimes we were so busy that a thorough account of what was being "delivered" couldn't be accurate. Larry and Lenard would supplement the delivery truck, just doing a run-out with the flatbed truck. In the end, we don't expect that anyone was honest.

- \* Dennis tells the story of a preacher arriving at DFO with a lot of \$20 bills to buy a houseful of new furniture. He had us deliver the whole truckload but by mistake used his own address. It was meant for his mistress. The wife was thrilled with all the furniture but evidently couldn't understand that it didn't fit with her taste or color schemes.
- \*\* Speaking of Steve and money: He wasn't shy to give himself hefty bonuses. Dennis saw one of \$20K. But he wasn't afraid to take cash from the register either. One day I came upstairs to find (unexpectedly) my father red in the face with rage. He was counting the cash register drawers over and over, comparing their contents to the numbers on the register tape. We were required to keep copies of the register tapes so that the government officials could monitor or audit the business to make sure that no one was stealing from the till thus depriving the government of the taxes due them. My father discovered that Steve had stolen which wasn't that big a surprise. He'd evidently caught him at it before. This seemed to be common knowledge with Jim Ackerman, our lawyer, my mother's cousin. I never found out how Jim knew; perhaps my father had told him.
- \*\* Racial tensions in Compton might have been high (we constantly had to paint out graffiti on our building that would often include RIP threats), but in the store, there didn't seem to be difficulties. Until Georgine became manager for a few years, Dennis and I were the only whites. The rest of the staff was either Hispanic or Black. They didn't seem to get in each others' ways and they mirrored exactly our clientele. Since I'd worked off and on with this diverse group of people most of my adult life I didn't notice race. For instance: I'd make a sale of a used rug. That demanded two employees to take the sold one from the hanging rug rack to carry it outside to fold up and put in a car. They'd sometimes ask what the customer looked like, implying race, and I'd have no idea. They were just a customer. But toward the end, I felt tension, unease. The riots, the horrible aspects of the Compton schools, the badly run police department, the Mayors (who always seemed on the take) made Compton a much more racially aware place. I remember in the last years that when I'd offer to help a black customer he'd (usually a male did this) roughly ask that he be served by a brother.

\*When Steve left the store completely I inherited a real mess. There was no order in the new department, the used section was in disarray. I discovered a little warehouse that we were renting from the burger place where they tossed used mattresses with other stuff that no one wanted to process. I re-initiated the sterilization of the mattresses and box springs, cleared the warehouse, and stopped renting it.

\* Dennis tells the story of Lilly, who he knew better than I did, though we both thought highly of her.

Lilly was one of the sweetest people I've ever had met. She took her religion seriously and really lived by it, in the best possible meaning. She was incapable of lying, or stealing, or ripping us off in any way. Lilly was hired as a cashier, but only after she'd been doing that for a while, did we realize that she was good with customers and bright. The customers sensed her honesty so we had her share the register and sales with Gwen. One of the MLK Jr. celebrations was delegated to her. She organized the talent, the speakers, her church choir, and of course the contests, such as pie eating. Lilly was a short lady and round, making us think of her like a ball.

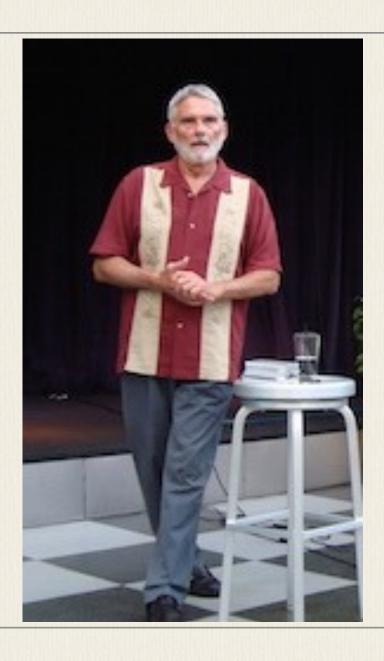
It was a sad day then when I came into work at the regular time; usually, Lilly had been there doing her work before we were even open! Hector came up to me and said, did you hear the news last night? I said, no. It turned out that Lilly and her family (a good-sized one), were eating at their dining room table that was hidden from the street. There was a burst of gunfire so she told everyone to get to the back bedrooms under the beds. She turned around to see one of her sons coming in from the front room on the floor in a pool of blood. Lilly spent the night calling her family in Texas so the first thing that our secretary Margaret said, was that Lilly had called to quit and move away from LA. They were out of Compton the next day; her son's body was flown to Texas. It was so hard when she came in to say goodbye, which she didn't need to do. Everybody was crying. She said to me that she hoped I understood. I said that I would do the same thing; we had good words together and she said she'd always pray for me. I had a special relationship with her. There was a rivalry between her and Gwen, because of sales commission: who had to be at the register more and thus miss out on commissions.

I was at the store years later when she stopped by to visit. She'd been made assistant manager of some big store in Texas. We were thrilled to see her and also happy with what she'd made of her life. She was (is) a nice person.

- \* Dennis says that the thinks that DFO got the larger share of the drug money that was freely floating around Compton at the time. It was normal for a limousine to pull up with someone getting out holding paper sacks, point to various pieces (almost a houseful of furniture), and pay in cash: \$20 bills were somehow a mark of drug money. It did dry up later on, but there were years that this happened.
- \* I thought that our furniture store competitors made their show windows look bad when they used sliding gate metal protection at night. We had spotlights shining on our beautiful merchandise at DFO, but it came with a price. About once every three months someone would break our show window to steal a lamp or end table. The lamp might have cost us about \$15, but the glass replacement cost hundreds. I'd be called by the police in the middle of the night to come back to Compton to secure the store. I was stubborn, never getting the metal gates. Dumb!
- \*\* At a certain point, I wanted to know if DFO was making money or not. But it was difficult to account for financially: there were so many shared functions. Of course, the same secretary handled the books for both ATS and DFO. The same goes for the deliveries, the buyer, the warehouse, etc. It was difficult to assign costs that were specific to DFO. There seemed to be slightly more stealing at DFO because it was separate from the busy larger ATS. I developed a complex way of figuring out the income and loss from DFO. It took time, but I finally reckoned that, at best, it was making very little profit but causing a lot of headaches. In the end, I closed it, thus concentrating our efforts on ATS. Our bottom line remained constant thereafter. It would be interesting to figure out how much ATS could have made without all the stealing.
- \*Everyone got crazy when they knew I was to arrive back from Hawaii. People cleaned up displays, dusted, wanting to make a good impression, even though they knew that I didn't care for new furniture. Even the used section got involved in the preparations. I knew about all of this and figured that it was nice that the store got spruced up once in a while. It added to a reason for me to visit. One of the other elements that the new furniture people feared (outside of Dennis), was that I'd go through the records to discover how much had been stolen. I did regularly uncover theft, but it was trickier to assign blame.

# Mr Hickling: the

## Teacher



My gifts are rather scattered, but if I have one that is natural, rewarding (for both me and the student), as well as useful, it is teaching. You can read about my first real full-time bass teaching assignment in "Manila." I may be the only classical music instructor who's taught everything from elementary to university: here's a list of the public teaching that I've done: elementary school (Long Island); junior high (Long Island and Kailua); high school (Long Island); University of Northern Colorado; Los Angeles Community College; sub teaching in LA and Hawaii;

private schools of Punahou, Iolani, and Kamehameha; teaching adults (in my home in Kailua and for the Hawaii Performing Arts Festival). I might have/could have taught all my life in an institution, become bored finally, bucked the administration, been fired. I always enjoyed teaching, being far more gifted at it than playing bass. Perhaps I could have taught bass, or music theory, or history. I respect the student at whatever level of musical understanding exists while trying to add to what's there. It's also fun to figure out what will catch the students' attention, making them want to study/practice/pay attention. But in the end,

besides teaching, I accomplished a lot of other tasks, making for a balanced, enjoyable life, mostly in music.

When I joined the Farmingdale schools I was assigned an elementary school that had never had a string department.

Arranging to visit the fourth-grade classes with a small cello I played "Michelle," a Beatles song that was popular at the time.

Everyone wanted to play cello! We

### Gary conducting



as seen by violin section















developed a large group that was able, from complete beginners in September, to play a Christmas concert in mid-December. Yes, in those days we could still say that word. One of my young violinists did end up playing a solo on stage with me (in the pit) accompanying him on the piano.

In the same school district, I taught junior high school strings. We met for group lessons as well as a daily string orchestra rehearsal. I promised the kids that we'd play the same music that the New York Philharmonic used. (There were a few exceptions.) We entered competitions, played Christmas and Easter concerts, as well as one of our own at the end of the semester. I arranged music for the group: a suite of R & J themes of Berlioz, Tchaikovsky, even a movie tune popular at the time. At one concert, the whole viola section stood to play the solo line of the first movement of the Telemann Viola Concerto. This group of kids also joined me for an excursion to Carnegie Hall where they saw me rehearse with Stokowski in the American Symphony Orchestra. Three students went on to professional careers in music while several others remained active in amateur ensembles. I'm proud of the effect I had on these wonderful people. Here's what they've written.

#### From Carol:

I really enjoy reading your emails. Your intelligence, energy and vitality comes through and is clearly as strong as when we were in Farmingdale! You helped me take notice of such qualities and to look for that in others as well as in myself. Besides learning about music, I learned lessons on what it meant to be passionate, professional and committed about an endeavor. Also you always dealt with us in a respectful manner. That made a huge impression on me too. I carried all that with me as important lessons learned to be applied wherever. I think they worked well you know.

### From Matthew:

I don't even know where to start. I guess I should start by thanking you for making music cool. I remember we used to go to the beach together after school. You'd pack a couple of students into your car and we'd head down to Jones Beach for a few hours. (I guess if a teacher did that today, they'd end up in jail, but we're talking the '60s. Life was more laid back.) I still remember the trip to Carnegie Hall to watch rehearsal and the opportunity to meet the musicians. Funny what sticks with you after so many years. I went on to a very successful student music career. I played in Long Island String Festival as well as All-County Symphony, every year from 7th grade through my senior year. I never made it to All State because I choked on my NYSSMA piece in 11th, but hey, everyone stumbles. I also played in the Long Island Youth Chamber Symphony for three years and we traveled the East Coast concertizing and competing. But by far, the best years I had were with you in 7th and again in 10th. We had the same kids in 10th that you taught when I

was in 7th and they were some of the best musicians in NY State. We really played some great music, especially for a high school orchestra. After high school I attended college at SUNY Fredonia, studying music. I played under Harry Brown, who was the music director of the Milwaukee Symphony. Those were great days and we played all the great works. Unfortunately, I gave it up, transferred to another school and got my degree in general education. Of course, I never taught and today I'm a compliance officer in the financial services industry. I didn't play for many years (about 30) but a few years back I picked it up again and I've been playing ever since.

### From Ellen:

I am a professional violist and I have played in the Jacksonville Symphony for 32 years. Gary Hickling was my orchestra teacher when I was in the 8th grade at Weldon E. Howitt Jr. High School in Farmingdale, NY during the 1969/70 school year.

I remember that in my 3 years of junior high school that I had 3 different orchestra teachers. I don't remember much about the 7th or 9th grade teacher, but I remember quite a bit about Mr. Hickling in 8th grade.

I remember playing Mozart's *Eine kleine Nachtmusik* in an orchestra for the first time. I remember spending extra time on it in evening rehearsals. It was the first of hundreds of times that I would perform it later in my life, and I'll always remember that first performance in Jr. High.

I remember Mr. Hickling giving me the solo viola part to the Telemann Viola Concerto. I wasn't sure what a concerto was, and I had never heard a viola solo before. Before I knew it, he was standing me up in front of the orchestra and I was playing a concerto. I don't remember even being nervous back then, except when we did it on one special occasion in the auditorium for parents.

I also remember that one day Mr. Hickling brought his violist friend, Miss Longo [I'm impressed that after 47 years she can remember her name!] to school and she played the Telemann with the orchestra. This was probably the first professional violist that I had ever heard. Mr. Hickling encouraged me to study privately, but at the time I couldn't afford private lessons.

I remember when Mr. Hickling brought the orchestra on a field trip to New York City to hear a rehearsal of the American Symphony Orchestra with Leopold Stokowski conducting. Mr. Hickling played the bass in this orchestra. I remember that Stokowski hardly moved when he conducted and I wondered how the musicians could follow him. After the rehearsal, Mr. Hickling asked Stokowski to say a

few words to us. I don't remember what Stokowski said to us, but I remember being pretty star-struck at meeting such a famous conductor.

I ended up majoring in music at Hofstra University with a full scholarship and studying viola with Olga Bloom. I graduated in 1978 with a B. A. in music and promptly got a full time job in an office answering phones and doing clerical work. Every night, however, I attended a different rehearsal for different community orchestras around Long Island. It was great for a while, but I didn't want to be an amateur violist. I began studying with Barry Lehr of the NY Philharmonic, since now I had some income and could pay for my own lessons.

One day, while carpooling to one of my rehearsals, someone told me about the National Orchestral Association (NOA). It was a training orchestra in New York City that had famous guest conductors and played concerts in Carnegie Hall. I auditioned and was accepted as an alternate, then eventually I was accepted as a regular member. The NOA is where I really learned how to play in an orchestra. I took the train from Farmingdale to NYC three times a week to attend rehearsals. For the first time in my life I had to actually play the correct bowings and I learned more repertoire and orchestra techniques that I would use later in my orchestra career. It was great being able to play performances at Carnegie Hall.

In 1984 I got my first full time orchestra job in the Puerto Rico Symphony. The orchestra was not very good, but it paid well and I got some good life experience. I was lucky to win the Jacksonville (Florida) Symphony position in the spring of 1985, and I've been there ever since. [Ellen wrote this in the Summer of 2017.]

When I met Ted Grille he was playing violin at the junior high school where I taught strings. He was an affable, good looking, talented kid and took violin lessons from my friend Janice Longo who came out to Farmingdale to teach some of my willing students. I don't remember how it came about, but at some point, I offered to teach Ted bass. He was eager and our lessons continued after I left Long Island. He'd come into New York for lessons and even stay overnight with me. Ted went on to Reed College in Oregon and then the New England Conservatory of Music where I visited him, hearing him play. After graduation, he took a position in the San Antonio Symphony Orchestra but left for teaching. Ted writes in 2017:

Since 1995 I have been employed at a middle school in Dallas to teach strings. It is a time-consuming task that will bring satisfaction on some occasion. I also teach private lessons to students of various ages and sectional coaching for the youth orchestra of Dallas.

Because of my teaching duties, I have had very little time to pursue performing. As my assistant at the middle school, my wife Rebecca has aided in the success of the orchestra program. Last year Rebecca and I arranged for the piece we commissioned for young players from the noteworthy Gunther Schuller to be performed in Dallas with Mr. Schuller conducting. To spend time with Gunther and to have his piece performed by young players was very rewarding. My fondest memory is a Howitt Junior High School trip you organized. The orchestra students traveled to NYC to hear the American Symphony Orchestra perform at Carnegie Hall, conducted by Leopold Stokowski. Following the performance, [actually a rehearsal], you ushered the students, one of whom was me, to meet Stokowski. My recollection (and time wreaks havoc with personal memories!) is Mr. Stokowski was regal, imposing, and a little bit threatening. When you asked Mr. Stokowski if he would allow a picture with the students the maestro answered, "No."

At Weldon E. Howitt Junior High School [where I taught] the orchestra played *Five Pieces* by Hindemith and *Roumanian Dances* by Bartok. [Ted has used these same pieces with his group.] I have fond and vivid memories of the experience; of both the playing and your teaching. If only the students I have today would aspire to such an elevated level!

I am working on the Capuzzi concerto, (a piece you taught to me), with a youngster. The music is tattered and slightly torn because it is the music we used way back when! [1972!]

Though not a bassist, violinist Fred Fehleisen was a joy. He had played violin seriously even before I arrived in Farmingdale. Fred was concertmaster, even playing solos with the orchestra. We became friends; he went on to study and later teach at Juilliard where he's a specialist in Early Music. I met him on one of my 1990s trips to New York, finding Fred as enthusiastic about music as he ever was. He'd developed all aspects of his talents: conducting, piano, violin, and scholarship. He was one of the first people I contacted to be an advisor for the Lotte Lehmann Foundation. It's strange for me to think it, but these youngsters that I taught in junior high school are now retiring!

Here's what his Juilliard faculty page says about Fred: Performs regularly with Concert Royal and other period-instrument ensembles in New York. Appeared with the Smithsonian Concerto Grosso, Hanover Band, Grande Bande, Brandenburg Collegium, and the Classical Band. Heard on period-instrument ensemble recordings for Sony Classics, Newport Classics, and Pro Arte. Music history faculty, Brooklyn College, 1987-89; Mannes College the New School for Music, since

1989. Degrees and Studies: Violin studies, Oberlin College; Aaron Copland School of Music, Queens College, CUNY; musicology, Graduate School and U. Center, CUNY. On the Juilliard School Faculty since 1996.

Way to go Fred! I'm proud of you! Here's what he wrote on my birthday 2017:

Gary, you changed my life. You awakened the music within me and I've lived under its spell ever since. I want to thank you for that now, and in the present tense, because you've asked former students to share their memories. This means that, happily, you're not dead.

For many years, I've played violin in New York, mostly performing Bach and Handel and Mozart on period instruments, and I teach music history at the Juilliard School as well. Since almost everything that has happened to me has happened accidentally, I want to make certain that you understand one thing: If Gary hadn't become the director of the string orchestra in Weldon E. Howitt Jr. High School when I was in 9th grade, none of these things that I do would have happened at all.

So, it's the fall of 1969 (?) and there was this new teacher, who plays the bass and who wants us to get really interested in "classical" music. He replaced Mr. Frank (Ferenc) Farago, a Hungarian violinist who retired after many years of service. Rather suddenly, we made the move from open strings ("A Tune a Day") to Eine kleine Nachtmusik. (I think we later did the "Hoedown" from Copland's Rodeo and other cool pieces as well.) [The Copland occurred when later I was conducting the whole Farmingdale High School orchestra as a sub.]

Within a short period of time, we actually gave one or more special evening concerts at school (the entire group showed up!) and people were quite amazed. Gary wasn't content with just doing that, so he took classes on repairing string instruments with Reneé Morel of Jacques Francais' firm in New York (Morel was the person who fixed the Strads and Amatis...). And he showed some of us how to fix and adjust things as he learned. There wasn't any money to fix up school fiddles or get better ones, but Gary wanted to do more.

His teaching and outlook began to stick. Musical life in the school began to matter to a lot of people. Now Gary happened to rent an apartment over the long auto parts store (next to Jack Burns' Bar & Grill). It was 200 feet from the railroad tracks and 500 feet from my house. It was a one-room studio with a stereo system on the floor, some records, a music stand, a bass stool, an Asian [Filipino] straw hat on the wall, and a rug.

At some point, [fellow string orchestra member] Timmy Harrington (?) and I visited Gary in order to set him straight about what good music was all about:

Cream, The Doors, and Hendrix. I'm not sure about the details or the time frame, but Rock somehow lost to Richard Strauss, Heifetz, and Pablo Casals.

Fritz Reiner conducting Also Sprach Zarathustra, Heifetz playing Tchaik, some-

thing about Rheingold that had nothing
to do with beer (!),
and Mahler. Gary
played in the American Symphony under
Stokowski, and soon
Sunday afternoon performances at Carnegie Hall would enter
into the picture.

Near the end of the school year, there were after-school trips to Jones Beach with small groups of students in the orchestra. Gary chauffeured us in "Hephzibah," an old station wagon (named for Menuhin's sister). One can't do such things today, but the long walks along



Violinists & violists remember the kind teaching that Janice provided.

the beach—at "West End 2" where there was a mile-long stretch of empty shoreline and the best spot to body surf on Long Island at the time—were moments when we learned about the world around us and how to critically think. I vaguely remember Gary being buried in the sand, up to his neck, and left for the crabs. But maybe that didn't happen.

If I remember correctly, Gary was at Howitt Jr. High for a second year, [no] when many of us left for the high school. The original group remained largely intact though, because Gary set up private lessons—bringing out some NY players, like violinist, Janice Longo—which people took in the basement of my house. (Lessons were given in a room filled with day-glow posters and black lights!).

Gary also taught in the preparatory division of Manhattan School of Music. Ted Grille, another student, and a talented bass player, began studying at MSM [actually privately with me], and Gary brought me in to hear a violin recital by Mary Blankstein, who also taught there, and who was Stokowski's concert master. Mary played the Brahms G Major Violin Sonata and that was it for me. I had no idea what I was doing at all, but I started studying with her at MSM.

Gary suddenly left Farmingdale—something that never made sense to anyone I know—[or me...see "Blunders"] and music there became something other than it had been. After that, I saw Gary now and again, after he was in Germany, while then back in New York for awhile. I remember when he was mugged, and how much that disturbed him. But I also know that he never gave up, on anything.

There were also various excursions to Joeffrey Ballet performances, art galleries, and other places. Each filled with long discussions about this and that.

After I went off to college (Oberlin), and Gary went back to California and then to Hawaii, we only had a few brief encounters, once on Oahu—where we talked and walked through bamboo forests—and a few times in NYC. Gary wanted to find a home for the Lehmann Foundation in NYC, and I hoped that something of that sort might happen through Mannes College, but, well...Ach!

If you're reading these words, you know, of course, about all of the things Gary has done throughout the years. He's always been obsessed by music and the people who make it. And he's always coaxed and cajoled us, and all of his former students into becoming obsessed with so many unexpected things.

Thanks, Gary.

Here's another Howitt Jr. High student's memory. Her name is Jan Gerston.

Mr. Hickling, many years ago, you were orchestra leader at Weldon E. Howitt Junior High, and I played viola in the orchestra in seventh grade. (My family moved to Arizona the next year.) You were responsible for a life moment I will never forget. If memory serves, you played in the American Symphony. You took us on a field trip to Carnegie Hall to watch a rehearsal and (amazingly) we all met the great Leopold Stokowski. I was absolutely enthralled by the whole experience. A bit later, I was a camper at Usdan camp [on Long Island] for the creative and performing arts (another life experience never to be forgotten). I once took the long way around and spied (and heard) you practicing the bass, alone, in the woods. In those days, I was all about the war horses, but you opened my ears to the "refreshing" (your word) music of the 20th century. [Bartok, Hindemith] All this happened 1968–1969.

After teaching in Long Island I moved to the University of Northern Colorado where I was hired to teach bass (primarily) as well as freshman music theory. See "Blunders." Bass teaching also included a shared course (with a cellist) on how to teach cello and bass in public school orchestras. I had a lot of fun teaching theory. The theory department was inventive, open to suggestions. The string department chairman, on the other hand, didn't support me, criticizing my teaching even during student juries. One bass major never took a single lesson in two semesters. When I flunked him the administration said that couldn't happen as he was a music major with bass emphasis. I immediately wrote up what they'd told me, taped it to my office door, and tendered my resignation. My few bass students were fine; one of them has recently emailed me:

Mary Hinman here from Phoenix, formerly your bass student at Greeley. How fun to read your biography and all the interesting & great things you've done. I still play the Jaeger bass you helped me buy in December 1972 at Olivero's in NYC. I am currently in the Scottsdale Philharmonic, the North Valley Symphony, La Forza Chamber Orchestra, and the Women's Orchestra of Arizona. I've never forgotten you and have thought of you often. —Mary Kelly (Hinman)

Strangely, though I'd given recitals at UNC, played a solo with their orchestra, given recitals in Denver and at various surrounding high schools, played in the Greeley Philharmonic, even had some nice personal relationships with some of the faculty, I had NO feelings of regret when I left the place. The city stank: it had feedlots. Everyone ate meat as a kind of loyalty to the area. The faculty and students were very isolated culturally: at one faculty luncheon, I happened to mention Beverly Sills, who was one of the most important singers at the time, had already taken over the direction of the New York City Opera: no one at the table knew her name. That was close to the end of the second semester and settled me on my decision to leave. I also remember giving a lecture on Casals. He'd just turned 90 or something, so I played some of his recordings and talked about his life. When I opened up the class for questions I received only one: "What do you figure this guy's worth?" I'd talked about his teaching, his stand against Franco, his wide influence as a humanitarian, etc., but this young man wanted to know how rich he was!

Back in NYC, I sub taught at Farmingdale High, meeting many of my Jr. Hi. kids.



In NYC I resumed private tutoring, teaching MSM Prep Division bassists, and at Ryder College in New Jersey. No particular students stand out during this time, though I did return to teaching some of my previous students.

In Germany, I didn't instruct until returning from Berlin when I taught in private Gymnasien. That's where I met Mani, among others, whom you can read

about in "Special Students."

I left Germany when I didn't get a full-time job playing in the Munich Chamber Orchestra. It seemed to me that there were plenty of fine bassists in Munich, so my (foreign) services weren't necessary. My idea was to return to LA where I believed that there were plenty of free-lance classical jobs, movie studio orchestras, and students just longing to be taught by a bassist returning triumphantly from Europe. Wow, was I mistaken! See "Blunders." There were plenty of fine bassists in the LA area so I couldn't make enough money to survive, playing as a ringer in community orchestras, thus I began substitute work. And not necessarily in music. I needed the money so I taught whatever was offered. Usually, it was more babysitting than teaching with the black schools just barely controlled riots. The most rewarding days (not many) were teaching deaf kids. In spite of having no

experience in that realm, the school repeatedly invited me to sub teach in that class. The students were very helpful and actual learning took place!

I finally got a job teaching junior high school strings and band full-time in Lomita. After moving there I had a good time; the kids (a nice group of mixed races) were responsive; we played some serious music. Ted DeColo visited, helping me a lot with the sax section. He'll probably remember some good tales. But there is a fun story: a new vice-principal visited my orchestra (winds and strings combined). She was a rather thin, timid lady in a job that was usually given to huge males that could enforce the rules. Anyway, during her initial visit to the rehearsal two bassoonists began fighting, almost using their large instruments as weapons before I separated them (physically, roughly, angrily), sending them to opposite corner storerooms for punishment (the worst thing that can happen to a young musician is to miss rehearsal). Afterward, the VP came up to me all a twitter, "Oh, Mr. Hickling, how can you deal with such violence?" She didn't last long. Neither did I. The administration kept me on substitute salary even though I'd been hired fulltime. I couldn't get health insurance, my back was sore, and I needed regular chiropractic attention. I left before the end of the semester, did a little more substitute teaching, ending up during the summer in Portland's Chamber Music NorthWest.

I didn't teach in Mexico and was kinda offended that no one approached either Sam or me for lessons. It further eroded my respect for the young Mexican musicians. After I left, Sam taught one student who ended up leading the bass section in our orchestra when Sam returned to the States.

When in 1981 I arrived in Honolulu I taught bass at three private schools: Punahou, Iolani, and Kamehameha. You can read about Alton Clingan, one of the star Punahou bassists, in "Special Students." My time at Punahou was especially memorable. Not only good bassists, serious students, etc. but excellent support from Mr. Sprenger, the head of the music department, for whom I also subbed as conductor of the string orchestra when he was absent. After school each day he'd spend time repairing string instruments. At one of his orchestra concerts, I was able to feature a quartet of basses playing one of my arrangements. It was

also at Punahou that I presented NY Philharmonic principal bass Jon Deak in a master class. As a bassist/composer he inspired Alton Clingan to that career.

How I ended up with cellist Ellie Lum coaching the string orchestra at Kailua Intermediate, I don't know, but we both had a great time. The teacher, a very sympathetic violist, Marilyn Kim, was overwhelmed and needed help. The "Gifted & Talented" program yielded motivated kids who also played in the band. Marilyn died after our first year, and last I looked there was a plaque on the building where she taught, in memory of her. The next teacher knew nothing about strings (I think she was a clarinetist) so desperately needed our help. The third teacher found us threatening so after a few weeks dispensed with our (free, volunteer!) services. We had had some good students and I'd conducted the group in a public concert (for the second teacher). Whenever Ellie and I get together we recall our time working together with joy. Her son played viola in the group; he's now a practicing doctor!

Private bass tutoring in Kailua was another aspect of my work. You'll see some photos of those students in the photo gallery. It was a chance to experiment with different bass methods and theories that I'd developed over the years. I had the honor of helping the excellent jazz bassist Bruce Hamada learn to play arco.

My next music instruction was unique: I'd talked about music when hiking with

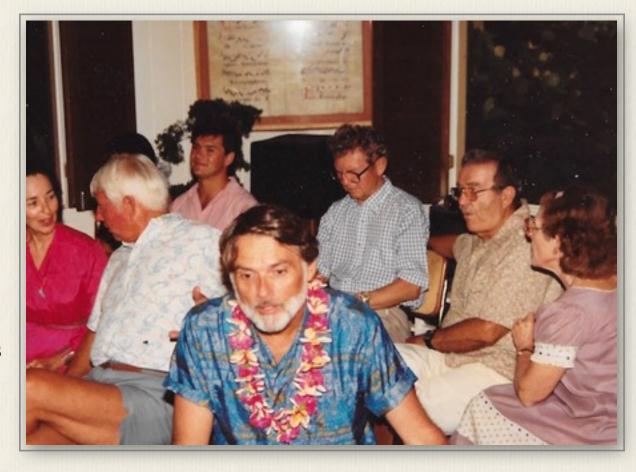
Alma and her friends which they found helpful in their understanding of the concerts or operas they attended. Alma suggested that I put together a regular evening lecture/recital on the history of classical music. We decided to use my place which already



had an excellent stereo and piano. I planned (and executed) a four-year structure, beginning with Gregorian Chant, coming up to contemporary music. Along the way, we made discursions to prepare the group (mainly older adults) for an upcoming HSO concert, HOT opera performance, or the visit of the Guarneri Quartet. Perhaps the major attraction of these events was the breaks when we'd enjoy the treats that one or another of the attendees prepared. The other was the light board that I made. Using Christmas tree lights of different colors along the border with permanent score lines, I'd write in the particular theme (also in the color of the light of that line). Each line then could be lit up as it occurred while the recording played. If a listener didn't read music, he could just register it as the "red" theme, noticing it each time it returned. The music readers could have their attention drawn to the particular melody in question. There was an audible gasp when during Mozart's Symphony No. 41 five themes occur simultaneously and the board was completely lit. You'll read Alma's story of these years in "Friends that Last" Volume 2. Some of the highlights for me were the appearance of Sarah Hicks at the piano, (she's now Principal Conductor of Live at Orchestra Hall for the Minnesota Orchestra, and Staff Conductor at the Curtis Institute of Music) playing some beautiful Liszt and Chopin. Afterward, she demonstrated some of the techniques needed with the group gathered closely around the piano (I remember double trills). Another memory was the use of the local Galliard String Quartet presenting a whole program of the history of that medium, arriving at the piece that they'd recorded of Alton Clingan's quartet with the composer attending. At one point, oboist Ann Marie Gabriele was preparing an important audition so she wanted to perform. We gathered together a small string orchestra so she could play a Vivaldi Concerto right in our living room! She got the job in the Columbus Symphony in 1993, now since 2000 plays with the LA Phil. The final class was dedicated to the members' requests that were submitted the previous week. I was amazed/thrilled at how many vocal pieces were desired. The gratitude shown to me was quite overwhelming. You can read the wonderful ditty that Alma and Barbara Earle sang to me in "Friends that Last." Vol. 2.

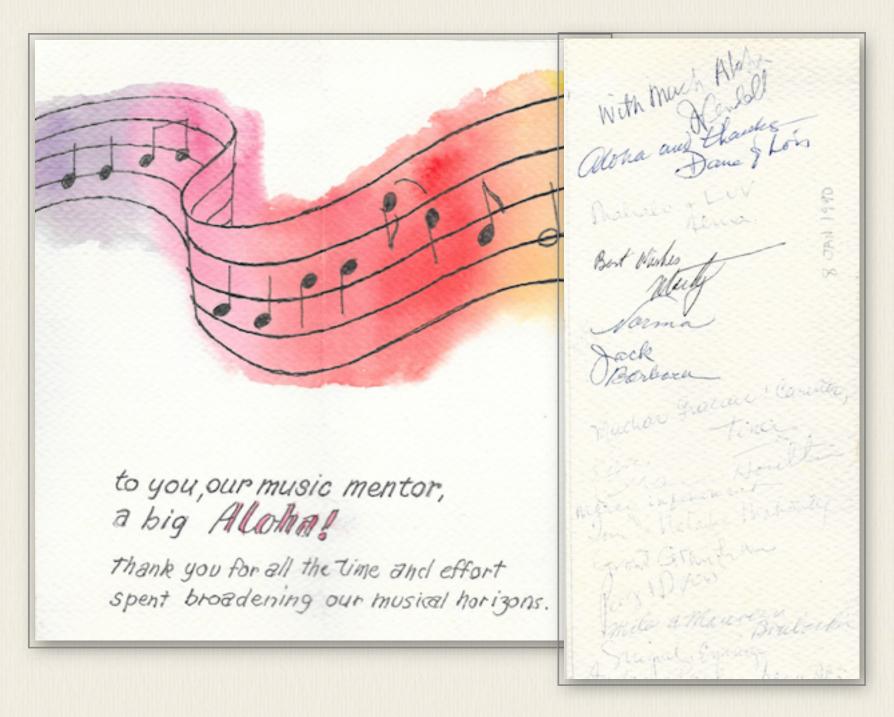
The main reason that I stopped the series was my involvement with the Great Songs radio program. There just wasn't enough preparation time. I was still

running the thrift store, playing regularly with the HSO, and teaching many students. BTW we often displayed Miguel's paintings at these meetings. His wife and baby Josh joined as well. (Josh is now an active jazz pianist on the East Coast.)



Here's the card that Wendell Davenport painted/drew for the final 8 January 1990 presentation. Besides his name, there's Dave & Lois Luehring, Alma McGoldrick, Marty Gold, Norma Nichols, Jack & Barbara Earle, Tina Manfredi, Tom & Natalie Mahoney, Grant Grantham, Penny & Dixon Smith, Miles & Maureen Brubacker, Miguel Espinoza, Andrea & Paul, Lee & Alan (Johnson). This was the occasion at which Alma & Barbara sang their version of "You are the very model of a modern mentor musical..." Barbara and her husband had already gifted me the original church manuscript seen in the background in one of the photos. We still have and enjoy it, even though both of them are gone. The whole experience was fulfilling for me and the people who attended speak of it often when we meet even now, decades later.





Almost a continuation of my "house teaching" (after decades of hiatus), I became for four years the musicologist-in-residence for the Waimea, Big Island, Hawaii Performing Arts Festival. Able to take free voice lessons during the LifeLong Singer program, I also played bass in various performances. But the real reason I was there was to introduce the audience to the piece they were about to hear. I'm good at this: showmanship, human detail, and historic knowledge come together in the live setting that I've never been able to match in my radio broadcasts. My name was already a known quantity in Waimea because HPR listeners had heard my program for years. While preparing the HPAF concerts I had fun researching the unknown music then condensing the revelations into a short introduction. You can experience me doing just that in an art song festival (Songfest) that Gerdine Markus produced in Hilo, as well as an actual performance of the HPAF with me on bass (a plywood student instrument!).

I must admit that one of the other attractions was getting down to Hapuna Beach where I swam along the cliffs you see in the photo, finding grottos and caves. Further down the shore, the underwater wonders increased and I even saw a manta ray. When I kept on swimming I discovered completely untrammeled coves in which to relax, meditate, or sleep.



This looks like a boring beach/ocean scene, but for me it brings back the joy of Hapuna and further south along the coast.



The chapel in Waimea where many HPAF concerts were held

Actually, before HPAF, I often spoke before Honolulu performances: orchestral, chamber music, or art song. I put together many art song recitals at HPR's Atherton Studio. There were different themes but used live singers and pianists whenever practical. It was there or in Orvis that many of the Art Song Contest Winners recitals were held. I often

said a few words about the songs that were to be performed. I never got the least bit nervous speaking. For some reason only playing solo bass, the thing I knew best and for which I was by far the most prepared, got me upset to the point that the playing suffered badly. Strangely enough, when I sang: no nerves.

What do I take away from my years of teaching? Some very close friendships developed (no crushes, I understood at some basic level that the two shouldn't get mixed). Sometimes I was in awe of the results of my work: not only that I was a fantastic teacher, but the student was so deeply responsive to every element of

music-making, from the technique needed to the almost primitive/intuitive response to the music itself.

I'm also proud of what my young students have accomplished, whether in the field of music, or something else that has attracted them along their way. I often tried to dissuade students from a career in music. They would find themselves in the awkward position of studying with the same person who was trying to direct them to a different



career. The adults were usually well-advanced in their careers so I was there to add to their enjoyment of classical music, whether live or recorded. I hope that I was not just teaching music, but teaching people to be aware of all aspects of life, especially the arts. It's no wonder that Ralph found me in the Frick when I was supposed to be teaching him a lesson.

Here's what an MSM Prep student wrote in 2007 (the last time we'd seen each other was 1973!)

The last time we talked I was heading off to Manhattan School of Music and you were headed to Germany. A lifetime has passed since then. I have often wondered how you were doing. I have always wanted to thank you for the invaluable lessons that you taught me. As I look back I see that it was not just an instrument that you were teaching, but lessons of life.

Those lessons and the study of music, have translated into so many areas of my life. The discipline to practice scales and etudes, the translation and transmutation

of taking a simple melody and playing it back several different ways. Listening to the tonality of each and every note and dissecting the bowing techniques. I have applied all of these to my work and life, if not directly then in some obscure form.

Anyway to fill you in, I have been living in Las Vegas for the last 10 years now. It's a great place to work but it's not exactly a cultural center. I got married in '93. We flew off to Lake Tahoe and got married on the top of Emerald Bay. My Italian family loved that one. I decided to go back to school and obtain a degree in Design and am designing Residential Kitchens in an upscale Design Showroom. I am still playing music although not much Double Bass playing. A little arthritis in the left hand, it takes so long to warm up. I have been composing in a very obscure electronic form. I call it 21st Century, Minimalistic, Ambient-ism for lack of a better title.

I would really enjoy corresponding with you. Please let me know where you are living and what you are doing. Again, I wanted to drop you a line and to thank you once again.

With Love,

James Martino

Jim doesn't mention the frequent visits of Stokowski to my studio. The door was open to encourage the next student to join in the lesson to learn from his fellow bassist. Stoki was at MSM to hear the percussion ensemble rehearsals that Mr. Price held on Saturdays at the end of the hall. Stoki just kindly stuck his head into our lessons for a brief word of encouragement. Without a doubt, it added to the ambiance of these young students' lessons.

This section of the presentation has been filled with memories of my students. My life has had many blessings, but watching a student's musical growth offers satisfaction and joy. And if you've read this far, you know that I'm speaking of the full age range of "students." They didn't need to play bass, just responding to the beauty of the music was reward enough for me.

#### C/70-

## Special Bass Students



Mani Plays Mahler Solo 2017



Mani Rössl in Munich in 1977

Jaime Austria, Angel Sicam, Angel Peña, Johnny Gosalvez (all from my 13 months in Manila); Ted Grille, from Farmingdale, Long Island; Mani Rössl, from Munich; Alton Clingan, Honolulu. Each of these students qualifies for the list of positive attributes that any musician should exemplify: dedicated, musical, good learners. The first four were my stellar students while I was on the JDR III Fund grant. Austria and Sicam both did advanced work in the U.S., married American girls, and had fulfilling careers in good orchestras. The advanced jazz-and classical-playing

**Angel Peña** joined the Honolulu Symphony Orchestra shortly after I'd left Manila. He was there when I joined the orchestra decades later. Small world. While I was still in Manila working with him, Peña wrote a bass concerto for me which he later played himself. I was proud that he'd written it without telling me. I always admired his composing, even commissioning his second sonata for bass.



Angel Peña on the left with luthiers in the middle, then Johnny Gosalvez and me



Angel in the HSO when I was there

Here are some excerpts from Mr. Peña's final emails:

Both of my eyes have a macular

Peña playing his Concerto with the Manila Symphony Orchestra

degeneration. Such a defect leads to blindness. I wish I still have a double bass so I can play leisurely when I become blind. I am presently writing my biography as suggested by my sisters. But I think I should go on composing before I lose my sight. [From another email:] Yes, we are enjoying California. One has got to develop his/her ability to enjoy on simple things and not complain. But despite the pleasure of living here, we are still contemplating on going back to Manila for good.

We being originally from there, we can get by better than if we were here at this 4th stage of our physical life. Our one month vacation in Manila confirmed such an idea. My health is as fair as usual. I brisk walk for 2 miles 3-5 times a week, and my sadhana or spiritual practice is regular. [Another email:] Would you believe that I am still ruminating on a number of events with you when you were in Manila? You have left a legacy there especially among us bass players. Your coaching helped me pass my audition for [HSO] Maestro Robert Lamarchina who is very demanding. I really miss him. He is a good conductor. Very dynamic and expressive but temperamental especially in opera which he knows from inside up. The Igorot Rhapsody [written by Peña] is probably the most often played piece in Manila. It has survived since 1960 after winning First Prize in the National Composition Contest. It was performed in Hongkong by the Hongkong Philharmonic Orchestra, and in Germany by the Bavarian Radio Orchestra. I only wish my new works could be performed. I have a Divertimento for String Orchestra and a symphonic cycle "Trinity." I am too shy to advertize my work. Vallejo Symphony discovered the Rhapsody by accident only and they rented the piece from my publisher Peer/Southern International of New York. How I wish the other works will be discovered like my bass trio which came to the attention of the Collophonium Bassquartet and subsequently published by Rodney Slatford. I guess it came about when you left it there when you once lived in Germany. Well, one thing I am blessed with is my loving wife, Jo. She is still in good health and has been very helpful to me. We are very happy together. She is meant for me, I cannot ask for more. I hope to have a continued correspondence with you even if

I hope to have a continued correspondence with you even if we are in Manila, maybe beginning next year. [Another email:] I'm always delighted to hear from you because it is a confirmation that I am still connected with my bass teacher and mentor who was in a way instrumental in my being tenured in the H.S.O. for 20 years and who has commissioned me to write pieces for the double bass.

I play: Peña's 2nd Sonata: Ist Mvt

**Johnny Gosalvez**, like Peña, was quite advanced when I arrived in Manila. They both were intelligent and autodidacts on the bass. I just codified and organized the positions adding some techniques that improved their playing. After verifying that I really knew my stuff, Johnny sent his students from the University of the Philippines to study with me. He was enthusiastic, preparing himself for every lesson as if he were a young student. Johnny tackled the most difficult repertoire and participated in the "student" recitals along with the others. It was a high compliment to me as a teacher that both Peña and Gosalvez supported my work

so fervently. They played with me in the Manila Symphony Orchestra and we also became friends outside of the orchestra, lessons, and students.

Jaime Austria was known as
Jimmy when I met him. He was
so serious about his study that
he took three lessons a week,
memorizing the assignments.
Jimmy's progress was amazing.
He was obviously, even as a
young man, mature
intellectually, probing
everything I said. He wanted to
understand the theory behind
each admonition. But it wasn't
just his good active mind that



I'm skinny because of amoebas. Jimmy is young, healthy, and ready to leave Manila with me. I'm wearing a piña fibre Barong Tagalog. Jaime's is a Polo Barong.

informed his playing. He was a gifted musician, intuitively phrasing each line with a discernment well in advance of his age. Jimmy could be crusty sometimes and not always easy to work

Memories of Jaime

with, but the results of each lesson were astounding enough that I didn't mind dealing with his unpredictable moods. As soon as I saw that he was of such unusual talent I began to work on a plan to have him do more advanced work first at the MAW, then at MSM. I wrote two deceptive letters, one to the JDR III Fund (which had financially supported the Americans teaching in Manila) saying that MSM was offering Jimmy a full scholarship if he could get support for his living expenses. The other letter, sent to MSM, said that the JDR III Fund was able to support his living expenses if Jimmy was assured of a full scholarship from the

conservatory. I made a tape of his playing, even interviewing him so that the supporting institutions could get to know something of his personality. Here, transferred from deteriorating reel-to-reel tapes, are the sound documents of this 1967 endeavor. Both institutions provided the support JA needed and he got both his BA

JA Interview 1967

JA playing Corelli 1967

and MM. His last fulltime gig was with the NY City Opera orchestra. We remained good friends; I always visited Jaime and his family when I was in NYC and felt welcomed. He died of cancer in 2010. Here's a link to his Life Celebration. At that YouTube link, you'll find eulogies and other tributes by his many friends and colleagues. His family saw that he'd written my birthday into his calendar, so after he "transitioned" in May they called on my August b'day, having prepared a harmonized version of "Happy Birthday" which they sang beautifully, a kind of memorial in reverse.

#### Jaime



Jaime in his first NYC apartment



Jaime played a duet with me on my Lincoln Center recital.

Here's an excerpt from an email that Jaime sent many years ago: "Ineffable feeling of gratitude and appreciation for your enthusiastic support, encouragement, and help. I feel so fortunate to have you as a dear friend/teacher/mentor/guide/and much more..."

Filipino **Angel Sicam** has a lighter personality than Jaime, though also very gifted. Like Jaime, he was a student of Gosalvez at UP where he'd had good basic training. Angel was able to quickly grasp all of the technical information that I offered, being musical enough to apply it to his playing. He followed Jaime to the U.S. a year later with a JDR III Fund grant and MSM support. I attended his MSM graduate recital and was very impressed. Porter McCray, representing the JDR III Fund, was there and I was able to introduce him to David Walter. Sicam went on to a permanent chair as assistant principal bass of the Syracuse Orchestra and raised a family. At this point (2017) he's retired to Florida with his second wife. You'll see a photo of him with Jaime, David Walter, and me in the gallery of Manila students on the next page. Though he's alive, I've lost track of Mr. Sicam, so I'll quote bits from emails to give you an idea of his personality. He's writing about his bass and bow:

It only took about 4 months for my [new] bass to settle. but i had to play on it all the time. then I had my [rotator cuff] surgery and I was laid off for another 4 months. I am more than fully recovered. All these years I've been using the Hammig bow that you gave me back in 70's and I now realize that it is too heavy. But I get a very powerful sound from it just like David's Pfretchner [bow]. I ordered a bow from one of the [Filipino] carvers. it will be made of local ironwood and ebony frog. You should take a nostalgic trip to the Philippines. I do not know if the Manila symphony still exists but the association still operates, there are 2 orchestras there now that employs full-time musicians. The Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra and the San Miguel Symphony Orchestra. 2 of your former students plays with the PPO. De Los Reyes and the guy who played french bow. During my recent visit to Manila, I had a chance to visit AP [Angel Peña]. He looked great except for the macular degeneration in both his eyes. He has moments of memory lapses. He remembered fondly of our lessons with you. Angel II [From another email: My concentration is slowly worsening, on the bad news side cecinio ronquillo [a former bass student of mine who went on to study with the principal bass of the Berlin Philharmonic and returned to take the principal bass position in the PPO] passed away in june or july due to complications of diabetes. he was only 56. i was in manila in sept. heard the phil. philharmonic for the first time at cultural center. they sound good but the conductor was very clearly behind the beat.

Two other Manila bass students stand out in my memory:

Delfin Calderon Jr. and Norben DeLaCruz. Both were able bassists when I arrived, learned a lot while studying with me, going on to play with the Hong Kong Philharmonic; after that, they returned to Manila. They were kind and supportive of my work, showing me a lot of Luzon. You'll read more about them in the chapter on Manila.

### Gallery of Manila Students



Jimmy turns pages for Angel while I do the same for Lakambini Zaguire, our loyal pianist.













Mani Rössl was another amazing student. I met him, along with other bass students, at his Munich gymnasium (an advanced high school). He'd already played pop bass and electric bass guitar, so it was just necessary to show him how to use the bow or work on his left-hand position. Once I demonstrated some aspect of the bass he was able to do it with no further correction or suggestion. Both his musical sense and his good brain allowed us to make quick progress. By the time he was ready to graduate he could play a bass concerto with the gymnasium orchestra. You'll see a photo of us together in that orchestra in the gallery that follows. After he graduated from the Munich conservatory he flew out to California to study with me before he began his auditions for a permanent position. You'll see photos of him with me in my little rental in Costa Mesa (with Mom and Dad), as well as in Kailua, a trip we made to celebrate his summer of

progress with me. Though he's handsome and a nice guy, I never had a crush on him. He just laughed at my gayness. Mani had a sabbatical in 2019 and visited me in Kailua. We had a blast together! Here's what he recently wrote.

Eines ist sicher: Mein Leben wäre heute ein völlig anderes, wenn ich dich nicht kennengelernt hätte.

Ich kann mich an ein Bild in deiner Wohnung erinnern, das aus verschiedenen Getreidesorten bestand. Du warst der erste Vegetarier in meinem Leben. Ich fragte dich einmal: Gary, warum isst du kein Fleisch? Antwort. I don't like dead animals. Da hatte ich verstanden!

Du hast uns Schüler am Sonntag in deine Wohnung eingeladen, uns Unterricht gegeben und Lieder vorgespielt. Du hast uns nicht nur Bassspielen lehren wollen, du hast uns eine Lebenseinstellung vermittelt.

In sehr positiver Erinnerung habe ich meinen Auftritt mit dem Capuzzi-Konzert in der Schule behalten, der mir viel Selbstvertrauen gegeben hat und wie du deinen anderen Schüler enthusiastisch applaudiert hast, auch wenn sie nur mäßig gespielt haben. Das alles hat mein Unterrichten sehr geprägt.

Noch was: ihr Amerikaner habt bei vielen Europäern, vor allem den intellektuellen, keinen besonders guten Ruf. Aber ich weiss: es gibt tolle Menschen dort!

Du hast mal erzählt, wie du nach München kamst: du wolltest der Gewalt in New York entfliehen und bist einfach nach München geflogen, weil man dir sagte, München sei schön und friedlich [und hat gute Orchester]. Diese Spontanität und Entschlussfreudigkeit (für mich amerikanische Tugenden) hat mich beeindruckt und mir geholfen, später ohne Bedauern ins Ausland (Belgien) zu gehen.

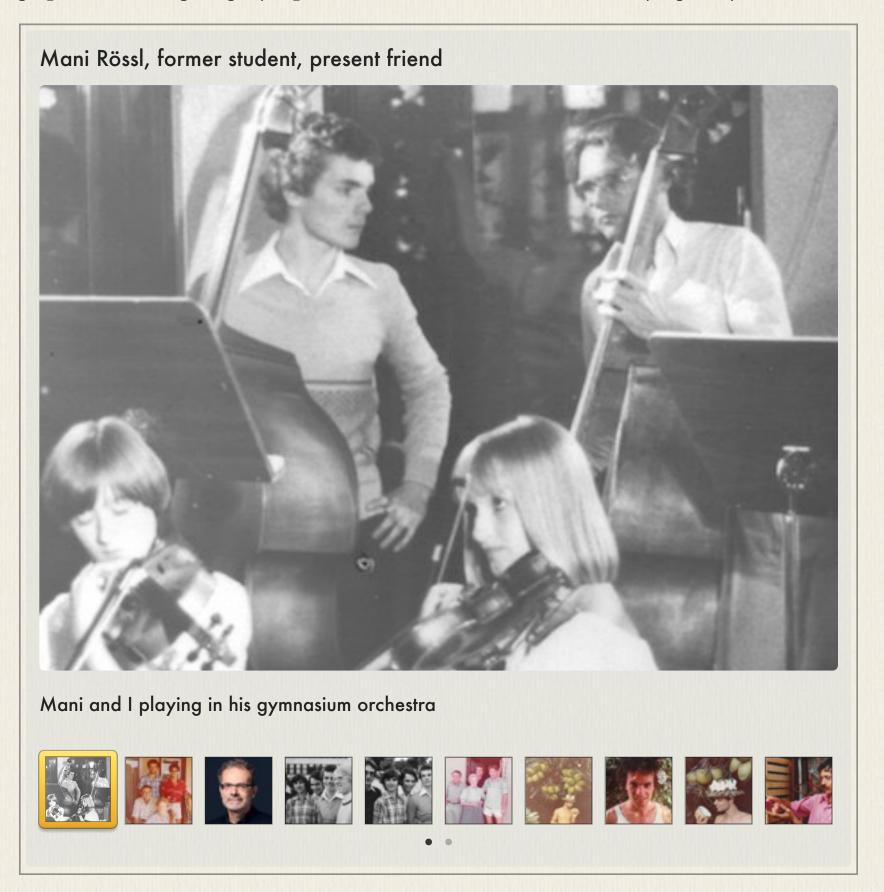
Und dass du mir deinen Kontrabass überlassen hast, hat sicher dazu geführt, dass ich weitergemacht habe und das werde ich auch nie vergessen.

Eine Geschichte möchte ich noch erzählen: Nach dem Rückflug aus den USA 1983 hat mich mein Bruder abgeholt und erzählt, dass unser Schwager Siegi, ein bösartiger Macho und Schwulenhasser, meiner Mutter erklärt hat, dass ich schwul sei (warum sollte ich sonst so lange bei einem Mann "Urlaub" machen?). Als ich dann Siegi und meiner Mutter Photos gezeigt habe mit der Bemerkung: und das ist mein schwuler Freund Gary! waren alle ganz still und es wurde nie wieder davon geredet. Ich habe innerlich laut gelacht!

When Mani visited me in California in 1985 I was weening the thrift store from me living in Costa Mesa. He'd practice all day while I worked, taking a lesson in the evening. Mani was always prepared. He practiced diligently! He's just

reminded me that during a break we drove to Tijuana so that he could experience that culture. We met Sam Agres there and Mani saw how poor Mexico was.

When Mani visited me in Kailua in 2019 we seemed like old friends, even though we hadn't met for 30 years. He helped my German for Lotte Lehmann & Her Legacy Volume VII and we spent 10 days touring the Big Island. He became a grandfather shortly after leaving the Islands. He's principal bass of the Bielefeld Orchestra and teaches bass at the local conservatory. You heard Mani on the first page of this chapter playing the bass solo from Mahler's first symphony.



When I met **Ted Grille** he was playing violin at the Long Island junior high school where I taught strings. He was an affable, good looking, talented kid who took violin lessons from my friend Janice Longo who came out to Farmingdale to teach some of my willing students. I don't remember how it came about, but at some point, I offered to teach Ted bass. He was eager and our lessons continued after I left Long Island. He'd come into New York for lessons, even staying overnight with me. Ted went on to Reed College in Oregon, then the New England Conservatory of Music where I visited him and heard him play. After graduation, he got a position in the San

Antonio Symphony Orchestra but left for a teaching job. Ted writes in 2017:

Since 1995 I have been employed at a middle school in Dallas to teach strings. It is a time-consuming task that will bring satisfaction on some occasion. I also teach private lessons to students of various ages and sectional



Ted taking a private lesson from me. Good left hand position!



My loyal Farmingdale students at the Lincoln Center recital. Violinist Fred Fehleisen is next to me and then it's violinist/bassist Ted Grille.

coaching for the youth orchestra of Dallas.

Because of my teaching duties, I have had very little time to pursue performing. As my assistant at the middle school, my wife Rebecca has aided in the success of the orchestra program. Last year Rebecca and I arranged for the piece we commissioned for young players from the noteworthy Gunther Schuller to be performed in Dallas with Mr. Schuller conducting. To spend time with Gunther and to have his piece performed by young players was very rewarding. My fondest memory is a Howitt Junior High School trip you organized. The orchestra students traveled to NYC to hear the American Symphony Orchestra perform at Carnegie Hall, conducted by Leopold Stokowski. Following the performance, [actually a rehearsal], you ushered the students, one of whom was me, to meet Stokowski. My recollection (and time wreaks havoc with personal memories!) is Mr. Stokowski was regal, imposing, and a little bit threatening. When you asked Mr. Stokowski if he would allow a picture with the students the maestro answered, "No."

At Weldon E. Howitt Junior High School [where I, Gary, taught] the orchestra played *Five Pieces* by Hindemith and *Roumanian Dances* by Bartok. I have fond and vivid memories of the experience; of both the playing and your teaching. If only the students I have today would aspire to such an elevated level!

I am working on the Capuzzi concerto, (a piece you taught to me), with a youngster. The music is tattered and slightly torn because it is the music we used way back when! [1972!]

Alton Clingan was one of my bass students at Punahou. Perhaps not one of the most gifted students that I've taught, he was brilliant in other ways. He had a really vivacious personality. Alton was sexually precocious, dating any woman (even in grades above him) that he took a fancy to. They were obviously delighted. He made good progress on the bass. In his final year at Punahou, I arranged for a master class with the principal bass of the New York Philharmonic (and a personal friend from my days there) Jon Deak, who was also a composer. They clicked (as Alton did with everyone), being inspired by Deak's double life as a composer and bassist. Alton took composition at Punahou while I served as a mentor in his final semester. That meant that there was a period each week where he'd leave the school to do some intensive music work (not necessarily on the bass) with me. He attended Honolulu Symphony Orchestra rehearsals that I played; we listened to Beethoven string quartet recordings, or simply talked music. When it came time for Alton to audition for a music conservatory, his parents, who knew I was gay, asked me to go with him to New York to guide him through the process. It showed

their ultimate trust in me. They also knew that hetero Alton would be safe with me. Whatever the case, Alton and I had gotten along well before and that condition continued on the trip. You'll read about our trip back from Rochester in "GodDamBass." Generally, things went smoothly; in the end, he was offered entry into several schools. While in New York we met with my friends when, regardless of their age, Alton was adept at knowing how to interact with total strangers. He met aging Porter McCray, Ann McKinney, and former bass students. Ann's son Robin was a youngster but Alton and he ran around Ann's mother's apartment

playing rambunctiously. Alton decided on the Eastman School of Music: he could pursue a double major of composition and bass. He liked his teachers there; we stayed in good touch. His bass teacher was the respected James VanDeMark. Alton went on to graduate study at Columbia and Harvard, concentrating on composition. He won awards, had his works performed, recorded, and was on



At a Punahou master class: Alton and Jon Deak (composer/bassist); the moment I believe Alton decided to become a composer/bassist

his way to world-wide success when, during a subway trip back to his hotel after a New York performance of one of his compositions, he was brutally mugged: a screwdriver was stabbed into his eye. He lost sight in that eye and in some way the trauma changed him. Alton had always dabbled in drugs but now he and his crowd seemed obsessed with various kinds of psychedelic and chemical drugs. He called me in 1994 when I was on the Big Island to ask if he could come out to stay with me to clean up his act. He named some of the recreational drugs by

acronyms that meant nothing to me, admitting that he needed help. Of course, I

said yes, but a short time later I received a phone call from Porter reading me Alton's New York Times obituary. Evidently choking from a drug-induced sexual experiment. I was sad for a long time. This vital young man was gone. The only audio I have of Alton's compositions is the Song of Chief Seattle from

Clingan: Song of Chief Seattle



a CD called *Circle of Faith—the Words of Chief Seattle*. Since he's trying to imitate American Indian music there's only one line and some variations. The complete piece includes singers, drummers, and a narrator.

After his death, I went to visit his parents in Mississippi where they'd moved when their two sons graduated from Punahou. (I had been in the Honolulu Arena when

Alton, as Punahou senior class president, gave his speech to the crowd with confidence and panache. I have the photo of him with his family with leis up to his nose!

I was in Mississippi to console Alton's folks not just about him, but about his brother, who'd died of brain cancer



Alton playing for one of my house concerts in Kailua.

about the same time. I remember Bob saying to his wife: "Now, don't you go anywhere." She's since died as well. We recalled all the things we loved about Alton and I tried to convince them to put together a website to honor him and his legacy. That didn't happen, so the recordings of his works have been lost. I have no idea what they've done with his manuscripts. Here's his New York Times June 3, 1996 obituary:

Alton Howe Clingan, a composer whose works have recently been performed in New York City, Boston and Amsterdam, died on Tuesday at his home in Cambridge, Mass. He was 27.

John Thomason, the manager of a funeral home in Vicksburg, Miss., said the cause of death was under investigation. Mr. Clingan's parents, Dr. Robert C. Clingan and Nancy Clingan, live in Vicksburg.

Mr. Clingan was born in San Antonio in 1969 and grew up in Honolulu. He studied composition at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, N.Y., and at Columbia University. He was working on his doctorate at Harvard University.

In his two years at Columbia, Mr. Clingan had several pieces performed in Manhattan. One of them, "The Runaway Horses," was a piano quintet inspired by Mishima's novel about the trials of adolescence. After a performance by Ensemble 21 in October 1993, a review in *The New York Times* praised Mr. Clingan's style for its "harmonic prickliness, rhythmic complexity and density of ideas."

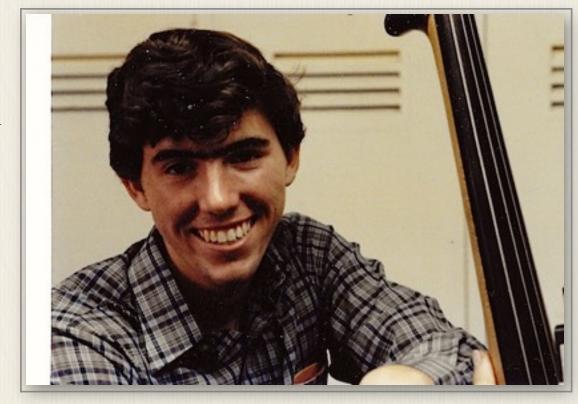
Mr. Clingan also contributed string quintet music to "Circle of Faith: The Words of Seattle," a setting of an 1854 speech by Chief Seattle in which Mr. Clingan's music and traditional American Indian drumming were combined. The work, commissioned by the bassist James Van Demark, had performances all over the United States in 1992 and '93. Sections of it were heard on National Public Radio.

In addition to his parents, Mr. Clingan is survived by his grandparents, Col. and

Mrs. O. E. Howe of Kailua, Hawaii.

On the following page, you'll find a postcard from Alton in which is demonstrated his humor, warmth, and creativity.

They say that it's a sadness of nature when a parent loses a child. The same can be said for the teacher. For me to lose

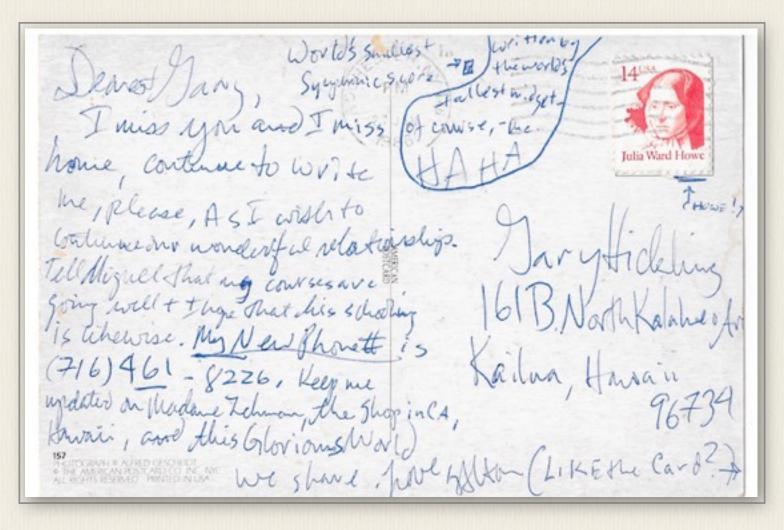


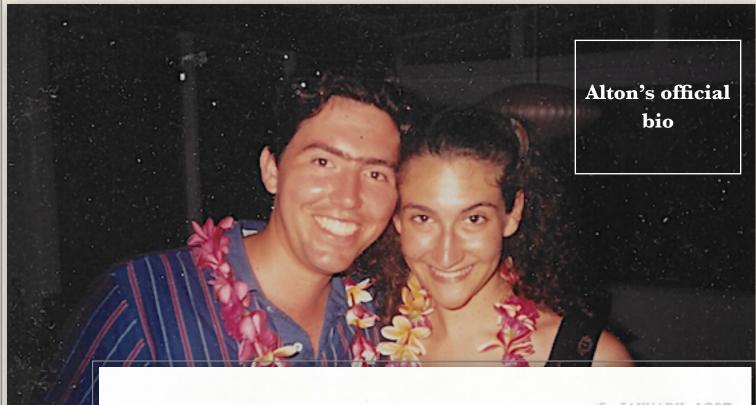
Alton before his maturity, was a deep personal loss. We fit perhaps like an uncle with his nephew, but certainly as teacher/mentor and pupil.

It was a pleasure to work with the whole range of students, from the least- to the most-talented. Now that many are either retiring or passed away it leaves me with a strange feeling. The joy was in the observation of the progress, the growth of these people, as humans as



much as musicians. Those that passed on too soon leave a strange bittersweet feeling in my memory.





6 JANUARY 1987

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

I AM WRITING THIS LETTER ABOUT ALTON CLINGAN IN ORDER TO GIVE A BROADER PICTURE OF HIS ABILITIES AND HIS UNIQUE PERSONALITY. I HAVE HAD THE PLEASURE OF TEACHING ALTON DOUBLE BASS SINCE 1983. HE HAD ALREADY PLAYED VIOLIN AND HAD BEEN GIVEN SOME PREVIOUS INSTRUCTION IN BASS. HE QUICKLY MADE PROGRESS IN TECHNIQUES AND REPETOIRE. I HAVE TAUGHT BASS IN A VARIETY OF SITUATIONS AND COUNTRIES BUT HAVE SELDOM ENCOUNTERED SUCH ENTHUSIASM AS ALTON HAS DEMONSTRATED.

HIS INTEREST IN MUSIC IS BROAD. HE COMPOSES AND STUDIES COMPOSITION WITH TRUE DEDICATION. I HAVE TAKEN ALTON TO CHAMBER MUSIC AND SOLO RECITALS, OPERAS, AND SYMPHONY CONCERTS AND ALWAYS MARVEL AT HIS ATTENTION AND PERCEPTIVE LISTENING ABILITY. YEARS AGO I BEGAN TO TEACH ALTON THE FUNDAMENTALS OF MUSIC THEORY. HE HAS SINCE TAKEN EVERY COURSE AVAILABLE ON THE SUBJECT AT PUNAHOU AND INTERLOCHEN. HE HAS READ WITH AMAZING UNDERSTANDING EVERY THEORY BOOK AROUND. THE ONLY ASPECT OF HIS BASIC MUSICAL TRAINING THAT REMAINS TO BE FULLY DEVELOPED IS THAT OF EAR TRAINING. BUT WATCHING THE PROGRESS OF SUCH A PERSON IS PART OF THE FUN.

I HAVE WRITTEN ABOUT THE MUSICAL SIDE OF ALTON CLINGAN, BUT TO DO JUSTICE TO HIS CHARACTER ONE MUST MENTION HIS SOCIAL ABILITIES. ALTON HAS A MATURITY OF SOCIAL INTERACTION THAT ALLOWS HIM TO BE CLASS PRESIDENT, MEET WITH ADULTS AS PEERS AND PLAY, JOYFULLY WITH CHILDREN. HIS ENTHUSIASM IS ATTRACTIVE TO ALL AND HE SHOWS SINCERE INTEREST IN WHAT THE OTHER PERSON IS DOING OR THINKING. ALTON HAS AN KEEN SENSE OF HUMOR, A PROBING INTELLECT, AND A JOY IN LIVING THAT IS CONTAGEOUS.

IT IS A PLEASURE TO WRITE ABOUT ALTON. BUT I'M SAD TO REALIZE THAT THIS IS THE LAST YEAR THAT I MAY TEACH HIM AND SHARE HIS COMPANY.

Sincordy, Bay Hidding



## On the Radio



My art song career on the radio started in 1972 with my call to WBAI in NYC. BAI was running the complete LPs of Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau's Schubert recordings. Heaven! But it seemed to me that the world believed there was only one Lieder singer, as good as he was. So I called up the station, asking that they play other such singers. They suggested, "do your own program. We'll show you how." So I did and they did. The first program was called the Schubert Top 40 for

which I received the help of none other than head MC at BAI: Frank Coffee. He taught me the basics of microphone etiquette.

Recognizing that I needed expert help to develop the content, I called up Philip Lieson Miller, at that time head of the music division of the New York Public Library. He was also famous for *The Ring of Words*, his book of art song translations. He was gracious and encouraging. I visited him using his reel-to-reel to record his amazing 78s of some of the best singers of all time. He helped me discover the best singer for each particular Schubert Lied we featured. It was great fun. I learned a bit about radio production.

But before this huge project was ready, I noted that LL's 85th b'day was coming up and decided that I should do a tribute to her. I wrote to ask if I could interview her (by phone from NYC to Santa Barbara), she agreed, if she could know the questions



I'd ask in advance. I sent my questions (augmented somewhat by Lieder-loving friends); she made only one change: she requested that I not play her Mozart, which she felt she wasn't suited to sing. She also asked that I mention her students. This was all agreed to, then in December of 1972 (several months before her February birthday....we all knew editing, etc. took time), we recorded the interview on a very noisy phone line. Remember this was before satellites or digital technology. Such a bad connection! But one can hear her responses.

The station and I received a lot of positive reactions to the program which encouraged me to continue my Top 40 Schubert effort. It ended up, like the Lehmann program, a several hour program. BAI had a flexible schedule so put these huge programs in prime-time slots (around 7 or 8 pm). After that, I produced a program celebrating the already-dead Elisabeth Schumann's 85th, then again with LL's telephone interview, a memorial for the death (in 1973) of Lauritz Melchior. That program put me in touch with a range of interesting record producers. They were already preparing various LP releases on Melchior so when I played excerpts, they knew that the broad classical/vocal NYC audience would buy the LPs when they were published. This final program was broadcast when I'd left and was already playing bass in Munich.

I played these tapes of the BAI programs for friends in Germany to universal approval. This must have given me the courage to approach Hawaii Public Radio with the idea of a Lotte Lehmann Centennial special. I met with Bob Miller, then music director, who showed me the set-up. The first program, on Lehmann, was broadcast in the Spring of 1988. I gathered the material, wrote the script with Bob Miller voicing the text. There were actually two LL programs that elicited good audience reaction. It was also the way I met Mrs. Hilde Randolph. She called in with a special donation, asking to be in touch with me. You'll meet her in "Old Ladies & a Few Old Men" in Volume 2. Later I approached Bob about a regular art song program; he was in agreement, showing me how it could work. I was dismayed that there was no engineer as I'd had at WBAI. But by then I was already getting used to the reel-to-reel technology having learned how to cut & splice. Sharp razor blades were a must! My first broadcast was a long Schubert program (was it one or two hours?) that was well received by both the listeners as well as the HPR staff.

The station was still growing so there was room for what I offered just following the opera broadcast. I was playing LPs on tape but soon moved from reel-to-reel to VHS. Yes, the station was playing these high-quality tapes for some of their broadcasts. Almost no editing, certainly no "cut & splice." After a few years, we switched to DATs (digital audio tapes) which were problematic as well. Very little editing was possible but despite their high-quality sound, the machines often broke causing the tape itself to tangle and break. It was a pleasure then when all-digital technology became available.

The number of great singers as well as other musicians that came through Honolulu offered me a ceaseless number of interesting people to interview. I built frequently fascinating programs on subjects suggested by these artists. You can read through the list of artists at the end of this chapter.

Art song is a niche market within the already minuscule classical music industry. Vocal music is mocked by most Americans ("until the fat lady sings") causing even the classical music programs that one hears on public radio to seldom play any. Even choral music isn't performed. When I began my art song program (called *Great Songs* in 1988) there were a handful of other weekly programs throughout the



Joan Canfield my first co-host

After broadcasting *Great Songs* for over a decade I thought that a cohost would add to the effort. Before she became a paid staff member of HPR, I invited Joan Canfield and until she started hosting her own

public radio sphere. Little by little they all dropped out, even from Canada or Europe. Sadly, the only remaining regularly scheduled art song program can be found only on a station broadcasting (or streaming) from the middle of the Pacific Ocean.



With co-host Joanna Takagi

program, she was a vital part of the program. After she departed I asked the choral specialist Joanna Takagi who became another valued co-host until she married and left the state. Thereafter the soprano Amy Healey joined me becoming another congenial co-host for years. She remained with Maya Hoover when the latter took over the program for me.

In 2009 Dr. Maya Hoover, voice professor at the Music Department of the University of Hawaii, Manoa, began producing the program. I needed a break especially during the time of my heart attack. After a few years, she was promoted at the University, thus having too many commitments to continue with *Great Songs*, so as of November 6, 2011, I resumed production of the programs.

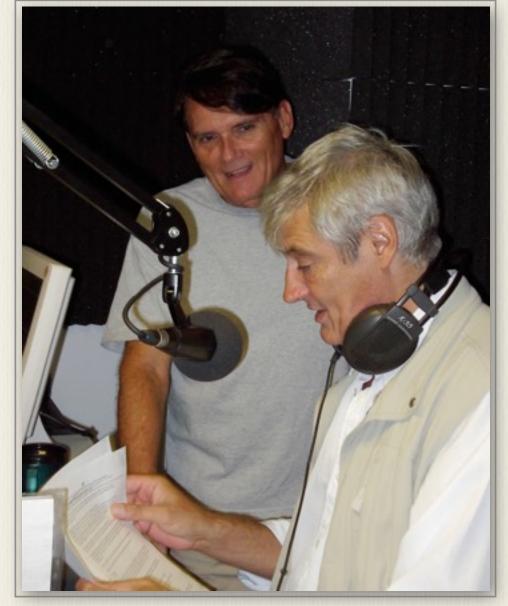
After 22 years of essentially the same format (all songs), when I continued *Great Songs* I called it "Singing and other Sins" (at the end of this I discuss my reasoning for the title) and though usually 50% or more of the program consists of art

songs, it also may include non-art song recordings for context or variety. But all art song is ok, too.

This variety can include other vocal music from opera, cantata, or oratorio; chamber music or solo piano; solo instrumental with or without piano accompaniment; orchestral symphonic music.

There's lots of classical music to choose from!

So now when I request that a composer send me his/her recent recordings of art songs, I include a request for non-song compositions as well. (Yes, Virginia, wonderful art songs are being written right now and all over the world!)



Former President and General Manager of HPR, Michael Titterton and I working on the 15th Anniversary program of *Great Songs*.

Further, I began to offer original texts and translations, so that liste

texts and translations, so that listeners could follow along with the songs on their tablets, computers, or smartphones. Since few people seemed to take advantage of this, I gradually stopped. I also play the songs more than once, when possible. The listener can hear the same song with different singers, different genders, vocal ranges, different styles, even different eras of recordings. All this offers the listener a chance to become familiar with (and enjoy more) the beautiful songs.

Special programs have included the international art song contest (now canceled). The most important program celebrated the 30th anniversary of art song on HPR

with a Labor Day program on art song composers speaking about their labor as well as suggesting which of their art songs could be included on the program.

I record and edit the programs so I no longer have any funny stories about

mistakes being broadcast.

As I age, my voice, diction, even imagination aren't what they were. Wanting art song to still be heard on at least one radio station in the world, I trained Blair Boone-Migura to take over all aspects of the program. He started his first one in August 2016 and with a few breaks continued until January 2020. It was thrilling to find someone so knowledgable about art song. Not only has he studied languages, voice, and piano, Blair is also the founder/ president of the Art Song Preservation Society of New York. He teaches art song at the University of Hawaii, Manoa. He's become a friend, even though he isn't now producing programs.



Blair Boone-Migura and me

Now I'm healthy enough to again produce the programs myself, as well as prepare some Evergreens of both Great Songs and SaoS for broadcast when I'm not able. Right now (June 2020), even after all these years I'm still having fun thinking up new themes, writing the scripts, voicing them, and finally doing the technical work of production.

It's amusing to consider that I've been broadcasting vocal music on public radio since 1972. The Lotte Lehmann League website offers an archive since 2013.

## Singing and other Sins

Why "Singing and other Sins"? There are several reasons for the name change. When I began *Great Songs* in 1988, "song" meant something that was sung. Now, it can mean almost anything: an opera track or a movement from a symphony, a pop song, or a movie soundtrack. Almost anything that can be downloaded. So the word "song" wasn't relevant any longer for a program featuring art song, which is indeed singing.

The "sins" portion comes about because we are part of a civilization for which singing is certainly viewed with suspicion. If you were to walk down the street singing, (outside of Italy), you would be judged insane, drunk, or exhibitionist. In other words, singing in most cultures is just not done. Classical singers are mocked "the fat woman" and except for the Pavarotti's of the world, derided.

The word "other" in the title refers to my present belief that I offer art song in the context of other music of the composer or period, thus providing context. Almost all art song composers were prolific in many genres; non-art song examples of their work can allow the listener to better enjoy art song and appreciate the whole body of compositions in which a serious composer finds expression. It's a pleasant challenge for me to find non-art song that works between the art songs. This music shouldn't be jarringly different but rather act as an intermezzo or interlude.

Fitting all the words of *Singing and other Sins* together should provide a bit of fun, something like the book title from a few years ago: "Men, Women, and Tenors."

### List of My Interviews

I have assembled a list of the musicians who have allowed me to interview them for one project or another (usually for the radio). With something between bragging and feeling honored, I offer the list here. Some of the people aren't necessarily famous but brought an area of expertise that



Blair & Gary: Argento interview

enhanced the broadcast. The hyperlinks will take you to the SaoS website archive so you can hear the programs of those interviewees.

**Elly Ameling**, soprano, after a Honolulu recital. She spoke of her studies with Bernac, including thoughts on how she would retire.

**Dominick Argento**, composer, in celebration of his 91st birthday, discussing his art song cycles as a part of his life. He died shortly thereafter.

**Adelheid Armhold**, mezzo-soprano, had been a Lieder specialist in Germany. Left for South Africa where she had a decent career. She ended up in Kailua, where I interviewed her. At the end of the interview, she sang a phrase of Beethoven's "Ich liebe dich." She was in her late 90s at the time. I didn't record it.

**Dalton Baldwin**, pianist, talking about coaching with Lehmann (and Souzay), I recorded this for *Lotte Lehmann & Her Legacy Volume II*.

**Mike Becker**, trombonist, on his love for Fischer-Dieskau as well as for playing Lieder on the trombone. The resulting program offered the original song and his transcription for trombone with piano.

Virginia Bennett, University of Hawaii professor; her specialty was Russian. We did the complete songs of Mussorgsky; on another program, we offered songs of

Tchaikovsky; we recorded other Russian programs. She also helped me write scripts on various Russian composers.

William Bolcom and Joan Morris, composer/pianist and wife/mezzo, for a program of their light historic American songs collaboration.

Robin Craver, a soprano living in Hawaii, who'd studied with Lehmann. She told some interesting tales on mic, for a LL program.

Cuenod at 105

**Hughes Cuénod**, a tenor with "no voice," who recorded into his 80s. He remembered seeing Lehmann in Vienna opera roles and spoke about his own career. I interviewed him several times

(by phone), in one case he sang a phrase of a Lied and a mélodie to demonstrate the stylistic difference. I didn't notice a disparity.

**Susan Duprey**, then voice student, now choral conductor, helped with a radio program on Songs About Sleep.

**Virginia Dupuy**, mezzo-soprano, who recorded Argento's *Diary of Virginia Woolf*, introduced the work on air.

**Drew Eckart**, cellist, with a great love of art song, helped in designing and voicing the script on the best performances of the *Four Last Songs* of Strauss.

**Lore Fischer**, German former mezzo-soprano, who often gave master classes in Honolulu on her way to or from Japan. I've forgotten the program that she helped with. Perhaps I only interviewed her but didn't record it.

Beebe Freitas, the foremost collaborative pianist in Honolulu, demonstrated at the piano, various aspects of the art of the accompanist for my radio program. You can hear these in two memorial programs.

**Vicki Gorman**, soprano, active in Honolulu during the 1990s and after, spoke on the modern songs that she liked to sing.

**Dale Hall**, a former professor of music at the University of Hawaii. His specialty is American classic songs. He helped with a program demonstrating the art of pop singing.

**Thomas Hampson**, baritone, for a program of his recordings.



**Dana Hanchard**, soprano, who has specialized in performance practice Baroque singing, as well as "pop"-tinged modern music. She introduced some of her recordings.

**Marilyn Horne**, recorded at her hotel room, for a radio program of her recordings at the time she was retiring from the stage.

**Helen Jepson**, former Met opera soprano, famous in the 1930s–40s, on her life as a star. Sadly this DAT got erased before I could even broadcast the interview.

**Thomas Jöstlein**, horn player, helped design and voice a radio program on songs with important horn lines.

**Annette Johannson**, soprano, and voice professor at the University of Hawaii, Manoa. She helped with programs on Swedish composers and introduced some songs composed for her with her own singing.

**Gilbert Kalish**, pianist, first worked for years with Jan de Gaetani, then after her death with others, including Dawn Upshaw.

Judy Kellock, soprano, helped with several programs of modern vocal music.

**Lotte Lehmann** let me interview her for her 85th b'day as well as a Lauritz Melchior memorial. You can hear these from earlier in this chapter.

Christa Ludwig, mezzo-soprano, to celebrate her 85th birthday.

Alma McGoldrick, British national, helped with songs to Shakespeare words.

Rabbi Maggid helped design a High Holy Days radio program.

**Gerdine Markus**, mezzo soprano and Dutch national, co-hosted a program of Dutch composers.

**Eric Mathis**, Canadian trombonist, with a love of Lieder. He aided my research and was on the mic for a program on Canadian composers.

**Andrea Matthews**, visiting soprano, who demonstrated for the microphone to let the audience know something about vocal technique.

Mildred Miller, mezzo-soprano, to celebrate her 90th birthday. She talked about working with Bruno Walter on the Mahler *Lied von der Erde*.

Katsuumi Niwa, tenor and voice professor in Japan, helped with programs on the history of Japanese classical song.

**Karl Pittuch**, then principal French horn of the Honolulu Symphony Orchestra; helped with program on art song with French horn obligato.

André Previn spoke about working with Lehmann in the MGM movie Big City.

**Hermann Prey**, baritone, on his comprehensive series of recordings on the history of Lieder, recorded for Phillips. I taped him in Munich (1973), sent the tapes to BAI, and have just discovered a reel of the interview!



**Josh Ranz**, then clarinetist with the Honolulu Symphony Orchestra; helped with a radio program on songs with clarinet obligato.

Ned Rorem, composer, many interviews to celebrate his October birthdays for both Great Songs as well as for Singing and other Sins.

Steven Salter, baritone, on the difficulty of being a black opera singer.

William Scherer, then University of Hawaii professor and Goethe expert, helped with several Goethe radio programs.

**Sissel Irene Sødel**, soprano, Norwegian national, who studied voice at UH and spoke on Norwegian art song.

Frederica von Stade, mezzo soprano, on her career.

**Risë Stevens**, mezzo-soprano, recalled her work on stage and as a student of Lehmann. Not recorded, but I took extensive notes which she helped edit by mail. I'd brought two dozen white roses with me as a gift for the famous Rosenkavalier. She appeared to be delighted with the roses but immediately handed them to her maid. The apartment was one of the most elegant NYC places I'd ever seen.

**Caitlin Tong**, a 10-year-old child who sent in a winning entry for a contest, helped with a program of art songs that especially appeal to kids.

**Damien Top**, French tenor, on a program of mélodie

George Walker, composer, and pianist, on his life as a composer

**Dan Welcher**, composer/conductor, on his art songs

**Robert White**, tenor, gave a long interview but I didn't record it or take notes.



Caitlin Tong was the winner in one of our *Great Songs* contests and so she had the opportunity to co-host a broadcast.

Dr. Lesley A. Wright, University of Hawaii musicologist, helped with a program on Meyerbeer songs.



## 30th Anniversary of Art Song on Hawaii Public Radio

Here's the press release that was distributed to mark the occasion.

In the spring of 1988, after working on UCSB's Lotte Lehmann Centennial, I approached then HPR music director (and one of the initial founders) Bob Miller, to ask if we could broadcast a Lehmann special. He was enthusiastic and when there was a good response, I suggested a regular program featuring art song. Bob knew that I'd produced radio specials for WBAI in New York City, so he figured that I'd do ok, but nonetheless stayed with me for the first few programs helping to splice the reel-to-reel tape of the singing from LPs and of course, my commentary. Soon I was left to my own devices and the program I called Great Songs joined other such art song-centric broadcasts heard across the U.S., Canada, and Europe. Now, 30 years later, I'm sad to report that HPR's Singing and other Sins (the name changed some years ago when "song" lost its meaning) is the only regularly scheduled art song program in the world!

I haven't produced this broadcast alone. There have been the engineers such as Charles Hussen, Jason Taglianetti, and the co-hosts including Joan Canfield, Joanna Takagi, and Amy Healey. Then, covering my heart attack and lasting almost three years, Maya Hoover took over with help from her engineer-husband Barett. And from 2016–2020, the art song expert Blair Boone-Migura shared the programs.

One of the special aspects of producing the program for years is access, usually through interviews, to some of my heroes of art song. The list of stars (at least in my firmament) is long, even sparkling: singers Marilyn Horne, Thomas Hampson, Elly Ameling, Hughes Cuénod, Christa Ludwig, Mildred Miller, Frederica von Stade; pianists Dalton Baldwin, Beebe Freitas, Gilbert Kalish; composers Dan Welcher, William Bolcom, Ned Rorem, George Walker, Dominick Argento.

To celebrate the 30th anniversary of the program this year's Labor Day program (on September 1, 2018) features American composers of art song. First, you'll hear them describe how each one writes a song and then we'll play examples of their craft. The composers include Dominick Argento, Lori Laitman, William Bolcom, Larry Alan Smith, and Peter Askim. This special is available in the <u>archive</u>.

Finally, I'd like to address the loyal listeners to either Great Songs or Singing and other Sins. You've been vocal in your own ways: it's always gratifying to read what the audience thinks of our choices of songs, singers, pianists, composers, etc. and what we could do better. Thank you for your interest and support.



Blair with me at the station

#### 00

# Studying Voice at 65



The list of my frustrated voice teachers is long, but my limits didn't deter me. I really couldn't sing well, but I never got nervous in front of teachers or audiences. It seemed such a natural thing to do. In my 50s I'd studied with UH professor Annette Johansson, but it was more to help my radio voice than to really learn to sing. Dennis and I decided that since I wasn't playing bass anymore I should sing, with him as my pianist. Various dedicated teachers met with us in Kailua where we developed a broad repertoire of German, French, Italian, and English

Dennis & me in Rorem's "Stopping by Woods" language songs. It was difficult to learn the poems, but Dennis was certainly challenged to play the difficult piano parts, so we had a lot of fun.

I approached Dale Hall, who'd accompanied me when I'd played bass in nursing homes and he was enthusiastic about the new repertoire. He also wanted to play solo pieces, especially his arrangements of the American songbook. And that's also mostly what I sang. We did often put in an art song or two, usually



Kazuyo singing at a nursing home.

something in English, but folk songs, Gershwin etc., made up the bulk of our program. Eventually, we invited my neighbor, soprano Kazuyo Takagi-Butts to join us. I'd been singing one Japanese song, but she sang a long list of songs that our Japanese and Japanese/American audience members enjoyed.

At the Big Island Hawaii Performing Arts Festival, in addition to being the resident musicologist/MC, I studied with all the wonderful, patient voice teachers. I sang in their recital programs with the very best pianists accompanying. What a joy. But I could never get my sound to really come out. It always seemed stuck somewhere back in my throat. I read the books, listened carefully to everything that the various vocal experts taught, practiced diligently, but it always sounded cloudy, dark, unprojected. And lacked vibrato!

Here an example from a lesson with Maya Hoover; a 15 minute home recital may be found at the end of this chapter.

Dale moved to Atlanta so we stopped singing in the nursing homes. Though in 2018 I began studying with the help of



I really enjoyed interacting with the residents. They seemed to enjoy it as well.

YouTube, it hasn't gone far enough to allow me to consider returning to public singing. Also, no pianist.

Here are some of my singing experiences, mostly in retirement and nursing homes. In the latter, the residents were a lot more like hospital patients, frequently in beds, sometimes immobile, often asleep.

One moving memory is of visiting the St. Frances home on the Pali Hwy

where the patients were in palliative Hospice care. The only piano was in the lobby, so that's where Dale played while Kazuyo and I went room to room to sing what we heard Dale playing. The sound was usually so indistinct that we were really visiting the room on our own with a single patient. In one of them, the woman responded a bit, but she was drawn up in almost a fetal position. I sang Stephen Foster's "Beautiful Dreamer" then moved on to the next room. When I came out of that second room I saw that the staff had pulled the curtains on the first one: she'd died just after "I'd sung her to death."

In another home for the seriously ill seniors, I ended up sitting next to a woman on a chair behind her walker.

Dale and I performed "I hear the Maui waltz" and, as I often did, I sang directly to the woman. She cried, but rather stoically; I later learned that she had Alzheimer's and was actually from Maui.

There's a beautiful home that's been converted to a facility for Alzheimer's as

well as other dementias, again, not far from the Pali Hwy. We performed many times there. They had a huge poodle that roamed the place, adding to the feeling of a welcoming
atmosphere. But, as
often happens with
this type of audience,
keeping their
attention wasn't easy.
At one point though,
I was singing a
Hawaiian song, when
one of the women
near the front who'd



seemed comatose, her head hanging on her chest, looked up, started singing along with the words becoming really engaged.

This same kind of involvement occurred in another home that seemed more like a hospital than a residence: I was singing an old familiar Hawaiian song when from the back I could hear someone humming along. I located the man in a wheelchair, obviously a stroke victim. I bent over to sing more directly with his humming. It was a moving experience, at least for me.

And that's often the point. Though we of course, wanted to distract, entertain, or engage our seniors, we were often the beneficiaries of their feedback. At the Lunalilo Home, we were treated to a whole concert of Hawaiian music by the kupuna who obviously worked on such music daily. They were so happy to repay us with the same kind of gift that we'd given them. That it made it very satisfying.

In a senior daycare center in Mo'ili'ili the crowd was so effusive in their applause and appreciation I got a rush of adrenalin that mimicked a heart attack. So after dropping Dale off at his apartment I went to the Kaiser ER which at that time was right at the corner of Pensacola and King. As so often with these mock heart attacks, it was really some kind of mental state, perhaps initiated by a rush of hormones, maybe a kind of PTSD or something similar.

At one senior daycare residence, we arrived to find the piano in such bad shape that it was not playable. I sang a cappella for a bit, the seniors sang while playing along on their ukuleles or guitars. We ended up having fun, but you can imagine that Dale was upset at not being able to play.

I made it a point of singing Gershwin's "Embraceable You" kneeling in front of the ladies while, if they seemed to want it, holding their hand. They'd smile, flirt a bit, and often wouldn't let go when, on the next verse, I tried to move on to the next woman. It was touching how much they loved touch!

It was memorable for me to sing in the various retirement homes in which Nancy Hedemann lived (see "Old Ladies & a Few Old Men" in Volume 2). She was always jolly, calling out her enthusiastic praise even while I was still singing.

After we performed our little recital at the elegant Kahala Nui, the staff thanked us, revealing that one of the ladies in the audience had turned 100 that day. I went to congratulate her, expecting to find someone emaciated or limited. Instead, a vital upright woman greeted me, answered my questions, so I ended up learning where she'd been born (Maui) and what she did when she first arrived in Honolulu.

I remember performance at Kahala Nui when friend, and former sax player, Barett Hoover joined me, I brought my bass, and with Dale, we performed a little American song-book jazz. Afterward, we reverted to the standard vocal program.

We were often offered little snacks after our performances. They were often generic things of almost laughably small dimensions. But once in a while, there'd be home-baked cookies or cakes.

Here's a dinner performance that pianist/coach/conductor Timothy Long and I gave of Wolf's "Fußreise" or "Hike" with my introduction.

Then you can hear a 15-minute house concert with my introductions removed. There is a wide variety of art song; my pianist is Susan Spangler.

On the following page, you'll find recordings of some of my voice lessons. "Fußreise"

15 Minute Art Song-Recital

Juliana Gondeck is a respected voice teacher and singer. She taught several summers at HPAC in Waimea. Always understanding, constantly giving suggestions to improve my sound, Ms. Gondeck never lost patience. I

Gondeck Lesson

Kurt Ollmann and his partner (adding suggestions as well as playing piano) only

sang in private lessons as well as in master classes, but no break-through.

taught at HPAC for one summer. I had several lessons with him, we got along well. I have admired his singing for years. He was accustomed to teaching older singers (I was 67), but didn't have the success with me that he hoped to enjoy. It must have been as frustrating for him as it was for me.

Ollmann Lesson

Robin Buck offers me a mostly technical lesson. That means less interest in a particular song, its interpretation, or its musicality. These technical aspects are necessary to

**Buck Lesson** 

improve one's voice, but I lacked and continue to lack the ear to employ them myself. Successful teaching needs a better student.

Pamela Tung was a piano coach at HPAC. A coach knows a lot about vocal technique, which you'll hear her offer me. I sing the song the Lotte Lehmann Foundation commissioned from Ned Rorem: "I Never Knew." You'll hear that I struggle to sing it, while Ms. Tung keeps offering good advice.

Tung Coaching

Daniel Teadt is a successful baritone who sings professionally all over the world.

He supplements his opera and recital work with on-line lessons. He was helpful, patient, never losing his focus.

To all my teachers I'd like to offer my thanks, acknowledging their expertise, patience, as well as their encouragement. Perhaps in another life on another planet, I'll be an excellent singer. So far, within my limitations, it has at least been fun.



#### -010-

# Back to School at 70

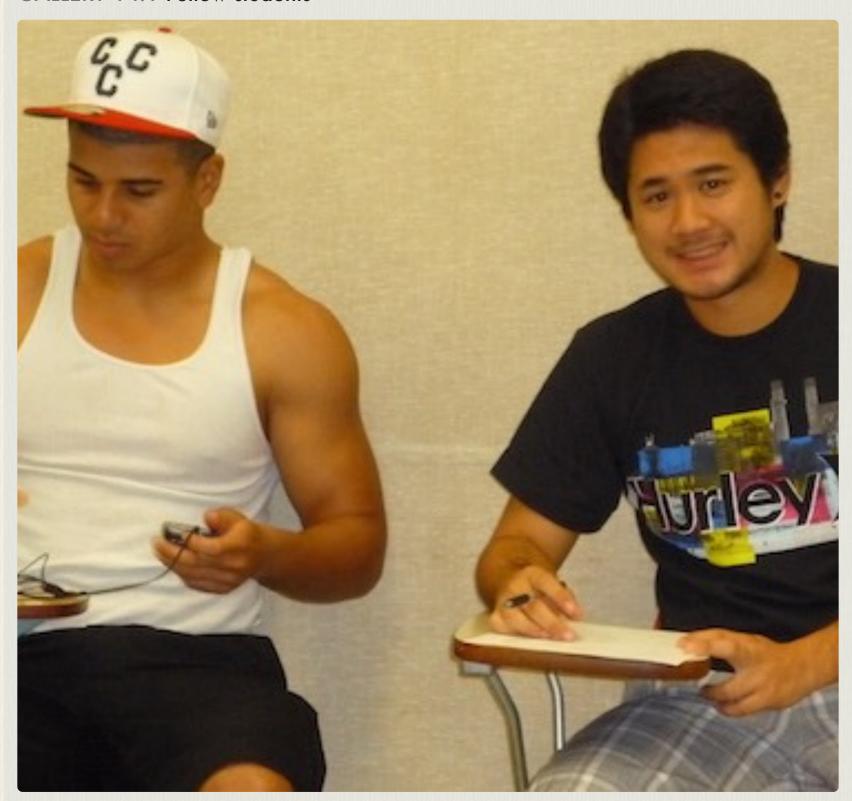


I discovered that people over 65 could attend classes without charge at the University of Hawai'i Manoa, no credit. I immediately began studying. There were good professors there, but too many mediocre students. But one of the major benefits (besides learning a lot) was being in touch, at the age of 70, with young people aged 18–20. I learned as much about the younger generation as I did in the actual classes. We old folks could study anything we wanted (with the professors'

approval) with no charge and no limit. For me, that was like a proverbial aged-kid in the candy store!

Over the three years, I took courses in advanced German and Spanish, as well as Indian Philosophy, Chorus, History of Opera, Early Music History, History of

GALLERY 14.1 Fellow students



Some of the students were hunks, but that didn't mean they knew how to learn.













Germany, American Literature from 1850–1950 (I'd never even read Huckleberry Finn!) and a course which covered the writers Emily & Charlotte Brontë, and Jane Austin. I even gave a short lecture in that class on the poetic beauty of Charlotte's writing because the professor's interest was only in plot/theme/development.

I thoroughly enjoyed those courses, did all the homework, wrote the assigned papers, took all the tests (except in the music classes).

I sang in a concert at St. Andrews with the University Chorus conducted by Miguel Filipe in his first year at UH. He is no longer in Hawaii. All these courses are offered free for us as a part of the diversity program called Na Kapuna.

Joseph Cardinale, my professor of American Lit from 1850–1950 was exceptional:



Dr. Cardinale back East with his son

he'd often break up the class into groups of 3 or 4 to have us analyze a Dickinson poem or some other amazing work. I discovered how little he knew of classical music when I proposed various pieces that seemed to illustrate the feeling of Hemingway or Elliot. So he started coming to the condo to study classical music with me. He absorbed each lesson like a sponge and became a friend, who visited me in 2017 when he returned from the Mainland to defend his dissertation and receive his doctorate. I had reading deadlines, needed to be able to discuss the material, ready to takes tests on these

books was a challenge that I enjoyed meeting. Not only had I never read the standard American works, but the English authors were also unknown to me.

Other important professors included (Swiss-born) Dr. Niklaus Schweizer, who knew every aspect of German history, philosophy, and literature. He was also a fluent speaker of Hawaiian as well as Tahitian! UH Manoa is certainly lucky to have him. Here's a paper (actually my own Fairy Tale) that I wrote for his course

on Romantic German Literature. It hasn't been corrected by Dr. S.

Es war einmal ein König, der hatte einen gut aussehenden Sohn, der Prinzchen hiess, denn er war klein und ein bisschen gebückt. Er hiess auch "Euer königlicher junger edler Prinz" und hatte auch Vornamen wie Ehrenreich Bonaventura Hyacinth Rofrano Wolfram Augustus, aber seine Familie taufte ihn heimlich Frosch. Und wisst ihr warum "Frosch"? Zuerst, waren seine Ohren so klein, dass man merkt sie kaum. Ausserdem war er überall nicht haarig, sondern kahl. Und, ja, sah er doch ein bisschen blass aus. Nicht nur matt, sondern auch ein bisschen käsig. Aber, seid geduldig, liebe Leser.



Dr. Schweizer

Die Königin dachte, dass Prinzchen das schönste Lebewesen der Welt sei, vor allem, weil er ihr Gnädiges Söhnchen war. Übrigens hiess die Königin "Euer Hochwohlgeboren", obwohl sie gar nicht so hoch aussah. Sie war so sehr gebückt dass sie die hochwohlgeborenen Zehe erreichen könnte ohne sich mühe zu geben.

Prinzchen Frosch liebte zwei Tätigkeiten. Zuerst, dachte er immer daran, eine Prinzessin zu finden. Sie sollte schön sein, und nicht nur schön, sie sollt auch das Wasser mögen, weil das Schwimmen seine zweite Manie war. Er schwamm ausserordentlich gut. Es war wirklich so eine Besessenheit, dass er sogar in dem Burggraben (den der Hof den Froschteich nannte) schwamm. Prinzchen wollte immer nackt baden, deshalb schwamm er hauptsächlich nachts.

Eines nachts, als er völlich nackt schwamm, sah er, wie im Traum, eine Prinzessin, ein Spiegelbild von alle Prinzessinnen, die über das Wasser schwebte: "sie sieht leicht wie eine Fee aus" und "hab' ich endlich solch ein Vermögen?" dachte die prinzliche Hoheit, und schwamm (natürlich mit dem Froschschwung) so schnell wie möglich dem Gespenst nach. Aber, um so schneller er schwamm, desto weiter war das durchscheinend gekleidete Geisterbild entfernt. "Ob dass ein Irrlicht sei?" fragte sicht Prinzchen ganz erschöpft.

In der nächsten Nacht hatte seine Hoheit ein Fischernetz mitgebracht. "Das Netz ist so fein, sie wird es nicht merken und ich kann sie leicht fangen," zitterte mit Erwartung Prinzchen. Plötzlich war die Prinzessin wieder da! Aber diesmal hat er Glück! Ganz leise warf Prinzchen das Fischnetz in die Luft und rasch hat er sie erwischt. Sie hat überhaubt keinen Schall geschrieen. Und jetzt, und jetzt, liebe Leser, ist ein Wunder passiert.

Die Prinzessin flog wirklich, weil sie ganz stark, aber durchsichtige Flügel hatte. Es war, als ob sie halb eine Grosslibelle wäre, oder sogar mehr als halb. Geschmackvoll: keine Fliege die über Müll fliegt! Und als sie Prinzchen genauer ansah, dachte sie, "Er sieht einmallig aus, und ist das alleschönsten Geschöpf das ich je mit meine 20,000 Augen gesehen hab" und plötzlich küsste sie Prinzchen.

Doch der war verschwunden! An seiner Stelle stand ein beachtlicher Frosch, der ganz schnell mit seiner 30,4 cm langen Zunge die Grosslibelle Prinzessin frass. Aber nicht zerstörte oder verdaute. Gar nicht! Denn er war ebenso plötzlich verliebt. Sie kitzelt ihn bis heute von drinnen. Und so lebten sie glücklich bis ans ihr Ende.



German instructors Anna Hawajska-Waters, Dr. Schweizer, Christina Gerhardt (with whom I didn't study) and Maryann Overstreet.

Dr. Maryann Overstreet taught me more advanced German language. Here's a paper I wrote for her (also uncorrected).

Der Dirigent schrie: "Herr Hickling, Sie haben schon wieder Ihre Stelle nicht erfüllt." Ich habe geantwortet, wütend, "Sie haben mich als Ihren Prügelknabe einmal zuviel benutzt. Sie können einander suchen. Ich schmeisse diesen Job."

Vor vielen Jahren, habe ich in einem Kammerorchester gespielt. Wir haben meistens Konzertreisen in den Vereinigten Staaten gemacht. Ich habe Kontrabass gespielt; dazu war ich auch der Bibliothekar. D. h. für jedes Konzert musste ich die Hefte mit den Noten füllen, mit jedem Stück, das wir spielen würden. Ich wusste in voraus die Spielreihe von Konzerten, denn alles wird im Programmheft gedrückt.

Ab und zu auf Tournee mussten wir Proben spielen. Während mein erstes Jahr mit dem Orchester, hat der Dirigent geschimpft, dass ich irgendwelche Stücke im Heft vergessen habe. Endlich habe ich ihn verlangt, mir eine Liste mit alles was er wollte für jede Probe zu geben. Dass hat geholfen. Der Dirigent gab mir die Liste. Aber nicht genau. Während der Probe würde er etwas ändern, und ein Musikstück, das nicht auf der Liste stand, verlangen. Und dann hat er laut geschrieen. Und lang. Er war Ungar, hatte also ein Temperament! Das letzte mal, das er schreiend gebrüllt hat, habe ich den Engagement beendet. Was danach passiert ist, braucht einen längeren Aufsatz.

The following is a Spanish paper written on the theme: My Favorite Spot.

Mi lugar favorito en O'ahu se llama Koloko, también conocido como Shark's Cove. Está localizado cerca Sandys, pero más al este. Hay más que solo un "cove"; hay dos bahías grandes, largas, delgadas y tranquillas.

A la boca de cada bahía las rocas de lava confrontan la furia de las olas feroces como filas de un ejército armado. Se puede andar sobre las rocas, pero solamente con zapatos gruesos y fuertes. Aun chancletas pesadas serían destrozadas. Pero vale la pena pasar sobre esas rocas raspeladas porque se llega a la orilla del mar, donde hay espacio para sentarse, relajar y observar las olas que tronan como platillos de latón que explotan a la culminación de una sinfonía de Tchaikowsky.

Con el viento contínuo hay tantas ráfagas del océano que casi nos golpean y de veras nos pican. Aquí se nota que la naturaleza no siempre es dulce y suave. Gotas de agua atacan la piel como agujas y rapidamente las gafas del sol se cubren con agua salada.

Y hablando de sal, no se olvide buscar en las piedras los estanques pequeños donde se ha evaporado el aqua, dejando, como regalos a los visitantes que avistan, la sal del mar que gasta más que salada. Me preguntas, ¿porque? Es que tiene los minerales y otros elementos del inmenso mar, llevado a Koloko después de bailar, correr, nadar y sobrevivir quien sabe cuantos siglos y kilómetros en el mar. Allá donde los corales les han comido, (su alimento), usado, crecido, y al fin vuelven mandado al mar.

Después de la experiencia tan fuerte y abrumadora, se busca un lugar tranquillo, calmado y como antes, sin gente. Hay que regresar al mero rincón de una de las dos bahías. Por detrás, cada bahía tiene árboles bajos, y arbustos en cuyas sombra se puede acostarse, aun bañar los pies en el agua serena. Después del violento mar, no lo esperes: ¡no hay ningunas olas aquí! Se puede leer un libro, meditar sin molestias o simplemente dormir.

Así es, Koloko, mi lugar favorito, tiene todo lo que me gusta: no hay turistas, y aparte de unos pescadores, no hay gente; pero sí hay muchas más cosas para gozar. Hay olas grandes y nada de olas.

Another Spanish paper is about important dates that everyone should know.

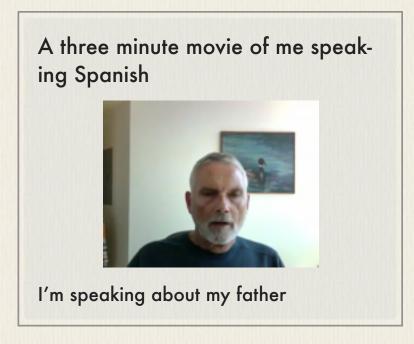
Hay fechas que todo el mundo sabe, reconoce o comprende. Son fechas, las cuales tienen ecos históricos, como "Quatorze Juillet," "Cinco de Mayo," "Fourth of July," etc., pero hay otras fechas que deben ser famosa y renombrada o mejor dicho, de mala fama. Es el 12 de marzo 1938, el día de "Anschluss" de Austria. La Wikipedia dice que la palabra significa "unión," "reunión," o "anexión," pero no dice tanto sobre el cambio psicológico y real que pasó, o la significación triste, porque en la historia del mundo, nunca habría tal día.

Hitler había tenido años de influencia en Austria; su partido nazi era legal, pero no había tenido poder en el gobierno. El canciller fascista Dollfuss fue asesinado en 1934 por los nazis austriacos. No entró Hitler en Austria entonces, porque Mussolini ayudó y apoyó a la familia de Dollfuss.

El seguidor de Dollfuss, Schuschnigg, continuó el sistema político de Dollfuss, "manteniendo una dictadura nacionalista." (Wikipedia) En Febrero 1938 Hitler le invitó a Schuschnigg a Alemania y demandó que los nazis austriacos tuvieron más poder. Capituló a Hitler, pero más tarde, cambió su manera de pensar y anunció un plebiscito sobre la pregunta de unión con Alemania. (Encyclopedia Britannica) Pero solamente días antes del plebiscito, lo canceló, siguiendo órdenes de Hitler. Resignó y ordenó al ejército austriaco no resistir a los Alemanes. El 12 de marzo, entraron en Austria las tropas alemanas sin disparar ni un tiro. No solamente que no había violencia, pero, la gente austriaca ha dado la bienvenida a las tropas. La damas echaron flores y la "guera" fue nombrada "Blumenkrieg" o "La Guerra con Flores". Unos días después de la entrada, llegó Hitler, y el 15 de marzo (o el 2 de abril, según otro fuente) pronunció un discurso en la plaza central de Vienna, asistido por cerca de 200,000 ciudadanos animados. Y según los archivos de la ciudad de Linz, enseguida, el ejército de Austria fue incorporado al de Alemania.

Por evitar resistencia, después de unos cuantos días, miembros de otros partidos austriacos y muchos judios fueron capturados y hasta 70.000 mandado a los campos de concentración, ya establecido en Austria. El poder de la iglesia católica también apoyaba Hitler y sus leyes. La iglesia luterana, una minoría en Austria, dio la bienvenida al nuevo régimen. Los gobiernos de Gran Bretaña y EEUU no dijeron o hicieron nada contra la anexión.

No se da cuenta de 12 de marzo 1938, hasta ahora. El cambio de independencia y el odio a los judios en un solo día, fue uno de los cambios más grande de la histo-



ria de la humanidad. Había razones complicadas y profundas, pero estas razones necesitan otro ensayo.

My Indian Philosophy professor, Dr. Arindam Chakrabarti, was Indian. He had trouble speaking (a vocal problem that doctors couldn't

correct), so I had him try my tapping, but it



didn't help. Here are a few of the papers I wrote for him.

Vedanta vs Buddhism: How are they alike?

Both believe in re-birth and consciousness They believe in the causality which binds the result of an action to its cause

(karma), and in rebirth conditioned by that nexus. Both are convinced of the transitory, and therefore sorrowful character, of individual existence in the world; they hope to attain gradually to a redeeming knowledge through renunciation or meditation and they assume the possibility of a blissful or serene state, in which all worldly imperfections have vanished forever. They each believe in the possibility of ultimate human liberation or enlightenment. ego-effacing

Both Buddhists and Hindus accept the doctrine of reincarnation, engage in meditation, seek enlightenment. Both traditions understand material desire to be the cause of suffering, a suffering that exists only in the mind. Thus in both traditions, freedom from material desire is understood to be the end of suffering, thus the end of birth and death (reincarnation).

How are they different?

While both acknowledge reincarnation, their understanding of what it involves differs, as does the nature of each tradition's meditation, and their sense of enlightenment. Perhaps the most important difference is that Buddhism does not acknowledge the existence of God or an enduring notion of consciousness (the soul), whereas Hinduism acknowledges both of these.

Buddhists see only matter in constant transformation, seeking to do away with what they would call the misconception that we are individuals. For Buddhists, matter is all there is, and because matter is constantly transforming, any sense of self derived from identification with a particular transformation of matter is illusory.

Buddhists teach that by letting go of this mental identity one can become free from the notion of birth and death.

Hinduism, on the other hand, teaches that while matter is constantly undergoing transformation, consciousness is observing even fueling that transformation. It tells us that consciousness is distinct from matter, consciousness being the experiencer while matter that which is experienced. It also tells us that we (the soul) are consciousness--or a particle of it. Thus any sense of self that is based on identification with matter (body/mind) is an illusory one. In Hinduism, the true self (consciousness) is not a composite of our attachments or desires that undergoes transformation along with those attachments. Rather Hinduism teaches that the true self is the witness to matter's transformation, that by knowing our self (consciousness) and our source (God) we can become free from illusion and the cycle of birth and death.

My visual analysis (at the end of this following paper) so impressed Dr. Chakrabarti that he asked my permission to use it himself.

This paper will attempt to describe my reactions to the Hymn of Creation in the following sections: 1. How I understand the words. 2. My speculation as to why the writer(s) used mysteries and paradoxes. 3. My judgment as to the aesthetic result of the elements of the Hymn.

1. In writing of my understanding of the intent of the Hymn of Creation, I am purposely avoiding questioning anything that is not included in the Hymn. The words begin by presenting the conundrum of something neither existing nor nonexisting, with no heaven or atmosphere. The Hymn has me imagine what was hidden, where "that" was, who protected it, and its composition. Was it deep? Was it water? The sage(s) who wrote these words provide propositions that are suggested or hinted at, rather than telling the receiver specifics. In the second section of this paper, I speculate on why I believe this was done. Among these puzzles and mysteries is the thought that neither the end of life nor life eternal existed. Further, neither day nor night was distinguishable. But there was something: it had the power to breathe even if windless, but there was nothing else. As if this disclosure was too much concrete information, the Hymn follows these words with a description of darkness that was hidden by darkness: all chaos. For me, this is not such a difficult paradox that my mind rebels. I can imagine it. And then just a bit of something more familiar: an undefined ocean. Again, this is followed by a more obscure thought that everything that is about to become (or be unveiled?) is surrounded by nothingness or void. At this point in the Hymn, there is something fairly solid: a One that is initiated by heat. Since this heat reference is immediately followed by the mention of desire, there would seem to be a connection. Yet a further link: desire was initiated by thought. The writer(s) tells us that sages reveal to us the relationship of the existent to the non-existent (the One?), this not by using their rational minds, but from searching within the heart, which I understand as using intuition or non-rational thought. I develop this further in the second section of this paper. These sages, we are told, saw across everything, but there existed still no real up or down. The power of procreation, probably linked to the heat or desire already mentioned, follows. But once again, perhaps too much has been divulged, because the Hymn asks, who knows? Where did creation come from? As if to absolve the gods of any hand in this, we are informed that the gods came later. And the last verse supports this thought by questioning the origin of the creation, whether it was made. The inference is that it didn't need making but was already "there" and just needed manifesting, or some knowing thing to notice it. A final glancing mention is made of someone or something (the One?) that sees all of this and that might or might not know the answers. This final thought removes any suspicion that I may have had that I am being patronized. It is satisfying to read that no one may know for sure.

2. Continuing to avoid questioning what is not in the Hymn, I would like to speculate as to the reasons for various enigmas that I encountered. I can't assume that others perceive the Hymn as I do; these are my personal reactions. The originator(s) of the Hymn may have had an agenda that included the hope that the receiver could experience direct perception of the unknowable or indescribable. The mental state in which this may be realized can be induced by bewilderment. In other words, by stating the paradox that nothing and not-nothing both exist, the mind may do a kind of involuntary bounce away from rational, linear thinking. This allows the mind to open to non-temporal, completely unstructured, and uncritical awareness. Thus the originator(s) of the Hymn has the opportunity to open the mind of the listener/reader in a way that allows for the imagination to be stimulated and exhilarated far beyond what could occur from logical thinking. The result is that my mind delights in having its abilities tested, found able to imagine the unimaginable and take part in the kind of mystical experience that only such an aroused or elevated state can offer. Since the word paradox literally means beyond belief, the paradox may function to provide focus on the word or situation beyond what it first appears to be. This characteristic serves to create a new meaning in place of the original or conventional set of words. This way a non-sage doesn't feel so bad not understanding precisely some of the elements found in the Hymn. With the final paradox in the last line, stating that even the One may or may not know, my intelligence is not insulted and my longing for more information, a spiritual or mystic quest, stimulated.

A drawing may help describe what I mean specifically about temporal thinking. We usually think of time as: -- It has a beginning, proceeds to where we are now and will keep going, even after we're dead. When reading the Hymn of Creation, our linear, temporal mind expects a beginning before which nothing existed. If by the use of paradox such a strict time feeling is eliminated so we can intuitively perceive its possibilities as: -- or even ----. This is very freeing for the imagination, allowing for great leaps of mystical understanding that go beyond any limits of words. In a way, it seems that a place in my imagination is prepared for Brahman as described in the Upanishads.

3. Beyond the merits of the words, meaning, or goals of the Hymn, the aesthetic elements can be enjoyed, if for me, only in various translations. I do experience a structure or framework of impossibilities, possibilities, or questions that are in balance. If, for example, all the questions or all the hints had been bunched together, it would not be a satisfying whole. The writer(s) asked questions in lines 1.3 and 1.4 (Macdonnel translation), providing some tantalizing bits of information in lines 3.4 and 4.1. Because of this balance, the mind of the listener/reader never rebels with the thought that "this is absurd" either in its directness ("That One by force of heat came into being"), or obscurity ("Darkness there was at first by darkness hidden"). We are dealing with the unknowable, so we allow that only sages could uncover these mysteries. Because they expose their results in a mixture of information as well as ambiguity the mind stays open to enjoy the ride. Thus the Hymn begins with two lines of paradoxes followed by two lines of questions. Paradoxes then are followed by the direct hints of fire, god, desire, love, seed as well as just a suggestion that we are bound to all of this. The same aesthetic or poetic balance continues with a series of questions, again followed by an allusion to the command a certain power (the One?) possesses, coupled with the impression that it may know the answers or even this power may know nothing, another paradox. Although this aesthetic balance may have been unintended or intuitive, it is presented in a form the listener/reader can appreciate, even perhaps on an unconscious level.

Using Walter Maurer's translation, which employs fewer paradoxes than the Macdonnel, I provide a visual or schematic of the Hymn broken down into the elements suggested below. These responses are subjective. Sometimes a line will strike me as paradoxical, other times just vague. So I don't offer this schematic as a strict analysis, but rather a general feeling about each line.

Let the 000000's represent obscure, contradictory, or paradoxical words. The ???????s are simply questions. Let -----s stand for words that provide a tantalizing bit of understandable thought. And ++++++s offer something tangible for the mind to hold on to. Some lines mix these elements.

[For this memoir I present before my analysis, the translation by Wendy Dongier O'Flaherty.]

There was neither non-existence nor existence then.

There was neither the realm of space nor the sky which is beyond.

What stirred? Where? In whose protection?

Was there water, bottomlessly deep?

There was neither death nor immortality then.

There was no distinguishing sign of night nor of day.

That One breathed, windless, by its own impulse.

Other than that there was nothing beyond.

Darkness was hidden by darkness in the beginning, with no distinguishing sign, all this was water.

The life force that was covered with emptiness, that One arose through the power of heat.

Desire came upon that One in the beginning, that was the first seed of mind.

Poets seeking in their heart with wisdom found the bond of existence and non-existence.

Their cord was extended across.
Was there below? Was there above?
There were seed-placers, there were powers.
There was impulse beneath, there was giving forth above.

Who really knows? Who will here proclaim it?
Whence was it produced? Whence is this creation?
The gods came afterwards, with the creation of this universe.
Who then knows whence it has arisen?

Whence this creation has arisen
- perhaps it formed itself, or perhaps it did not the One who looks down on it,
in the highest heaven, only He knows
or perhaps even He does not know.

My symbolic analysis follows on the next page.

- 1.1 00000000000
- 1.2 -----00000
- 1.3
- 1.4 ?????????????
- 2.1 000000000000
- 2.2 -----00000
- 2.3 -----00000
- 2.4 +++++++
- 3.1 -----00000
- 3.2 +++++++
- 3.3 -----000000
- 3.4 -----
- 4.1 ----++++
- 4.2 +++++++
- 4.3 ++++++++
- 4.4 +++++++
- 5.1 -----000000
- 5.2 ?????????????
- 5.3 ++++++++
- 5.4 ++++----
- 6.1
- 6.2
- 6.3 ++++++++
- 6.4 ?????????????
- 7.1 ??????????????
- 7.2 ?????????????
- 7.3 ++++++++
- 7.4 0000000???????

Of course, I wrote many other papers, took copious quizzes, exams, and took part in the classroom work. Though I learned a lot in each course and found the teaching to be excellent (except for one American Poetry teacher whom I abandoned after two classes: she was completely disorganized and couldn't keep a thought going to the end of a single sentence. Maybe some dementia). The students were often overwhelmed with their lives: work, family (husbands, wives, kids), and parties. They often seemed badly educated by the previous schooling they'd had. This was usually the public schools of Hawaii. The non-Hawaii-born students were better prepared, having a far broader understanding of the world, history, art, literature, music, philosophy, languages, etc.

During one summer "off" from university studies, I took an ikebana course offered at the Linikona School of the Academy of Art (now known as the Honolulu Art Museum). Though I learned the basic formats for the ancient Japanese tradition of flower arranging, I missed having the background, the religious rituals associated with the art. There's a long history that I felt should have been part of the whole course. The two teachers (locally born Japanese male and female) were talented and helpful, but it just seemed to me so much flower arranging.

Here's one review of Dr. Cardinale I found. It offers some idea of his compelling teaching abilities.

I gotta say coming in as a freshman: I despised English. And what do you know I'm now a English major. Professor Joseph is truly one of a kind. His passion for English truly motivates. He is a very easy person to ask for help, and willing if you put the effort. Overall the best professor I ever had. A must if you want to learn a lot. Changed how I view life.

## Dr. Chakrabarti received the following review:

I love this professor! He is definitely my all time favorite. He is unbelievably intelligent, funny, nice...I feel like I learn so much from him. He always makes the boring readings clear and interesting. He has so much passion in his teaching. I love how he acts like he's going to try to get the class to all talk, but then he can't help himself and goes on and on...good thing that it's always interesting...I never mind staying overtime in that class.

Dr. Overstreet had mixed reviews, which I can't understand. Her inventive, imaginative teaching methods kept us constantly amused while at the same time learning. Here's one of the good reviews.

I adore her! She makes class super interesting and fun to attend. She really improved my German last semester and is always there to offer feedback. advice, and just to be there for you. You know what to expect on tests and homework is assigned every class but very simple. Take her classes if you really want to improve your German!

Dr. Leslie Wright, with whom I studied Opera as well as Early Music, has many negative reviews, but one is revealing:

I really enjoyed Dr. Wright's class, even though many people thought it was quite boring. I don't think anyone actually stays completely awake and focused for the entire semester, but as long as you make an effort to take consistent notes and read the textbook for any information you missed, you will do well.

Why you may ask, aren't I continuing to study at UH? I liked it all so much that I actually started another school year, but Dennis was so sick that he needed my attention. Even after he was over the initial problem that sidelined me from university study, I was still aware that he might require help that would break up my studies.

There were also logistical reasons: I had arranged to study on the days when I was at the condo. Taking the crowded bus was the main way I reached the campus; I also rode my bike, especially if I were only in classes on the lower campus. It was too much for me to ride further up the valley to reach the upper campus. As I aged, neither of these options was appealing.

Now I've discovered many opportunities for study online which I do enjoy. The major virtual learning that I've found useful is vocal instruction. Some excellent teaching has improved my timbre, even adding vibrato to the sound.

Dennis has DVDs of a first-rate, talented professor giving lectures, with music examples, on a wide range of classical composers. We've watched some of these together, both learning a lot. There are other fields (writing for instance) that one can also study with this series of DVDs, so that may be something I use.

#### C/70-

# The Famous Ones



With mezzo soprano Frederica von Stade aka Flicka

There are, of course, well-known, even famous ones to read about in the chapter called "My Conductors & Teachers." This chapter of "famous ones" are often completely unknown in the non-classical-music world, but they're the proverbial rock stars of mine. Lotte Lehmann has her own chapter. The following people will each receive the "story" treatment or more: Martial Singher, Natalie Limonick,

Jerome Robbins, Ned Rorem, Flicka, Risë Stevens, Gary Karr, Jim Foster, Garrick Ohlsson, Paul Sperry, and Herbert Zipper (also mentioned in "My Conductors").

\*Jerome Robbins \* I was warming up (alone) in the pit of the hall in Lincoln Center now called Koch. I was substituting for David Walter and wanted to learn the ballet/dance music we were about to rehearse. This was a week before the Stravinsky Festival for which I played all the rehearsals and performances. More on that later. Rehearsals with Jerome Robbins.

I was accustomed to attending as much of the New York City Ballet as possible, the night before having seen *Windmills*, a controversial ballet by Robbins with Japanese instruments played on stage and very slow movement by the soloist Edward Villella. As soon as the





work was over there was vociferous booing (as well as applause) and this intensified when Jerome Robbins, the choreographer, took his bow. While I was practicing in the pit the following night I recognized Robbins who was on stage doing some simple ballet moves. He was obviously trying to think of some new things for the Festival. When he paused I

called out to him (he hadn't noticed me previously), "Mr. Robbins, do they always boo your works?" He came over to me, sat on the edge of the stage with his legs dangling into the pit, good-naturedly answered. He was friendly, charming, even encouraging. We soon began to date (no sex). He even visited my shabby place on 64th street. Since I later was invited to his beautiful place on Long Island, he must have felt ill at ease in such dreary surroundings, but he still listened to some of the

recordings I played. It was there that I remember asking him if he ever directed opera (especially thinking of the Ring) when he told me that the Met never offered him enough rehearsal time for him to seriously consider it. Here are the "dates" that I remember: a trip to watch Whirling Dervishes from backstage. He'd been invited and was fascinated. A day trip to the beach, where Mr. Robbins carefully observed children at play. They were doing some fun leapfrogs and other athletic jumps that five-year-olds do so naturally. Once we were returning from some evening date, were walking along the streets of NYC, he looking down at the lines in the cement pavement of the sidewalk, when we began to discuss the theory of ballet or dance in general. His feeling was that it wasn't so much about movement as about dividing up time. The lines in the sidewalk divided the space, and as we walked over them, time. When I was out on Long Island with him (I assume it was his place, but have forgotten now) there were many other gay men there, one of whom tried to convince me to wear nicer clothes. He didn't realize that I was poor. While out there we saw some home movies that had actually inspired Watermill. Robbins and his friends obviously examined life in all its manifestations, then used these observations in their creative work. On this trip, or another, Robbins and I paddled out into the Sound in a little craft and he showed me the little unpopulated island called Robbins Island (no relation). We never did much NYC partying or even concert-going. Our dates tended to be more personal, without any physicality, more intimate. When Ann threw a farewell party for me as I was about to leave NYC for Munich, Robbins was invited but sent a gift instead: a set of Indian arrowheads with a note that he wanted to celebrate my American-ness. After I flew off to Munich Robbins continued to stay in touch by mail, even sending me Aaron Copland's address when I wanted to commission a small solo bass work. When I returned to visit NYC later (in the 1980s) I gave him a telephone call, but by that time he'd forgotten who I was.

\*\* Martial Singher \*\* This baritone/teacher took over the reins of the Music Academy of the West vocal department in 1962 following Lehmann's time there. I was present when he gathered the voice students together to discuss how he was going to handle the all-important master classes. (He also was going to teach privately in a studio.) This dapper Frenchman (with a strong, charming accent)

had a winning if demanding personality. He'd already pursued a successful career in Europe as well as at the Met, sung and recorded the recital literature, was blessed with a teacher's love of developing the best in his students, and sometimes showed off by singing in the master classes. I vividly remember his directing in the opera master classes in which he demonstrated the most effective ways to use the body to illustrate the character's feelings. When he demonstrated it was with a still serviceable baritone; he even made a few recordings of mélodie shortly after I left the MAW that aren't at all embarrassing. Like all teachers, he wanted his students to at least try it his way. Why would they study with him if they didn't?

We developed a bit of a personal relationship. He knew how attached I was to his student Katsuumi. Singher even encouraged me to "stage" the duet between Gilda and Rigoletto (the latter sung by Katsuumi, who was at that time a baritone) for a master class. My resulting arrangement was rather flat or predictable. He noticed my dismay, speaking in the class of the special difficulties of handling a duet in which both singers must ultimately face towards the audience (instead of each other...to whom they're singing).

I remember a specific idea he gave a baritone student Rigoletto. Since he's supposed to be hunchback Singher felt it was best to just choose one foot, turn that inward and limp hunched over that foot. Another memory I have is of the moment when the student Don Giovanni was downstage while there was action upstage. He sat in a kind of funk pretending to throw pebbles. Singher felt that it drew too much attention to the DG character while there was singing upstage.

At one point Katsuumi and I were having trouble with our landlord so we went to Singher's cottage to ask for advice. He was flattered but felt that he could do nothing but suggest following what the man wanted.

Singher saw me at both the art song and opera master classes, always cheerfully greeting me. I saw him for the last time at the Lehmann Centennial. He was so much older than when I knew him (it had been over 20 years!) that I hardly recognized him. After his death, I produced a tribute on my radio program that included both the recordings that he'd made in his prime as well as the "senior"

recordings that I mentioned above. I sent a copy to his widow; she replied with a courteous, heartfelt thank you.

On YouTube, you can experience Singher teaching master classes as well as hear his singing. His impeccable European manners are something that I witnessed in him as well as the many other émigrés with whom it was my pleasure to study or perform.

I'm reminded of other immigrants with whom I worked: Emanuel Bay, Heifetz' pianist, who taught us the rarely heard Mendelssohn sextet; Lehmann, of course; Maurice Abravanel, MAW conductor, who challenged us in the opera pit or orchestra concert; Paul Ulanowsky, LL's pianist who also taught at the Yale Summer School of Music & Art when I was there; Lucas Foss, UCLA conductor/composer who added to my experience of 20th-century orchestra performance; Eleazar de Carvalho, conductor of the ProArte Orchestra, never shirking the most demanding pieces including the Berlioz *Requiem*; as well as other conductors found in "My Conductors and Teachers."

These men and women exhibited a European charm, even courtliness, old-world knowledge, as well as musical experience that fascinated and educated me.

\*Jim Foster \* The American former director of the Honolulu Academy of Arts from 1963–1982, now called the Honolulu Museum of Art. He kindly consented to be interviewed by me for Public Radio's StoryCorps; this audio is on file at the Library of Congress. It seems superfluous for me to write what we



Jim Foster at one of his own exhibits: photography and pottery

discussed, so please set aside some time to listen to this historic conversation with someone who had such a huge impact on the Museum.

Even in his 90s, Jim continued to be active

artistically: photography, pottery, painting.

You can watch him play Bertoia's sounding sculpture.

Jim Foster Interview

### Jim Foster



Jim knew this sculptor personally



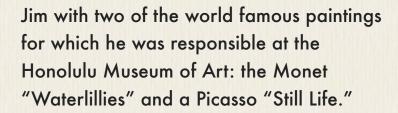














\* Natalie Limonick \* Another famous American who was important in my musical life. I first knew her at UCLA where she was active in the opera department, working with Jan Popper, playing piano, and coaching. I don't remember our initial contact, but I do remember her introducing the opera scenes that our orchestra accompanied. She'd worked with Lehmann at the MAW, even weaving LL stories into her introductions. Natalie was always warm, personable, and unaffected: the students felt that and responded by paying attention. She was also the pianist who played for the Japanese students that Dr. Popper had brought to UCLA. Since I was Katsuumi's pal, I was there for many house concerts. She frequently held parties for us students at her home. At some point Natalie and I became friends. This continued throughout her years when she'd moved from UCLA to USC and retirement. Natalie was also the director of the Opera Guild of Southern California. When, through the thrift store, we offered prizes to local singers, she vetted the tapes with me. Her comments were always spot on. Natalie could quickly recognize a singer who just copied recordings or another who had something original. She donated to the Lotte Lehmann Foundation (for which she was one of the original board members) always supporting my efforts for LL or art song. She advised and helped me develop several Foundation projects such as CyberSing and Lyric Languages. The last long visit I had with her was a trip to hear

Don Giovanni performed in Orange County. She had her reservations about a performance that I found excellent. Thereafter she began to lose her sharp mind: I'd phone from Hawaii, finding her less and less communicative. It was distressing because she'd been so articulate. I tried to have her record her LL memories for the tribute CD but it was too

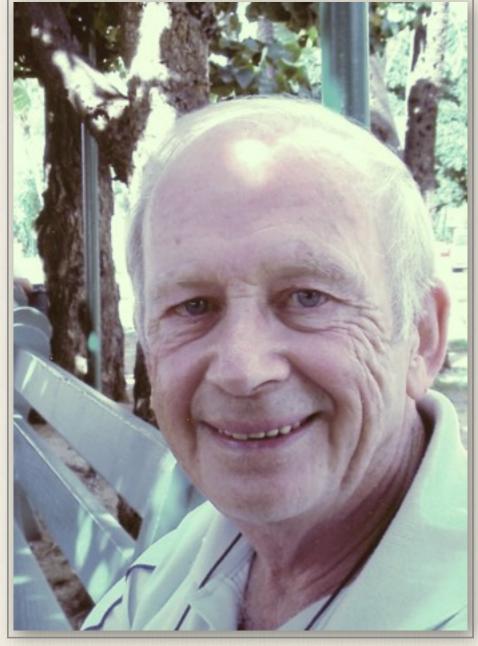


Natalie Limonick with me at the Lotte Lehmann Centennial in 1988.

late. She only responded with non-committal sounds. I choose to remember the vibrant, lively, multifaceted Natalie.

\*Dalton Baldwin \*I must admit to forgetting how I came to know this great collaborative pianist. Another American, I remember greeting him during a Honolulu hotel rehearsal he was playing for Elly Ameling. He allowed quietly that she was no Lehmann, whom he revered. I went to the Ameling recital and through Dalton's connection, recorded a solid interview with her for my radio program. Later I was able to meet with Dalton many times when he visited O'ahu on his way back from his Maui time-share. Each visit was a wonderful chance to catch up on each other's lives: his, on his way to or from Japanese recitals where he found the audience enraptured with mélodie. He often had discovered a new talented young singer. And I always had my various LL projects. He recorded a few LL stories for me which I used in Volume II of Lotte Lehmann & Her Legacy. He

was also kind enough to write the Foreword for Volume III of Lotte Lehmann & Her Legacy. Dalton's international recorded legacy needs no comment from me. It's his friendship and encouraging support that I wish to remember here. He was the first recipient of my World of Song Award presented at a 70th birthday celebration as a surprise. I was told that he was very moved, not only by the award but by the fact that it was given in Lehmann's name. What an honor it was for me to know such an intelligent, knowledgable, musical, gracious, gifted man.



Dalton Baldwin on a visit to Honolulu; photo by author

\*\*Gary Karr \*\* If you're not a bassist you may not know his name. But if you are, you probably own a bunch of his LPs or CDs. Karr is exactly my age but early on entered the exalted world of solo bass playing, making it a respected genre. Maybe this story belongs in my bass-playing chapter, but here it is for now: I was in the high school dance band, not really jazz, everything was written out on the sheet music I played. We didn't sound bad, but it was just kinda ho-hum. For some reason, we were scheduled to appear on a local LA television station. We had to wear light blue shirts, which would be picked up as white on the black and white cameras of the time. I was assembling my bass and music when I heard a guy my age playing Schubert's "Ave Maria" with his harpist sister. It hardly seemed like the same instrument. He was already advanced, it was serious classical music, and Karr was (and is!) talented. He was kind to me but it didn't really register with me that we both played double bass.

A few years later my UCLA bass teacher took me to a full recital that Karr gave in Los Angeles. It was amazing: technique, sound, musicality, and more like the cello register than the bass. My teacher disparaged his playing, probably out of jealousy or envy, but again, I could barely recognize that we played the same instrument. He was a soloist; the most I aspired to was being a decent orchestra player.

Years later, in New York, Gary and I became friends. When he came to Honolulu we hung out together, hiked, played bass for each other (I'd advanced a lot), and were really on the same page in many ways. He provided a sort of master class at my



A bit of Mark Kuraya, Gary Karr, Tracy Dullea, John Kennedy, Tony Monaco, Byron Yasui, Alton Clingan, I'm cut off with someone else. All bassists!

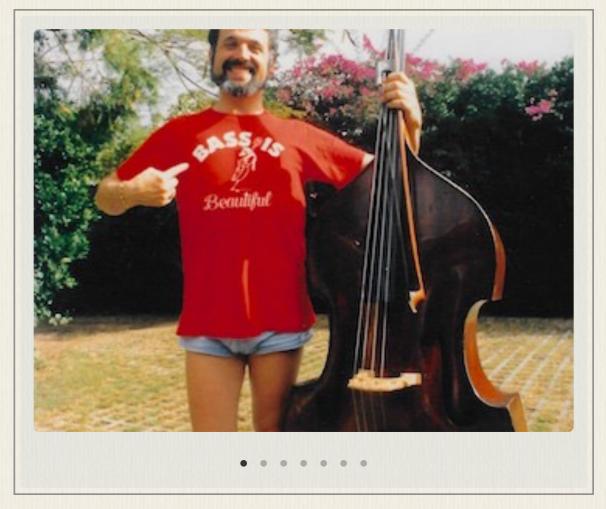
house with many of my Honolulu bassist friends as well as a few students. While in Honolulu he played a concerto with the Honolulu Symphony Orchestra and gave a solo recital. I attended both when Gary always greeted me warmly. During our hikes, I'd gotten to know his pianist/partner Harmon which added to the whole

package. It was on the hikes that I began to know the obnoxious side of Gary: his punny jokes, always "on," and usually self-reverential. But hey, some people have a lot to be proud of; certainly Gary Karr is one of them. The history of the instrument in the 20th and 21st centuries was



Gary with his partner, pianist Harmon.

/is changed by his advocacy, performance, and recordings.



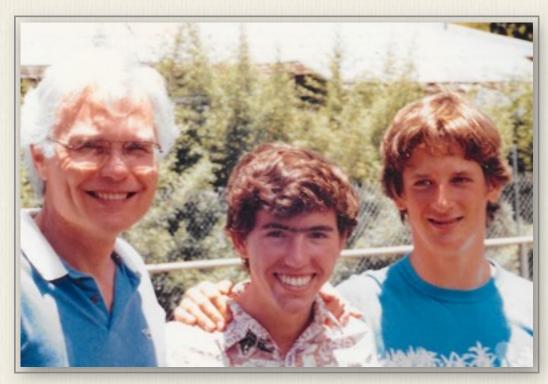
He brought his amazing Amati bass on which to play his solos. There was a little piece of wood at the bottom which was loose (after centuries of wear and tear) and I had the privilege of helping to repair it.

Bravo, Gary Karr: thanks for the stories, encouragement, and friendship. \*\* Speight Jenkins \*\* In this chapter one or more of the "famous ones" has/ have also become "friends that last." One of these is certainly Speight Jenkins, most famous for his many years as the director (not music director, not stage director, but like the CEO) of the Seattle Opera. Its very existence and high level of achievement were due to his leadership. Let me tell you the story of how Speight and I got to know and work together.

In 1972 we both lived close to the YMCA (which was soon to go coed) so swam regularly there. Somehow we got to talking, discovering our mutual musical interests. At the time Speight was a music critic for NYC's second newspaper, the New York Post. Of course, knowing him, I began to read the reviews. Always critical of the critics, I was finally able to talk with one. I learned that though his musical interest was in opera, he'd never studied music seriously. I began visiting his beautiful home: a mansion apartment on Central Park West owned by his mother, a gracious Texan. Speight was also born there. I met his wife and kids and when no one else was around, gave Speight advanced music lessons. There was a piano to work with so I could demonstrate various aspects of music theory and other technical matters. He was eager and a quick learner.

The benefit of having Speight as a friend was that he received "critics" seats to most performances. His wife was already sick of going to so many concerts and operas, so he began to take me. It may have raised a few eyebrows, but he could truthfully say that Linda was tired of the concert night scene. Well, I'd never seen the Metropolitan Opera performances from so close up, and there were many other events that I was able to enjoy. I remember a small opera company in the Village whose new work (an easy listen) we attended. Concerts at Carnegie Hall etc. were also part of the package. Speight would go over with me a few points that he was going to make in the review before the night was over and my appreciation of his work grew.

When I left for Europe I found a good friend who could continue Speight's advanced technical lessons, which helped his music knowledge grow. They became close friends as well. Speight continued to send me his reviews when I was in Munich and I had the presumption to mail them back with my edits!



Speight with Alton and Dan

Speight was always a good talker and had been part of the Met's intermission feature on TV for years.

After I'd left the States,
Speight gave a talk on the
Ring for Seattle Opera
supporters and the board
decided that his enthusiasm
for that cycle (for which the
SO was already famous), as
well as his general knowledge

of opera, made him the perfect new General Manager.

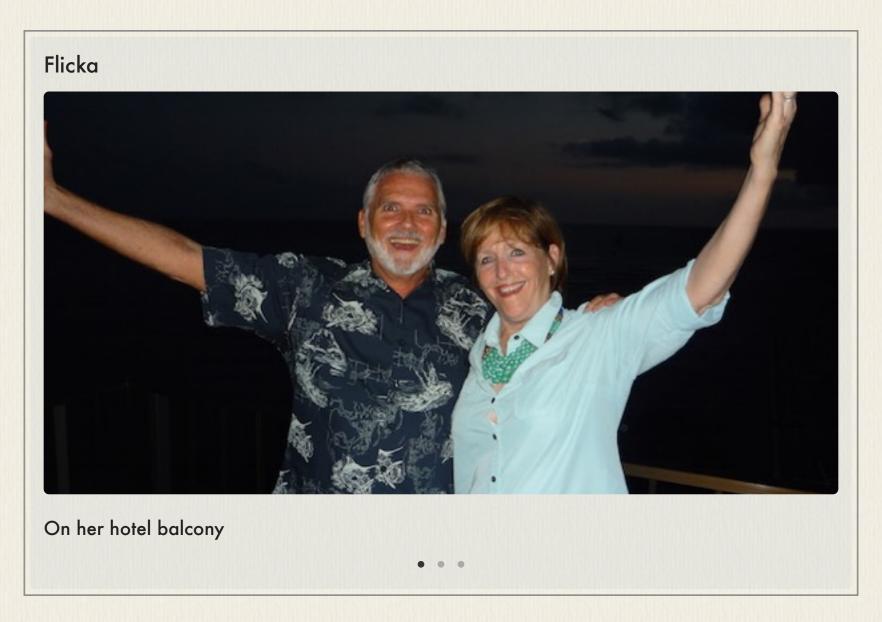
Years after he and his family moved to Seattle he visited me in Kailua (getting badly stung by man-o-war in the Bay), showing me the drawings/designs for the first *Ring* under his management. I thought it looked dumb, wrongly telling him so, which caused him some doubt or consternation, but all was set so it went on as planned (successfully!). A few years later he invited me for the second production (which wasn't abstract like the first) sp I flew to Seattle. I enjoyed the *Ring* as well as touring around the city between operas. While there I was able to reacquaint myself with his charming mother who was always in the audience (and once later was an extra onstage). Years later he sent me CDs of live performances of the SO of which he was especially proud. He had the fine-tuned sensibility of knowing which singer was perfect for which role. This and his people skills were probably among the reasons for his successful 21 years at the helm of the company.

Speight kindly took part in the Lehmann Tribute CD which added to its variety of participants and the legitimacy of their comments. Way back in '73 he'd shared my Melchior Tribute on WBAI and we've continued to be in touch. Now that he's retired but still giving lectures, he sends emails. Speight is

Speight's LL talk

battling cancer but seems to be doing well. He works out and looks healthy.

\* Frederica von Stade \* The next of these famous ones is Flicka, aka Frederica von Stade, mezzo-soprano. She has a reputation for being a nice person among the divas. I was skeptical until I met her. Now I can't remember how/why we did meet. The first time I know we spoke was after her Orange County star performance of *Dead Man Walking* in which she sang the lead role. My father had died that day so I wasn't in good shape, but she'd expected to see me backstage so there I was. We spoke, she was kind, later I explained the reason for my awkwardness and she understood. The next time we met I picked her up at her Waikiki hotel when she was dressed in a hat with a sash, big dark glasses, etc. as if she were avoiding the paparazzi (she's not really famous enough for that). I hardly recognized her! We went out for a Thai meal, having a great conversation. This may have been the year she sang with the HSO. She had been scheduled to perform various popular arias but I'd emailed her that our audience (especially me) would much prefer to hear Nuits d'été and Songs of the Auvergne which she ended up singing. After intermission she came out in the colorful dress you'll see in the photos below, doing a kind of side-to-side dance showing it off. The audience



responded just as she wished: laughter with applause and she hadn't yet sung a note in the second half! She did include her famous drunk song as an encore, but the bulk of the program was very sophisticated.

We had stayed in touch by email so she recorded a song from *Frauenliebe und -leben* for the Lehmann Tribute CD. Flicka evinced interest in my idea for supra titles for recitals, once writing that before she hung up her vocal cords she'd like to sing such a concert. She'd rather have the lights low (in which case the audience can't read the songs' translations) so she wouldn't need to look at their gaping faces.

At one point she flew here to sing a kind of farewell recital at Orvis Auditorium. It included her charming story-telling introductions to the songs. A few years later she was here for *Three Decembers* which demonstrated her excellent acting talents as well as her a not-yet-retired voice.

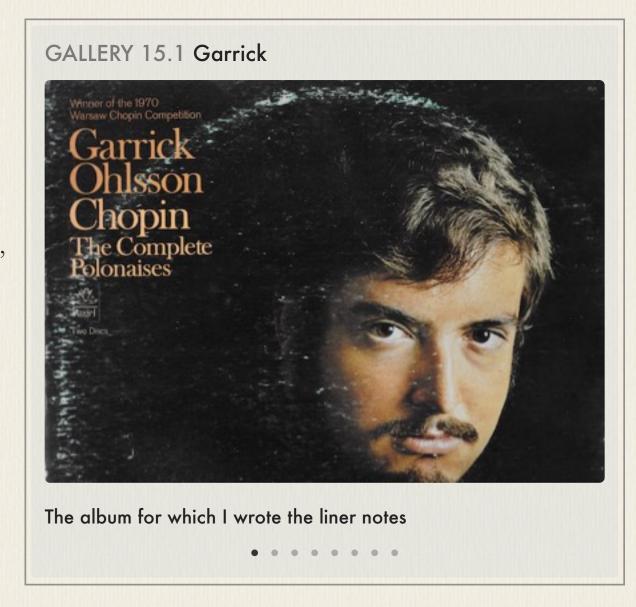
On a previous visit when she came to give a master class for the UH Music Department students I met her and her friendly husband at their hotel. He made himself scarce as I handed my portable digital recorder to Flicka (she wanted to remain prone on her bed because of a sore foot). I asked a large number of interview questions. It turned out that the recorder ran out of battery power about halfway through, but there was enough for a decent radio program.

Flicka remains in good email contact, answering every message with the same kindness, consideration: yes, she is just *nice*!

\*\*Garrick Ohlsson \*\* I was working for Harold Shaw in 1970 when (among many others) he represented Garrick, the first American winner of Warsaw's Chopin Competition. Soon he recorded a two-LP set of Chopin's *Polonaises*. One of the special aspects of the album was that the pianist was going to write his own liner notes. Though he was certainly capable of that (did write a short essay on the back cover), he was too busy: practicing, recordings, concerts, recitals, interviews, etc. Shaw asked me to write the notes. I showed my typewritten manuscript to Ohlsson when he noticed errors and made good suggestions. I was paid!

Once when I'd gone out to Martha's Vineyard with Shaw for a short vacation Garrick was there so we got to know each other better. He treated Shaw with much love as well as respect. I remember him rubbing sun lotion on his back

(Shaw was whitehaired at the time, but he had probably been blond in his youth, so was generally fair.) In the '70s when it was rare, Garrick was already out, in a committed relationship. It was fun to be with someone who could be so frank about such things. Shaw also kidded a lot about gay subjects, but it didn't have the



same allure as it did with the much younger Ohlsson.

I remember meeting with him at his West Side apartment with Ann. I sat under the piano as he demonstrated the music for the next set of notes I'd be writing. It was a thrilling sound! When I was already in Munich Shaw arranged for me to write the notes for this second recording: the Chopin *Scherzi*. When Garrick played a concerto in Munich we met backstage, thus continued our friendship. BTW I was impressed with his German as he greeted his fans. Then some Italians showed up: he was equally at ease in Italian.

He knew that I was writing more liner notes so we met the next day in front of his hotel to go over the general outline of his wishes. I remember walking on a rare bright day outside in the brisk Munich air talking about Chopin, music, and great pianists of the past. I told Garrick that I thought he could be counted in their company so he was pleased. I submitted the manuscript which was included on the next release. Again, I got paid!

It was many years later that I met Garrick when he came to Honolulu to play the Rachmaninoff Second Piano Concerto with the HSO. I went up to him just before the first rehearsal was to begin. He recognized me immediately, giving me a bear hug. He's a big guy! I had the temerity to complain that he was playing such a warhorse. He said that he'd surprise me with a fresh interpretation. And he did. It was his own, alive so I told him so. He joined me and my friends for some nice excursions enjoying the company and the views. You'll see the photos in the gallery.

The final time I've seen him was when he gave a recital in LA. I went up to him afterward having waited for the fans to depart so we could be alone for a few minutes. Again, after years, he immediately recognized me! We had a great talk recalling our first *Polonaise* venture. He'd recently recorded every Chopin work for another company so joked about whether he should have used my notes. It was a pleasant few minutes.

\*\*Paul Sperry \*\* The next person is of great merit but only limited fame. I have actually met and worked with Paul many times over the years. He's a thoroughly knowledgable teacher/producer/commentator on and about American art song. I've personally heard him teach a class, coaching singers in the intricacies of American art song (poetry/music) at both Juilliard and MSM. He is a compelling, even inspiring teacher. Wealthy, he makes sure that good American art song gets published and recorded. Paul directed the art song-promoting Joy in Singing from 1986 till 2017. His many years with that organization allowed many fine art song singers to be heard and receive the attention they needed for careers. He's easy to work with, super intelligent. At one point we considered merging the Lotte Lehmann Foundation and the Joy in Singing organization but it didn't work out. He knows everyone (composers, pianists, singers) in the American art song world. Paul arranged for me to meet the American composer Richard Hundley. That was a real honor. I went to Hundley's apartment, spending considerable quality time with him. It was almost historic to meet an art song composer of such rank. Later

I was able to arrange a World of Song award for Hundley which was presented by Paul shortly before the composer's death.

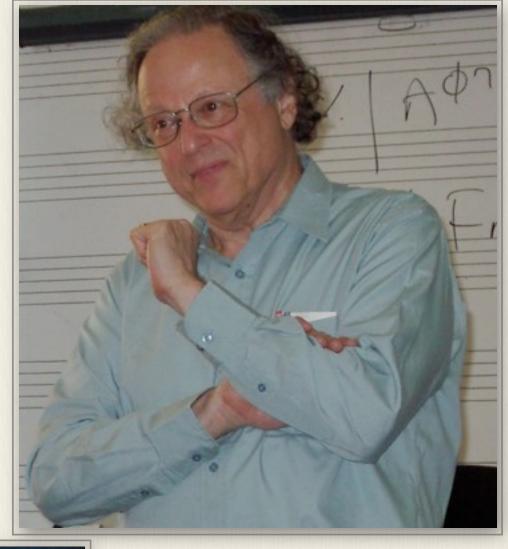
Paul recorded a wonderful memory of observing Lehmann

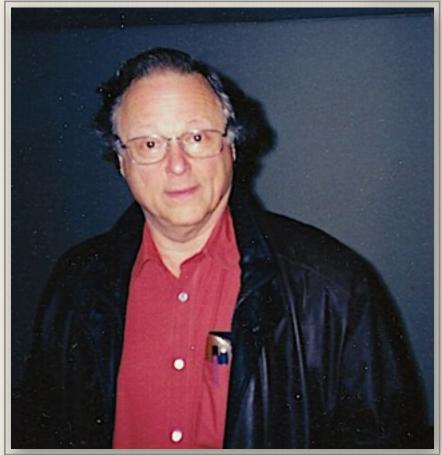
teach a master class also for that same recording sang the piece that so impressed him. I have the good fortune of considering Paul, my friend.

Most recently Paul took an active role in helping me design the Singing and other Sins program that simultaneously marked the 30th year of art song on Hawaii

Public Radio as well as celebrating Labor Day. He suggested various composers whom I should contact to ask them to record their way of writing an art song. Paul suggested the length of their talk even helping me get in contact with some of the composers. Thanks due again to this ongoing friend and semi-famous person!

Paul's World of Song award was the most difficult to design because he's been very active in





so many areas of American art song. To let you read the many accomplishments the award celebrates, I've placed it on the next page, in as large as this format can manage.

You'll be suitably impressed.

### THE LOTTE LEHMANN LEAGUE

The World of Song Award

Paul Sperry

A brilliant interpreter of Art Song whose repertoire spans music composed over centuries, in more than a dozen languages, A tireless advocate for American song who, through his performances, teaching, and editing, has brought these important works to countless performers and listeners, A caring and committed educator who has mentored thousands of young artists through Joy in Singing, and at every major summer festival, Inilliard, Manhattan School of Music, and in venues throughout the United States and beyond, A devoted citizen of the musical community, who has served as President of the American Music Center, and Chairman of the Board of the American Composers Orchestra, A commissioner of new works, a champion of contemporary composers, and an artist who has significantly expanded the repertoire of Art Song, A gracious and generous colleague who enjoys the greatest respect and deepest affection of the Art Song community In honor of your Eightieth Birthday,



2014 in New York City

\* Herbert Zipper \* Through the support and enthusiasm of Dr. Zipper I ended up in Manila. Here's a link to a whole film about his life, so I'll just fill in that portion which brought me into his orbit. In the space of one morning, he convinced me that I would benefit, even enjoy a year teaching and playing bass in Manila. His thick Viennese accent reminded me of all the great musicians with whom I'd already studied, his conducting of the masters with the Manila Symphony Orchestra confirmed that belief. He administered the JDR III program which sent us four Americans to teach and play our instruments in Manila. But, after introducing us to the power brokers of the Philippines and conducting us in several concerts, he returned to Chicago to his full-time jobs there. He managed our work from there by mail (telephone being a difficult medium in 1966), but there were often disagreements. He felt that we weren't fulfilling the mission, which maybe was the case of some of the other teachers, but I felt insulted because I was having such success with my many bass students. Dr. Zipper met with me when I'd returned from Manila, was enthusiastic about my work, and wrote kind letters of recommendation for me. He was an 1990 Letter intelligent, dedicated musician whom it was an honor for me to from Dr. Z have known. Herbert Zipper was almost 93 when he died still

\*\* Risë Stevens \*\* When I was regularly visiting New York City to move the Lotte Lehmann Foundation there I had a chance to visit the mezzo-soprano with

whom Lehmann had sung at the Metropolitan Opera. I wanted to know about their relationship both on and off the stage. She was, even in her 90s a gracious, mentally alert woman. Ms. Stevens looked healthy even beautiful as she shared her Lehmann memories. I could tell how much admiration, even love, she had had for Lehmann. She

teaching and conducting.



spoke about her visits to Lehmann in Santa Barbara where Lehmann painted her portrait and gave her lessons in Lieder performance. There she also met Bruno Walter as well as other musical luminaries who accompanied Ms. Stevens in the Lieder repertoire. But when Stevens' husband heard her sing these songs they seemed to be an imitation of Lehmann's versions. She thus never pursued a concert career but remained an opera singer. Stevens also appeared in Hollywood movies and on TV singing opera arias. After our interview, which sadly I didn't record, I sent her my notes which she helped edit for accuracy and even tone. She couldn't have been more helpful. Risë Stevens lived to be almost 100.

\*\* Ned Rorem \*\* Looking back on my years of knowing and interviewing this important American composer, I can't remember how we met. Since he's most famous for his art song compositions, it was natural that we'd be in contact; perhaps it was at one of Paul Sperry's parties. Rorem and I exchanged letters in

which he agreed years after year to be interviewed by phone in celebration of his birthdays for my HPR radio program. He often was critical of other composers or annoyed at singers who didn't sing in their native language. There are three Singing and other Sins interview programs on the archive. Rorem wrote the first song for the Lehmann Foundation's CyberSing. It's a good art song, to her poem in English translation. It' been recorded and I've sung it too. (See "Studying Voice at 65.") It was



obvious that he should receive the LLF's World of Song award which I was pleased to present him in his own apartment. In the past few years, in his 90s, his hearing is so poor that it's difficult to conduct interviews, so at this point (2020) we're out of touch. Because he jointly interviewed Rorem with me, Blair was able

to meet him in NYC. Blair then invited Rorem to attend one of the Art Song Preservation Society's concerts, but he couldn't make it. He's going on 97 so is understandably getting frail.

\*\* Transfer Guys \*\* In my many Lehmann-related activities, it was natural for me to meet or work with that breed of specialists called Transfer Engineers. It has been a joy for me to work with many of these men who have helped me to complete many projects. In my world, they're famous.

Such specialists include Ward Marston, Lani Spahr, Mark Obert-Thorn, and Seth Winner, all active in improving/transferring old recordings.

Ward and I released the Lehmann acoustics CDs that I produced in 2017. We worked together for three years on her Berlin electrics (2020) both for his *Marston Records*.

Lani was the engineer when I produced the *Music & Arts* 5 CD release of Lehmann rarities. We had some disagreements, but in the end, his engineering was fine. Lani is also a respected/recorded Baroque oboist.

I've been in touch with Mark over many years asking him technical questions, even offering him the engineering job for the *Music & Arts* set. He thought Lani would have the more advanced expertise to handle the difficult job of removing the "time tone" that sounded over one of the proposed songs. In the revised Volume I of *Lotte Lehmann & Her Legacy* Mark checked my technical writing, offering some additional information on early recording techniques.

Seth is both technically and historically minded, most recently restoring one song that Lehmann sang on a 1945 recital recorded on acetates that he owns. It appeared on one of the VRCS CDs which he allowed me to use in Volume II of Lotte Lehmann & Her Legacy. Besides being the technical transfer guy for the VRCS's yearly CDs, he's also an expert on the live New York Philharmonic broadcasts found at the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts Library. He runs his own sound studio that produces recordings from the past.

#### -00

# My Conductors & Teachers

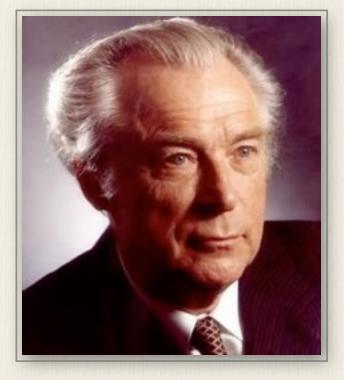


Stokowski at about the age that he conducted the ASO with me playing bass (1968–1973)

Here are some of my important teachers/conductors: J. Hobart McGlaughlin, (the man who formed the neighborhood orchestra in La Cañada); Eldred (Bud) Balzer (high school conductor who has <a href="his own section">his own section</a> in this presentation); Dr. Clarence Sawhill, Kelly James, Lucas Foss, Richard Dufallo, and Dr. Jan Popper, (these five from my years at UCLA); Maurice Abravanel (from the MAW), Jonel Perlea\*, Frank Brief, Emerson Buckley, and Anton Coppola (from MSM); Eleazar de Carvalho, (the ProArte Orchestra on Long Island); Leopold Stokowski,

(founder/conductor of the American Symphony Orchestra); Dr. Herbert Zipper\* (the conductor of the Manila Symphony Orchestra); Kurt Graunke, (founder/conductor of the Munich-based Symphonie-Orchester Graunke); Rudolf Kempe, (Munich Philharmonic); Hans Stadlmair, (Münchener Kammerorchester); Honolulu Symphony Orchestra conductor/music director Donald Johanos, with world-class guest conductors such as Vladimir Ashkenazy, Seiji Ozawa, Maxim Shostakovich, Zdeněk Mácal, Eiji Oue, André Previn, Robert Shaw, Karl Anton Rickenbacher, etc. (from my 13 years with HSO); \*these two conductors had spent time in Nazi concentration camps.

My bass teachers were Peter Mercurio, (UCLA); David Walter, (MSM); and Franz Ortner, (privately in Munich). But bass colleagues and my students provided the most important skills. Peter was too kind, David offered me little useful technique in three years. Ortner, strict but no "bassics;" his efforts was to have me learn the difficult bass passages of Wagner operas. He also advocated more cross-string work than I'd previously attempted. But I developed many needed theories on my own. Until a bass friend gave me scales/arpeggios that he'd gotten from his teacher, Ludwig Streicher, principal bass of the Vienna Philharmonic, I'd never done serious technical work! More on bass teachers in: "GodDamBass."



You can watch **Kurt Grauke conduct** one of his compositions in Munich's Herkulessaal where Dennis and I played many times in his orchestra. His great love of the standard repertoire, as well as his own compositions, brought Dennis and me closer to the great composers of the Romantic tradition. I'll never forget how softly he demanded we begin Bruckner's Symphony No. 4, or how slowly we ended Beethoven's Pastorale. His love of Robert Schumann's works was deep; he sought and found unperformed works of this master! We

had the honor of the first performance of an early Schumann symphony. To my delight, we performed all the Schubert symphonies in one season, including the overlooked youthful ones. Dennis will never forget how high the inexperienced

## Symphonie-Orchester Graunke Kansterische Leitung: Kurt Graunke

8 München 21, 28. Nov. 1974/R Wilhelm-Mayr-Straße 15 Telefon 089/562563

Herrn Gory HICKLING

8 MÜNCHEN 40 Jungwirthetr. 10

Zeugnis

Herr Gary Hickling spielt seit September 1973 in unserem Orchester zur ständigen Verstärkung als Streichbassist.

Herr Hickling ist sehr fleißig und übt sorgfältig seine jeweiligen Passagen für die Orchesterwerke der Konzerte, in denen er mitwirkt. Ich kann aus meiner Beobachtung heraus sagen, daß Herr Hickling bereits eine Stunde vor Beginn der Konzerte auf dem Podium nochmals gewissenhaft übt.

Die vor kurzem mir vorgespielte Sonate von Händel bewies, daß Herr Hickling sich intensiv für Probespiele vorbereitet hat.

Herr Hickling kennt durch seine Tätigkeit in unserem Orchester einen Großteil der symphonischen Literatur; unser Orchester ist vielseitig ausgezichtet auf Konzerte, Oper, Ballette u.a.

Graunke's letter of recommendation that, along with Lehmann's, allowed me to audition for the Symphonisches Orchestra Berlin, where I played for one year.

half Hambe

youthful Schubert wrote for the trumpet. It demanded that he use a piccolo trumpet. When young Franz showed his first symphony to his father, he looked at it then "soundly boxed his ears" shouting "this hasn't been done since the time of Bach." While playing under Graunke, even during rehearsals, we understood that he strove to bring out of every orchestra member (and himself) the inner ability to understand what the music could be; every moment should be a great performance. I well remember how, after the first two giant chords of Beethoven's Symphony No. 3 (Eroica), he'd stop, saying that he wanted it to be like two giant columns supporting all that was to come. Dennis remembers the slow movement of the Eroica, where there is a short trumpet fanfare. "He made me feel as if I were transforming the work to a higher level." When we rehearsed the slow movement of Mendelssohn's Symphony No. 4 (Italian) he wanted to make sure that we basses didn't mechanically pluck the moving line, but rather responded to the rest of the orchestra which carried the tune.

Graunke was also a clever businessman so we played many Hollywood movie scores. We both remember recording the score to *The Wind and the Lion* composed and conducted by Jerry Goldsmith, who knew how to get great sounds from his orchestration. On the very first day of recording, we were astonished to see two of the percussion players lying on their backs under the piano with mallets ready to achieve a particular and astonishing effect. On another day of these recordings, there was a love song (for orchestra), but when Goldsmith didn't make his own music work, he yielded the baton to Graunke who brought out the Romantic/romantic elements. We also recorded unusual operettas with big stars such as Anneliese Rothenberger, Nicolai Gedda, and Hermann Prey. The famed Vienna violinist/conductor Willi Boskovsky conducted us in this repertoire, using the wonderful acoustics of the Bürgerbräu Keller for the recordings. He instructed us in the exact way the Viennese get the bounce in 3/4 time in von Suppé's *Boccaccio*.

The very first rehearsal I had with <u>Leopold Stokowski</u> was filmed. If you look closely you'll see the bassists lined up against the back. The Felt Forum was a hall in the then-new Madison Square Garden complex. Stoki always wanted to investigate every NYC hall to see if there were yet another place for orchestras to perform. This place had a noticeably dull low sound, so he hired extra bassists to



Leopold Stokowski as he looked when I played with the ASO; notice: no baton.

counter the weak acoustic. So began my association with him. The five off-and-on years that I played with his American Symphony Orchestra were always thrilling. Stoki would arrive early while we were warming up or practicing on the Carnegie Hall stage. One time he came right up to hear me working on the arpeggio that makes up the main theme for the Tannhäuser overture. I was emphasizing the top note but he wanted more push from the bottom or the beginning of the arpeggio. Stoki often came to MSM on Saturdays, when I was teaching in the Prep Division, to hear the percussion ensemble which practiced just down the hall from my studio. He never failed to come in to encourage my students. At this point, Stoki was one of the most famous musicians on the planet so my bass students never forgot his visits. Speaking of his kindness to youngsters reminds me of a fun story. While I was teaching junior high on Long Island I still managed to fit in performances with Stoki. One of the rehearsals was a head-on conflict with my teaching schedule so I arranged to take my orchestra on a field trip into NYC to hear a rehearsal of the ASO with me playing in the bass section. It all worked out and I assembled the students during intermission to meet Stoki. When I told him that these kids (about 30) were my students he marveled, "So many bassists!" I corrected his misunderstanding, letting him know that they were players of all the

string instruments. He was courteous, inviting them to return to any rehearsals they wanted to attend, which wasn't his usual policy. They were thrilled and have remembered it to this day. (See their comments in "Mr. Hickling: the teacher.")

After so many years playing with Stoki, I have many stories. One of the best is when he mounted the podium for a rehearsal the day after we'd played the Berlioz *Symphonie Fantastique*. He spoke to the woodwind section thanking them for not responding to one of his cues. He said, "You were great! I made a mistake but you did not follow me! Thank you." Humility is not usually one of conductors' best qualities, so we were impressed by this.



The UCLA Symphonic Band performing in Vielje, Denmark during the 1961 European Tour.

In 1971 when Dr. Clarence Sawhill retired from his many years at UCLA part of the band's half-time show was filmed. At the end of the segment, you'll see him honored when the announcer calls it the "end of an era." In 1952, Clarence Sawhill became director of bands. F. Kelly James became the director of the marching band, a position he would hold until suffering a stroke at the UCLA-Cal football game in 1980. Sawhill and

James grew the UCLA band program to include a 100-piece Concert Band, an 80-piece Symphonic Wind Ensemble, a 144-piece Marching Band, and a 60-piece Varsity Band. I benefitted greatly from their dedication and musicianship.



The UCLA Concert Band in 1961. I'm the bassist on the right. Sawhill and James stand left.

From the 1950s the UCLA Marching Band uniforms were gold jackets with navy blue pants, blue shakos, and white shoes. The uniforms were the same when I marched with them so that's what various European venues saw when we performed on the tour of 1961. This was my first time on an airplane, first trip to Europe, traveling with a bunch of like-minded university students (male and female), seeing the art I knew from books "live" on museum walls. But it wasn't just museums that



Dr. Sawhill

fascinated me: there were castles, churches, elegant concert halls.

I'll list some of the venues. We played for the American Independence Day



celebration ay Denmark's Rebild National Park with Walt Disney speaking. Other places included: Victoria Embankment Gardens, London; Salle Pleyel, Paris; the Casino, Lucerne; Amerikahaus, Munich; Konzerthaus, Vienna; Tivoli Gardens, Copenhagen and a NATO celebration at Naksov, Denmark. Can you imagine the impact this had on a 19-year-old kid like me? Dr. Sawhill conducted Sousa marches with the emphasis on the upbeat: he didn't want it to sound stodgy. On the field, he marched alongside us to show how to pick up our thighs with each step. He wasn't young but had a

lot of energy. When he was Chairman of the UCLA Music Dept. I'd often see him take the stairs two at a time to get to his office. During my last year at UCLA, I took my one "class" with Dr. Sawhill, a clarinet class, part of the required courses to obtain the background needed to become a school band teacher. (Dr. Sawhill had been a clarinetist before he found his calling as a conductor.) Clarinet

became my second (third if you count Sousaphone) instrument and I became almost proficient: Good enough to make it my minor instrument at MSM. In the final (which was oral with demonstrating) he required us to sight-read various pieces, no problem for me. But I felt bad when he asked for the alternative fingerings for intonation reasons, and I blanked. He still gave me an A for the class. By the way, it was through Dr. Sawhill that the famous British clarinetist Reginald Kell gave a master class attended by the whole concert band. He was elegant, discussing his "two-lip" way of playing, not commonly encountered in the States. We felt honored to have such a visitor.

Sawhill often chose rep that was originally for band, not just Sousa marches. There's a lot of good concert music for that group so it was a pleasure to play the masters' band works.



On YouTube, there's an actual performance with Jonel
Perlea conducting in his homeland, Romania, shortly after we'd worked together in NYC. The box around him is just like the one we used at MSM to keep him from falling. You'll see that he only uses his left hand. I have many Perlea stories. First, and perhaps most importantly, he conducted a huge repertoire: everything from CPE Bach to Prokofiev.

You can imagine the passion with which he conducted the Enescu *Romanian Rhapsody*. But that same commitment was apparent in Mahler's 5th, Prokofiev's *Lt. Kije* (in which I played the short bass solo), Bruckner's 9th, or *Death & Transfiguration* by Strauss. Here is a Perlea story that appears elsewhere in this presentation.

At MSM I was orchestra manager but that job somehow morphed into getting a cab (it seems that no one in NYC owned a car) and riding it down to Midtown to

pick up the handicapped maestro. He'd had a bad stroke which paralyzed the right side of his body, forcing him to wear metal braces on his leg. We'd built a wooden box around the conductor's podium where he sat on a swiveling stool. He conducted with his left hand, turned pages with his left hand, cued entrances with his left hand. He had a fantastically accurate ear able to catch and correct the slightest misprint in our music or intonation problem within the trombones. Perlea was a great conductor and we worshipped his musicianship. He didn't pretend to be nice but scolded us in his attempt to make the music sound the way he imagined it. In the cab, before the rehearsal, we didn't talk much. Because of the stroke, he'd lost his ability in English so could only speak in his native Romanian or German, which at the time I didn't speak. His assistant conductor, Richard Kapp, was present for most rehearsals to translate the German. When I took Perlea home I had to help him to the door of his apartment. Even with his cane, he was very unsteady, blaming gusts of wind for almost blowing him over. Then he'd curse and bang his cane against his metal braces laughing a kind of hoarse chortle. Sometimes his kind, worshipful wife would invite me in for a few minutes during which she'd tell me about a composition that Perlea was writing or a forthcoming recording session. Maestro probably asked Kapp to take him to my graduating recital. It touched me deeply that he, a famous person (with problems getting around), would be there. It still does.

Maestro Perlea also conducted the Westchester Symphony Orchestra. When they played the Brahms *Requiem* I was contracted to play principal bass. Though not my favorite performance of the work, (that would be with Robert Shaw and the HSO), I felt honored to be associated with the great man outside of a conservatory situation, where he had to conduct me whether he liked it or not.

My final Perlea story revolves around the fact that I was bass section leader while also orchestra manager. At a certain point in my third (and final) year at MSM, I decided that the orchestra offered a real-life opportunity for experience in a section, so I sat last giving my stand partner the leader position. I planned to move him to the back after the next performance. Anyway, at the first rehearsal, Perlea looked to the spot where he expected to see me, then found me at the back of the

section. Not being able to speak, he pointed to the front, then to where I was (as if I'd been demoted), groaned a laugh, and then started the rehearsal.

You'll find a short documentary on **Eleazar de Carvalho**. His wife also speaks but in Portuguese. Carvalho conducted the ProArte Orchestra on Long Island. We played fascinating repertoire, but the concert I remember most is the Berlioz *Requiem*. It's seldom performed because of the massive forces needed. We performed in an airplane hanger. Four portable "stages" lined edges of the place; they provided the sonic surround for the antiphonal brass bands the piece calls for. The audience found their seats by rather tall signs. When we began playing Carvalho looked out to cue one of the bands and finding a sign exactly in the way, he kept conducting, stepping down from the podium, and knocking the offending sign to the floor.

<u>Lukas Foss</u> conducts at Carnegie Hall in a "film" that's only in motion at the beginning. Remember that besides his conducting and composing he was a highly respected <u>pianist</u>. While we were at UCLA, not only did we perform under his



baton, we also played his compositions: a children's opera, *Griffelkin*; a cantata for soprano, alto, tenor, bass, mixed chorus, and orchestra called *The Prairie*. We also learned many American works by Ives, Copland, etc. In the "Mexico" chapter you'll read about me performing with him with no rehearsal when his Brooklyn Philharmonic bass section was struck with Montezuma's revenge while they were in Mexico City.

There's a nice interview with **Dr. Herbert** 

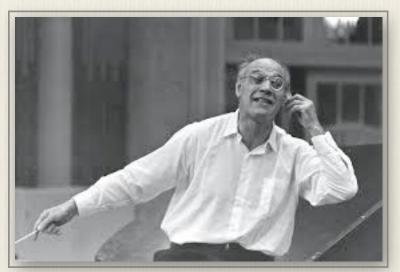
**Zipper,** which was filmed. He was the director of the Community Music Schools which was the organization that worked with the management of the Manila Symphony Orchestra and the John D. Rockefeller III Fund to send teachers to train Filipino musicians. Dr. Zipper was elegant, courteous, and on the podium, knowledgable, easy to follow. He was never mean to the players but encouraged everyone. He only became upset with us "Rockefellows" when he was in the US

and we didn't write to him often enough letting him know how our teaching was coming along. Otherwise, I enjoyed good a rapport with him. His devotion to the Philippines and their musicians knew no bounds. He'd been there (off and on)



since 1939. You can read the story of his time in Dachau, Buchenwald, and his life thereafter at this Wikipedia link. He met me in California years after our professional relationship had ended, was as cordial and kind as always. I also remember one time when I was back in NY he tried to help me get a job in Arkansas to help establish more interest in classical music. It involved a trailer that doubled as a stage. At the time they didn't have an orchestra so this effort tried to correct that. He was in some way involved with the project that needed a director on the ground which he hoped would be me. The project never got going.

I enjoyed playing under the enthusiastic, musical, and knowledgeable conductor **Maurice Abravanel** in concert and operas during my three summers at the Music Academy of the West. You can read his bio in the Glossary. For me, this man of the world, especially the European world, brought glamor as well as high standards to our young musicians' orchestra. He never talked down or expected less than the highest level of musical proficiency from us. The operas we played



were demanding: *Pelléas et Mélisande*, *Don Giovanni*, and Massenet's *Manon*. The orchestra literature was challenging but fun. The rep included Ive's Symphony No. 2, Shostakovich's Symphony No. 5, Mahler's *Adagietto*, etc. I have his signature on three (1962, 63, 64) MAW certificates, as well as a nice letter he sent to me. Years after MAW when Abravanel was attending an LA Phil

concert we met on the stairs during intermission where he asked what I was doing. I replied that I was running the thrift store. Without missing a beat he told me to be sure to support music with any money that I had available. As with Martial Singher, I saw Abavanel one last time at the LL Centennial at UCSB. During his presentation, he spoke of the time that Toscanini had re-written the "Komm Hoffnung" aria a half-step lower to accommodate Lehmann's wishes. He felt that

MUSIC ACADEMY OF THE WEST

1070 The Fairway
Santa Barbara, California

ANNUAL SUMMER SESSION
July and August 1964

Student Certificate

This is to certify that
attended the Summer Session of the Music Academy of the West during the resentles of July and August in the year of 1964.

Money, Dancing Head August

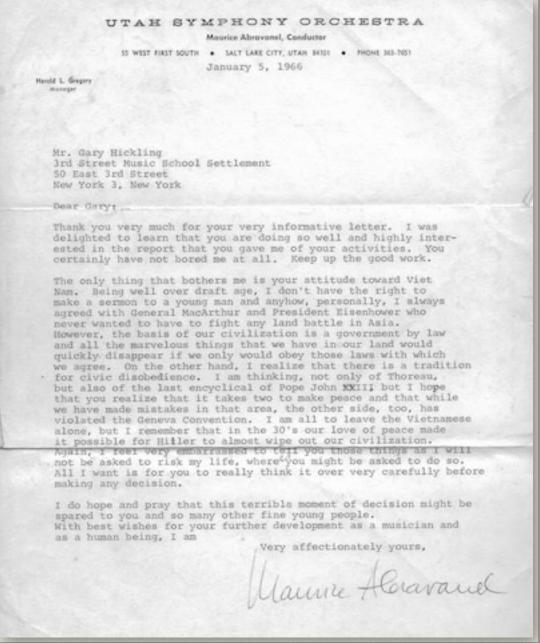
Reservoir Dancing

Head August

if the world's greatest conductor (who was also a stickler for original intent) would change Beethoven, then LL must have merited only the highest kind of appreciation.

In his Lehmann bio, Kater writes about bad blood between LL and Abravanel. In the three years that I

worked with him (with LL appearing for the final dress rehearsals of each opera), he never mentioned Lehmann's name without reverence and honor. She was an institution; at that point in the MAW's history, Lehmann WAS the MAW. She was its most effective fundraiser, its best contact to the older generation of musicians who either taught there or offered master classes and most of all, Lehmann was great



publicity. At the time, far more famous than Abravanel, she was constantly in newspapers or magazines.

One other memory of Abravanel: during a MAW rehearsal he told us that he'd just returned from hearing an LA Phil concert, speaking highly of the orchestra, but singling out by name the piccolo player, (my Glendale High School principal flute), Louise DiTullio. He was generous in his praise, and of course, I felt proud having known her. Abravanel epitomized what it meant to be a gracious person.

Perhaps this is the place to speak about the thick European accents that these great maestri had. Since I only knew such people, whether Lehmann or Zipper, I took it as a given. \*\*Musicians spoke with accents.\*\* Even Stokowski, who was British born, spoke with a kind of accent that was hard to place: something between a kind of Oriental pastiche (leaving out articles, etc.) as well as an elegant English upper-class sound.

**Theodore Bloomfield** was the accomplished American conductor of the Symphonisches Orchester Berlin who was a joy to play under. His German was excellent, his music-making satisfying to the young as well as mature orchestra



members. These older German bassists found his tempi more like those of the past, even before the war. As far as they were concerned, he didn't rush things rather paying attention to details. He and I got along well. (Perhaps because we were both Ami's, though there were a few others, including principal bass Randy.) The SOB was the third orchestra in West Berlin so we didn't always play at the best halls or for the largest crowds. But this didn't make Bloomfield any less caring about every nuance. He brought attention to a rhythmic moment in the Dvorak New World that even the percussionist had

never noticed. He conducted the SOB from 1975–1982. Though I only played under him for a season, he was not the reason I left West Berlin. The place just felt like too much of a cage: Located inside hostile East Germany. Bloomfield wrote a kind, even enthusiastic recommendation letter when I left the orchestra. I didn't need it: I was returning to Munich and the comfort of the Symphonie Orchester Graunke. No more auditions! I wish I had kept the programs of my concerts with the SOB. We played the classics of course, even recorded a few times (light music as I remember) and performed many world premieres. It may have been the purpose of the orchestra to give legitimacy to young West German composers. There was a kind of culture war between the two Germanys. I remember Bloomfield being just as conscientious in the preparation of new works as he was in honing our skills in the *Christmas Oratorio* of Bach, that we played in the Philharmonie. It was not our only concert there, but time has erased the other concerts in that justly famous auditorium.

My very first conductor was the American-born J. Hobart McGlaughlin. A



neighbor, he and his wife were in charge of music for the Glendale School District and the LA School District, respectively. He must have noticed the youthful musical enthusiasm of us kids, so Mr. Mac invited us to join him for an orchestra rehearsal in the basement of our neighbor, the Bruces. Though I had a violin and viola that I'd inherited (via my grandparents) from my Uncle Ernie, I'd just played

around on them not knowing how to read music. So I had my harmonica in my pocket when I arrived. That instrument, I discovered, wasn't part of the orchestra, but before my embarrassment could mortify me, Mr. Mac asked if I'd play the snare drum. He gave me a quick lesson and voilá an enthusiastic drummer. I had special fun during March Slav! Every Saturday was a treat for us; music, friends, and Mr. Mac. A year later he looked at my 15-year-old hands, saying they were large for my age so next week I'd play bass. I thought he meant bass drum, but when I met him at his house I discovered it was the string bass. He gave me my one and only double bass lesson I received until reaching UCLA. Mostly he showed me how to carry it, but I did learn the basic ½ position as well as how to hold the "German" bow. Thereafter I played in the concerts he arranged, never once practicing a scale, arpeggio, etude, or even the music we played. Steve took violin lessons (the teacher came to our house), but lessons for me were never discussed. I know my mother wasn't happy with my "chosen" instrument, but otherwise, the whole thing just wasn't discussed. Partly, this was just my blasé attitude to the bass (and to life in general).

At one point Mr. Mac had tried to help me with my ukulele, but it didn't take. He took me fishing once, but my parents felt that wasn't right, so it wasn't repeated. On this trip, I told him about my second harmonica in a different key that I hoped would allow me to play the notes that weren't available on my first one. He tried to help me understand a bit of harmony (accidentals etc.), but it was too soon. This was probably before he established the basement orchestra. Though I didn't need to know about accidentals as a drummer, I certainly responded to them as a bassist, even though I didn't know a whit about theory, keys, or accidentals.

Mr. Mac knew the music that kids would like to play: *March Slav*, *Syncopated Clock*, Haydn's *Surprise Symphony* (just that movement), as well as other short undemanding semi-classical and classical stuff. We had a ball. He kept the rehearsals light, with humor, motivating us with plenty of rewarding comments.

Years later, when I was already a university bassist, I visited Mr. Mac when he showed me that his dream of owning a Strad violin had finally come to pass! He reverently showed it to me, knowing that I was experienced in the string world enough to appreciate it.

When I'd returned from Mexico I often went out to Pasadena to hear recitals at the Ambassador Auditorium. During intermission, I ran into Mr. Mac. He was just as friendly as before, but he had the sad duty to tell me of the death of his wife (whom I didn't ever know well). That was the last time I saw him, but luckily, I was able to tell him about some of the places that I'd played, thanks to his starting me on the bass.

**Dr. Jan Popper** conducted opera at UCLA. I also took a class in Verdi from him, but though he was an enthusiastic lecturer, it's as a meticulous conductor that I best remember him. He knew his scores well and during individual rehearsals with

us (especially for the difficult *Il prigioniero* by Dallapiccola) he made sure that we knew every note for which we were responsible. The other operas I remember playing with Dr. Popper include *Don Giovanni*, *Pelléas et Mélisande*, and even the unknown Paisiello *Il barbiere di Siviglia*. We also played the West Coast premiere of Barber's *Vanessa*. I came to know Dr. Popper in a personal way. It was he who'd brought over the five or six Japanese singers that included Katsuumi. When my parents threatened to deport him for corrupting me, Dr. Popper became directly involved. He asked me to meet him after school at his home (a large mansion, it



seemed to me at the time). He told me that he knew about my affair but also the threat that my parents posed. I almost remember his exact words: "Do you realize that the whole Fulbright exchange program could be in jeopardy?" Dr. Popper didn't care what I did with Katsuumi; I was to convince my parents that they had no reason to deport Katsuumi (not an option!). I lied to my father that I'd seen the error of my ways so he could call off the lawyers who were working on Katsuumi's case. I felt bad about the lie but didn't know any other way. Of course, nothing changed with me, but my father must have called off the lawyers because the only thing I

figured out later was that he'd hired a secret detective to follow me. It was discovered that I was still visiting Katsuumi, even staying over in his quarters instead of the coop where I'd moved when my parents disowned me (they'd stopped paying my room and board). During this time my folks called a meeting of all my professors to disclose to them that they were harboring a pervert. Since many of them were gay or bi it didn't mean anything; I heard the whole story a few years later while making out with one of those professors. Anyway, Katsuumi and I moved to NYC so the time/distance may have been a calming factor in the whole story. Far away and disowned, I had no contact with my family for years. Though I heard about Dr. Popper from Katsuumi (he toured Japan often, meeting Katsuumi on these tours) I had no further contact until, after his death, I was having a restaurant meal in Los Angeles with the visiting Katsuumi, his friends, fans, and Dr. Popper's wife, Beata. She was not friendly.

#### Here's an unofficial obituary:

Jan Popper, the dapper, enthusiastic opera devotee whose nearly 300 productions at the UCLA Opera Workshop ranged from the exquisiteness of the Baroque era to the realism of the 20th Century, died of cancer Wednesday at Stanford University Hospital.

He was 79, and since his retirement as professor emeritus of music at UCLA in 1975 had established himself as a presence for opera in the Orient. There, his productions in Japan, Taiwan, Thailand and Malaysia brought him additional honors late in his life.

He also had taken a leading role in the West Bay Opera Co. while continuing a lifelong fight for increased financial support for opera to limit the exodus of American singers to Europe, where artists frequently are subsidized.

Teacher, lecturer, and conductor, Popper spread his fascination with singing theater into television, originating and performing a series of 16 half-hour films called "Spotlight on Opera." First seen on KNXT in Los Angeles in 1955, the George Foster Peabody Award-winning series later was broadcast on public television stations across the country.

But to the thousands of opera cognoscenti who saw his productions over the years, Popper will best be remembered as the founder of opera workshops at both Stanford University and UCLA.

Said Times music critic Martin Bernheimer after learning of Popper's death:

"In a time when Los Angeles was an operatic wasteland, Jan Popper kept the flame alive with his workshops. He not only discovered and nurtured worthy young talent but also explored a challenging, often esoteric, repertory."

And what Popper found when he went to UCLA from Stanford in 1949 was indeed a very small flame. What he discovered was not a theater but a single, modest classroom and not an orchestra but a lone pianist.

"Our first stage director," the maestro recalled in an interview on the eve of his retirement in 1975, "sat underneath the grand piano, highlighting the action by shining a baby spotlight onto the stage from his hiding place."



Dr. Popper with Mme Lehmann for his TV show on opera.

By his departure, there had been built a theater (Schoenberg Hall) and a faculty dominated semiprofessional orchestra that Popper conducted from a bona fide pit with what [critic] Bernheimer recalled as his "customary authority and flair."

Popper was born in Liberec, Czechoslovakia, and attended the Conservatory of Music in Vienna, where he received a doctorate.

He emigrated to the United States in 1939 after serving as conductor at Prague's German Opera House and for the Czech State Broadcasting Co.

#### Here's a tribute:

"There does not exist enough praise..." so wrote the great soprano Lotte Lehmann of Dr. Jan Popper after working with him for two summers at the Music Academy of the West. Her sentiments have been echoed by countless colleagues, students, and opera-goers from California to Belgium, from London to Iran, from Taiwan to Korea to Japan. He had an uncanny knack of perceiving and nurturing the musical potential of everyone who worked with him, imparting to each a sense of self-worth; thus he could challenge them to outdo themselves, always in the greater service of the art. They rose to the challenge, loved him for it, and the results were typically astonishing. The enthusiasm and dedication he brought to his opera classes and to his performances of operas, opera scenes, and highlights had the effect of creating, to a great degree, our present large opera audiences in Los Angeles. He was responsible, moreover, for bringing about the world or west coast premieres of a number of significant works. In 1981, UCLA, in recognition of his international standing as a conductor, performer, and teacher, named one of its performance halls Jan Popper Theater.

From a 1982 performance of <u>Marriage of Figaro</u> in Taiwan, you can see an excerpt with Dr. Popper conducting, playing from the harpsichord.

Baritone Dau-Hsiong Tseng sings "Già il sole dal Gange" with <u>Jan Popper</u> at the piano

Despite the problem with my parents, Dr. Popper kept up positive relations with me. I was orchestra manager so we worked together to make the opera performances, choral concerts, and the instrumental evenings a success. He was always professional as well as courteous.





From record jacket covers you'll see Dr. Popper at the piano. Many of my friends from UCLA are there as well as Dr. P's wife Beata.

#### 00

# Lotta Fun with Lotte

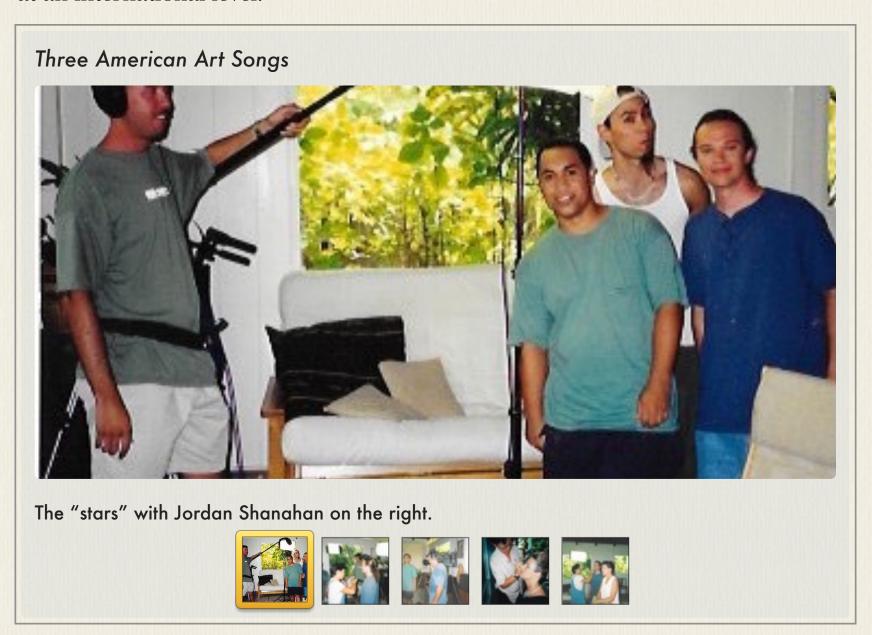


Starting with Lehmann herself, continuing with Frances Holden (her partner), Judy Sutcliffe (Holden's friend and Lehmann fan), the Lehmann Centennial at UCSB, the Discography for the Beaumont Glass Lehmann bio (with extensive help from Bill Moran), the Lotte Lehmann League Newsletters (shared with Sutcliffe), the Lotte Lehmann Foundation (its board in Honolulu and later New York), the Lotte Lehmann League (website), five Lehmann CD projects, eight Lehmann presentations such as this, I've encountered so many challenges, so

many interesting people, and of course, learned so much, that I often contemplate not just Lehmann's artistry, recordings, books, teaching, etc., but equally how much working with her legacy has enriched my life.

Though I invested a lot of time (and money) in the LLF, it turned out to do nothing on its own. But I'd had fun while running it, feeling that I'd accomplished a lot.

The LLF included CyberSing, whose winners, amazing singers from around the world, entered the contest often winning recognition. This had grown from a parallel competition in the local (Hawaii-based) Art Song Contest that ran for thirteen years. Some of these singers' as well as their pianists' performances were at an international level.



One of the other thrills I had while running the LLF was the writing of the script, then producing *Three American Art Songs*. I'm proud of this video for many reasons: I was able to include exactly the artists that I had in mind when writing the script.

The script, even the music that it called for, both came to me easily, as if I knew what I was doing. During the actual filming, I didn't get nervous or impatient. The team that worked on it was professional with Dennis helpful in every way. He prepared the food, which is so necessary for such an endeavor. The editing was handled by the director (Altieri), who worked easily with me. An amazing, satisfying, proud-making effort. See the *Three American Art Songs* photo gallery.

Talk about amazing: when I began the LLF I knew that I needed famous names as "Advisors" for the stationery and later the website, so we'd have respectability or legitimacy. I knew a few people and contacted them: friend as well as composer Dan Welcher; former professor at UCLA, Natalie Limonick; former student at junior high now teaching at Juilliard, Fred Fehleisen; interviewees such as Elly Ameling [who later withdrew after disagreeing about CyberSing, even sending in her recording to trick us!]; Marilyn Horne; Dalton Baldwin; and Thomas Hampson). But that was too thin a list for an international foundation. So I sought those people in the art song world that were really important (to me, at least). Through their agents, I sent letters requesting that they allow me to use their names as Advisors to the Foundation-in-launch. Very few refused. Nicolai Gedda phoned from Europe to accept. Dennis picked up the phone but was so dumbfounded he could hardly speak! We had both recorded with him in Europe. Birgit Nilsson responded that she thought she was too old to be of any use. I wrote back saying that Hugues Cuénod, who was in his late 90s at the time, had joined so she immediately wrote a sweet note, with her admiration for LL along with her acceptance.

Here's a list of the Advisors we recruited: Elly Ameling, Olaf Bär, Thomas Bagwell, Dalton Baldwin\*, Juliane Banse, Steven Blier, Barbara Bonney, Phyllis Bryn-Julson, Grace Bumbry, Tom Cipullo, Hugues Cuénod\*, Mary Dibbern, Fred Fehleisen, Irwin Gage\*, Nicolai Gedda\*, Christine Goerke, Juliana Gondek, Nathan Gunn, Thomas Hampson, Barbara Hendricks, Wolfgang Holzmair, Jorma Hynninen, Speight Jenkins, Graham Johnson, Warren Jones, Judith Kellock\*, Jennifer Larmore, Natalie Limonick\*, Lotfi Mansouri\*, Gerdine Markus, Thomas Meglioranza, Carol Neblett\*, Birgit Nilsson\*, Marni Nixon\*, Kurt Ollmann, J.J. Penna, Christoph Prégardien, Derek Lee Ragin, Rachel

Schutz, Larry Alan Smith, Paul Sperry, Frederica von Stade, Nathalie Stutzmann, Val Underwood, Benita Valente, Roger Vignoles, Sarah Walker, Dan Welcher,



With Advisor Steven Blier in his NYC apartment

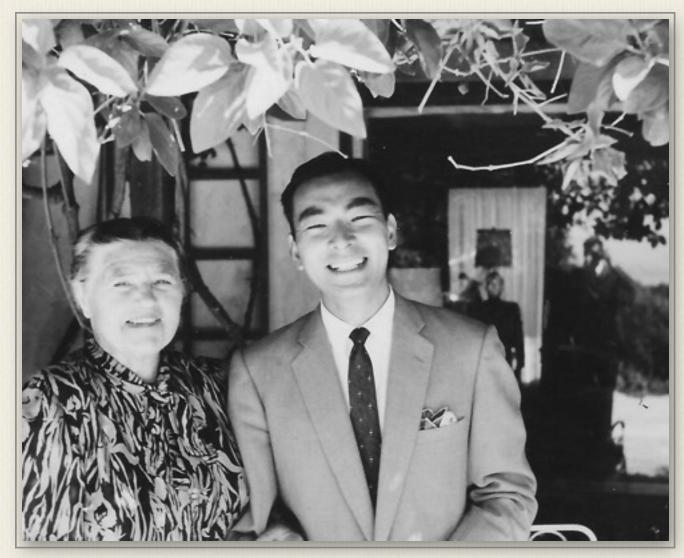
Robert White, Edith Wiens. (\* as of June 2020, these fine musicians have died.)

I knew, even back before we developed the LLF into a true foundation, that the web would be the way we could operate from Hawaii. I'd met techguy Ryan Hunt as a seat-

mate on one of my many trips to California to run the thrift store, so I asked him about advising me on something I knew nothing of: a web page. Or did I mean a web site? I had everything to learn so he set up what I needed. He was too quick or impatient to be a good teacher but did what was necessary to make an attractive site. I filled it with information as well as photos. It became the LLF website that I turned over to the new board in NYC which morphed into the present LLL site. I'm still not sure why the LLF did not succeed in NYC.

Another thrilling accomplishment, even a surprise for its novelty as well as a feeling of creative satisfaction: The LL Tribute CD and its spin-off, which never made it to CD, but is available on the LLL website. I'd noticed the death of several LL students and thought that their memories of her were dying with them. So I contacted students, and others, who were on the list of Advisors and again, with almost no problems, the singers, the pianists, even for the most part, the recording engineers, worked for *free*! The resulting product was an historic, artistically satisfying, sincere LL tribute. The technical aspects of the production's liner notes were handled by Dixon Smith, the artistic side by his friend, Paul Turley. I was able to use local recording engineers to help with my technical needs and the CD was published by Arabesque Recordings. You can access what was recorded for the second CD of "Lotte Lehmann: to honor her legacy."

It entailed a lot of work to initiate the LLF, with (501c3), Advisors, fundraising, developing projects. It's a shame that it is now defunct. Dennis helped throughout the whole process: He joined me in affixing labels to the quarterly newsletters, and



My only photo with LL: usually cropped out, to the right of Katsuumi you see me in a suit with a camera to my face reflected in the sliding glass door.

we had so much news, that we sent off single page newsletters in between! We were proud of what we were accomplishing.

We lumped together all my projects under the LLF rubric. That meant the radio program Great Songs; the Art Song Contest (first only local, before we added CyberSing); Supra Titles for Art Song; Three American Art Songs; The World of Song Award; LyricLanguages; the Lehmann tributes that found their way onto the website, the CD, and into the newsletters. When I would interview someone, like Risë Stevens, I'd condense the words into a report for the newsletters. The goal of the Foundation was the preservation of LL's artistic legacy, as well as support for art song. While I ran it here in Hawaii, both of those goals were actively met. I am proud of that accomplishment. You can find the newsletters in the "LLL and LLF Newsletters" section of the Lotte Lehmann League website.

The only way we could really receive donations was as a non-profit (501c3). I knew nothing about this so talked to many people in town with experience. Finally,

a lawyer, Mary Beth Wong, a student's aunt, agreed to set it up (pro bono). I did most of the paperwork, but as a lawyer, she knew what went where, what to expect, how to write things up. Though most such entities are rejected on their first try, we were quickly accepted. Thanks to her, it gave us standing!

Further Lehmann projects came at a dizzying pace: I worked with Rita Nasser on her Lehmann video documentary <u>Stimme des Herzens</u> (The Heart's Voice) that was yet another chance to be a part of Lehmann history.

I began the Lotte Lehmann Foundation in 1997, serving as its president for the first six years of its existence. In January 2003, I determined to move the Foundation from its birthplace in Hawaii to New York City finally retiring from active service in 2005. Here is a list of people who supported the LLF either financially, on the board, or morally.

Many thanks to personal friends such as Ruth Ballard, (this list is long, so you may want to skip to the end), Robert Bullington, Dr. Herman Schornstein, Al Schütz, Louise Emery, Speight Jenkins, Mrs. Hilde Randolph, Tom and Karen Ackland, Roxie Berlin, Judy Kellock, Judith Sutcliffe, Lois & Davidson Luehring, Sam Agres, Mark & Noriko Bagley, Dale Hall, Nancy Hedemann, Vinny Gioia, Kent Pachuta, Penny & Dixon Smith, Natalie Limonick, Bruse Eckmann, Alex Farkas, Beebe Freitas, Lee Alden Johnson, Alice Marie Nelson, Rodney Punt, friends, relatives and students of the late Jane Birkhead, who'd studied with LL, Shirley Sproule, Benita Valente, Tom and Natalie Mahoney, Sylvia Baldwin, John and Betsy McCreary, Jay & Judy Messinger, Chris French, Brian Zeger, Paul Sperry, Dan Welcher, Susan Duprey, Eric Schank, Sarah Shanahan, Mary Dibbern, David & Mary Lerps, Neil & Marion McKay, Marion Vaught, Mike Becker, Joan Canfield, Steven-Douglas Hickling, John Kennedy, Eric Mathis, Hans Ramm, Melanie Robinson, Philip Ulanowsky, Evelyn Lance, Marni Nixon, Marcela Reale, Hertha Schuch, David Walter, Nick Bayak, Bob Dickerson, Norman Foster, Robert Hines, Kaweo Kanoho, Penny Lawhn, Kurt Ollmann, Robert Pollock, Ken Staton, Fumiko Wellington, Valerie Yee, Steven Blier, Ann McKinney, Norma Nichols, and many others.

In 2006 I worked with Jon Tolansky and the WFMT Radio Network to help produce a two-hour radio documentary on the <u>life and music</u> of Lotte Lehmann on the 30th anniversary of her death.

Besides compiling the Lehmann <u>discography</u> for Beaumont Glass' *Lotte Lehmann*, a *Life in Opera and Song*, I have worked for years in assembling the elements of her chronology. This has taken some detective work that has been fascinating. The complete Chronology can be found in Volume II of *Lotte Lehmann & Her Legacy*, or at: <u>Lehmann Chronology</u>.

For three years I assisted author Dr. Michael Kater in his 2008 Lehmann biography *Never Sang for Hitler*. Reference to my discography as well as the chronology proved the title, which had been in dispute from a previous biography. It was a pleasure to meet Dr. Kater while doing his research at UCSB. The depth of his efforts uncovered many hitherto unknown aspects of Lehmann's life.

My past "Lehmann" years had seen a huge accumulation of Lehmann-related material in my office, so in 2010 I began to disburse this treasure. The Lehmann Archives at UCSB; the Lehmann Collection at Stanford University; the Marr Sound Archive at the University of Missouri, Kansas City; and the Historic Record Archive at Yale University have all been the recipients of my years of collecting. In each case, it was determined what of my collection did not duplicate their holdings.

While preparing the above disbursement I discovered to my delight that there was a considerable amount of recorded Lehmann performances that had never been commercially released. This inspired me to contact Fred Morath at the *Music & Arts* label in California to release a Lehmann CD set, that I called "Lehmann Rarities." The excellent restoration engineer Lani Spahr worked on the project with me so the whole four-CD set is now available. There is a fifth CD (CD-ROM) that has the late Beaumont Glass' Lehmann remembrance, notes by me for each track, including translations. The complete set is titled: *Lotte Lehmann: A 125th Birthday Tribute*. It received positive reviews.

In 2011 I began the Lotte Lehmann League web site that replaced the one I'd set up for the Foundation.

During 2013 I began linking every recording in the Lehmann discography with its actual sound to the page in the LLL called the <u>Lehmann Recordings</u>. Though the sound is only mp3, I believe it gives some idea of her unique vocal quality, the

Lehmann interpretation. Because she re-recorded so many titles, one may follow her development over the years.

In 2015 the Vocal Record Collectors Society of NYC played a CD I'd provided for their meeting. I called it Lotte Lehmann: <u>Legendary and Unknown</u>, which became a chapter of one of the presentations such as this, which also can be heard on the LLL website.

The years 2015–2020 found me working on presentations for Apple books: *Lotte Lehmann & Her Legacy* (in eight volumes) that are available from Apple at no charge. Volume I received glowing notices from Fanfare magazine. Later I brought many of those chapters into the LLL website. During 2018 I worked extensively with one Dr. Herman Schornstein, of LL's friends from her last years, in a complete revision and expansion of Volume I. Dixon Smith, as usual, helped with the technical aspects. Volume II completes many chapters from the previous presentation, adding others that develop the personal relationships that students or fans had with Lehmann.

Volumes III, IV, and V of *Lotte Lehmann & Her Legacy* have already been published by Apple, but they warrant updating/second editions when further material arrives. Volume III already features many of Lehmann's Lieder master classes, Volume IV the song cycles, and Volume V, the opera arias and scenes.

In 2018 I brought all of those LL master class recordings to the LLL website.

In 2019 I published Lehmann's talks and interviews as Volumes VI (English) and VII (German). Many of these interviews will be duplicated later to the LLL website. Some of these interviews are videos that add to the Lehmann mystique.

Marston Records released Lotte Lehmann: Acoustic Recordings: 1914–1926 in February 2017. I helped produce the four-CD set, later working with Ward Marston on a six-CD set covering her Berlin electric recordings released in 2020.

Sometimes I've felt that by being an outsider (non-vocalist, non-pianist, someone who began knowing nothing of opera and Lieder) I could gain better insight into these worlds, thus attracting others who could support my efforts to bring LL and art song to a broader audience. If I'd had a reputation or had a career in these

fields, there could have been "camps" or other kinds of cliques that could have stifled my efforts. Over the years, my knowledge of art song has grown considerably and I'm even familiar with some opera. I'm now considered a Lotte Lehmann "expert."

That first encounter with LL has yielded many wonderful side careers for me. Whether radio, web site, record production, book writing, video production, or the actual administration of a foundation, all these developments enhanced my knowledge and broadened me as a person.

I will always be grateful to Lotte Lehmann for the many personal kindnesses she showed me, but mostly for the humanity that shines through her artistry as it continues to reach audiences. I am honored to have helped disseminate her legacy. Through her writings and recordings, her supreme example will glow for generations to come.

Though an upcoming chapter is called "Epilogue," here's the epilogue I wrote in Lotte Lehmann & Her Legacy Volume VIII which covered her art-works.

As I finish this multi-volume and well over a five-year effort on behalf of Lehmann's legacy, it's become clear to me that I've been afforded the honorable task of working in this medium that allows for audio, video, and certainly lots of photographic representation of Mme Lehmann's art. Yes, Madame is what I called her, what we all called her. She was still a vivid, visible presence at the Music Academy of the West when I was there to study double bass in 1962. Lehmann appeared at the dress rehearsal (and probably performances) of the MAW operas and the last master classes of the season in opera and art song given by her excellent successor, Martial Singher. After all, she was one of the founders of the institution, proud of what it continued to accomplish.

Since these books have amply covered her life and legacy, what I want to mention now is her continued imprint on me as I've produced these presentations. When I've made an artistic or even a mundane decision, there's always been a small but potent voice that asks, "Would Mme Lehmann approve of this?"

Am I trying to please or impress her? In some way, yes. But on the more important artistic level, though I do admit to hoping to attain some of the same high

standards to which she aspired, I want my work to represent the best that we can both offer.

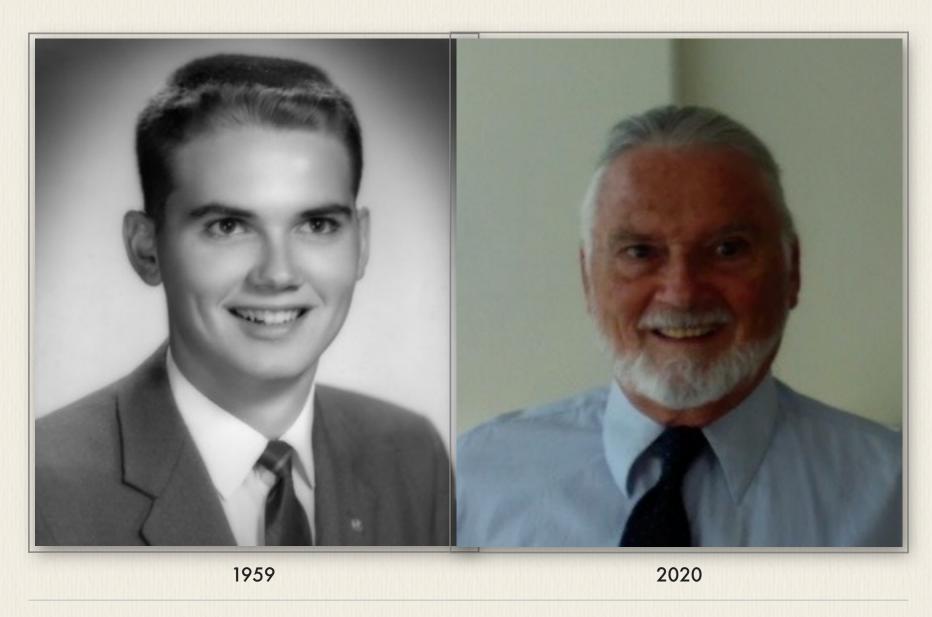
Finally, though this series is at an end, I can still enjoy Lehmann's recordings, her books, her art. I'll try to emulate the demanding, active, creative, and productive life that she demonstrated. I admit to some degree of nostalgia: seeing the photos of her home where I watched her teach, reviewing the artwork that I viewed on my visits there, hearing her speaking voice in my radio interviews with her, all these mark my association with this strong personality. The young singer whom I drove to private lessons with Lehmann has recently died. So have many other of Lehmann's students; those who live on are now retired and many have even stopped teaching. Beyond nostalgia then, it is my hope that these presentations will demonstrate Lehmann's art, teaching, and creative energy for many years.



Lehmann teaches Jeannine Altmeyer and tenor Guy Rothfuss Die Waküre Act II.



# Epilogue



These are actually the same person!

#### Summing Up A Life

When I look back on these chapters of my life I'd like to believe that there was a profound result for me having lived. Just having a lot of fun, which I certainly did, isn't the only thing that I want to feel is the sum. Yes, I know that many students were influenced or inspired by me, but they're already retiring or even passed on. I've taken up space and resources of the world for going on 79 years. What has

been the result? What have I done that's special? The credits in the art song world or legacy of Lotte Lehmann are noticed or enjoyed by a dwindling number. What, in other words, has been my legacy? Oooooh, that's tougher. When one writes a kinda memoir/autobio the author wants to brag so there are those sections that deal with my pride in this or that accomplishment. Some of these deeds or even exploits have been satisfying to my ego, but in the bottom line assessment, can they be claimed as enduring, or even imperishable achievements? Less sure. I've dabbled in many fields but what long-lasting success can I claim? Probably not much. But I salve my ego's wounds by recalling that most of a human's heritage is eventually weakened or misunderstood with time. There's no chance that I have affected my beloved classical music with anything like the profound achievements of the master composers/performers. Creative genius hasn't been my gift. Nor have my talents persuaded the world to appreciate those things that are important to me: environmental care; appreciation for good music, especially art song; equal treatment for races and sexual proclivities; patience for and love of our fellow animals, including humans; sharing of one's delights. Does my ego long for something meaningful being written for my obit or tearfully recalled at my funereal celebration of life? Yes, probably so. But it's time to admit that there's no immutable, persistent reverberation that can be traced to my eight decades here. So in admitting defeat, I can claim the reverse: I've tried to mitigate my damage to the environment or suffering to people or animals. Double bass playing, the art song world, or Lehmann legacy haven't deteriorated or languished under my efforts. It may not count in the obituaries, but I'm happy to have deeply enjoyed so many things. As my faculties wane and my very being passes away, looking back on this life, joy, yes, the joy in appreciating the wonders of this world, whether natural or manmade has outweighed suffering. That, my friends, is an accomplishment.

Now looking back on the development of this presentation, which has included sifting through elements of my life that matter to me, I can conclude that this procedure has been fun. When I further examine the motive for compiling this there *was* fun in the process, but fundamentally the work is my ego project that helps me feel permanent, immortal.

But I believe that for me, identification with my ego and my perceived accomplishments doesn't allow me true freedom. Perhaps the whole action of compiling and organizing this book is a subconscious way to empty my mind of the accumulated stories. I don't need to continually glorify myself with the selected proud-making moments of my life.

Eckhart Tolle writes: "There is another, more easy, way to free ourselves from the ego: presence. The present moment is the easiest exit point out of the ego." And in the most basic sense, if I could live in that clear, empty, free mind—no expectations, no preconceptions, no prejudices, no fear, no hope—then I would attain the clarity of awakening. The realization that nothing is forever. There's no eternity. Nothing being permanent includes me.

If I put together a clean, calm, quiet, *empty* mind with the removal of the expectation of an eternal future, then I am free. In the meanwhile, there's this exposition of my ego for me and perhaps others to chuckle over.

The remainder of this page has been intensionally left blank.

### IN-Q

Son of	, who is a friend of Jay and Judy Messinger
forgotten his real name	e, but he began as a rapper (successful, specially
know that he's not blace	ck) and is now a speaking poet. He's had great
this and has been on T	ED and other venues both live and on line.

#### **Related Glossary Terms**

Drag related terms here

Index Find Term

Chapter 1 - Getn Started

#### Lore Fischer

Born: May 27, 1911 - Stuttgart, Germany; Died: October 16, 1991 - Munich, Germany

The German contralto, Lore Fischer, studied singing and violin playing at the Musikhochschule of Stuttgart. She studied singing at the Musikhochschule of Köln by Maria Philippi.

In 1934 Lore Fischer gave her first concerts and became known now as soloist in oratorios and as Lieder interpreter. She appeared in the music centers in Germany (numerous concerts in Berlin, Hamburg, Hannover, Cologne and in more cities) and abroad. Thus she gave concerts in Paris (1938 and 1941), in Warsaw (1933), in Brussels (1938 and 1939), Amsterdam (1939 and 1941), in Graz (1938), and undertook in 1956 an expanded USA tour.

In 1942 Lore Fischer got married with the violist Rudolf Nel. With him and the composer Hermann Reutter she created the Lore-Fischer-Trio, which brought above all compositions of the Baroque period to the public. She lived in München-Gräfelfing, from where she went out to her expanded concert activity. Later she was appointed as a Professor at the Musikhochschule of Stuttgart.

Lore Fischer's recordings appeared on the labels Polydor, Christschall, Concert Hall and Philips. She sang the alto solo in L.v. Beethoven's 9th Symphony on the French label RC; also on Odeon, Eterna, Oiseau Lyre and Decca (Matthäus-Passion (BWV 244) of J.S. Bach).

#### Rachmael Weinstock

Rachmael Weinstock, a violinist who specialized in chamber music and was renowned as a teacher, died on July 19 at the Split Rock Nursing Home in the Bronx. He was 86.

Mr. Weinstock toured widely during the 1930's as first violinist of the original Manhattan String Quartet. (An ensemble formed by some of his students revived the name more recently.) During the 1940's he was second violinist of the Roth Quartet and in the 1950's he was a member of the New York Trio. He also played in the Radio City Music Hall orchestra briefly, and with Arturo Toscanini's NBC Symphony Orchestra for eight years.

Mr. Weinstock was born in Newark in 1910, and assembled an approximation of a violin, using wood and chicken wire, when he was 4. He began studying the instrument seriously the following year, and by the time he was 14 his violin teacher had hired him as an assistant. It was around then that he became fascinated with chamber music, after hearing a recording by the Flonzaley Quartet.

Soon after he enrolled at the Manhattan School of Music, in the late 1920's, he formed the Manhattan String Quartet with three other students. The group, which, unlike most quartets, performed its programs from memory, made its formal debut at Town Hall in 1932 and toured Europe in 1935. During the tour, the ensemble performed the Brahms and Franck Piano Quintets in Budapest with Bela Bartok at the piano. In 1936, the quartet toured the Soviet Union during an easing of restrictions on foreign artists. The group disbanded in 1937.

Mr. Weinstock began his teaching career in the late 1940's, when he joined the faculty of the Manhattan School, where he remained on the faculty as a professor emeritus. He also taught at Manhattanville College, City College, Brigham Young University and the University of Tel Aviv, as well as privately. His students include members of the New York Philharmonic, the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam and several chamber ensembles, including the current Manhattan String Quartet.

He is survived by a son, Richard, of Scarsdale, N.Y.; a daughter, Joan, of Manhattan, and two grandchildren.

#### **Related Glossary Terms**

Drag related terms here

#### Stanley Bednar

Mr. Bednar will be missed by all that knew him. He was helpful to all of the students in all ways during his time at MSM. Steven Sacks MSM '7 - Steven Sacks

Manhattan School of Music is saddened by the loss of Stanley Bednar, a longtime member of the MSM family. Mr. Bednar graduated with his bachelor of music (1949) and master of music (1952) joining the violin and chamber music faculty in 1954. MSM is eternally grateful for his dedicated work that included facilitating the School's move from East Harlem to its current home as well as establishing college admission procedures and seeing that a doctor of music degree was added to its curriculum. He was honored with the School's Presidential Medal for Distinguished Service in 2001. His passion and dedication will be remembered with gratitude throughout the years to come. Peter G. Robbins, Chairman, Board of Trustees Robert Sirota, President

Stanley Bednar began studying the violin at an early age. His post-secondary education was received at Eastman, Juilliard, and Manhattan School of Music, with summer studies at the University of Minnesota. Mr. Bednar also served in the U.S. Army during the Korean War and was decorated for valor.

His professional performance career has included solo appearances throughout the Western Hemisphere, participation in various chamber music groups, membership in several symphony orchestras, and appearances at international music festivals.

In 1954, Mr. Bednar was appointed to the college faculty of Manhattan School of Music as a teacher of violin and chamber music, joining the School's Preparatory Division in 1956. That same year, he assisted the Manhattan School administration in preparing for its initial accreditation for four subsequent inspections, having served in every capacity over the years while maintaining a teaching schedule at the School. Mr. Bednar was responsible for establishing the procedures for college admission which were later adopted by all conservatories and schools of music. He was instrumental in adding new degree programs and the entire doctoral program. Mr. Bednar was solely in charge of the reconstruction of the School's present facilities at 120 Claremont Avenue, its move from East Harlem, and the sale of those buildings. He was the School's representative to both the Federal and State governments and was instrumental in obtaining applications for various grants totaling several million dollars, enabling the School to relocate. He also worked directly with the NEA to establish its initial program of grants to independent conservatories and with the New York State Council on the Arts for major support of the opera program. For ten years Mr. Bednar served as an executive officer of the Association of Independent Conservatories and for twenty-five years was on the board of the Morningside Area Alliance. In addition, Mr. Bednar served for seven years as the chief executive at Manhattan School of Music.

#### **Related Glossary Terms**

Drag related terms here

Index Find Term