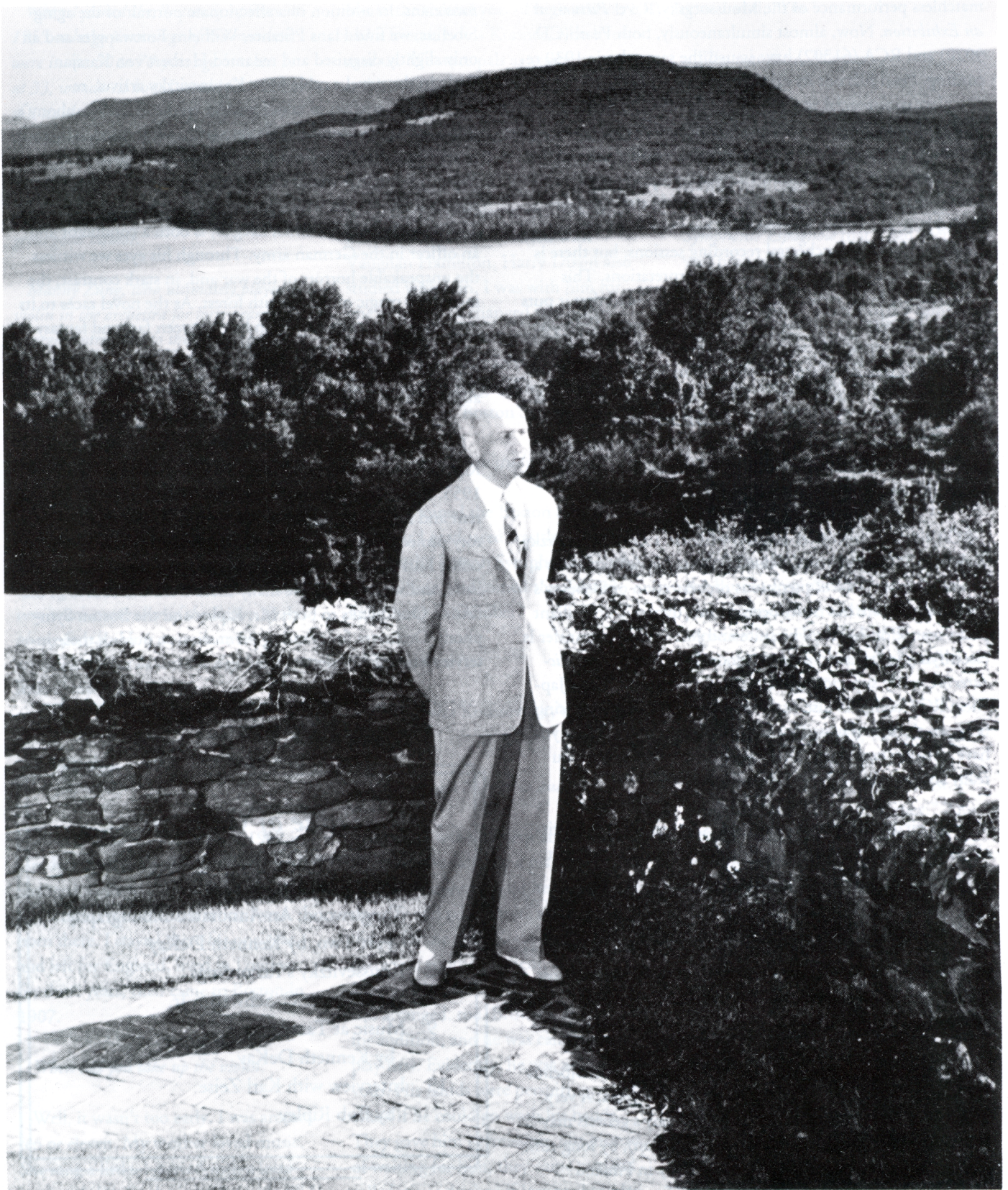


KOUSSEVITZKY

Recordings Society



Letter from the President

Vol. VII, No. 1, Spring, 1993

For years it was all but impossible to obtain Koussevitzky's matchless performance of the Moussorgsky/Ravel *Pictures at an Exhibition*. Now, almost simultaneously, both Pearl (CD 9020) and RCA (61392) have issued the same classic 1930 recording. Pearl fills out its excellent release with Koussevitzky's complete commercial recordings of Stravinsky, made between 1928 and 1940. By the late '20s, the Boston Symphony was already a spectacular instrument, as Pearl's earlier issue of the 1929 recording of Prokofiev's *Classical Symphony* made abundantly clear. The fragments from *Petrouchka* and *Apollo* included here are no less impressive. These were drawn from Koussevitzky's first orchestral recording sessions, but there is nothing tentative about his glowing interpretations. This *Petrouchka* is bold, virile, and so brilliantly colored that it puts nearly all modern recordings of the score to shame. Only the abrupt speed-up at the beginning of the last side betrays the conductor's lack of experience with the tedious 78 rpm recording process. Koussevitzky's last Stravinsky recording was also his finest—the version of the *Capriccio* with Jesus Maria Sanroma. With performers such as these this slight score becomes, for the moment, a minor masterpiece. The impressive sounding transfers are by Mark Obert-Thorn.

RCA's new disc couples *Pictures* with the 1930 Koussevitzky *Boléro*, 1944 *Daphnis and Chloé Suite #2*, *La Valse* and—as a pleasant bonus—Ravel's sensuous orchestration of Debussy's *Sarabande*. There has never been a more dynamic or brilliant performance of the *Daphnis* suite and Jon Samuels's transfer is electrifying in its clarity and presence. Both transfers of *Pictures* are vastly superior to either the Camden LPs or the Japanese RCA compact disc of a few years back. Thus, choosing between these two new discs is utterly impossible. Unless you have a strong preference for one program or the other, you really should add both to your collection.

Koussevitzky is back on the airwaves, at least in Great Britain. The BBC has produced and aired a major thirteen part radio series devoted to Koussevitzky's life and work. I have heard only the first hour, which was a superlative biography of the conductor supplemented by the candid reminiscences of Leonard Bernstein, Lukas Foss and many other close associates of the conductor. Humphrey Burton was the writer and host of this segment. I sincerely hope that these programs will soon be made available to fine arts radio stations in America.

The uncertain fate of the Eighth Symphony by Jean Sibelius has inspired all manner of speculation over the years. A very compelling fictional account of the Symphony's genesis may be found in the new novel, *Winter Fire* (Dutton), by long-time KRS member William Trotter. Set primarily in Finland during the Second World War, this magnificently written and

phantasmagorical tale introduces us to a number of prominent musicians. In addition to a affectionate portrait of the aging Sibelius, we find Hans Pfitzner, Wilhelm Furtwängler and an only slightly disguised and renamed Herbert von Karajan. Early in the novel a cable from Koussevitzky arrives, requesting permission to take a passage in the Fifth Symphony's finale at a tempo considerable slower than indicated. The composer responds: "Of course you must take that passage as you *feel* it, otherwise it would sound wrong no matter what the tempo. I know that, with you, my works are in good hands." The central character, Erich Ziegler, is both a conductor and an officer in the German army. Through his eyes we witness the unspeakable horrors of the war and, in stark contrast, the incredible magic of the Finnish forest. As the novel races to its inevitable conclusion, the thin line between fact and fantasy becomes hopelessly blurred. All-in-all a remarkable accomplishment, especially when we realize that this is the author's first novel.

Finally, we welcome a new contributor to our pages. Robert Ripley has been a cellist with the Boston Symphony since 1955. Recently he has begun to interview a number of his current and former colleagues as part of the orchestra's oral history project. His fascinating and insightful conversations with cellist Karl Zeise and violinist Manuel Zung appear in this issue, and we hope to have many more from this source in the future. Our thanks to both Mr. Ripley and the Boston Symphony Orchestra for granting permission to publish these interviews in our newsletter.

Tom Godell

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Interview with Manuel Zung

September 26, 1991

When I joined the Boston Symphony in 1955, a large percentage of the members were in the 50 to 70-plus age bracket. I, at 33, wondered how I would fit in with this staid, venerable group. My concern was shattered the moment I walked into my first rehearsal. The atmosphere was positively electric! There was an overwhelming spirit of vivacity, youth and great good humor.

Manny Zung, who ultimately played violin in the orchestra for forty years, was a large contributor to this atmosphere. He was the first to shake my hand and welcome me to the orchestra. Manny is now ninety and lives only a mile from my home. He drives "up town" regularly to do errands, and I see him there fairly often. He is as keen and lively as ever. He will immediately ask me, "How's the orchestra doing? What's going on at the Hall?" He keeps abreast of our activities, such as tours, guest conductors and soloists—still very much a member of the Boston Symphony family. He is a much an inspiration now as he was the day I met him, thirty-eight years ago.

Bob Ripley

Bob Ripley: *Manny, when and where were you born?*

Manuel Zung: I was born in 1902 in Grodno, Russia/Poland. That country changed hands every few years after the war, and so it was Russia when I was born there. I stayed there for one year and left for England, lived in London for three years, then came to Boston in 1907.

When did you take up the violin?

Well, it wasn't too early. I was around ten or eleven. My mother loved music. She sang a little. I started with a local teacher. I didn't take it up seriously till I

was in the second year of high school. I had a friend, Louis Krasner, who lived near us. We were pals as youngsters, and he was going to the New England Conservatory of Music. In my second year of high school, I decided that was what I wanted to do. I was either going to be a doctor or a musician. So I started taking lessons also at the New England Conservatory. I started with Vaughan Hamilton. Harry Dixon also studied with him. I was with him for one year, then I changed to Eugene Gruenberg, who had a lot of influence on my life. He was an old Viennese musician, wonderful gentleman and former member of the Boston Symphony.

How long did you study with him?

Until I joined the Boston Symphony. The year I graduated was the year I went in the Boston Symphony. Graduated in June, and joined the Boston Symphony in October.

Of what year?

1925. It was Koussevitzky's second year.

How did you happen to audition?

Sanroma was a student at the Conservatory, was already a pianist with the Boston Symphony, and he came to me one day and said that he arranged an audition for me with Koussevitzky. And there was another student, George Brown, who was a cellist; his audition was arranged, too. Brown and I went up for audition, and he was called in to play first. Evidently, he was a little nervous. His hands were perspiring, and he asked if he could wash his hands. They gave him permission, but instead of waiting for him, they came out and called me and asked if I wanted to play

now. I said, "Yes."

Who was there, Manny?

Koussevitzky, Richard Burgin, concertmaster, Jean Bedetti, first cello, Jean Lefranc, first viola, and Max Kunze, first bass. They were the judges. Well, I got through playing the Lalo *Symphonie Espagnole* that I had pretty well prepared. I had been practicing it to play at commencement. When I got through playing, Koussevitzky came out with me to the corridor and told me I was engaged for the orchestra and to go sign my contract with the manager. I immediately went down to the offices, and the manager wasn't there. But Judge Cabot, who was president of the trustees, was sitting behind a desk, and he was going to take care of me. He started asking me questions. One of the questions was, why did I want to join the Boston Symphony when I could play in the theatre orchestra and make more money. That kind of floored me. I didn't know what to say, and I said, "Are you kidding?"

That kind of got him, too. Maybe I was too brash. I don't know, but he said, "Well, in looking over the list, I find that there isn't any vacancy." That was the end of that meeting. I tried to see Koussevitzky at his last concert that week, Saturday night, but I couldn't get to see him because the crowds took all his time. So I went all through the summer not knowing if I was going to get in the orchestra or not. I even visited the manager, Mr. [William H.] Brennan, who lived at Rye Beach, New Hampshire, and he couldn't do anything for me.

Anyway, I waited till Koussevitzky got back from Europe and went to his home to see him, my mother going with

me, because she spoke some Russian. When he saw my mother, he told her not to worry about anything—to be at Symphony Hall on a certain day, and see the manager, and I'd have a contract. He said that if there wasn't any place for me, he'd make a place. Actually, that's what he did! I went to Symphony Hall, and got Mr. Brennan to sign the contract, and when the season started, there wasn't any place for me, but he put this chair up in back of the second violins, all by myself, just one, and I sat back there. He made a place.

Of course, in a couple of weeks, I was on the first stand. In those days, we played everything stand by stand. We happened to be playing the Beethoven Ninth Symphony that first week—I think it was. He made the second violins play the famous scherzo stand by stand. When you're a young fellow and you're playing concertos and everything, it was simple. The technique was nothing for that scherzo—spiccato. And of course, the poor fellows were all nervous, and the bows were shaking. I couldn't understand it. I didn't know enough—too ignorant—to know what it was all about. I evidently played well, because when we got through, I remember Koussevitzky said, in German, "Zung, you played better than everybody."

Of course, when he came to your stand, you were all alone!

It's easier alone, also. You play better. Of course, there was a little resentment from some of the members of the orchestra...

No doubt.

...which I got walking off the stage in intermission. I heard remarks.

So you went right away to the first desk?

Thillois was the leader of the second

violins, and I sat with him, but not too long. I forget whose place I was in—oh, Mayer. Then I sat on the second stand after that.

That's where you were when I came in.

Oh, I'd been down on the first stand, back and forth, you know—when somebody's out. I didn't have the temperament for it. I couldn't concentrate long. I mean, you had to all the time. On the first stand you really had to. You could relax a little on the second stand. So there were auditions for the first stand sometime. I went up to Koussevitzky and asked him to release me from it. I didn't want to sit on the first stand. I was happy on the second. It was on my level, anyway, because I didn't feel comfortable.

Well, now, over the years there must have been interesting incidents that happened.

True. During the years we had a little bridge group with Richard Burgin, Fernand Gillet and Boaz Piller. One day we were standing on the stage during intermission during rehearsal at Tanglewood; there were three of us. And Koussevitzky came walking towards us, smiling, and as he approached, he said, "Oh, the bridge crowd." Richard Burgin asked him if he'd like to join us in bridge. He said that he used to play cards years ago when he was playing double-bass as soloist, but holding the cards in his hands used to tire his fingers out, and he had to give it up, because it bothered him in his soloistic career. So he never played bridge with us.

Now, identify those others—what they played.

Burgin was concertmaster. Gillet was first oboe, and Piller was contrabassoon. Dr. Koussevitzky knew that we were the bridge players. He had all the

information about the men in the orchestra. That was his family, and he wanted to know what everybody did outside of the orchestra. That orchestra was his life, and he always referred to *his* orchestra. When somebody would ask him how his second fiddle section was, he said, "In my orchestra there aren't any second fiddles. They're all first violins."

I remember when he said that to us students at Tanglewood, too. So what was it like working with him? We hear stories about Koussevitzky being such a tyrant.

Day to day, I was too young to feel it, but I felt sorry for my colleagues. It made them very nervous, and there were changes being made. We were non-union then. And they didn't know from year to year what was going to happen to them. But he was a very strict disciplinarian, always asked for more than you could give, and the results were fantastic in the sound of the orchestra. In those days, we were number one. Of course, critics in other cities would write that, and when that happens, it really is so.

Since it was non-union, there was no restriction on the length of rehearsals, was there?

No, no. We had a three hour rehearsal, ten to one, and we used to stay till half-past one or two o'clock. I played with the Zimble Quartet, and we broadcast on WNAC three times a week at one o'clock. And we always got through in time to get to the radio station. We'd have a taxi waiting at the stage door. Well, this morning Koussevitzky kept going and going. It was almost one o'clock and nothing being said about it, and we were worried. Finally, Joe Zimble walked up to him. He was the cellist in the quartet, and he spoke to Koussevitzky, telling him our dilemma. Koussevitzky thought for a minute, and he said, "Well you can go

now, but play well.”

It must have taken some courage on Zimble’s part to go up to him.

He was the only one who could have done it. Koussevitzky would be very lenient that way with his musicians, as long as they played well. That was his orchestra, and he loved it. He gave his life to it.

What were your first recollections of Tanglewood?

My first recollection was the rain coming down through a tent that we played under—like a Barnum and Bailey big tent. It was a Wagner concert. We had to keep moving our chairs around as the rain came through the tent. Of course, that helped to get the pavilion built. It wasn’t too long after that it was built.

What other activities did you have outside the orchestra? Were they allowed?

I also played with the Worthington Quartet, with Bob Gundersen, Jacobus Langendoen and George Humphrey.

Gundersen was violin. Langendoen was cello...

...George Humphrey was viola. I did that for quite a while, but it got to be too much for me. I had to give up one of them. I gave up the Zimble Quartet.

Did you do much teaching, Manny?

No, I didn’t do any teaching, but I did a lot of playing outside with Arthur Fiedler. We had an awful lot of concerts

in those days, and I played every one, until the end of my career. The young fellows made a ruling: there has to be a rotation. That stopped that, but I was all through with the orchestra about that time, thinking of leaving.

You were in the orchestra before Fiedler took over the Pops, weren’t you?

No, I was in the orchestra when Arthur sat next to me, playing viola at that time. He had started on the violin and switched to viola. He sat next to me, and I used to tease Arthur a lot. Men fooled around [during Pops concerts]. He was one of the first ones to do

Koussevitzky said, “In my orchestra there aren’t any second fiddles. They’re all first violins.”

that. At the pianissimo he’d drop a load of coins on the floor—that sort of thing. And Jacchia wanted to fire him.

Agide Jacchia was conductor of the Pops at that time?

Yeah. But Brennan stopped that. And it wasn’t long after I joined the orchestra that Fiedler came to me once and said, “I don’t expect to play the viola much longer. I’m going to be a conductor.” And sure enough, two or three years after that he was conducting the Boston Pops.

How did the men take that?

Well, at the beginning he had his hands full.

Yeah, because he was just one of the guys.

Well, that’s what I mean. But he tried to get some discipline. And slowly and surely, he did. He did a wonderful job with the Pops. He turned it around. The hall used to be half-empty. When he started, it began to fill up. He changed the programs, and he was ideal for the Boston Pops. He learned as he went along, at the beginning. He also had a Sinfonietta that I played with.

Arthur Fiedler had a Sinfonietta?

Twelve men. His uncle and I played violin. Benny Fiedler was a regular—played with his nephew—and when they needed another violin, I would play. That’s how Arthur got his orchestral conducting experience. And through the years, he became world-famous. I think I played the last concert with him—a Pops concert on Cape Cod. He wasn’t feeling well at that time. I was standing, and

he came by. He called me over, and he walked with me—took my arm. He wasn’t feeling too well then. He passed away not too long after.

What about recordings with the symphony?

They were very difficult, because Koussevitzky was hard to please, and you’d be playing for a long time into a piece, and it’s just one little slip, and you’d have to go all the way back to the beginning again. The record companies couldn’t afford it. So it was tense—more tense that way. You couldn’t make a mistake. Now, you make a mistake, you just go back a few bars.

Do you remember how he got along

with the engineers, the recording people?

Oh, well, they didn't dare say a word. Koussevitzky was lord and master over everything. The Victor company wouldn't say anything. The trustees couldn't say anything—they were like his errand boys.

Did Koussevitzky speak in German mostly in rehearsals?

Yes. In later years we had a lot of French and Russian musicians coming in, and he spoke those two languages after that.

So he didn't speak much English in rehearsals, then?

Very little. It was a broken English, and it was probably a broken French. I don't know! And the same with German—all his languages. But he managed to get along, and we knew what he meant. The

biggest soloists in the world came to play. We seldom had guest conductors. We used to have English conductors coming—Sir Thomas Beecham, who was well-known, and Adrian Boult. And the English pianist Myra Hess played with us.

How was Koussevitzky as an accompanist?

Well, he managed—if the music was straight. He began to have difficulty with Prokofiev concertos when the tempos changed; Stravinsky, when he started playing his music. Change of rhythms, that bothered him a little.

Koussevitzky has a reputation for having

brought a lot of new music into the repertoire.

We did a lot of first performances. There was a competition between those three conductors: Toscanini, Stokowski, Koussevitzky. And Koussevitzky got his share of first performances.

But he had the reputation of not being a very good reader in music.

Well, he had a pianist playing the score for him.

Who did that?

“The trustees couldn't say anything—
They were Koussevitzky's errand boys.”

Nicolas Slonimsky. He came over to this country when he was a young fellow. He was another ambitious fellow. I remember him reading an American newspaper every day, learning a new word in English. He played the new scores for Koussevitzky. He learned the scores that way, but it worked for him.

Didn't Sanroma do that for him?

He did at the very beginning, yeah. He was the first one, before Slonimsky.

Was Sanroma there when you joined the orchestra?

Sanroma was my accompanist at the audition.

Tell us about your family life. Where and when did you meet your wife and when were you married?

Irene was my accompanist. She played for my teacher's pupils. That's how we met, and my second year in the orchestra, we were married. So she's a member of the Boston Symphony, too. She took part in everything. Georges Moleux's wife was a pupil of Irene's when she was a young girl.

Moleux was principal bass when I came in.

He started as first clarinet with the symphony.

Moleux played first clarinet? That's a revelation.

With Koussevitzky—maybe lasted more than a year. He was kind of filling in till they got somebody. He played first clarinet, and then he got the first bass job.

That must have been an accomplishment, with Koussevitzky being a bassist himself. When did you retire?

I played from '25 to '65.

Do you still play?

Just to check the violin, make sure it's working. I play for five minutes, and it keeps the arthritis from getting into my hands.

You've given us a very rich, rich chapter in our history. Thank you very much.

Transcribed by Cynthia Kerfoot

Tanglewood: An Annotated Bibliography, Part 2

After Koussevitzky

❑ *A Tanglewood Dream: The Berkshire Music Center 25th Anniversary Album, 1940-1965. Koussevitzky Music Foundation, 1965.*

❑ *Copland, Aaron and Perlis, Vivian. Copland, Since 1943. St. Martin's, 1989.*

❑ *Holland, James R. Tanglewood. Barre, 1973.*

❑ *Kupferberg, Herbert. Tanglewood. McGraw-Hill, 1976.*

❑ *Leinsdorf, Erich. Cadenza: A Musical Career. Houghton Mifflin, 1976.*

❑ *Pincus, Andrew L. Scenes From Tanglewood. Northeastern University Press, 1989.*

The 25th Anniversary booklet is not easy to find, nor does it appear that a 50th Anniversary booklet was published in 1990. However, *A Tanglewood Dream* is well worth having. Its photographs, which are its main feature, are very well chosen. There is a tribute to Koussevitzky in the form of a brief introduction by Gregor Piatigorsky. The text is composed of quotations from the writings of Dr. Koussevitzky, Charles Munch, Erich Leinsdorf and Aaron Copland, all very apt and well-coordinated with the photographs, and there are ten very intriguing sketches of prominent Tanglewood personages by Mrs. Olga Koussevitzky.

The second volume of Aaron Copland's autobiography covers his years at Tanglewood after World War II. He worked with Koussevitzky until the

conductor's death and then functioned as head of the Music Center in all but name during the Munch years. With the coming of Leinsdorf, there were major changes at Tanglewood, not the least being Boris Goldovsky's departure from the opera department and Copland's retirement. However, one of those interviewed in the Copland volume suggests that it was not so much the coming of Leinsdorf, but rather Copland's desire to conduct that led to the separation between Copland and Tanglewood. Those in charge of the Boston Symphony were reluctant to have Copland conduct Tanglewood concerts, something which would have been difficult to avoid had Copland continued at the Music Center.

James R. Holland has produced a brief book of photographs with a still briefer history of Tanglewood in its foreword by Michael Tilson Thomas. The photography is long on art but short on atmosphere. Overall, the photos in John Mahanna's *Music Under the Moon*, Kupferberg's *Tanglewood*, and the 25th Anniversary booklet are far superior, especially for historical purposes.

In his volume, Kupferberg handles the Munch years rather tenderly. He indicates the role Munch preferred to play at Tanglewood, where he may have been a sort of overseer (opinions on this are divided) but certainly not a director in the same sense as Koussevitzky. However, Kupferberg is not completely clear as to the decline in the finesse of the Boston Symphony under the rather too benign direction of Munch. For that one must look to Leinsdorf's book.

The Leinsdorf years were difficult ones

for the orchestra, the conductor and for Tanglewood—for who among us likes substantial change, no matter how essential it may be? While Kupferberg deals reasonably fairly with the Leinsdorf years (in stark contrast to Pincus), on one point he appears to be rather off-base: he suggests that the management of the Boston Symphony in choosing William Steinberg to head the orchestra upon Leinsdorf's departure may have been rectifying an error it made when it passed over Steinberg at the time Leinsdorf was selected. To support his point, Kupferberg notes that Steinberg was considered too old in the first instance, but not too old several years later.

What Kupferberg ignores is that in the intervening years the nature and scope of the position changed radically: the task which Leinsdorf accepted meant directing the orchestra on a full-time basis and running Tanglewood as well. Whether during the Leinsdorf years the orchestra's management decided that such a task was just too much for one man or that it would modify its demands in order to have Steinberg as Leinsdorf's successor, the fact remains that when Steinberg was hired, he had no duties at Tanglewood and was at best only part-time with the orchestra, even retaining his position with the Pittsburgh Symphony. Obviously, Steinberg might well have been too old to undertake the duties assigned to Leinsdorf, whereas—even several years later—Steinberg was not too old to accept the part-time post he was eventually offered.

Kupferberg writes of the triumvirate

of Bernstein, Ozawa and Gunther Schuller which was designated to head Tanglewood operations after Leinsdorf's departure. Interestingly enough, neither Joan Peyser (*Bernstein, A Biography*, Morrow, 1987) nor Peter Gradenwitz (*Leonard Bernstein*, Wolff, 1987) makes mention of such a triumvirate. In fact, Peyser pretty much ignores Tanglewood after the death of Koussevitzky, while Gradenwitz largely ignores Tanglewood altogether. Kupferberg gives us a bibliography; Pincus does not.

Leinsdorf is his usual outspoken self in discussing his years with the Boston Symphony and Tanglewood. One only wishes that his readings of the orchestral repertoire were as outspoken and interesting as his literary endeavors.

Indeed, one readily concludes that Leinsdorf could have been a great teacher, far greater than he is as a conductor. It is regrettable that Boston and Tanglewood were but a small part of his autobiography, because a full-length book by Leinsdorf on those years would really be something to read and savor.

Pincus takes Tanglewood from the middle seventies to the end of the eighties. The author deals with the early years of Tanglewood in a cursory fashion and can hardly wait to get at Leinsdorf, whom he belabors with a will at every turn. Once past the Leinsdorf years this volume is all we have, at the moment, on Tanglewood in the last fifteen years.

Pincus also contributed to a work entitled *Sennets & Tuckets: A Bernstein Cel-*

ebration. His chapter deals with the summer of 1940 at the Berkshire Music Center as seen by some of the students attending classes there. This collection of short pieces (edited by Steven Ledbetter and published by the Boston Symphony in 1988) is focused, of course, on Bernstein as seen by those who worked with him, studied under him, participated in his music-making, or otherwise experienced him in some fashion. Several of the contributors attended the music school at Tanglewood over the years, hence there are several glimpses of Bernstein at Tanglewood in his many and varied capacities and roles.

Kenneth DeKay
© 1992

Koussevitzky's Recordings

DEBUSSY

French music was one of Serge Koussevitzky's specialties; Romantics and Impressionists both received their due. Debussy traveled to Moscow in the winter of 1913 to conduct several concerts of his music. The composer stayed with the Koussevitzkys. Debussy and the conductor were thus able to discuss the Frenchman's compositions and evolve a suitable style. In the late thirties, Koussevitzky and the Boston Symphony transcribed *La Mer* (12/1/38 & 11/7/39; M-643). This version ranks with the greatest readings such as those by Toscanini and Szell. A Camden LP (CAL-376) adequately preserves the performance, though one must boost the volume and lower the treble in order to approximate the original sonics.

Georges Laurent's flute solo in the *Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun* distinguishes Koussevitzky's beautifully-paced record (11/22 & 28/44; 18-0042). Unfortunately, this is an instance when a thoroughly worthy recording was never reissued on LP.

The *Danse* and *Sarabande* (10/30/30), arranged by Ravel, share the same fate as the *Prelude*. The performance of *Danse* demonstrates the incredible, smooth Boston Symphony string section, while the *Sarabande* calls upon the full resources of the orchestra. *Danse* filled out the album of Ravel's *La Valse* (7414), while *Sarabande* occupied the final side of the original issue of *Pictures at an Exhibition* (M-102). The *Sarabande* may now be heard on CD (RCA 61392).

FOOTE

Arthur Foote's very beautiful *Suite for Strings* received its premiere recording under Koussevitzky's baton (3/19/40; M-962). Along with Mozart's *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik* and Tchaikovsky's *Serenade for Strings*, the *Suite* features the full string section, and the work gets a well-nigh definitive performance here. Fortunately, RCA saw fit to reissue Foote's *Suite* on LP in 1966 to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the establishment of the Berkshire Music Center (LM-2900). The sound is very fine indeed. In the early eighties, Turnabout reissued the *Suite* on LP (TV-34784). It is currently available on a Pearl CD (GEMM CD 9492).

Vincent C. Schwerin, Jr.

Music at Tanglewood

The coming of the Boston Symphony and Serge Koussevitzky to Tanglewood meant many changes both short-term and long-run. But nowhere was the change greater than in the music offered at the Festival concerts.

When the Festival opened in 1934, Henry Hadley conducted an orchestra made up of 65 members of the New York Philharmonic (in those days that orchestra functioned under the more impressive and far more formal title of the Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra of New York, but that was before the onset, and onslaught, of a more informal age). Hadley had been Associate Conductor of the Philharmonic for many years and was a respected composer as well. He was an enthusiast of more concerts for the general public under informal conditions and at lower prices and was a strong advocate of American composers.

Whether it was Hadley or the sponsors of the Festival or both who had a hand in the selection of the programs for the first season of 1934, two things were quite clear: 1) the programs had a supposedly popular concept which included portions of symphonies rather than complete works, the exception being the all too familiar Fifth Symphony of Beethoven; and 2) some attention was given to American music, though the works played were all shorter pieces.

First Berkshire Symphonic Festival 1934
at Hanna Farm, Stockbridge
Berkshire Symphony Orchestra
*Composed of 65 members of the
New York Philharmonic-Symphony Society Orchestra*
Henry Hadley, conductor

THURSDAY EVENING, AUGUST 23
BERLIOZ *Roman Carnival Overture*, Op. 9
MENDELSSOHN *A Midsummer Night's Dream*
Nocturne and Scherzo
DVORAK *Symphony #9* in e, Op. 95,
From the New World—Largo
STRAUSS *Don Juan*, Op. 20.
CHABRIER *España Rhapsody*
RESPIGHI *The Pines of Rome*
TCHAIKOVSKY *Symphony #4* in f,
Op. 36—3rd & 4th movements

SATURDAY AFTERNOON, AUGUST 25
SMETANA *The Bartered Bride Overture*
FALLA *El amor brujo*, Soloist: *Sophie Braslaw*, contralto
MACDOWELL *Clair de lune*
POWELL *Nachez of the Hill*
HADLEY *Streets of Peking Suite*
BIZET *L'Arlésienne Suite #1*
DEBUSSY *Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun*
BORODIN *Polovtsian Dances from Prince Igor*



SUNDAY EVENING, AUGUST 26
WAGNER *Die Meistersinger* Prelude
WAGNER *Siegfried Idyll*
WAGNER *Tristan und Isolde*—Prelude and Love-Death
BEETHOVEN *Symphony #5* in c, Op. 67

In 1935, Hadley had a somewhat larger orchestra of 85 members made up of New York City musicians drawn from a number of sources. In that season the programs seemed to lack any rhyme or reason as, for example, the inclusion of two movements from Rimsky-Korsakov's *Scheherazade*. The three symphonies, this time played in their entirety, were tried and true but none the worse for all that. The first two programs were certainly puzzling in their nature, the more so if one notes the conjunction of vocal music by Bach, Mendelssohn, Moussorgsky and Wagner. In programming the excerpts from Moussorgsky's *Boris Godunov* the conflict between better music and more popular music seems apparent in as much as Boris was sung by Richard Hale, who was then best known as a popular actor who was appearing in summer theater in the area. (Hale was subsequently to read Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf* at a 1939 Tanglewood concert and for the first of two recordings of that work made by Koussevitzky and the Boston Symphony—the other recording featuring Eleanor Roosevelt as the reader).

Second Berkshire Symphonic Festival 1935
at Hanna Farm, Stockbridge
Berkshire Symphony Orchestra
*Composed of 85 members of the
New York Philharmonic-Symphony and other Orchestras*
Henry Hadley, conductor

THURSDAY EVENING, AUGUST 8
BACH-STOCK Fugue in g

WAGNER *Die Meistersinger*—Chorale
 “Awake the Dawn of Day is Near!”
 BACH *St. Matthew Passion*, S. 244—Final chorus
 MENDELSSOHN *Elijah*—Four excerpts:
 “Behold God the Lord Passed By”
 “Be Not Afraid” (abridged)
 “Lift Thine Eyes” (as 3-part women’s chorus)
 “And Thine Shall Your Light Shine Forth”
 MOUSSORGSKY *Boris Godunov*—Coronation Scene
Boris: Richard Hale
 BEETHOVEN Symphony #3 in Eb, Op. 55, *Eroica*



SATURDAY AFTERNOON, AUGUST 10
 DVORAK *Carnival Overture*, Op. 92
 TUTTILL *Bethlehem*, Op. 8
 RIMSKY-KORSAKOV *Scheherazade*,
 Op. 35—3rd & 4th movements
 FRANCK Symphony in d



SUNDAY EVENING, AUGUST 11
 WAGNER *Tannhäuser*—Bacchanale
 TCHAIKOVSKY Piano Concerto #1 in bb, Op. 23
Soloist: Rudolph Ganz
 BRAHMS Symphony #1 in c, Op. 68

After the 1935 season, Hadley departed. That he was not in the best of health was true, but all the same his departure was not voluntary. His programs in both of the seasons under his direction had been criticized as rather too popular, though Hadley had indicated that the 1934 programs had been developed in conjunction with suggestions of the Festival trustees. He had promised better programs for 1935, only to have those programs fail to live up to that promise. And in the 1935 season the orchestra, though larger than in 1934, had been made up in large part of unemployed musicians from New York City, along with a few musicians from other New York City orchestras and a sprinkling of New York Philharmonic members who were not playing with the Philharmonic at Lewisohn Stadium that summer. Clearly, the ensemble put together by Hadley had left something to be desired.

Hadley died in 1937. His part in the first Tanglewood Festivals has been largely ignored and forgotten, yet we was a distinguished musician with considerable enthusiasm for the performance of American music and a desire to broaden the audience for orchestral concerts. A brief summary of his career

can be found in Herbert Kupferberg’s *Tanglewood*, and his years with the New York Philharmonic are treated in Howard Shanet’s *Philharmonic, A History of New York’s Orchestra* (Doubleday, 1975). It is unfortunate that the criticisms of Hadley as the conductor of the first two seasons have so obscured his importance in getting the Festival started. However, his successor at Tanglewood also had a deep and abiding interest in American music, was an even finer conductor, and had under his control a truly superb orchestra which was available on a regular basis for a series of summer concerts.

Certainly the first year of Koussevitzky and the Boston Symphony made quite a difference in the concert programming for the Festival: not that the works played were less popular (except, perhaps, the Sibelius Second Symphony which, while certainly popular with Koussevitzky, had not yet reached the degree of popularity with the public which the Russo-Finnish War gave it a few years later), but rather that the programs did not give the appearance of “playing down” to the audience. In this season, for the first time, all the concerts were typical of the symphony programs of the era and not an all too obvious effort to cater to supposedly popular tastes.

As was to be expected, the programs were made up of works which were strong points in the Koussevitzky repertoire and well known to the orchestra, but they were distinguished concert programs all the same.

Third Berkshire Symphonic Festival 1936
 at Holmwood
 BOSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
 Serge Koussevitzky, conductor

THURSDAY EVENING, AUGUST 13
 BACH Chorale Prelude
 “Komm Gott, Schöpfer, heiliger Geist”
(arranged for orchestra by Arnold Schoenberg)
 BEETHOVEN *Egmont* Overture, Op. 84
 BEETHOVEN Symphony #7 in A, Op. 92
 SIBELIUS Symphony #2 in D, Op. 43



SATURDAY AFTERNOON, AUGUST 15
 HANDEL Concerto Grosso in g, Op. 6/6—Larghetto
 MOUSSORGSKY *Khovantschina* Prelude
 DEBUSSY *Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun*
 RIMSKY-KORSAKOV *Capriccio espagnol*, Op. 34
 BRAHMS Symphony #2 in D, Op. 73

SUNDAY EVENING, AUGUST 16
 MENDELSSOHN Symphony #4 in A, Op. 90, *Italian*
 WAGNER *Lohengrin* Prelude
 WAGNER *Die Meistersinger* Prelude
 TCHAIKOVSKY Symphony #5 in e, Op. 64

The 1937 season doubled the number of concerts from three to six and three of the concerts consisted of the works of a single composer, certainly a new departure at the Festival. Koussevitzky programmed a single American work (by Edward Burlingame Hill) and another Sibelius Symphony, this time the Seventh. And the whole of *Scheherazade* was played this time!

Fourth Berkshire Symphonic Festival 1937
 at Tanglewood
 BOSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
 Serge Koussevitzky, conductor

THURSDAY EVENING, AUGUST 5
 BEETHOVEN *Leonore* Overture #3, Op. 72a
 BEETHOVEN Symphony #6 in F, Op. 68, *Pastorale*
 BEETHOVEN Symphony #5 in c, Op. 67



SATURDAY EVENING, AUGUST 7
 MOZART Symphony #39 in Eb, K. 543
 HILL Sinfonietta for String Orchestra, Op. 40a
 RAVEL *Daphnis and Chloé*, Suite #2
 TCHAIKOVSKY Symphony #4 in f, Op. 36



SUNDAY AFTERNOON, AUGUST 8
 SCHUBERT *Rosamunde* Ballet Music
 SCHUBERT Symphony #8 in b, D. 759, *Unfinished*
 STRAVINSKY *Firebird* Suite
 FRANCK Symphony in d



THURSDAY EVENING, AUGUST 12
 WAGNER *Rienzi* Overture
 WAGNER *Tristan und Isolde*—Prelude and Love-Death
 WAGNER *Die Walküre*—Ride of the Valkyries
 WAGNER *Siegfried*—Forest Murmurs
 WAGNER *Parsifal* Prelude
 WAGNER *Tannhäuser* Overture
 (A storm prevented the complete performance
 of this program)

SATURDAY EVENING, AUGUST 14
 HAYDN Symphony #88 in G
 SIBELIUS Symphony #7 in C, Op. 105
 RIMSKY-KORSAKOV *Scheherazade*, Op. 35



SUNDAY AFTERNOON, AUGUST 15
 BRAHMS *Academic Festival* Overture, Op. 80
 BRAHMS Symphony #3 in F, Op. 90
 BRAHMS Symphony #1 in c, Op. 68

Again, in 1938, there were six concerts. This time the Sibelius Symphony was the First; there was a piece by Aaron Copland and one by Henry Hadley, played *in memoriam*, though one could wish that Koussevitzky had been more generous toward Hadley and had not been satisfied to perform but a single movement from the Third Symphony. The new departure for 1938 was a performance of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. And there was also an evening of operatic Wagner: the final scene from Act I of *Die Walküre* and all of Act III of *Siegfried* (in 1937 the all-Wagner program had been an orchestral program, and that had been the concert interrupted by the famous Tanglewood storm).

Fifth Berkshire Symphonic Festival 1938
 at Tanglewood
 BOSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
 Serge Koussevitzky, conductor

THURSDAY EVENING, AUGUST 4
 BACH Cantata #80, *Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott*
 First chorus & chorale
 BEETHOVEN Symphony #9 in d, Op. 125, *Choral*
Cecilia Society Chorus (prepared by Arthur Fiedler)
Jeanette Vreeland, soprano • *Paul Althouse*, tenor
Anna Kaskas, contralto • *Norman Cordon*, bass



SATURDAY EVENING, AUGUST 6
 HAYDN Symphony #99 in Eb
 DEBUSSY *La Mer*
 SIBELIUS Symphony #1 in e, Op. 39



SUNDAY AFTERNOON, AUGUST 7
 MOZART *Eine kleine Nachtmusik*, K. 525
 BRAHMS Symphony #4 in e, Op. 98
 COPLAND *Music for the Theatre*

RAVEL *Mother Goose Suite*
RESPIGHI *The Pines of Rome*



THURSDAY EVENING, AUGUST 11
WAGNER *Die Walküre*—Act I, Final Scene

Sigmund: Paul Althouse

Sieglinde: Beal Hober

WAGNER *Siegfried*—Act III, complete

Wotan: Norman Cordon • Erda: Anna Kaskas

Siegfried: Paul Althouse • Brünnhilde: Beal Hober



SATURDAY EVENING, AUGUST 13

HADLEY Symphony #3 in b, Op. 60

Angelus (Andante tranquillo)

BEETHOVEN Symphony #6 in F, Op. 68, *Pastorale*

TCHAIKOVSKY Symphony #6 in b, Op. 74, *Pathétique*



SUNDAY AFTERNOON, AUGUST 14

SCHUMANN Symphony #1 in Bb, Op. 38, *Spring*

PROKOFIEV *Lieutenant Kijé* Suite, Op. 60

BRAHMS Symphony #2 in D, Op. 73

In the six concerts programmed for 1939, Koussevitzky had Richard Hale, formerly Boris under Hadley, read *Peter and the Wolf*, played two Sibelius Symphonies, the Second and the Fifth, repeated *Scheherazade*, and dropped the single-composer format. The American composer of choice was Walter Piston, and the programs ranged over the centuries from Bach to Stravinsky. The concept behind the programming of *The Rite of Spring* in conjunction with a Haydn Symphony and four orchestral excerpts from Wagnerian opera should certainly puzzle others as much as it has this writer. Koussevitzky also conducted Moussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*, noted in the program as "Pianoforte Pieces Arranged for Orchestra by Maurice Ravel."

Sixth Berkshire Symphonic Festival 1939

at Tanglewood

BOSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Serge Koussevitzky, conductor

THURSDAY EVENING, AUGUST 3

BACH *Brandenburg* Concerto #3 in G, S. 1048

(with the Sinfonia from Cantata #4,

Christ lag in Todesbanden)

RIMSKY-KORSAKOV *Scheherazade*, Op. 35

BRAHMS Symphony #1 in c, Op. 68



SATURDAY EVENING, AUGUST 5

PISTON Concerto for Orchestra

SIBELIUS Symphony #5 in Eb, Op. 82

BEETHOVEN Symphony #7 in A, Op. 92



SUNDAY AFTERNOON, AUGUST 6

K.P.E. BACH* Concerto in D

(arranged for orchestra by Maximilian Steinberg)

PROKOFIEV *Peter and the Wolf*, Op. 67

Narrator: Richard Hale

TCHAIKOVSKY Symphony #4 in f, Op. 36



THURSDAY EVENING, AUGUST 10

BEETHOVEN Symphony #2 in D, Op. 36

STRAUSS *Also sprach Zarathustra*, Op. 30

MOUSSORGSKY *Pictures at an Exhibition*

(orchestrated by Maurice Ravel)



SATURDAY EVENING, AUGUST 12

HAYDN Symphony #102 in Bb

STRAVINSKY *The Rite of Spring*

WAGNER *Lohengrin* Prelude

WAGNER *Tannhäuser*—Bacchanale

WAGNER *Die Meistersinger* Prelude



SUNDAY AFTERNOON, AUGUST 13

SCHUMANN Symphony #4 in d, Op. 120

DEBUSSY *Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun*

RAVEL *La Valse*

SIBELIUS Symphony #2 in D, Op. 43

Kenneth DeKay ©1992

*Now known to be a composition by Henri Casadesus

The 2nd installment in Mr. DeKay's series will appear in the Fall, 1993 issue of this newsletter.

Interview with Karl Zeise

August 9, 1991

Karl Zeise was a man of many interests and talents. Besides playing the cello exceptionally well, he was skilled at carpentry, sailing and painting. He did lovely watercolors, and for many years he was in charge of arranging the art exhibits in the gallery at Symphony Hall

Karl was the first former member of the Boston Symphony whom I interviewed as a part of an on-going oral history of the

orchestra. He was ninety at the time and quite nervous about doing an interview, as though he were going to play a concerto. He had his "speech" all written out and insisted that we rehearse it on tape before the actual "take"—just like a recording session.

During the take he was rather stilted and formal, instead of conversational. One could tell that he was reading; but as he went on, he became more relaxed and finally abandoned his paper.

After our interview Karl became more enthusiastic about the idea and told me that he wanted to do more. He had thought of some more things to add. Unfortunately, that never happened. Karl passed away on the evening before Thanksgiving, 1992, at the age of ninety-two; but he had enjoyed playing chamber music with family and friends as recently as three weeks before his death.

Bob Ripley

Bob Ripley: *I'm talking with Karl Zeise, a former cellist of the orchestra, and we're sitting in his very comfortable cottage near Tanglewood which he's rented*

for the summer. It's a rainy, cool, clammy, typical Tanglewood kind of day, but we're very comfortable in here, and we're going to talk about the Boston Symphony and Karl's days with the orchestra. Let's get a little biographical information first. When and where were you born?

Karl Zeise: I was born in Jamaica Plain, March 3, 1901.

He had his speech all written out and insisted that we rehearse it before the actual take.

How did you happen to take up the cello?

Well, my uncle—my mother's brother, Oscar Schultz—was a cellist. He played around Boston. He did play very well. He was a pupil of Hauptmann, who was a cellist of the very famous Joachim String Quartet in Berlin, and he had a scholarship at one time with him, but he ran away because he could make more money. That's the truth, and that's an insight into Uncle Oscar, too, God bless him.

Was he your first teacher?

Oh yes, I studied with him for quite a while. I don't know exactly when I started, because I also played on my

father's violin. My father was an amateur who played the violin, the organ and conducted the chorus.

So you came from a very musical family. Your next teacher was Alwin Schroeder?

Yes.

He was principal cellist of the BSO, wasn't he?

At that time, yes. And he left the orchestra to become the part of the Kneisel String Quartet, which didn't quite make it financially. I guess it was too early in the development of chamber music.

Franz Kneisel was the concertmaster, wasn't he?

Yes, and when Alwin Schroeder came back into the orchestra, Monteux was the conductor and Jean Bedetti was the first cellist by that time, because Schroeder had been out for over two years.

Did you play in an orchestra before coming to the Boston Symphony?

Yes, I played in the Philadelphia Orchestra. I played there for three years at one stretch, and five at another time, because in the meantime I had to go to Europe to study with Hugo Becker.

A famous name to cellists. What did you do after that?

I played for Mrs. Woodall's Stradivari Quartet in Boston with Louis Krasner.

He was famous for giving the premiere of the Berg Violin Concerto. What else did you do in the way of chamber music?

The year that I spent in Boston, I also organized the New England String Quartet, and we played around in various colleges in New England. And in Boston I organized a series of concerts at the Boston Art Club, which no longer exists.

How did you happen to audition for the Boston Symphony?

Elliot Cabot had sponsored us in the Boston Art Club concerts and also helped our trio, and we played many concerts. We were doing quite well when Cabot—who was our main sponsor—suddenly passed into the next world, which left us high and dry and me without any particular thing to do in Boston. So I looked towards New York for the next move, and played auditions for the New Friends of Music Chamber Orchestra that was forming in New York, and became a member of that. We did many, many recordings—which never were released.

One day there was a rehearsal from ten to twelve for the New Friends of Music Chamber Orchestra at Carnegie Hall, but it was changed from that to nine to eleven, because the Boston Symphony with Koussevitzky was to have the stage from eleven to one, which seemed to give us a great chance to hear the orchestra rehearse with Koussevitzky. At eleven, I found a seat well towards the back of the hall, so I could not be seen very well from the stage, when someone came and sat beside me. I thought he was going to ask me to leave, but instead he stayed and asked

me, “What do you think of the Boston Symphony?” I replied, “It’s rated at the very top of the world’s great orchestras. I don’t know what else could be said.” So then, after some little chit-chat, he asked me, “Would you ever be interested in playing with the Boston Symphony?” And I certainly said, “That would be a marvelous step for me to make, but I don’t think the chances are very open.” “If you are seriously interested, there will be cello auditions in the very near future. Write me your address and phone number at Symphony Hall, and I will let you know when the auditions will take place and how to apply. I am the manager of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. My name is George Judd, and we met some time ago after

Koussevitzky turned
dramatically and said,
“Not more de snore drum!”

an H.M.A. concert—at the Harvard Music Association.”

Needless to say, I am very interested in playing the audition. I played it quite well—most of the Dvorák [Cello Concerto]. I did not hear of any results for a long time. Then, after quite a wait, Koussevitzky had an interview with the press at which time he announced the names of new members of the Boston Symphony. I was on the list that Koussevitzky gave to the press with two other members of the New Friends of Music group, [Violinist] Emil Kornsand and [Violist] Eugen Lehner. I believe it was my sister that gave Symphony Hall my whereabouts. I was in Spokane when,

after a long wait, I received a telegram asking if I would come to Tanglewood July 1. I most certainly could and certainly would and certainly did. So the summer of 1938, second season of the Boston Symphony in the new shed, I played.

Where did you play the audition?

In the conductor’s room upstairs at Symphony Hall, where there was Richard Burgin, Jean Bedetti, Jean Lefranc, Georges Laurent, Fernand Gillet and all the rest of the principal players. In Philadelphia, where I had played the past seasons, Rachmaninov was always a great event when he came to play. We had a recording to make with him, and

he was the only one of the great artists who could throw the fear of God into Stokowski. So when he came on the stage that morning, he turned to the orchestra—it was a very hot July morning, I think—and said, “Gentlemen, would you mind if I take my coat off?” And with great applause from the orchestra, Rachmaninov took his coat off and sat down.

He had a pompous way about him, and with his deep Russian voice he said, “I am ready.” And so when I came to play my audition with this array of first players and great artists sitting in front of me, I thought of Rachmaninov and Stokowski, and it was also a very hot day, so I turned to Sanroma and said, “Do you think they would mind if I take my coat off?” So Sanroma said, “Sure. Ask them.” So I asked them. I got a big grin; I didn’t get any applause. I took my coat off and was much more comfortable. So I played, and Sanroma turned to me and said, “I’ll play just a B minor chord. Come in anytime you’re ready and do anything you want; I’ll follow you.”

So he accompanied you? That was a help. Did Koussevitzky say anything?

He didn't say anything, not a word until after I had played; he wanted to see if I knew how to tune the cello, I guess.

Did he tell you to tune it?

No. I played almost through the whole first movement of the Dvorák. It went quite well, but I've played it better. I've played it freer.

We all feel like that in auditions.

Well, you know one is always tense under such a circumstance, but I've built the reputation, not intentionally, of having a lot of nerve in my early days. I think maybe I still retain it, in a way.

You do, definitely.

Then Koussevitzky asked me to play the slow movement, so I played it to the very end, with all the harmonics and everything.

Did Koussevitzky say anything after you finished?

Yeah. Koussevitzky came up to where I was sitting and had me play *Don Juan* and *Don Quixote*.

Oh, some sight-reading.

All the sight-reading stuff, and he finally came to Brahms's *Variations on a Theme by Haydn*, which is one of my favorite pieces, and I love to play it, and I think I probably did my best playing right there, and Koussie was impressed, and he asked me [imitating Koussevitzky's accent], "From where have you come?" I told him Philadelphia. "Ah, Philadelphia, Stokowski..."

What were your first impressions of playing in the Boston Symphony?

I think we played *La Mer* that summer, and I fortunately got the same part in the division of the cellos that I had in Philadelphia, so I really lit into that. I remember that distinctly.

What happened at your first rehearsal in Boston?

Georges Fourel was one of my most intimate friends, because I had played chamber music with him. At one time, he was the first viola player, but he preferred to play on the second stand. I don't remember what the particular piece was, but it was something for the snare drum, and Koussevitzky turned dramatically to the drums and said, "Not more de snore drum!" I could see Georges Fourel, and he went [Zeise snores loudly].

A courageous man!

Almost broke me up, and I almost laughed. If Koussie—in the very first Boston rehearsal—saw me laughing, I would really be in a tight spot. And fortunately, he didn't. He wasn't looking at me.

How long did you play in the orchestra?

As a regular member, for thirty-two years, and I was on the second stand with Mischa Nieland for a good deal of that time.

Do you remember your impressions of some of the players like Bedetti, the principal cellist? How did he strike you?

Oh yes, I had an interesting little thing happen. See, I had played the audition, so Bedetti came to me and said, "Congratulations. You know, you never should have gotten the job. It's only be-

cause you played so well." I was speechless. I felt like saying, "For what other reason is there?" But I didn't say that.

What about Koussevitzky? Were you intimidated by him, scared of him—or—not you?

No, it was very strange. I had heard such terrible things about how everybody got so intimidated and nervous from him, but I had a liking to this man from the very beginning, and I think it stemmed mostly from his great dedication to his work and to the orchestra. He always mentioned the orchestra as "mine orchestra," and when we played our first notes in Tanglewood after a season of the Pops, Koussie used to say, "What has happened to mine orchestra? I know what it is: de Pops!" At any rate, we started by playing things over and over. Discipline. The orchestra got a Koussevitzky disciplining for the first rehearsal.

What else do you recall about Koussevitzky?

I, with Rolland Tapley as first violin, George Humphrey as viola, and Malcolm Holmes—who was then the dean of the New England Conservatory—as second violin, made a quartet, and with Sanroma we played at the Harvard Music Association the first performance of the Shostakovich Quintet. Sanroma, who had, of course, a very close contact with Koussevitzky, asked us if we would be willing to play the Quintet through for Koussevitzky at his home sometime. Of course, I said immediately, "Sure!"

Brash young Karl Zeise!

I was always ready to stick my neck out. So an arrangement was made, and we played for Koussevitzky. It went very well. We went into a bedroom to wait till the great Koussevitzky came in and

said he either approved or did not approve of our interpretation. He came in and said [again imitating Koussevitzky's accent], "It is just as if you shtudied vith me!"

The highest praise possible!

If I remember right Koussevitzky asked us, "What is the name from the quartet?" We tap-maneuvered around and got to the point of where we had Koussevitzky name us the Tanglewood Quartet. Actually, Koussevitzky suggested it—with a bit of Tapley behind it. So that next year it was, I believe, that we played the first performance in Washington, at the Russian Embassy. And that night, Koussevitzky excused us from the orchestra, and we played another program—I think it was the Dvorák Quintet and the Shostakovich Quintet—both with Sanroma, of course, at the Library of Congress. That's the time that we were very close to the Russians. This was during World War II.

Do you recall what happened when the Tanglewood Quartet performed at The Church on the Hill in Lennox?

For some reason or other Koussevitzky had to make a speech there, and he asked us if we could play a little bit of music between some of his talks. Of course, we were delighted. He told us, "When I say the vord—something—you vill play"—I can't remember the exact word. And of course we listened, and we were all ready to play the slow movement from the Haydn, and no "something" came up. So he turned around to us instead of the audience and said, "Noo, vhat iss?" So we began playing. And after we played, we were invited up to Serenak, and after a little snack, we sat in the gorgeous living room there, and Koussevitzky asked us some questions about our personal lives. He never called me Zeise; he always called me "Z." That's all right. So he asked various people where they were, how they came to be in the orchestra, and he turned—being the last on the score, you know: first violin, second violin, viola and cello—"Hey, Z, and vhere you have been?" So I told him about the Philadelphia Orchestra. "Oh yes," he said, "First Stokowski had everything in New York. Then Toscanini came, and it was

not so good anymore. Toscanini was doing very well, but Toscanini played dinner music. And then Stokowski goes to Hollywood with the girls—*A Hundred Men and a Girl*."

It's interesting that he called you "Z."

That didn't bother me at all. No, I admired Koussevitzky very much. I'm afraid I said this once before, but I want to say it again, because I really mean it, and I think it holds very true today, because to Koussie the Boston Symphony was *his* orchestra. He was so dedicated to the Boston Symphony. It was his whole life. He didn't want to go on vacations. He didn't want to have anybody influence his orchestra in any way. And that's the reason why it was such a great orchestra at that time.

Transcribed by Cynthia Kerfoot

About the Koussevitzky Recordings Society, Inc.

The Koussevitzky Recordings Society was established in 1986, and we are dedicated to the preservation and dissemination of the recorded legacy of Serge Koussevitzky. The Society is a non-profit corporation, staffed entirely by volunteers.

The Society is involved in a variety of projects, including the creation of an "oral archive" of conversations with those who knew and worked with Koussevitzky and an archive of the conductor's recorded performances. The activities of the Society are highlighted in our bi-annual newsletters. These include interviews from the oral archive, articles about the conductor, and book reviews.

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