

# KOUSSEVITZKY

Recordings Society





by Tom Godell

## Letter from the President

Serge Koussevitzky and Leopold Stokowski were in the news once again this past February. When the American Classical Music Hall of Fame opened its doors in Cincinnati, they immediately inducted both of these great conductors along with 24 other individuals and organizations that “have furthered the growth, development, and appreciation of classical music in America through performance, creation, and education”.

In addition to Koussevitzky, several of his closest associates were among the first class of inductees: Samuel Barber, Leonard Bernstein, Aaron Copland, Howard Hanson, George Gershwin, Robert Shaw, Igor Stravinsky, and Nicolas Slonimsky. Meanwhile, Stokowski was joined by several other distinguished conductors, including Gunther Schuller, Fritz Reiner, Arturo Toscanini, and Theodore Thomas. Composers Scott Joplin, John Philip Sousa, Elliott Carter, Charles Ives, John Knowles Paine, Arnold Schoenberg, and Roger Sessions were also honored at a gala ceremony in Cincinnati on Sunday, May 24th.

The American Classical Music Hall of Fame is housed temporarily in Herschede Building on West Fourth Street, one block from downtown Cincinnati. You can find more information by calling 800-499-3263 or on the web at [www.classicalhall.com](http://www.classicalhall.com).

Several exciting compact disc reissues are on the way. Biddulph has just released two Koussevitzky/Boston Symphony CDs. The first is devoted entirely to the music of Richard Strauss: *Zarathustra*, *Till Eulenspiegel*, and the 1947 *Don Juan* (the second and best of Koussevitzky's two recordings of the piece). Copland headlines the second disc. His *Appalachian Spring*, *Lincoln Portrait* (narrated by Melvyn Douglas), and *El Salón México* are heard along with Randall Thompson's *Testament of Freedom* and two stirring Sousa marches (*Semper Fidelis* and *Stars & Stripes Forever*).

A plethora of Stokowski releases is coming down the pike as well. Biddulph's new Philadelphia Orchestra/Sibelius disc (with recordings of both Stokowski and Ormandy) is reviewed on page 22. Transfers are by Mark Obert-Thorn, who has just finished another CD—this time for Cala—with Stokowski performing Classical-era selections: Mozart's *Sinfonia Concertante* for Winds (Philadelphia Orchestra, 1940) and Beethoven's *Pastoral* (New York City Symphony, 1945).

At long last Stokowski's Desmar recordings are making their way to CD. This includes Rachmaninov's 3rd Symphony and *Vocalise*, Dvorák's *Serenade* for Strings, and some Stokowski transcriptions—all on a single EMI disc. Unfortunately, they are not currently scheduled for release in America. And Testament will release the 1951 Philharmonia/Stokowski recording of Rimsky-Korsakov's

*Scheherazade* coupled with a complete *Petrouchka* from 1950. Again, this disc may not appear in the U.S.

The Philadelphia Orchestra has named Mark Obert-Thorn as the artistic consultant for their *Centennial CD Collection*. Twelve discs are scheduled for release in the fall of 1999. There will be several live Stokowski performances, including some items that he never recorded commercially.

Bob Stumpf reports that Leopold Stokowski's priceless collection of musical instruments and scores—which the conductor donated to the Curtis Institute—has been given to the University of Pennsylvania. Several items from the collection were recently placed on exhibition there. More information can be found at [www.library.upenn.edu/special/gallery/stokowski](http://www.library.upenn.edu/special/gallery/stokowski).

Once again, all photos in this issue of our *Journal* appear through the courtesy of the Boston Symphony Orchestra Archives. Our thanks to Bridget P. Carr and her colleagues at the BSO for providing us with these rare photographs as well as the fascinating interview with Pasquale Cardillo that appears on page two.

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by Bob Ripley

## Pasquale Cardillo Interview

West Newton, MA  
December 9, 1991

*The late Pasquale Cardillo, former BSO clarinetist, was born on April 23, 1918 in North Adams, Massachusetts. While growing up, there was always music in the Cardillo home. His mother and her sisters were all fine singers, and his father still had the clarinet that he'd played in his youth. Cardillo's oldest sister took violin lessons, then taught the eight year old Patsy to play the instrument. But Cardillo's first love was the clarinet, which he'd heard at town concerts and in parades. Eventually he persuaded his father to let him abandon the violin and, at age ten, begin clarinet lessons. He never found it difficult to play the instrument. Cardillo's first mentor was James Morley Chambers, who was then director of music for the North Adams schools. Upon graduation from Drury High School, Cardillo began studying at the New England Conservatory in 1935. His teacher there was Viktor Polatschek, first clarinetist of the Boston Symphony. The following interview with Pasquale Cardillo appears through the kind courtesy of the Boston Symphony Orchestra.*

**RIPLEY:** *Did you go to BSO concerts in that time?*

**CARDILLO:** Yes. As a matter of fact Polatschek gave me tickets in the early part of my studies with him. Then later on, when it was maybe my Junior year at the Conservatory, I started earning a little money, because they gave me the job of teaching the grammar school children who came for lessons on Saturdays. So I was making some extra money there, and I bought myself tickets for alternate weeks.

*Did you ever go rush?*

Yeah, I went rush, too. It was fifty cents then. So I got to go to quite a few concerts. Gosh, if I was sitting close enough, at the end of the concert I would wave to Polatschek, and he would wave back. Why, I

thought I was in seventh heaven. That somebody from the Symphony recognized me and acknowledged me was great. Those were great years. Those were, of course, the Koussevitzky years, and I learned early on that he was quite a disciplinarian and a complete authority over the orchestra—and a discipline that was second to none as far as orchestras were concerned. I think the only other orchestra that had such good discipline at that time maybe was the Philharmonic with Toscanini—who was also a tyrant, but in a different sort of way.

*Was the BSO, then, the first symphony orchestra you ever heard?*

No it wasn't, because in my high school years the Detroit Symphony used to travel around, and they came to Williamstown and played in Chapin Hall. I'll never forget Gabilowitsch the pianist was the soloist. Mr Chambers took me to one of those concerts. Then, in the early years of Tanglewood, we would get tickets and go down to hear those concerts of the Boston Symphony in the tent. In the very beginning, it was not the Boston Symphony at Tanglewood. Hadley conducted a kind of a pickup group...

*The New York Philharmonic.*

Maybe so, but there were musicians from other orchestras that made up the group. Then the BSO took over with Koussevitzky at the helm, and he made things really happen up there. Marvelous.

*So you went through four years of Conservatory with Polatschek. Then what happened?*

Well, I graduated from Conservatory in June of '35, and I had no idea what I was going to do. I thought I'd look around maybe for one of the lesser orchestras somewhere and try to audition for a position in a symphony orchestra, because that was my goal. In my earlier years in high school, I had worked at the

*North Adams Transcript*, the local newspaper. I was down there just chinning with the fellows one day when a telephone call came for me. It was my mother. She was all excited. She said I had to go home right away, because tomorrow I had to play for Koussevitzky. That was like a bombshell, you know. So I hurried home, got all fixed up, took the train—old Minuteman—down to Boston, and got off in Cambridge.

*How did it happen that you were going to play for Koussevitzky?*

Rosario Mazzeo, to whom I will be ever grateful, is the one who engineered this whole thing. But I'm getting ahead of myself a little bit. At that time the orchestra used to start its rehearsals before they went to Tanglewood. They came to the beginning of the rehearsals, and the bass clarinet player, whose name was [Paul] Mimart, had gone up to his island off the coast of Maine, and he didn't show up for the rehearsals. They had no way of getting in touch with him, and there was literature on the programs for Tanglewood that absolutely had to have bass clarinet and E-flat clarinet, too. Mazzeo was the E-flat clarinet player at that time, and when he was apprised of this predicament, he went to Koussevitzky and told Koussevitzky he would play the bass clarinet—which is something he wanted to do right along—and he would get somebody to play the E-flat clarinet.

*Was Mazzeo personnel manager then or just a member of the orchestra?*

No, at that time we weren't even in the union.

*Oh, that's right. You didn't have a personnel manager?*

No, we didn't.

*Nobody took care of those things?*

They had just one manager, who was George Judd. One librarian who was Leslie Rogers, and Judd had one



secretary. That was the extent of the staff at that time.

*And there was Koussevitzky.*

Koussevitzky took care of everything else. Anyway, Mazzeo met me at the station in Cambridge, took me to his home, and his wife made a wonderful dinner. I remember it was these absolutely wonderful lamb chops. I don't think I've had anything as nice since then. Afterwards we went up to his study, and he went over the parts with me that were important for the Festival—the *Rite of Spring* and *Zarathustra*. So the next morning, I went into Symphony Hall with him. After the rehearsal that they had for Tanglewood, I went into Koussevitzky's room.

*Were you able to listen to the rehearsal?*

Yes, I sat in the hall. If Koussevitzky wanted somebody at the rehearsal, they could be there. There was no question about it.

*The orchestra had no veto?*

No. He had all the votes and the vetoes, too. So, anyhow, I played for him.

*Did you play just for him or was anyone else there?*

Mazzeo was there.

*Mazzeo was there, but none of the other principals? This was just a spur of the moment audition?*

Right. So he said to Mazzeo, "Fine. He will play; you will help him"—which he did. And the Festival went actually very well. I know I played beyond my talent, because he had that facility. He had that magic about him that he could make you play beyond yourself.

*Did you have anything signed for that summer—a contract of any sort? Nothing?*

No.

*They did pay you though?*

Oh, they paid me. Yes! At that point who worried about signing anything? At the end of the Festival, I went to Mr Judd, who was the manager then, and I told him, "Gee, I'm awfully interested in staying here if the position is open." And Mr Judd said, "We want to make sure we're going to get the best player possible, and I think we're going to have to have some auditions." They set the auditions up for the last day of September of that year, so I went. I was in Boston at the time. Leslie Rogers, who was librarian at the time, was running the auditions, as far as personnel going into play. He came to the balcony where we were. I don't think there were more than ten or fifteen of us.

*You had to play again?*

Yes and this time, of course, I had to play the regular clarinet. The first time I played just E-flat for the summer thing. And Rogers said, "Anybody ready?" I thought, "I've got to get this over with," so I said, "I'm ready!" I went in.

*So were you first then?*

Yes. I went and played first—got it over with. And it was a good thing, because I think the nervousness would have overtaken me eventually. So I played, and then I waited. I went through some of the difficult repertory for the E-flat, like *Till Eulenspiegel*. He'd already heard me in *Zarathustra* and *Rite of Spring*, so no problem about that. Then I played some of the Mozart Clarinet Concerto on the A clarinet, and the opening of the Tchaikovsky Fifth Symphony, and that was it. Then I went and sweated out the next two and a half hours, waiting for something to happen or some news.

At the very end of the auditions, Leo Litwin, who was the pianist with the Pops and the Symphony at that time, came out before anyone else, and he came over to me. I'd known Leo from having played a summer engagement with him up at Wentworth By the Sea. And he said, "Patsy, I think you've got the job." Shortly after that Mr Judd came out,

and he called to me. He said, "Dr Koussevitzky has advised me that I can invite you to become a member of the orchestra. If you come in on Monday, we'll have a contract ready for you." Voom!

*That's terrific. Boy, you were on cloud nine then.*

I get emotional about it even now, after fifty-some-odd years.

*Oh, sure. Now were there others listening to that audition?*

Yes, all the principal players were there.

*And was this upstairs in the Green Room?*

Yeah.

*That's kind of scary. Such close quarters...*

They were just in a semicircle in front of me. So I went in on Monday. Mr Judd had the contract all ready, and I signed it. I would have signed anything at that point to become a member of the orchestra.

*You didn't quibble about money.*

No, no. I think it was the great sum of sixty dollars a week. In those days we had just a forty week season: thirty of the Symphony and ten of Pops. You had a vacation, but it certainly wasn't paid like it is today. I went for forty-five years from that time and had Koussevitzky for ten years, and then Munch, then Leinsdorf, then Steinberg, and then Ozawa. So it was very colorful.

*Spans a tremendous portion of the history of the orchestra.*

All kinds of personalities and interpretations, to say the least.

*How did you feel when you sat down for the first time up at Tanglewood to play in the Boston Symphony with Koussevitzky?*

It was wonderful, because it was my home territory to begin with. North Adams is only about thirty miles north of Tanglewood, and, of



course, it created a lot of local interest. The newspapers up there really wrote it up quite fine, and they were very good to me. Best of all my mother, my sister, my father, and several other members of my family came down to the first concert, and that was pretty exciting.

*How did Koussevitzky treat you? Did he have any individual instructions for you?*

He was absolutely wonderful to me. As a matter of fact, at one point he turned to Richard Burgin, who was our concertmaster at the time, and—I got this back from him later on—he said, “This boy is a wonder-

So I played it, and all of a sudden that vein stuck out on the right side of Koussevitzky’s forehead. He said, “Stop!” and the whole orchestra stopped. Of course, the discipline was tremendous. Nobody even drew a bow or anything. Dead silence. He looked at me, and he said, “My dear, if you will play again like this you will kill me.”

*Did he mean it was so good or so bad?*

He wasn’t happy with it. I had anticipated one of the notes. I had gone ahead a little bit too quickly. So backstage at intermission, this head came up behind me, to my ear, and

little anteroom there, and he looked at me, and he said, “You stupid man! Vaht you are doing?” I said, “I’m very sorry. I realized when I started to play it was wrong.” He said, “Then why you not stop and begin again?” Well, anybody who knows *Daphnis* knows that if you stop at that point and try to begin again, you’re going to make an awful mess. But that was it, and then he just went off and shook as head as much to say, “Oh, my God”. But everything went fine after that.

*Do you recall people who were old timers when you joined the orchestra and what they might have said about their earlier days? That’s a tough one.*

Well, it’s tough in the sense that when you came into the orchestra the majority of these so-called old timers were from Europe. They were the so-called old school, and there was a kind of a curtain. You didn’t address anybody by his first name like we do now. They were all Mister, and they didn’t really confide in you. The closest thing that I got was the Laus incident. He was an old-timer. The only common denominator there was that they were all really scared to death of Koussevitzky, because in those days, as I said before, we weren’t in the union, and he could fire right on the spot. But they were wonderful years. It’s a wonderful organization, and I just can’t say enough good about it.

*You had a relationship with Arthur Fiedler, too, didn’t you?*

My relationship with him was strange, and when I first went in the orchestra, it wasn’t all that great. Arthur liked to pick on certain people, and I became one. I must admit I raised as much Cain in the Pops as anyone else. At one point we were doing a recording. We had played this music the night before in Pawtucket, in a Pops concert down there. We were going to record it—Tchaikovsky, I think the *Swan Lake*. I knew there was something wrong with the part, and I hadn’t had a chance to see him before the recording session started. So just before we’re getting ready to record, I asked him a question about it. He really got

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## *I thought, “Oh my God! This is my short life with the Boston Symphony. Everything’s finished.”*

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ful player.” That was really good encouragement for me. No, it was uneventful in the sense that nothing negative happened, and everything just went along fine. And I was relieved as well as extremely happy that it went that well. I’m rather convinced that since he had me, so to speak, under fire, that was probably a great factor in his decision to hire me for the orchestra.

There were great things that happened all through the years and some are just as vivid as the day they happened. Of course, Koussevitzky had a reputation as quite a tyrant and disciplinarian and all, and there was this one bassoon player. He’s long since passed away, so I’m not telling any stories or anything like that against him. His name was Abdon Laus. He was the third bassoon player. I guess he and Koussevitzky didn’t hit it off very well. Well, we were rehearsing a Mahler Symphony one morning, and there was one little five note passage for the E-flat clarinet. It was very slow, very soft.

whispered, “Cardillo, if you play again like this, I’ll give you twenty-five dollars!”

In ten years, I had only one other incident, when we were doing *Daphnis* in concert. I came in at the very end—in the General Dance, at the very end, everything goes wild, and the E-flat clarinet starts this whole thing by vamping with the flute and the oboe—and I came in too soon. The other instruments had to follow, but they all followed *me*. During the intermission, our stage manager came to me, and he says, “Dr Koussevitzky wants to see you.” I thought, “Oh my God! This is my short life with the Boston Symphony. Everything’s finished.”

*When was this in relation to when you joined?*

It was quite soon after. Maybe the second season—very early in my career there. So I went upstairs. In those days he put on fresh clothes at intermission. He came out of his



very upset, and I was very upset, too. And I kind of cursed him a little bit under my breath—and he heard it! He said, “Don’t you dare call me...” whatever I called him. Then the whole orchestra knew about it, and they had to call an intermission. Then I just figured, to heck with him. I won’t even talk to him, and I went several days. Up until that time, I used to stop in after the concert to have a glass of beer with him and others in the Green Room downstairs. So I didn’t go in.

My friend Jimmy Pappoutsakis came to me one day and said, “You really ought to go talk to Arthur. He’s really upset that you’re not talking to him.” I said, “Well, I’m not going to talk to him. He’s just so irrational about this thing.” He said, “Yeah, but go ahead anyway.” So one evening I was leaving, and I stuck my head in. I just waved. He said, “Come in, come in!” Well, Arthur was the first one to shake hands with anybody he had an argument with. He never held grudges. He was a curmudgeon, there’s no question about it, but I think—I’m sure—that in all the years, which were about fifty years he was there, he never fired anyone. He just had lots of arguments...

*His bark was worse than his bite.*

Yeah, absolutely. But then, in the last years, I got to be very friendly with him. As a matter of fact he lived on my way to Symphony Hall, and all during the Pops I would pick him up and drop him off at night. We had lots of nice conversations going and coming. Occasionally on the way back we’d see fire trucks going out from one of the stations in Brookline and had nothing to do but follow the fire trucks. He was quite a fire buff, and they all knew him. We’d stop, and they’d explain to him what was happening. That would mean that we’d get home, instead of one o’clock, at about two or two-thirty in the morning. But he was Mr Pops, there’s no question about it. He had a really good talent or genius for making programs that the people loved. When he took over the Pops,

the audiences—maybe you’d get a half of Symphony Hall. And then he started putting in the modern tunes of the day. He always started out with the light classics, the overtures, parts of symphonies, and then go to maybe the musicals of the day, and, in the later years, things like the Beatles songs. At that time I was so upset because he was going to put the Beatles on—who I couldn’t stand. But then we had good arrangers, and when they arranged those things for the full orchestra, some of those tunes were really very lovely. He called me up one day, said he had tickets for this new musical, and that Mrs Fiedler couldn’t go. Would I like to go with him? So I did, and it was *Hair*. It was premiering in Boston, I think. When I came out of there my head was ringing. Then I heard he was going to have some of that music arranged for the Pops! And there again he was right. The arrangements were excellent, and the audience loved it. It was, I think, a lot better than some of the modern popular things that are coming out today.

There were a lot of things I can never forget. Arthur had several coronaries. By doctor’s orders he used to have a little glass of bourbon. That suggestion wasn’t too hard for him to take. Now, the conductor’s stand was such that behind it, away from the audience, was a little glass holder. In those days he’d play a tune, come and sit down, take a little sip of his bourbon, and go back again. One night one of the viola players brought in a toothbrush, and unbeknownst to anybody, put it in the glass. When Arthur came down to take his sip of bourbon, he saw the toothbrush. He became livid. Of course, we all split up. I don’t think he ever found out who put it in. But, in retrospect, he could see the humor behind it.

*Yeah, he had a good sense of humor himself. He did some very funny things on the podium during concerts.*

He was a natural. Nothing was contrived with him.

*Oh, yeah. He wasn’t a phony. He was himself. He never put on any airs.*

He did what he wanted. If he wanted to be irascible, it didn’t make any difference if there were a thousand people present—he would be irascible. And, as you say, he was a very funny guy. We had some wonderful laughs with him there.

*It must have been something going from the tense, serious, almost militaristic discipline of a season with Koussevitzky into the Pops right away, where you could really let down. I suppose that must have contributed to the loose discipline of the Pops, too.*

You’re exactly right. All of a sudden the shackles are off, and you feel relaxed. Of course, the music was in a sense so much more easy to play, and it was really easy to work with Arthur. He was demanding in his own way, but not unreasonably so. His biggest fight was with the fooling that was going on. In concerts, too.

*Tell us the story of Sammy Messina and Koussevitzky. He was a violinist...*

Yes. Sammy had been in the orchestra at the time when Monteux was conducting. Then Koussevitzky came and took over. We were going on a trip, and Koussevitzky used to get very nervous about the trips, because we were going to New York and Carnegie Hall, and that was Toscanini’s domain. There was quite a rivalry between them. Well, Sammy had gotten a haircut, and at a rehearsal one morning, Koussevitzky looked over and said, “Who is this strange man in my orchestra? I cannot have a stranger in the orchestra.” Here poor Sammy was a quiet man—lovely, lovely man—just sat there, didn’t know what to make of it. But they finally convinced Koussevitzky he’d been there for some time.

*What are your hobbies?*

Cooking, fishing, golf. They’re all healthy hobbies, I think. And the cooking—I’ve done several things on behalf of the orchestra. The orchestra put out a lovely cookbook, and there were recipes from many members of the orchestra. And on two occasions I

*Continued on back page*



by Kenneth DeKay

## Koussevitzky and His Guests, 1924-1944

Over the years all sorts of reasons (all of them guesses) have been given for the supposed paucity of guest conductors during the tenure of Serge Koussevitzky as conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. It is not necessary to give cognizance to these speculations for one simple reason: during his tenure Koussevitzky built the Boston Symphony into one of the greatest in the world—and kept it at that level until the day he retired. Koussevitzky obviously felt that the Boston Symphony was his orchestra, and *he* would conduct it. And audiences agreed, for, as Erich Leinsdorf noted, Koussevitzky's concerts were "sold out to the walls".



Henry Hadley

For much of the time Koussevitzky reigned in Boston, the New York Philharmonic was governed by part-time conductors, whether led by Willem Mengelberg, who never relinquished his post with his Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra, or by Arturo Toscanini, who rarely if ever conducted the Philharmonic for more than half of each season during

his tenure. Under these circumstances the Philharmonic was rarely if ever a great orchestra for an entire season, tending to relax somewhat when neither Mengelberg nor Toscanini was on the podium. In contrast, Stokowski created a sense of pride in his Philadelphia Orchestra to the point where that orchestra maintained its sense of perfection even when Stokowski was not conducting. But, of course, Stokowski was on the podium for most of each season. In Boston, Koussevitzky was on hand almost all the time to see that his orchestra played as he demanded. That is the real reason why these two orchestras were usually deemed superior to the Philharmonic.

### Part I: *The Early Years*

During Koussevitzky's first year with the Boston Symphony, the season of 1924-25, his only guest conductor was the American composer and conductor Henry Hadley, who led a program of Beethoven, Mozart, Smetana, and Richard Strauss, along with his own Symphony 4 in its first Boston performance. Hadley had a distinguished career both as a composer and on the podium, serving for many years as associate conductor of

the New York Philharmonic, and later as the first conductor of what eventually became the Tanglewood concerts.

In addition to Hadley, the American composer Henry Eichheim was invited to conduct the world premiere of his *A Chinese Legend* in a program of Foote, Ravel, Schumann, and Tailleferre conducted by Koussevitzky with Alfred Cortot as soloist. At that time, Eichheim's pseudo-Oriental music was very popular; Stokowski even recorded some of his music (reissued on Cala 501, "Philadelphia Rarities"—ED). Eichheim had been a violinist in the Boston Symphony from 1890 to 1921 and had toured extensively as both soloist and conductor.

In the 1925-26 season two guest conductors appeared with the orchestra. Eugene Goossens (not yet knighted) was at that time the conductor of the Rochester Philharmonic as well as a composer of quite modern tendencies. His two concerts included Weber, Debussy, and Symphony 4 of Brahms as well as the first Boston performance of his own *Sinfonietta* and Delius's *On Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring*. It was after these Boston concerts that Goossens telegraphed his parents in England: "Boston was colossal triumph. Please deny rumor am succeeding Koussevitzky next season."

The other guest that season was Michael Press, who was much better known at that time than today. His program included Wagner, Brahms (the Violin Concerto with Jacques Thibaud), and Symphony 1 of Sibelius—a composer whom Koussevitzky had not yet conducted with the Boston Symphony. A child prodigy in Russia, Press had played the violin and conducted there at a very early age. Later, he toured Europe both as soloist and as a member of a trio with his wife and brother. He taught in Moscow and was conductor of the Gothenburg (Sweden) Orchestra before coming to the United States in 1922. He became a member of the faculty of the Curtis Institute and then taught for many years at Michigan State University.

The 1926-27 season brought two composers to Boston. Alfred Casella, who was also a conductor of some repute in Europe, presented works by Vivaldi and Mozart as well as the first Boston performances of his *Partita for Piano and Orchestra* and his *La Giara* ballet suite. Casella, who had also appeared with the orchestra in 1923, wrote of his 1927 Boston concerts:

"... I had the exceptional pleasure of having Giesecking as piano soloist, with whom I performed the Mozart Concerto in C Major, No. 21 and my *Partita*. Pianist and orchestra, each worthy of the other, constituted one of the greatest delights I remember in my life as an artist."



At this time Casella made a sufficient impression to be appointed conductor of the Boston Pops concerts in 1927, 1928, and 1929.



**Casella & Respighi**

Also in the 1926-27 season Ottorino Respighi and his wife Elsa brought an all-Respighi program to Boston (and elsewhere). It included his Piano Concerto (with the composer at the piano and Casella conducting), a set of his *Ancient Airs and Dances*, the *Belfagor* Overture, and *The Pines of Rome* as well as his *Il Tramonto* with Mme. Respighi as mezzo-soprano soloist. All were first Boston performances except for *The Pines of Rome*. (Incidentally, at the concerts of the very next week, Koussevitzky conducted the world premiere of Respighi's *Church Windows*!)

During the 1927-28 season concertmaster Richard Burgin appeared as guest conductor for the first time, presenting a program of works by Schrecker, Cherubini, and Liszt, with Albert Spaulding as soloist in the Brahms Violin Concerto. Later in the same season Sir Thomas Beecham conducted works by Delius, Berlioz, Mozart, Richard Strauss, and Handel—the last arranged by Beecham. But most important, Maurice Ravel appeared as conductor in an all-Ravel program including the first Boston performance of Ravel's orchestration of two Debussy dances.

In the following season, 1928-29, Koussevitzky conducted works by Tchaikovsky and Richard Strauss in a program that featured Howard Hanson conducting the first Boston performance of his Symphony 1, *Nordic*. Hanson was a well-known figure in American music both as a composer, conductor, and educator at the Eastman School in Rochester. Richard Burgin also appeared once again conducting works by Richard Strauss, Miaskovsky, and Beethoven, including the *Emperor* Concerto with Rudolf Ganz as soloist.

The featured guests of the 1928-29 season were Enrique Arbos and Arthur Honegger. The latter conducted eight of his own works, six of them first Boston

performances, including his Piano Concertino with his wife as soloist. Arbos, who was renowned for his interpretations of the music of his fellow Spaniards and even better known for his orchestration of a suite taken from *Iberia* by Albéniz, conducted four first Boston performances, including Ravel's *Alborada del gracioso*, portions of the Albéniz-Arbos *Iberia* Suite, and works by Turina and Halffter. He opened his program with the Overture to *Die Meistersinger* by Wagner and closed with one of his specialties: the Three Dances from Falla's *Three-Cornered Hat*. Arbos had long since won renown in Europe, first as a violinist and later as conductor of the Madrid Symphony. He had conducted the world premiere of Falla's *Nights in the Gardens of Spain*, and the fanfare written by Falla for Arbos's seventieth birthday later became the first movement of Falla's *Homenajes*.



**E. F. Arbos**

In that same season, Ernest Schelling conducted the first Boston performance of his tone poem *Morocco*; the remainder of the program—consisting of works by Franck, Borodin, and Roussel—was conducted by Koussevitzky. Schelling was not only a composer of numerous works (including *A Victory Ball*, of which Willem Mengelberg and the New York Philharmonic made a famous recording), but he was also a conductor of considerable experience and a very well regarded pianist who had toured extensively in both Europe and the United States as a recitalist and soloist with various orchestras.

## **Part Two: Koussevitzky Established**

During the 1929-30 season Eugene Goossens returned as guest conductor in a program of Wagner, Schumann, Respighi, and his own Concertino for Double String Orchestra, this last a first Boston performance. According to Goossens, at about this time Koussevitzky hinted that Goossens might someday succeed Koussevitzky as conductor of the Boston Symphony. Later, according to Goossens, Koussevitzky even suggested that he not sign a contract with the Cincinnati Symphony for more than



two years, Goossens having been selected to succeed Fritz Reiner as conductor of that orchestra. If so, Goossens may well have been the first of those led to believe that he was Koussevitzky's likely successor. However, some time later, Goossens wrote that Koussevitzky's plan to retire in the 1930s was frustrated when Mrs Koussevitzky lost all of her money in the stock market crash and was unable to recoup her losses, thereby compelling Koussevitzky to continue to conduct the Boston Symphony as he could not afford to give up his annual salary. However, thus far Goossens's contentions have lacked confirmation.

Alexander Glazounov, who had left Russia to live in Paris, came to the United States for appearances as guest conductor during the 1929-30 season, appearing first with the Detroit Symphony. With the Boston Symphony he conducted an all-Glazounov program, though, unexpectedly, none of the works on his program was new to Boston: Symphony 6, *Stenka Razin*, and the Violin Concerto with Benno Rabinof as soloist.

Richard Burgin appeared once again as guest conductor in a program of Rimsky-Korsakov, Borodin, Saint-Saëns, and Wetzler. The *Symphonic Dances* from the opera *Basque Venus* by Hermann Hans Wetzler and the excerpts from *Le Coq d'Or* were both first Boston performances. In the Saint-Saëns, Jacques Thibaud was the violin soloist.

Walter Piston conducted the orchestra in the world premiere of his Suite for Orchestra during a program of Haydn, Bach-Schoenberg, and Sibelius conducted by Koussevitzky. Piston may have been given extra rehearsal time because all the works conducted by Koussevitzky were repeats from concerts given earlier that season.

Samuel Gardner also appeared to conduct the world premiere of his symphonic poem *Broadway*. Gardner, who was born in Russia, came to the United States in 1912 when he was twenty. He became well-known both as a violinist and composer and appeared with many orchestras either as violin soloist or conductor in the performance of his own works.

The fiftieth season of the Boston Symphony, 1930-31, started off with a special guest: Sir George Henschel, the orchestra's first conductor. The program of this renowned musician, who had been a pianist, baritone, and teacher as well as conductor over his long career (he died in 1934 at the age of 84), included Beethoven (naturally, it was his *Consecration of the House Overture*), Wagner, Haydn, Schubert, and arias by Bruch and Gluck (sung by Margarete Matzenauer). This was the same program Henschel had conducted at his first Boston Symphony concert, but for the substitution of a Wagner overture for one by Weber.<sup>1</sup>

The other guests in the 1930-31 season were Arbos, Hadley, and Burgin. Henry Hadley conducted a Haydn symphony and his own tone poem *Salome*, as well as first Boston performances of his suite *Streets of Peking* and *Masquerade* by the contemporary American composer Carl McKinley. Burgin's program included Sibelius, Mozart, and the first Boston performance of *Little Symphony* by Ernst Krenek.

Arbos gave the first Boston performances of his orchestration of *El Albaicin* and *Navarra* by Albéniz (the latter having been completed in its piano version by Severac) and a Suite for Strings by Corelli as arranged by Pinelli. (Arbos also arranged this same Corelli music, but the program clearly indicates that he conducted the Pinelli version.) His program also included Falla's *El Amor Brujo* (in the orchestral version without a vocalist) and the Franck Symphony.

The 1931-32 season featured the appearance of Gustav Holst (von Holst until World War I), who conducted a program made up entirely of his own works. Three were performed in Boston for the first time: *St Paul's Suite*, *The Perfect Fool* ballet music, and *Hammersmith*: Prelude and Scherzo in its version for orchestra. The concluding work—*The Planets*, naturally—was heard for only the second time in Boston.

A rather unusual program in that same season included two Beethoven works conducted by Koussevitzky and three works, two of them world premieres, conducted by their composer, Nikolai Tcherepnin, a Russian composer and conductor of renown in Europe (and father of Alexander Tcherepnin, who became better known in the US owing to his many years of residence here). The elder Tcherepnin conducted the first Boston performance of his *Enchanted Kingdom* and the world premieres of his *Miniatures* and *In Memory of Rimsky-Korsakov*.

Richard Burgin conducted a program of works by Chausson, Vogel, Toch, and Berezowsky. Vladimir Vogel's Two Etudes and Ernst Toch's *Little Theatre Suite* had their first Boston performances as did the Violin Concerto of Nicholas Berezowsky, who was soloist in his own work. The Russian Vogel was a student of Busoni and considered a very modern composer in the atonal vein. The Russian-born Berezowsky often appeared as either violin soloist or conductor of his own works with orchestras both here and abroad.

Chalmers Clifton also appeared during the 1931-32 season conducting works by Handel, Wagner, and Sibelius with the Poem for Flute and Orchestra by Griffes in what seems to have been, amazingly enough, its first Boston performance. Georges Laurent, the orchestra's famed first flutist, was soloist. Clifton's name may not be

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<sup>1</sup> In his original program Henschel had concluded with Weber's *Jubel Overture*, because it ends with the anthem "Heil dir im Siegerkranz," which is also the music for "My Country 'Tis of Thee". But, of course, it is also the tune for "God Save the King", and the Boston audience did not view Henschel's tribute to the United States as he intended. Hence, the Wagner substitution this time.



as well known today as it was years ago, but he had a long and distinguished career as conductor and educator. He founded and for many years directed the American Orchestral Association in New York City. In 1943, he became the first chairman of the jury which awarded the annual Pulitzer Prize for music, and he continued to serve as chairman for several years thereafter. As a conductor he made numerous guest appearances with orchestras in the United States and France.

During the 1932-33 season, Koussevitzky conducted the entire season except for his two week mid-winter vacation when two guests appeared. Richard Burgin conducted Stravinsky, accompanied Albert Spaulding in works by Mozart and Chausson, and gave the first Boston performance of the Third Symphony, the *Pastoral*, by Vaughan Williams.

Albert Stoessel conducted a varied program of works by Bach-Vokel, Mozart, Tchaikovsky, and Delius, as well as the first Boston performances of the Polka and Fugue from *Schwanda the Bagpiper* by Weinberger and *Station*



**Albert Stoessel**

*WGZBX*<sup>2</sup> by Philip James, the contemporary American composer and conductor who later won an honorable mention for his Overture: *Bret Harte* in the 1936-37 awards given by the Philharmonic-Symphony Society of New York to American composers. Stoessel had a most varied career during his relatively short life; he dropped dead at age 48 while conducting. American-born, he trained in Germany, toured the United States as a violinist with Caruso, appeared as a violin soloist with the Boston Symphony in 1920, was a bandmaster and trainer of bandmasters with the A.E.F. (American Expeditionary Forces) in France during World War I, taught at New York University and the Juilliard School, conducted the Oratorio Society of New York, conducted opera and concerts at several summer festivals, and composed a number of works including his opera *Garrick*.

Two prominent guests were scheduled to conduct the Boston Symphony in the 1933-34 season: one a famous conductor, the other a composer of repute (and disrepute in some quarters). But the scheduled appearance of Arnold Schoenberg was delayed by illness. Instead of an all-Schoenberg program conducted by the composer, the revised program included Bach as arranged by Schoenberg and *Transfigured Night*, both conducted by Richard Burgin and a Brahms Symphony conducted by Koussevitzky. However, later in the season Schoenberg did appear to perform his *Pelleas and Melisande* at a concert that concluded with Koussevitzky conducting Schubert and Richard Strauss. Sir Henry J. Wood, the dean of British conductors, presented a program of music by Purcell (as arranged by Sir Henry), Beethoven, Mozart, Elgar, Richard Strauss, and Lalo. There were three first Boston performances: Beethoven's *Rondino* for Eight Winds, an *Andante* from a Mozart Cassation, and the Purcell-Wood Suite for Orchestra.

Walter Piston conducted the world premiere of his *Concerto for Orchestra* as part of a program conducted by Koussevitzky including works by Debussy, d'Indy, and Brahms. And Richard Burgin appeared—no longer as a guest conductor, but as First Assistant Conductor—in a program of Vaughan Williams, Tchaikovsky, and Moussorgsky.

### Part Three: *The Koussevitzky Era in Full Flower*

Conductors other than Koussevitzky led six weeks of concerts during the 1934-35 season. Richard Burgin, continuing in his role as First Assistant Conductor, took over three weeks of concerts, including one week when Koussevitzky was ill. At one of Burgin's concerts the American composer and conductor David Stanley Smith conducted the world premiere of his *Epic Poem*. Smith taught at Yale and had long been the conductor of the New Haven Symphony.

Adrian Boult, not yet Sir Adrian, conducted two weeks of concerts, probably in return for Koussevitzky's appearances with the BBC Symphony of which Boult was the music director. The first Boult program included works by Gabrieli, Mendelssohn, Haydn, and Elgar, the second Bliss, Holst, Bax, and Schubert. The Bliss Introduction and Allegro and Holst Fugal Overture were first Boston performances as were the Gabrieli Sonata and the Mendelssohn Scherzo for full orchestra from his Octet. Many years later, Boult, by then Sir Adrian, wrote at some length about his visits to the United States and about several orchestras, including the Boston Symphony. His comments have been discussed in Vol. III, No. 1 of this *Journal* and need not be repeated here.

The most prominent guest conductor of the season was Igor Stravinsky, who conducted an all-Stravinsky program of the *Firebird* Suite, *Fireworks*, and the first Boston

<sup>2</sup> So listed in the program, but elsewhere given as *Station WGBZX*.



performance of *Persephone*. Henry Eichheim also appeared in the 1934-35 season to conduct the first Boston performance of his *Bali*. The remainder of the program consisted of works by Richard Strauss and Sibelius conducted by Koussevitzky.

During the 1935-36 season Dr Koussevitzky conducted all but three weeks of concerts. Burgin conducted for one week, his concerts including the world premiere of Roy Harris's Symphony 2. The other two weeks featured Dimitri Mitropoulos, newly arrived in the United States. For his first week Mitropoulos programmed works by Beethoven, Richard Strauss, and Debussy along with the first Boston performance of *Overture for a Don Quixote* by the contemporary French composer Jean Rivier. The next week Mitropoulos conducted one of his own Bach transcriptions, *La Tragédie de Salomé* by Florent Schmitt, and Mahler's First Symphony.

It is worth noting that during the 1935-36 season Koussevitzky conducted the first Boston performance of Casella's Triple Concerto with the Casella Trio. This was part of a series of thirty concerts given in the US by that group. Of his Boston performance Casella wrote:

"We also played with the orchestras of Chicago and Boston. The latter, conducted by Koussevitzky, gave a prodigious performance of my Concerto for Trio and Orchestra, and it seemed to me that I heard the piece for the first time, such was the virtuosity and perfection of the interpretation."

In that same season, Carlos Chávez conducted the first Boston performance of two of his own works: *Sinfonia de Antígona* and *Sinfonia India*. The remainder of that concert included Artur Schnabel as soloist in a Brahms concerto and selections by Rimsky-Korsakov and Bach-Casella conducted by Koussevitzky.

Mitropoulos returned during the 1936-37 season. Both he and Burgin conducted two weeks of concerts. Mitropoulos programmed for his first week first Boston performances of four works, including his transcription of music from Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*, his arrangement of Beethoven's String Quartet, Op. 131, *Preludio Giocoso* by Ricardo Castagnone, and Respighi's Toccata for Piano and Orchestra, where Mitropoulos was both piano soloist and conductor. Castagnone, a contemporary Italian composer, was considered by some to compose in the tradition of Respighi.

The next week there were two more first Boston performances conducted by Mitropoulos: another of his Bach transcriptions and Piano Concerto 1 by Malipiero with Mitropoulos once again as both soloist and conductor. (Malipiero was a composer with as sense of the ridiculous: taking a bow after the world premiere of one of his works, he was booed so lustily by the audience that he came out to take additional bows, all to the accompaniment of ever more boos.) The remainder of the second

Mitropoulos program offered works by Robert Schumann and Ravel.

These two seasons of guest appearances by Mitropoulos with the Boston Symphony have led to seemingly endless speculations and contradictions, some of which have continued into the 1990s. There is no question but that the Mitropoulos appearances were a rousing success. Hence the talk that Koussevitzky was jealous, though this hardly explains Mitropoulos being asked to return for a second season! At the same time there was talk that Koussevitzky viewed Mitropoulos as his successor. But the fact of the matter is clear: Mitropoulos went to Minneapolis while Koussevitzky remained enthroned in Boston.

Werner Josten appeared during the 1936-37 season to conduct the world premiere of his Symphony in F. The remainder of the program, conducted by Koussevitzky, included works by Vivaldi, Satie-Debussy, Mendelssohn, and Franck. Nicolai Berezowsky also appeared once again, this time as the conductor of the first Boston performance of his Symphony 3; he had appeared in a prior season as violin soloist in another of his original works.

The 1937-38 season brought Georges Enesco, Nadia Boulanger, and Serge Prokofiev to conduct the orchestra for the first time; Burgin led one week of concerts and part of another week's; and Daniele Amfitheatrof took over the orchestra during Koussevitzky's mid-winter vacation.



**Georges Enesco**

Boulanger conducted the New York Philharmonic, the Philadelphia Orchestra, and the Boston Symphony on her visit to the US, the first woman to conduct each of these three orchestras. Her Boston concerts presented her as organ soloist in the Saint-Saëns Symphony 3 conducted by Koussevitzky. She then conducted the Fauré Requiem to conclude the concert. She had previously appeared as organist with the orchestra during Koussevitzky's first season as conductor in Boston.



The Prokofiev concerts included his *Buffoon* ballet suite and *Peter and the Wolf* (with Richard Hale as narrator), the Suite 2 from *Romeo & Juliet*, and his Piano Concerto 1. For the last work, Richard Burgin conducted while the composer was the piano soloist. All but the music from *The Buffoon* were first Boston performances.

Enesco conducted the first Boston performance of his own Second Suite for Orchestra and *Actaeon*, a symphonic poem by the contemporary Roumanian conductor and composer Alfred Alessandrescu, who was for many years a prominent conductor of both opera and symphonic concerts in Bucharest and artistic director of the Bucharest Radio. The other works in Enesco's program were his First *Roumanian* Rhapsody and a Haydn Symphony.

Daniele Amfitheatrof<sup>3</sup> had been appointed associate director of the Minneapolis Orchestra of which Mitropoulos had been named music director. He had served as assistant conductor to Molinari at the Augusteo in Rome. Included in his first week of concerts were works by Rossini, Beethoven, and Boccherini as well as his own *American Panorama*. Both the Boccherini Suite (as arranged by Johann Christian Lauterbach) and the Amfitheatrof work were first Boston performances. In his second week Amfitheatrof programmed Beethoven, Scriabin, and Ildebrando Pizzetti, whose *Concert dell'estate* was given its first Boston performance.

During that 1937-38 season Paul Hindemith appeared as viola soloist with the orchestra, E. Power Biggs made his first appearance with the orchestra as organist, and Walter Piston conducted the world premiere of his Symphony 1 in a program of first symphonies with Koussevitzky conducting Beethoven and Sibelius.

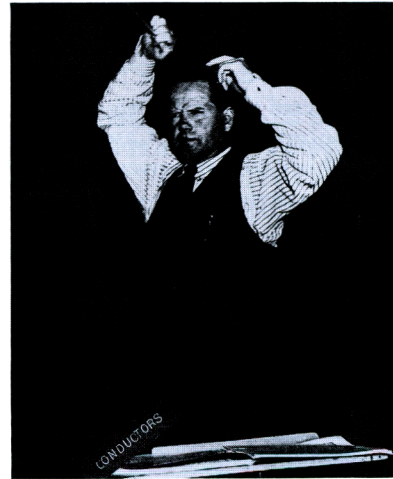
Georges Enesco and Eugene Goossens returned to conduct the Boston Symphony in the 1938-39 season along with Ernest Bloch. The latter conducted three of his own works including a first Boston performance of Two Symphonic Interludes from his opera *Macbeth*. Goossens's program included, in addition to some Tchaikovsky, three first Boston performances: his own *Two Nature Poems*, a Handel overture, and *Carnaval*—consisting of 19 of Robert Schumann's piano pieces orchestrated for the Ballet Russe by Rimsky-Korsakov, Liadov, Glazounov, and Nicolai Tcherepnin. Enesco's program included his own First Symphony and a Mozart symphony along with the first Boston performance of his Second *Roumanian* Rhapsody and a work by the youthful Dinu Lipatti: *Satrarii-III*, first prize winner in the 1933 Enesco Competition in Roumania.

Richard Burgin conducted three weeks of concerts in the 1938-39 season during which David Stanley Smith

appeared once again, this time to conduct the world premiere of his Symphony 4.

#### Part IV: *Years of Trouble and Turmoil*

From 1939 to 1944, both the Boston Symphony and its conductor were subjected to outside pressures. There was the coming of World War II and later the official entrance of the United States into the war. These were also the years of the prolonged battle over unionization of the orchestra. Then, too, the conductor had to cope with the death of his wife. And it was in this period also that the orchestra and the conductor almost came to a parting of the ways as pressure mounted for Koussevitzky to take over the New York Philharmonic.



**Tauno Hannikainen**

The 1939-40 season of the orchestra included appearances on the podium by Igor Stravinsky, Nicolai Malko, and Tauno Hannikainen. The latter's engagement was the direct result of American sympathy for the Finns in their war with the Soviet Union. He was even permitted to conduct a portion of the orchestra's concerts in New York City though, heretofore, these has been the exclusive property of Koussevitzky. His Boston program included works by Handel and Beethoven, and, naturally, three works by Sibelius, including the First Symphony. In New York he conducted this same symphony, while Koussevitzky presented Bach-Respighi and accompanied Heifetz in the Second Violin Concerto of Prokofiev—surely a strange choice for a program intended to show sympathy for the Finns as against the Russians.

Malko had conducted all across Europe and had appeared frequently with the Danish State Radio Orchestra after leaving Russia in the late 1920s. In his Boston program he conducted works by Rossini, Reger, and

<sup>3</sup> Anyone interested in the career of Daniele Amfitheatrof before, during, and after Minneapolis (he later went to Hollywood and then returned to Italy after becoming a U.S. citizen) is welcome to try to reconcile the conflicting information and misinformation found in Trotter's biography of Mitropoulos, *Baker's*, *Grove's*, and the *Cyclopedia of Music and Musicians*.



Tchaikovsky, as well as Shostakovich's Symphony 1, a work he had been closely identified with ever since he gave the world premiere in 1926. Stravinsky conducted two weeks of concerts. Both programs were of his own works and included the first Boston performance of the ballet *Jeu de Cartes*. Howard Hanson also appeared to conduct the first Boston performance of his Symphony 3 in a program of Toch, Haydn, and Richard Strauss led by Burgin. Later in the same season Koussevitzky conducted this same Hanson symphony in one of his concerts.



Nicolai Malko

The 1940-41 season brought the Paris-born (Paris, Idaho) American composer, conductor, and educator Arthur Shepherd to Boston to give the first Boston performance of his Symphony 2 in a program of Beethoven and Rimsky-Korsakov conducted by Koussevitzky. Shepherd had been assistant conductor of the Cleveland Orchestra and conductor of the Salt Lake Symphony before concentrating on composition. His works had won several awards. Eugene Goossens returned to conduct his Symphony Op. 58 in its first Boston performance; the remainder of the program included Mozart and Rachmaninov and was conducted by Koussevitzky with Horowitz as piano soloist. The fall of France led Darius Milhaud to come to the United States. In his appearance with the Boston Symphony he conducted three of his own works, all first Boston performances: *Le Cortège Funèbre*, *Fantasie Pastorale* (with Stell Anderson as pianist) and *Suite Provençale*. Koussevitzky concluded the program with Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique*.

Igor Stravinsky came to conduct a Stravinsky-Tchaikovsky program. Tchaikovsky's Second Symphony (*Little Russian*), which was given only its second Boston performance, was a work often conducted by Stravinsky. His Symphony in C Major was presented for the first time in Boston, while his music for the *Fairy's Kiss* was performed for the second time in Boston.

Stanley Chapple had conducted both concerts and opera in England for many years. In addition, he had

been musical director for the Vocalion Gramophone Company; his earliest recordings date from 1920. In 1939, he had been made assistant conductor at the Berkshire Music Center. For his first Boston concert with the Boston Symphony he programmed works by Elgar, Delius, Bax, and Brahms. The *Overture to a Picaresque Comedy* by Bax was played for the first time in Boston.

Desire Defauw had long been considered Belgium's preeminent conductor. Before turning to conducting he had been well-known in Europe as a violinist and in England as founder of the Allied String Quartet during World War I. He had first conducted in the United States in 1939, appearing with the NBC Symphony. He led the Montreal Symphony from 1940 to 1943. Then he became conductor of the Chicago Symphony and managed to survive four seasons in the maelstrom which raged in Chicago from the death of Frederick Stock until the coming of Fritz Reiner, during which time Defauw, Rodzinski, Furtwängler, and Kubelik, and perhaps others as well suffered undeservedly. For his Boston concerts Defauw conducted works by Franck, Grétry, Falla, and Beethoven.

The 1941-42 season was badly disrupted by union interference and, even more so, by the death of Mrs Koussevitzky. Then too, the orchestra's Trustees had agreed to allow Koussevitzky to conduct two weeks of concerts with the New York Philharmonic which was celebrating its Centennial with a series of guest conductors in addition to its Principal Conductor, John Barbirolli, whose removal seemed clearly in the offing. According to Moses Smith—whose book on Koussevitzky is not always factually reliable—the Union or Petrillo (who was the Union for all practical purposes!) forbade the appearance of Howard Hanson, Carlos Chavez, and Bruno Walter with the Boston Symphony. However, a review of the orchestra's programs reveals that only Walter was actually scheduled to appear and his programs announced. In fact, the sole guest conductor for the 1941-42 season was Defauw. His program consisted of Franck, Lekeu, Respighi, and Dukas. The Lekeu Adagio for Strings and *The Birds* of Respighi were each given their first Boston performance.

Richard Burgin ended up conducting six concerts, though only one seems to have been originally scheduled for him. He substituted for Bruno Walter, conducting an entirely different program from that scheduled for Walter. He substituted for Koussevitzky for two weeks after the death of Mrs Koussevitzky, and he took over the two weeks while Koussevitzky conducted the New York Philharmonic. Inasmuch as the death of Mrs Koussevitzky had also forced Koussevitzky's concerts with the Philharmonic to be rescheduled, the season's concert schedule had to be rearranged drastically and hurriedly, union pressure or no union pressure, and there seemed to be no other way to do so than to have Burgin take over Dr Koussevitzky's programs—Moses Smith to the contrary notwithstanding.



By the autumn of 1942, things had quieted down. The orchestra became officially unionized in December. Dr Koussevitzky seemed able to cope with the loss of his wife. And he had decided to continue as conductor of the Boston Symphony. The orchestra continued intact in spite of the loss of a handful of members to the armed services, and even its tours continued to take place. No doubt there may have been difficulty in planning the season because of the union problem and the war so the solution seemed to be a Koussevitzky season. There was but one guest conductor, George Szell, and Burgin took over the orchestra for three weeks, but otherwise it was all Koussevitzky. During the season, Burgin was redesignated as First Associate Conductor of the orchestra.

Szell conducted a program of Schubert and two works of Smetana, one of which—his String Quartet 1 as arranged for orchestra by Szell—was given its first Boston performance. At a Koussevitzky concert of Copland, Sibelius, and the world premiere of William Schuman's Cantata *A Free Song*, the Brazilian composer Camargo Guarnieri conducted the first Boston performance of his *Abertura Concertante*.

In contrast to the preceding season, 1943-44 brought guests galore to conduct the orchestra. Howard Hanson came to lead the world premiere of his Requiem at a concert during which Burgin conducted Brahms and Mahler. At a Koussevitzky concert of Rabaud

and Robert Schumann, Leonard Bernstein conducted *El Salón México* by Aaron Copland and the first Boston performance of his own Symphony 1 *Jeremiah* with Jennie Tourel as soloist. At another Koussevitzky concert of Mozart, Beethoven, and Rimsky-Korsakov, Nicolai

Berezowsky led the world premiere of his Symphony 4. And Gardner Read conducted the world premiere of his Symphony 2 at a concert during which Burgin conducted Gershwin, Beethoven, and Bach-Schoenberg (the program hardly lacked for variety). Read had studied with Copland, Sibelius, and Pizzetti. He had prepared as a conductor under Vladimir Bakaleinikoff, the longtime associate conductor in Cincinnati and Pittsburgh. His Symphony 1 had won first prize in the 1936-37 awards by the Philharmonic-Symphony Society of New York.

Igor Stravinsky returned to conduct yet another all-Stravinsky program including the first Boston performance of his orchestral version of *Circus Polka* and the world premiere of his *Four Norwegian Moods*, as well as his own arrangement of *The Star-Spangled Banner*.

Vladimir Golschmann, long a fixture in St Louis (but looking for new fields), conducted a program of Beethoven, Ravel, Roussel, and Satie-Debussy. André Kostelanetz presented a varied

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### Koussevitzky and the New York Philharmonic

For its centennial season of 1941-42, the New York Philharmonic (then known as the Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra of New York) scheduled, in addition to its Principal Conductor John Barbirolli, a series of guest conductors: Leopold Stokowski, Bruno Walter, Artur Rodzinski, Dmitri Mitropoulos, Fritz Busch, Eugene Goossens, Walter Damrosch, Arturo Toscanini, and Serge Koussevitzky.

Dr Koussevitzky's two weeks of concerts were delayed due to the death of Mrs Koussevitzky, but they were given in February and March of 1942. The programs of Dr Koussevitzky were as follows:\*

#### February 19&20

C.P.E. BACH (arr. Steinberg): Concerto in D for Strings  
 COPLAND: *Quiet City*  
 RAVEL: *Daphnis and Chloé* Suite 2  
 SHOSTAKOVICH: Symphony 5

#### February 22

CORELLI (arr. Pinelli): Suite for String Orchestra  
 RAVEL: *Daphnis and Chloé* Suite 2  
 SHOSTAKOVICH: Symphony 5

#### February 26&27

FOOTE: Suite in E for Strings  
 DEBUSSY: *La Mer*  
 TCHAIKOVSKY: Symphony 5

#### February 28

CORELLI (arr. Pinelli): Suite for String Orchestra  
 COPLAND: *Quiet City*  
 RAVEL: *Daphnis and Chloé* Suite 2  
 SHOSTAKOVICH: Symphony 5

#### March 1

DEBUSSY: *La Mer*  
 TCHAIKOVSKY: Symphony 5

At the end of the 1941-42 season, Virgil Thomson wrote in the *New York Herald-Tribune*: "There is no question that with standard Philharmonic equipment Mr Koussevitzky has produced the best all-around result of the year."

\*from *The Philharmonic-Symphony Society of New York: Its First Hundred Years* by John Erskine (Macmillan, 1943).

Kenneth DeKay



by Richard Burgin

## Memories of Koussevitzky

*Edited by Diana L. Burgin. Transcribed from portions of a taped interview with Professor Elias Dann of Florida State University, done in June 1974. Printed with the editor's permission.*

Nicholas Slonimsky, an outstanding musician and extremely interesting person whom I knew very well, was a very important person for Koussevitzky. And in fact, Koussevitzky liked him very much, but Koussevitzky's second wife, [Natalia Ushkova], who had great influence on her husband, did not like Slonimsky for some reason, something that came up caused a rift between them, and as a result, Koussevitzky and Slonimsky went their separate ways. But when Koussevitzky first came to Boston, and during his first years there, Slonimsky did everything that Koussevitzky needed, musically. And he needed quite a bit because Koussevitzky was an outstanding talent, but his musical experience was based on his intuition more than on learned knowledge of his profession. And, in a sense, that's what really made Koussevitzky great, his ability to project his natural talent despite the shortcomings in his musical education.

Because Koussevitzky regarded the Boston Symphony as his orchestra, he exercised virtually sole authority over programming and what works were performed, even at concerts which I conducted as associate conductor. I was limited in the selection of works I could conduct, and I had to get Koussevitzky's permission to conduct even works which he did not have plans to do. So, there were always certain problems involved in making programs. I was the first to conduct Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony in Boston, for example, because before hearing it, Koussevitzky did not want to conduct it with the Boston Symphony. But when he did hear it, in

the performance I conducted, he took it over, and I could not touch it anymore.

Koussevitzky was also pretty demanding in respect to what works guest soloists played with his orchestra. For instance, I remember distinctly when an extraordinary Russian violinist wanted to get an engagement to play with the Boston Symphony, he was told by Koussevitzky that he could arrange a concert for him if he would play the Stravinsky Concerto.

The Boston Symphony's reputation for being "the perfect orchestra" under Koussevitzky's leadership was due in part to the length of his tenure. Twenty-five years is a long period, a whole generation, and naturally, when Koussevitzky got used to all the players, when the players got used to him, a feeling of family developed, players were not discharged for frivolous reasons, and the turnover in personnel was smaller, actually, than in any other orchestra.

Koussevitzky was also a musician of great enthusiasm. Like all human beings, he had his shortcomings, maybe even musical shortcomings—I don't know—but there was one thing in him that I think is very important, especially for conductors: he had a great deal of imagination and a convincing way of making music and enjoying it. That rubs off on the players, no matter how cynical they are. Sooner or later, they come under its spell. And Koussevitzky proved that cynicism does not necessarily have to develop as 'part of the job' of being an orchestra player for so many years.

Koussevitzky, both because he himself was originally a member of an orchestra and because he could afford to be very independent due to his financial situation, really tried to take care of the members of the orchestra. He took a personal interest

in everybody's well-being. Whenever you had gripes with management, you could always count on his being on the side of the orchestra. So, naturally, the members of the orchestra could only reciprocate Koussevitzky's attitude to them, sincerely wanting to please him.

There is one thing that people are apt to overlook when they speak about orchestras and conductors. People do not realize that musicians in an orchestra do not perform for the audience. When a soloist stands up in front of the orchestra, s/he performs for the audience, but the orchestra musicians perform only for the conductor. It couldn't be otherwise, because when you have four horns, let's say, in a symphony, nobody in the audience can say whether it's the first horn who plays a passage, or the third horn who plays the same subject in a different tonality. Neither could anybody say whether a passage is played by the first oboe or the second oboe. Perhaps a listener assumes that if the melodic passage is longer, it's probably played by the first oboe player. But in fact, listener's don't see. The oboe player, however, is very eager, whether he's second, third, or first, to play for the conductor so that the conductor is affected. The conductor is his listener. The oboist thinks, that is the person I am playing for, and he plays his heart out for him.

Now a conductor is able to indicate, maybe just by the twinkle of his eye, that he is aware that an individual player is playing, that he is reacting and is pleased. On the other hand, if the conductor is not quiet aware that the individual player is there, or he doesn't look at him, that conductor is no conductor to the player. A player needs an audience. There is no such thing as performing for zero. You have to have a listener. You are communicating and you have to have somebody feel that your

*continued on page 23*



# THE PHILADELPHIA ORCHESTRA

FOUNDED 1900

ALEXANDER VAN RENSSELAER  
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WILLIAM CURTIS BOK  
VICE PRESIDENT  
WILLIAM PHILIP BARBA  
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LEOPOLD STOKOWSKI    OSSIP GABRILOWITSCH  
CONDUCTORS

ARTHUR JUDSON  
MANAGER  
LOUIS A. MATTSON  
ASSISTANT MANAGER

PACKARD BUILDING  
PHILADELPHIA

THE SCORES REFERRED TO IN THIS LETTER ARE LEFT WITH MARSHALL BETZ  
AT ACADEMY - GET IN TOUCH WITH HIM.

Mr. Sylvan Levin,  
1915 Walnut Street,  
Philadelphia, Penna.

Illustrious Maestro:    I am returning a  
number of scores you were so kind as to  
lend me.    One of these interests me -

A PERSIAN BALLET    by WELLESZ

which I hope we can do some time.    It is  
not long, and it looks quite interesting.

If you have any more scores that you think  
might be interesting I should be so glad if  
you would lend them to me for a short time.

I am trying to plan next year, but so far  
nothing is very definite.

When do you sail for Europe?    And how can  
I can find you over in that unstandardized  
confusion?

Do you have any of the following scores which  
you could lend me for a little while:

|           |                                     |
|-----------|-------------------------------------|
| PIZZETTI  | Deborah                             |
| HINDEMITH | Morder, Hoffnung der Frauen, Op. 12 |
| "         | Das Nusch-Nuschi, Op. 20            |
| "         | Sancta Susanna, Op. 21              |
| "         | "Der Dämon"                         |

Always yours,

LEOPOLD STOKOWSKI

MAESTRO

March 30th, 1931.



## The Levin Letters

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I first “met” Sylvan in 1983. I was unemployed that summer and had been a member of the Leopold Stokowski Society for a few years. For some time I had felt that there ought to be a Stokowski Society in America. Letters to the members in England were apparently going to some black hole. I was also somewhat frustrated at the long gaps in time in getting newsletters and LPs. In an issue of *Toccata* I happened to read that the American representative to the Stokowski Society had resigned. His name was Sylvan Levin. I called information and got his phone number. With his help we were able to found the Leopold Stokowski Society of America.

I met Sylvan and his wife Lib about a year later when we went to New York. Susan and I spent several hours at his apartment in Manhattan, chatting, being shown all the autographed photos, etc. I was struck by the fact that he was very short, about 5 feet. I actually felt tall for once in my life. I wondered how such a diminutive man could have played piano. Then I noticed his hands. They were inordinately large, and I got to see them in practice at his place (one room was filled with a baby grand piano). Over the next several years we talked often, and he was not hesitant to tell me if he disagreed with something we’d printed. We had our differences, but he always supported us. In the last few years of his long life (Lib died not too long after we met at their place) Sylvan began to drift into his own world. He spent the last couple years in a nursing home. His sister would take him copies of *Maestrino*, and he would read them and appreciate the journal even though he’d ask who published it. He was a giant of a man, teaching and coaching many, many musicians. His personal friendships with Leonard Bernstein, Eugene Ormandy, and Zubin Mehta (all of whom had visited his place) helped me garner their support for the LSSA.

He had been associate conductor of the Philadelphia Orchestra under Stokowski. He premiered the Ravel Piano Concerto with Stokowski and, as will be seen, was instrumental in much of the work Stokowski did in Philadelphia. Sylvan was fired from that position in a disagreement with the assistant conductor at the time, Fritz Reiner. He went on to many other jobs, mainly in New York, made some recordings, taught, etc. From 1929 to 1953 he received over 100 letters from Stokowski. He sent photocopies of them to me and asked that I “do something” with them. Well, better late than never, here are the results.

like you to assume complete responsibility for everything musical on the stage...” Stokowski goes on to instruct Sylvan to select and “train him or her” so as to free Sylvan for rehearsals. You need to know that this was the US premiere of the piece to fully appreciate Stokowski’s trust in Levin’s judgement.

The letters start to take a more personal tone, at least as far as Stokowski ever got, as he addresses a February 1931 letter to “Dear Levin”. In that letter he indicates there will be six vacancies in the Philadelphia Orchestra the next season, and he asks for Sylvan’s

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## *Over the years Stokowski would again and again ask Sylvan’s input regarding musicians...*

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The first letter, dated 8 November 1929, relates to Stokowski’s presentation of excerpts from Moussorgsky’s *Boris Godunov* in 1929. Sylvan was working with the chorus for the production and Stokowski writes to him with specific details of what he wants. He comments, “As you know the five singers so well, I leave it to your judgement how to divide the above solo parts among them.” This is but one of many times Stokowski would entrust such tasks to Sylvan.

This trust was tapped again in December 1930 in letters related to the production of *Wozzeck*. He sent a copy of a letter to Mr Elkin indicating, “I am leaving for Mexico... During that period I have put all the preparations of *Wozzeck* in the hands of Sylvan Levin.” To Sylvan he wrote, “For the performance of *Wozzeck* and the 3 final stage rehearsals I should

suggestions for the replacements. Over the years Stokowski would again and again ask Sylvan’s input regarding musicians, most notably for the ill-fated New York City Symphony Orchestra.

Then comes a letter dated March 30, 1931 (reproduced on opposite page). In it Stokowski addresses Sylvan as “Maestro” for the first time. He is returning scores Sylvan has sent for consideration and asks for scores by Pizzetti and Hindemith. He goes on to comment, “If you have any scores that you think might be interesting I should be so glad if you would lend them to me for a short time.” It is in this letter that Stokowski first signs as “Maestrino”.

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*Bob Stumpf is President of the Leopold Stokowski Society of America*



This way of signing letters to Sylvan continued, off and on, throughout the many years of correspondence between the two musicians. Among the photos I have is a copy of one Stokowski inscribed to Sylvan, and it is signed “the Maestro”. It was this photo that gave me the idea for the title of the Leopold Stokowski Society of America’s publication and my ‘page’ on the Internet.

The Chesterfield radio series was occasionally conducted by Sylvan instead of Stokowski. On those occasions Stokowski would listen to the broadcast and then write Sylvan about it. In a letter from 1934 Stokowski is very specific about what he did and did not like about the broadcast. Stokowski writes, “I have been repeating at the end of the concert something that was played in the concert just as you did last night but I find it is not good because it sounds as if the Chesterfield talk at the end of the concert comes within the music and is surrounded by it both sides. Therefore from now on I am always going to play something different at the end but something which harmonizes with the program and hope you will do the same.” The underlining in these letters is Stokowski’s which indicates how strongly he felt about such matters. In this missive Stokowski signs himself as “S”.

In a letter from the summer of 1935 (signed “M”) Stokowski for the first time reflects some of the developments which ultimately led to his leaving Philadelphia. He asks Sylvan’s advice for soloists in some Bach Concertos for the coming season. Stokowski writes, “I hope it won’t be like last season with so many battles. It took up so much time, was really not interesting and does not seem to have produced much effect.” These ‘battles’ were with the board, not the orchestra.

In December of 1938 “Always your friend, S” writes to Sylvan about *Fantasia*. “In the picture I am working on at present with Disney—there is a place where we may include Schubert’s Ave Maria—either in the key of G or the low key of D. Do

you know a beautiful contralto voice in or near Philadelphia that could sing just the first verse? Someone with a large voice—no vibrato and who would be flexible in rhythm in the way that you and I are flexible.” I wonder if the phrase “beautiful” applied to the physical aspects as well. I recall a conversation with Sylvan about Stokowski’s womanizing. Sylvan observed that Stokowski was more a gourmand than gourmet. It is interesting how, once again, Stokowski tapped Sylvan for advice on a matter so vital as this major undertaking.

A few of the letters in Sylvan’s collection were actually written to someone else. One of these was in July of 1939 to C. David Hocker, General Manager of the Philadelphia Opera Company. It is obvious that Sylvan had suggested that Stokowski ‘judge’ some scores for them. Stokowski declines due to time constraints. An interesting comment he makes is, “My experience is one never knows how good a symphony or an opera is until after one has performed it.”

This brought two notions to mind. First, it reflects Stokowski’s attitude about “The Score” as ‘black dots on white paper’. Second, in discussions about Stokowski’s prodigious work in promoting “new” music it has been stated that Stokowski may have performed and recorded many such works, but only once in many cases. Such an attempt at belittling Stokowski’s efforts overlooks this fundamental truth. Maybe after actually performing such music Stokowski decided it wasn’t as good as it looked on paper, ergo....

I skipped ahead to 1945 for the next letter. By this time Sylvan had his own career as a conductor but was assisting Stokowski with the New York City Symphony Orchestra. Stokowski writes in a July letter from California about personnel matters, asking Sylvan to assist in selecting players for the coming season. He also complains at length about Mayor LaGuardia and the committee. “Instead of Mayor LaGuardia saying disparaging things about me

(although he did not mention my name) he might have thanked me for giving a whole season of work without compensation and giving up many engagements... which could have brought me a large income... As people do not seem to understand my ideas of giving services for idealistic reasons I am not going to do it anymore.”

In February 1949 Stokowski wrote to Sylvan encouraging him to apply for the position of assistant conductor of the New York Philharmonic. He mentions, “I do not know whether you would feel you could give up your position at WOR for this.” WOR was a government sponsored orchestra of which Sylvan was music director and chief conductor. Little is known about this group today, but it was very active in the late Forties. Here Stokowski signs himself “LS” with swooping letters.

The last letter in Sylvan’s collection is dated 2 January 1953. In it Stokowski answers questions Sylvan had obviously asked about Grainger’s music. It is signed, again, LS. Shortly thereafter Stokowski and Sylvan had a parting of ways. It was about this time that Stokowski was undergoing the divorce and custody trials with Gloria. As near as I can decipher Sylvan’s comments, that sticky situation involved Sylvan. Sylvan went to see Stokowski and told him that ‘what the girls are telling you is wrong’ and left. The “girls” were Stokowski’s ‘aides’ and apparently they persuaded Stokowski that Sylvan had taken Gloria’s side in these matters.

One thing has become obvious to me in my years of studying Stokowski. The man was an enigma because he wanted it that way. He tended to compartmentalize his life, closing out older acquaintances when it suited him. His long association with Sylvan Levin was a personal one as well as professional, as you can see for yourself. ♦



by Victor Koshkin-Youritzin

## Revealing Stokowski: Anthony Morss Interview, Part IV

*Koshkin-Youritzin: I recall your having once mentioned something fascinating to me about Stokowski's attitude toward being photographed. Could you elaborate on that?*

Morss: I don't know how Stokowski related to cameras in his early years, but those who worked with him later on, as I did, soon discovered his phobia about being photographed informally. The prohibition against cameras was announced sternly to the Symphony of the Air. The mere sight of a camera roused him to wrath quicker than almost anything else. During one weekend house party I attended with him, one of the other guests asked permission to photograph him with her children and dog and his two sons. He agreed until later when the camera actually appeared; he then angrily waved it away. He had a clause in all his contracts stipulating that he must not be photographed during rehearsals or concerts. When this clause was broken by a member of an orchestra he was guest conducting in Europe, he fired his manager, Andre Schulhof.

This camera-shyness may have had to do with his aging appearance, which could still be magnificently glamorous under formal portrait conditions, but came off much less flatteringly in the sweaty hurly-burly of rehearsals. He was particularly distressed by a photograph of himself on the cover of his recording of *The Planets* of Holst. It showed him conducting one of the recording sessions in his usual dark blue shirt, open at the neck, with his long white hair resting on his shoulders, looking for all the world like the Witch of Endor. It was arresting and superbly grotesque, but even more cruel than the usual passport photo. He resolved never in the future to allow a record jacket to appear unless he had personally approved it.

As a young conductor he had worn his blond hair close-cropped. Later on it was expanded to the familiar aureole, first blond and then flaming white. As he aged, this fine-textured hair started thinning, and he began wearing it longer and longer, carefully brushed up on the lower back of his head, rather like a slipped D.A. haircut. I shall never forget a definitive performance of Orff's *Carmina Burana* in which each of the dramatic cutoffs, of which there are many, caused his hair to slip slightly. At the electrifying conclusion, his final cutoff shook the hair completely loose and it fell all the way to his shoulders. What timing!—both musically and dramatically unforgettable.

His tailcoat was famously well-tailored—in London; and for matinees he was the last conductor to wear a cutaway with wing collar and Ascot tie. The Ascot was

tied in an unusual knot, the secret of which he would never divulge. Offstage he always seemed to be dressed the same way: a dark blue shirt with a necktie of alternating dark blue and cream stripes, and a dark blue subtle pinstripe suit, the coat and trousers of which surprisingly often did not quite match—close but not exact. Every jacket, without fail, sported the *Legion d'honneur*. We all wondered if he had its ribbon on his pajamas as well! For rehearsals, he took off his blue coat and often his tie.

During rehearsal breaks he would sit at his place on the podium, on one of those tall stools bass players often use. Any of the musicians or management could then approach him and ask questions. When the time came to conduct, however, he always stood, at least in my time.

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*“His Technicolor personality colored his music-making very directly”*

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The gradual curvature of his spine and neck became ever more apparent in his last fifteen years, until eventually he could no longer walk. Then, of course, he had to sit throughout.

I don't believe we need make any apology for describing his usual wardrobe. Throughout I have endeavored to present a picture of what it was like to work with him and be part of his social world, because his Technicolor personality colored his music-making very directly. And this is equally true of Koussevitzky's very different personality. One of the most treasurable aspects of the interviews published in this *Journal* is their sense of capturing the human presence and flavor of these two great musicians. I feel justifiably proud in preserving this sense of their individual humanity.

*How strong was Stokowski's training in music theory?*

Unlike Koussevitzky and Beecham, Stokowski had an extremely solid background in music theory. Being a groundbreaker by temperament, however, he was never overly impressed by academic rules. He once related to me that he had had a dream in which he was studying Bach's *Matthew Passion* and discovered parallel fifths. He

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*Victor Koshkin-Youritzin is David Ross Boyd Professor of Art History at the University of Oklahoma, Norman*



awoke and hurried to the score, where sure enough, there they were, just where he had dreamed them, large as life! How could Bach, the theoreticians' paragon, have committed such a fundamental error? Then he checked himself: did the progression sound convincing? Yes, it did. Well, then, the rule in this instance was meaningless.

On another occasion we were talking about musical form, and he derided those academics who thought that by pasting a formal label on a piece—song form or third rondo, let's say—they had caught its essence. These terms, he declared, were only the grossest differentiations: even a simple solo flute melody, if it was well composed and therefore organic, had its own unique structural cohesiveness. Thus each work had a highly individuated, complex structure; and until the performer had analyzed its own special formal personality, he could not interpret it adequately. Wise words indeed!

*Before we conclude, are there any other observations you would like to share with us?*

As I read over the second section of my Stokowski interview, I was a bit troubled by my assertion that Stokowski abandoned the baton in Cincinnati. I had always assumed this to be the case, since it doesn't take more than a year or two of constant conducting to become comfortable with a baton in one's hand. Subsequent reading about Stokowski's life, however, seems to indicate that he abandoned the baton some time not long after he took over the Philadelphia Orchestra.

The anecdote about feeling more comfortable after the baton had flown out of his hand comes from his ex-secretary and long-time girlfriend Wendy Hanson, a close friend of mine. That seems unusually late in a conductor's career not to have become entirely at home with a baton; but of course choral conductors, organist/choirmasters such as he had been, conduct with just their hands.

Whether Stokowski conducted a concert or two in London after being engaged by Cincinnati board members in Paris is a possibility. In any case, he arrived in Cincinnati with amazingly little orchestral conducting experience. Some musicians who studied conducting with Arthur Nikisch in Germany—Leipzig, I believe—thought they remembered Stokowski as one of the students there, but he himself was very coy and noncommittal on that subject. I would have asked him a lot more about Nikisch if I had thought Stokowski had worked with him.

*In terms of Stokowski's early growth as a conductor, what impact did Nikisch have on him?*

The mesmerizing Arthur Nikisch was a crucial figure in the development of Stokowski and many other important conductors. Koussevitzky idolized Nikisch and copied

him in the beginning, later claiming to be the continuation of Nikisch's art—with improvements, naturally! Furtwängler was thunderstruck by the realization that Nikisch proved, for the first time in conducting history, that stick-technique could actually produce specific tone-colors from an orchestra.

Sir Adrian Boult studied with Nikisch and so, apparently, did Stokowski. The possibility of his study with Nikisch is tantalizing, even in view of his attitude—previously mentioned—that conducting cannot be taught, at least beyond the rudiments. He did think that one could learn by watching good conducting, so being around the great Nikisch had to be valuable to him.

One reason why this generation of super-great conductors is so fascinating is that, quite apart from their musical talents, they were all much bigger and more colorful personalities than the best today. Craggy, cantankerous, terrifying, heroic, trail-blazing, warm—

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*“Craggy, cantankerous, terrifying, heroic, trail-blazing, warm—hateful or lovable, they dwarfed their successors.”*

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hateful or lovable, they dwarfed their successors. Only Bernstein has come close as a personality, perhaps Karajan to some extent. But the latter, great as he was, still never achieved the spiritual dimension of Furtwängler! I was privileged to come in at the tail-end of the generation of giants and to see them in their old age. ♦

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*continued from page 14*

program of orchestral works by Kabalevsky, Paul Creston, Albéniz-Arbo, and Stravinsky, as well as works by Grétry, Milhaud, Mozart, and Rachmaninov all sung by Lily Pons. And G. Wallace Woodworth, who was on the Harvard faculty for decades and well-known as conductor of the Harvard Glee Club and the Harvard-Radcliffe Choral Society came to conduct an all-orchestral program of Haydn, Piston, and Beethoven with Rudolf Serkin as soloist. All of the works at the Kostelanetz-Pons concert were first Boston performances except for the Stravinsky and the Albéniz-Arbo, while Woodworth gave first Boston performances of Haydn's Symphony 80 and Piston's Symphony 2.

*In our next issue, Kenneth deKay profiles Boston Symphony guest conductors from the final years of Koussevitzky's tenure.*



by Robert M. Stumpf, II

## The Stokowski Sound

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### ④ Phase 4 (made in America)

Debussy: *La Mer* (1970), *Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun* (1973), *The Engulfed Cathedral* (orch. Stokowski) [1966]\* Ravel: *Daphnis & Chloé Suite 2* (1970). Leopold Stokowski conducting the London Symphony Orchestra and New Philharmonia Orchestra (\*) London Phase Four 455 152.

This disc replicates most of what was previously released on London 417 152. That said, all comparison ends there.

I have a lot of theories. Most of them are half-baked... or so I have been told. I share them with victims who happen to sit too long at my park bench. I am of the opinion that conductors who have crossed the ocean in a ship will impart to Debussy's *La Mer* a sense which those who have not, cannot. Imagine the feel of the roll of water below your legs as you stand on the deck of a sailing vessel. That same visceral feeling is what you would want your orchestra to reproduce in a musical sense. If your perception of the sea is that of someone flying over it, you will not have the same sensual experience to attempt to relate to the orchestra. Stokowski crossed the Atlantic many times and almost all of them via ship. He crossed the Pacific via the same means. (He had a fear of flying.) This may be more an ocean than a sea, but it smells salty to me.

*La Mer* is one of those pieces that I did not like at first. I didn't dislike it, either, but it took a long time for me to appreciate it. My current copies include Karajan's *Das Meer* (I cannot figure out why it is so highly rated). I also have Ansermet's account on

London, which I like a lot though the sound is a bit thin. Then there is Haitink's Concertgebouw recording, a wonderful interpretation and recording from a conductor I generally find dull. There is also Martinon's on EMI. I particularly love how he gets the orchestra to shimmer like waves toward the end of the first movement before it swells to a climax. In fact, that moment is one of the defining ones for me so far as evaluating a performance. Finally, perhaps my favorite, the monaural recording by Monteux with the Boston Symphony (on RCA 61890). My ears soon adjust to the mono sound, which is very good anyway, and I am swept away by the power and excitement of this version. It is also the fastest I know.

In comparing these recordings, using just the first movement, Stokowski's opening can be sensed, can be felt before it can be heard. This is also true of the Monteux recording. Martinon emerges from the mist quite nicely. Haitink is not as good here, but he has the best solo violinist of them all! The closing moments in Stokowski's hands shimmer above the waters, not quite as magical as Martinon (but, see below) then swell deeply before rising to its dashing close. Stokowski is slower than Martinon (9:46 to 9:08 in the first movement; and then there's Monteux at 8:38!). On the other hand, Stokowski is never dull. In fact he is exciting (you'd never guess he was 90 when these were recorded). He may milk it for all its worth, but extremism in the name of.....or something like that.<sup>1</sup>

Nobody performed Debussy's *Prelude* better than Stokowski, and this is the finest of all of the 11 we

have to sample<sup>2</sup>. This release captures the inner details and atmosphere which were not present in the original LPs! This is simply the finest recording I have ever heard of this piece. Do you want to hear a study in phrasing? Listen to this recording of Stokowski's orchestration of *The Engulfed Cathedral* and then listen to any other conductor's more recent recordings. Stokowski imbues this music with a majesty and aura of an era long gone. The others pale by comparison.

Then there's a most sensual *Daphnis & Chloe* Suite. The drive to my new home crosses some of the eastern hills of mid-Ohio. Along the way I go around a turn and then suddenly see a deep, farm studded, rolling valley. Far ahead I can see the crests of more hills echoing away. The experience takes my breath away every time. That same sensation is all I can think of to describe how Stokowski's opening to this recording of *Daphnis* affects my mind's ear.

This disc is one of the latest batch of Decca/London releases that has been made in America instead of Germany. Comparison of many discs of the same music in previous releases has established that these latest ones are fuller and warmer. There is also added detail. There are moments in the first movement of *La Mer* that you can now hear music that literally wasn't there in the previous CD. In fact, there are moments you can hear music that you can't hear on the LP. It is all still warm and pleasurable.

*Post Script:* I experience, literally, brain pleasure when listening to certain recordings and performances. It begins as a glowing sensation emitting from my ears. Then it flows

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<sup>1</sup>Research indicates that Stokowski first performed Debussy's *Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun* with the Cincinnati Orchestra in 1912. Over the years he frequently performed this piece and other Debussy, including his own transcriptions. Oddly, I cannot find an entry for *La Mer* until October of 1949 with the NYPO.

<sup>2</sup>There are 10 listed in John Hunt's over-all excellent publication. Since it was published, however, the Concertgebouw has released, on Globe, a disc containing a live 1951 performance with Stokowski at the helm.



as a tingling sensation along the back of my ears, arching down along the back of my brain, radiating down a bit. It is a pleasurable sensation. I sense it while listening to this latest Stokowski release. At moments the music seems to be coming from within me, swirling around me. I write this as straight as an arrow. I wonder if this same tactile sensation is experienced by others and if it is a function in loving music even more than appreciating it.

### 🎻 Sibelius

Sibelius: Symphony #1; *Lemminkäinen's Return* [Eugene Ormandy conducting the Philadelphia Orchestra in 1941 and 1940]; Berceuse from *The Tempest*; Symphony #4 [Leopold Stokowski conducting the Philadelphia Orchestra in 1936 and 1932]. Biddulph 62

Okay, it is good to hear some of Ormandy's earlier, Philadelphia recordings. By the time I was a teenager the words Ormandy and Philadelphia Orchestra were nearly synonymous. His contributions to this disc are certainly thrilling and "nervous" as Edward Johnson puts it in the excellent insert notes. This is still Stokowski's Philadelphia Orchestra, and it seems that Ormandy went by the philosophy, "If it ain't broke,

don't fix it." I cannot say that this is what it would have sounded like if Stokowski had led the First Symphony. In fact, listening to the recording of the Fourth, you can easily imagine a deeper, fuller bass line had Stokowski recorded the First. Still, you can hear a sibling resemblance, if not twins. (This from the father of five-year-old twin girls.) The sound here is excellent and warm with an almost stereophonic soundstage to it. It is for the Stokowski, however, that most buyers will purchase this album. This is a second incarnation, the items having previously appeared on a Dell'Arte CD available through the Leopold Stokowski Society in England. That disc, however, was remastered by Ward Marston. This one is by Mark Obert-Thorn. The differences generally favor this newer job. There are clearer details in Ward's work. Note the bass solo in the very opening of the Fourth. On the other hand, Mark's transfer—because it is slightly recessed in comparison with Ward's—provides the opening bass solo a more haunting essence. There is also less surface noise on this latest release, and I found the whole listening experience warmer, more involving, and more musical. So, even if you have the earlier CD, seek out this new one.

How about the performance? It is pure Stokowski—as pure and cold as a Finnish lake. The strings actually sigh when appropriate. The reading is dark as depression with jagged edges reminding you that this is an almost modern sounding work. The smaller orchestra (this anomaly is clearly detailed in Ed Johnson's absolutely delightful, insightful, and educational notes) provides, as Ed put it, an almost chamber-like quality to the performance. I have never heard anyone, even in stereo, make the close of the "Tempo largo" so haunting. The use of glockenspiel and tubular bells is clearly discerned in this recording and, again, Ed offers up a fascinating story about this controversy. Finally, the finale. This symphony should end as an enigma, like the short story, "The Lady or the Tiger". You may want to quibble whether that story is an enigma, but you get the point.

Anyway, I digress like an old man on a park bench in July. Stokowski's close leaves an afterglow. I wanted to hear absolutely nothing for the rest of that evening. I think it is beyond obvious that I strongly recommend this disc. It is great Stokowski. It is great Sibelius. It is great sound. It is the Philadelphia Orchestra and their leader in a synergistic creation. ♦

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## Letters to the Editor

It certainly gets discouraging when I read in the Koussevitzky Recordings Society publications about new or future Koussevitzky releases by Biddulph Recordings.

I live in the San Francisco Bay area (above 6.5 million people) with easy access to three large Tower Record stores, among others. As is mentioned in the Winter edition of *Gramophone's ICRC* (p. 72) "major label releases advertised in *Gramophone* often don't turn up in (American) stores until months or even a year later, if at all... New Biddulph reissues are difficult to come by these days."

I've never been able to locate Biddulph WHL 019 (Beethoven Symphony No. 6; Strauss Waltzes), WHL 044 (Hanson 3rd Symphony and misc.), nor WHL 045 (Shostakovich 8th Symphony, etc.). And now to learn that the *St Matthew Passion*, which I've waited so many years to hear, is scheduled for release by Biddulph. There are also many other Biddulph releases by other conductors that have never shown up on our shores. Thank God

we do get all Pearl and Dutton releases. I hope things are better in '98.

Has the next BSO Classics (Brahms, Schubert, Beethoven, Wagner) been released yet?

Patrick Fleming  
Pleasant Hills, CA

*No word yet on the pending BSO disc. As to Biddulph distribution, Mark Obert-Thorn (who does many transfers for them) responds:*

Since that letter was written, US distribution of Biddulph has gotten much better. They've changed distributors (from VAI and Tower's Bayside to Albany), and I've seen more new Biddulph releases in stores sooner than at any time in the past. (There are more in Tower than when *they* were distributing them!). So I think that the problem has been largely cleared up.



by Kenneth DeKay

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## Stokowski in Chicago

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*“The Podium”, the publication of the Fritz Reiner Society, carried a two-part interview with Clark Brody, principal clarinetist of the Chicago Symphony for many years. In Part II which appeared in the Spring/Summer 1983 issue, Brody spoke about the “Stokowski Sound” in Chicago.*

BRODY: One of the great geniuses of sound was Stokowski, and we did some nice recordings with him, very nice results. And very uncomfortable in the process, too, because he had the orchestra spread all over the place. To play good ensemble when you hear the strings from way behind is very difficult. But the final results, sonically, were incredible.

PODIUM: He was running things, not the recording producer.

Yes. And he was always experimenting. He would rearrange the whole orchestra—in concert, not necessarily for recording. One time, for instance, he had the cellos strung out along the back of the stage and the woodwinds right down where the cellos are now, right on the edge. So we were looking at the conductor from a completely different angle, and that didn’t work out. But he *tried*, he’d *do* things.

There’s a recording of the Shostakovich Fifth Symphony with Stokowski and the Philadelphia Orchestra. In the closing string passage to that symphony—high first violins—there’s an effect that he gets. Naturally, the strings of the Philadelphia Orchestra were fabulous. But there’s some unusual beauty in this recording that you don’t hear on any other recording of that piece. Nobody could figure out why. Well, one day the man who played piccolo in the Philadelphia Orchestra came and joined the Chicago Symphony as piccolo player—Burnie Atkinson. He told us one time about that recording. Stokowski had put the piccolo player practically in the middle of the first violin section and had him doubling this high string part on the piccolo. And this is what caused this incredibly beautiful blend of sound. Who in the world would think to put a piccolo in the middle of the violin section? He was innovative in that we. He’d *try*, you know?

*He did the Fifth in Chicago as well, in 1960. Did he do anything funny with what Shostakovich wrote on that occasion?*

No, I don’t recall that he did. This is another thing that’s very strange, and you can’t put your finger on it. When he conducted the Chicago Symphony, it would take on a sound which was—it’s hard to explain—the Stokowski sound. More colorful somehow. Some of it was due to his instrumentation.

*Maybe the free bowing, too.*

Yes. He did some funny things. For instance, in the Tchaikovsky Fourth Symphony, in the Scherzo, there’s a difficult first-clarinet entrance [Mr Brody sings part of the Trio section]; then it’s immediately repeated an octave lower. So he had me playing the original, just the top part of this passage. And then the second time, an octave lower, he had two clarinets and two bassoons doubling this thing [Mr Brody sings this passage much louder]. It sounded like somebody opened the door to a band rehearsal all of a sudden! Well, we fell off our chairs, it sounded so ridiculous.

He conducted in Chicago when he was approaching ninety and was not physically very strong—but mentally, just as sharp as a tack. In Philadelphia, he’d look at his score. “Okay, gentlemen, we’ll take three bars before number twelve,” and BOOM—you’d better be ready. He later tried this in Chicago. “Six bars before letter ‘X’”, and half the orchestra didn’t even know where letter “X” was! “Come-come-come-come” [rapping the baton]. He’d look around. “Where is the second trumpet? Where is the third trombone player? Where is the bass-clarinet player? Someone in the orchestra would reply, “Oh, he isn’t in this movement.” [rap, rap] “I want everybody here all the time.” My teacher played with him in Philadelphia, Daniel Bonade. In his heyday in Philadelphia, Stokowski was such a tyrant that he would make Reiner look like a Sunday school teacher—and Reiner was no Sunday school teacher! Things must have been pretty grim in Philadelphia in those days.◆

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communication is hitting the mark, successfully or not, that’s beside the point. The main thing for the individual player is an orchestra is to feel listened to. And Koussevitzky conveyed that he was listening to each player, individually.

When somebody’s playing appealed to him, he showed that he was moved, and for a performer that kind of response is very, very inspirational. There are great conductors whose faces are completely immobile; they are very well aware of who is playing, but take the playing for granted. Professionally, they are right, they should take good playing for granted. But psychologically, orchestra players, even when they know that in playing well, they are merely doing what is expected of them, still want to be appreciated, concretely, by the conductor. And Koussevitzky showed that kind of appreciation. As a result, one could not have desired anything better than the give and take between the orchestra and the conductor that existed during Koussevitzky’s tenure with the BSO.

*continued from page 6*

went to do my so-called famous white clam sauce. One was at the book fair that the *Globe* ran in conjunction with the cookbook, and then another one on a Sunday morning at Channel Five. That's nerve-racking. I'd rather sit in the orchestra under Koussevitzky than to do cooking in front of a camera!

*What about the Munch days?*

Ah, the Munch days were halcyon days for everybody I guess, because Munch most of the time liked to do things with a minimum of rehearsals. And he had a penchant for canceling out rehearsals, especially up in Tanglewood. He loved to play golf, and he was a gentle man. I found him to be a very colorful, very exciting conductor. I don't know how many times we did the *Fantastic Symphony* or *Daphnis and Chloé* with him, but it was never the same twice. He was really a mood conductor—whatever his mood was at the time—but they were always exciting performances. And they were very peaceful, quiet years. Nobody was let go in those years. He seemed to be a sad-type person. I guess he had his own personal sadness in his life, but there were enough French people in

the orchestra at that time that he could socialize with.

*It must have been almost a shocking contrast from Koussevitzky to jump right into to work with Munch. They were so different.*

Yeah. It was like the case of the Philharmonic, when they went from Toscanini to Barbirolli. They destroyed Barbirolli, because the discipline just fell apart. Munch was so easy to play with, and maybe we just relaxed a little bit too much in the beginning, but I think he picked things up quite well.

*Steinberg was only with us for three years...*

Steinberg was a very distant person. I think he was one of the most nebulous conductors I ever played with. His beat was just... I know he was a fine musician. He had a wonderful reputation and all, but I never felt all that confident when I was playing that I was going to get enough strength from his conducting. Now that may just be my own personal feeling.

*No, it's not.*

He was not as approachable as even Koussevitzky was. You'd go in, and I can remember one occasion, I wanted to ask him about something. Instead of saying, "Hello", he said "YES?"—in a very gross, stentorian way. I felt I was upsetting his reverie or something. It was just was not pleasant.

*And Ozawa?*

Ozawa no question is a really extremely fine musician. His decisions as far as players are concerned I've questioned. There've been incidents where a player obviously, in the minds of the orchestra, is very fine and certainly capable of holding down that position, but for reasons that seem so nebulous to me, he vetoes them. And I find his conducting rather sterile. I don't know if it's because he lacks emotion. He seems to be a warm enough person at times. But I must say that if somebody would ask me who the greatest conductors of my time were, I would say Koussevitzky and Munch. Those were the ones that I felt more musically satisfied with, regardless how demanding—especially Koussevitzky—was.

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## About the Koussevitzky Recordings Society, Inc.

The Koussevitzky Recordings Society was established in 1986, and it is dedicated to the preservation and dissemination of the recorded legacy of conductor Serge Koussevitzky. The Society is a non-profit corporation staffed entirely by volunteers. Our Board of Directors consists of President Tom Godell, Vice President Victor Koshkin-Youritzin, Secretary Karl Miller, and Treasurer Louis Harrison. Members of the Society's distinguished Advisory Board include Alexander Bernstein, Martin Bookspan, David Diamond, Harry Ellis Dickson, Charles Dutoit, Mrs. Irving Fine, Lukas Foss, Karl Haas, Richard L. Kaye, and Gerard Schwarz. Leonard Bernstein, Aaron Copland, William Schuman, and Antonio de Almeida were Advisors until their deaths.

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 journals which include interviews from the archive, articles about the conductor, book reviews, and other material of interest to our members.

To become a member of the Society and receive our publications, please send your check or money order in the amount of \$18 to 1211 West Hill Street, Carbondale IL 62901-2463. Memberships run from January to December. Those who join in the middle of the calendar year will receive all the publications for that year. Back issues of our publications are also available. For a complete list, contact the Society at the above address.