

Detroit Music Oral History Project

Detroit, MI

(Beatriz Staples)

Interviewed by

(Catherine Nicolia)

(November 29th, 2016)

(Bloomfield MI)

As part of the Oral History Class in the School of Library and Information Science

Kim Schroeder, Instructor

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Brief Biography

Beatriz (Bea) Staples is a now retired section violinist from the Detroit Symphony Orchestra of which she was member for 50 years. During her tenure in Detroit she has also worked with Motown Records and with many prominent arrangers and musicians. Bea enjoys practicing yoga in her spare time and working with her local book club, she resides in Bloomfield MI.

Interviewer

Catherine Nicolia is a graduate student of Wayne State University where she majors in Library and Information Science. She currently works as a freelance musician and private music instructor in the Metro Detroit area. She enjoys knitting and experimenting with new culinary pursuit, she resides in Royal Oak MI.

Abstract

During this interview Beatriz Staples speaks candidly with Catherine Nicolia about her years growing up during and after World War II as well as her journey to America. She reflects on her long career with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra and Motown as well as with other collaborations such as arranger David Van de Pitt. Reflecting on trying memories such as the DSO's 2011 strike Beatriz tells her story from the heart.

Restrictions

None

Original Format

MP3

Transcription

Catherine: OK, my name is Catherine Nicolia, I am a graduate student at Wayne State University. I'm here with Beatriz Staples, a now retired section violinist from the Detroit Symphony Orchestra. Today is November 29th, 2016 and we are at Beatriz's personal residence in Bloomfield Michigan. Also Beatriz is my future Mother-in Law.

So hi Bea.

Beatriz: Hi

00:45 **C:** OK, Well, digging in, can we start briefly with some memories from your childhood, as much as you're comfortable with?

B: Well I was born in 1938 which is one year prior to the, the official start of World War II and unfortunately most of my childhood experiences have been marred by the war, it is constantly, it was constantly in my consciousness for so many years, even during the years after the war and even today whenever I think back to my childhood I hear sirens, I hear bombs flying low, I feel the anxiety rushing down to the bomb shelter. It was anything but a typical childhood, I can tell you that.

In more detail some of the experiences that most stand out in my mind, one in particular and this is after we have left my home city where I was born was in Budapest and during the years very often my Mother would take me to the country where my Grandmother and Uncle had an estate and there I was in safety because there were, there was no concern that the bombs would be, the flyers would be going there because it would not have been of any interest to them, so it was mainly in the urban areas where the activity was, but we had left Budapest and we were on our way North and West that's all I knew but we spent a few month in a city near the border which in Hungarian is call Sopron and in German Odenburg it was that close to Austria that it had two names. Just like for instance Bratislava used to be called Pressburg because it was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire which of course seized after 1924 when, well actually by the end of the first World War the empire was dissolved but it wasn't official until '24 when the peace treaty was, the peace treaty in Versailles which was sort of, a real tragic date for all Hungarians because they still remember this but I'm digressing and I shouldn't. So we were in this border area and we were in a hotel and it was December 6th and the reason I remember that is because it was St. Nicolas Day. St. Nicolas is celebrated not around Christmas time but it's in early December and it was early in the morning maybe 10 or 11 o'clock, it was bright, blue sky and sun and my parents and there was some other people there as well were looking out the window and they saw from afar little diamond specks glistening in the sky and low and behold maybe five or ten seconds later the sirens went on and of course I was the first one "let's go, let's go" by the time we got down to the first floor the air planes were coming so close that you could hear glass rattle but we made it down to the shelter and those were probably some of the most harrowing moments of my young life. We were huddled together, I remember my Mother's arms around my ears and my shoulder because, it was, whenever planes fly really low, big planes it makes a horrendous sound, I've never heard it since then but that sound is still with me so, and

then there was a tremendous impact and a thud and then there was a let up, and then it would come back, and so it went for maybe 15 minutes.

C: Do you remember which forces were coming in the planes?

B: Well yeah it was the allied forces, it was yeah I think in particular I think it was English but it was the Allied yeah.

You know they were doing their job but they had to do, this is such a paradox in war that you have to you know, maybe they hated to do what they were doing but they went in the war and they were doing their duty and I simply could be pondering over that for a long time you know the justice and they had to, they had a mission, so then finally this whole scenario repeated itself again the planes flying and then there was a tremendous shock and the force, you know everybody was I don't know, I remember crying and, it was a mixture of crying and praying. And then it let up and somebody opened the door and again sunlight came in and we stepped outside and maybe forty feet away from the door where we came in the court yard there was an incredible crater. When a bomb falls there is a huge crater when it misses the target right, it missed the building and there was the crater and it fills up with water and low and behold on top of the crater I saw my sister's dolls clothe and how that got there is, was a mystery. Was probably the windows had broken upstairs and some, some impact, something blew it out of the room and it landed in that sea of destruction in that crater that is something I'll never forget.

08:01 **C:** Briefly, from Hungary, will you please let us know where you traveled to after the war?

B: So when we left Sopron, we traveled in cars we had my parents my sister some relatives, my Aunt and others we were in these two cars and we got a far as the actual border and then it seemed to me that whatever we had, the cars, our luggage, our instruments, my violin, my Mom's violin, it was confiscated and the bare minimum we could take with us and after maybe couple of hours of waiting around they shoved us in a train and the trouble was we didn't know where the train was going, we didn't know if it was going East or West. So we had been on the train was going through by that time we were in Austria proper but if you probably remember from your history class, Austria at that time as was Hungary was under the Axis powers so in other words it was the German Reich, spread out its tentacles and we were unfortunately engulfed in that but the SS people were ruthless, they kah, they just took everything away they treated you like cattle, like you hear of descriptions what they did with Jews during, they just shov.. ok it wasn't that bad they didn't literally shove us into wagons but it was a normal train, passenger train but still it was a frightening, moment. So then my Father recognized as we're going through the countryside and also I must include that bombs were falling during the time and my Dad recognized the steeple of a church in Austria and that's how we knew that we were in Austria and not further East from Austria. So because always going East you think of going towards Russia or thereabouts, so we were in, Austria going towards Germany, it was, the cities name was Rosenheim literally translated means the home of Roses. That's how we got to Germany and we lived in Germany for seven years I went to school there and life became somewhat more normal although after the war it was hard to get basic necessities, and we were lucky in that respect that we were not in a camp with other refugees, we were in a village in a,

the second floor of the school house where the school was, I mean mind you school consisted of one big room and upstairs was a more or less normal living quarters that we shared with the bachelor school teacher and we had a kitchen, I don't remember if there was, there was a bathroom but not like with a bathtub or anything like that just a john, you know minimum comfort but, but ok and one bedroom that at least four of us slept in and in yeah that's where we lived and life went on. My sister went to, in to the nearby city to the high school and I was in the elementary school underneath were we lived and started studying violin with my Mom, well actually I started back home in Budapest already, so but it was all very sporadic.

12:46 **C:** To clarify how old were you during this transition between Hungary and Germany?

B: Well I was probably, well I know exactly actually I was six and the reason I remember is that during this horrific train ride we stopped somewhere, the train stopped we didn't know where it was like in a very small rural place and there was like a, it almost looked like in today's language I would describe it as maybe a refugee aid station or something like that and they were handing out milk to kids under six years old and my Mother says "go, go, go and get some milk" and I said "no I can't I'm six I'm already old I can't, I can't lie" she said "just be quiet, just go there, tell them you're not quite six" so finally with great difficulty it really bothered me, my first lie and my Mother said I should do it so I did, and so that's, I remember I was six years old.

C: Well, so you mentioned that your Mother played violin. Music has been a tremendous influence in your life from the beginning and so was it your Mother who interested you in the violin, who got you started?

B: You know I don't really know why she did it but I think, I think she told me and actually I remember when I was maybe like two or three years old we had shoe tree's you know, you know what she trees are.

C: I do not

B: Shoe trees are little sticks that you bend and put into shoes after you take them off so to preserve their shape and this shoe tree on one end had some kind of metallic rapper so that it made noise and I used to take one shoe tree in my left hand and the other one in my right hand and I pretended it was the violin and maybe based on that notion my Mother thought that I was interested in the violin which it turned out that I did, I did like it, yes. I grew up with the classic violin repertoire, hearing Bach sonatas, and Corelli *La Folia* I remember was one of my favorite pieces.

C: And your Mother was classically trained but did she perform?

B: My Mother was a graduate of Hubay I don't know if you're familiar with that name but he was a famous director of the national conservatory in Budapest and he was also a composer and there is one piece that we still have that *Zephyr* you know the "wind" *Zephyr* it's spelled *Z.e.p.h.y.r* and it's a very cute violin piece, every once-in-a-while it's still performed. So anyway my Mother had a very distinguished teacher and yes she did play she played chamber music and I remember her playing a sonata recital in Germany and she played *Spring Sonata* and a Mozart sonata and a Hindemith Sonata in E-flat, comes back all of a sudden.

C: And the *Spring Sonata* is by Beethoven.

B: Right, right.

16:47 **C:** Continuing on, when you first came to America, did you come, you did not come through Germany I understand, you were living elsewhere?

B: no we, well from, we did live in Germany, we lived in Southern Germany and in the mean time we lost our, my Father and we needed to move on. It was very hard for my Mother to gain employment in Germany and she needed to, at that point she realized that she had to bring us up alone and she did have a part time position played as a substitute violinist in the Bavarian Radio Orchestra in Munich for some time and, but my Aunt had already arrived to South America at that time and so we're talking now about maybe '51 or '52 and she urged my Mother to immigrate to South America to Colombia and she thought that it would be a great place for us. So after some to do with thee, how to get there and we managed to get across, I was in the sick bay for the whole trip from Italy to South America because my sister contracted trench mouth and it's an infectious ailment and had, had they notice it before boarding the boat they wouldn't have let us on but she put up a good show and she acted like she was fine and she recovered very soon but I caught it and the doctor on board of the big Italian transport ship was called *Uso di Mare* was really angry at my Mother that she brought a sick child on board. He said that "what am I going to do with her if she dies?" my Mother was horrified of course about the possibility of something like that happening but I was sick but actually I was better off in the sick bay than being with fifty other women in the bowel of the boat because this was not a luxury ship but a refugee transport so but we made it to South America and we arrived there in December. And, I remember Christmas service the first December we were there we were there in fluffy summer dresses and all that. When we were up, up in the choir loft they were, instead of the beautiful religious music that they played in churches in Germany we were hearing Strauss Waltzes played with maracas, thee, you know the typical Latin percussion instrument and yeah, it was a culture shock, a difficult one.

C: And from Colombia you came to America, what brought you to America?

B: Well, I was seventeen years old by that time and a member of the Colombian the Orquesta Sinfonica Nacional, means the Columbian State Orchestra, I got into it somehow by hook or by crook when I was fifteen years old and I still wanted to study because I realized that I wasn't good enough and thee opportunity came somebody ah very nice Jewish family had a relative in Hartford Connecticut who had, who had a child and this child was a child prodigy, she was a violinist and supposedly she had an outstanding teacher they were from Rumania and they were they communicated to us then that they would be happy to welcome me for time, for a time if I would want and they sent me all the necessary papers from the music school where I should register and so it was set in motion and September of 1955 I came to Connecticut and this was the school and I was very lucky.

C: And the school was the Hart Conservatory?

B: Hart School of Music of the University of Hartford later incorporated in the University.

22:18 **C:** When you first arrived in America what went through your mind? What were your first impressions?

B: It was overwhelming, it was overwhelm' I mean you know America is every immigrants dream, this is where I can make a beginning this is where I'm not going to be discriminated against because I'm a foreigner or I'm this or that and even though I was only seventeen years old I was acutely aware of that and I was just very, very grateful but I remember the car trip from the airport to Connecticut I was astounded by the highways by the roads.

C: One second [*Experiencing technical difficulties*]

B: So where were we? Coming to America, yeah, land of everyone's dreams, and so we drove to Connecticut and it was difficult because as when I arrived to Colombia there I also had trouble with the language I didn't speak very fluent Spanish hardly any, and then...

C: OK, you were describing your first impressions of America.

B: right, it's, it's an overwhelming experience when, when you arrive into the land that you've been trying to get in, it was not easy, the only reason why I finally got a temporary student visa was because my Mother in the meantime became a Colombian citizen and that facilitated my paper work also because we were stateless until then and it was very difficult to get a visa into the States no matter whether you were a student but anyway I was finally there and you know I made a great effort to do as well as I could because I know that it was a great sacrifice for my Mother just to put up the money that it cost for the trip alone and she gave me a little bit of money but I was lucky there after that I earned all of my, my whatever tuiti..., little tuition I had to pay, most I of it...mostly I got a scholarship and I was lucky to right away get into the Hartford Symphony and I, there I was able to do all other little community orchestra jobs and so I supported myself.

C: And at the Hart Conservatory you studied violin performance?

B: I did, violin performance, every once and a while by the end of the week I was discouraged and exhausted and I said "no, I'm going to study something else like music history" that's another area or subject that I really liked and to this day I, I love music history but then when I became less discouraged about the violin I continued with the violin.

C: And who did you study with?

B: I, my teacher was Rafael Bronstein, he was of the Russian school and I adored the man I absolutely adored him and his daughter also taught, she was, quite a well-known violinist in those days, Ariana Bronne, she was also a great teacher we became close friends I was honored that she considered me not only a student but a friend and we have kept in touch even after I left the school. I used to go back to New York at least once a year to visit Mr. Bronstein but then finally he passed away and ah yeah, but we, we talk about him quite a bit, Greg met him once and he was, we took him and he played for him.

C: And Greg is your oldest son and my fiancée.

B: yeah

27:44 **C:** And when did you first hear about the Detroit Symphony Orchestra? I understand that it was during your time in Connecticut.

B: Well Mr. Bronstein my teacher told me one fine day this, that “you know when you want to go somewhere let me know because they are always, their always sending me letters that we have openings” and, and so one day he told me, said “their begging me for violinist” and I’m sure they were not begging him for violinist but that meant that there is the opportunity to go and audition so, and this is after many years in Hartford and I had in the meantime earned my Bachelor degree and the Master of Music degree in performance so it was time for me to move on and yeah. So, we had a symphony concert in the evening one day and a friend of ours, there were two of us and I don’t even remember the other person but we borrowed the car of a boyfriend, the car was, it was running but just barely, and there was a big hole in the floor, and so it was freezing cold, it was early spring and we arrived in New York at three in the morning. I was really not feeling well and so I had a few hours’ sleep and went for my audition in the Wellington Hotel. In those day’s there were no blind Auditions there were no committees, there were two people, one was the music director and the other one was the personal manager. OK, that is if you are lucky because sometimes it was only the music director, so anyway it was Sixten Ehrling and Zinovi Bistrizky and so I played there and I didn’t play too well but I played anyway, and I remember the pieces I played, I played the Bach Preludium and Mendelssohn Concerto and then the Orchestral excerpts and I only played one or two orchestral excerpts and Ehrling stopped me and he says “if we offer you the job will you take it?” and I looked at him amazed and firstly I said “why would I be auditioning if I’m not going to take it” I, I really couldn’t understand why he would, and later I found out, because typically people audition and see if they can make it and then they don’t take, take the job which is sort of ridiculous to me but anyway I said “yeah sure I’ll take it” and then later that afternoon I also went and played for Vladimir Golschmann, now that’s a name you probably that you don’t remember, he was music director at that time of the Denver Symphony, this is before the Denver Symphony folded. Ok and I played for him and he wanted me to sign a contract right away and I said “I can’t, I really can’t do it, I have to think about it” and I said that “I want to come to Detroit because I want to take lessons with Mischa Mischakoff” he say’s and he used to be a violinist, he say’s “no I’ll teach you” and I thought I didn’t really want that but...Ok so a few days later I heard from Bistrizky that indeed I had gotten the job and I was very happy.

31:48 **C:** Your first year in the Symphony.

B: hmmhmm

C: What was that like?

B: Well...I was nervous, I was nervous for quite a while like before every rehearsal I would, I’d get butterfly’s and I would arrive really early, early because I was nervous and I tried my best. I practiced the parts really well and you know I was one of five women and that makes it sort of difficult in other respects as well and yeah it was fantastic I couldn’t believe the sounds around me, I had never been in a major orchestra I didn’t know what it sounded like, everything perfect

the intonation, where I came from it was a fairly good orchestra and the school orchestra was so-so but still ok and then when you're in a major orchestra like that and everyone is playing there is no dead weight there and so it was yeah, I said "this is what I want to do".

C: And at the time, Mishakoff was the concertmaster?

B: Mishakoff was the concertmaster.

C: The assistant concertmaster was Gordon Staples correct?

B: The associate concertmaster was Gordon and I remember the first time when I met him he was, well everyone was very nice I must say but Gordon in particular was very charming, debonair, very outgoing. He was, he could make people feel very easy he had that knack of knowing how to social graces that he just said the right thing to somebody who was he sensed probably that I was somewhat timid and yeah he made me feel at ease and offered to, to if he can help in anyway and this was the first rehearsal and I asked him that our bowings weren't correct that if I could have some help if I could go and get the right bowings and he says "yeah I'll talk to Eddie Kesner right away" Eddie Kesner was the principal Second at the time and he was the leader of the second violin section, and I said "excuse me but I'm in the first violin section" I said that to Gordon and, and he looked at me as says "oh I didn't know that" so I took from that right away that since I was young and I was a woman he just presumed that I would be playing second violin whereas I had gotten in the first violin section which meant a little, it meant a lot to me and so it showed me his attitude towards women in orchestras but you know this goes back to 1964 so it's understandable.

C: And 1964 was your first season?

B: Right

C: '64-'65 season

B: Correct

35:15 **C:** yes, wonderful. Well I understand that the Symphony at the time played at Ford Auditorium, sadly no longer with us. What was the hall like? I've heard little snippets here and there.

B: Well when I came I had heard prior to coming that this was a new hall, it was built in the '50's middle of the 1950's and it was after, it was by, with the patronage of the Ford family that it was built and it was a stunning new hall and it was stunning when you looked at it from the outside, it was on the riverfront, what else could be more beautiful with a big circular driveway a big lobby in the front just like the dream but unfortunately the hall itself was acoustically inferior and it was not really just a concert hall it was a multi-purpose auditorium so it was great for conventions and for graduations and weddings but it was not acoustically satisfying and that made it very difficult.

C: And in comparison you witnessed the grand reopening of Orchestra Hall, what do you recall from the first time you saw the hall? Whether it was during construction or when you, the orchestra first played, what, what went through your mind?

B: Well it was very real what went through my mind, you're probably going to laugh but when we played our first concert, it was a noon concert on the stage of Orchestra Hall before it was renovated and there were holes in the ceilings and other places and there were pigeons flying around and it was quite extraordinary, it was, you probably know the history that it was saved by the efforts of a group of dedicated and forward looking individuals who realized the value of a jewel and because of its history it was built in a very short period of time when their famous music director Gabilowitsch was music director. So we had the experience with the pigeons but when we played there, I think if I remember correctly we were playing part of the Haffner Symphony it was you know amazing even in its dilapidated state that it was in and it was really sad to see that it was neglected and what that does to a structure, I mean you could see you could somehow envision that it had real potential and the acoustics were phenomenal. So, lucky for us they renovated it with these visionary individuals like Paul Ganson and a few others from the orchestra Mario de Fiore and this impossible dream became reality and that was fantastic.

39:14 **C:** So during your 50-year tenure with the orchestra, do you have a singular favorite director out of the principal directors of the orchestra?

B: Look nobody is perfect and there is no such a thing otherwise they wouldn't be musicians and but some had all the you know great qualities as musicians they had the skill and they also happened to be nice people and my position being by then the wife of the concertmaster because Gordon who was at the beginning of our interview associate concertmaster he then became concertmaster in 1968, '68 yes '68 and yeah and so I had sometimes you know fortunately or unfortunately the access to meeting music directors and socializing with them a little bit be it for dinner or a chat or inviting them to our home that sort of thing and there was one in particular who we befriended just as an individual apart from his musical expertise this was Jerzy Semkow, yeah and he was, he came to Detroit to conduct for over 30 years and the Detroit audiences really, loved him.

C: And was Semkow a principal director or was he the assistant?

B: Unfortunately he never had an official title but then the other conductor who stands out in my memory was my main mentor so to speak someone with whom there was never a moment of dullness and there was always something that I could learn from him and so could everyone else and that was Antal Dorati, yeah. He was, he was really an extraordinary musician, cultured individual and, yeah there's, there wasn't one rehearsal ever that I didn't go home and could think "yes, I didn't know this, I learned this and I learned that but he was also very difficult person, difficult person who even according to himself in his book, he wrote and published a very lovely book to read which I would recommend to you *Notes of Seven Decades* and he even states in that book that the only thing that he was never able to conquer was his temper, and the orchestra musicians suffered the brunt of that.

42:45 **C:** Well, as well as your time with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra you also worked with Motown Records.

B: Absolutely

C: Yes, and what do you recall from your time working with Motown?

B: Well It was a venture into something that, that was totally new to me in particular because I came from a European background even though I lived in the United States since I was seventeen years old my, you know those formative years being absorbed by German culture were really left a, sort of formed what my values my values system in music and culture so it was a little bit difficult for me to accept that genre of popular music but it was almost contagious, the enthusiasm and thee, it was really Detroit, it was the culture of Detroit of its people and, yeah, the stars of those days became icons of popular culture and not only here in America for instance just a few years ago maybe since I've been retired I did an interview with somebody from Great, Great Britain, they had a survey all through the British Isles about which is their favorite Motown tune. I mean to this day they love Motown music so that's really amazing, yeah what was it like, so we were the, the strings that sort of added interest in the orchestration not just to have rhythm section but to have something a little bit more interesting, so it was, we were in a way sort of the, if you want to say maybe the bridge between the longed haired symphony musicians and the more hip part of society and their music, so yeah we had sessions mostly after symphony concerts, really late at night and we were, they had a track and it was, we had beeps in the phones so we would cover one ear to hear the beep and leave the other ear open from the head phones so we could hear ourselves play because as you know you being a violinist it's pretty hard to play without hearing yourself so we had the, the track, the beep and most of the time when we first started recording it we would just hear the beep and yeah Gordon was leading us sort of and we would go through the charts and they were, they were difficult for the most part, very difficult, very well written too but they were, they were young arrangers at that time and we all learned as we went along, they learned how to, that for a string player it's better to write a tune in D major rather than in D-Flat because for us to play with exillience of flats you know when you don't have one open string left on the instrument and it's all fingered it's very unpleasant and very difficult.

C: Yes, and one of the arrangers was David Van de Pitt, I understood, understand became a very close family friend, what was your collaboration with David like?

B: David was, was one of the very talented, along with a couple of others who I remember by name. David was very, very talented arranger and orchestrator, he had a real knack for writing very beautiful lush string parts very nice, he had a feeling for it and it's surprising because he actually was a trombone player rather than a string player and, but he had that talent, he felt it. He used to play in bands yeah I think if I'm not wrong he played in the Jimmy Dorsey Band as a young man he traveled with them and he was also a composer who wrote other serious music, he, we played a string quartet by him one, one time and he also wrote a lovely violin piece that Greg played at his memorial service, beautiful little piece, yeah, so he was a composer as well but, and then later he, after Motown years we had some very fruitful collaboration where he hired a group of strings, he had some other work from other people and so we had a long history together.

C: I understand that Gordon as the Concertmaster of the Detroit Symphony and working with Motown he released his own album, called the *String Thing*?

B: Yeah

C: Do you, do you recall anything from that project?

B: Yes I recall, I see, I, I envision the picture that is, it's sort of a crazy picture where it's in the back of a violin and everybody is acting goofy and, and stuff like that but if you will look at the picture carefully, I'm missing from that picture and the reason being is that I was pregnant and again they did not want to have a pregnant woman sitting there it was, so that was also the summer where I had, this was in 1970 about three four months prior to the birth of my first son and the Detroit Symphony released me from all duties they didn't want me on stage of Meadow Brook in the summer even though in those day's women did not emphasize their, their child to be born but wore tents around them but, no I did not think that it was you know part of that bohemian atmosphere of that record jacket for me to be sitting there so, but I did play some of the tunes actually but I'm not on the record jacket.

50:11 **C:** To fast forward a little bit through, through the decades, um, the DSO had some labor disputes between the unions and the management, the most prominent of those being the 2011 strike. Would you share a few memories from that time please?

B: yeah Well that was a very bitter dispute, very difficult period and first it wasn't exactly surprising and it wasn't anything new for me because we had experience through our whole existence since day one that I came to Detroit every three years our stomachs where upset and the anxiety grew to a feverish pitch, are we going to have a job next year? Is the Symphony going to fold? There was fear mongering and yet also realistic concern because after all music is a luxury, I think it's a necessity but some people consider it as a luxury it's not like you know firefighters and building cars that's a necessity of life but I think culture should be like in Europe, it's sponsored by the state but in America it is not and so that, that was difficult but never had the outlook been so bleak and it was the mindset of management that, that was really concerning, concerning that this, this time they really mean it and it's going to be very difficult, they wanted, this was not just with us it was a whole movement across the spectrum of American symphony orchestras and it was very difficult, very divisive. Up until that negotiation this was a very unified orchestra and that unity gave us strength and, and at that point before, well we, when we went on strike slowly that strength was eroding, there were fissures, do I pronounce that correctly, fissures cracks in the strength so there were different factions in the orchestra and you know when I look back I can understand it there were young people who came from the conservatory they were not concerned with what came before them so in a way I don't hold it against them and yet I regret that so many of my colleagues who I respect deeply couldn't stand to be part of the organization anymore they either retired or left the organization went somewhere else so it was very sad because part of the DSO, the tradition of all the music directors and all that went, went away and some of our you know very finest musicians left and some retired prematurely so that was sad but you know I think music is going to win in the long run and from the ashes we arose, right and we have a beautiful new refurbished hall and with, now with facilities and the first few years I forgot to mention after we moved into the hall there were by that time we had maybe fifteen women already in the orchestra and we had one tiny little dressing room and then had to go up upstairs to the stage. Anyways now we have the

beautiful new hall with a huge atrium lobby all the amenities that you could want and we the musicians are doing fairly well, not as well as they would like but you know they are playing music to make a living.

54:56 **C:** In the 2014-2015 season you made the decision to retire after 50 years, do you have a favorite memory from that season?

B: Well, it was a difficult decision but I mean I had been thinking about it and I knew that there has to be an end there were too many unemployed young musicians who, who need to be there, who need, every spot counts and, but it was difficult and I think the highlight for me was of course was the last concert because it was such a beautiful stirring piece of music that I absolutely loved Mahler 3rd symphony and on top of it I got to sit with my favorite stand partner, my son so. But earlier I had, I wanted to mention during, the question you asked me about highlights of my career with other music directors, that, one moment that stands out in my mind. When we went on the '79 European tour with Dorati, we played in Berlin at that time it was still a divided city, West and East, although the cracks in the wall were showing, there and that, those cracks were good because the wall came tumbling down but so there we were a symphony orchestra from Detroit basically an industrial town still known as the car capital and so this is an orchestra from the industry of the Mid-West of America and we played in Berlin and we played two pieces, one piece Beethoven's 7th Symphony which is a staple of the Germanic core repertoire and the other one was the Bartok Concerto for Orchestra so there was an American orchestra and a Hungarian conductor playing in Berlin and it was an absolutely stunning reception. We were applauded for 45 minutes, the orchestra played encores, two or three encores, we finally left the stage and people were still applauding so Dorati came and brought individual musicians out and taking a bow I mean you want to acknowledge the, the applause of the audience and thank them but you know we had to leave also, it was an absolutely unforgettable experience because of the quality of the music making and also the reception, the acceptance by the German public.

C: Bea this was an amazing treat for me, thank you so much.

B: Your welcome, hope that the technical parts work out.

C: Me too, me too thank you.

Bibliography and Footnote Citation Forms

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