

have succeeded Taffanel and Gaubert, continuing a tradition dating back to 1870.

JPS: And it's because of you that there is a wind ensemble class at the Paris Conservatory?

FO: It's true that it needed to be created. I made bassoonists and other wind players play quintets, trios, and solos before having them play in larger ensembles. The wind ensemble class became the logical consequence of this research.

JPS: You have numerous students, for the most part with brilliant careers, I think?

FO: I won't mention any names for fear of forgetting someone, but if you look at the list of international prizes, conservatory professors, principals in Paris or regional orchestras, you'll see that the majority of wind players have passed through my class.

JPS: A few words about reeds?

FO: I never had any bad blood with reeds. I say often, "Have a lot of respect for them, but treat them as often as possible with contempt."

JPS: This quality of contempt is reserved only for the greats, *mon cher Maître*. But we've taken up a lot of your time. What is your advice to young people?

FO: Well, I would say to them that the bassoon is one thing but that the individual is another. If a student has talent, let him develop and use it. But along with that he should acquire a deep general knowledge and a solid musical culture: I am thinking of music history, analysis and harmony, without which one cannot hope of being a complete musician.

JPS: Thank you, *Maître*, and it is our turn to invite you. When you celebrate your diamond anniversary in the music world, we'll be there to celebrate the day with a concert in your honor.

At the August, 1985, Conference of the IDRS at Boulder, Colorado, two well-known American double reed artists were elected to Honorary Memberships number thirteen and fourteen. They were oboist **Robert Bloom** (1908-1994), and bassoonist (and retiring IDRS President) **Sol Schoenbach** (b. 1915).

Robert Bloom was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, on May 3, 1908. He studied at the Curtis Institute of Music as an oboe student of Marcel Tabuteau. Early in his career he held the positions of assistant first oboe and solo English horn with the Philadelphia Orchestra and principal oboe with the Rochester Philharmonic. He was also solo oboist of the NBC Symphony under Toscanini for six years and oboist with the

Bach Aria Group for 47 years. He taught at the Philadelphia College of Performing arts, the New College Music Festival and the Juilliard School. He is perhaps best remembered as double reed players for his many years of teaching at the Yale University School of Music, from which he finally retired.

On the occasion of the 80th birthday of **Robert Bloom**, "Tribute to Robert Bloom", compiled by his wife, oboist Sara Lambert Bloom appeared in the Winter, 1988 (Vol. 11, No. 3, pp. 11-21) issue of *The Double Reed*. At the end of this article a series of personal tributes to him was presented as "Excerpts from well wishers." These are reprinted below:

Excerpts from well-wishers ...

Julius Baker: It has been fifty four years since I came to the Curtis Institute and first heard you play English horn in the Philadelphia Orchestra. Such a long association is quite a record. I expect to get congratulations from you on my eightieth birthday.

Evelyn Barbirolli: We met many years ago after a Bach Aria concert (in Los Angeles I think) when you played *very* beautifully This card is apposite only because Bach so often had sheep involved in his cantatas. Many warm wishes and remembrances. I do wish I could be there to give them to you in person over a drink!

Samuel Baron: Now about Bob's playing. This is simply something unforgettable. In the arias of Bach he demonstrated his mastery of line and phrasing and he achieved a singing quality that had infinite shadings and gradations of nuance. It was singing that was far superior to most vocal efforts, even those of celebrated singers. What is his secret? All that I could observe was that he could make two seemingly contradictory things happen at once: an absolute security of pulse simultaneous with a free play of rubato and rhythmic inflection. And I have said nothing about his sound, which is another uniquely personal gift, a sound of great fullness and penetrating power that has none of the insistent monotony of most oboe playing. It is a great voice which is heard only infrequently. Bob was blessed with it, and he knew how to use it.

Leonard Bernstein: Sorry I can't be with you; I'll be abroad in May, but thinking of RB.

Peter Bowman: Thank you for being a wonderful influence on myself and oboists everywhere!

Roger Cole: Although I can't be physically present at this celebration to honour your distinguished career, my heart is with you today. Your gift to me of wonderful teaching and loving guidance will always be remembered.

Robert DeGourdon: I am really sad to be unable to be with you today ... But my heart will be with you and your family all the day long. I remember with great emotion our first meetings in Paris: rue du Vert-Bois- When was it? 20? 25 years ago? For me it is yesterday. I'll never forget the good time we had together. Robert, I wish you a *Happy Birthday!* I thank you for your faithfulness. I thank you to have devoted your life to music and to the oboe. Today you can be proud of your career — See all around you: the audience is mostly composed with the students you have been teaching — What a recompense — and what a talent! Excuse me but it is difficult to translate my feelings in English. Again “JOYEUX ANNIVERSAIRE” Avec toute ma profonde amitie.

Dorothy DeLay: I'm so sorry not to be able to attend this wonderful concert. My congratulations to you and thanks for the wonderful contribution you have made to all of us who love music.

William Douglas: My deepest congratulations to you on your 80th birthday. Thank you so much for your inspiration, knowledge, and beauty.

Elaine Douvas: I just wanted to say thank you for arranging all of the tickets for Robert's 80th birthday concert. It was a wonderful presentation and a great inspiration to see what an influence Robert has had on such a range of musicians! For me the highlight of the day was hearing the beautiful Elogy and the beautiful playing of it. I am so glad my students got to come; they are so young that most had never heard Robert play. Now they are clamoring to find out what records they can look for to hear more. I too would love to know this! Do you have a Robert Bloom discography? I'm awfully glad I was there and many congratulations on your birthday.

Lilian Kallir and Claude Frank: For the past 36 of your 58 years we have admired and loved you and your playing, and cherished the times when we were privileged to make music with you.

Robert Freeman: Though I cannot be in the audience at Alice Tully Hall on May 15, I write to let you know that all of my colleagues and I will be very much with you in spirit. Though your stay at Eastman was all too brief, the Eastman School has followed with pride your wonderful achievements in behalf of oboe playing and music all over America during the past half century. Your performances, the accomplishments of your students, and the integrity and enthusiasm with which you represent all of music make us all proud. This brief note is meant simply to convey personally to you, the very, very high esteem in which you are held by us here in Rochester, where your legacy is represented with such dedication by Richard Killmer. Congratulations again, and continuing best wishes.

Felix Galimir: You are not only a great musician but also a great colleague and friend.

Ralph Gomberg: Congratulations on a long and illustrious career. Such dedication has been an inspiration to many a young musician.

Gary Graffman: With warmest best wishes for an absolutely stellar May 15!

Earnest Harrison: It hardly seems possible that it was 10 years ago plus that you were on the LSU campus for a week with our students and visitors. The time was memorable for all of us and I am grateful to have been a small part in getting you to spend time here. I do feel close to you and admire you very much.

Sidney Harth: From our first encounters so many years ago through our Pittsburgh association to our short Yale camaraderie, Robert Bloom has been a wonderful, warm, inspiring human from whom much was learned and treasured. He is unique and beloved in our musical community.

David Howard: I will always be grateful to you for teaching me that there is a moral imperative to not only think about the music but also to sing it out. With you though the goal at hand was always elusive, and for that reason, tantalizing, frustrating, challenging, exciting, forbidding, and ultimately fulfilling. I think of you often and cherish the memories or working with you. All the best.

Richard Killmer: You have helped countless oboists, young and old, to find the colors and voice of their own playing and you have, by your incredible artistry, given us the finest model possible. Unfortunately we cannot play like you but all who have heard you have been moved by the poignancy of your playing and have been enriched as one is enriched by a beautiful sunset or a great painting. Whether singer, pianist, clarinetist or cellist, all who have come in contact with you have left nourished by your music and guidance. May you continue to guide and nourish for many years to come.

Marc Lifschey: How fortunate I was to have heard your warm, rich, vibrant sound in my ears from 1938 (when I began to play the oboe) thru many more of the important “oboistically” formative years — PLUS your constantly singing, soaring line and poetic imagination. In N.Y.C. colloquial — I should only be around to congratulate you on your 100th Birthday! Buona Fortuna.

John Mack: Best wishes and hearty congratulations on the occasion of your 80th birthday. It's nice to know that you will be serenaded by so many of your pupils and others among your many admirers, and I greatly regret not being able to be present to salute you personally, and hear the tributes as well. Again, my heartfelt wishes for this one, and many more.

Paul McCandless: Thanks for opening my ears,

instilling your high musical standards and introducing me to Paul Winter!

Hans Moennig: Best wishes to you on your birthday.

Philip F. Nelson: How wonderful it was for both Georgia and me to once again be in your presence, and to help, along with your many, many friends, celebrate the fact that you are now 80 years *young*. We both send love from our house to yours.

Murray Panitz: Happy Birthday and many more. I shall always remember the times we worked together. It was always a privilege and a great musical experience.

Alice Peerce: I recall with great pleasure the years that you and Jan and the other soloists spent performing Bach. With every good wish to you and yours for many years of good health, happiness and continued fulfillment.

Joseph Robison: Thank you for teaching the oboe how to sing, and for refining its voice into the most beautiful *bel canto* we shall hear on the instrument. May the memory of those sweet vibrations sustain you in the service of music and young musicians for at least another twenty years!

Ronald Roseman: On this happy occasion of your eightieth birthday, I wanted to send you warmest best wishes and to tell you once more how much your wonderful playing has meant in my musical life. I first heard you play when I was about 17; it completely blew me away. I had never heard - or even conceived of - anything as beautiful as your sound. I became a complete Bloom freak, buying every one of your records that I could find and listening to them for hours on end, often with my fellow students. (We referred to you as "The Master.") Through your concerts and recordings, you were my only teacher for about a year-and-a-half. You were a great teacher! Your expressive playing of Bach, with your fantastic sound and line, really set me on the path that I wanted to follow as an oboist. I realize now even more that you gave birth to a concept of oboe playing and sound that had never existed before, and that has enriched the oboe world ever since. So I wanted to thank you for the gift that you gave to music, other oboists, and to me.

Harry Sargous: Our love to you on this milestone occasion. You have been and continue to be a paragon of musicality, musicianship and mentoring for so many of us. We pay you the tribute today together that we offer you every day as we pursue your example in music.

Sol Schoenbach: "Fourscore and 12 days ago" Robert Bloom appeared, so conceived and so dedicated that many of us have enjoyed a better musical life because of him. I first met Bob Bloom over a bottle of Scotch when his teacher, Marcel

Tabuteau, told me how he poured all his "secrets" into Bob. He had learned that a French oboist, Morel, had auditioned for Stokowski in Paris and was prepared to take the position in Philadelphia for a fraction of Tabuteau's salary. Alerted to the danger (and with some help from the Immigration authorities) Tabuteau saved his post, but he vowed to develop American talents to meet the threat of French imports. Along came talented Bob Bloom and the rest is history. Unfortunately for me Bob Bloom heard I was coming to the Philadelphia Orchestra and left. But I put on my old 78 of *Es ist Folbrackt* and shall never erase the sound of that dialogue between Bloom and Guetter. It is the ultimate in tone, phrase and feeling, and that is what we express to Bob today and everyday. May all your birthdays be celebrated.

Leonard Sharrow: I deeply regret that I cannot participate in the ceremonies honoring Robert Bloom on May 15th. When the NBC Symphony was formed, in 1937, Bob Bloom was first oboe and I played second bassoon. For four years in that orchestra, before I was drafted into the U.S. Army, I heard oboe playing, the like of which I had never heard before. It was the most beautiful sound and consummate musicianship I had ever been exposed to. Bob's playing had an enormous influence on me. Thank you, Bob, for helping me to achieve whatever I have achieved on the bassoon. I owe you a tremendous debt of gratitude.

Robert Sprenkle: I'm still very grateful for the enormous support you have given me in my career. Your too brief tenure in Rochester gave me the personal, musical, and practical boost I needed to be able to compete in our profession. If I have any regrets they would be because our performing *together* was limited to the '36-'37 season. Barbara and I both have fond memories of our association with you and continue to take pride in your continuing success.

Ray Still: I'm sorry that we have a regular subscription concert the very day of the birthday celebration for Mr. Bloom. When I first heard Bloom on the broadcasts from the Toscanini NBC series it was a great revelation as to how the oboe could sound — soaring above the orchestra with a magnificent tone. After being away from music for 5 years during World War II, I decided to go to N.Y. with my wife, Mary, and two children and go to Juilliard under the G.I. bill — always dreaming of studying with Bloom but afraid to approach him till I could play better. I did — miraculously — become the first oboist of the Juilliard Orchestra with John Mack as my assistant, Jerry Roth as second oboe and Dave Abosch as E. H. I also played in the National Orchestral Association under Barzin and

while playing a concert at Carnegie my old Cabart, open hole, with octave, oboe was stolen. John Mack took over for me and later when my friend Sam Baron heard about my plight he asked his friend Robert Bloom if he would select an instrument for me. (The National Orchestral Association had found an "angel".) I was almost overcome with awe and gratitude when Mr. Bloom tried several Lorée oboes for me and selected a good used Lorée — and offered to give me lessons. He would never take a penny for any of those lessons. I feel that he was by far my most influential teacher and stimulated me with his great sound and singing quality to try to communicate on the instrument as he always did. When I auditioned for Steinberg at Bloom's recommendation for a job as first oboe in Buffalo I was accepted by Steinberg. I pleaded with Mr. Bloom that I was not ready — he said the only way you'll get ready is to take the job and learn as you play. I believe he also recommended me to Fritz Reiner for the Chicago Symphony (it was well known that Reiner really wanted Bloom). Without those lessons graciously given to me by Mr. Bloom, I doubt if I could have succeeded these last 35 years as first oboe in Chicago. I might never have had the chance. He is a great artist and a great man.

Daniel Stolper: I'll always remember the Bach Aria Group's appearance with the San Antonio Symphony in the early 60's. I was completely overwhelmed by your playing and felt sure it was the most beautiful oboe tone I'd ever heard; that combined with such wonderful artistry really made a great impression on a then "wet behind the ears" youngster. I've appreciated your support, advice, and coaching in the years since, and I especially treasure the memory of your visit to Michigan with Sally - just before Julia was born.

A student: I'm just writing to wish you a hearty congratulations on your wonderful accomplishment: The Robert Bloom Tribute. I was so impressed and inspired by the performances. The amazing thing that I realized throughout the concert was the real love that everyone shared for Mr. Bloom. It was simply incredible to realize how much he had influenced those who were present. Though this influence was omnipresent, his students did not end up like "clones" — a further tribute to his teaching. We who were not able to hear Mr. Bloom play in a live situation are at a grave disadvantage, but the Tribute suddenly made the picture clear to me.

Joel Timm: My thoughts and best wishes are with you. Congratulations.

Karen Tuttle: I will drink a toast in your honor and I hope you will feel all the loving vibes we send to you. My husband drew this eternal spinning card which of course is exactly right for you.

Allan Vogel: I am feeling the same thing that all of us, your students, friends, and colleagues, are feeling — wishing you happiness on this day and all future ones, and ourselves feeling joy for you and gratitude for what you have always given us. First there is the example and inspiration of your playing; reaching out with incredible communicative intensity, beauty and artistry. And those of us who were able to study with you appreciate and continue to draw upon what we were given, both in terms of a sophisticated, technical knowledge of the oboe and wonderful musical guidance. Finally, you also show us all the way in some of life's most important areas — your positive energy, love of life, penetrating intelligence, and gentle wisdom are some of the qualities which we love in you.

David Weiss: When I think of what a powerful influence you have been on me, and on so many other musicians as well, my thoughts drift to the real meanings of words like "patriarch," "living legend," "immortal." Indeed, you are leaving a legacy which will live on for generations to come. What a privilege to have been your student!

Carol Wincenc: You are someone more recent in my musical life journey — but how fortunate that we crossed that path! I have always known about you — so to have finally met you, observed your inspirational work, and to have received from you that inspiration has meant a great deal to me.

Keith Wilson: It was magnificent, wonderful, moving and most deserved tribute to you, Bob, and Sally, how you planned and coordinated and executed such a colossal production, boggles the mind. It was so great to see so many people we hadn't seen in years, to say nothing about hearing one great oboe player after another, all of whom it was obvious had had superlative teaching.

Barbara J. Winters: My most sincere congratulations to you for a wonderful career. I'm sorry I cannot stay to greet you personally (concert tonight) but much appreciation for the help you gave me many years ago (1960)!

Paul Wolfe: Every musician has some special musical memories of an occasion when hearing a particular work or a certain musician changes his life. Thus it was for me with Bob Bloom. When I first heard Bob play, in 1943, I was just starting in the profession as a member of Stokowski's New York City Symphony. Of all the members of that orchestra I was most inspired by Bob — by his exquisite tone and phrasing. For me he has always epitomized the ultimate in oboe playing and musicianship. It was Bob, also 27 years ago, who learned that the Florida West Coast Symphony was searching for a new conductor. His influential recommendation launched

me on my career with that orchestra. Then there was that steamy week in July when Bob consented to come to a small college in Sarasota to join four other artists for the beginnings of the New College Music Festival which — with his help and inspiration as performer, teacher and advisor — has been developed into an internationally renowned chamber music festival. For many years now he has been joined at the Festival by Sally, who has also become a dear personal and musical friend, of mine, my wife and the music festival. I treasure my memories and our continuing friendship, which spans almost half a century. Bob has been a musical mentor, guide, friend ... an inspiration to us all!

Richard Woodhams: Congratulations! I know you are not a corny man, so I'll try not to be corny. You are an inspiration to all of us who try to make the oboe sound like something distinctive, and your talent, energy and inspiration I always feel within me when I play. Also, you are a poet, a practical man, and a nice guy to boot. The fact that you could retire gracefully and continue a vital and productive life as a musician, husband and father is equally remarkable. I look forward to continuing our friendship for many years to come.

Eugenia Zukerman: Only a few weeks one summer when I was nineteen — but how memorable a teacher like you can make those precious days! I will never forget my summer at the Yale Summer Music School and the joy of being coached by you. Your enthusiasm, dedication and love of music inspired me enormously and I am truly grateful for the care and guidance you gave me. As you enter your ninth decade, I wish you everything wonderful, and send you my warmest thoughts. As my grandmother said — bis hundert und zwanzig!

Sol Schoenbach was born March 15, 1915, in New York City. He studied at the Juilliard School and received the Bachelor of Arts degree from New York University in 1939. He has been awarded honorary Doctorates of Music from the Curtis Institute of Music, Temple University, and the New School of Music. He was staff bassoonist for the CBS Orchestra from 1932 to 1937; he founded the Philadelphia Woodwind Quintet in 1950 and was a member of that ensemble until 1966. He became principal bassoon of the Philadelphia Orchestra in 1937 and held the position until 1957, apart from two years in the military service during World War II. He has served on the Pennsylvania Council on



Sol Schoenbach

the Arts, and was Executive Director of the Settlement Music School. He has taught at the Curtis Institute of Music, the Banff Festival of the Arts, the Berkshire Music Center, and the New England Conservatory of Music. He was also the President of the International Double Reed Society from 1981 to 1984.

IDRS member William Dietz conducted a wonderful interview with Sol which was originally printed in the Winter, 1987, (Vol. 10, No. 3, pp. 48-51) issue of *The Double Reed*. It is reprinted below.

A Conversation with Sol Schoenbach

William Dietz

In 1937, upon the untimely death of bassoonist Walter Guetter, Sol Schoenbach, at the age of 22, joined the legendary wind section of the Philadelphia Orchestra. The seasonal principal winds of that golden eras included William Kincaid, flute; Marcel Tabuteau, oboe; and Robert McGinnis, clarinet. In a recent interview with Dr. Schoenbach in his Philadelphia home, I asked him about his early years with the Philadelphia Orchestra. Dr. Schoenbach's reminiscences about this and events pertaining to the early years of his career lend insight to the origins of the "American system of bassoon playing."

WD: I understand that at the time you started studying seriously, the French bassoon, was in effect, as popular in the United States as the German bassoon. Would you talk about that period and how it came about that you began to play on the German system instrument.

SS: To understand the story completely I must give you a little background. At that time there were two orchestras in New York, the New York Philharmonic and the New York Symphony. Walter Damrosch, the conductor of the New York Symphony, dominated the entire New York City educational system of music. He had a theory that all string players should be Russian or Polish Jews, that all brass players should be German, and that all woodwind players should be French. His orchestras was made of of these different ethnic groups and he would hire European musicians each year from these various countries to staff openings in his orchestra. Two important wind players who were involved in this European importation were the flutist George Barrere, and Marcel Tabuteau, the famous oboist. Others included the French bassoonists Auguste Mesnard and Louis Letellier. This fine group of wind players became part of the faculty of the Institute of Musical Art, which was founded by Frank Damrosch, the older brother of Walter Damrosch. The Institute of Musical Arts later merged with the Juilliard