

America. In 1985, Mr. Dietz was invited to return to Costa Rica to present a series of master classes at the Programa Juvenil of Costa Rica. In addition to his duties as professor of bassoon and chamber music at the University of Arizona, Mr. Dietz performs with the Tucson Symphony Orchestra, and is principal bassoon of the Arizona Opera Orchestra, and the Flagstaff Festival of the Arts Orchestra. In 1986, Mr. Dietz presented a recital of contemporary works by American composers at the MTNA National Convention in Portland, Oregon, and appeared with the Arizona Wind Quintet at the MENC National Convention in Anaheim, California.

The reader is also referred to the articles: "Happy Birthday, Sol!" (*The Double Reed*, Vol. 13, No. 3, Winter, 1991, pp. 21-22), and "My Uncle Had a Radio: the Life Story of Sol Schoenbach as Told to the Students at Domaine Forget, June 21, 1995," transcribed from the video tape by Nadina Mackie Jackson (*The Double Reed*, Vol. 19, No. 1, Spring, 1996, pp. 13-20).

Honorary Members number fifteen and sixteen were elected to this position at the Conference in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, in August, 1986. They were the distinguished American oboist **Robert Sprenkle** (1914-1988), and the venerable German bassoonist/composer **Victor Bruns** (1903-1996). Then Chair of the Honorary Membership Committee, Ed Lacy, and William Waterhouse, who had nominated Victor Bruns, filed the following reports in the Fall, 1986 (Vol. 9, No. 2, pp. 17-19) issue of *The Double Reed*:

#### New Honorary Members of the IDRS

*Ed Lacy, Evansville, Indiana*

At the 1986 Annual Meeting in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, the IDRS conferred honorary membership upon oboist and teacher **Robert Sprenkle** and bassoonist and composer **Victor Bruns**.

Robert Sprenkle was born October 27, 1914. Upon graduation from high school, he received two college scholarship offers: from Carnegie-Mellon in engineering, and from the Eastman School of Music in oboe. Howard Hanson convinced him to enter Eastman, which he did in 1932. In 1936 he graduated with a Bachelor's degree and the Performer's Certificate. At Eastman, his teachers included Arthur Foreman and Robert Bloom, who was elected to honorary membership in IDRS in 1985.

Sprenkle joined the Eastman-Rochester Orchestra, now the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, in 1936 as 2nd oboist and English hornist.

The following year he became principal oboist, a position he held until 1985, for a total tenure in the orchestra of 49 years.

He also was professor of oboe at the Eastman School of Music from 1937-1982. Many of his former students now hold positions in major orchestras in the U.S. and abroad.

He co-authored with David Ledet *The Art of Oboe Playing*, one of the most widely-used books of its type.

Mr. Sprenkle's solo recordings have been issued by RCA, Columbia and Mercury records.

Bob has not quite retired, as he will be teaching at Ithaca College on a sabbatical replacement in 1986-87.

For biographical information on Victor Bruns, see the following article by William Waterhouse.

(William Waterhouse provided a nice article entitled "Victor Bruns", which appeared in the Fall, 1986 (Vol. 9, No. 2, pp. 18-19) issue of *The Double Reed*. It is reprinted below.)

#### Victor Bruns

*William Waterhouse*

On a recent visit to East Berlin I had the pleasure of meeting the composer and bassoonist Victor Bruns, at 81 one of the distinguished "elder statesmen" of our fraternity.



*Unter den Linden, Berlin (East), 30th September, 1985. The author with Victor Bruns and four colleagues from the Staatskapelle. L to R: Herbert Heilmann (principal), Holger Straube (asst. principal [prize-winner at Munich in 1984 and 1985]), William Waterhouse, Victor Bruns, Ottfried Bienert (contra) and Herr Erkens (bassoon, retired).*

While there have been a number of bassoonists who have composed a solo repertory for themselves (Ozi, Jacobi, Jancourt for example), Bruns' achievement in having combined a busy career of professional playing with the composition of a large number of major works of all kinds, as well as an impressive number of works for his own instrument, is surely

unique. As his name, although well known to players in Europe, is not to be found in reference books, the following details may be of interest.

He was born the son of German parents on 15th August 1904 in Ollila, a small town in southeast Finland. A pianist who switched late to bassoon, he trained from 1924 to 1927 at the Petrograd (later Leningrad) State Conservatory under A. Vasiliev for bassoon and V. Shcherbachov for composition. He then joined the orchestra there of the State Theatre for Opera and Ballet, keeping up his composition studies until 1931. A German citizen, he left Leningrad for Berlin in 1938, where he has since made his home. After playing in the orchestra of the Volksoper from 1940 to 1944, he joined the Staatskapelle in 1946, becoming *Kammervirtuos* in 1959. After 23 years service there as bassoonist and contrabassoonist, he retired in 1969, being made *Ehrenmitglied* of the orchestra in the following year. Meanwhile as composer he had finally completed his studies in 1949 after three years with Boris Blacher; his three ballet scores, which have been the most widely performed of his works, date from 1953, 1955 and 1957; in 1960 he was awarded the *Kunstpreis der DDR*. Since his retirement he has been able to devote himself entirely to composition. His large output includes the opera *Minna von Barnhelm*, 4 ballets, 4 symphonies, a total of 20 concertos for various instruments (including violin, cello, flute, clarinet and trumpet), as well as a quantity of chamber music, much of it with wind instruments. On the occasion of his recent eightieth birthday, he was the guest of honour at a banquet organized for him by his colleagues.

As a composer, his style shows predominantly the influence of Prokofiev and Stravinsky. As might be expected his writing for bassoon is idiomatic and imaginative, rewarding both to play and to listen to. Among other works for his instrument, he has composed no fewer than three concertos, of which the third has recently been issued on a record made by Herbert Heilmann, the solo bassoonist of the Staatskapelle (*NOVA — VEB Deutsche Schallplatten Berlin DDR — 8 85 185*).

His compositions for double reeds include the following works:

*Concerto for Oboe, Bassoon and Strings*, Op. 66, Breitkopf.

**Bassoon:**

*Concerto No. 1* (1933), 5 Leeds Music (NYC 1948).

*Concerto No. 2* (1946), 15 Hofmeister, H 1404.

*Concerto No. 3* (1966), 41 Breitkopf, EB 7516.

*Sonate*, bn + pf, 20 Pro Musica Leipzig, 95.

*Sonate No. 2*, bn + pf, 45 Breitkopf, EB 7519.

*5 Stücke*, bn + pf, 40 Breitkopf, EB 7502.

*2 Stücke*, cbn + pf, 57 unpublished.

*Fagottstudien für Fortgeschrittene*, 32 Hofmeister, 7194.

*2 Kleine Suiten*, 3 bn + cbn, 55 Breitkopf.

*Konzertante Musik*, bn, vn, va, vc, 58 Breitkopf, EB 3943.

**Oboe:**

*Concerto for oboe*, 28 Hofmeister, 7136.

*Concerto for English horn*, 61 Breitkopf, EB 7529.

*Concerto for flute + English horn*, 74 Breitkopf.

*Sonate*, ob + pf, 25 Hofmeister, H 1420.

**Chamber Music:**

*Trio*, ob, clar, bn, 49 Breitkopf, EB 7519.

*Woodwind quintet*, 16 Hofmeister, 1535.

*Sextet*, wind + pf, unpublished.

*Octet*, unpublished.

**Robert Sprenkle** died in 1988 and in the Spring, 1991 (Vol. 14, No. 1, pp 16-34) issue of *The Double Reed*, Oboe Editor Daniel Stolper published an article: "Remembering Robert Sprenkle" based on interviews with him. In the interview, Sprenkle recalls his career. That portion of the entire interview is reprinted below.

**Remembering Robert Sprenkle**

*Daniel Stolper - Lansing, Michigan*

*A Tribute to the life and career of Robert Sprenkle, honorary member of the IDRS and long-time professor of oboe at the Eastman School of Music, was held in the School's Kilbourn Hall on September 17, 1989. I had the chance to see Bob three different times in 1988—in January he came to Michigan to work with my students for several days. Then in May, we were together in New York where we both were members of the jury for the Lucarelli competition for oboists. I corresponded with Bob across the following summer and responded to his invitation to visit him at Lake Placid in early September. During that visit we talked a lot about his career as performer and teacher and did a lot of reminiscing about his early days. June Gifford kindly offered to transcribe these taped conversations. They were far from a formal interview. We started by talking about his early musical training in Pittsburgh, and then about his first year at the Eastman School where he studied with Arthur Foreman.*

*Bob never had a chance to edit these transcripts, and I was surprised in reading them to see how little editing these conversations needed. For his students and friends, reading his words will be a memento; for those who did not know him, these thoughts will give some idea of this extraordinary individual.*

**RS:** So Arthur (Foreman) was able to sit down at the piano and accompany you in a piece or he would play duets but I never discovered that he had any

real method or projection of ideas that he was trying to convey. It was just, he would, like I said, correct wrong notes and then assign something for the next week. And he was very capricious about lessons. I lived practically across the street at the YMCA. By the way, that's been torn down.

**DS:** So I understand.

**RS:** And sometimes I would come in from whatever I did at night, which wasn't much, and there'd be a note in my box that said your lesson is tomorrow morning at 8am. So I remember particularly the one morning, it was like today is, you know, bright and sunny, and I was feeling pretty good and I marched in. He had that studio at the head of the stairs where Bill Street was later. I don't know who was there. But as you came up from the mezzanine the first studio to the right. And I came in and I went over to the, "Y". I said, "Good morning," as I came in and I went over the table and started to take out my oboe, and he was standing looking out the window and didn't say anything and finally he turned around to me and he said, "In England, you know, it's customary to say, 'Good morning, Mr. Foreman.'" Well, that soured my relationship quite a little bit because I, you know, I wasn't feeling any disrespect and I didn't intend any, and it was a good morning and he spoiled it for me. So not too long after that—oh, by the way, a young man at that time living across the street was Harry Shulman and he kept telling me about Curtis and I heard about Curtis some when I was in Pittsburgh, although not much, only after the fact. So, I got an application from Curtis and filled it out and on it it says if you're presently enrolled in a school you need to get the director to approve this application. So I very naively marched into Howard Hanson's office and told him that I'd like him to sign this paper and he asked me what, you know, I felt and I said, "Well, I came here to learn to play the oboe and my teacher's not interested in it." I said, "He's hopeless about a lot of things and just not interested." And he said, "Well, we haven't been very satisfied with him for awhile, but we're planning a change. You'd better stay." But it took four years for them to dislodge him.

**DS:** Was he playing in the Philharmonic?

**RS:** Yes, he was the first oboist. In fact, that was the complication. Apparently there was an unwritten agreement that the principal player in the Orchestra taught, the principal cello, the principal clarinet, the principal bassoon, the first trumpet, the first trombone. I mean, all those principal players taught at the School. Some of the assistants also did, but that was that. So they got a written agreement, a paper that you signed which said if your services ever become undesired in one job you have to resign from both. And they invoked that on him, so he had

to retire. And when he left he said, "Well, if you're going to fire me you ought to fire the English horn player. He's no good." That was Mario Bottesini, who later became the manager of the New Orleans orchestra, 'cause some people encountered him later. But so that created two openings in the orchestra, and they had auditions and Shulman had told us, he was down at Curtis at this time, and he used to come home and when he'd come home he'd come see me and we'd play duets and talk. And he told me what a fine player Bloom was and so the students got very interested in it. So we kind of agitated in his favor and I can't remember who else tried out. I think Mitch Miller was one of the people considered but he says he turned it down. I have no reason to believe that's not true. And Duvoir, who was the oboist at Milwaukee?

**DS:** Minneapolis, I heard.

**RS:** Minneapolis, was a contestant, and I'm sure there were others, but Bloom won it. Then—

**DS:** How many students were there at that time? Do you remember in the school?

**RS:** Well, there, maybe six. Not more than eight. It was fairly small and the students didn't have much influence but they voiced their opinions. Then after my freshman year, you see I was majoring in public school music and oboe, a double major, and I pretty much resigned myself to the fact that I probably was going to be a public school teacher because things weren't working out and I didn't work very hard at the oboe and—

**DS:** Yet did you feel like you were rising to the top of the heap pretty quickly there among the students?

**RS:** Well, I always felt I was one of the stronger students, yes. Swingly graduated a couple of years before I did, two or three, so he got Mitch Miller's job, second in the Orchestra.

**DS:** Was he a Rochester, no, he was from Pittsburgh also?

**RS:** No he was from Pennsylvania, I think Scranton or someplace. I think his family had lived in Pittsburgh, but then they moved somewhere in the middle of Pennsylvania. He was a Pennsylvanian, though, Harrisburg.

**DS:** Harrisburg, that's right.

**RS:** I believe he was from Harrisburg. Now let's see, where was I? And then when they announced that there'd be an audition for the second oboe/english horn job, my friends all pushed me to try out. I was undecided. I didn't really think, I thought surely that Swingly would get it because he'd been playing in the orchestra for a few years, and there was another fellow there who later went to Boston. Right at the moment I can't think of his name. He was a pretty good player. And I don't know who else tried out, but anyway, I did go and try out

and Bloom heard the audition and I think one of the things they put up was the Tchaikovsky Fourth. You know the Scherzo in that. And I'd never negotiated that, never tried to play it. And it kind of floored me but I didn't do it well and so I was sure I didn't win the audition and it wasn't announced right away. And I think it was the next day I saw Swingly in the street and I congratulated him because I was so sure he'd won it, and then I found out afterwards that I had won it and I was really quite surprised. So some time later, I don't know just when it was, I asked Bloom, I said, "How come you chose me instead of one of those other guys?" He said, "Well," he said, "I thought you had fewer bad habits." Wasn't very flattering, but it was probably the truth and so that's always been one of the humbling things I can think of when I, if I ever feel at all content with what I'm doing. But I took lessons with Bloom. I registered in the School for lessons with him, but they never materialized in any formal way. I mean, I didn't go to the studio and he'd keep putting me off and then finally I'd go out to his house and spend the afternoon and we'd work on reeds and I'd play a little bit. It was more like, you know, a discussion. But in retrospect I think that was an ideal way, because for one thing, I don't think he's terrifically well organized. His strength is interacting with people and I'm not very well organized, I don't think. I do best in interacting, so I had a chance to interact with him personally, both in the orchestra and in the lessons and I've spent a lot of time trying to analyze him and so much of what I've formulated as a method has been from trying to analyze people, both positively and negatively. Because I think most of us are well-intentioned. That almost everybody wants to do well. Well, and when we fail, it's seldom for lack of desire but it's usually some impediment that prevents us from perceiving what would be really desirable or is a blockade to fulfillment of a good idea. And so that's been the thread that's gone through all of my effort. Well, that year I was doubly blessed by having a conductor who was, I've always thought, still think, a truly outstanding musician. Jose Iturbi.

**DS:** Right. Was he the person you auditioned for then?

**RS:** Yeah, I didn't audition for him for the second job, but the next year, Bloom went into the NBC Orchestra with Toscanini and it was known, oh, in the middle of the year, that he was going, so then they scheduled auditions for his job and again I hung back because I had so little experience. I played first oboe for maybe two school concerts and I played English horn in the Philharmonic, but never first oboe.

**DS:** How old were you then?

**RS:** I was twenty-two. So I didn't contemplate trying for the job. But one day, it was late in the morning, the personnel manager came to me and said, "You're going to play for Mr. Iturbi in Kilbourn Hall at one o'clock." And I said, "I'm not prepared. I haven't been playing oboe very much. I've been playing English horn and I don't know any of the repertoire, and—" Bloom must have put him up to it. So I went to Bloom and I said, "They want me to play for Iturbi at one o'clock and I don't have anything prepared." And he said, "Well, go down to the library and get some solos and bring them up to my studio and we'll go over them." So it must have been near noon because, by the time I got down to the library, it was noon and the door was shut, and the librarian at that time was Joe Rober, who was a kind of a testy old German and he, I think, hit the bottle quite a bit, he had that ruddy complexion of a person that—and, anyway, he was in there and I was in a hurry and I rapped on the door. I could see him through the glass, and he didn't come, and so I rapped more imperiously and finally he came to the door and he says, "Can't you see the library's closed?" I said, "I see the door's shut but," I said, "I have to have some music. I'm supposed to play for Mr. Iturbi at one o'clock and I need this music." He said, "Go away." So I was practically in tears with frustration and I ran up to Mr. See's office, which was up on the mezzanine at that time, just facing the stairway, and I went in and I said, "I'm supposed to audition at one o'clock and I have to have some music and the librarian won't give it to me." So he got on the phone, he called him up and said, "You give him that music." So I ran back down and got it and then I ran up to the second floor and then Bloom steered me through the Brahms First Symphony and the Don Juan solos and he praised everything I did, you know, tried to build up my confidence because I was just shaking. Well then, I went down in Kilbourn Hall and it was just Iturbi and Bloom and they sat in the first few rows, not very far back, and I was up on stage. I started to play and Iturbi looked very glowering like he could when he was displeased and he said, "Is that an old instrument that you play?" And I had a, let's see, I forget the serial number of it, but it was a Lorée that had belonged to Sidney Davinsky who had been a pupil of Tabuteau's and he was a favored son when he was there and then some other favored son came in and broke his nose, so to speak, and so he left and he came to Eastman and he lived in the YMCA and after he'd been there a little while he got discouraged with the whole thing and tried to commit suicide, unsuccessfully. And he decided to sell all his stuff and go out of the music business, so I bought his oboe. And he became a printer and he lived in Rochester and when he

died—. But anyway, this was a Tabuteau oboe but it did have a small tone and sort of a dry tone. And Bloom will still apparently promoting me because he said, "I have a new oboe upstairs. I'll go get it." So he ran up to his studio and brought down his new oboe and I played on the oboe and Iturbi started to beam and he said, "That's good. Will you get a new oboe?" "Yes, sure, I'll get a new oboe." Well then, I went through my brief repertoire of solos and I must have played fairly well, but not perfect, and he said, "If you got this job would you take lessons?" And I said, "Sure." He asked Bloom, Bloom said, "Sure," he says. "I spend the summers up at Seal Harbor in Maine and he could come up there." So this was the end of the season, our season had just finished, so I went home. I went to Pittsburgh and I was greatly surprised a day or so later I got a telephone call from Arthur See and he offered me the job. And so then I called Bloom and I arranged to see him up in Maine, and, of course Barbara's from Maine and I had a lot of incentive to go to Maine. I went up and I stayed about a week and we had a session or two, you know, and that was the extent of the lessons. I've always been enormously grateful to Bloom because I really enjoyed playing with him and he helped me to believe in myself and the same way with Iturbi. Iturbi was extremely demanding. He was the kind of guy that, well, we recorded a number of concertos with him and if there was anything at all that he didn't like about it, he'd bang on the piano so they couldn't use it and at that time they recorded on wax discs and they had to be in increments of about three to four minutes and if you made one mistake, I mean, it really threw a wrench in it. But with him getting things correct was not the end. It was the beginning. The correctness was something that didn't appeal to him very much. And yet he demanded it. Everything had to have a meaning, a shape, a mood, and so very often when you rehearsed with him you'd go over and over some passages where he was trying to find the formula that would make it work. And when words would fail him, he'd sit down and play it out on the piano. And it was marvelous how he could differentiate the moods of things and make you understand. So I've always thought that the most inspiring thing about music is that it doesn't have to be the same, yet we devote an awful lot of our time and energy to try to get it the same because that's the only way you can learn and so the very process that helps you to become more correct has a dehumanizing effect on the expression of the music. And these people that I think we truly admire are the ones that have found out how to be correct but that's only a step on the way to being expressive. And Iturbi was a master at that. And Bloom responded very well to that kind of an attitude. And

of course the flutist was Joseph Mariano, who also responded very well to that. So it set up a pattern of thinking that appealed to me very much. I can't imagine having to get things just one way, 'cause I would feel defeated to start with and not have much incentive. But that if I can understand what the objective is, then I can put some of my own ideas into getting there, and so I've been endlessly interested in why things are the way they are and why they sound the way they do and what input could complement or influence that in a desirable way. So I think that's helped me in my teaching. And that's what motivated the book. The book I wrote came about because the editor came to me and asked me if I'd write it. I spent quite a bit of time writing it and Barbara sweated a lot of blood helping me too. It got bigger and smaller and bigger and smaller and then finally you just had to quit because I could see you could never finish anything like that.

**DS:** That's right.

**RS:** So I'm not too sure how my feelings and ideas that I have now compare with what I did twenty, thirty, or forty or fifty years ago. But I think they're similarly motivated and I think that's the same thing that keeps music alive, of course. You know, we play music that's two hundred years old and we couldn't if we wanted to reproduce the conditions that existed then. But I think people are pretty much the same as they were and so that if something is truly meaningful to me, then I dare to present that to other people as being appropriate. And yet what I do today is undoubtedly different than I would have done yesterday, and what I do tomorrow will be undoubtedly different somewhat from what I do today, so those alterations are part of living. As soon as it becomes frozen and just one way that's made it possible for me to be continually interested. I've never thought that I had reached the end of anything. I'm still learning and I'm also at the same time forgetting some things I wish I didn't. A close friend of the family when I was in high school was the conductor of the orchestra and he was trying to solicit people to be in it. He knew my sister was a fine pianist, so he said, "Why don't you play in the orchestra?" I said I didn't have any particular desire to. There wasn't any instrument I wanted to play. But one day they came and got me out of shop class, took me up to the orchestra rehearsal and I listened a little while and they said, "Wouldn't you like to play?" and I, you know, I was very indifferent about it, and, but to be polite, I said, "Well, what instruments do you have?" Oh, he said that they had some instruments they could loan us. And he said, well, he had trumpets and oboes. I'd never even heard of an oboe. I didn't know what it was, so I said, "Well, I don't want to play the trumpet but what is an

oboe?" So he got one out and showed me and he soaked up a reed and the opening was enormous on it so when I tried to play it I got this very loud, raucous, flat sound and that was kind of discouraging. The conductor of the band was the guy who was going to help me. He was a trombone player so he didn't know much about it either. He went through a method book. I forget which one, one of those all-purpose ones, and he just stayed a page ahead of me. So that's how I got started. And I got to play in Pittsburgh. Our high school had been assimilated into the city of Pittsburgh. My father was the principal of the high school I attended, and then they had an all-city of Pittsburgh. My father was the principal of the high school I attended, and then they had an all-city or inter-high orchestra. I forget what they called it, that met down at Schenley High School. So I got into that and I got to be first oboe in that. That's what encouraged me.

**DS:** And you went to hear the Pittsburgh Symphony play, probably.

**RS:** Yeah. I remember hearing Enesco. He played a piano concerto and a violin concerto and conducted.

**DS:** His own music, probably.

**RS:** Yeah, probably. I think the individuals that you encounter in your youth have a very profound influence on what you do—

**DS:** No question for you.

**RS:** And I've observed that some of the young players, ones that came into the orchestra while I was still playing, when we didn't have a conductor who could inspire you, like an Iturbi could, they're not able to get the kind of help that I felt that I got, and, you know, we as musicians we can retreat in a sense to being correct but being correct is seldom being expressive.

**DS:** I think, not to get you off that track, but I think once you said, many years ago, perhaps, that Iturbi would occasionally play concertos and conduct them at the same time.

**RS:** Yeah, that's the only way he did it.

**DS:** And that seems to me a unique opportunity to really make music with a conductor from the standpoint of, like the Mozart concertos where the oboe parts are so important. It's like playing chamber music with the conductor.

**RS:** I remember when he and his sister did the Mozart double concerto. And when we recorded that the little oboe solos, Swingly and I had to stand up and play them because the way the microphones were set up, it wasn't loud enough. It was pretty hard to come in on those without anybody up there helping you. He constantly had this attitude that music had to make sense and I remember one time we went on tour and it was typical of that kind of a

situation where the tour wasn't very well planned. We played a concert, I think, in Columbus, Ohio, one night and then the next night in Springfield, Massachusetts, and we had to travel by train overnight to get there. Well, we went to Columbus and we played, among other things, the Brahms First Symphony and I think it was the Grieg Piano Concerto, with Amparo as soloist. And during the Symphony, I could see that Iturbi was getting more and more agitated. He was obviously very unhappy and I wasn't feeling any pain. The intonation seemed clear and we were playing well together and, you know it seemed all o.k. At intermission, I was downstairs and somebody said, "Mr. Iturbi wants to see you." So I went upstairs and his dressing room was kind of dark and he was pacing back and forth in there, and he said, "Mr. Sprenkle, why do you play like that?" And I said, "I don't—" And I hadn't decided whether he liked it or he didn't, you know, because I had this feeling of guilt but pretty soon I realized he didn't like it. He thought we collectively were playing without any spirit. We were playing correctly, in other words, but not imaginatively. And he said, "Tell that second oboe player he has a heart like an artichoke." Well, I had a lot of time to brood on that, you know, all night riding over to Springfield, so that next night we exuded a lot more personality. And I came off stage at intermission and he embraced me. He said, "That's the way I want you to play."

**DS:** I wonder how different it was. That's interesting.

**RS:** Well, I did feel different. You play more daringly and—when you played with him, for me, it was like being transfixed. I had to look at him all the time. I had practically memorized the music and watched him. He was very creative and the music seemed to be formed, you know, at the moment of being reproduced. Sometimes his eyes would kind of disappear up under his eyebrows like he was reading his brain or something like that. It was an odd experience. Something I never had with anybody else. But it was very meaningful.

**DS:** It's an interesting thing because his career then took a funny curve toward Hollywood and people, including me, didn't realize that he had such a depth of musicality to him.

**RS:** He came back later as a, you know, like a guest conductor for one concert—

**DS:** Actually when I was playing?

**RS:** And he no longer had the rapport with the orchestra and so everything seemed understated or overstated and it was a big disappointment and I found that I couldn't play as well for him as I had before 'cause I tried too hard. I tried to outdo myself and I couldn't do it. But on his eightieth birthday he

hired the orchestra to come down to New York and he played four concertos and conducted the *Marriage of Figaro* overture and we couldn't get into Carnegie Hall until late in the afternoon because the New York Philharmonic had it. So we got there around four o'clock and rehearsed. Went through all the concertos and he did his whole stint and then the concert was early. It was like seven or seven-thirty that night. He came back, did the whole concert and he played brilliantly. And he was eighty years old.

**DS:** Of course.

**RS:** The quality of playing tremendous.

**DS:** When he left, was that the beginning of the Leinsdorf era or was there a—

**RS:** There was an interim there when we had guest conductors and then we, one year, Beecham came quite a bit, and Leinsdorf and Bernstein shared a season once. They each had half and they asked the orchestra who they wanted and everybody wanted Bernstein, but the manager thought we ought to have Leinsdorf because he thought the orchestra needed discipline and so we got Leinsdorf.

**DS:** They were also fine pianists, both of them.

**RS:** Oh, yeah.

**DS:** Did they play?

**RS:** Yeah.

**DS:** Solos too?

**RS:** No. Leinsdorf never played with the orchestra. But when I, he came back after he'd been away a while, he came back for a final time and that was '59, and I played the Strauss Concerto on that concert, he came up to my studio Monday afternoon. He sat down and played from the score and gave me suggestions while he was playing. You know, he's a brilliant man. But Bernstein played a lot of stuff with us too. Played concertos. Played some of his own music and everybody liked him. And he was even more bravura than he is now.

**DS:** Is that right?

**RS:** Yeah, he danced all around and was very vigorous. Of course, he was many years younger.

**DS:** Yes

**RS:** He never came back. We tried to get him to come conduct benefit concerts with the orchestra, but he was always too busy. His manager may never even have mentioned it to him personally.

**DS:** I guess I'm gathering, and maybe if I'm on the wrong track you'll tell me, but your experience then as a player and growing confidence, maybe, and ideas from conductors who were collaborators as well as sources of inspiration and bringing your own creativity out of you could be something that you could subconsciously even use as you were trying to bring creativity out of youngsters who were put in your charge.

**RS:** I'm sure of that, yeah. I think we need to communicate. I think that's the most basic thing in our profession. And that if the feedback you get is honest, and current, that is, it's not something that was decided yesterday, but is decided on the moment, and if you have respect for that person, then that has an influence on you that's forever, because it's something that you can believe in.

And somebody like Iturbi had a lot of flaws, his personal life was almost tragic, I think his wife committed suicide and his daughter died, and there were a lot of things about him that were unhappy, but his relationship with music was always current, never pre-digested. Every time he made music it was at that moment. In fact, if a soloist would come and rehearse and they would sing sotto voce, he'd stop conducting. He said, "What's the matter?" They'd say, "Well, why are we rehearsing?" He said, "I have to know how it's going to sound." And if you had one reed and you wanted to save it for the concert, you didn't do it. You played it for the rehearsal because he wanted to know how it would sound. So really, with him, rehearsals and concerts weren't any different. You were always trying to be creative and so there was none of that routine playing that comes from trying to be right. It always had to be humanly done, he said. And that's something I always treasured.

And I feel that students are grateful if they can believe what you say and that it's related to what is really happening.

For instance, I have a lot of knowledge. If I just dish that out it has very little application. You know, if I just recite what I know. But if what I know can be parcelled out relative to something that's happening, then there's a chance that it might be useful to somebody else, so when I teach that's what I do. I try to relate to what's happening and compare that to my experiences in the past and presently so I have to go by what I hear and what I see. So I'm sure that's what the other person is trying to do too.

I think to be successful you have to make some concessions to the people you're working with.

For instance, when I'm teaching somebody, I have to, before we start, concede that their hearing is at least as good as mine. That their talent is equal to mine.

Whether or not it's true, it doesn't make any difference, because if I assume that they are less discerning or care less or any of those other things, then I will qualify everything I say, whereas if I don't qualify it, then it has more meaning to the other person.

And the way I got thrust into the job was a little overwhelming, because when Bloom left, there I was. My fellow students had been John Holmes, who later

played in the Boston Symphony, and Earl Schuster, who played in the Chicago Symphony, my wife, Ezra Kotzin—

**DS:** Played in Buffalo.

**RS:** Yeah, and my first year students that I got as freshmen, were Earnest Harrison and, can't think of the boy's name that was from Little Rock and played in the Little Rock orchestra—

**DS:** Oh, Showalter.

**RS:** Showalter, Gene Showalter. So I mean, these were fine talented capable people and I even briefly had thoughts of, "Gee, if I make them better they're going to be better than I am." You know, if I do the best I can for them, they're going to exceed me. But I don't think that lasted more than a few minutes because when I actually started to teach I found that every time I was able to help them it helped me more than it helped them. And I think that's true. That as a teacher, if you have good enough perspective to see something that's true, then you've strengthened yourself whether it helped the other person or not and it's harder for somebody to receive advice than it is for you to give it. That if what you give has real merit, which you hope it does, it strengthens your own playing. So I've always thought that playing and teaching concurrently is an ideal situation because it's much easier to recite truisms than it is to demonstrate them.

And the thing that's markedly different now than it was fifty years ago when I started is that the recordings and video equipment is actually very recent. And I think that's enormously helpful. And when I was in school you could hear broadcasts but the quality of tonal reproduction was limited. More like what comes over the telephone and so you couldn't hear the real essence of a tone of a particular player as effectively. For instance, when I — we used to get live broadcasts, though, almost every week, of the Philadelphia Orchestra and the New York Philharmonic and the Boston Symphony and then later the NBC, so I was quite a bit influenced by hearing Tabuteau, Fernand Gillet, Labate, and then Bloom play, and that input was very helpful. But not nearly as good as you get on equipment now and so the individuals who grew up will say in the Philadelphia area, even if they didn't study with one of the players in the Philadelphia Orchestra, they got to hear those things and realize what was possible. Whereas some kid coming from a small town would have a lot less chance to hear that.

Now it's pretty well distributed all over the world. You can hear and little pieces of equipment like this, why, quality is really quite acceptable.

The seventeenth and eighteenth Honorary Memberships were bestowed on bassoonist

**Leonard Sharrow** (b. 1915) and oboist **Ralph Gomberg** (b. 1921) at the IDRS Conference in Las Vegas, Nevada, in August, 1987. Still functioning as Chair of the Honorary Membership Committee, Ed Lacy, once again filed the following report in the Fall, 1987 (Vol. 10, No. 2, pp. 28-31) issue of *The Double Reed*:

#### **New Honorary Members of the IDRS**

*by Dr. Ed Lacy, Evansville, Indiana*

At the Sixteenth Annual Conference of the Society in Las Vegas, two distinguished double reed performers were awarded the highest honor which the organization confers. Our newest honorary members are oboist Ralph Gomberg and bassoonist Leonard Sharrow.



*Leonard Sharrow*

Leonard Sharrow was born in New York City on August 4, 1915. He attended the public schools of New York, graduating from DeWitt Clinton High School in 1933. He graduated from the Juilliard School of Music in 1935.

Sharrow's first professional appointment was as principal bassoonist of the National Symphony in Washington under Hans Kindler, a position which he held for two seasons, 1935-37. Then, he joined the NBC Symphony under Arturo Toscanini from 1937-41. From 1941-45 he served with the Armed Forces of the United States.

Returning to civilian life, he played for half a season in 1946 as principal bassoonist of the Buffalo Philharmonic under William Steinberg, and then for one season in a similar position with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Karl Krueger. He was invited by Toscanini to re-join the NBC Symphony as principal bassoonist, which position he held from 1947-51.

In 1951 he became principal bassoonist of the Chicago Symphony, a position he was to hold until 1964, serving under Rafael Kubelik, Fritz Reiner and Jean Martinon.

In 1964 he left the orchestral world to accept a full-time appointment as professor of bassoon at Indiana University, remaining at that capacity until 1977. In that year, he decided to return to the field of performance, joining the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra as principal bassoonist, serving under Andre Previn and Lorin Maazel, until his retirement from that position just this year (1987).

Sharrow has also taught at several other universities and conservatories, including the Juilliard School, Roosevelt University, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Carnegie-Mellon University, and the New England Conservatory of Music. He has also served as