TELLING TIME:

Reflections on a Life in Music

Stanley Walden

For Rhonda

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Preface:

Talking to the Wrong End of the Dog

When I met Stanley Walden, I didn't know much about music. Now, three years later, I know a little more about music, but only a little. My mother warned me that I'd regret quitting piano lessons when I was nine, and sure enough, I do. What I do know a lot more about now than before I met Stan Walden, though, is musicians.

Stan is still friends with people he's known since Truman was president or before, most of them musicians, some other kinds of artist. He's friends with their children, some of them musicians, some other kinds of artist. He's friends with most of the musicians and artists he's met in between. So if you're hanging out with Stan Walden, you're with people who've achieved enormous success as musical performers and composers, filmmakers, novelists, dancers, and actors in this country and in Europe. When we'd known each other about a year, I counted up the people Stan had introduced me to, and came up with close to 50 names. That list is even longer now.

Although each of his friends is, of course, a unique and intriguing personality, outstanding in their fields, in terms of their career paths, they are more like each other than they are like Stan. Most have undergraduate degrees from distinguished colleges and universities—Juilliard, Yale, it almost goes without saying—and some had glorious graduate careers followed by decades of teaching and performing, usually simultaneously. It's a pattern: most people who achieve artistic success at that level are formally trained, and Stan's friends are no exception. He is, though. He's an exception.

Stan has that most indispensable attribute of super-achievers: he doesn't see obstacles to his dreams, to his ideas. Although he went to a good college—Queens—he skipped graduate school and instead apprenticed himself to people in New York who were the best at what he wanted to learn to do: to compose, and to play wind instruments. He'd just barge right up to whoever it was, and ask whether he could study with that person, who wasn't always a teacher per se, but that never stopped him. He hired his own faculty, created his own opportunities, and pretty much made himself up. Surprisingly, he doesn't covet the spotlight for himself but loves to be part of a team. Maybe that's why his friends who've worked with him all say what a great collaborator he is. I know how rare teamwork is in an arena where egos throb and kick at the

slightest nudge. So no wonder Stan flourished out in the treacherous weeds of freelance performing, then of composing.

And then became an academic himself, creating (with Bobbie) and running a whole new discipline and a department to house it, at the HdK in Berlin. In academia as I know it, outsiders other than Nobel laureates are rarely hired to tenure; one must learn the secret handshake at the right schools and write the correct dissertation under the direction of a flavor-of-the-month scholar in order to be seriously considered for employment. In Stan's case, however, the Germans, whose respect for learning and for teachers is legendary but whose standards are famously rigid, threw out the rulebook in order to get what they wanted when they wanted Stanley Walden.

And he's a Jew. From Brooklyn. I know why Stan lived and worked in Germany for so many years, but even after all our discussions on the topic, I'm still not sure I understand how he did it. I suspect his passion for Beethoven and Goethe leavened with the thrill of sticking it to Hitler, even posthumously, pushed him past any ghosts or monsters that might have tried to get in his way. Again: Stan Walden doesn't see obstacles.

However, in sleep, he does sometimes see things that aren't there, and he tells me about them. He'll ask me, "Why am I hanging upside down? . . . I'm not hanging upside down? . . . Oh. OK." Or he'll warn me, "You're talking to the wrong end of the dog!" We have a dog, so anything's possible. With Stanley Walden, anything is possible. Read on.

Rhonda Rockwell
Palm Springs, CA
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Introduction:
How Did *This* Happen?

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A few weeks ago, returning to Palm Springs from Ojai and Ventura, Rhonda and I stopped in Los Angeles, at the Los Feliz home of Michael Brandman and his wife, the actress Joanna Miles. Michael, although some seven years my junior, has been a kind of goad and guide ever since our first encounter in New York, for the premier production of *Scuba Duba* at the New Theater, in 1967. Michael was the General Manager of the Establishment Theatre Company for David Balding, the producer. Jacques Levy had brought me on board to write the incidental music for Bruce Jay Friedman's play. Jacques was to direct, Jerry Orbach to star.

In negotiating my contract—my first theatrical contract—Michael was relentless, but we finally came to a fair agreement. And so we went into rehearsal. Over the years, Michael went on to a sterling career as producer and author, and we kept up our friendship, especially after Bobbie and I moved to California.

On this recent visit to Michael and Joanna, I kvetched about my current inactivity, my lack of engagement and feeling of marginalization after the very moderate success of *The Goldberg Variations* last fall in Karlsruhe. I described my vacant stare into the void. Michael, who has transformed his life from an active one of producer into a partially reclusive one of author, berated me for my inactivity and forcefully suggested that I start writing this manuscript—"You have STORIES, Man!" Joanna urged—following the dictum laid down by Robert Parker, the prolific novelist with whom Michael had had a close relationship, even writing best-sellers in the Robert Parker series after Parker's death. That formula: "Write at least five pages a day. After a week you have 35 pages, after a month 150, and possibly a book! Don't edit, just GO. Later, review and edit, and see about possibly publishing." So it wasn't a Proustian *madeleine* that started me on this exercise, but a nicely laid table of Nate and Al's lox and bagels.

Within a day or two of our return to Palm Springs, I began this account of my life and found Parker's Dictum worked fine for me. Or maybe I should let you be the judge of its efficacy. Some of the dates I refer to here may be off by a few years, or even a decade. So what? Sue me. What follows is the way I remember it. And try not to hurt yourself; this book is extra-heavy due to the weight of the names I've dropped into it in the course of its creation.

(There are no photos included in this text; for visuals--photos, film clips, music examples, etc., I suggest you log on to my website: stanleywalden.com, and view the 45-minute film, *CHUTZPAH*!)

Chapter 1

1967-69: The Road to *Oh! Calcutta!*

I've had the sensation just a few times, but it's central to my being an artist. The first time I was 15 or 16: Stravinsky's *Le Sacre du Printemps*. Years later, Schubert's *C Major Two-Cello Quintet*. The first time I saw Rodin's *Burghers de Calais.* When I acted in George Tabori's *Jubiläum*, in Bochum, Germany, and in 1959, when I had established myself as an active free-lance clarinetist in New York, something happened in Carnegie Recital Hall that would change the shape and direction of my life from then on.

For that concert, six of my colleagues and I had begun a six-month preparation of the Schoenberg *Pierrot Lunaire,* a seminal piece of 20th Century music that was seldom performed. The piece (based on the poetry of Albert Giraud translated into German) consists of 21 poems requiring the voice to realize the text in a kind of *Sprechgesang* (literally "speechsong") and the instrumental ensemble is written in an extreme "expressionistic" style, not yet the 12-tone system that Schoenberg was later to develop, but charged with *"Klangfarben*" ("colors of sound").

The group consisted of Jan DeGaetani (*Sprechegasang*), Gil Kalish (piano), Joyce Robbins (violin), Michael Rudiakow (cello), Phil Dunigan (flutes), and me (clarinets), all under the baton of Bob Cole. After meticulously investigating and rehearsing the piece, we finally performed it in Carnegie Recital Hall. In the course of the performance, phrasings, balances, tempi--details we had rehearsed again and again--happened in a new way for the first time, and they happened to all six of us spontaneously and concurrently. Almost mystically, we became what, years later, The Open Theater would call an organism: we six melded into a singularity. I was exhilarated and somewhat frightened, felt physically as if a wave were mounting from my chest and riding the path of my breath, to break on the shore of my passion.

I have always reacted this way to deep, life-changing confrontations with art. Rare as they were, each of these experiences changed me, literally "transported" me, altered my vision of the world and who I was. What I want and need from art is, in the words of William Blake: "the lineaments of [my] gratified desire."

As the British director Peter Brook has said, "The reason we have the arts is not that man cannot live without them, but rather, that there are those amongst us who are compelled to practice them." I didn't follow the well-worn path of academia, didn't enjoy multiple commissions and awards, and was still able to support a marriage of 60 years, with two sons. Somehow, I was able to remain in this open artistic environment, avoiding (or not applying for)

any permanent employment. At the same time, I didn't reap the security and fame that was possible in the commercial theater but, looking back, I did craft a career.

Both of my main collaborators in crafting that career, George Tabori in Europe and Jacques Levy in the States, were premier chess players. I have never mastered the game and do not "game" life in the way they did. I have often mused on what attracted me to them, on what they saw in me, and I suspect the quality I offered may have been a kind of ballast for them: in their flights of fancy, I could bring my improvisatory gift in the moment, supporting their intention. And it was intoxicating, joining in with their fantasizing, aboard for the journey.

Jacques' astonishing intellect worked on high and low cultural levels. He never stopped evolving. Whether in broadening his musical knowledge or learning to fly or scuba dive or write haiku—writing with Dylan for the *Desire* album and directing the Rolling Thunder tour—meeting with Abbie Hoffman while Hoffman was incognito, Jacques was always at the center of whatever was bubbling up in the counter-culture. Always a hint of danger in his work, a touch of the illicit, and he was usually a step or two ahead of me.

George, on the other hand, brought the entire world of 20th Century Europe—Austro-Hungarian Budapest, espionage in the Middle East, Hollywood with Brecht and the refugee German community, the New York Upper East Side, an encyclopedic knowledge of Shakespeare and the Bible—a treasure chest of experience. Of course, their paths also crossed, Jacques' and George's, at the Actors Studio, when Jacques directed Viveca Lindfors, George's wife, and when I worked with each of them.

In 1967 I got a call from the composer Meyer Kupferman, asking whether I would be interested in spending the summer at Green Mansions, an Adirondack resort that maintained a theater company to entertain their guests with a different show each week. Green Mansions, along with Tamamint, was the womb of many musical theater collaborations, i.e., Harnick and Bock, Strouse and Adams, etc. So I agreed to meet the theater manager Dick Edelman and the director he had chosen for the coming summer, 1967.

That director was Jacques Levy and we felt a thrilling connection between us at this first meeting; he would become my major collaborator in the American theater for the next 20 years. Bobbie and I took the boys with us to scout out a place to live, and we discovered an old wooden Adirondack mansion, with a towering keep, 360-degree screened porch and private beach on the shore of Brant Lake. Jacques and his girlfriend Brenda Smiley found a place closer to the hotel. We started producing the weekly shows with a cast that included Brenda and Vivan Reed (who went on to a major Broadway career). Among these events were the Gertrude Stein one-act, *In a Garden*, the musical *Archie and Mehitabel*, an evening of Harnick and Bock, and an evening of

Brecht (much to the annoyance of the owner of Green Mansions, Lena Barish, who wanted her guests entertained, not provoked; however, the bars did do their best business of the summer that week).

The season was exhilarating, and gradually I began to understand and trust Jacques' sense of theater, which was just developing off-off Broadway in places like La Mama and Café Cino. The headiness of challenging the accepted forms and mores of the past—the spirit of revolution was abroad in the world, in the summer of 1967. Jacques' readiness to risk thrilled me. After that summer, Jacques invited me to join The Open Theater, (a sort of follower of the Living Theater), a collaborative ensemble led by Joe Chaiken, made up of actors, musicians, and directors who were investigating theater as a lab, without thoughts of production. The members of the Open Theater would decided on a subject or area to investigate and meet regularly to see how we could bring such abstract concepts as Asassination, China, or Genesis to a theatrical life without limiting ourselves commercially. They had had a great success with J.C van Itallie's *America, Hurrah*, which played off-Broadway and made a splash with its three parts, the first two directed by Joe Chaiken, and the third, *Motel*, directed by Jacques. Lindsey Decker's set and costumes for *Motel* exploded the current theater aesthetic of the well-made play by having the actors wear grotesque, oversized heads and having them destroy the set, scrawling obscenities on the walls.

[I met Lindsey several times, serendipitously; once when I was in Berkeley for the premier of *Weewis* with the Joffrey Ballet, I went walking and noticed some painters working on the roof of a building. They had a radio up there with them, and it was playing a Beethoven symphony. I looked closer. The painters were Lindsey and his son. Another time I ran into him in Miami, where he was living in a shack. He had been a working sculptor, having shown at all the major galleries and museums, but he still had to earn his living. In the Eighties he joined in a scheme to run some dope from Africa to France in an old schooner and was arrested by the French. He was living in terrible conditions in a French jail in Marseilles, and we all joined in a campaign to have him released, writing letters and pressuring the State Department. It worked!]

By 1968, the Open Theater had become a darling of the Establishment and was given a grant that would cover our studio rental (which we had been paying ourselves), give us *health insurance* (!), and pay other expenses. A heady group of guests and friends surrounded the core, including Susan Sontag, Peter Brook, Jerzy Grotowski, and Joseph Campbell. They all guided us in our quest.

Jacques decided to lead the Assassination Workshop, dealing with how we felt about JFK's murder less than five years before. I was given free reign to use my imagination, and Jean-Claude was present to record any texts emerging from the improvisations, and to write some of his own. One of these texts was, "I was not alone/I am a small person. . ." etc. I came up with the idea of fracturing the text, then reconstructing it in succeeding variations, all set to the cortege beat that accompanied JFK's hearse down Pennsylvania Avenue. First were the vowel sounds, then the consonants, then the syllables starting to make sense. And finally the full chant evolved. It was exhilarating work, pushing my boundaries and suggesting future explorations. For *The Serpent,* another workshop led by Joe Chaiken, Richard Peaslee and I created a parade of body percussions sounds and abstract vocalizations. (Dick Peaslee had worked with Peter Brook on *Marat/Sade* and with the Eddie Sauter Big Band). We became quite close and years later worked together with Martha Clarke on *Endangered Species* for the Brooklyn Academy of Music.

But Jacques' tastes and ambitions were wider-ranging than Joe's, and eventually the two came into conflict. Jacques was upset that much of the work we had done in the Assassination Workshop found its way into *The Serpent*, the production that later toured Europe, and was never credited to him.

The Open Theater members and friends took part in "Be-Ins" in Central Park and anti-war demonstrations, along with the Bread and Puppet Theater and other like-minded groups. We tried to end the war in Vietnam by the purity and innocence of our intentions. Finally, it took somewhat more than that, but our activities were not without influence.

On his first foray into the commercial theater, Jacques had been hired to direct a Bruce Jay Friedman play, *Scuba Duba*, off-Broadway at the New Theater. Having read Bruce's novels, both of us imagined him as a Woody Allan-like nerd, so we were startled when we met him and discovered such a hulk of a *Shtarker* (big, strong guy) whose humor was striking, dangerous, crossing the line of racial correctness, giving voice to the roiling racial tensions in our society. Some audience members were so incensed by *Scuba Duba* that they stormed out, shouting at the stage.

The piece starred Jerry Orbach, who was known primarily as a musical theater performer—the original El Gallo in *The Fantastics—*before his iconic roles as Jennifer Grey's father in the film *Dirty Dancing* and as Detective Lennie Briscoe in TV's *Law and Order*. I wrote a series of stereotypical cues and set a lyric of Bruce's, "Uncle Misery," as an R&B tune for Cleavon Little, who played the Scuba Duba Man. I had to coach him in singing "black"—imagine the absurdity—as his ethnic roots didn't reach too far down at that time. I also set "Enough!" Bruce's gloss on the hit "More" (ironically, the theme from the "shockumentary" film *Mondo*

Cane), which had the winning couplet, "I'm leaving today from Penn Station /for a newly emerging African Nation." *Scuba* was a hit and we were getting closer to "uptown."

While *Scuba Duba* was in rehearsal, I was also rehearsing Donald Martino's wonderful woodwind quintet for a performance in Philadelphia. Earlier that year, the Penn Contemporary Players had been formed under a Rockefeller Foundation grant. A group of us came down from New York to present a series of concerts at the University of Pennsylvania. Ronnie Roseman and Gil Kalish were among my fellow players who had rehearsed the programs in New York. One of the most memorable of the Penn performances was the Messiaen *Quator pour la Fin du Temps* (*Quartet for the End of Time*), a work Messiaen had written and performed while he was a prisoner of war in Görlitz, Germany in 1941. Scored for piano (Gil Kalish), violin (Charles Castleman), cello (Michael Rudiakov) and clarinet (me), this quarter is written in Messiaen's idiosyncratic musical language. The most difficult thing about the piece is to play slowly enough; in the solo clarinet movement, the tempo is indicated at 44 to the sixteenth note! Which means that each sixteenth note lasts a quarter of a second. An extraordinary composition.[1]

The day after *Scuba* opened, I rehearsed the Martino's woodwind piece under the guidance of Sam Baron. *Scuba*'s great reviews had just come in, I had a hit in New York and a totally engaging performance coming up—I really had the best of both worlds. Sam was a wonderful man, a flutist, a musician of extraordinary breadth, from the Bach Aria Society to the New York Woodwind Quintet to the Boulez *Flute Sonatine*.

For a short time, I was Jerome Robbins' musical assistant on a Broadway production of Maria Irene Fornes' *The Office*. (I knew Irene from the Open Theater.) Unfortunately, the show never officially opened, which is only slightly worse than *World War 2 ½,* the Roger Hirson play The Open Window did some music for, which ran for all of one performance.

Cross-fertilization among the arts was modish at that time, and the Establishment was eager to feed on the *avant garde*. Tom O'Horgan, the director who had had a megahit with *Hair*, and the playwright J.C. van Itallie had been commissioned by the Harkness Ballet to create a dance theater piece. They asked me to be involved in the creation of *Image*, a ballet to be made without a choreographer, and with text spoken by Joe Chaiken. The piece was built around a set made of a gigantic female body (á la Niki Saint Phalle). When we showed what we had made to Rebecca Harkness and her Board, they promptly called the whole thing off. One indelible memory: after the turndown, we all went out for a drink with an oily European type, a man of intrigue (maybe a Board member?) who surreptitiously invited my wife Bobbie to a weekend at

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[1] A moderate tempo would be 72 to the quarter note; the tempo in the Messiaen is 8 times slower.

the villa where the notorious semi-hardcore porn best seller, *The Story of O*, had been set. We were coming up in the world!

Dick Peaslee, my fellow composer with The Open Theater, invited me to a party in his rehearsal loft on West 72nd Street. Peter Schickele, whose first *PDQ Bach* concert I had seen at Juilliard with Jorge Mester conducting, was at the party, along with Bob Dennis, another Juilliard-trained composer. With the composer Larry Widdoes, they had formed a trio that was looking into writing material to straddle the worlds of rock and contemporary concert music. With performing dates looming, Larry Widdoes bowed out, not happy at the prospect of actually performing the pieces before an audience. So Peter and Bob approached me and asked if I would be interested in joining them. We were basically a keyboard trio, with Peter on acoustic and electric piano, Bob on Baldwin electric harpsichord, and me on keyboard bass, Farfisa organ, and clarinets. We all sang, under the influence of the Everly Brothers. We rehearsed in the Peaslee loft and presented our first concert at Barnard College on the night that Martin Luther King, Jr., was shot. This memory sticks with me because the streets had become more dangerous than usual, and we were extra-careful as we made our way home that night.

We had dates at various museums (once sharing an evening with Twyla Tharp), and Peter, who had been doing very well arranging for Joan Baez and others at Vanguard Records, approached the Solomon brothers about our making an album for them. The resulting album went nowhere, but The Open Window lived on for the next three years.

One of our dates was to open for Buffy St. Marie at a huge hall. We were a comparatively "refined" cross-over act, didn't exactly tear the place up. Years later, I happened to be on a flight to L.A. with her and reminded her of the date; she was less than pleased to be reminded of our luke-warmup.

Jorge Mester had become the conductor of the Louisville Orchestra, which had a contract with CRI to record contemporary scores. They commissioned us to produce a half-concert's worth of pieces, *Three Views from The Open Window,* that would explore mixed media, another part of the Z*eitgeist* that was prevalent. We each chose a different medium to mix with—Peter used a short film made by a friend, Bob chose photos of the destruction of Pennsylvania Station in New York, and I used taped vocal non-language expressions, recorded by my friends from the Open Theater, Joyce Aarons and Bill Macy.

My piece, *Circus*, started with a complete blackout as the conductor raised his baton for the upbeat. The hall was plunged into darkness and the recorded voices of my actors, played through loudspeakers placed so they seemed to be coming from the audience, started with "Hey!" "Wha—?" and coughing. Meanwhile, the musicians started building a cloud of tone clusters

while at the same time mumbling their own names. This all created a sense of danger, of not knowing what was coming next, the feelings that one might experience at the circus. This "cloud" crescendoed until, at its climax, the lights came on and we were in the first Walkaround, the big entrance at the beginning of each circus performance, followed by "Tightrope," during which the lights gradually dimmed while we, the trio, sang a song of mine about a sexual encounter while the actors mirrored, with appropriate vocal sounds, the shape of a sex act, culminating in a shiver of orgasm in the instruments and the taped voices. Last was "Three Ring," in which three different styles of music were played simultaneously, an Ivesian kind of planned mayhem that led to a second "Walkaround," which built to another huge crescendo. At the height of that crescendo, the sound leaped from the stage to a tape that the trio had recorded. This tape was a rockish song, "*Goodbye, Folks,"* that played on as we took our bows and left the stage.

As you can see, I was playing with the "fact" of the concert, bringing the Brechtian aesthetic of self-reference into the concert hall. The piece created a scandal: some of the female members of the orchestra, when they realized what was going on during "Tightrope," refused to play the concert. This led to newspaper articles and TV coverage. Because the performance was to be broadcast, we had a crisis. Jorge Mester came to me and asked if I would please allow that movement to be played without the tape. I caved and agreed, something I'm not proud of now. We would later play the pieces with the Chicago Orchestra at Ravinia, with Seiji Ozawa conducting, and at Cleveland's Blossom Festival under Louis Lane. In both these performances, we used the complete tape. No serious injuries resulted.

Chapter 2

1932-39: Another Brooklyn Story

At this point in my telling of time, it's time to go back to the beginning, to the path that led up to that first meeting with Jacques.

Life is preparation—the upbeat, the plié before the leap, the moment's hesitation before pen touches paper or brush touches canvas, the 10,000 hours of practice, the inhalation before the song, the 85 years of preparation for this exercise. If I go back to the beginning in Brooklyn, I find it murky and undifferentiated, a series of momentary images of streets and stoops, concrete and front and back pocket lawns. Everything, I'm sure, much smaller in reality than the inflated scenes enlarged in the child's mind. The first house on East 24th Street in Flatbush is a vague memory for me, the last-born. We must soon have moved around the corner to 2314 Avenue O, one of four private homes created by a developer, ours contiguous with an apartment house occupying the corner lot on Avenue O and East 23rd Street. The postage stamp lawns in front and back were meadows for this four-year-old.

No one is left to verify or contradict my account of the lawns, or of anything else I might bring up. My father Herman, mother Henrietta, brother Bernie and sister Terry (born Thelma, but her name transformed to "Terry" along with her Roman/Jewish nose into an acceptable *goyishe* one)—all are gone. Also no older relatives, aunts/uncles/cousins, etc., except for astounding Aunt Sylvia, living out her decline at 103 after a rich and productive career as a child psychoanalyst. (Sylvia's contemporary, my aunt-in-law Selma, just died at 103. And my mother's sister Ruth went at 104.) For Sylvia's 100th birthday, I wrote a piece for solo cello, consisting of 106 notes, thus wishing her even more. The piece is made up out of the tones Eb, Bb, A, derived from her name, Sylvia Brody Axelrad; in German notation, **S**=Es=Eb, **B**=Bb, and **A**=A. I had the piece recorded and I presented it to her personally in her sumptuous Fifth Avenue seven-room apartment where she has lived since the early Fifties. She has recently begun losing her hearing, so it is increasingly difficult to communicate with her. Her days consist of "getting through"—like mine—and waiting. "Waiting" seems to be the predominant mantra for the aged.

Back to Brooklyn: my group of boys called ourselves The Climbing Cats. Our goal was to climb from garage to garage without touching the ground and so traverse as far as possible the internal topography of our square block before the streets and avenues stopped our progress. Another vivid memory: at about six, undressing with a girl in our unattached garage, and somehow being made to walk back to the house in public view, naked and actually or imaginarily

jeered at by neighbors, whose views into our back yard from their elevated apartment house windows were unimpeded.

Flashing images: milk bottles being delivered by the milkman, the cream at the top straining against the lid in the winter. Street vendors, the old-clothes man shouting/singing "High cash old clothes!" Itinerant musicians (accordion or violin) being paid for their recital in coins wrapped in a handkerchief and thrown from the apartment house windows (the apartment house courtyard bordered our house). Horse-drawn carts with produce and products. Knife-and-scissors sharpeners—though I couldn't know it at the time, they were the Brooklyn version of floating vendors who would besiege Bobbie and me every morning, 50 years later, on Lake Dal in Kashmir.

Inside our house, three bedrooms on the top (second) floor—the master, my sister's, and the boys', but because he was 10 years my senior, I have virtually no memory of Bernie in that bedroom. He went to war in the Forties and from that point on, for a few years, I shared the room with my maiden Aunt Ruth, which must have left some echoes in my psyche, as I was about nine years old at the time. This arrangement was necessary because after Bernie left, my sister refused to share a room with Ruth, and my mother, being the eldest of seven siblings, felt compelled to take in her spinster sister. There was also a shared bathroom (I don't remember if the master had a separate one) and some indistinct memories of sexual experimentation with other boys in the shower stall. One strong memory of entering unannounced into the master and seeing my mother's exposed pudenda. Funny how something like that stays with you.

The ground floor, starting at the front entrance, was arrived at after a set of maybe six or seven brick steps, with a tiny vestibule between the front door and an inner door. In the front room, a bay window overlooking Avenue O, carpeting, easy chairs, a sofa and, of course, the piano, my beloved Knabe, which was to accompany me until he was replaced by my current Steinway, a sign of maturity and achievement. Piano lessons were offered by a Mrs. Williams, whom I remember as a spinster who imparted virtually nothing in her weekly lessons but who secured her employment by rewarding us (Terry also "took") with gifts, small tchotchkes, candies, whatnot, so that we would stay with her. I learned almost nothing about music from her and even less about playing the instrument.

Next came the dining room, large enough to seat 14 people for Passover seders, and my father's gin rummy club every month or so. I have a photo of it, in all its bourgeois glory, awaiting the onslaught of the Pesach guests. Of course, there were also the supporting cabinets to house the tableware, the goblets and dinnerware and special silverware, linens, etc., that saw the light of day only a few times a year. At the far end of this room the staircase led up to the

bedrooms, with a wooden banister that was great for gymnastics. Also at the far end was a small hallway, with a door to the downstairs bathroom to the right, and to the left, a door to the stairs leading to the basement, and the small maid's room, a built-in sign of upper middle class mobility. (Maids were a necessity because my mother worked in the family business, Walden's, on 34th Street in Manhattan, across the street from Macy's.)

In the downstairs hallway, just before the kitchen, was the pantry. Nowhere else I've lived since has had such a room. This pantry was kept minimally or completely unheated, so it was always chilly even in the summer, and I was able to purloin all sorts of foodstuffs and treats. The kitchen was large enough to accommodate a sit-down breakfast table, where we took most of our meals. I have no distinct memory of the appliances. The overall impression is one of linoleum. Exiting the kitchen was the back door, opening on a small porch where the milk and seltzer were delivered, and another set of steps descending to the back yard and garage. The back yard was grassy, bordered by rose bushes and honeysuckle. The driveway leading to the garage was the border between our land and our neighbors, the Greens.

Finally, the basement. After descending the stairs you arrived at the playroom, where we had a ping pong table, a punching bag, improvised basketball venues, a bar with an ice-maker and a sink and a variety of chairs. The windows on one side looked up and out onto the driveway. Behind this large room was the laundry, with washing machines, a big flat machine to iron large linens like sheets and tablecloths, and a fascinating mangle, a contraption with rollers to wring the water out of wet laundry and squish little boys' fingers. I remember clothing lines strung in the basement and also outside, so I don't know if there was a dedicated dryer. There was, of course, also a toilet opposite the laundry. Finally a door to the furnace room, a dark, oil-soaked place of mystery and intrigue, whose secrets invited forbidden exploration. Out the back door of this room were the steps leading up to the back yard,

So this was the stage, the frame in which the character of "Stanceley" (my mother's pet name for me) was shaped and formed, extruded from the plastic material of a Jewish boy's becoming, in the distant reaches of the 1930s, startlingly parallel to the Newark of Phillip Roth, with the clichéd street stickball and Dodger games at Ebbets Field. One twi-night double header was unique in that, when the field lights were switched on, a swarm of insects, attracted to the lights, descended on the field and the stands, causing the game to be called "on account of bugs!" and sent us all scrambling for the exit. My younger Brooklyn contemporaries, among them Woody Allen and Barbra Streisand, are products of the same template.

Chapter 3

1940-50: Schools and Friends. And Others.

Around the corner was our public school, PS 197. I don't remember much of what went on in that building, but outside in the schoolyard, some vivid memories. I had a classmate named Davie Budin, a passionate and inveterate gambler—I remember him offering odds on which pigeon was likely to fly off a wire first—who later gained notoriety as one of the fixers in the City College basketball games scandal. (At that time, before the hegemony of the NBA, college basketball was the main event and attracted most of the wagering). So Davie was busted and, I believe, did some time.

A propos basketball: college games were the headliners, and sometimes my dad would take me. Once at Madison Square Garden (the old one), I found myself standing next to Harry Boykoff, a Jewish giant of a St. Johns center at 6'10". To the 13-year-old diminutive me (my growth spurt came a few years later), he appeared as enormous as Dianne Arbus' Eddie Carmel, the eight-foot Jewish Giant; the disparity in our heights is graven on my memory along with the sweat coursing down Boykoff's body, his face transformed into a terrifying skinfolded mask.

Also under the heading of basketball: we played for hours on end outside on the schoolyard courts around the corner. In the wintertime, when all was snow-covered, we broke into the closed schoolyard with shovels and cleared the ground so we could play. I remember going to the fights with my dad, a bloody event, at an arena somewhere in Brooklyn, where the bloodlust of the crowd overwhelmed me. We also had elements of culture: there was a Subway Theater Circuit, a kind of internal touring production that would play serially in each of the five boroughs. I can't for the life of me recall a single title, although I'm sure Abie's Irish Rose was on the list. Aunt Ruth (blood aunt) sometimes took me to the Broadway theater, where I saw Harvey with Frank Fay, (who came out after the bows and did 15 minutes of stand-up, virtually inventing the form) and An Evening with Ethel Waters. I didn't get the double entendres and resented the fact that everyone else was laughing.

Our part of Flatbush was old, and there were still vestiges of colonial times. One of these was a short alley that ran off of Avenue O, called Bay Avenue and, of course, this being Brooklyn, there was a Bay Avenue Gang, mostly non-Jews, but somehow I was accepted among them. I remember one fight with another gang where objects were thrown, and either I was hit by a brick (thereby illustrating a line out of Cyrano De Bergerac, "We all live under the possibility of a falling brick"), or some guy on the other gang was the Krazy Kat to my Ignatz Mouse.

Under the heading of violence: a grievous attack on me by a boy who lived in the apartment house next door. He must have been a playmate, or at least an acquaintance: one day I was home and the doorbell rang. Our maid answered the door and then came looking for me, announcing that one of my friends was at the door, asking for me. She didn't name him and, if she had, I might have had second thoughts about coming. Naming some misunderstanding that we'd had while playing, he sliced open the side of my face, from the left eye down to my mouth, with a rusty razor blade. A millimeter higher and he surely would have blinded me. He ran away and I was left standing in shock, bleeding all over the front vestibule. My mother was not home, working, as usual in Walden's, alongside my father. The maid called our nearest relative, my other Aunt Ruth, who lived some blocks away on Kings Highway, and they rushed me to the doctor. Solly (Solowitz) was an intimate of my parents and did a superb job of sewing me up, to the extent that I have virtually no residual scarring although I must have enjoyed a certain notoriety among my mates. The boy, whose name has mercifully left no trace, was later arrested and, I was told, sent away to some sort of reform school. This all must have been in the early Forties.

Now that I've introduced you to the other Aunt Ruth (not the one sharing my bedroom), I will use her as entrée to the Brodys. This Aunt Ruth was married to my mother's brother Leo, and they had two sons, Gene (who was to become a major figure in my later life; you'll meet him again) and Alan, his kid brother, later a playwright and for many years the provost of the creative arts department at MIT. They lived on Kings Highway and Gene, although a few years older, was a major playmate. He preceded me at James Madison High School, went on to graduate the Wharton School, became an officer in the Navy and then entered the financial world, where he became a star. Gene was a Master of the Universe, a die-hard conservative and political foe of mine and Bobbie's, but always leavened by the deepest bonds of blood and love; we even acted as God-Parents for each others children.

My mother was the oldest of seven siblings: the three girls—my mother Henny, Ruth, and Sylvia—all lived long lives, well into their 90s and 100s, and four boys—Abe, Leo, David, Milton—all of whom, except for David, died young. My mother, being the first-born, became the *materfamilias* and, particularly after their parents Isador and Gussie died, in effect raised the others, mainly the girls Ruth and Sylvia, hence the obligation to shelter Ruth in my bedroom.

Like many of the immigrant Jewish families at that time, one of the most urgent needs was the purchase and maintenance of burial plots, so a Brody Family Circle was founded, as a way to ensure a burial spot for the family members as they died in the New World. When I was a boy, this Circle met in a different member's house on a rotating basis every couple of months.

Like most families with the requisite 7-10 siblings, the permutations of cousinhood were great, so I got to experience the sense of belonging to something larger than just the immediate family.

I never knew my mother's parents, Isador, a furrier, and Gussie. Both died when I was still an infant, and my father's parents, Heshber and Bertha, I knew not at all: his father didn't make the trip to America (more about him later) and my father, at the age of 11, was the responsible male accompanying his aging mother on the ship to the new world.

My father, Herman, having achieved a certain standing in the middle-class society of 1930's New York (he even went to Washington during World War II as a representative of the clothing industry), was eager to show his standing vis-a-vis the others and loved to lord it over my mother's Brodys. So for a long while he was the president of the Brody Family Circle, many of the meetings took place in our house, with marathon ping pong games in the basement, opened bottles of Canadian Club at the bar, and a groaning board of potluck dishes along with those from our kitchen on the dining room table. The Brodys had branches in Canada (I was to meet several in later years), London, and Israel. Some distant relatives were murdered in the Shoah, but the Holocaust didn't decimate our families the way it did some others.

So that was the shape of my boyhood: street games and family. And radio: Captain Midnight, Jack Armstrong after school, and the Lone Ranger at night unless there was a Dodger game on the 12" Philco TV. I sent away for a Tom Mix Premium Glow Belt with Secret Compartment Buckle that turned out to be a cheaply made plastic strap that disintegrated in the classroom when I wore it to school, so I had to run home for lunch holding my pants together with my hands. Because we lived just around the corner from the school, I came home for lunch every day.

Our maids were mostly black and mostly from the Caribbean, but occasionally were replaced by an Irish or other infiltrator. Esther, a Jamaican, was with us for many years, a sort of mother-in-situ when I was an infant. She was fiercely protective of me and loved me dearly. I never knew her family name. This racial disparity colored all relationships; there was only one black student at PS197, the son of the janitor next door. My father's racial discrimination—he referred to all blacks as schvartzes—was standard for Jews of a certain age. Aside from the maids, I had no contact with black or Hispanic people but the exotic black did entice me and as I matured, Joe Louis, Lena Horne, Charley Parker, and Fats Waller were my pantheon of heroes. (Much later, for my son Josh, this fascination was even more evident: his wife and his later partner were both black, as was his best friend and roommate. Josh was in effect a Negro manqué.)

Starting when I was barely five, I spent summers at sleep-away camps that were mostly in the Adirondacks and Poconos, predominantly Jewish, and bourgeois; the pinko Workers Circle camps of the Catskills were for Socialist Jews. At camp, I first tasted theater and was drawn to the act of performance. I learned to swim and to play more sports, entered into secret societies (both encouraged and illicit) and exotic activities like woodworking, lanyard construction, horseshoes and arts and crafts. Sometimes, either my brother Bernie or my sister Terry was at the same or sister camp, but we had virtually no contact. I discovered a fascination with snakes, which I caught barehanded then murderously bashed their heads in. I opened them up to see what they had eaten or how their inner organs were configured.

In a camp production of Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Pirates of Penzance*, I got my first taste of the stage. You may have noticed that I haven't yet made any reference to music. Aside from the pop tunes of that time, the early 40s, I had no contact with the concert world or with serious music. Even today, when I happen to hear one of these 40s songs, it throws a switch, and I can sing the entire lyric of an eminently forgettable swing tune from that time. Back then, the idea that I would later be engulfed by music, study the art of composition, and become a composer would have struck me as absurd.

One of the embarrassments that accompanied me to camp every summer and throughout my youth, up to my mid-teens, was that I was a bed-wetter. Within the house, it was treated as a minor fluke, but away at camp I was a member of a scorned and spurned minority. I had to either try to hide the fetid evidence in the morning or endure the public shaming of changing my sheets. Now that I look back, this must have had a major effect on my "being" in the society at these camps. How did I survive this derision? How was I not banned from the inner circles of boyhood? I must not actually have been alone. There must been other bed-wetters, and we must have formed a kind of enclave in the bunk-hood, but somehow we were not excluded.

My grades at PS197 were high enough to skip a grade and get me into the Rapid Advanced Class, so I transferred to Cunningham Junior High School. Far from being around the corner, Cunningham was two bus rides away from my home. The school was not as Jewish-ghettoized as PS197, so I was introduced to a new subculture. I have a vivid memory of getting into a schoolyard brawl with a gang of others (I don't have a label for them, but I know they were not black). Down on the ground, I was surrounded by hostiles until one of them recognized me from one of our classes and apparently feeling a certain kinship said, "This guy's ok, let him up."

Another flash memory: going to the Polo Grounds when it was still a Giants ball park, and on the subway steps, being caught up in a crowd of black boys and threatened with a mugging. Which leads to a still further stab of terror at remembering an incident on the streets of

midtown Manhattan: being accosted by an older man who somehow offered to show me some interesting photos, following him to a darkened doorway until I finally came to my senses and ran for it. Further, the sight on the subway of a respectably dressed man masturbating behind a copy of the New York Times. Also on the subway, a man picking his nose, drawing out an amazing long, gelatinous stream of snot and blood before calmly wiping it under the seat. Ah, New York! New York!

At Cunningham, I got in with a new bunch, some of them fellow transferees from PS197, others new. Rather than the Climbing Cats, we organized a sports team (the name forgotten, but we did invest in a team sateen jacket) and played schoolyard pickup basketball and an occasional baseball or stickball game. The only teacher I distinctly remember is an old Irish biddy who always wore black, with clod-busting work shoes and hair growing out of her facial wens. Her admonition to come to order was “THIS IS NOT COMMUNIST RUSSIA! WE’LL HAVE ORDER HERE!” She was a real termagant, an Irish Catholic fascist terrorist.

With Cunningham and the shul now so far from home, I often needed a place to have a snack or relax between activities and preparation for my Bar Mitzvah. Luckily, my father’s niece, Hannah Greenberg, and her family lived in a strategically convenient location. Hannah’s mother was my father’s sister Pauline, his closest sibling and, to me, the most approachable. Hannah was a stay-at-home mother of two girls, and married to Herbie, a sweet and funny man. (I later learned that Herbie had been the best friend, growing up, of the Hollywood director Robert Rossen; on one of my first trips to Los Angeles, I called on the actress Carol Rossen, Robert’s daughter and Hal Holbrook’s wife, and we met for coffee.)

My father’s family history is complicated and fascinating. Herman’s father, Heshber—my grandfather—who died before he could come to America, came from a shtetl, a village in the Pale, that part of Central Europe encompassing parts of Poland, Russia, Lithuania, and Austria, constantly shifting in its contours, the home of millions of Jews. While still a very young boy, Heshber was kidnapped off the shtetl street by the Cossacks as part of a plan put into effect by Tsar Nicholas 1 in an attempt to enrich the Russian society with Jewish *sechel* (intelligence). Jews were officially prohibited from participating in many professions and the upper levels of the Russian government. Nevertheless, the Cossacks stole young Jewish boys from their families and sent them to special schools to be educated in law, medicine, government administration—all the “forbidden” professions. Called cantonists, the boys had to serve the Tzar for a period of 25 years, after which they could choose either to remain apart from the Jewish community or to return to their roots.

Heshber was trained as a forester and served his 25 years. Choosing to return to his origins, he faced a dilemma: he now had a new name and only a dim memory of the town he came from. So he started to wander through the Pale, seeking his people. Along the way he met a widow, Bertha Volusky, mother of two children. Heshber and Bertha married, and he took her name, having forgotten his own family name, and started a new family, conceiving seven children, my father the youngest. Eventually, my grandfather found employment as a forester in Northern Silesia on the estate of the German nobleman Graf von Holdenberg and, as was often the practice, took his employer's name (as the slaves here in the U.S. did), dropping, of course, the "von." Herman's older brother, my Uncle Harry, had preceded my father to America and, after Heshber's death, arranged for Herman and their mother Bertha to come and join him in New York. Harry had met a woman in America who did not want to be saddled with a European name like "Holdenberg" so he changed the name to "Walden."

So at the age of 11, my father, Herman soon to be Walden, sailed as a responsible male, in charge of his aged mother (remember, Bertha had borne nine children over many years), and they arrived in America in steerage. Herman became an apprentice in the millinery business; he once told me of dressing in livery and riding in a horse-drawn coach to deliver bespoke hats to wealthy clients on Park Avenue. Later, the brothers Harry and Herman started their own millinery shop, which eventually became Walden's, on 34th Street opposite Macy's. The store eventually expanded to include women's ready-to-wear clothing. The hat shop was still active upstairs, and I spent many fascinating hours playing amidst the wooden head-forms and exotic feathers in the workshop of Heinrich Schneiman, the chief fabricator.

My father was trying to inculcate me into the business, a hopeless goal, but I put in my time at the cash register. I went to the store with them on Saturdays in that year's Cadillac, did my stint at the cash register and constructed boxes, took my hard-earned money, and made my way to Gimbels through the arcade right next to Walden's that allowed foot traffic directly between Macy's and Gimbels. In the Gimbels basement was the stamp department; I had started a collection. I pored over cancelled first editions, pristine new sets like The Presidents Series or The National Parks, and made my purchase. One day, I saw two black boys run a scam: while one of them got the saleslady's attention, the other hopped over the counter and stole a bunch of stamps. They must have been really passionate collectors. I saw this larceny and rather than being horrified, was a little envious of their daring.

My father took great pleasure in his haberdashery and his personal grooming. He visited his barber, John, in the barbershop in the basement of the Pennsylvania Hotel across from the old Penn Station. Dad would regularly have a shave and trim while simultaneously having his nails

done, then regally luxuriate under a hot towel. At the time, this ritual looked a little absurd to me; now I would kill for it. Sometimes, afterward, he would take me with him to the gym on the highest floor, where we would sit for a while in the schwitz and then expose ourselves to being blasted with a cold-water cannon, while covering our privates. The expanse of naked flesh, mostly overweight cloak-and-suiters, was impressive. One of the last images I have of my dad was, when I visited him in the hospital as he was terminal, of him playing with and caressing his testicles.

While we're in this byway of genealogy, let's deal also with my mother's family, the Brodys. My mother, Henrietta Brody, was born in the town of Rypin, in north central Poland, in the late 1890s. Her family supplied oil for the lamps of the town. In the 1990's, Bobbie and I, while living in Berlin, visited Rypin and found the town square where they must have lived (it was a Jewish enclave) and although the population when my mother was there was 30% Jewish, by the end of the Nazi period, all signs of the Jews had been eradicated, save for a neglected and overgrown memorial that an American emigré had financed, hidden on the edges of a farm, far removed from the town center. Defining the contours of this memorial were Jewish gravestones the Fascists had used as street paving. No living Jews remained in Rypin at all. A thoroughly depressing visit. My parents were approximately the same age; they met in New York in the 19-teens. My father volunteered for the US Army in World War I, but never saw combat.

Like many of my generation, I was presented with a panoply of relatives, what with seven siblings on my mother's side, my mother being the oldest of her clan, and nine on my father's, with his half-siblings; he was the youngest. On Herman's side, there was Becky in Philadelphia; his half-brother and -sister, Meyer and Reisel, Rose, and Saida in New York; Chaiesther in Boston; and Harry and Pauline in Brooklyn. A volatile mix for a young boy to incorporate. My father's nephew Bill Walden (Harry's son) and his wife Trippie were long time employees of The New Yorker magazine and Bill, who was a closet dramatist even managed to get a play of his, Metropole, based on the character of Harold Ross and the magazine, produced on Broadway in 1949. Unfortunately, it only ran for one night. I knew Harry and Pauline best. The others were much less assimilated than we were and seemed foreign to me, especially Meyer, who was Orthodox.

Again, I have no distinct memory of any school-related music. By the time I got to Cunningham Junior High, the venerable and venal Mrs. Williams had been replaced by a young, attractive woman (whose name I've forgotten) who taught something known as "popular piano," i.e., I learned how to play the popular songs of the period, which of course included the hits from

the Broadway shows of Rodgers and Hammerstein. In addition to a piano, every respectable Jewish middle-class home had a record player of 78 rpm configuration, the more sophisticated ones capable of stacking multiple discs and automatically turning them to the B side so that the cast albums of hit Broadway musicals were part of the everyone's record library. Of course, these songs were also covered by the popular singer-celebrities. Anyhow, learning to play these tunes was my entrée into the world of music theory, as I learned functional harmony and began to hone my sight-reading ability.

Our synagogue, Temple Ahavath Sholom, was just a few blocks from Cunningham, so some days I would go there for my Bar Mitzvah preparation and instruction. I vaguely remember an unpleasant rabbi but oh, how attractive I found the prospect of performing before a large audience, and how self-satisfied I was with the reception of my speech. Nevertheless, another unforgiveable act: along with some accomplices, I somehow broke into a storeroom at the *shul* and destroyed some material. I took some pieces of a Bakelite telephone receiver for no other reason than the thrill of theft, and kept them hidden in my bedroom. And we played a trick on the rabbi, placing something with a pointed end on his chair so that he got stabbed in the ass when he sat down.

I had eyes for a blonde, blue-eyed, zaftig shiksa in our class at Cunningham. We started "dating" although I really had no idea what that meant. All I knew was that I had a new fascination with the female body, and I wanted to explore that terra incognita. The actual act of penetration probably would have scared me to impotence. I think I did actually get to lay down a bunt and was limping toward first base when her mother, a single divorcée, caught on to the gleam in my eye and the bulge in my pants and put a stop to the long bouts of necking going on in her parlor. (Did we really have parlors in Brooklyn?)

Speaking of unseemly conduct, my parents were called to school conference several time in my Cunningham years, my most grievous offense being the time I had poor grades, so I hid in the schoolroom closet and, after the building had emptied for the day, retrieved the grade book in the teacher's desk and altered my grade. Of course, the teacher noticed immediately, thus the requested meeting with my folks.

And then, the great day when I was able to come beaming to the early-morning throng in the schoolyard to report my first nocturnal emission: "HEY GUYS, I CAME!!" I also began wearing glasses, probably because I read as many books as I could carry from the library. Reams of science fiction, sports bios and boyhood fantasies like *Home Ranch, a Tale of the West* by Will James. I began to hoover up literature, leading to my present library of close to a thousand books.

At the end of 1945, as my Bar Mitzvah drew near, we lived in a world of optimism, having just won a war against the Axis Powers. America was preeminent in the world. That August, at camp, we heard the announcement that the U.S. had dropped some sort of huge devastating bomb on the Japanese, and we rejoiced in the decimation of so many of the enemy.[2] The previous four years had filled our minds with fantasies of heroic acts whereby we would personally capture and kill Hitler and Hirohito; William Steig's "Dreams of Glory" drawings show such fantasies. I have no clear memory of discussing the Holocaust or any familial connection to it, but I felt the general aura of "being Jewish," of having been somehow persecuted in the past but being secure in our present Fortress Flatbush. A world defined by Hymie's Highway High-Grade Appetizers on Kings Highway and going out for Chinese food ("Chinks") on Friday night (otherwise keeping a somewhat flexible kosher at home), and delicious shellfish and lobster at Lundy's Seafood in Sheepshead Bay on the weekend.

My Bar Mitzvah finally came to pass, and my Haftorah and speech got A reviews from the captive audience. Then on to the party, an ostentatious affair at the Union Temple on Eastern Parkway. I was finally the star of my own movie, awash in applause as I made my grand solo entrance across the dance floor. I had invited 10 of my closest male friends—even a few goyim among them!—and the many tables were filled with members of the Brody Family Circle, the Kings Highway Boys (my father's card club), salesgirls from Walden's, and other business associates. My father's half-brother Meyer cut the challah. Uncle Meyer, the Orthodox Jew who was my only contact with that distant and uncomfortably strange group, lived in a small, dark walk-up redolent with the off-putting smell of cabbage and other indefinable odors, near elevated tracks somewhere in the distant, black hole of unknown Brooklyn. The five-piece band at my Bar Mitzvah earned the lavish sum of $125 for playing all night long. I reveled in the largess of my gifts, more in the checks and cash than in the pen and pencil sets.

One friend at the affair was Tall Paul Bender, all of 5'11", (I was among the shortest, my growth spurt to 6'2" still in the future) who I later learned belonged to the family of Milt Okun, my publisher (much more about him later) and whose family owned a resort in the Adirondacks, Scaroon Manor, a hotbed of leftist political and artistic activity, the birthplace of the Weavers, with Pete Seeger and my colleague in The Open Theater, Ronnie Gilbert. One summer Paul, at camp with me on Schroon Lake, arranged for a bunch of us to visit the Manor. That was a major point in my political awareness; my parents were solidly conservative bourgeoisie. My one whiff

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[2] This memory is confirmed by Billy Gould, a bunkmate at the time, now a successful semiretired dermatologist and novelist in Menlo Park, California.

of the roiling Commie world had been from my apostate Uncle Milton, who had wanted to go to Spain with the Lincoln Brigade, but never did. Paul later became an expert in Constitutional law.

Also in the Bar Mitzvah photo are my little cousin Alan and some other classmates from Cunningham. My brother Bernie hadn't yet been mustered out of the service, but his fiancée Beverly was there.[3] When Bernie was in basic training at Elon College in North Carolina, my father and I took the train, my first such trip, to visit him. I was confronted for the first time with the apartheid of the South, shocked by drinking fountains and bathrooms labeled "Whites Only." We had nothing like that in Brooklyn.

Bernie later flunked out of flight school and was assigned to ground crew work at Clark Field, Manila. He took one of his leaves in Japan and was able to bring me gifts of a finger-ring made from a shell casing and a silk scarf with a rising sun drawn upon it; both of which gifts I treasured for years. The ring may still reside somewhere in the dark recesses of my storage loft in Palm Springs.

I managed to graduate junior high with reasonable grades and eagerly looked forward to entering the more advanced world of high school, at James Madison, in the same class as Supreme Court justice Ruth Bader-Ginsberg, although I didn't know her personally. The school also later spawned, from its Jewish middle-class womb, such politicos as Chuck Schumer and Bernie Sanders. I love namedropping.

My father and brother always had major generational problems. I was the Golden Boy, the Chosen, while Bernie got the raw end of the deal. From the early days through Bernie's return from the Army Air Corps, theirs was a contentious relationship, and it grew ever more so later on, resulting in actual fights and chases through the living room of 2314 while I cowered upstairs, grateful not to be involved. Psychologically we young Waldens were not atypical for the time—a conflicted older son, a self-absorbed female middle child, and an unbearably smug young Chosen, whose real talent had not yet emerged. A father who succeeded in business and occupied the *Herr im Haus* role with his wife, often joking to others as he and his wife approached middle age, "Think I should trade her in?" Hennie neatly outmaneuvered Herman with us children and, in later years was, and still is, routinely referred to by relatives and friends as a saint. Really. I'm not making that (or anything else) up.

Aunt Sylvia, early in her career as a child psychologist and not yet married to the sociologist Sydney Axelrad, was active at that time in both the Society for Ethical Culture, and the Walden School (no relation) in Manhattan. As a Bar Mitzvah gift, Sylvia gave me a visit to another psychologist for what was then standard practice, a Rorschach inkblot test; she was

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[3] She later dumped him, a trauma from which he never fully recovered.

probably concerned about my bed-wetting. The result, as far as I was allowed to know it, was that though I suffered from some of the usual problems of early puberty, I was not a candidate for therapy. When I started wearing glasses, she directed me to another office where I underwent a series of visits in which I sat before a device that projected flickering, changing images across my entire field of vision, thereby "exercising" the eyeballs. I now think this was quackery—it had no effect on my vision—and, in retrospect, I'm surprised Aunt Sylvia fell for it.

Warren Brody, of the Toronto Brodys, was a distant relative. Like Sylvia, Warren was a psychologist; he later ended up in Sweden, a much-respected immigrant to Scandinavia. As a young man, Warren hung out for a while with Bernie and some other cousins; they went camping, etc. When it came time for us to decide where I was to spend the summer of 1947, Warren suggested Canada, specifically Camp Wabikon on Lake Temagami, in Northern Ontario. Temagami is 80 miles long, with hundreds of islands, and Camp Wabikon, which specialized in overnight canoe trips, was located on one of them. Of course it was mostly Jewish, our Northern cousins having the same tribal needs as we had.

I was enrolled without ever having been there, and took the longest train ride of my life—with a SLEEPER!—passing through Niagara and finally ended up at Temagami. Camp Wabikon was divided into boys' and girls' campuses, and into bunks by age. My bunk was a senior one, i.e., we governed ourselves. We had no rules about cleaning, making the beds, or filling our time with activities, so we pampered sons of the middle- and upper-middle classes became feral, our living quarters increasingly filthy. The laundry accumulation under the beds threatened to lift them on clouds of soiled cotton. After about a month, my folks came to visit, to see how I was doing (I was having the time of my life) and, upon seeing the state of our bunk, threatened to take me home immediately. Their reaction sobered me up, and I performed a ritual cleansing and sweep, thus saving my summer.

At camp, there was the usual teenage groping among the sexes, but it wasn't cherry-picking season. I remember smoking for the first time and reacting as I would later to pot, lying on my back in a meadow, reeling under a brilliant Northern sky and being transported by the Northern Lights, either in the skies or in my head. One night, I managed to scarf down an entire tub of whipped marshmallow topping and was terribly ill for several days afterwards.

As the *raison d'etre* of the summer was canoe tripping, we went on successively longer trips until we were ready to go out for a week. It was summer, so the forests were abuzz with mosquitos and other flying nature, which made the portaging a trial. We made camp, and at first dawn, we went out in the canoes to fish, bringing in perch and pickerel. Then back to camp to prepare the fish, grill it and have memorable feasts of fish and eggs. One day we were out on the

water when an unexpected storm struck, with huge waves swamping the canoes. We had stored our belongings (clothes and sundries) under the gunwales and were wearing only underpants and plastic ponchos. The waves swamped the boats and all our belongings floated away and sank in the middle of the lake.

Luckily, we happened to be in the vicinity of a Hudson Bay Trading Post, so we paddled over there and, wearing only our underpants and see-through ponchos, entered the Post and bought replacement clothing. I don't remember what we used for money; maybe the counselor had cash or an account, but my strongest memory is of the Indians who were native there, laughing out loud on our predicament. This misadventure strangely echoed the memory of being a naked six-year-old forced to leave the safety of our garage in Brooklyn and being jeered at by the neighbors. In the swamping of the boats, this dangerous episode presaged another that happened decades later, in Greece.

At the end of the summer, I got permission from my parents to visit with some of my new Canadian friends on my way back home. About five of us boys stopped outside of Toronto at the suburban mansion of Dick Greisman, whose family owned the Lady Ellis shops. There was a lot of wealth on display in the camper population at Wabikon, but the Greisman compound was really high-end, a new world for me. The Greismans had their own stable, so we rode on bridal paths and cross-country through the woods. I had learned to ride at some of the American summer camps I attended but had never experienced the thrill (and danger) of galloping through the Canadian woods. (I also recall either before or after this Canadian summer, going riding in Brooklyn on the Rockaways with my cousin Gene, galloping along the surf on Gerritson Beach near Marine Park.)

Dick's parents were traveling, and his older sister and her friends wanted nothing to do with us, so we had the house to ourselves, with servants to indulge our every need. Unsurprisingly, we indulged in an inordinate amount of drinking and horseplay. One of my closest friends that summer was Marty Kirsch, from a Montreal family. Not long after this summer, I visited him in Montreal, where he arranged for me to lose my virginity with a sweet young hooker. He set up the visit for the two of us and allowed me, as invited guest, to precede him.

After being informed that this was, indeed, my initiation, she couldn't have been more considerate and patient. As I was in position for my second trip of the night, entering her from behind, the phone beside the bed rang. Without breaking stride, and encouraging me to stay as I was, she answered the call and made arrangements with another client before hanging up and finishing the exercise. There was something so wholesome and sweet about the whole thing that it

was probably the best way to introduce a young boy to sex. I can't imagine a similar procedure for girls, who usually have to take their chances with fumbling, ignorant, or aggressive boys, but a system similar to mine wouldn't be a bad introduction. I think some "native" societies do, in fact, follow such a practice.

After the summer in Canada, where my fellow campers routinely mocked me for my thick Brooklyn accent, I changed my locution from "wauta" to "wahter" and from "sault" to "sahlt." At the Brooklyn dinner table, when I asked someone to pass the "sahlt," I was again jeered at for "putting on airs," for showing off my alien smarts. But this jeering didn't take, and my speech ever since has only echoes of my Brooklyn upbringing.

James Madison High was a hefty walk from 2314 Avenue O and for three years I made that walk every day as there was no public transport available for the route. I have less of a memory, less detail and emotional context for these years than for my junior high years.

My musical involvement was coming to the fore. After coming back home from Canada, I felt a need to make music on an instrument more personal, more connected to the breath, than the piano. I had become a big fan of Benny Goodman's, so I chose the clarinet as my new instrument. If I had achieved any degree of proficiency on the piano I would have continued with it, but I could only improvise, not play any of the immense treasure of music available for the piano. Out of this inability and frustration, I came up with the justification of taking up the clarinet.

A relative through the Brody line was Manny Goldrich, owner of Manny's, a major music store on West 48th Street in Manhattan. Although Manny's sold no stringed instruments, no violins or celli, the store was the preeminent shop for professional musicians, the sidemen, the brass and wind players, the drummers and guitarists in New York. Manny's walls were lined with signed 8x10 glossies of this clientele. Years later, just before the store's demise (sold to chief competitor Sam Asch), my cousin Henry, who had inherited the store upon his father Manny's death, published a book of those photos.

Manny Goldrich owned not only the store, but also the entire building, something my father had also done. Walden's building on 34th Street was very valuable commercial property, and he rented out spaces to a series of tenants; just above the store, for instance, was a hair salon. The family always went to this salon on Thanksgiving, to have prime seats for the Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade (known as the Macy's Day Parade), right where its many giant balloons terminated their journey down Sixth Avenue. Another tenant, on a higher floor, was an eccentric musician/composer, who often placed a megaphone in his window to broadcast his music onto 34th Street.

Back to 120 West 48th Street. One of Manny's tenants was a wind doubler (a musician who plays more than one wind instrument) named Al Carlin. Al became my first teacher. He taught me not only the clarinet but also the tenor sax. I soon owned a doubler's case for the sax, with a separate space for the clarinet. Thanks to Cousin Manny, I started with premiere instruments, a Selmer sax and a Buffet Clarinet. Although I took the subway ride from Brooklyn to the City every Saturday to have my lesson, I was still a musical illiterate; I was limited to and only interested in the popular music of the day. I had no idea how many symphonies Beethoven had written. My progress on the wind instruments was not spectacular, but I stayed with it and eventually started playing in Madison High School's Big Band. Sometimes I played the piano; we had arrangements of Big Band hits made playable for students.

Gradually, I became more musically literate. At one point, Madison's student orchestra (not the Big Band) needed someone to play the bass clarinet, and I volunteered. I was given the instrument from the school's *fundus*, and although I practiced many hours, I never completely tamed the beast. A bass clarinet is much larger, heavier, and more complicated than a regular clarinet, and I hadn't studied it much. I was terrified of the squeaks possible in the upper register, and it took many years for me to conquer that. One evening at the ballet in New York with my parents, who weren't aficionados but attended occasionally, I walked down the aisle at intermission to ask the bass clarinetist how I could play in the upper register without squeaking. (Years later I would occasionally play myself in that orchestra).

Aside from these musical times, most of the rest of my James Madison education remains a blur. Although the yearbook claims I was captain of the track team, I only vaguely recall competing as a high jumper of moderate achievement (the Fosbury Flop had not yet been invented). I do remember how proud I was of my track shoes, high-jump style with spikes on the soles. I competed on the swim team in the butterfly, something I can barely imagine now, and even ran for an elected office in the student government. I must have been in a self-contained fug for those years—no friends stand out, no pointed memories, no love affairs—nothing!

The only class I remember is a history class with a male teacher (name forgotten), in which I read Edgar Lee Masters' vitriolic attack on Abraham Lincoln, something that appealed to my contrary nature by introducing me to the clay feet of heroes. I continued with my own voracious reading and somehow waltzed through the required curriculum. In my last year of high school, the family moved from the far reaches of Flatbush to the sophisticated world of Manhattan, into an apartment at 325 West 86th Street between West End Avenue and Riverside Drive. By now, it was just my parents and me, my siblings having moved out years before. Faced with a daily subway commute of more than an hour, I made application to transfer to The High

School of Music and Art in Manhattan but was rejected because it was only for my senior year. So I made the daily subway ride, back and forth, filling the time with the latest paperback or science fiction magazine.

The graduation in 1950 took place at the Loews Kings Theater, a downtown Brooklyn landmark notable in later years as the showplace for Cousin Brucie's Rock and Roll shows. I played in the orchestra and remember nothing else. One anecdote: years later, trying to fill in some of these gaps, I searched online for the yearbook of my class only to discover that my name was missing. I began to wonder whether, in fact, I had been there. Eventually, I realized that in those days high schools graduated two classes a year, one in the fall and one in the spring. Because I was born in December, I was placed in the group that graduated in the fall. I finally got a copy of the relevant pages of my yearbook and discovered some of the facts of those years, 1947-50. In addition to those I've already mentioned, I was chosen Best Boy Actor; my goal was Juilliard.

I finished my walk on the dark side of the three years at Madison with the school production of Shaw's *You Never Can Tell*, in which I played the leading role of the dentist but have not a single memory of the process, the production, or the experience. I played in the orchestra for the fall and spring graduations, played piano in the Swing Band and bass clarinet in the concert band. I had given up the sax by this time. I did play it once professionally, in one of the first performances of Kurt Weill's *Down in the Valley*, at the 3rd Street Settlement, under Julius Rudel. I was never very good, and the sax was thankful to see me go.

But as Professor Irwin Corey would say after five minutes of silence, "However…." I find I have missed or elided over an important, seminal thing on the way here, so before starting my account of my college years, I must retrace my steps.

That most important, life-changing event was my first encounter with the Disney film *Fantasia*. Although it was originally released in 1940, I first saw it in 1947, when I was 15 and happened to see it at a theater in the Century chain. Along with many of my colleagues (as I later discovered), I had never seen or heard anything like it. The segment that opened the world for me was the Creation, with dinosaurs roaming the earth, fighting to the death. It wasn't the visual, which was stunning enough, but the musical accompaniment that got me. I was possessed by the sound of the Stravinsky *Le Sacre du Printemps*; it seized me and wouldn't let go. So I took my semi-hard-earned money and bought the Philadelphia Orchestra recording on 78s, stacked the weighty shellac discs on our top of the line automatic-changer player in the living room, turned out all the lights and lay down on the carpeted floor. What happened next was uncanny. I was transported by the sounds and the rhythms, and I found myself becoming sexually excited. As the

music reached its climax, so did I. Afterwards, lying there spent, I said to myself, “HOW did he DO that? How does anyone make something like that?” And so, the direction of my future life was determined: “I’ve GOT to learn how to do that.”

Chapter 4
1950-55: College and Becoming A Musician

When I was born, my father took out a savings bond to pay for my college tuition. Hah. By the time I started college, at NYU in 1951, it barely covered the first semester. I can't remember why I chose NYU. We were living on West 86th Street and, rather than the hour-plus train ride to Brooklyn that I did for my senior high school year, NYU was a relatively short 20 minutes on the #1 to Sheridan Square. The school was a behemoth, with 50,000-60,000 students, and the Washington Square campus was in the wonderland of Greenwich Village. My classmates were diverse, quite a few of them black. I had the temerity to date one lovely black girl: rather than pick her up at her apartment in Harlem, she told me to wait for her at a nearby street corner because she didn't want her folks to know she was going out with me. I also hid this fact from my folks. We probably did what I usually did on my first dates: go to the City Center Ballet and sit up in the highest, cheapest balcony.

Somewhere my passion for dance had been ignited (probably by that orgasmic experience with the Stravinsky), and I loved sharing Balanchine's *Symphony in C* and Robbins' *Interplay* with young lovelies on my way into their pants. One of the ballets in the repertoire then at either the City Center or at ABT was Herb Ross's *Capriccios*, set to the Bartok *Contrasts*, a trio for clarinet, violin and piano that Benny Goodman had commissioned. I was still relatively unformed as a composer and clarinetist, but when I heard the sound of the clarinet in that piece, I had to find out who the player was. It turned out to be Dave Weber, whose studio was across 48th Street from Manny's. I sought him out and asked if I could study with him.

He agreed and introduced me to a technique of playing that was not widely used, the double *embouchure,* in which not only the bottom lip is folded over the teeth in contact with the reed, but also the top lip is folded over the upper teeth in contact with the mouthpiece. This resulted in a softer, warmer sound; its main practitioner, aside from Dave, was the Frenchman Louis Cahuzac. Dave was a contentious, thorny character whose main gig was as solo clarinet with the ballet orchestra and who arranged years later for me to be his second at the Symphony of the Air concerts one summer at Bear Mountain under Stokowski, and in Montreal for a performance of Pizzetti's opera *Murder In the Cathedral—in* the cathedral and under the direction of George Pretre, which gave the double bassist Dave Walters (father of the actress Jessica Walter) the chance to preface a rehearsal question with "*Maitre Pretre*—?".

I had met Peter Siegal at summer camp, and he introduced me to the world of New York private prep schools, namely the Fieldston School in verdant Riverdale, a long way from the concrete of James Madison. He was dating fellow student Helen Goodman, and they introduced me to Helen's twin Ruth. The Goodman twins' parents were Saul, the New York Philharmonic's long-time timpanist, and Lillian, a professional cellist. They all lived in Yonkers, down the street from Gene Krupa. At the Goodmans', where Saul and I were the only males, I was introduced to the strict practice of leaving the toilet seat down. Saul invited me to sit in on his percussion ensemble classes at Juilliard, a priceless lesson in percussion writing. He even allowed me to fill in on a triangle or wood-block part, if that player was missing. In the wonderful way that the world turns, Dan Druckman—the composer Jacob's son, our neighbor on Riverside Drive, my son Matthew's best friend, and a student of Saul's at Juilliard—now heads that department and leads these ensemble classes.

One of Manny's sales clerks was Murray Sunshine, a veteran of the Second World War who was studying composition under the G.I. Bill, as so many returning vets did, with Stefan Wolpe. Murray had written some incidental music for solo clarinet for the 1949 Equity Library Theater production of Clifford Odets' *Night Music*, starring Rod Steiger in his New York stage debut, and Murray needed someone to play this music offstage. He asked me, and this was my first taste of the New York theater. The production was then moved to Broadway, and they replaced me with a much more capable musician. In the process, I had invited Ruth and her parents to a performance, so I was encouraged to ask Saul to endorse my application for Tanglewood the next summer. I played for him at their home in Yonkers, and he correctly disabused me of any hope in that direction.

As you can see, my musical literacy and clarinet technique were developing apace. I had a lot of ground to make up; my knowledge of the "classical" repertoire was minimal, and I still had no specific composition teacher. I was immersed in the jazz world of 57th street, often hung out at Eddie Condon's and at Birdland, fascinated by the music and the emerging bebop style of Charlie Parker and Dizzy, but not able to play it

While visiting my folks in Clearwater, Florida, at the Safety Harbor Spa, where they went for Dr. Baranoff's annual high colonic flushing, I went to a jazz club and saw what would make me hesitate to offer myself as a jazz musician in the coming years. It was an open mike night, and anyone who had the temerity to join the group on the bandstand was invited to do so. One daring youth took up the challenge, opened his case and produced his sax. As he played his solo choruses, the leader looked at him with derision and went over and spit in the sax case. It's a hard life: ask anyone who was threatened with a knife by Charlie Mingus, he of the often fearsome

temperament, "The Angry Man of Jazz." I have certainly used jazz inflections in my concert and theatrical pieces, but I have never felt secure enough as a player to represent myself as a jazz musician.

Back in my freshman year at NYU I started with my musical literacy, learning the basics of diatonic theory, species counterpoint, music history, playing in the student orchestra and learning German. I was also writing doggerel and one of my early attempts was accepted and printed in the student magazine *Good Themes*.

In addition to the NYU orchestra, there was also a training orchestra at the Mannes School, uptown on the East Side. I can't remember who the conductor was, (possibly Leon Barzin) but my stand partner was Arlene Weiss, later to marry Alan Alda and get an orchestral position in Houston. What sticks out is the memory of playing my first classical piece, Wagner's *Meistersinger Overture*. Also in that orchestra was the bassoonist Jane Taylor, a friend who was central to my decision to transfer to Queens College after my freshman year at NYU, which I found too large, too impersonal.

In addition to Jane's recommendation, my Uncle Sydney Axelrad, now married to my Aunt Sylvia, taught sociology at Queens. He praised the school, a boutique institution compared to NYU. Queens had a particularly distinguished music department, staffed by some Jewish emigré luminaries like Curt Sachs, the extraordinary polymath, specialist in music, dance and much else (and whose instrument collection I would encounter years later, when I started teaching in Berlin at the HdK) and who illustrated the *Ländler,* a German folk-dance equivalent of the minuet, by climbing up on his desk and dancing; Edward Lowinsky, a prominent musicologist and specialist in the early music of the Madrigal Comedy (we sang the first performance since the 16th century of Banchieri's *Il Festino)*; Karol Rathaus, a Viennese composer and my first composition teacher, who commented on the music of the Second Viennese School of Schoenberg and Berg with the statement, "*Dat ist a Musik mit* no . . . how do you call dese? [pinching his breast]) *Brustwarten*?" A timid suggestion from the class, "Nipple?" "*Ja! Genau*, anti-nipple music!" and Boris Schwartz, whose compendium of violin fingering would be a guide in my future writing.

So I exchanged the 20-minute ride to Sheridan Square for another hour-plus commute out to Forest Hills. I was absorbing music, history and literature like a sponge. I couldn't get enough. I was becoming a musician. For my father, this was less than wonderful news; he would ask,

"*Macht man davon a Leben*?" ("Can you make a living?")[4] His referent was the klezmer musicians of the shtetl, the fiddlers on the roof of his village, where music was a not-quite-reputable profession, not suitable for the heir to Walden's, my brother having broken with Herman and now working at Orbach's. Still, my father did support my clarinet lessons and my other musical activities—pushed in that direction, no doubt, by my mother.

My relationship with Ruth Goodman having run its inevitable unconsummated course, I found a new object for my concupiscence in the lovely violinist Bira Fenster, a classmate in Queens. She lived with her family in a 14th Street walkup, in the shadow of the 3rd Avenue El. Necking in the entryway downstairs, we could have been two characters out of a Henry Roth novel. At Queens, we would retire to the wooded greenery around the campus at lunch break then show up for rehearsals with Edward Lowinsky, still brushing off the grass and twigs we had picked up lolling on the ground.

Among my other new classmates at Queens was Ronnie Roseman, a phenomenally gifted oboist, later admitted into the Philharmonic, which he left to pursue a solo career as member of the New York Woodwind Quintet and the Bach Aria Group, later a faculty member at Queens and at Yale. Ronnie's father was in the garment trade, a cloak-and-suiter like my father, and his divorced mother had remarried with Peter Grippe, a well-known artist. Ronnie's mom and Peter introduced Ronnie to Ben Weber, a composer, to further his compositional studies. Ronnie became my best friend and confidant—we indulged in all-night L.T.s (long talks) about Life, Love and Literature—and Ronnie introduced me to the world of chamber music.

I started lessons with Ben, and he became the major guide to my compositional maturation. He was a somewhat sad recluse, an overweight balding version of the carefree young Adonis he had once been on the West Coast in his studies with Schoenberg. He was also a gourmet cook. My lessons with him initially took place in his *souterrain* apartment on West 10th Street. We talked about and listened to his and other contemporary composers' music, and worked on my writing for a few hours, then prepared dinner, mostly Chinese exotica like Five Spice Chicken. Some six hours after showing up, I would leave him and his beloved dog, to take the subway home.

The Queens College Orchestra was conducted by John Castellini and, in the course of the next three years, I played clarinet and tympani and sang in the annual performance of Handel's *Messiah* (the Mozart orchestration). I took a playwriting class with John Gassner, a well-known theater critic, and won that year's award for a one-act play. We also did a production of Gilbert

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[4] I may give the impression that I'm a fluent Yiddishist on the order of Saul Bellow. I'm not. But I do treasure the particular *tam*—taste—of certain words when I chew them.

and Sullivan's *Patience*, in which I performed as The Colonel, singing, "When I first put this uniform on. . . ."

My classmates at Queens were a varied and talented crew, including the director Norman Schwartz (imported from NYU and later much employed as a dialogue coach in Hollywood), the conductor Saul Lillienstein, the aforementioned Jane Taylor and Bira Fenster, the soprano Reri Grist, and the composer Elaine Radoff-Barkin, who went on to teach in UCLA's musical composition department for 23 years and is now *emerita*. By now, I knew that Beethoven had written nine symphonies, that Bach's B Minor Mass was a pinnacle I had not yet climbed but at least had perceived in all its majesty, and that the bass clarinet was a tame-able beast.

I found a new direction for my stage jones: as a modern dancer. When I approached my father for the money to finance my lessons, he drew the line and said, "That's something you'll have to pay for yourself!" So I started classes at the 92nd Street YMHA, the hub of New York intellectual and artistic activity.

My first teachers were Katherine Litz and Nona Schurman, both of whom were encouraged by my athleticism and discouraged by my inflexible back. Since Martha Graham's technique was based on the contraction and release of the pelvis, which required a similarly flexible backbone, I never did master it. In spite of my physical limitations, though, I was one of the few straight male dancers around, so with their encouragement, I applied to the New Dance Group, then on East 56 Street, and was accepted as a scholarship student. In that milieu, in Donnie Mckayle's class, I caught the eye of a young woman newly arrived in New York from Hartford in her quest to become a dancer, Barbara Dolgin. After class, I accompanied her home to the Barbizon—not past the front entrance!—after we stopped for an apple or papaya juice, walking and talking, getting to know each other. One of the ways I had of entertaining her was to swing down the length of a subway car, from strap to strap (as the old subway cars were outfitted, hence the sobriquet "straphanger") and pole to pole while emitting chimpanzee yelps—not the most sophisticated approach, but it works for the apes. And it worked for me.

After a time in an apartment on Convent Avenue (across from the old Juilliard) which she shared with a number of other girls, Bobbie moved into a sublet on West 77th Street with another dancer, Roberta Ampel. This apartment was in the basement of the Universalist Mystic Church and was routinely invaded by hordes of cockroaches emerging from the floor, which was particularly upsetting when one was doing one's floor stretches and warm-ups. The owner of the building, Bobbie's landlady, was a wild-haired harridan who prepared dinner every night for her long-deceased husband. Eventually, Bobbie Dolgin and I found ourselves necking on the sofa/bed all night before her departure the next morning for a visit home. When she got off the train at the

Hartford station and her then-boyfriend Billy got a look at her swollen lip and disheveled appearance, he promptly broke off their relationship.

Another classmate of mine at Queens was the choreographer Marvin Gordon. He cast me in his company for some recitals at the 92 Street Y. Again, my leaping ability was my prime asset. Bobbie was also in the company, and she and I decided to develop our own performing group, the Young Person's Theater. We did a number of children's parties. Murray Sunshine, my old contact from Manny's and composer of *Night Music*, was contacted by Gertrude Berg, the creator and star of a hit radio then TV show of the 1950s, *The Goldbergs*. For a TV show they needed a piano player for an episode set in the Catskills, someone who could speak a few lines and then dance with one of the guests. I got the part and thereby met Menashsa Skulnick, who was well known as Uncle David on the show. Skulnick was developing a solo act and needed a composer and musical director. I met with him a few times, assayed some tunes and was rejected.

At the New Dance Group, which in the meantime had moved to new quarters in the theater district of the West 40s, I began accompanying some classes and eventually started doing that also at the Graham Studios on East 63rd Street, where I became one of the staff accompanists. I got to know Martha well enough to become a musical assistant in her preparation for *Clytemnestra*; she complained to me about her "commodification" as an artist. I constantly tried to become the clarinetist for her Broadway seasons (Ronnie was already playing the gig) but was never accepted. I then expanded my accompanying to include many other studios in New York: Jose Limon's, Maggie Black's ballet classes, Pearl Lang's, etc. I had a special knack for accompanying dance classes, thanks to my experience as a performing dancer and to my keyboard proficiency as an improviser, developed through my many hours banging away at my beloved Knabe, following my compositional urges.

I was a favored accompanist for Bert Ross, a principal Graham company member, who had a secret life as a gay cabaret performer of show tunes, so I sneaked such tunes and jazz notes into my accompaniments for him. When I tried the same for Martha, I was severely reprimanded. I took dance classes with Merce Cunningham in a studio that he rented on lower Broadway. Also in that class was Remy Charlip, a Cunningham company member with whom I would later work on the preparation for the unproduced Jacques Levy-Roger McGuinn musical TRYP. The owner of the Broadway space was a performer, Scotty Marshall, whom I accompanied; Scotty was in a relationship with Theodore Gottlieb, who became well known as Brother Theodore, a bizarre dark monologist whose Carnegie Recital Hall appearances became a cult success in the 1950s. One of his unforgettable rants was that he had been "in love with my raincoat until, after many

years of successful Freudian analysis, I now *hate my raincoat*!" He regularly invaded our rehearsals in insane jealous rages until she finally broke up with him.

By now I was convinced of my path. My goal, however, was unclear. My ear, which was not the finely tuned instrument it should have been to justify my claiming to be a musician/composer, was now constantly filled with song, and has been so ever since. Whatever I've heard most recently is constantly playing inside my head. I am able to disregard it, but, if I choose to concentrate at any time of the day or night, I can tune in and hear it. I began to be able to "think in sound," as I later described the compositional process to people who couldn't imagine how we composers do it. I began to think sounds and then either see them written out or conversely, see them being played on the keyboard of my mind. My maturation as a composer consisted in refining and expanding the possibilities of this process.

The music collection of the New York Public Library was housed in the East 67th Street branch, and I spent hours there, catching up with the canon of the past 300 years. Here I encountered copies of *New Music*, Charles Ives's financed editions of music by himself, Henry Cowell, Aaron Copland, etc. One afternoon I went to Dick Frisch's in the Bronx when his parents were away. We drank some of their best whiskey, and he put on a record that astonished me: Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire*. Although I didn't orgasm to this music as I had to the Stravinsky, I was captivated and confused. Again, I had never heard anything like this, and when I asked Ben Weber at my next composition lesson, and although *Pierrot* is not a serial piece, he started to lead me toward the 12-tone serial path, a way of writing music and the world he inhabited. *Pierrot* was to prove to be a seminal event in my musical maturation. I never became an orthodox member of the serial fraternity, but I have always used the basic approach of spinning material out of constructed cells in my work.

I was also beginning to be involved in the professional world of the performing musician. The American Federation of Musicians (AFofM) was famous for the gangster-like tactics of its president, James Petrillo, who opposed the amalgamation of the black and white union locals. I joined the union (Local 802) opposition and campaigned against the incumbents. We won and eventually became just as corrupt and divorced from the needs of the performing musician. Only years later, when some of my fellow practicing musicians (like the violist John Palanchian), out of the theater pits and recording world, became Union officials, did the Local truly represent the working musician.

I went to the union floor of Local 802 of the American Federation of Musicians, the AFM, in the Roseland Ballroom on West 52nd Street. On Wednesday and Friday afternoons, there was a cattle call. Club date musicians milled around while the voice over the public address

system called out in a thick Brooklyn accent, “Trumpet for the mountains this weekend” or “Bass for a cruise,” etc. I responded only once to such a call—New Year’s Eve at the Sherry Netherland Hotel, playing sax and clarinet in a big band. It was an inexplicable act of *chutzpah*—I had no business taking the gig. At such events, the individual band members usually do solo “heats,” mingle with the guests and play tunes and requests. Each time my turn came, I demurred. The other players, all seasoned veterans of the club date circuit, were soon looking at me funny. The next day the contractor called me and chewed me out for ever accepting the date and swore never to hire me again. The only thing that leavened my shame was the fact that the contractor’s brother, a concert cellist, was also on the date, but all he did was practice scales and Bach suites behind the stage all night long.

I can’t remember how, but outside of the Union, I was hired to play piano for a Yiddish-language production of *H.M.S. Pinafore* but, because it was a non-union job I couldn’t use my real name on the program so I appeared as Stanley Livingston. I also began playing weekends in the mountains, the Catskills, which were still thriving in the guise of *Kuchalaens* (cabins surrounding a central main house, where Jewish fathers parked their families for the summer while they, the fathers, toiled further in the sweltering city). At hotels like Grossingers, The Nevele and Kutschers, where the lusting singles of the city would meet on the weekends to consummate (or not) their roiling sexuality and maybe, just maybe find a mate. (Old joke: What did the egg say to the chicken at Grossingers? “Now that you’ve laid me in the country will you call me in the city?”) You know how the Nevele got its name? There were 11 siblings, so they spelled it backwards.

Some of us formed a little band, piano, sax, bass and drums, with me on piano, and offered ourselves as accompanists, to agents who booked comics, jugglers, or ballroom dancers who played three or four hotels a weekend, traveling in their rattletrap vehicles from one hotel to the next, doing two or three gigs on the same day. Naturally, we had little time to rehearse under such time pressure, so rehearsals consisted of a “talk-over” a few minutes before the show went up. The acts carried their arrangements with them, which we got a cursory look at before we had to play.

One place had a small pit in which the piano, an upright, had a music rack of almost no angle, so that the arrangements had to stand flat. This was ok for most charts, but one comic had brought a complicated arrangement, laid out in an accordion-folded form and, when the lights went down and the show went on, the accordion fold began to unfold. I tried desperately to stay with the “hits” and special bits, frantically waving my hands between the keyboard and the music, trying to keep it from falling off the rack. Eventually I could only watch helplessly as the

manuscript unfolded in both directions, eventually covering not only the keyboard but also my hands. Obviously, I couldn't keep playing, so the comic did a whole number attacking me, to great laughter as I desperately tried to reassemble my part. We didn't work that resort or for that agent again.

We got a job for the whole summer at the ridiculously named Queen Mountain Country Club, a second-rate *Kuchalaen* not far from Grossingers. We played the shows on the weekend, when the husbands came up from the City, and during the week played for dances, wives dancing with wives or with the waiters and busboys (an unwritten perk of the job) or, if the opportunity presented itself, the musicians (we rotated on the bandstand). I did gain a certain proficiency in sight-reading and seeing how an act was put together, but I never really entered that elite brotherhood of the club date musician, those who can call on a repertoire of thousands of tunes, in any key and in any style. Those who could, who worked the exclusive halls of Meyer Davis or Lester Lanin or Dick Judson, have my utmost respect.

At one point, our clarinet player had to fulfill a National Guard obligation for two weeks, so he arranged for a sub with the band. The sub was Mike Bergio, a student of Leon Russianoff, the prime clarinet teacher of serious "straight" (i.e, non-doubling) clarinetists in the city. Mike had no idea of the repertoire of pop music, so I called out the chord changes, transposing the chord names to his B^b key, while playing the piano in the concert pitch, and he played scales and arpeggios. Otherwise, Mike and I played clarinet duets during the daytime. Our regular guy returned, and Mike went on to become the second clarinet chair in the New York Philharmonic.

I also hitched rides to other hotels in the Borscht Belt and met other musicians, some of whom I would later encounter in the New York freelance world, at the ballet or opera orchestras, or indeed at the Philharmonic. Some weekdays, if there was nothing scheduled at the hotel, I hitched a ride to the City, down Route 17, where we stopped for coffee at the Big Apple Diner, a coffee rest stop near Monticello that was the meeting place for all the acts going to or returning from the mountains. Legendary joke battles took place there, between all the leading comics—Jerry Lewis, Milton Berle, Red Buttons. I think that's where the moniker of "the Apple" in referring to New York was born.

My relationship with Bira had been on hold for the summer and one day, when we had some days off at the hotel, I hitched a ride (I had no license or car of my own; that didn't happen till much later) and made my circuitous way to Golden's Bridge, a leftist enclave in the Eastern environs of Westchester County, where the Fensters had a bungalow. I showed up unannounced in a rainstorm and pressed my suit. I must have really alarmed Bira (not to mention her parents)

with my obvious erotic need. Bira broke off our relationship. I reacted badly, banging my head against a tree and generally acting like a spoiled child.

After the summer I returned home to 86th Street and picked up my burgeoning life as a college student, dance accompanist, and freelance clarinetist. By this time I had found a great affinity with the bass clarinet and began playing that instrument in various orchestras in the city, although I still didn't have one of my own. I performed on stage in the Queens College production of *Patience*, and a group of us indulged in a weekend at Evy Schleiffer's family cottage near Peekskill, where there had been a famous ant-leftist demonstration centered on Paul Robeson. It was late fall, and the weekend was a heady mix of chamber music and sex, drugs not yet having made their presence known. Ronnie Roseman's mother and stepfather had an apartment in Provincetown and in the following summers, we could use the apartment as we played, as the Gramercy Chamber Ensemble, a series of chamber music concerts at the Provincetown Art Association. This was before the interstate road system was built, so we loaded up somebody's car and made the long trip through Providence and up the old Route 6 (before the Mid-Cape Highway was built), pulling into Provincetown early the next morning.

At the Provincetown chamber music concerts, I learned pieces like the Mozart and Beethoven trios, the Stravinsky three solo pieces, and the Debussy Rhapsody. The pianist for these concerts was initially Sue Kagan, who lived across the street from us on 86th Street. She also accompanied me at my audition for Tanglewood, where I was rejected. I knew Sue from the summer I spent as music counselor at summer camp (Sue was the music counselor at the girls' camp), where the owner, an amateur violinist, had hired musicians like Sue and the cellist Fred Goldstein, and Alan ("Mike") Kriegsman, later a Pulitzer-prize winning critic for the *Washington Post*, so that he could play chamber music with them.[5] Later, for the Provincetown concerts, Ellie Kassman, wife of the psychoanalyst Buddy Meyer, became our pianist. She and Buddy lived in a splendid town house on the East Side of Manhattan. We rehearsed in her studio in the City and then at their house in Hyannis on the Cape. Their son Nicky later became a successful screenwriter in Hollywood.

I met Heather Anderson, Maxwell Anderson's daughter, and she told me about the show her father and Kurt Weill had left unfinished when Weill died. It was based on *Huckleberry Finn.* They had completed some three or four songs, and several composers had tried, or had been approached, to complete the score. In my boundless humility, I asked whether I could have a whack at it. They indulged me, but Maxwell Anderson rejected my attempts.

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[5] The next time Mike and I ran into each other, we did so literally: many years later, we backed into each other while gazing up at Michelangelo's ceiling in the Sistine Chapel.

At the same time that I was accompanying classes at the Graham Studio on East 63rd Street, I was gradually easing into the life of a free-lance musician in New York, with the extraordinary challenges of playing any type of music *prima vista* (sight-reading) in any style. I turned my romantic attention and lusts toward Bobbie Dolgin, building on that unbridled (actually somewhat bridled) night on her sofa/bed. I began work on my first orchestral piece, a Passacaglia for chamber orchestra, which I heard premiered later with the Seventh Army Symphony Orchestra in Greece and Germany.

The first performance of a piece of mine took place at Queens College: a Sonatina for violin (Paul Gurewitz) and piano (Gil Kalish, recommended by Ronnie Roseman.) Gil was at that time a student at Columbia, and he astonished me with his faultless playing and understanding of the music. Gil was to be among my most profound musical encounters; now an internationally renowned artist and educator, he remains a treasured friend to this day.

For my senior recital, I wrote a theater piece using an Ogden Nash poem sung by Reri Grist[6] ("How long is a song, oh Lord, how long?") while Bobbie and I danced, and Elaine Radoff and others were placed in the audience to contribute asides. Sol Berkowitz, a Queens faculty member and accomplished jazz pianist and theoretician, agreed to play. Also in the band was Ron Odrich, a wonderful clarinetist who went on to become a dentist, specialist to musicians, while establishing a first-rate career as a jazz clarinetist, but I can't remember the other musicians. The show was a clear representation of my interests, and I remember my father, who must have been puzzled by the whole exercise, asking Leo Kraft, another faculty member, for an assessment of my prospects in the professional world. Leo told him my path lay clearly in the direction of the theater.

I also appeared in the varsity show, a musical with a score by Jack Urbont, a fellow senior who went on to do graduate work at Princeton with Milton Babbitt, but whose bent was toward pop and theater and who for years provided the background music for a soap opera. I had a solo number, "They Went That-a-Way," a cowboy ballad with dance breaks. Dick Grayson, a talent scout for the New York Theater Guild, saw this performance and got in touch with me after the show; he offered me an apprenticeship for the coming summer at the Westport Country Playhouse, the try-out venue for the Theater Guild that was a diversion for Lawrence Langner and his wife, Theresa Helburn, a leading couple in the New York theater world.[7]

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[6] The same Reri Grist who sang the first Consuela in *West Side Story* on Broadway—Leonard Bernstein wrote the song "Somewhere" for her—and went on to a long and distinguished career in Europe as a coloratura soprano.

[7] I ran into Dick Grayson again 16 years later, when he was the house manager for the theater in North Beach where we prepared the San Francisco production of *Oh! Calcutta!*

Because I had failed my audition for Tanglewood, I accepted the offer. Highlights of that summer at Westport for me were *You Can't Take It With You*, with Wally Cox, Phil Loeb, and Kate Harkin, wife of Zero Mostel, who gave us an unforgettable evening when he entertained us all on our night off; the musical *Coming Thru The Rye*, based on the life and work of Robert Burns, in which production I would meet Irwin Cory and the choreographer Anna Sokolow; and Robert Sherwood's *Road to Rome*, in which I played a Nubian slave in full body makeup. One of our fellow apprentices was trying to use his Method Acting training, so when the Roman soldiers were taking a rest break on the stage, and an emissary burst on and announced, "Look sharp…Hasdrubal's coming!" this apprentice, Jacques Andre (née Rabinowitz) jumped to his feet and shouted, "Oh shit!"

So much for Stanislavsky. I was to spend the summer apart from Bobbie, so we arranged for her to be the nanny for the three-year-old twins of the company manager. I met the train at Westport to find her accompanied by a huge Rottweiler; she had taken on the responsibility for him with one of her roommates. This was not in the original deal we had made with the manager, but we gave it a try. Bobbie, who was a modern dance student at the Graham Summer Program in New York, and the pampered darling of middle-class leftist parents in Hartford (her mother was secretary for the Connecticut Communist Party), had no intention of carrying out such chores as cooking for the twins and cleaning up the kitchen; this, together with the damage caused by her unexpected beast tearing up the back yard, led to her swift dismissal. In my free time, I went into the garage of the house where I was billeted and practiced the Copland Clarinet Concerto. All in all, a heady summer as I approached the worlds of the freelance musician and Broadway apprentice.

Chapter 5

1955-57: The Draft, and a Proposal

I was approaching the end of my college career. I had determined not to proceed with post-graduate work. Because of the draft I was in the tenuous position of not being able to take any symphony auditions (I rationalized that I would probably not have won any). I investigated playing in the West Point band. I was accepted, but I would have had to enlist for three years, so I chose to volunteer for the draft, thereby committing myself for just two years. I had my eye set on joining the Seventh Army Symphony Orchestra, stationed in Stuttgart; this unique outfit had been in existence since 1950 and several of my buddies from the New York free-lance scene were in that orchestra. I wrote to them, and they set the wheels in motion.

I went downtown for the physical and passed. I was soon called up and went to Fort Dix in New Jersey for basic training. You've all seen the cliché films of basic training—the screaming cadre, the humiliation of cleaning up the area of cigarette butts and pebbles on hands and knees, the exhausting hikes, the termagant sergeant ordering pushups for imaginary breaking of imaginary rules, etc. I slept in the bottom of a double bunk and one morning when we were awakened at reveille, the man above me sat up, got to the edge of his bed and froze; he was in a catatonic state, not moving a muscle. No matter how hard the sergeants screamed at him to get dressed, he stayed paralyzed in his sitting position until the medics came and lifted him, still in the unbending L of his seizure, and took him away. We never heard from or about him again. There were other college-educated draftees in the troop, even some post-grads, but most of the unit were working stiffs or guys who had been given a choice between the draft or jail.

One day we went out for rifle practice and, fanning ourselves into a circle facing a central point, faced an elevated stage where a cadre instructed us in loading dummy ammunition, cocking, and aiming the rifle. We were all to aim our guns at the instructor. Suddenly a shot rang out, which fortunately did not meet the target. The instructor turned ghostly pale, and we were ordered to stand and march away. An investigation did not solve the question of how a live round had crept into the ammo.

We spent another day on the firing range, with live ammo. I loved the grenade launchers from the rifle. They were so cool! But we were shooting at targets, and my rifle must have been defective; the recoil was so strong that my right shoulder was traumatized with severe contusions following a full day of shooting, and turned a startling rainbow of bruises. I was sent to the hospital, where I promptly contracted a bacteria and had to be placed in an isolation room. For the next two weeks, I was treated in this room, which was great. Bobbie, who was doing *Ankles Away*

on Broadway, took the first bus out in the morning, spent the day with me in my private chamber tending to my *every* need, then bus back to the city in time for her call and performance. Of course, being sick meant that I had to miss some of the central practices on the way to becoming a killer (like the obstacle course, crawling through mud and under barbed wire, long hikes with full packs. I had already done one of those but, despite warning the cadre that I suffered from hypoglycemia, I was forced to participate. Toward the end, I promptly fainted.)

A propos hypoglycemia: from about the age of 15, I had suffered fainting spells after hard exertion or fasting. I fainted in synagogue during Yom Kippur services, so I was given a dispensation and allowed to eat on the fast day. After I fainted while playing basketball in Central Park, I took myself to my friend George Lowen's apartment on Central Park West. George's father was our family doctor. To confirm the diagnosis of hypoglycemia, my father took me to a lab where I underwent a day-long testing, blood drawn every two hours, a fresh poke each time, a nightmare. The diagnosis was confirmed and thereafter, for the next 20 years, if I was not careful and went too long without eating, I fainted.

As my shoulder slowly recovered and I got over my flu, I was scheduled to be held over, to complete my basic training with another unit. To avoid that, my father visited and invited the sergeants of our cadre to come to the city and bring their wives or girlfriends and pick out something nice at Walden's. In exchange, they gave me a pass so that I completed my basic training with my unit and didn't have to stay on an extra two weeks of crawling through mud under barbed wire, with live ammo whizzing overhead. Thank God for venality.

Since my specialty was "musician," I was next posted to Fort Knox, in Kentucky, for band training. Although one of the perks was playing at the Kentucky Derby, that happened only once a year, so as you can imagine, we were a disreputable unit. When reveille sounded, we tumbled out of bed, assembled outside and, as the armored division rumbled by (Fort Knox was the training center for armored and tanks), we performed our version of the Army Daily Dozen: the Cheek Scratch, the Mouth Yawn, the Toe Flex, etc. Our physical requirements thus having been fulfilled, we could go back to bed. One draftee in the armored division was desperate to get out of his tank unit and into band training. He asked me to tutor him in the saxophone, and I gave him a series of private lessons, but he was hopeless and eventually moved to a clerk-typist position. One day, I got a call on the barracks phone; it was he, telling me he had seen the orders for my coming post-band training posting, and I was scheduled to go to Korea (not combat, but playing at the airport for arriving planes and freezing our asses off). He asked if I wanted to be sent there. Of course, I said "NO! I'm working on joining the Seventh Army Orchestra!" Because the Army is run by its clerk-typists, he cut me new orders to be sent to Europe.

Our unit supplied the music for the officers and non-coms clubs on base. The Army was still segregated, especially bases in the South. I was approached by one of the black musicians to be the piano player at the black non-coms club. We played long, long sets of what was then called "race music" (rhythm and blues in white-speak). The dance floor got more and more crowded, the lights dimmer and dimmer until they finally went out, and we played on in the darkness, accompanying Lord knows what on the dance floor. It was quite an education.

One of my mates in our unit was a trumpet player who had been on the road with big bands for years until the draft caught up with him. He had developed a taste for booze on those long road tours, and he kept a stash in the barracks. The post command drew the trumpeters for the performance of taps and other bugle calls out of our unit. One day my friend got the call. He was completely smashed. We managed to get him to the flagpole and with us supporting him above and below his waist, he played a note-perfect Retreat.

When it became evident that I was to be sent out of the country, I called Bobbie and proposed: "You want to get married next weekend?" She said, "OK." My commanding officer granted me two contiguous two-day passes. Because it was late summer and Bobbie was still doing *Ankles Away* on Broadway, and it was the time of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur that year, we had a very small window of opportunity. I had to get to New York by train from Louisville that Thursday, we had to get our blood tests and fill out the paperwork on Friday, then have the ceremony and wedding night so I could get back to Fort Knox on Monday and she back to the show by Tuesday. Before I left Fort Knox for the wedding, I had to visit the chaplain for a prenuptial talk. I showed up at his office, and he proceeded to tell me what married life would be like: "Fuck her as often as you can, buy her something nice every once in a while, get her pregnant soon, and don't take any shit," was his advice. I thanked him, saluted, and headed for the train.

My folks took care of the arrangements as the Dolgins were in Hartford, and the ceremony was in New York. It was a small group of *machatunim*: our parents, Bobbie's grandma, my best man Dick Frisch (of the *Pierrot* introduction), and Bobbie's maid of honor, Donya Feuer.[8] We didn't have a *minyan*, but luckily the photographer was Jewish. This all took place in

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[8] Donya Feuer and Pina Bausch, a German, met in New York in the Fifties, when Donya and Paul Sanasardo formed their Studio for Dance ensemble in which Pina and Bobbie also participated. One night, after viewing a showing of the Bergman film *Persona*, Pina and Donya stayed up all night, smitten with the film. Donya vowed to go to Sweden, seek out Bergman, and work with him—which she did, emigrating there for the rest of her life and eventually choreographing his production and film of the Mozart *The Magic Flute* and doing her own directing at the opera. I met her there in Stockholm when I was there for an international theater festival. In Wuppertal, Germany, Pina went on to found her *Tanztheater*, a startling

the Park Sheraton Hotel, and after the meal, we retired to our bridal suite. The next morning, I ran to Grand Central station to catch the train back to Louisville.

After finishing band training, I had orders to report to Fort Dix once again, to the reple-depo (replacement depot), a staging area for troops shipping out to Europe. For the next two weeks, I avoided the eyes of the sergeants and kept myself busy hiding from make-work chores like raking leaves and cleaning quarters. I disappeared all day and, after dinner, with a pass I had managed to procure, took the bus into the city and spent the night with my bride before catching the first bus back and reporting "present" at the morning roll-call. (Notice the elegant kind of symmetry with our arrangement two and a half months earlier, when I was in the hospital.) Eventually, my orders came through, and I boarded the ship for the five-day trip to Bremerhaven.

On the ship, our sleeping quarters were in the hold, in hammocks stacked four bunks high. The mess was next door, and we were expected to do KP. I volunteered for any musical activity, for *any* activity that kept me above decks and out of the hellhole down below. I accompanied all denominations for religious ceremonies, played dinner music for the officers and their wives, and even walked their dogs on the forward deck and picked up their poop—anything to keep me out of the hell down below. It was a stormy crossing, so our metal food trays careened all over the long metal dining tables, and foodstuffs would spill out and mix and slosh over the edges, resulting in awful mixes that brought forth heaves, mixing vomit into the already unholy mess (never was a meal more aptly named).

Luckily, there were some paratroopers on board, and they liked to get together and play country-Western on their guitars. They asked me to join them on piano, and I eagerly agreed. The weather turned bitter cold, but every night the troops would sit out on deck to view movies being projected on an improvised screen. It didn't matter what the film was or how cold it was, we sat there with frost numbing our faces, shivering on the bare metal deck, anything to avoid the hold as long as possible.

We finally docked in Bremerhaven. I was floored by the immense sky of the North Sea but very upset by the sight of workmen in black leather coats, busy on the quay. This was 1955, and the specter of Nazism lurked before me. One of the first things the Army afforded us was a film, shown in a theater set up on the base, a film about the war and its atrocities, with scenes of the concentration camps, with appropriate narration. These films were meant to educate those amongst us who might have missed out on the previous 20 years. At the mention of the

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new type of performance called "dance theater," which would travel the world and present dance in a new perspective. So do great oaks from little acorns grow.

Holocaust, there was applause in the audience, from some of my country-Western paratrooper buddies from the ship. I felt ill and got out of there. After the film was over, they came out and found me and asked if I was ok. I explained to them that I am Jewish and that the film and their reaction to it had made me ill; they said, "But you ain't like *those* Jews—you're an OK guy!" That night some of them went into town, got smashed, got into a melee, and one of them shot the other dead. Ah, GIs.

I had counted on my orders being cut for the Seventh Army Symphony Orchestra in Stuttgart, so I was devastated to discover that I had been shanghaied by the chief warrant officer (CWO) in Berlin, who needed a lead clarinet for his marching band. I sent an SOS to my buddies in Stuttgart, but for the time being I was headed to Berlin. Another fly in the ointment was that lowly GIs like me were not permitted to bring their families over, especially not to Berlin, which was still under the four-power arrangement that had been worked out in Potsdam after the War. I got on the train, and we rode through the corridor in East Germany that had been designated by the Russians, to reach our destination, Lichterfelde West, in the American sector in Berlin. The American barracks were housed on Finkensteinallee, in what had been an SS *Kaserne,* a military base. The pool had been the swimming venue for the 1936 Olympics.

I had mixed feelings about my assignment. At Fort Knox, I had been plagued by the incessant practicing of a young alto sax player named Sims, who was an early practitioner of what we would later call "free jazz," typified by Ornette Colman. For hours on end, he would play bursts of cascades of notes, following an architecture of sound that was clear only to him. When the Army bus delivered me to the *Kaserne*, that architecture was the first sound I heard—Sims had preceded me! But there was also a familiar and welcome face: John Minkoff, a Juilliard graduate, trumpet-playing friend was also in residence. Him, I was glad to see. (In later years, he became a scientist, working at Bell Labs in secret government programs.) I was assigned my billet and introduced to the leafy, green suburban world of Berlin West.

Of course, Berlin was a name and an adventure that had occupied my fantasies and nightmares since I was seven years old. The womb of Nazism, the lair of Hitler's bunker. A striking element at the post was that much of the running of the base was in the hands of German civilians—the security detail at the gate, the running of the PX, the cleaning personnel were all German nationals. These people all spoke English and most of the GI population knew only "*zwei Biers, bitte*" (pronounced "tswy beers, bitter") and only got off base to drink and fuck. The Americans had virtually no contact with the local culture and had all their daily needs met by the extraordinary PX, a kind of cornucopia in the midst of a still threadbare postwar German economy. The *Wirtschaftswunder* (economic reconstruction) hadn't yet been fully realized. In

1972, when I was in Berlin with my sons, I tried to show them the base, but we were denied entry by the German guards. In East Berlin, I also showed them a flower shop that offered only one kind of flower, a graphic example of the differences between life in the United States and life under Communism.

I reported to the CWO and told him that I was in a quandary: I was newly married, my wife already had her ticket to come over to live with me in an apartment off base, but only officers were allowed to bring over their dependents. The CWO said, “Tell her not to come!” He didn’t know who he was dealing with. When I called Bobbie and explained our problem to her, she said, “Screw that! I have my ticket, and I’m coming.” When I reported her refusal, he blew up, vowing never to let me live off base and to make my life in Berlin hell.

Of course, the Army’s presence in Berlin was a political farce. Berlin was an island in the middle of an East German Socialist state. In the event of Cold War hostilities, the joke was that 1. The band would be immediately flown out so that we wouldn’t foul things up, and 2. The Russians would call our HQ and say, “We’ll be over in twenty minutes, put the coffee on.” Every once in while, we engaged in war games in the Tiergarten, the park by the Zoo, where the Berliners watched us, amused.

One of our duties was to play in marches and parades on Clayallee (named after General Lucius Clay), the main avenue of the American presence in Berlin Dahlem. For the first parade, I refused to play my treasured Buffet clarinet in the Berlin chill. There being no metal clarinets available, I was issued a trumpet, which I had not the faintest idea how to play. I was to march in the parade, holding the cold metal mouthpiece to my lips when the other trumpets did (with Minkoff coaching) and fake-play. Of course, I couldn’t resist imitating Sims and contributing my own version of free jazz to the mix.

We were also given a proper uniform dress code, which included putting metal hoops in the bottom of our pants where they met the boot-tops, so that the pants looked “bloused.” I didn’t quite get that either, so in my first parade, there I was, not-playing a trumpet, with my pants dragging on the ground and the metal hoops clanging. Rehearsals with the CWO bandmaster were a hoot. His beat was more like a traffic signal, and he had a stock set of comments that he had obviously picked up in his career: “The winds are out of tune” “The drums are late” (or “early”) “Play louder!” all of which he said at least twice during every rehearsal, whether they were appropriate or not.

There were some terrific musicians in that band: Phil Batstone, a wonderful jazz pianist who was also a serious composer of serial music who had married a German woman, Magda, mother of a chubby son whom we all called “*Dicke*” (Fatty), and who stayed on to study with

Boris Blacher at the Hochschule (and later with Milton Babbitt at Princeton). I was to see him again when I returned with the orchestra a year later. And a Mormon trumpeter, whose name I forget, who was the first member of that exotic culture that we had ever met.

We were not allowed to wear civvies off base, so I attended early theater and concert performances in uniform, which led to both positive and negative reactions. Older Germans sometimes came up to me in the street and screamed at me about the destruction we had rained down on them, about how much they had lost. Such younger ones as there were—there were conspicuous gaps in the adult male population—were friendlier. The radio station they listened to most was RIAS (Radio in the American Sector), and the younger Germans were gobbling up American Big Bands, 50s jazz, and early rock and roll. The news was delivered by the Voice of America.

After a luxurious crossing on the *S.S. United States*, Bobbie arrived, accompanied by a huge steamer trunk. My CWO's hand had been forced by a direct command from Stuttgart to facilitate my transfer, but he vowed to delay as long as possible and to make me sorry for wanting to escape his tyranny. I found a room close to the barracks with a Frau Winter on the Ringstrasse. It was a three-story house, the other rooms occupied by the "*Schatzies*" of GIs—in other words, a sort of bordello for pour honeymoon. Our room was on the top floor, and we shared a kitchen with the other women. Our fridge was the windowsill of our bedroom. Bobbie still hadn't learned much about cooking, and the *Schatzies* taunted and teased her as she struggled to get our meals together. Even though it was early winter, the aptly named Frau Winter often went out in the snow to do a full body wash with the frozen crystals, shouting "*Macht gesund*!" ("makes you healthy!"). She also told of being raped by the Russians, a familiar narrative of most Berlin women.

When we ventured off the base, my German was rudimentary, but Bobbie's was nonexistent. She sought out the possibility of dance study and came upon the studio of one of the progenitors of Modern Dance, the wonderful Mary Wigman, whose studio was not too far away from us. I wrote out how to ask for directions from the bus driver or pedestrian, but she misread them: instead of saying "*Ich bin*

"Ich bin sehr dankbar" ("Thank you very much"), she said, "*Ich bin Ihnen sehr drehbar*" ("I am very revolvable to you"), and was met with various puzzled responses. Mary Wigman was very generous to the American expats who were studying at the school, and eventually let Bobbie teach some Graham classes. Mary made a special Christmas dinner each year for the Americans, bedecking her tree with fragrant beeswax candles. The adjustment required of us as Jews in the bosom of the beast was put on hold; otherwise, we couldn't have

functioned. (Minkoff and I had searched out Berlin's minuscule Jewish community and went there to play basketball.) I was to meet Mary twice in the coming years, once when she visited the Graham Studio in New York, and once shortly before her death, when Mary was about to head for Switzerland on her yearly visit, I went to visit her with Anna Grass, Gunther's first wife, who had been one of Mary's students. Mary was virtually blind by then and I've never forgotten the indelible image of her saying good-bye, her blind eyes filling with tears. She knew she was close to the end.

Remember, this was 1955, barely 10 years after the War, and Berlin everywhere bore the scars of intensive Allied bombings. As much as half the city had been destroyed, and ruins were still visible wherever you looked. The *Trummerfrauen* ("rubble women") were busy removing the debris and building the *Trummerbergen* ("rubble mountains"). Berlin was divided into four sectors, one for each of the occupying forces—American, Russian, French, and British—with free travel between and among the sectors. Because the Wall had not yet been built, had not yet instigated all the divisions that would later bedevil the city, we could go to the Russian (i.e., Eastern) sector and purchase music scores published in the Soviet Union, for literally pennies on the dollar. The Deutschmark was then trading at the rate of 4:1. That fact, combined with the ridiculously low prices translated from rubles, made my "literally" true. I still have my copies of *Wozzeck*, the Shostakovitz Symphonies, and other scores I bought and sent home from Berlin. At that time, the Army generously transported anything back to the States for returning GIs, hence the proliferation of Mercedes, BMWs and VWs gracing Americas streets, gratis the US Defense Department. I knew GIs who sent home whole houseful s of antique furniture.

Because Bobbie and I expected to be transferred at any day, I figured we could live under better circumstances for the near future, so we took all our wedding gift money and moved out of the Ringstrasse room and into a small boutique hotel, *Die Reblaus* ("The Winelouse"), a modest retreat for the diplomatic corps and visiting firemen of many nationalities. One of the U.S. diplomats, seeing the usual disarray of my uniform, courteously asked me, "Which army are you with, soldier?" Bobbie and I ate at a different first-rate restaurant every night (our favorite was the Paris, in the French sector, on the Kurfurstendammm) and went to the reborning Berliner theater. We saw Kurt Weill's *Der Silbersee* in a temporary Schiller Theater before the present one was built. We knew that this idyll was to soon end, so we indulged ourselves to the hilt, burning through most of our stash.

The proper orders finally came through and we boarded the train for Stuttgart, arriving there early in the day and being met by one of my New York friends, the violinist Seymour Rubenstein, who showed us to our temporary quarters, a place to roost till we found something

more permanent. When I reported for duty, I was stunned to discover that, in the interim, without my knowledge, I had been once again shanghaied, this time by the Stuttgart Chief Warrant Officer to report to the 7th Army Band!

Once more into the breach, hiding from the Army and my CWO during the day, knocking on doors to change my orders. One of the first things I had to do was to audition for the first clarinet, Art Bloom, whom I had met briefly at Princeton in 1954, when we both took part in a concert of students of composition at Princeton. Art had played a piece for solo clarinet by Don Martino, a virtuosic display that I had dismissed as incomprehensible (I was ridiculously narrow in my taste back then) while I had played in a chamber setting of *The Tempest*'s "Full fathom five, my father lies" by my college friend Jack Urbont. Although we were eventually to become the closest of friends, Art could be unbearably arch and condescending, and he took that position with me when we met for coffee before I played for him. This didn't sit very well with Bobbie and she began to strike back, with me doing my surreptitious best to silence her, as Art was in position to determine our future for the next year and a half. Nevertheless, the audition went well, and I awaited the next set of orders to the orchestra. But it finally took a direct order from the commanding general of the Seventh United States Army to release me from my leaf-raking and to effect my entrance into the orchestra.

Bobbie and I found a room on Relenbergstrasse, situated high above downtown Stuttgart, arrived at via bus or a set of some 150 steps set steeply into the hillside. Our landlords were *Herr und Frau Glaser*; we shared the *Grundetage* (first floor) with them and their son. Three other Army Orchestra members, with their wives lived on the floor above: we got to know Harriet and Harlow (trumpet) Hopkins, our first born-again Christians; Ron, also a trumpeter, and Marilyn Anderson (Ron would later play on the *Scuba* recording for me); and Stu Krams, a bass player from New York who later lived in the Poughkeepsie area near us, and his wife Lila. Patch Barracks, the headquarters for the Seventh Army, were outside of town in Vaihingen, but because orchestral rehearsal took place in a hall in town, we went for long periods without having any contact with the post command.

The situation at Patch was unique: in addition to the orchestra, there was a touring variety show, athletes, a big band—in other words, a complete entertainment unit. As you can imagine, such draftees were outliers to the strict regular Army. For instance, Ralph Froelich, a brilliant French hornist, marked his departure from the barracks and the Army by setting off a large explosive that was meant to simulate a howitzer charge under a mattress while he went whistling to meet his bus.

Blowing up his rack wasn't Ralph's only stunt. I met him when he was a Juilliard student and shared an apartment with other musicians on Riverside Drive. Ralph had been involved in a dispute with another tenant about loud music being played on a radio in the shared courtyard of the two buildings. On the night I visited, Ralph had organized three other horn players, and they had set up their music stands next to the window opening onto on the courtyard. They proceeded to play excerpts from the Schumanheern *Konzertstück* for four horns and orchestra, with all four horns pointed directly at the open window. That solved their problem.

This may be apocryphal, but I think it's true: in another apartment, after a dispute with the landlord, the guys, led by Ralph, decided to move out in the dead of night, but, before leaving, they painted the entire apartment black.

Later, in the midst of his career, Ralph was hit with a case of Bell's palsy and had to relearn the instrument with a new embouchure, blowing out of the side of his mouth. (Don McCourt, the bassoonist, had to do the same thing).

The Seventh Army Symphony Orchestra was created in 1952 by Sam Adler, a draftee violinist born in Germany, the son of a cantor, whose family had escaped the Nazi terror. Initially, the orchestra was an elite string quartet. The U.S. State Department and the Army realized, with Sam's help, that a touring orchestra could be a powerful propaganda tool to show the German people that the U.S. could produce musicians of concert quality playing their (the Germans') music, the music of Bach and Beethoven and Mozart, and that we were not limited to the tunes of Elvis, who would also tour Germany after he was drafted, in 1958. In the 15 months that I played in the orchestra we were led by three different conductors, also draftees. When I arrived, Ron Ondrejka was there; (later, he would lead the Santa Barbara Symphony). Next came Henry Lewis, who had been in the Los Angeles Philharmonic as a bass player and who, at that time in Germany, was having a long-distance relationship with the soprano Marilyn Horne; they later married, and Henry went on to an active career, conducting for her as she became an international star. Finally Ling Tung, born in China to a notable musical family and a violin graduate of the Curtis Institute, who later conducted for many years in Jackson Hole, where Bobbie and I had lunch with him one summer when we were traveling.

As I said, the orchestra's main *raison d'etre* was to tour, not only in Germany but more widely. Just before I got there, they had returned from a tour of NATO countries, and in my time, we toured throughout Germany and Holland, and in France and Greece. The quality of the musicians was mostly quite high; in subsequent decades (the orchestra was phased out in the early 1960's), U.S. orchestras usually boasted at least a few Seventh Army Symphony veterans.

Phil Naegele, whose family had also fled the Fascists and who later joined the Cleveland Orchestra and the Marlboro Festival, was concertmaster. The violinist Lenny Felberg stayed over there after his discharge to join the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam. The singer Barry McDaniel sang Berlioz with us and also took his discharge in Europe, eventually singing for decades with the *Deutsche Oper* in Berlin. On one weekend, Adam Pinsker (later a leading arts administrator), Henry Lewis, Bobbie and I drove to Vienna so that Henry could visit with Marilyn Horne, who was studying and starting her career at the opera. (That drive was especially fraught, since an epic Bavarian fog came in and we were virtually driving blind; at one point, Bobbie had to crawl up on the hood of the VW so that she could read the street sign). It was the time of the Hungarian uprising, and the streets were filled with destitute, wandering refugees. We attended a performance of *Blattl vor'm Mund,* a political cabaret/revue starring Helmut Qualtinger that I didn't understand a word of, but which so impressed me that I later tried my hand at it with my *Open Season*, which died unproduced in New York.

You can imagine that such a high-powered group of talented neurotics didn't fit easily into the Army scheme of things, and there were constant confrontations between the two elements. To keep us minimally in shape, we were assigned a traveling minder, a Regular Army captain. Sometimes this man was cool, but when he tried to pull rank, things could go awry. For the English tour that preceded me, the guys had bought some Steiff teddy bears who traveled with the orchestra, mounted on wheels. Local papers and TV featured photos of the bears arriving at an airfield in Scotland, and sitting innocently in the side stage at concerts, etc. When I was there, one of our tours included Nuremberg, during the great toy fair. We bought a great many wind-up toys and when the concert started, those of us who weren't playing in the overture that usually started the evening sneaked into the auditorium and wound up the toys, then released them from the rear of the auditorium and watched delightedly as they made their individual ways down the raked aisles, with the assembled music lovers reacting to the invading horde like Whack-A-Moles.

We pulled other stunts like wearing glassless spectacles and rubbing our eyes through the empty frames; wearing large fake hearing aids; interleaving photos in the conductor's score so that when he turned a page during the performance, startling images would greet him. This worked especially well with Henry Lewis, who had a morbid fear of spiders. The look on his face as his brown skin turned ghostly pale in the middle of Rachmaninoff was priceless. We usually traveled by Army bus, and as we were billeted at the nearest U.S. base, we were always checked out at the gate by the MPs. The orchestra had developed a tactic for this moment: whoever was sitting at the front of the bus would conduct a performance of "crowd noise"—random mutterings of "rhubarb" or of our names, shaping this undefined murmuring into threatening waves of sound

which would usually be enough to get any MP off the bus. Silliness like this was our way of keeping our equilibrium between the demands of our art and the discipline of the Army.

I had joined the orchestra as second to Art Bloom, but I lacked a clarinet in A and didn't have a bass clarinet, either. I got a pass to go to Paris to buy these instruments after my father advanced me the francs ("advanced"—ha! I never paid him back). I got the A clarinet at the Buffet showroom and went to Leblanc for the bass. There I was taken in hand by M. Montaigne, the solo bass clarinetist for the *Garde Republique* band. Somehow I made an arrangement with him to take a private lesson in the instrument at his home, and showed up there the next day. We shared no common language outside of the instrument; he opened a jar of preserved cherries from his place in the South, and we spent a wonderful afternoon getting smashed on the marinated fruit while I got the most productive lesson in my life—without verbal language. I was to join the orchestra on their tour in Germany. When I got to the British Army base that was hosting them, I was met by a sergeant in the East Surrey Regulars and discovered that I shared scarcely more language with him than I had with M. Montaigne in Paris.

On extended tours, our wives accompanied us by driving behind our bus in the Andersons' VW bug, to meet us in the next town. In such cases, we married couples would elect to rent a room at a pension or cheap hotel. The first tour we went on after I joined the orchestra was through northern Germany, in what would prove to be one of the coldest winters in decades, so cold that the water in the toilet froze overnight. The Reithalle in Kiel had started heating two days in advance, but we played (and the audience listened) in overcoats and gloves.

In Hamburg, the Älster froze over, and the North Sea froze so solid that one could drive across the ice to Denmark (and many did). We played in the concert halls of the town, for an audience made up of Germans and U.S. Army. After one concert a commanding officer at the local fort sent a note back to the conductor demanding that the trombones be disciplined enough to all move their slides at the same time—which they'd have done if they'd all been playing the same note.

We made a point of including some American compositions on each program. Much of this repertoire was unknown to the German population, as anything by a Jewish composer had been *verboten* under the Nazis, so Copland and Bernstein remained to be discovered. And we made our own discoveries, for instance the ovens at Buchenwald, the Eagles Nest at Berchtesgarten, the gemworks at Ideroberstein. But I realize that I have written little about the necessary adjustment that allowed us to live in in the Land of the Perpetrators, as the Germans say. That great adjustment didn't happen until later, when we returned there to live and work; for these years ('55-'57), we put such feelings on the back burner (forgive me).

Toward the end of my tour of duty, we were faced with the decision of whether to return to the States or to take my discharge in Germany and stay and build on the careers that were offered to both of us. Bobbie had settled into the room at Relenbergstrasse 6 and was taking ballet classes at the opera. She was cast in a production of *Kiss Me, Kate* at the *Theater im Marquardt*, in the role of Bianca. Later she got to know Inge Brücke and her husband Michael Pfleghar, a leading director for musical TV. Bobbie starred along with Inge and Caterina Valenti's brother, Sylvio, in a production for *Südwestfunk TV* of *Duelen Nach Noten* ("Duels over Notes").

But the idea of staying in Germany permanently, which some chose to do, didn't sit well with us. One of the expats who stayed was Speri Karas, a percussionist I had met in Saul Goodman's percussion ensemble at Juilliard. Speri became the drummer for Eddie Sauter's radio big band in Cologne, married a German woman, and lived out his life in Germany. In 1983, when I wrote the jazz score for our production of the Gertrude Stein opera *Doctor Faustus Lights the Lights* in Cologne, I used Speri for some of the prerecorded moments.

In 1956, a new concert hall, the Liederhalle, was completed in Stuttgart, and the Army orchestra was invited to participate in its opening. I had completed my *Passacaglia* for chamber orchestra while working with Ben Weber years before, and now Henry Lewis was interested in programming it with the Seventh Army Symphony Orchestra, so we played it in Stuttgart at the Liederhalle and later, on tour in Athens and Thesaloniki. Stuttgart was a thriving city that had been decimated by the War and then again by the automobile in its reconstruction. The German love of the Autobahn led to many architectural missteps, and the brutal separation of the cultural centers from the rest of the city through the construction of highways was among the most grievous. But the *Hauptbahnhof* (the main train station) had survived in all its vaulted glass majesty, and we could travel anywhere in Europe from there.

One winter, Bobbie and I took my Christmas leave in Italy. In Rome, we stayed in a freezing marble-floored pension, attended a family one-ring circus, and saw the shepherds from the surrounding hills playing in the streets on sheeps'-bladder bagpipes and musettes, and paid homage to the Italian masterpieces on display in the museums and cathedrals. Traveling north into Tuscany, we were awed by the imposing stele towers of San Gimignano and the glories of Firenze, including Pollaiuolo's remarkable mural of the three dancing Graces, a print of which I first saw in college and now tracked down in a private residence in Fiesole. In the Uffizi, we were transfixed by Michelangelo's *Bound Slave*. On her way to meet me in Germany, Bobbie had met a wealthy young Swiss on the ship, and he had given her his card; his family owned a boutique hotel in Zurich, and we stayed there on the way back to Stuttgart. My parents planned a trip to Europe and Israel and visited us in Stuttgart. They came to our place at the Glasers' and I was

amazed to hear my father communicate with Herr Glaser, my father speaking Yiddish and Herr Glaser his thick *Schwäbisch* (a Bavarian dialect). .

While the orchestra was on tour in Athens, we were warned that the city was not particularly safe due to a wave of anti-British feeling caused by some sort of British misadventure. We red-blooded American GIs were not to be deterred by such a warning, of course, so a few of us went out *bummeling* (barhopping). On a street corner, we were approached by a shill and directed to the Chicago Bar, a subterranean den. There, we took seats at the bar and watched events unfold.

A table in the middle of the floor was occupied by a bunch of sailors getting progressively smashed on ouzo and beer. Two whores were vying for the attention of one of the sailors, and the tension mounted until the younger of the two shoved the older one aside and jumped up on the table. To the accompaniment of blaring rock music on the sound system, she lifted her skirts, exposed her naked crotch, grabbed the drunken sailor's head and forced it between her legs, all the time sneering in triumph at her colleague. As if that wasn't edgy enough, some of the girls began hitting on us at the bar. We spoke no Greek, and the girls' English was limited to "Fucky fucky, sucky sucky?" so we took out the handy Army manual for such parlous circumstances and read in Greek from page 19, "How many enemy tanks are in the area?" Although we got a laugh from the girls, their pimps weren't amused. We were wasting the girls' time. Half-hidden in the darkened gloom, the pimps brought forth knives and began playing with them. We got the message and skedaddled posthaste.

I was responsible for another perilous adventure on the orchestra's Greek tour: I had read about the Monastic Republic of Athos, located on one of the three peninsulas pointing down into the Aegean Sea, close to the Turkish border. Athos is comprised entirely of monasteries that hug the coastal cliffs in gravity-defying splendor on both sides of the peninsula. One member of the orchestra, Jim Economou, was of Greek heritage and spoke the language (we could have used him in that bar!), so we invited him along on our trip to Athos. We were Don Reinberg, Phil West, Dave Sweetkind and me (and Jim). We had some free days in Salonika, so we hired a driver to take us across northern Greece to the east coast, where we could go by boat to Athos.

Athos is a unique place, created by the Eastern Orthodox Church after the fall of Constantinople as a repository for the most treasured objects of the Eastern church. Among them are original editions of Ptolemy, ancient icons, and other rarities. The other distinguishing feature of Athos is that it is entirely female-free, not even any female animals (other than cats, as mousers), and everything not grown in the soil has to be imported via boat (like us) or over mountain trails by donkey. After a hair-raising trip across Northern Greece in the hired car (there

had been torrential rains, and some of the roads had washed out and were now dirt gullies), and being shot at for trespassing by irate goat farmers, we finally pulled into the hamlet of Efistos, where everyone was already in bed for the night. We hadn't eaten all day, so the mayor, roused from his bed by our driver, came downstairs to open his store, where all there was to eat were two wooden barrels: one of halvah, and the other, feta cheese. That became our dinner until the town awoke next morning.

The mayor in turn awoke the only hostelry, run by two spinster sisters, and we settled in for an exhausting night's rest. Early the next morning, I went for a walk in the field leading down to the pier, narrowly avoiding an ancient crone squatting in the weeds for her morning poop. I heard a familiar sound as I approached the dock and found our captain listening to Elvis on his portable radio there, at the end of the world. We chartered the boat, an open *caïque* and set off for Athos. It was a glorious summer day. When we docked on Athos, we were greeted by a monk in flowing purple robes. He led us up to the monastery, and we went through a traditional welcome ritual involving plums in wine and halvah. (We didn't reveal that three of us were Jewish.) It being the midday siesta time, we were free to wander through the public spaces. In one of these little piazzas, we suddenly heard a familiar voice holler down at us to from a gallery above, "How youse guys like da choich?" Our caller was from Chicago, a tailor who had retired to Mount Athos and was one of the laymen who had volunteered to live out their lives serving the monks.

After a dazzling afternoon being shown the wonders of the monastery, we returned to our boat and set off on the Aegean Sea to chug back to Efistos. In the midst of the crossing, however, an unexpected storm blew up and swiftly got progressively worse. The boat's motor conked out, and we were helplessly tossed about on an ever more turbulent sea. The captain went below and tried to fix the motor while we desperately bailed out the Aegean pouring in over the ship's gunwales. Lightning and thunder clawed the sky. We were frantic. It took far too long to regain control of the boat. Were we responsible for the storm? Was Jahweh showing his displeasure with us Israelites profaning his second home? We all but kissed the ground when we finally arrived safely in Efistos.

Years later, the horn player John Canarina wrote a book, *Uncle Sam's Orchestra* in which he recounted the trip to Athos. He must have been told about the details by Dave Sweetkind, Don Reinberg, or Phil West, and somehow they forgot that I was also there and, in fact, had instigated the whole thing. This omission was nothing compared to the fact that for years, in the annual listing of orchestra members on the website, I was officially listed as dead. I'm told that has been corrected. Thereafter, Sweetkind always referred to me as "the dead guy" anyway.

Back on dry land, I had had my eye on the extraordinary serving pieces created by Greek and Turkish coppersmiths, and when we returned to Thessaloniki, I went looking for such a shop. When I found one, I went in to ask how much such a platter would cost. The shop was empty when I entered, and after a while I rang a bell hanging near the register. A burly, sweating coppersmith came out of the back, still wearing the stained apron of his craft. I don't think we shared a single word of language as I tried to explain what I wanted. Much limning of air with the hands, much bringing forth examples of his work, much incomprehension until we two, realizing the absurdity of the situation, broke out into gales of laughter and hugged each other, signaling the void between us, and waved goodbye as I left.

I decided to go to Crete and investigate the Minoan Palace at Knossos, the remains of a civilization from 2,000 years ago. As a boy I had read about the unexplained disappearance of this civilization and the indecipherability of Linear B, the written record of the language. When we had a weekend free in Athens, I jumped at the opportunity and flew alone to Crete on a small prop aircraft filled with Cretans returning home, laden with their live chickens and produce.

It was a brilliant, sunny day as I made my way to the reconstructed rooms of the palace. For some reason I was virtually alone at the site. I was thrilled by the frescos of the bull leapers, restored to their vibrant colors; by the sophisticated water and plumbing systems; by the highly civilized architectural planning- in other words, I felt myself to be in the presence of a thriving culture. After a few hours a sense of unease crept over me and I had to leave the ruins and return to Heraklion. This sense of unease only grew stronger through the night and developed into a sense of threat and dread: if this high-water mark of Hellenic culture could vanish without hardly a trace, if their language could be lost so that the basic human need to communicate could be wiped out inexplicably, then something very close to *my* sense of being was being called into question. I felt threatened in a new and dangerous way, even more so than my feelings living in post-Shoah Germany. I cut my visit short and flew out the next day.

On another tour, we returned to Berlin, where Henry Schuman, Art Grossman, John Caracina, and I played the Mozart *Concertant* in one of the first performances to open the *Konzerthalle* of the Hochschule, which would be one of our performing spaces for our musical theater program in the 1990s. After this concert, Bobbie and I entrained for a vacation in Denmark. On the train to Copenhagen we were "adopted" by an extraordinary Danish woman, Fr. Ulla Grandjean, who was returning from her winter sojourn in Italy and insisted on bedding and boarding us in her apartment while she stayed with her children. Wonderful days in Tivoli and Elsinore, and salivating before the windows of George Jensens, Silversmith.

Just before we returned to the States, we toured France: a concert in the Salle Pleyel in Paris following *canard a l'orange* at La Tour d'Argent, the walls of Carcasonne and the *bouillabaisse* of Marseilles, severe sunburn on the beach of Sete, renting mopeds and riding on the Cote d'Azur to Frontera. Bobbie returned to Stuttgart to prepare for our redeployment, but I still had a few days' leave, so I took the train down to Barcelona, had *paella* at Los Caracoles off the Ramblas and stumbled through Gaudi's Sagrada Familia. My Spanish was limited. I ordered a dessert that sounded good. When it arrived, I found it to be enormous strawberries floating in a sea of Carlos I brandy. Stoned by the Giant Strawberry, I resolved to mark my future success by owning my own bottle of the stuff. I now have several. Empties.

In Bremerhaven waiting for our ship home, Bobbie found out the hard way that she had become dangerously allergic to some shellfish, so she started the voyage twice her normal size and covered with hives. On the way back to the States, I again slept in the bowels of the boat as I had in the voyage to Germany, while Bobbie shared a cabin above decks with some other wives. Again, I performed all possible musical chores. One night, she and I prepared some numbers as an entertainment for the officers and their wives, but the seas were so heavy and the floor so precipitous that the upright piano had to be chained in place; even so, it slid away from me as I played (à la Maurice Rocco), and the microphone stand skittered around with Bobbie desperately clinging to it.

Chapter 6

1957-1968: New York, Two Kids with Two Kids

My folks met the boat when it docked in in Brooklyn, and the huge new autos in the streets astonished us. Some days later when I showed up for my discharge, the CO asked the group if anyone would like to re-up. The silence was deafening. While we were in Europe, my folks and my sister bought a country place in Hopewell Junction, an old farmhouse on 21 lush acres about an hour north of the City. Bobbie and I visited them soon after our return and enjoyed many weekends there.

So there we were, in 1957, in our early 20s, returning from a cosseted year and a half in Europe courtesy of the U.S. Army, living it up on our wedding money, now facing the undifferentiated Alp of a future in the mammoth arts scene of New York. I needed a job, and Bobbie needed to study and find work as a dancer. We repossessed my old bedroom on 86th Street and moved in with my parents. I picked up some of my former dance accompanying at the Graham Studio and at Juilliard while trying to break into the unwashed pool of free-lance musicians as a clarinetist.

My first attempt at gainful employment as a married man was to try to break into advertising. I assembled a demo reel and submitted it to an ad agency, which rejected it for being "too European-sounding"—a characterization that would crop up intermittently throughout my career, but I couldn't have known that at the time. So I went to Hollywood to break into film. Out there, I was told to be prepared to become the apprentice to a busy composer as "realizer" and orchestrator of his sketches, and to do this for a least a few years before I could expect to get my own films. I would in fact be a composer-for-hire, and they would own my work. I was horrified and fled back to New York.

In the late 60's The Open Window somehow got a chance for a 30-second radio spot for a steakhouse called Prime Time. Peter, Bob, and I decided to prepare three versions, one from each of us, but to present them without identifying their composers. At the "audition," mine was played first, and the others followed. Having heard all three, the account executive said, "Very clever! The first one was so bad that the others could only sound better than they might actually have been."

My last adventure in advertising was a one-minute ad for a German cigarette called West, to be shown in German film houses in the 80's. My friend Arnie Black created the slogan and tune: "West, let's go West," and the film showed long-haul truckers in the American West. The ad went out in three versions, and I was assigned to score one of them. I wrote it and recorded it

with the cream of New York studio musicians, and now regret ever having supported cigarette advertising, which also cost me one friendship in Germany, a man who couldn't believe I had sold my soul to the Devil. Christian Blackwood, producer of the German ads, was a terrific documentarian and later he engaged me to "sweeten" some moments in documentaries that he had made about the singer Eartha Kitt and designer Edith Head. I realized that the world of advertising was not my world, so I stopped trying to travel in it.

One of my first maneuvers in the professional music world was to join some old contacts from Queens College, from the Army, and from my contracting days in Provincetown. We formed a chamber music group, The Gramercy Chamber Ensemble, composed of a string quintet,[9] a wind quintet, two pianists and a vocal quartet. The first performance of a piece of mine in Manhattan was on one of our Gramercy concerts, *A Set of Three Ironies*, which Dick Frisch sang, with Gil Kalish accompanying. We presented some concerts at Carnegie Recital Hall (the old one). When necessary, our wind quintet bassoonist, Bob Cole, conducted us.[10]

The Gramercy Chamber Ensemble rehearsed in Gil's spacious West End Avenue apartment. One afternoon after rehearsal, we all had freelance deadlines looming when we discovered the elevator was out of order and the stairwell locked. We were stuck. Our only way out was via the fire escape, but we could reach it only through an apartment on the other side of the floor. We rang the bell, and the tenants generously allowed us to crawl out their window. Carrying our instrument cases, we snaked down the fire escape, fully visible from West End Avenue. A wino down below, busy holding up a wall, looked up and shouted, "That's not the way to do it! You gotta sneak out the *back* way!"

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[9] Seymour Wackshall, our first violinist, was Juilliard-trained and a fascinating mixture of street kid and violin virtuoso. He was the first violinist of the quartet in our chamber ensemble, and some of his escapades are legend. He and Eddy Basson (the cellist) were said to have brought a bowling ball to Juilliard and gone bowling in the hallways. Seymour's father ran a knish and hotdog stand at the bus stop at Kisssena Boulevard in Queens, where my bus stopped as I made my way to college, and sometimes when he was filling in at the stand, Seymour would slip me a free knish. One evening, the ensemble played a private concert at the Gramercy Park home of Sam Barlow (one of the toniest addresses in New York) and, at the after-party, Seymour was introduced to the Ambassador of Rumania. Sy kept on referring to him as the "Ambassador of Armenia" until the tuxedo-clad gentleman forcefully corrected him. Wackshall replied, "Rumania, Armenia—what's the difference? You're all gypsies!" I quickly got him out of there. Seymour got a position in the Met Opera orchestra, which he lost when he was discovered to be dealing drugs. After a while he sued for reinstatement and was successful in rejoining the orchestra. Seymour's big dream was to present a Carnegie Hall solo violin recital and, in fact, he pulled that off.

[10] Bob was a wonderful musician but a tortured soul whom I had gotten to know when we roomed together in Montreal for *Murder In The Cathedral*. He confessed to me his profound sense of guilt for the anti-Semitism of his fellow Christians. Bob was a closeted homosexual and into rough trade, sometimes showing up for rehearsals with battered features. Years later, he fell victim to one of his tricks and was murdered.

1963 was the 50th Anniversary of the *annus mirabilis,* 1913. In that year, the world saw three seminal music pieces come to life: *Le Sacre du Printemps* of Stravinsky, *Jeux* of Debussy and *Pierrot Lunaire* of Schoenberg. To commemorate this milestone, the Juilliard School planned a concert of all three works, to be performed as far as possible by students. Jan DeGaetani was asked to *Sprechsing* the Schoenberg, and because there was no capable bass clarinetist in the student body (hard to imagine!), I was engaged to play those moments. The other *Pierrot* musicians were superb and included Edward Steuerman, who was teaching at the school and who had premiered the work in Vienna 50 years before. His take on the music was fascinating as it had lain semi-dormant for 50 years and was now entering the canon and would soon be played by high school students. This changing perspective is astonishing in the arts (as in sports), where material that was once daunting has eventually become part of the language and completely accessible. Our Gramercy group also performed the work several more times, including in the pit as accompaniment to Glen Tetley's ballet.

Bob Listokin, a Juilliard grad who was later (after my time) first clarinet in the Seventh Army Symphony Orchestra, was now solo clarinet with the Radio City Music Hall orchestra. As he got busier in the freelance world, he needed someone to sub for him, especially when the Music Hall went on a four-performance-a-day schedule in the Christmas and Easter seasons. I did that until I got bounced some years later for "acting up" in rehearsal and in performance, to relieve the monotony of that life.

The orchestra was made up of some first-rate players. Some of the strings eventually made their way to the Philharmonic, Don Butterfield was the tubist with Mingus, and whiz kids like George Marge and Al Regni, stunning multi-instrument doublers out of Eastman who went on to become first-call free-lancers in the recording and concert world, and Dale Clevinger, who went on to become the first horn in Chicago. The second clarinet chair was held in perpetuity by a smooth operator, Greg Raffa, who not only played in the orchestra but who also owned a recording and rehearsal studio in the building and rented out the space for the orchestra to rehearse and for the Rockettes to work.

Jay Rabin, a grandson of Sholem Aleichem, whom Bobbie knew from Hartford, approached me to create a sound logo (like the NBC chimes) for a closed-circuit TV channel that would be aired only in doctor's offices. If I had been the least bit tech-savvy, I could have come up with something on a synthesizer in an hour, but I had to get around my ignorance. I agreed to rent Raffa's studio for an hour to record the logo. I wrote something for vibraphone, a building up of perfect fifths that then begin to vibrate. The only problem was that when we threw the vibrato

switch on the vibes, there was an audible click on the tape. I solved that by crawling on my hands and knees to the electrical outlet and, when the three or four tones had been played, shoving the plug from the vibraphone motor into the outlet. We figured out that for the $125 fee that I was paid, it came to a $.0001 payment for each use.

As a kid, I had gone to the Music Hall with my mother to see the Ravel *Bolero* as part of the stage show. The orchestral *piece de resistance* of the show that had thrilled me to the core was when at its climax, at the modulation, the bolero drum pattern leapt from the orchestra into the loges lining the audience, being played by drummers (borrowed male dancers from the *corps*) dressed in loincloths, in swarthy body makeup, beating the hell out of their drums. Imagine my delight in finally being part of that experience.

The conductors of the orchestra were a motley crew, the worst of them a man named John, of whom it was rumored that he could not read music and whose scores were covered with markings pointing to which direction to conduct when new instruments played. During one Christmas show, while the orchestra slowly rose from our subterranean retreat on the huge elevator, we were playing arrangements of carols. At a given point the conductor was to turn around and conduct the audience in a sing-along. On this one show, though, the elevator got stuck midway. John, referring to his score, turned and conducted the elevator wall.

Eventually I got to play as extra with the Philharmonic (contrabass clarinet) and the Met Opera (basset horn). Of course, I didn't own a contrabass clarinet, so I borrowed the one in the Juilliard instrument collection. I checked out this moving crate of a case, just made it to a cab and took the monster home. I opened the case and spent the next hour trying to figure out how to put the damn thing together. It was made of metal and resembled nothing so much as a chemical toilet. Finally, I tamed the beast to the point that I could play it in the two lower registers. The instrument could play down to the lowest sounding Bb on the piano, the same bottom limit as the contrabassoon. The only trouble was that when I played these lowest tones in the Schoenberg orchestral pieces under Pierre Boulez, the vibrations were so slow and so mighty, my glasses slid off my nose and the fillings in my teeth began to rattle. I'm afraid I was a modest, retiring performer on the instrument.

For *Elektra* at the Met, I borrowed a basset horn, which proved to be another untrustworthy animal, in terms of its tuning and control. One Sunday, sitting in the orchestra while the opera was being broadcast live, the thought occurred to me through my sweat at the upcoming solo passage, "Why am I doing this? Do I really need this?" I filled the rest of my time with various freelance dates, with chamber music rehearsals, with teaching at the Hebrew Arts

School on 16th Street on Sunday mornings, and with wind quintet performances in the public schools for Young Audiences.

Of the many concerts I played in the Sixties, three stand out:

Emmanuel "Manny" Ghent was a practicing psychoanalyst and, on the side, a composer of electronic music (and friend and neighbor of Ornette Coleman in the East Village). One of Manny's innovations was to compose for live ensemble, with each member having his or her own independent tempi. This was achieved by having individual click-tracks, which the players would follow through earphones. The piece didn't require a conductor, but the tracks were so conceived that the different parts would occasionally meet for a common tempo. This was at a Town Hall concert, and afterward, in the dressing room, I met with Jacques and Sam Shepard, both of whom were excited and a little baffled by the concert.

I often played in lofts and other unusual spaces, once with Charlotte Moormon, "the topless cellist." Both her playing and her nudity left something to be desired. But her collaborations with Nam June Paik, with TVs draping her body and her instrument, were beguiling.

At one Town Hall concert, this time with a large ensemble piece by Morty Feldman, the individual parts were notated on graph paper, but generally with the command "as soft as possible." Arthur Weissberg had to conduct the piece by giving a downbeat and then leaving the players free to improvise according to the graph. At one point, I looked up at Peter Rosenfeld, a cellist, and we started giggling. Gradually, this giggle ran through the ensemble like wild fire until the entire group, while playing as softly as possible, was also trying to stifle their laughter.

There were evenings of chamber concerts devoted to one composer at the Donnell Library across the street from MOMA. A special bonus for concerts there was the sound of the E train, running just outside the underground walls of the concert stage. One year, Frank Wigglesworth was organizing these concerts, and he asked me to set up the musicians for the concert devoted to Ernst Krenek. Krenek was an Austrian who had enjoyed an extraordinary success early in life with his opera *Jonny Spielt Auf* (*Johnny Strikes Up*), which after its initial production in Vienna, became a world-wide phenomenon. Krenek was driven out of Europe by the Nazis although he wasn't Jewish, he was a "decadent" modernist.[11] I assembled the musicians—I was also to play—and we prepared the program and then met with him. Krenek turned out to be a bitter, disappointed man, highly critical of his artistic life here in the States,

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[11] And eventually ended up in Palm Springs, where he died before we moved here, but I did meet his widow.

particularly after he had been fired from Vassar for his leftist leanings. I vowed never to allow myself to become so embittered. I haven't fully succeeded.

After recording the Mozart *Serenades for Winds* with Newell Jenkins, I then played basset horn in stunning performances of the Mozart *Grand Partita for Winds* under Alexander Schneider of the Budapest Quartet, at Dumbarton Oaks in Washington D.C., and in New York at Carnegie Hall. These were among the highlights of my clarinet career.

By this time, Bobbie and I really needed our own apartment, and through one of the dance students at Graham's whose father was in real estate, we got a tiny one on East 66th Street. The bedroom was just that—the room was entirely taken up by the bed. We had to climb over it to get in and out of the room.

I had another fire escape experience here: one day I had a rehearsal and had to get back to the apartment to get my instruments. Bobbie had gone up to Hartford to teach, and I had lost my key. The adjacent building was a convent. I rang the convent bell to ask whether I might access my front window, which I was sure was unlocked, by climbing through one of their rooms from which I could then make my way to my front window via our adjacent fire escapes. The prioress told me to wait until they had prepared my route to the necessary room. When I was admitted to the holy precinct, I saw that they had turned all images of their savior to the wall so that he would not witness the appearance of a male in their midst. The prioress told me to turn my gaze downward and not to meet the eyes of any of the nuns we might encounter. I complied, and crawled out the sister's bedroom window. Gingerly, I made my way between the two fire escapes and got to my front window. Across the street from our house was a trade school and, since it was lunch hour, many of the students were lounging outside, having a smoke. When they saw me crawl out of the convent window, they burst into loud applause.

Our neighbors in that building were a young couple. He was an amateur musician and I sold him my tenor sax. She was an actress, Anne Meacham, in rehearsal for a production of Tennessee Williams' *Suddenly, Last Summer*, which was to be done around the corner at Warner LeRoy's newly opened York Playhouse (I had volunteered some construction time to it). One night I heard what sounded like murder being committed next door, so I called the cops. It turned out she was running her lines for the play, which involved cannibalism.

One summer, when Bobbie and I were planning on staying on the Cape for a long time, I agreed to let my cousin Gene use the apartment as a *pied à terre* for his assignations with his future wife Jackie. When we returned after that summer, we found the apartment in terrible shape, the stove black with use, the windows compromised, a real mess. I mention this only because

later, when Gene had made a great success on Wall Street and he and Jackie were living in their houses on East End Avenue, East 79 (with their own garage!) and Sag Harbor, all the furnishings and design for their house were an immaculate white.

I had written an *Overture for Brass Octet* based on two melodies I had heard in Europe: a slow Scottish march played by bagpipers, and the trumpet fanfare played at the bullring in Seville. Bob Nagel, the leading free-lance trumpet player in New York, agreed to conduct a performance of the piece at a clinic he led in Georgia, so I got to hear a recording. Among the dancers I accompanied was Danny Nagrin, who taught a kind of jazz-inflected searching style. He had done Broadway and film, was married to the modern dance pioneer Helen Tamiris, and was creating an idiosyncratic solo repertoire. He offered a summer session at C.W. Post College on Long Island and I was engaged to accompany him and to teach music.

Danny commissioned me to write the music for a piece he was developing, and so I wrote "For a Young Person," a piano sonata with a nod to the world of rock. Danny's pianist for performances was Sylvia Marshall, and she performed the piece. One more memory of Danny some years later, but I'll include it here: After I got to know Jacques Levy I discovered that he also knew Danny. They had been neighbors in a building on East Bleeker Street. Danny still lived there and, after Helen's death, he was involved with a woman named Lee. They planned to marry, so we decided to have a boys' night out with Danny, José Limón, Paul Draper, Jacques, and me.

We met at Danny's, where we soaked up a lot of wine. Then began an extraordinary evening, as the three dancers did their version of "The Dozens," a kind of challenge event familiar to jazz players and Harlem street kids ("Yo' mama so FAT, she—" "*YO*' mama so fat, she—") These three masterful, vital male dancers tore the place up, dancing for and with one another. Later in the evening, the doorbell rang. Men in suits identified themselves as FBI and asked whether they could use Danny's apartment to access another one where they suspected drugs were being sold. Jacques stood up to them, said empathically, "No chance!" and wouldn't allow them access. Something I couldn't have done.

But the main event of that decade happened in 1959. The summer before, Bobbie and I lived in the Grippes' (Ronnie Roseman's stepfather) apartment on Railroad Avenue in Provincetown. Having been taught to drive at age 27 (by a flutist named John Paress), I had a brand new driver's license and a battered Morris Minor I got from Bob Harper, Reri's first husband. That car was so flimsy I had to crawl under it each morning to tighten the starter motor. Bobbie and I had a secret swimming hole, a "lost lake" down Cape. That morning, Bobbie had a medical appointment, so I was in the water alone, swimming in the middle of the lake, when she arrived, driven by Kala Kazan. She jumped out of the car and ran to the lakeshore, shouting, "I'M

PREGNANT!" I swam to shore, beating my chest in a series of Tarzan yelps. And so we awaited the arrival of Matt, who came into the world the following April.

Bobbie's gynecologist and primary physician, who had tended to our need for contraception, was Heinz Luchinsky, who saved many young single women in the buttoned-up Fifties, when the American conservative right was terrorizing the sexual atmosphere. Heinz had agreed to deliver the baby in the French Hospital, a Catholic institution on 8th Avenue, in the 30's. We were living in a flat on West 26th Street and, when Bobbie went into labor, we walked up 8th Avenue to the hospital. I had moved up in the orchestral world and was now playing second to Dave Weber in the Symphony of the Air. I had a rehearsal scheduled in Carnegie and couldn't stay, so my mother came over and stayed with Bobbie. When Matt arrived, my mother called the backstage number and asked the stage manager to let me know that I had a son. Somehow they got a message to me, and I stood up in the middle of the rehearsal and told the world, to loud applause.

Back then new mothers were afforded "lying in," staying in the hospital for a week after giving birth. We had the *bris* performed in the hospital by a *moyl*, and returned to our railroad apartment, where the kitchen table was also the lid of the bathtub, the baby's room a niche in the long string of rooms (hence "railroad") culminating in a front parlor. This neighborhood was torn down in the next year to put up the present ILGWU development, and we were given a bonus to move. Chelsea was a real neighborhood back then. We went for walks with Matt in the carriage, and connected with the sense of belonging that a city can offer but seldom does. One of my jobs at this time was as the pianist at the Circus Bar, a strip joint in the Bronx. One of the strippers was a failed ballerina. Between sets, we enjoyed talking of Balanchine's repertoire.

I was writing "smart" topical songs, hoping to get them performed at places like Julius Monk's Upstairs at the Downstairs, songs like "The Juilliard Schoolyard," "Take This Charm," "Summer is A-Comin' In," "Almost Thirteen," etc. I played them at parties and thus came in contact with the Wynn sisters, Janet (the writer and later wife of Donald Malcolm) and Marie (the birder and later wife of the musician Alan Miller). But these songs went nowhere. For a short time I met with Patsy Birch, whom I knew from the Graham company, in planning an act. Patsy was breaking into the Broadway world and, years later, would suggest me as her music director for a new show coming out of Chicago, a retro musical called *Grease.* At that point, we Waldens had just moved to the country, and after a few meetings, I decided that I didn't want to get involved in a production in New York. I was building my studio, and I also honestly had no connection with the Doo-Wop style of Fifties rock so would not have done a good job.

I had met the director Isaiah Sheffer through my friendship with Arnie Black, a violinist/composer. Arnie had written the music for a production of the Brecht *The Exception and The Rule* at a theater on West 13th Street. One of the roles was that of a musician/actor who could play the piano and act the role of the judge. They needed a replacement for that role, and Arnie suggested me. That was my first engagement with Brecht—also with Eric Bentley, who was the foremost translator of Brecht into English.

I felt an immediate connection with the Brechtian sensibility and unknowingly prepared myself for my future career. I played the role until the other actor could come back. Danny Nagrin was invited to perform at the American Dance Festival at Connecticut College in New London, where Bobbie had studied before she came to New York; the music he had chosen was the Bartok *Contrasts* for clarinet, violin and piano, the work that led me to Dave Weber, a work that Benny Goodman had commissioned and had recorded with Josef Szigety and Bartok himself. I was engaged to play the *Contrasts* and any other works involving clarinet in the Festival. The schedule fitted nicely with our concerts on the Cape and we planned to go by bus from New London directly to Provincetown. Because we were traveling, we avoided schlepping a crib or bassinet, so Matt was snuggled up in a bureau drawer.

I rehearsed with Bob Rudie on violin and Sylvia Marshall on piano. The performances went well but there was a little trouble when I was called upon to play in the pit for a new work by John Cage. Merce Cunningham conducted the work by rotating his arms in the manner of a clock, while the musicians played off of their parts, which consisted of squiggles and fragments marked "play any of these fragments or anything else that you feel appropriate." I was incensed at the fact that we were rehearsing this piece—if we could play what we wanted, why rehearse? I'm ashamed that I behaved this way, but I had fallen into the old-fashioned way of asserting my "artistic" stature—I was, after all, hired as a *soloist* (!)—so I stood up in the middle of this "rehearsal" and said, "A TALE FULL OF SOUND AND FURY, TOLD BY AN IDIOT, SIGNIFYING NOTHING!" Scandal ensued. I was told that contractually I had to play the performance. As I was warming up backstage, Cage came to me, put his arm around my shoulder and said, "I think it's better if you only use what's in the part." I was so incensed, I took a swing at him but he, sensing it coming, had safely moved on. (He was actually the sweetest of men.) I packed up my clarinet and sat silent and immobile in the pit for the entire performance. This absurd behavior on my part was to change significantly in the coming years although I had similarly outraged feelings at a concert/talk given by Karl Heinz Stockhausen at Columbia. It's painful to recall how close-minded and fragile I was in those days.

Another musician at the American Dance Festival was Gary Goren, a trumpet player I had gotten to know in New York. He was racking up hours for a pilot license, so he offered to fly us up from New London to Provincetown. We happily bundled up our stuff, moved Matt out of his drawer, went to the airport, got into the small plane, and took off for the 30-minute flight to Provincetown. However, when we got to Providence, we got the message that the Cape was completely fogged in. We landed in New Bedford, stuffed Matt and all our gear onto a Greyhound bus and finally arrived in Provincetown many hours later.

Another man I befriended around this time was Alvin Brehm, a wonderful double bassist/composer who was also a busy orchestral contractor on the New York scene. He was putting together an orchestra to tour with Robert Shaw, the foremost choral conductor in the U.S. Shaw's concerts were sold out wherever he went and he had scheduled a piece by Schoenberg that involved a chamber group to accompany the chorus. This group—clarinet, mandolin and solo strings—was to come to the front of the stage and then return to their seats after the piece was done. It was a virtuoso part, and I practiced it to death. The tour was set up with minimal down time between dates, so we played some 30 concerts in a bit more than a month. Eventually it became so routine that, one night, in the middle of the concert, following the Schoenberg, I turned to my second and asked "Did we do the Schoenberg yet?" This so shocked me that I resolved never to go on such a tour again. A side benefit of this tour was that Howard Vogel, the bassoonist, introduced me to pot. I never played stoned until years later, before a concert in Tully Hall. I was so shocked at my state that I resolved never to do it again; I was too uncertain.

I befriended one of the sopranos on the tour whose boyfriend and a friend of his were interested in writing a musical on the population explosion. They asked me to write the songs, and that became my first musical, *Sometime Soon*. It was never produced. Nor was my second attempt, the ironically titled *Cart Before the Horse*, a musicalisation of the Phillip Barry play *White Wings*, which I worked on with Dick Frisch. So I was in no danger of peaking too early and being spoiled by early acclaim.

For the Gramercy Chamber Ensemble, summers in Provincetown were a wonderful combination of art and vacation. One year before the boys were born, Bobbie and I, Dick and Jill Frisch, and Ronnie and Judy Roseman rented three of the shacks on the ocean-side dunes, which have since been designated The Dune Shacks of Peaked Hill Bars Historic District.[12] The shacks were real shacks, just one unheated room with no electricity and no running water. Upon waking in the morning, we just ran down the dunes to the water, to bathe. We had a propane stove to

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[12] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dune_Shacks_of_Peaked_Hill_Bars_Historic_District

cook on and had to carry provisions and drinking water from the road over the sand dunes to the shacks, about a quarter of a mile away.

One memorable night in 1960, a group of us convened in somebody's hotel room. We ordered in pizzas, opened a few bottles of single malt, and broke out a new set of cards. Eddie Basson, a cellist, was dating Ermadelle, a lovely harpist from Mississippi, and she was also up to play in that year's Provincetown Symphony concert. We were there with Matt, in his infant swaddling. Among the others were Kenny Schermerhorn (later conductor of the Nashville Symphony, the concert hall named after him), Art and Beverly Bloom, John and Gloria Palanchian, Eddie and Ermadelle, and others. As was the common practice back then, we were all smoking, drinking, and playing poker with money on the table, and Bobbie was nursing Matt. Ermadelle was scandalized. This was no Southern Baptist evening's entertainment. I heard that when she went home after a Tanglewood summer, where she had been introduced to some exotic Yankee tastes, she asked her Biloxi grocer if he had any sour cream, he responded, "I sure hope not."

Beach parties were the thing, and a memorable one was when Alan Cisco, a cellist who had been in the Seventh Army Symphony Orchestra with me, speared a huge lobster[13] off the ocean shore and started an enormous pot to boil. Others contributed smaller versions, and we were in the enviable position of having as much lobster as we could eat, plus local corn and other edibles. Also present were Robert Frank, the photographer and his wife Mary, whom I would later meet again in the Open Theater.

In 1960, Bobbie informed me that she was once again with child. I was nonplussed; we had Matthew, and I was scraping out a living with just one child. How was I to provide for a second? But we never considered for a moment terminating this pregnancy. Some years before, Bobbie had accompanied a roommate to an abortion performed under shady circumstances, not exactly in a back alley, but certainly illegally and in secret. Her friend had hemorrhaged, and Bobbie stayed with her, a terrible experience.

Another of Bobbie's roommates in the apartment that she shared with at least three other girls on Convent Avenue, across the street from the old Juilliard—I forget her name—had a boyfriend who was an undergraduate at Princeton and had dreams of making it big in the Latin Christian music market. He asked me to record a 45 rpm record of a tune he had written, and made a date with a studio in Midtown. I was to play a Hammond B3 organ, but I had never played one, so I showed up at the studio the day before and asked if I could try out the instrument.

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[13] Probably illegally

The engineer looked at me funny and said "It's a regular B3, what do you want to know?" "Just want to make sure," I said, so he let me into the studio. I was up against it now—I couldn't figure out how to turn the damn thing on. Finally I had to admit my ignorance, and he showed me how to operate it. I did the recording, and a copy of it lies somewhere in my attic.

By this time (1961), we had moved from 26th Street to 788 Riverside Drive. We had found the apartment through the *New York Times* and were eager to take it, but the present tenants insisted we buy some of their furniture and the carpeting. My folks helped us out, so we moved in, our rent jumping up to $125 a month for a five-room apartment on Riverside Drive. Josh was born on August 21, once again at the French Hospital. Art Bloom was dating the soprano Shirley Verret-Carter (before she became a major star) and when Bobbie went into labor, Shirley came and cooked a delicious meal for Matt and me. Once again, we had the *bris* done in the hospital, then settled into life in our new neighborhood.

Our enclave on Riverside Drive was populated by the mix of composers, painters, writers and musicians that any two blocks in Manhattan produced in those days (and probably also today). Jacob and Muriel (Mickey) Druckman lived next door. Jacob and I tried our hand at writing some "commercial" songs—"Buenos Tardes, Señor Braunstein," for instance—before he won a Pulitzer for his first large orchestral work, *Windows*, in 1972. The writer Suzanne Lobel, the painters Alan Hart and Mathew Feinman, and the pianist Fred Rzewski were all in residence in the buildings at 780-790 Riverside Drive. When the local library sponsored an evening with neighborhood composers, I met Meyer Kupferman. Eventually, the boys found friends, among them Danny Druckman (now head of the Juilliard percussion department—he succeeded Saul Goodman—and a Philharmonic member). Danny and Matt started drum lessons with Fred King, who lived in our building. (I ran into Fred again years later in Seville, where I was working in the Expo, and he was on tour with Max Roach's percussion ensemble, M'Boom.)

I was accompanying dance classes at Juilliard, playing for Josè Limòn, Paul Draper, and the Graham teachers when one day, in the middle of a Paul Draper class, June Dunbar, assistant to Martha Hill, head of the dance department, burst in to announce, "The president has been shot!" Class dismissed. I remember trying to convey to my small sons the gravity of the time and, innocent as they were, their inability to grasp the significance of the moment. I recalled listening to the radio on December 7, 1941, and hearing FDR report that the Japanese had attacked Pearl Harbor. I knew something important had happened but my nine-year-old mind couldn't process it.

In 1960, the woman who had been teaching Music for Dance at Juilliard left for Hollywood, and I was hired to teach that class, which I did for the next four years. At the same

time, the New York State University campus at Purchase was taking shape, and Michael Hammond invited me, among others, to participate in designing the courses. We met in the house that had been the residence of the Thomases, a colonial family on whose estate the college would grow. Bill Bales was head of the dance department, and I was to plan the accompanying music classes. When Alvin Brehm (the double-bassist on that rigorous tour when I couldn't remember whether we'd played the Schoenberg) became dean of the music division at SUNY Purchase, he hired me to fill in for Bob Levin and Yehudi Wyner in their theory and history classes while they were on sabbatical. I took over Jan DeGaetani's classes in—I don't know what to call it, but we worked with the musicians to introduce them to a musical/personal awareness, using many of the Open Theater exercises that I had helped to develop. Meyer Kupferman needed a cover for his classes at Sarah Lawrence College (composition and jazz ensemble), and at the Lincoln Center Institute, led by Mark Schubart and Maxine Green, June Jordan was recruiting faculty for their experiment in "aesthetic training," going into the New York public schools to prepare the students for the touring events provided by the various Lincoln Center components. This experiment led to an academy each July, attracting teachers from all over the country, where we faculty would train them in ways to increase aesthetic awareness in their students through their teaching. One project I tried was to challenge them in creating a music notation system for music illiterates. We codified the system; then, I created a piece, *Primer*, for them to teach their students when they returned home.

I was getting a reputation as a radical, a teacher on the fringe. The Yonkers Museum called and asked if I would do a session for five- and six-year-olds. I turned it down, couldn't think of what one might do with such a group, and then called back and accepted, recognizing that answering that question was reward enough. I brought a guitar and various percussive noisemakers that I spread around the room before the kids entered. As the little ones came in—without their teachers—I strummed the guitar while they discovered the instruments. Hearkening back to my lesson on the bass clarinet with M. LaMontaigne, I "taught" the entire hour without speech and let the kids bang away as they pleased. At a certain point I moved to the grand piano in the room and started to play. As the kids came over to see what I was doing, I silently encouraged them to join in. Eventually, we all were playing an improvisation for 30 hands, most of them exceedingly small. I let things quiet down until there was stillness, then picked up the guitar again and opened the door so their teachers could collect them. As they filed out, a small black girl looked up at me wide-eyed and possibly inspired by my beard, asked, "Are you God?"

By combining these teaching gigs with my freelance work and unemployment insurance, I was able to eke out a living. One of my regular jobs was replacing Jacob Druckman on Sundays

at the Hebrew Arts School, then on 16th Street. The president of the school was Dr. Mathilde Krim, later among the first AIDS researchers. I conducted the orchestra and taught some clarinet, but not to Charles Neidich. His father Irv was the main clarinet teacher, and Charlie grew up to be an astonishing soloist. The school taught mostly the children of orthodox Jews and was led by the dynamic Tzipora Jochsberger. She wanted to give a concert at the *92nd Street Y*MHA to raise money for the school, and asked me to create something involving the entire student body. I wanted to show how child's play becomes dance, and children's songs become concert music. But I ran into a serious problem: the young *chasidim* didn't know how to play, how to throw a ball or skip or dance, so I had to teach them.

I had become a regular performer with the Group for Contemporary Music at Columbia, (Charles Wuorinen's and Harvey Sollberger's series of contemporary music) and one of my pieces, "*Stretti* for Octet," was programmed. I used the rhythmic world of Count Basie's Neal Hefti arrangement, "Li'l Darlin'" translated into the language of contemporary chamber music. Art Bloom conducted, and among the players was Joel Krosnick, then a 17-year-old *wunderkind* of the cello. (I would later compose *Songs and Dances* for him and Gil Kalish.) I also presented my songs at the annual ASCAP Showcase at Steinway Hall on 57th Street. The head of Frank Music heard about me there, and they paid for a demo of my songs. Anna Sokolow, whom I had met at Westport when she choreographed *Comin' Through The Rye*, and for whom I had accompanied at Juilliard, used my *Stretti* as a score for the Manhattan Chamber Ballet.

Two failed events from this time stick in my memory: I had met the erudite and witty Jonathan Levy, an academician who was eager to work on an opera idea of his. This piece was called *The Critic*, and was intended as a chamber opera. We completed a first draft of the first act and decided to produce a demo. We were able to record the demo in the spacious apartment of the tenor, Paul Sperry, in the building on Central Park West that also housed Stokowski and many other notables. The piece went nowhere and we never did complete the second act.

A group of us wind players agreed to form a woodwind quintet with a permanent pianist, to perform works like the Poulenc Sextet and Beethoven Quintet and other literature. My colleagues were Tom Nyfinger, flute (an extraordinarily gifted flutist, who died much too young), Phil West, oboe, Don McCourt, bassoon and Larry (?), horn, who was playing in the Met Opera Orchestra. The pianist, and really what made the group special, was Robert Miller, a fully engaged lawyer who was also one of the most active performers of contemporary music in the city. We prepared our first concert, which was to take place in Carnegie Recital Hall. We had decided on the name "The Metropolitan Sextet" and, in the midst of rehearsals, Bob Miller received a letter from the opera, claiming infringement on the name and barring us from using it.

His legal advice was to not fight it, but to continue on: by this time we had had programs printed up and had made various PR arrangements, so we decided to go ahead with this one concert and deal with the problem later. The concert went well, but proved to be our first and last. Bob Miller died shortly after from a cancer, something he had withheld from us all along.

During the long preparation of *Pierrot*,[14] Bobbie and I had become very close to Jan DeGaetani, and after she divorced Tom (who had been the theater manager at Juilliard), we introduced her to the oboist Phil West, my buddy from the Seventh Army Symphony Orchestra. Phil, who grew up Southern Baptist in Johnson City, Tennessee, had introduced me to white Gospel tunes (e.g., *Life is Like a Mountain Railroad*), a flavor I used in quite a few of my future recipes. I wanted to write a piece for Jan, who was rapidly becoming the international composers' first-call mezzosoprano. With all of my involvement with the world of dance, I decided to seek out texts having to do with dance and named the work *Love's Proper Exercise,* borrowing the title from John Davies' "Orchestra, or a Poem of Dancing." ("This wondrous miracle did Love devise/For dancing is love's proper exercise.") I scored it for piano, woodwind quintet, and singing actor.

The *Zeitgeist* at that time was to infuse the concert experience with dramatic dimensions, and composers like George Crumb, Luciano Berio, and Jacob Druckman were presenting pieces in which the performers had to fulfill acting roles as well as musical ones. They weren't reinventing the wheel: singing Schubert's *Die Winterreise* also had strong dramatic elements, as does the Beethoven 9th, but these new pieces made the fact of the concert itself, not only the music, a Brechtian experience, i.e., *"das Ding an sich"* ("The thing itself"). I chose texts ranging from Rilke's *Spanische Tänzerin* to Theodore Roethke's *My Papa's Waltz*, set as a country waltz. The wind quintet was *The Lark*, with Art Bloom (clarinet), John Wion (flute), Bert Lucarelli (oboe), Howard Howard (horn) Lanny ? (bassoon), and Gil Kalish was the pianist. The acting dimension called for the singer to interrupt the players and speak directly to the audience, for the pianist to enter into a dialogue with her, etc. Jan did a wonderful job. The piece received just the one performance but later, for a concert evening at the American Place Theater, I recast the accompaniment for mixed winds and strings, and Peggy Clapp performed the voice.

At one point, I was invited to play bass clarinet in Janacek's Mládí for a concert with the New York Woodwind Quintet at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston. Arthur Weissberg was the bassoonist, and at that time he was putting together the ensemble that would be known as The Contemporary Chamber Ensemble, with Art Bloom as the clarinetist. I became the second clarinet and bass clarinet—Sam Barron called Art and me "the frolicking dolphins of

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[14] See Chapter 1

contemporary music." We played regularly in New York, and we toured. At Antioch College, when I was warming up on the bass clarinet with my usual jazz-inflected riffs, someone poked his head in and shouted, "Eric Dolphy LIVES!"—a high point in my performing life. We also played a yearly concert at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. One afternoon in New York, Arthur asked me to go through the bass clarinet part of Eliot Carter's A Symphony of Three Orchestras together with Eliot, something I have done in my own music whenever I've written for an instrument that presents technical demands that might be problematical.

For a short time, I was Jerome Robbins' musical assistant on a Broadway production of Maria Irene Fornes' The Office. (I knew Irene from the Open Theater.) Unfortunately, the show never officially opened, which is only slightly worse than World War 2½, the Roger Hirson play The Open Window did some music for, which ran for all of one performance.

Dick Peaslee, my fellow composer with The Open Theater, invited me to a party in his rehearsal loft on West 72nd Street. Peter Schickele, whose first PDQ Bach concert I had seen at Juilliard with Jorge Mester conducting, was at the party, along with Bob Dennis, another Juilliard-trained composer. With the composer Larry Widdoes, they had formed a trio that was looking into writing material to straddle the worlds of rock and contemporary concert music. With performing dates looming, Larry Widdoes bowed out, not happy at the prospect of actually performing the pieces before an audience. So Peter and Bob approached me and asked if I would be interested in joining them. We were basically a keyboard trio, with Peter on electric and acoustic piano, Bob on Baldwin electric harpsichord, and me on keyboard bass, Farfisa organ, and clarinets. We all sang, under the influence of the Everly Brothers. We rehearsed in the Peaslee loft and presented our first concert at Barnard College on the night that Martin Luther King, Jr., was shot. This memory sticks with me because the streets had become more dangerous than usual, and we were extra-careful as we made our way home that night.

We had dates at various museums (once sharing an evening with Twyla Tharp), and Peter, who had been doing very well arranging for Joan Baez and others at Vanguard Records, approached the Solomon brothers (the owners of Vanguard) about our making an album for them. The resulting album went nowhere, but The Open Window lived on for the next three years.

One of our dates was to open for Buffy St. Marie at a huge hall. We were a comparatively "refined" cross-over act, didn't exactly tear the place up. Years later, I happened to be on a flight to L.A. with her and reminded her of the date; she was less than pleased to be reminded of our luke-warmup. Jorge Mester had become the conductor of the Louisville Orchestra, which had a contract with CRI to record contemporary scores. They commissioned us to produce a half-concert's worth of pieces, *Three Views from The Open Window*, that would explore mixed media,

part of the Zeitgeist that was prevalent. We each chose a different medium to mix with—Peter used a short film made by a friend, Bob chose photos of the destruction of Pennsylvania Station in New York, and I used taped vocal non-language expressions, recorded by my friends from the Open Theater, Joyce Aarons and Bill Macy.

My piece, *Circus*, started with a complete blackout as the conductor raised his baton for the upbeat. The hall was plunged into darkness and the recorded voices of my actors, played through loudspeakers placed so they seemed to be coming from the audience, started with "Hey!" "Wha—?" and coughing. Meanwhile, the musicians started building a cloud of tone clusters while mumbling their own names. This all created a sense of danger, of not knowing what was coming next, the feelings that one might experience at the circus. This "cloud" crescendoed until, at its climax, the lights came on and we were in the first Walkaround, the big entrance at the beginning of each circus performance, followed by "Tightrope," during which the lights gradually dimmed while we, the trio, sang a song of mine about a sexual encounter while the actors mirrored, with appropriate vocal sounds, the shape of a sex act, culminating in a shiver of orgasm in the instruments and the taped voices. Last was "Three Ring," in which three different styles of music were played simultaneously, an Ivesian kind of planned mayhem that led to a second "Walkaround," which built to another huge crescendo. At the height of that crescendo, the sound leaped from the stage to a tape that the trio had recorded. This tape was a rockish song, "Goodbye, Folks," that played on as we took our bows and left the stage.

As you can see, I was playing again with the "fact" of the concert, bringing the Brechtian aesthetic of self-reference into the concert hall. The piece created a scandal: when they realized what was going on during "Tightrope," some of the female members of the orchestra refused to play the concert. This led to newspaper articles and TV coverage. Because the performance was to be broadcast, we had a crisis. Jorge Mester came to me and asked if I would please allow that movement to be played without the tape. I caved and agreed, something I'm not proud of now. We would later play the pieces with the Chicago Orchestra at Ravinia, with Seiji Ozawa conducting, and at Cleveland's Blossom Festival under Louis Lane. In both these performances, we used the complete tape. No serious injuries resulted.

Chapter 7
1968-70: *Oh! Calcutta!*

Kenneth Tynan, the *doyen* of British critics, had conceived an evening of high-class erotic material, where a liberated couple could attend and be entertained. This proved to be impossible to present even in "swinging" 1969 London, still suffering under the yoke of the Lord Chamberlain, a kind of censor. Ken brought the idea to Hilly Elkins, a scrappy New York agent/producer who was at that time representing Jacques. Hilly thought the piece could be done in New York, with Jacques directing, hopefully creating a scandal that would match that of *Hair*, which had toyed with nudity in the theater. Jacques asked The Open Window to be the composer/players for the piece that would effect a sea-change in American stage performance. The title *Oh! Calcutta!* came from an inscription on a painting by Clovis Trouille, a French artist whose erotic images were getting some attention. The inscription "O! Calcutta!" under an odalisque seen from the back, was a play on the words *O quel cul t'as!—"*Oh, what a lovely ass you have!" Ken approached leading writers to create pieces that would explore the sexual landscape. Works from Sam Shepard, John Lennon, Samuel Beckett, Jules Feiffer, Leonard Melfi, Edna O'Brien, and others would be performed along with moments created in the rehearsal period via methods and games out of the Open Theater workbook.

One night in the preproduction phase, a group of us assembled at a theater at Second Avenue and 12th Street, to see whether the space would be suitable for our show. It was a venerable old theater, originally a flagship venue for the thriving Yiddish-language theater of the Lower East Side. Then it became the respectable home of a repertory company and finally, when we were considering it, it had become a porno film theater. I showed up early, and while waiting in the lobby for the others to assemble (Hilly, Jacques, etc.), I heard strains of the Beethoven Seventh Symphony wafting out of the closed theater doors. My curiosity thus aroused, I ventured a peek into the darkened theater, where the Beethoven Symphony was accompanying a full-screen image of an exposed vulva and vagina. The scattered male patrons were obviously enjoying the Beethoven immensely.

After the film, we inspected the theater and discovered that the former dressing rooms had obviously been used for sexual assignations following the films. We renovated and renamed the theater the Eden and reclaimed it as a legitimate theater (The Eden) for *Oh! Calcutta!*

Our first hurdle was casting an ensemble that would bravely cross a line that no one had yet crossed. Part of the audition was an improvisation, supposedly by a stream, speaking aloud a message to someone, to see how comfortable the actor could be naked before viewers. Auditions

were under a strict rule that no-one's *amour proper*—personal boundaries—be violated. And we had to follow Actors Equity performance standards. And so began months of rehearsal. Each author had been guaranteed that his/her piece would be played at least once before an audience. We played a month of previews with a different running order every night, seeking the final form. Eventually, we cut some pieces, including a Tennessee Williams trifle and a big production number, "Chase Me, Charlie," which traced the history of women's underwear. It was decided to not credit the various authors with their particular pieces, but to include their biographies in the program.

Jacques brought his training and experience as a clinical psychologist at the Menninger Institute in Topeka to bear as we all swam in the liberating waters of a new sea. The actors were under an injunction not to fraternize outside of rehearsal; there was to be no pairing up. Jacques foresaw that that could be destructive to the work. Sometimes, after watching a particularly intense rehearsal, I had to call Bobbie on the way home and warn her to be ready for a heated encounter before dinner.

Peter, Bob, and I had decided to divide the compositional work among us, with a few moments of joint composition. The creation of a title song fell to me, and I wrote a kind of sliding piece, slithering between tonalities and a throbbing rock tune. The only lyric is the title, so I've always referred to the song as "Word and Music, Stanley Walden."

For the vocal quintet *Suite for Five Letters*, I used metrical modulation[15] for the singers, who were clad in formal concert attire and sitting on stools, first singing texts garnered from "kinky" British advertisements of the Thirties, then shifting to bizarre personal ads lifted from the *Village Voice* of the Sixties. The piece ended with the very proper quintet transforming into fantasists, as they fondled themselves and gave voice to whatever sexual fantasies they were having in the moment.

My third big number was the nude ballet *One on One, The Ballad of Clarence and Mildred*, which I created with the choreographer Margo Sappington, who was also in the ensemble. My lyric, set to my country rock score, tells the story of an encounter between a biker named Clarence Cooze, and Mildred Susan Archer, a "tired waitress workin' hard, slinging' hash t' truckers/Suffers 'em t' pinch her ass and raise her tips that way." Margo and I got along famously. The dance was not an illustration of my song but rather a sensuous duet, with startling moments as the two nude bodies created vivid sculptural pictures on stage. This ballet was the iconic moment of the evening and became a cover of *Time* magazine.

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[15] Metrical modulation is a technique used by Elliott Carter in which one meter (time signature) modulates to another.

What with NYPD watching every preview to see whether we were violating any laws, and scalpers selling tickets at inflated prices, the expectations and *frisson* surrounding *Oh! Calcutta!* grew to be a *cause scandale*. Finally, we opened, and on opening night we awaited the reviews at Sardi's, the usual venue for an opening night party. We particularly awaited the determining review from the *New York Times* critic, Clive Barnes, (who had praised *Scuba Duba*). When the reviews came, they were not only uniformly terrible, but also unusually long, as each critic painstakingly revealed his or her reaction to each specific sexual taboo we were breaking. As the faces of the investors began to droop, Hilly jumped up on a table and offered to buy out any investor who wanted to sell his share in the production. *Oh!Calcutta!* went on to become the longest-running revue in the history of the New York theater.

My mother and Bobbie's mother, Helen Dolgin, came to a performance. The Marxist "liberal" from Hartford was shocked beyond words while my conservative, bourgeois mother was delighted by the show. (Just as well my father was safely buried; the shock might have been too much for him.) The Open Window performed in the pit, but quite soon after opening we replaced ourselves with subs, one of them John "Bowzer" Bauman, later of Sha Na Na, and another a musician from the band at West Point, who wrote an arrangement of the title song for marching band that was played at an Army football game. A recording was soon set up with a label, DRG, created especially for it, and we sweetened the score with additional instruments.

Although it broke records, *Oh! Calcutta!* did not throw off the expected royalties for those of us who had created it. The Open Window's share was split three ways, and the general author's share was divided among the many writers whose work had survived the previews. We always suspected Hilly of skimming off the box office but despite audits of both his and his successor Norman Keane's books, we were never able to prove it. Norman had taken on the role of producer when the second iteration came up from Coconut Grove, where Jacques and I wrote some new material, and opened at the Edison Theater on West 46th Street, where it would play for the next 11 years.[16]

Ironically, the most money I have earned from the show came years later, after we moved to Palm Springs in 2007. My publisher, Milt Okun, invited us to breakfast at the Beverly Hills Tennis Club. He looked at me and said with his sweet smile, "You're going to be surprised soon, and in a nice way." A few days later I got an email from EMI with a listing of a very large sum for royalties from *Oh! Calcutta!* The song had been sampled by Rich Harrison for the hip-hop

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[16] Norman was dangerously unstable, insanely jealous of his wife. Eventually, he stabbed her to death then leaped out a window to his death. A pleasant homecoming for their son when he returned from school.

song *One Thing*, sung by Amerie, which had been a hit and had been used for the endcrawl in the film *Hitch*. Much to my surprise, I received the ASCAP Rhythm and Blues award for this use.

The major royalty came not from the film license, though. It came much later, from *One Thing*'s wide use as a ringtone for smartphones. The kicker was that I couldn't even recognize the song in its sample. I later discovered that Harrison hadn't sampled my recording from the album or from the film, but rather the cover version by The Meters. Five years on, my son Josh and I went to the movies—and heard *One Thing* again, accompanying two pole dancers in Sofia Coppola's film *Somewhere*. When it started, I turned to Josh and crowed, "THAT'S MY SONG!"

The next stage production of *Oh! Calcutta!* after New York was set for San Francisco, so in 1970, we set out for Sausalito, where Steve Schmidt, a friend of Peter Schickele's, lived on a converted barge. The barge was divided into three apartments, with a shared middle space large enough for our boys to ride their bikes. We rented one of the upper apartments and discovered, when we arrived, a stash of plastic dildos under the bed; the previous tenant was in the business, apparently. We took a ride up to a Salvation Army outlet and furnished the apartment for a minimal sum.

We did the show in North Beach, down Columbus Avenue from the Condor nightclub, where Carol Doda pioneered topless dancing, and near City Lights, Lawrence Ferlinghetti's iconic bookshop. Dick Grayson was the house manager for the San Francisco show; I had last seen Dick when he invited me to apprentice at Westport in 1954. An L.A. production was also in the works, so Jacques and I flew down there to meet with Margo and cast it. For a while my commute to work involved going to the helipad on the beach in Sausalito, taking a helicopter to the San Francisco airport for the trip to LA, then reversing the sequence to come home to the houseboat. Things were moving very fast.

Oh! Calcutta! also went to London. One of the original investors in the show was Michael White (neé Weiss), who planned an English production following the New York success, now that the Lord Chamberlain's office was no longer. The London production was set for The Roundhouse, a converted trolley turnaround facility and a central theater in "happening London." I wrote to Michael and offered to come over and work on/advise the production. (I had been the musical supervisor on the California productions).

Michael was evasive and not particularly welcoming in his replies, but we saw a chance for the family to visit England and planned to go in spite of his lack of warmth, so we arranged to rent a houseboat on the Kennet and Avon Canal in Newburyport. We met the boat's owner in Newburyport, Berkshire; he was to tow the houseboat to a lock of the Canal. We Waldens traveled on the houseboat behind the tug, which was loaded with young girls, all French tourists.

Unfortunately, the captain had had a pint or two and was having some difficulty navigating the canal. At one point, he misjudged, and the houseboat smacked into the canal wall, causing my sons to do abrupt, elegant flips over the rail into the canal. I dove in after them and brought them up on the shore, where we three stood with the canal water streaming from the soaked and stretched sweaters that Bobbie had knit. The French girls found it all *trés amusante*.

Eventually, we got the houseboat moored at a lock in the canal, and we often swam there. One Sunday, a free day, we invited the cast out for a picnic. Three of the New York cast had been hired for London: Margo, Bill Macy, and George Welbes, Margo's partner in the ballet. On this beautiful sunny Sunday, we all had the wine and cold meats, took off our clothes, and jumped into the lock. What we didn't know was that this Sunday was also the day of a canoe race on the canal. In the midst of our Dionysian revelry, a string of canoes, paddled by crews of young girls, suddenly appeared, headed straight for us. Then, they all made abrupt U-turns and paddled away, their fabled English reserve having stood them in good stead

I thought that I had made a connection with Tynan. He invited us Waldens to tea with him and Kathleen in their white-carpeted rooms in Thurloe Square in Knightsbridge, while all of our children played in the private park on the Square. He was quite friendly; he had the odd quirk of humming to himself pop music from the 50's and I would sometime join in. My suspicions about the production were justified when I turned up in London and tracked down a rehearsal, where I discovered that Tynan, who had never been a great collaborator—Jacques threw Kathleen Tynan out of rehearsal for taking her "notes" directly to the actors—had asked John Dankworth, a British star musician and husband of the singer Cleo Laine, to write a new score for *Suite for Five Letters*—without telling me. I got in touch with Hilly and asked him to intercede; he wrote back and said that he had worked it out, and they would use my version.

However, as I discovered at the dress rehearsal, they had continued rehearsing Dankworth's version and planned to use it opening night. As a *lagniappe*, they had asked me to set a text by the 17th Century English poet John Cosgrove, "To His Black Mistress," to be sung by a black woman. When Ken came to me after the rehearsal, I was so furious, I took a swing at him (same story as with John Cage in New London, but with more justification this time). Like John, Ken saw it coming, so—luckily—I didn't connect. Bobbie went back to Margo's apartment in Maida Vale, where we staying during rehearsal, and I went on an epic pub-crawl, eventually showing up back at the apartment completely smashed. The only time I encountered this kind of double-dealing with a straight face again was in Vienna, the home of *schmierige Charm*.

A film was also in the offing in New York and, as we produced it, Jacques came up with the idea that viewing the film should somehow have the aura of a live stage performance, which

meant we would have to add a laugh track. In one of my fondest memories, Jacques and I are sitting in a studio with Charlie, the "laugh-track guy." Charlie was a sound effects specialist who keyed in the appropriate degree of laughter for each joke from tapes he had incorporated into a special keyboard he invented and kept under lock and key at all times. Charlie had a monopoly on all laugh-track work in New York—a lot of television was being produced there—so he was in tremendous demand. The only drawback: Charlie had no sense of humor. As we scrolled through the footage of a scene, Jacques and I had to tell Charlie "Here!" then describe which kind of laughter the joke required before he would hit a key and bring up the appropriate sound. Jacques and I could hardly contain our own laughter at the absurdity of the situation. The LP of the show was nominated for a Grammy, and the film opened to no great acclaim and almost bankrupted the producers.

One of the investors was Garth Drabinsky, a Canadian cousin of Norman Keane's, to whom Hilly had sold off various rights. Hilly made a little side business of selling off rights whenever he needed cash, which resulted in the mare's nest we have now, whereby it is virtually impossible to determine where certain rights lie. Drabinsky was later involved in a financial scandal that resulted in his conviction on charges of fraud and forgery, for which he served five years in jail.

At one point, the *Oh! Calcutta!* keyboardist/musical director was busted for drug dealing and no one was available on short notice to replace him for a month, so Norman asked me to step in. We had already moved to the country, and it was a drag to come to the City every day, but I arranged to stay at the Peaslees. Two weeks later, I was bored. The show had lost its *frisson*, and I was glad to pass on the baton.

After *Oh! Calcutta!* the scent of something unclean lingered around our reputations in the U. S. as if the show's success were somehow illicit. (In Germany, however, it enhanced my reputation.) Having listed *Oh! Calcutta!* for years with a nasty critique, *The New Yorker* magazine stopped listing it altogether toward the end of its run. Later productions I saw in Paris and Berlin were appalling: the show had become what the New York critics accused us of: a randy, cheap evening. I still think our production was a delightful, tasteful evening of erotica.

After I left the pit of *Oh! Calcutta!* I took on two more musical director jobs. Megan Terry, one of the playwrights in the Open Theater, was preparing to present her play *Talk Show* at the Actors Studio, and I wrote some songs for her. John Duffy had written a show with Rocco Bufano, *Horseman, Pass By*, which was set to open at the Fortune Theater on 8th Street. They had assembled a stunning cast: Barbara Barrie, Clifton Davis, George Hearn, Terry Kaiser, Lawrence Luckinbill, Novella Nelson, and Maria Tucci, all of whom enjoyed sterling careers. Will Geer

supplied some voice-overs. The music, settings of W.B. Yeats poetry, needed to be orchestrated and taught, so I took on the job.

Hilly Elkins was married to Claire Bloom at that time, and we had gone house-hunting with the *verkockte* plan that we three couples, Hilly and Claire, Jacques and Kathleen (Brenda's successor), and Bobbie and I would all form a kind of co-op and buy a large place in the country outside Manhattan. We looked at properties up and down the Hudson, including a large estate owned by Johnny Winter, which had a recording studio. On one of the days looking at places, Claire came along with her mother, who was visiting from England. When we talked of going to London and Ireland for the show, Mrs. Bloom generously offered us the use of a cottage in Connemara, which Claire and her first husband, Rod Steiger, had given to Claire's mother. It was an idyllic place to recover from the pains of London, with cows grazing outside the front door, their unpasteurized milk being delivered daily by the caretaker, with bonny boys riding their bikes no-handed and singing and whistling on their way, with trips to Clifden for the tinker horseraces and to Galway for the Yeats castle. God bless the Irish—and why doesn't He stop them from killing each other? Ultimately, the co-op plan came to nothing, which was just as well because the other two relationships dissolved shortly thereafter, and we would have been left holding the bag.

When we were living on the houseboat in Sausalito, Bobbie and I took a trip up to Point Reyes, where she dropped acid and, while dipping into the ocean, had a vision: we would move out of Riverside Drive and live closer to the land. Upon returning to New York we looked at many possibilities: houseboats on the Hudson, communes in the hills, the commune at Stony Point where artists like David Tudor, Stan Breckenridge, and Lamar and Sheila Davenport lived. We finally decided on my family's 21 acres in Dutchess County, just off the Taconic Parkway, on Miller Hill Road. My widowed mother and my sister owned the property jointly and agreed to sell it to us for a laughable sum so we could move in with no mortgage.

One of the first things to do upon moving to the country was to create a workspace for me. (Our grand plans included another for Bobbie and one for the boys, but that idea vanished in the face of reality.) In our apartment house on Riverside Drive, there was an architect who taught at Columbia. I asked him for a reference, and he suggested a student of his, just graduated. Michael visited Miller Hill, and we came up with the plan: he would design the building—it would be his first and would be, in effect, his *practicum*—and we would give him room and board for as long as it took. We chose a place across the road from the house, attaching to the pool cabana, which would house the furnace and water pump, etc., and broke ground in September. Construction took nine months. I joined in on most of the heavy labor and have not-so-fond

memories of nailing roof shingles in winter, occasionally missing a nail and hitting my thumb. It was a good thing I had "retired" from the free-lance world. In retrospect, I'm very proud of the result and glad that I never had to do it again. The 20'x 30' space with a sleeping loft was my haven where I would write many bars of music in the coming years.

Matt and Josh were far less than thrilled with the prospect of leaving their friends and schools in New York, however, so I made a deal with them: they could each have one wish fulfilled at the new house. Matt wanted a mini-bike, Josh a horse. Matt tore up and down the still-unpaved Miller Hill Road on his mini-bike, and—oh hubris!—we found a horse for Josh, a roan gelding he named Takka after the character in *Final Fantasy*. I installed an electric fence corral in the upper field, in what had been our vegetable garden, and Takka was delivered to us.

Josh was 10 years old and small, and the horse was much more than he could handle. We bought a saddle, which was never used, and I ended up doing all the work. Once, when I had the horse outside the corral, he got away, and his bridle got caught up in one of the picnic tables around our pool. Takka pulled the table, along with its heavy concrete anchor, across the field, digging a deep scarring rut. I managed to quiet him down but never took him out of the corral again. That didn't stop him. The electric charge in the fence was very sensitive and an insect crawling into one of the insulators could cause a short. Takka constantly tested the fence and one day, I returned home from the City to find the fence breached and the horse gone. I looked everywhere and couldn't find him. Eventually a man came up the road leading him on a rope and said that Takka had gone down the road, crossed the Parkway (!) and was grazing on this fellow's property. Somehow, the man knew where the horse came from. We sold the horse.

Matt, who was linguistically and mathematically precocious, started out in the public school in Wappingers Falls, but we withdrew him after his advisor predicted Matt would make a good accountant. Matt was mercilessly teased by the kids on the bus for having long hair, and they called him "Spearchucker." We enrolled him at Oakwood, a Friends School in Poughkeepsie, where he thrived (he had attended a Friends school in Manhattan for a year). Josh also started in a public school but soon transferred to the Poughkeepsie Day School, a private school for the children of Vassar faculty. He managed a couple of years but then had a traumatic LSD experience, so we transferred him to Oakwood, too. This drug trauma changed the course of his life, although he had already had problems with inappropriate behavior.

Chapter 8
1970-71: First Work with Tabori--*Pinkville*

In the summer of 1969, Bonnie Enten, one of our cast members in *Oh! Calcutta!* was dating Chris Tabori, son of the writer/director George Tabori, and Chris had taken part in a production of a show of George's, *Pinkville,* at Williamstown in the Berkshires. They planned to produce the show the next year at the American Place Theater in New York, and they were looking for a composer. Bonnie suggested me, so I met George and Marty Fried (his son-in-law at the time), and they gave me some of the song lyrics George had written for the Williamstown *Pinkville*. I took one of them home ("Jerry the Rover") and set it that night. After I played it for George and Marty the next day, George and I hugged in mutual delight, and I entered the next act of my life, for George and I were to write together for the next 35 years, in some 50 productions.

Pinkville was a Brechtian inquiry into what it would take to turn a nice, clean-cut American boy into the kind of killer who would commit an atrocity like My Lai, at that time a red-hot topic in public discourse. In Tabori's show, the Lt. William Calley character is named Jerry O'Carey. We assembled a cast of strong New York actors and went into rehearsal under Marty Fried's direction. At that time, Wynn Handman's American Place Theater was situated in a church on West 46th Street, and the shows took place in the main church space. I was given a number of lyrics to set, ranging from "Television Baby" to "In Memory of One," a simple memorial for a murdered Vietnamese baby, to "Dear Mom"—"I'm in Vietnam, tell Dad I'm not yet dead!"—to a marching chant of "KILL. . . KILL . . . KILL!"

Another song I set, with my lyric, emerged one night at the family dinner table when Matt asked me whether he would have to go into the Army when he grew up. I answered that he might not have to fight if he had a disability. "Like what?" he asked. I answered, "You might have flat feet, for example." He turned to Bobbie and said, "Mommy, don't fix my feet!" So I wrote "Mommy." ("Mommy, don't improve my arch 'cause I don't wanna have to march and Mommy, don't be proud of your boy and then maybe, I won't have to destroy Vietcong, and maybe I'll get to live pretty long")

Christopher Tabori, George's son, who had played the role of Jerry in Williamstown, started the rehearsals but got a film offer and left the show. His replacement was Michael Douglas in his first (and, I think, only) New York stage appearance. Raoul Julia and Art Sherman were also in the cast. I scored the music for piano and percussion and turned to Jacob Druckman for some special electronic battle effects. I was once again paired with Anna Sokolow, who created the stage movement. We had a terrifying moment in one performance: Michael was in a

cargo net suspended from the church's ceiling, swinging and spinning in wide arcs over the stage and the audience. At this particular performance, the rope holding the net broke, and Michael fell about eight feet, narrowly missing several audience members and miraculously preserving the sterling career in his future.

Pinkville was powerful but was strongly attacked in the press as anti-American, which it wasn't, of course—it was very strongly anti-war, which at that point seemed to amount to the same thing. One strange element of the production was Wolfgang Roth's set, which connected My Lai to Auschwitz: the audience was held outside a chain link fence, with the text **ARBEIT MACHT FREI** ("Work Makes You Free," the actual motto over the gate at Auschwitz) before they were allowed to enter the playing space. George had had a major hit with his *Die Kannibalen* (*The Cannibals*) in Berlin, and Wynn Handman had done a production in New York, so following the New York run, we were invited to do a German-language version of *Pinkville* as part of the Berlin Festival.

After the critical attacks in the New York press, the U.S. State Department withdrew its support for the Berlin production, so Dr. Maria Sommer, George's Berlin publisher, had to round up private financing and a Berlin space willing to present the play. George's marriage to Viveca Lindfors was dissolving and his translator, a young woman named Ursula Grützmacher, was with him in New York. George wrote all of his plays in English (except for the very last ones) and Grützmacher was contractually connected as translator with all of them. She was intimately involved with him for the rest of his life, even after their romantic involvement was long over. After the New York run, George left the U.S. with a DAAD (*Deutsche Akademischer Austauschdienst*) subvension in Berlin and never returned to the States to live.

[While *Pinkville* was running, I kept writing. Diane Arbus's 1967 MOMA show moved me to write a theater piece I called *Hot Ginger and Dynamite*, but it was never produced because after Arbus' death in 1971, her daughter Doon wouldn't release the rights. And The Open Window was still active. We supplied and played the score for a children's musical at the City Center, B. J. Lifton's *Moonwalk*; my contribution was "Moonwalk Candy Freakout." For this production, we added a drummer, , whom we had first met when two of Jacob's students at Juilliard, facing a graduation recital, had asked The Open Window for pieces to play on that event. The Open Window incorporated Gordon as our own drummer and created a piece for Max Pollikof's new music series at the 92nd Street Y, "Susanna and the Elders," with Jan DeGaetani as Susanna. Guess who were the elders. Gordon got a big solo when it came to the stoning.

The other percussionist in Jacob's class was David Friedman, whom I would encounter years later in Berlin at the *Hochschule* president's office as he and I prepared new curricula for

the HdK, his for jazz, mine for musical/show. The piece I wrote for their Juilliard graduation was "Shivaree," a reversal of the Ravel *Bolero* in that "Shivaree" went from loudest sounds possible on the percussion instruments strewn across the stage to quietest, almost inaudible moments of rubbing hands together and whispering.]

The Berlin production of *Pinkville* was the next big event. I went over for the month-long preparation. George had connected with the Max Reinhardt Seminar, an acting program that later was incorporated in the formation of the *Hochschule der Künste*. The program was taught in a large building on the Bundesallee (where our musical/show department would find a home in 1996). My first contact with the cast was a meeting that I attended direct from my flight. We all sat in a circle on the floor in the collective democratization of the early 70's—legacy of the "don't trust anyone over 30" from 1968—and the actors were into an endless discussion about the play, the war, their breakfast, anything and everything. I held out as long as I could then finally stretched out and fell asleep.

When they woke me at the end of their pointless rant, I told them that I wouldn't attend or indulge such filibustering if it interfered with rehearsals, a threat I had to invoke several times in the coming weeks. Among the students were Peter Kock, who played Jerry and went on to a distinguished German theater career, Burghart Klaussner, now one of the leading actors in German cinema, and Wolf Steigert, a major force in the digital age on many levels. The students were deeply committed and were thrilled to be working in the style of New York theater. Most German theater was still under the rubric of disciplined, traditional study, so *Pinkville* was an exciting new sensibility for them.

The play text had been translated by Grützmacher, but we needed someone special to do the song lyrics. A young cabaretist, Volker Ludwig, had made a name for himself with the *Reichskaberett Berlin*, a political review with big teeth. Volker and I hit it off, and his translations were first-rate. We resolved to work together on something after this, a resolve that held firm and was finally satisfied 27 years later with the production of *Cafè Mitte* at his by then world-famous GRIPS Theater in Berlin. We needed a percussionist for the '71 *Pinkville* production and approached the *Musikhochschule* (not yet incorporated into the HdK) for a recommendation for a student, whereupon the percussion teacher ruled that if any of his students agreed to play my rock or pop music, he would throw them out of his class. Cultural change had begun in Germany but had a long way to go to catch up with the rest of the West.

George put me up in an apartment on the Hauptstrasse. That first morning, I awoke, looked out the window and saw the length of a massive construction site wall plastered with alternating posters for coming productions of *Pinkville* and *Oh! Calcutta!* "Aha," I said to myself,

"this must be the right place!" We ended up presenting *Pinkville* in yet another church, this time the *Dreieinigkeits Kirche* in Buchow, an outlying part of Berlin. A young filmmaker, Rainer Schnurre, recorded the rehearsal process. Rainer's father was a well-known poet, and his Jewish mother taught film editing at the Film Akademie. Rainer and I became close, and he asked if I would be willing to play on a film that he had planned. He wanted to rent an open truck and an upright piano so he could interview me as I played and sang while we were driven through Berlin. My German wasn't fluent then, but I agreed. The cameraman for this adventure was Michael Ballhaus, later one of the most sought-after Hollywood cameramen.

Pinkville opened to rave reviews, and I was faced with the moral quandary of enjoying encomia in the land of my people's murderers while resenting bad reviews from the people of my family's rescuers. I had long discussions with George, who had a checkered history of living in many countries, under many regimes, and had made the accommodation of living with his father's murderers at Auschwitz. I told him I didn't feel justified in claiming to be Jewish in a world in which I didn't observe any of the rituals and didn't believe in any God. George replied that I didn't have to worry myself about whether I was legitimately Jewish. The Germans would decide the matter for me.[17]

[17] In Appendix 5 of this document, I offer an essay containing my impressions and decisions about being a Jew working in postwar Germany.

Chapter 9

1972-1989: *Hin und Her* (Back and Forth)

(Dear Reader: please fasten your seat-belt and have your seat back in the upright position for the next two chapters, covering the years 1972-2002, as I fly constantly between and within the U.S. and Europe, attending to some 60+ productions and 30+ concerts.)

Back in New York, Wynn Handman's American Place Theater had moved to new quarters on West 45th Street and was planning a production of Robert Coover's *The Kid*. Jack Gelber, whose play *The Connection* had created a great stir for the Living Theater, was directing, and I was brought on as composer. I was delighted because "country" is among my favorite flavors. After the seismic Summer of Woodstock in '69, I underwent a shift in my self-image. The "cowboy" had always been a romantic figure for me, and with the new freedoms from expectations, I grew the beard that I have worn since then, and changed my dress to include Stetsons, straws, and Tony Lama boots. At 6'2" plus boots plus hat, I was difficult to miss. I continued in this style until the 90s, when Bobbie pleaded with me not to wear the hat anymore as it could make me a clear target for terrorists on my frequent sojourns in Europe. I was secretly relieved to surrender the Stetsons because, on an airplane, there is no elegant way to stow the costly topper in the overhead bin.[18]

The Kid is a penetrating look at the myth of the American Wild West. A particular highlight for me was the song "The Kid with Blue Eyes" sung by Jenny O'Hara as she swooped on a swing from stage to audience. One night, a fire broke out on some of the froufrou decorating the stage and we had a difficult time convincing the audience that it was a real danger, not a part of the play: we shouted "FIRE!" in the crowded theater, but nobody believed us. We opened on my 40th birthday and I had set up a recording in a midtown studio after the show but had to cancel after Wynn said that that would be in violation of the union rules, even though the cast had all agreed. Two of the musicians in that band were special: Sy Johnson on piano, a jazz specialist, who would later lead the Mingus Big Band, and Bob Gunton, newly arrived in New York, was

[18] My modest change of appearance is dwarfed by the transformation of Brooklyn-born Sidney Frumkin into Sidney Franklin, the renowned bullfighter praised by Hemingway and known as *El Torero de la Torah*. A friend of mine was related to Franklin, and one day in the late Forties, we visited him in his Brooklyn home. He showed and shared with us the many trophies and awards he had won in the bullrings of Spain, including his *Trajes de luces* (Suit of Lights). He did not present us with an ear.

our guitar/banjo/vocalist. It was his first New York gig, and he went on to star in *Evita* and in many films. Bob Coover and I became friends and talked of turning his novel *The Public Burning* (about the Rosenbergs) into an opera, which we never did.

Margo Sappington, the choreographer of *Oh! Calcutta!* had been a company member of the Joffrey Ballet, and Bob Joffrey was interested in using the sounds and rhythms of rock in his company's repertoire. He had commissioned a ballet from Margo, and she turned to me for the score. We developed a piece she called *Weewis,* a meaningless word that she and her husband Tommy had used as a secret endearment. The structure of the piece was three duets: a competitive challenge dance for two men (Jimmy Dunne and Gary Crist), an aggressive duo for a dysfunctional couple (Tony Catanzaro and Susan Magno), and a loving erotic duet (Becky White and Christian Holder). The piece was scored for full orchestra and rock quartet, and each duo got a distinctive music; at times they overlapped, or all three were simultaneous. After rehearsing in New York, the premier took place in Berkeley, where the company had a residency. I conducted the premier performances there, followed by the New York premier. *Weewis* stayed in the Joffrey repertoire for many years, and eventually became part of the repertoire for the National Ballet of Mexico, for which production I recorded a chamber orchestra version that was then used by several European companies. Dan Carter, a guitarist/singer whom I had taught at Sarah Lawrence, then hired for the Florida production of *Oh! Calcutta!* was featured on the recording.

Jan DeGaetani and her English horn-playing husband Phil West wanted to do a piece of mine in a concert at Swarthmore College, so I wrote *Coronach, A Kaddish* for them.[19] The soprano part is a vocalise, with the choice of syllabification left up to the singer. The piece also needed a *chazzan,* a cantor intoning the Kaddish, the Jewish prayer for the dead. I had not recited the Kaddish for my father, as a respectful Jewish son should do, so I conceived of this piece as a substitute for the 11 months of temple attendance otherwise required. Dick Wernick's friend Raymond Gilbert was a cantor and agreed to take part in the performance. *Coronach* was performed just this once, by this group; unfortunately, the tape machine didn't function that night, so there is no record. However, I did record it in Berlin with wonderful performers, including soprano G. Schreckenbach, J. Hillerböhl on English horn, and Efraim Nachame, the *chazzan* for the Berlin congregation.

Bobbie turned 40 in 1974, and when I asked her what she would like as a gift, she replied that she would like to give a concert for the patients on the locked ward of the Hudson River Psychiatric Hospital—the most severely disturbed and dangerous patients—where she was

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[19] A coronach is a Scottish prayer for the dead.

engaged as a dance therapist. We assembled: Jan DeGaetani, Phil West, Bobbie, Josh, and me. The patients were brought into a common room, and all of us except Bobbie were a little concerned about how they would behave. Those mental patients, supposedly the least predictable, were among the best audiences I have ever appeared before. Jan and Phil performed some Bach arias with oboe obligato, I accompanied them and played and sang with Bobbie some standards and some of my own music, Josh improvised a dance. The audience was stock-still and deeply appreciative of our offerings. Afterwards we five retired to the CIA (The Culinary Institute of America) just up the road from the hospital, and enjoyed a splendid meal.

In 1974, Tom O'Horgan, the director of *Hair* and *Lenny*, called me with the idea of writing a musical based on the story of Svengali and Trilby. We entered into an agreement and started writing. It was not the most satisfying of such arrangements, since I ended up writing 90% of the material, and he contributed his reactions. I liked him, though. Tom lived in a fabulous loft on 12th Street, really a museum of instruments that he had purchased with his royalties from *Hair*, including one room dedicated to a full set of Thai tuned-gongs. There were rooms of flutes, drums, guitars, and in the middle of the apartment, a harp, which was Tom's chosen instrument and with which he had made his New York debut. He assembled a group of New York theater gypsies, and we made a demo recording in the loft (among the singers was Sheila McCrea, singing a song of mine, "Too Much World," that I had originally written for and about Jan's daughter Francesca when she was entering puberty). *Svengali* never got done, but Tom and I parted on friendly terms.

Joe Chaiken had continued working with a small group after the dissolution of The Open Theater (a decision we all arrived at after the unwanted public acclaim and being so "in"—we didn't want to be anyone's darlings). Joe's group met in a space on Great Jones Street for what we called The Winter Project, an extension of the Open Theater work. I wrote some things, among them a duet for Ronnie Gilbert and bass clarinet based on the story of Persephone. Joe, who had a history of cardiac problems, had a stroke while on the operating table for something else and lost some of his power of language. Part of his postop recovery consisted of the two of us walking around the Village, giggling whenever he stumbled on a word or the proper use of a pronoun. He later presented an evening with Sam Shepard that made capital of his affliction, and he traveled and led a workshop in Israel.

Art Bloom had a new position with the New York State Council on the Arts, and they were awarding grants for theater and concert performances outside of New York City. There was a small elite girls school near us in Dutchess County, Bennett College, famous for having a large

stable where the students could keep their horses. Bobbie had met some of the faculty in a dance collective called Riverdance. I approached them with the idea of working on a theater piece that would involve much of the school. The piece became *Fandangle, A Tomfoolery* for singers, dancers, and actors. *Fandangle* had a fantasy level, with Groucho, Mae West, and Mickey Mouse in acting roles, a ballet based on an American Indian creation myth, and William Blake's *Long John Brown and Little Mary Bell* set for female vocal quintet. Josh had found a weird Donald Duck voice, and I involved him in the performance. A talented student sang pop/rock, and staged events occurred in the audience. I scored the piece for woodwind quintet—for which I used the West Point musicians—bass, percussion and prerecorded string quartet.

Tabori had stayed in Germany following *Pinkville* and had ended up in Bremen, where the intendant[20] Peter Stollzenberg had hired him with the intention of building up his own ensemble to be embedded within the larger ensemble of the theater. George aimed to develop an evening of happy theater as counterweight to the *Sturm und Drang* then prevalent on the German stage, and he asked me to come over to help. We were given a rehearsal space in an unused villa near the theater, where George lived on the ground floor, looking out on a garden, and me on the top floor, with the studio between us. George's relationship with Grützmacher had soured (although she insisted on using the name Grützmacher-Tabori, from a marriage that either did or didn't exist), and he had spotted a 21-year-old dancer in the theatre's ballet company, led by Johann Kresnick, a wild-man of the German dance world. This young dancer was also named Uschi (Höpfner), and George brought her into our ensemble even though she had never acted, and into his bed and, later, married her.

We started with a potpourri of material, some by Tabori. One of these possibilities was a protocol out of Fritz Perl's *Gestalt Therapy Verbatim*. This slice was so rich in its content that eventually it took over the entire menu, and we opened under the title *Sigmunds Freude*. This was a real "Freude" (joy) for me, as I had the opportunity to use quite a few of my songs to make some sort of connection to the figures in the play. I also got the chance to do something that I had always wished to do—I wrote "foreground music," music that would push and direct a scene, not solely support the action, sometimes going explicitly against the acting beats, challenging the actors' choices in the moment, diving into the "here and now" with my improvisations. We performed the piece in a former movie theater, Concordia, with the action taking place within a clearly demarcated circle, around which the audience sat on the same level as the acting took place, with the actors alternating taking turns being Fritz, and one of his patients. Audiences

[20] Not a misspelling of "attendant." In Europe, an intendant (accent on the final syllable) is a kind of impresario who promotes one or more theaters.

found the piece so compelling that sometimes audience members jumped on “stage” and asked to be therapised.

I wrote a *Laudate Hominum*, a choral celebration of the many varieties of man/woman. To create the most variety in my soundscape, I assembled a panoply of instruments out of the theater’s fundus and added my clarinet to them. I placed myself in a little “cave” above the stage. Bobbie, who had by now earned a master’s degree in dance therapy at Antioch College/New England wrote us a detailed list of exercises that she thought we could use in developing the piece, which was a great help.

At the end of the evening, the tension culminated in a scene in which Uschi, who had never spoken on the stage, played the part of a woman who had lost her voice. I entered the playing space, provoking her with my clarinet playing until she was able to shout out to her father, in her unused, cracked voice “*Leck mich am Arsch, Du alte Bock!”* (“Kiss my ass, you old goat!”) She tore up a pillow she had been cradling, and feathers flew all over. A metal ring with orchestral chimes hanging from it descended from the flies, and Uschi picked up a hammer and started whacking the bells. A recording of Bach’s *Cantata #50*, *Nun ist das Heil,* a powerful double fugue for double chorus, came roaring out of speakers placed around the audience. The cast rushed on stage, carrying large hunks of timber and, under the eye of a foreman, started building a large structure the set designer, Marietta Eggmann had created, which gradually revealed itself to be an elaborate assembly line. At the end, a cream pie was placed on the conveyor belt, which moved as someone turned an oversized crank. At the end of the cream torte’s journey on the conveyor belt, a large hammer that had been hovering above the construction all along came smashing down on the cream cake and sent whipped cream mixed with the feathers streaming all over the actors and the audience. It was the most thrilling *Ode to Joy* since the *Beethoven 9*th. I also presented an evening of my own songs, something that I would repeat at many of the theaters in which we later worked. Through the work on this piece, I was improving my German and could almost hold my own in the political discussions that were each night’s fare.

After England and Sausalito, the houseboat life still called out to us, so Bobbie and I chose to spend three weeks in Kashmir, on one of the luxury houseboats left over from the Raj.[21] The owner of the houseboat asked me to bring with me an electric typewriter as personal equipment, thus avoiding any duty charge. I complied and, on our first night on the boat, we plugged it in. It promptly blew up, with billows of smoke and fire. Both of us, along with the boat’s owner, had forgotten that the power voltage was different on the Subcontinent.

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[9] You can see what they were like in the 1984 British TV series *The Jewel in the Crown.*

Part of the arrangement with the houseboat rental was the provision of a servant, who slept curled up at the door to the boat. At one point Bobbie made the request to visit a psychiatric institution, much to the dismay of our hosts. She was adamant, wanting to compare their system with her experience in the U. S. It was a journey into hell, a revisiting of what in America used to be referred to as "snake pits". We made several trips away from the houseboat, one of them a river journey on the Jammu in an open boat, with a cook and his bevy of live chickens, one of which he'd slaughter every night for our dinner. One of the crew smoked weed and got so high he jumped into the river, and we had to fish him out. Another trek was into the Himalayas on mules, first to visit a glacier and then to camp out. The next day, we both got seriously ill before the trip home thanks to spoiled yak milk we unwittingly drank in the mountains. The entire trip was surrounded by a hint of danger, as the enmity between the Kashmiri and the Indians was present and simmering.

Back home, David Newman, whom I had met while rehearsing "*Sincere Replies"*," the piece he and Bob Benton had in *Oh! Calcutta!*, needed music for his film *The Crazy American Girl* (*La Fille d'Amerique).* Serge Silberman, a Holocaust survivor, was producing the film with his Greenwich Films in Paris. David and I once flew to Paris for a lunch date with him. We wrote some songs for the film ("Got Myself Together," "Gettin' Off"), and I went to Paris for the recording of the score at Billancourt Studios.[22] I wrote a full score, with moments of Ravelian sweep, others of intense passion. One of the sounds I wanted to employ was a wooden "log" drum, so I brought one over and, the drummer on the date ended up buying it from me. The film, starring Patty D'Arbanville, was based on the exploits of Kathleen Dabney, Jacques' former girlfriend, who had taken off for France to "get" Mick Jagger. When Kathleen and Jacques found out about the film, which had used her bio without permission or recompense, she sued Greenwich Films. This soured Serge's plans for the film (and David and Jacques' friendship). *The Crazy American Girl* opened to a deserted Paris in August, the quickest way to kill a project.

Around this time, Jacques invited Josh and me to join him in the booth for one of the *Desire* recording sessions with Dylan, described by many participants and observers as chaotic. Dylan used no charts to run it. He just started strumming and singing, and the others—including Emmylou Harris and violinist Scarlet Rivera[23]—had to join in at their peril. I found the process

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[22] David asked me to write a song for the scene in which the "crazy girl" would behave outrageously at a strictly formal party. He had planned to use the Rolling Stones *Satisfaction* (she would put on a recording) but the license proved too costly, so I had to come up with something at the same tempo and sound as *Satisfaction* ("I can't get no—"), so I wrote *Gettin' Off.*

[23] Jacques was in a car with Dylan in Manhattan when they noticed a lovely young woman walking down the street with a violin case. They pulled over, and Dylan rolled down the window, stuck his head out, and

exhilarating and terrifying at the same time. At 14, Josh wasn't all that thrilled, so he went for a walk in Manhattan.

A totally different atmosphere surrounded the John Denver session Milt Okun invited me to observe. Everyone had a written part, and of course they made changes along the way, but "Rocky Mountain High" emerged from that relaxed, smooth session.

In 1978, the Arena Theater in Washington D.C. planned a new production of Brecht's *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* with Robert Proscoe as Azdak. Marty Fried was to direct, and rather than use the traditional Paul Dessau score, he asked me to create a new one. I did some research and came up with a vocabulary of Caucasian folk music styles and orchestrated it for violin, oboe, guitar and percussion. Of course, The Arena is in the round, so we placed the musicians in a kind of crow's nest over the audience. I set the narrator/singer's text following Georgian modal scales.

For me, the unforgettable moment came at the point when Azdak orders a circle to be drawn: Santo Loquasto, who did the sets and costumes, had created the illusion that the various set platforms, or islands, were being rearranged for each scene as polers pushed the sets into new configurations. Actually, the islands were being moved by machines and pulleys, so that when Azdack ordered the circle to be drawn, the "islands" moved by themselves, and the audience gasped as the illusion broke. Marty was a difficult taskmaster, and the cast showed up for the opening night party wearing t-shirts with "I survived *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*" silkscreened on them.[24]

One last thing about this production: at one point I had to fly directly from Vienna to Washington for final rehearsals. The plane was delayed leaving Vienna, then further delayed due to weather. This flight was scheduled to fly Vienna/Washington/Detroit, but at one point, the pilot announced that we would land first in Detroit and then terminate the flight in Washington. This would mean less sleeping time for me in the room that the production had booked for me, but I could handle that. Since Detroit was our first stop in the U.S., we'd have to go through customs there, and in going through my carry-on—this was pre-9/11, even—they looked suspiciously at a bottle of my meds.

While in Vienna, I had broken the original bottle that these meds came in and had transferred the pills to an empty, unmarked container. "Do you have a prescription for these?" the customs officials demanded. I explained what had happened, and they asked me to follow them

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asked her whether she wanted to be on a record. She did. Scarlet was an excellent musician and went on from accompanying Dylan on *Desire* to the Rolling Thunder Revue.

[24] When I brought the family down at Thanksgiving to see the show, Zelda Fichandler, the theater's director, generously allowed us to stay in her apartment.

into a small room. As these pills were a "controlled substance," I was forced to drop my pants and bend over for a visual rectal search. If I refused, I wouldn't be allowed back on the plane and would probably spend the night in jail. So I let them peer at my sphincter, they confiscated the pills anyway, and I was allowed back on the plane under the disgruntled, accusing glares of the other passengers, whose arrival in Washington I had further delayed. We landed in Washington around 3 a.m. and by the time I got to the apartment it was 4.

I staggered to the front desk, towing my several bags—I had been away for a month already and faced another month in D.C.—only to be told by the concierge that because I didn't show up on time, my room had been given to Mr. Loquasto, who had been called unexpectedly to the show. After a long time, they found me another apartment in the same building. I dragged myself to the elevator, somehow fitted the key into the door, threw my bags into the room and dropped in my tracks to sleep that night on the floor of the entryway to the hotel room. For years afterward, every time I flew, my name raised a red flag, and I was detained though not strip-searched again. Finally, I wrote to the State Department, pleading that my name be removed from the list. They answered that they could move it further down the list, but legally they had to keep it there. At least they stopped hassling me when I flew.

Jacques had been active with other composers, with Liz Swados for Gary Trudeau's *Doonesbury,* a failed Broadway attempt; with Jeremy Burnham and Raun MacKinnan for the Sam Shepard play *Jackson's Dance*, which never opened, at the Public; and with Roger McGuinn of The Birds for *Tryp*, an American musicalisation of Ibsen's *Peer Gynt*. They brought me on board as musical director, and the producer, David Balding, arranged for a "production vacation," a sort of *Tryp* trip to the Motel on the Mountain near Harriman, New York. Included on the weekend were Remy Charlip (choreography), Peter Larkin (sets) and others. We "scoped out" the costs and practicalities facing us and discovered our biggest problem was that Jacques wanted a pond on the stage for the Chestnut Mare to jump into. The cost of achieving this, along with a lot of other special effects, kept the show from being produced.

We brought Hilly in to raise some money. He arranged for Roger and me (on piano) to present a private performance of the *Tryp* score for David Merrick, the terror of Broadway. Everything went smoothly until Merrick made a slighting remark about Hilly's girlfriend, who had previously been with Merrick, and the two fighting cocks went physically after one another. Jacques, with his prestigious degree in psychology, jumped in and held them apart. Just another regular day on Broadway. When they were thinking of producing the show, Hilly and Jacques asked me to meet with Jon Voight at Hilly's town house, a half-address on the East Side, with red-flocked wallpaper bedecked with numerous portraits of Napoleon. I tested Voight and gave

my OK, with reservations. They never did raise the money. But many years later, Jacques and Roger did a tab-version of the show up at Colgate, where Jacques headed the theater department.

I remember being picked up for the *Tryp* trip, the production vacation, at the Vanguard studios, where The Open Window was recording songs for our next album. I had written a trilogy, following my first trip to L.A.—"Freeway" (for piano six hands), "The Farmer's Daughter Motel" (with synthesized clarinet), and "Song of the Slot Machine." Then the Solomons invited us to lunch and cancelled our contract, so we never made that second album. The Open Window was closing. We played one last concert in Hastings on Hudson .[25] It was inevitable. Peter's activity and responsibilities were expanding, and there had always been a mismatch between the others and me in terms of style. Theirs was more Beach Boys-inclined, mine more jazz-oriented, and they were better at part-singing.

In the meantime, George had moved from Bremen to Munich, being forced to dissolve his company after they had worked on a theatrical version of the Kafka parable *Der Hunger Künstler* (*The Hunger Artist*). George's take on this material was to play it within a small circus, with the actors sharing cages with some of the animals and the main action taking place in the circus main ring. But the thing that outraged the good *Bürgers* of Bremen was George's intention of having the actors fast for 40 days (under the care of a physician). In Germany of the 1970s, with the lingering memory of wartime food shortages, the idea that someone would intentionally fast for 40 days was an outrage.

The city administration attacked the production so vigorously, George folded up his tent and withdrew to Munich, where Dieter Dorn had created a space for George and his ensemble at the *Kammerspiele*. The show played a number of festival guest appearances, and for the *Oktoberfest* in Munich, they again played in a circus tent. For this iteration of the show, Bobbie joined the cast, and I appeared on the roof of one of the cages as a butcher in a bloodstained apron. I also played my clarinet, with a synthesizer that I brought with me, and because of the difference in voltage, I blew the synth. Bobbie tried desperately to match the others by fasting but, as she lay in bed one night with terrible headaches, I had to call an emergency doctor, who came and examined her and told her that if she continued fasting she would become critical. I went out and brought back some bread and meats, and she broke her fast. But because she felt that she wasn't matching the others in their forbearance, she decided that she would have to give up something, and from that point on, she never smoked again. I don't recommend this method of stopping.

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[25] I think the others played one more in Brooklyn without me, without telling me, but I'm not sure.

As usual, I gave a concert/recital in the *Bierzelt* (beer tent) before a raucous, drunken German audience. In the midst of one of my numbers, a truck-driver type shouted his displeasure with my music and threw a can of beer at the stage. Like a fool, I took up his challenge and came to the footlights and dared him to show himself. Luckily, he didn't.

Jacques had harbored a plan for years to turn John Millington Synge's *Playboy of the Western World* into a musical, transposing the rural setting from the wild coast of County Mayo to the isolated plains of the American West of Kansas. In the summer of 1978, he came to live with us on Miller Hill, sleeping in the studio that I had built across the road from the house. We named the piece *Back Country*, exploiting the similarities between our "country" music and Irish folk music, and making the point that many of the early settlers of the American West were indeed Irish. We recorded a demo of three of the songs, "Runaway," "Mr. Moon and Lady Fire," and "Too Much Pain," at a studio in Manhattan, and asked Jerry Orbach, who had been a friend since *Scuba Duba*, to sing the part of Christy for the demo. For the band, we hired Deliverance, led by Eric Weissberg, a virtuoso guitar/banjo/slide player who had graduated Juilliard as a double bassist and who had recorded the music for the film *Deliverance*. I played piano. The demo turned out wonderfully, and we shopped the show around. Gene Wolsk signed on as producer, and we played some backer's auditions and planned to work on the show in Cohoes, a sleepy Hudson River town north of Albany that had a renovated opera house. In the auditioning process, we had the good fortune to see and hear Harry Groener, a stunning performer newly arrived in New York from Portland, after his family had immigrated from Augsburg, Germany , where Harry was born. When we asked Harry where he had learned to tap and dance so masterfully, he responded, "From watching Fred Astaire movies."

We spent the summer of 1979 in Cohoes and then moved to Boston for the pre-Broadway run. We had Margo Sappington as choreographer and actor, Peter Larkin as set designer, and Jack Weissberg (not of the Bronx Weissbergs, like Eric, but the Yonkers brother of Arthur, the bassoonist), to design a sound system that would be revolutionary.[26] We worked intensively in Boston, writing new material at night on the keyboard they put in my room, rehearsing it the next day while still playing the old show that night, etc. To publicize the show, the cast did some numbers on a local TV talk show and that night, after collapsing in bed with the TV still on, I woke up to a rebroadcast of the show. For a moment I was completely confused and terrified, having veered across the line between illusion and reality.

The show opened at the Wilbur Theater to mixed reviews. The Irish critic of the Boston paper was offended by our take on the Synge classic, something we always knew was a

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[26] It wasn't.

possibility. But what killed our chances of moving on to New York was a newspaper strike in the City, and Gene Wolsk couldn't risk bringing in a show under such circumstances. Announcing that to the cast after that night's show, we were all gobsmacked. Jacques retired to his bed for three days. Margo and I joined him and Claudia in their room, and we drank ourselves senseless. I poured Margo into a cab by the Common, where we had spent some hours commiserating with each other. Bobbie had gone home to Miller Hill, so I didn't have her shoulder to cry on, but I flew home the next day. To recover from this blow, Bobbie and I fled to the Caribbean, booking a room at L'Hammock, a luxury hotel on Guadeloupe where we were the only guests, as the hotels were out of season, as were we. For two weeks, we lived in a bungalow and could order anything we wanted from the four-star chef until Tabori came to the rescue by asking me to work on a new production he was planning in Munich at the *Kammerspiele*, so I left America somewhat chastened.

George had long harbored another wish, to somehow do a version of *The Merchant of Venice* that would deal with the anti-Semitism of the play in a way that would not point the finger of guilt at the German audience but rather force them to take a long look at how they were dealing with their nation's past. He called this version of the play *"Ich Wollte Meine Tochter Läge Tot Zu Meine Füssen und Hätte Die Juwelen in Den Ohren": Improvisations über Shakespeares Shylock*.[27] [28]

We didn't do the production in the theater but rather in the basement of a *Gastarbeiterheim*, a building housing many of the Greeks, Turks and Italians brought to Germany as "guest workers." Marietta Eggmann, our set designer, painted the space stark white. She placed a grand piano with a broken leg in the center after a photo from Theresienstadt, the concentration camp the Nazis claimed was a "spa town" for elderly Jews. In the course of the play, a pool of blood spread out from under this piano and edged toward the audience, who sat on hard chairs affixed to the floor at odd angles so they would have to strain to follow the action. Hanging from the ceiling were dolls made to look like concentration camp victims, which the cast would occasionally torture.

The entire cast was costumed as Shylock, and much of the action took place on the closed lid of the piano. The show started with one Shylock jumping onto the piano and singing a setting that I had made of a rabid anti-Semitic poem from Samuel Pepys' extensive collection of ballads.

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[27] *"I would my daughter were dead at my feet, and the jewels in her ear!"* (Shylock's cry about his betrayal by Jessica): *Improvisations on Shakespeare's Shylock*

[28] While I was doing the show, the theater put me up at the Arabella, a block of luxury apartments where Giorgio Moroder was inventing Disco with Donna Summer in his studio in the basement, and Gershon Kingsley, the composer of "Popcorn," lived and worked on the second floor.

I was also dressed as Shylock, and I participated, either musically or physically, in the play. We didn't do the Belmont scene, but at the end, when Shylock is forced to convert ("Art thou contented, Jew?"), I played klezmer wails on my clarinet as a counterpoint to the cast singing a Christian hymn. Then I sang a song of mine, "Possible":

> It's possible, in the afternoon,
> To play both books of preludes and fugues,
> And spend the evening gassing Jews.
>
> It's possible, in the summertime,
> To write the Bill of Rights due to Man
> And spend the winter skinning Indians.

This was potent, confrontational theater. Some people couldn't take it and fled from the theater, murmuring, "George Tabori is crazy!" The play caused a fierce dialogue in German society, especially among the Bavarians, and a book about the production was published. This was a trying period for me emotionally, but it was important for me to deal with my Jewish identity, and for the Germans to deal with their history.[29]

Back in the States, Jacques had teamed up once again with Bruce Jay Friedman, and they had come up with the play *Turtlenecks* (or *One Night Stand*), which Merrick was producing. *Turtlenecks* starred Tony Curtis, performing for the first time on Broadway. William (Billy) Devane was also in the cast. Once again, I provided the music, but the great bonus for me was that Bruce had convinced his drinking buddy at Elaine's,[30] Paul Desmond, to play on the date. I was ecstatic and wrote some beguiling bossas and blues for him, with Jay Berliner on guitar, Richard Davis on bass, and Steve Little on drums. When we first met, I went to Paul's apartment on West 55th Street, where the furniture consisted of a mattress on the floor, luggage and suitcases strewn about, and an unexplained hole in the wall big enough to step through. I have rarely met such a gifted and damaged man, but he came through with a superb recording.[31] Unfortunately, Merrick closed the show after its pre-Broadway Detroit run. I had to wonder whether I was doomed never to have a Broadway show while I enjoyed a growing reputation in Germany? Was success on one continent equivalent to success on the other?

Again, Tabori to the rescue: he had been engaged by the HdK (now a huge umbrella all-arts conservatory in Berlin) to work with the acting students on a production of his choice. He had chosen the poetry of Sylvia Plath and named the piece *Tod & Co.* (*Death and Co.*) The

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[29] See Appendix 2, "Some Observations by an American Acting in the German Theater" for more from me on this subject.
[30] Then the pub of choice for a whole subset of New York writers.
[31] You can hear Desmond play one of the bossas at stanleywalden.com.

performance was to be done in a large floor-through prewar apartment on the Potsdammer Strasse. The idea was to set the five scenes simultaneously in five rooms of the apartment. Each scene would be played five times, as the audience moved through the apartment, from room to room. I wrote music to accompany this movement of the audience, plus some settings of the poetry. I lived in the former maid's room at the back of the apartment and need only roll out of bed to attend the rehearsals. It felt good to be back in gray, black-clad Berlin after the fat, beige, self-satisfied world of Munich.

I had withdrawn from the freelance world in New York, and my clarinet playing had been reduced to two pieces: Druckman's *Animus 3*, which Art Bloom had recorded and which Gerry Arpino used as the score for his Joffrey ballet *Solar Wind*, and my own *Some Changes* for mezzo (Jan DeGaetani) and electric clarinet (me), after poems of June Jordan. When I got a call to perform one of these pieces, I practiced intensively. One of these calls was to play the *Animus* in a contemporary music festival in Puerto Rico in 1980. Bobbie and I went down for a lovely time at the Hotel Il Convento in San Juan. After this I decided to give up the clarinet. It was too difficult to maintain that level of playing.

Also in 1980, Tabori had settled in as one of the "house directors" at the Munich *Kammerspiele*, once again finding a home for his group. He called and wanted me to join him for the next season. This time, Bobbie took a leave from her job as a dance therapist at the Hudson River Psychiatric Center in Poughkeepsie, and we found an apartment on the Klentzestrasse. Matt was safely in residence at Drew University, but we needed to find a place for Josh, who had just graduated from Oakwood (as had Matt, earlier). We reserved a place for Josh at Bennington College and left for Munich. Josh called an audible while we were away, never showed up at Bennington. Instead, he moved in with my sister on Long Island and enrolled in a dramatic school in New York. That was Josh.

That year, 1980-81, was a composer's dream: I did a production of *Hamlet* under Ernst Wendt's direction at the *Kammerspiele*, *Der Untergang der Titanic* and *My Mother's Courage*, both with George and also at the *Kammerspiele*, two radio plays, a solo evening, the TV film *Frohes Fest* for ZDF and the film *Desperado City* with Vadim Glowna.

I tried some fancy stuff in *Hamlet*. I recorded the Players in a Renaissance- sounding piece of mine and had loudspeakers placed in the hallway outside the entrances to the auditorium. The tape played through successive speakers so the audience had the illusion that the approaching Players were circling toward the stage. Just before their entrance in Act 3, Scene 2, they began to play live and burst upon the stage. I also recorded a setting of one of the Sonnets for soprano and

harp, and played it very quietly under Gertrude and Claudius's boudoir scene, giving the illusion that a concert was taking place elsewhere in the palace.

The Enzensberger[32] book of poems, *Der Untergang Der Titanic*, had exploded on the German cultural scene and George decided to make a theater event out of it. We did a series of workshops, investigating the meaning of water in the piece, and George put a huge aquarium at stage center, with a large *Wels* (a kind of Danube catfish) swimming in it. Many of the major moments in the piece took place *in* the aquarium *with* the fish, while the actors simulated drowning. He also built a set of bleachers on the stage, where the actors were for the whole time. These bleachers were set on springs, so that moving about on them was unsteady. And plastic was laid over the benches, with water cascading down, making it really dangerous and then, to top it off, some of the scenes were played blindfolded. One of the numbers, "Kapitän und Shine," was a Dixieland strut, and I had some trouble finding capable musicians for the recording.

I had one musician on the stage for this show: a Hungarian cellist/guitarist named Bodz, a terrific guy who had studied seriously at the Budapest Conservatory. He was a refugee, trying to survive in Munich. One of his several jobs—he was also a cook somewhere—was cleaning out chicken coops at a farm, so sometimes he would come to rehearsal covered with feathers and chicken shit.

George never had any use for prompters in his plays, but the theater rules dictated that a prompter always be present during performance. When faced with this requirement, George told the prompter, "I don't want you to do anything. Above all, don't prompt." So he always placed the prompter on the stage, in full view of the audience; she sat there for the whole evening, following the script, and never threw a cue.

After the last *Titanic* performance, we had a party on stage. Bodz brought his chef's knife and prepared a delicious Hungarian fish soup out of the wels that had been swimming in the aquarium. When the prompter realized what was going on, she protested loudly and filed a complaint with the authorities—we had *killed* a fish and *cooked* it! And *eaten* it!

I had also to create an aquatic soundscape for *Titanic*. An especially effective element was that of a "wave." We found an indoor swimming pool and dragged a large piece of canvas across it, with two microphones held by runners alongside the people doing the dragging so that we ended up with a stereo representation of a wave. Again, I put loudspeakers in front, on the sides, and in back of the audience so at the beginning of the piece we played this "wave" through the audience, giving an astonishingly realistic experience of being in the ocean.

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[32] Hans Magnus Enzensberger (b. 1929) is a German author, poet, translator and editor.

When we were rehearsing *Titanic* in Munich, Jörg Höpfner, Uschi Tabori's brother, was assisting George as he had done for several productions. He had also acted a role in *Frohes Fest*, as one of the Bad Santas (see next page). We were getting close to opening, and Jörg was running an errand on his bike. He had been blinded in one eye when he was younger, and I don't know if this played a role in what happened, but he was hit by a truck and killed. The news hit the ensemble, and especially Uschi, like a hammer. We considered postponing the opening and offered to do so for Uschi and her family, but she chose to go ahead. It was an awful and wonderful show.

[Also, the production of *The Beggars Opera* that I did in Berlin had a cloud, but not before the premier. One of the women, who was playing Polly, was very labile, wonderfully and exquisitely sensitive and the demands of performance were too much for her. I had written the song *Die Liebe* ("Love") for her, and she sang it in her transparent, fragile voice. After the opening, when I had left Berlin and returned to the States, I heard that she had committed suicide. The demands of the theater sometime overwhelm its practitioners, and I'm afraid the stage bears its share of destroyed lives.

For the production of *Mein Kampf* in Vienna, an older actor was playing the role of Lobkovitz, a Jewish chef. Shortly after we opened, he died, so George took on the role and played it from then on. Mortality and the muse, *thanatos* and theater.]

Radio productions of *Die Conservatorium* by Donald Barthelme for *Bayersche Rundfunk*, and *Traurig, Einsam und Entgultig* (*Sad, Lonely and Finished)* by Oswaldo Suriano for SWF, allowed me great latitude. For the Barthelme, George pulled a fast one: unbeknownst to me, when I met with the bass player and singer in a rehearsal room to go over the song I had written, George recorded the rehearsal. For the length of the broadcast, one heard that rehearsal sub-rosa, as if it was taking place in another room of the conservatory. For the Suriano, I wrote my first German lyric as the title song of the broadcast.

Frohes Fest was George's take on the consumer madness of Christmas. It was a commission from the TV channel ZDF and eventually cost the two producers their jobs. The premise of the piece: an American Indian sociologist comes to Munich to shoot a film about Christmas in Germany, and he interviews various people to find out what it all means. He keeps running into the madness of the season and can't understand the mania driving everyone.

One of the groups he encounters is a gaggle of five madwomen dressed in tutus who have escaped from a planned production of *Swan Lake* at their asylum and are being pursued by their doctors. Another set of interview subjects are the real villains of the piece, a trio of robbers and

rapists dressed up as Santa Clauses. One set piece is confrontational on every level: a fashion show for the severely handicapped, where brazenly tasteless models parade before an audience of real handicapped people, who give their candid, shocked reactions to the *gaucherie* at their own expense they have just witnessed. I wrote for brass ensemble, harp and percussion, and we recorded the score in Studio Hamburg. The score ranges from brutal *ländler* to brass chorales to delicate filigrees accompanying the escaped women as they dance in the English Gardens. Bobbie and I appear in the film as a Hungarian refugee version of Joseph and Mary, she enormously pregnant, the two of us searching for a room. She finally delivers—in the entrance to a luxury bedding store in the pedestrian zone.

At the finale of the film, the three villains, still in their Santa outfits, chase one of the escaped women to the roof of a parking structure and rape her. The American Indian sociologist filming the scene is attacked by the Bad Santas, who beat and strip him. The crazies, finding him freezing naked on the roof, decide to keep him warm and take off all their clothes to cover him and then in the only truly Christian gesture of the film, lie down with him to warm him. When we filmed this scene, our cameraman, Willy Jamm, felt that it was inhuman to subject the actors to this extreme cold—snow had begun to fall—while he was warmly dressed, so he also stripped and shot the scene naked. ZDF didn't want to air the film, but *Frohes Fest* won some awards, so the network was forced to show it.

A second production for the *Kammerspiele* in Munich, this one of George's *My Mother's Courage* (an intentional gloss on Brecht's *Mutter Courage*), once again did not take place in the theater[33] but in an abandoned movie theater. Hanna Schygulla, another *TIME* magazine cover for her work in Fassbinder's films, starred in the piece as George's mother. *My Mother's Courage* is a dramatization of the moment when Elsa Tabori, having been arrested in the final roundup of the Budapest Jews, was transported in a cattle car on the way to Auschwitz, where her husband Cornelius had already been murdered. At a transfer stop, she recklessly and forcefully challenged the legality of her arrest, claiming to have a Red Cross pass.[34] Somehow, the German officer she confronted was moved by her plea and sent her back to Budapest, the only passenger and survivor on an otherwise empty train. For this production, I created a score that we recorded on the four tracks of two stereo tape players. The sound technician thus had the ability to follow the acting moments, extending certain cues and jumping others, a flexible way of accompanying the action at a different pace every night, and of freeing the actors from the corset of a fixed timing.

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[33] Like the *Shylock* production

[34] There was a flood of such passes at the time, but they were really worth nothing.

I wrote my second German lyric, "*Ich bin eine Frau*," a faux Thirties Marlene Dietrich-style number that was sung by Ute Kannenberg, a leading jazz vocalist, in a scene following a young teenaged girls telling of a rape by an SS man, thus the painful irony of the lyric: "No longer a child, now I am a woman." Jörg Jannings, the director of the *Hörspiel Abteilung* (radio plays) also produced *My Mother's Courage* as a radio play for RIAS/ Berlin, and I wrote a completely new score for woodwind quintet to accompany the broadcast.

A weekly broadcast from RIAS in Berlin called *Kunstkopf* experimented with various applications of the technique.[35] I was known to RIAS through my work with Tabori. Jannings was a fan of George's and made radio productions of most of his plays. Jörg suggested that I make a tour of Berlin in a van, playing my Yamaha portable keyboard, and the crew would accompany me and see what happened. We went to the *Wilmersdorfer Fussgängerzone* (pedestrian zone), to the top of the *Fernsehturm* (television tower), and to many other places. We ended up at the Berlin Zoo. I played for the apes and elephants, who weren't visibly impressed, but in the bird house, the most astonishing thing happened: toucans and mynah birds tuned right in, and I had musical dialogues with them. I would imitate one of their calls, and they would respond, then I would initiate something, and they would mimic me. We kept this up for quite a while. I wish I had a record of that performance—it was one of my best.[36]

In Munich, I presented a concert at the *Kammerspiele* (which I titled *Kammer Spiele*) that consisted of three of my *Fancies*, my performance of the Druckman *Animus* (for which I had to pick up my clarinet again!), and me singing a group of my songs. I had written the *Fancies* in the previous years, in the throes of the *Zeitgeist* I already mentioned, treating the concert as a dramatic event.

Fancy 1 is for oboe and piano and subtitled "The Impossibility of Recapitulation." At the end, the musicians attempt to exchange instruments and start all over again. Doesn't work.

Fancy 2 ("Toward Clarity") is for soprano and recordist playing the whole family of *Bockflöte* from piccolo to contrabass. The soprano sings a text, first as disjointed syllables (*vide* the Assassination Workshop with the Open Theater) then melodically and, finally, spoken.

Fancy 3 ("Incorporating the Odd Device") is for viola, double bass and tam-tam. The players find the tam-tam unexpectedly and unexplained on the stage between their music stands.

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[35] The *Kunstkopf* was an artificial dummy head developed by recording engineers to give a faithful illusion of true stereophony as it reaches the human ear.

[36] One afternoon in Berlin, I went to the zoo and all of a sudden heard Kurt Weill's "Mack the Knife" being played on a hurdy-gurdy. I followed the sound and discovered that the hurdy-gurdy was being played by an elephant turning the crank with its trunk. I said to myself, "If an elephant ever plays a song of mine on a hurdy-gurdy, I'll die happy."

In the course of the piece, their fascination with the gong gradually seduces them, and ultimately, it takes over the concert.

I now consider these pieces failures. The musical values are scanty and unsatisfying. I think the dramatic situations far overshadow the music. But the concert was well received by a friendly audience.

My last big work of 1980-81 was a film by Vadim Glowna, *Desperado City*, for Atossa Film, shot in Hamburg. *Desperado City* was a kind of homage to the American gangster film, and I had the chance to sing and record some of my songs, "*The Lights Of Cortez*" ,"*Like a Stranger in My Life*" and "*Lady Black's Blues*". I appeared in the film as Stanley, an expatriate American piano player working in a rundown Hamburg bar, and I can also be seen in a long shot, playing my clarinet out of a window. The film won the 1980 Camera d'Or in Cannes and was never seen again. Vadim betrayed me with his next film, which he had promised me and then gave to someone else. He once told me that the failure of *Desperado City* was due to my score. I responded, "Get the fuck out of my life," and he did.

After some time back in the States, George asked me to come to Berlin in 1981, to write and record the music for *Der Voyeur*, a production of the Berliner *Festwochen*. The score was to be recorded by the RIAS Big Band, a top-notch German radio big band—the stations all had big bands, symphony orchestras, and chamber ensembles. The piece was played in a *Spiegelzelt* (a mirrored tent imported from Holland; I also gave a solo concert there), and later, the Tabori group went on tour with the work. *Der Voyeur* was a collision of two worlds on East 95th Street between Lexington and 3rd Avenue in New York (where the Taboris had in fact lived, next door to Elia Kazan)—on the south side of the street, a white liberal intellectual population, and on the North side, Puerto Ricans on welfare, the start of El Barrio. This multicultural content enabled me to write a wide-ranging score.

After I returned to Miller Hill, Bobbie and I, along with three other actors, developed a piece, *Bein' Here Tonight*, based on the world of the homeless women who lived unseen in Penn Station. Bobbie and Veronika, one of the other actors, spent some nights with the homeless women, sleeping and washing in the women's toilet at the station. I directed and wrote a score, and we played the piece at two venues in New York and as part of the *Wiener Festwochen* in Vienna.

Syd Hodkinson, whom I had met at Eastman, invited me to present an evening at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, where I finally got to see the real Dealey Plaza that we had so carefully researched in the Assassination Project. It was also a chance to see how *Fancy 3* worked with an American audience. Not a whole lot better.

And now (1983) my biggest acting challenge: a major role in a play of George's in Bochum. *Jubiläum* (*Jubilee*) is the ironic title of a play that opened on the 50th Anniversary of Hitler's takeover of the Reichstag in 1933. The action takes place in a Jewish graveyard, and all the characters save one are dead Jews whose deaths were caused directly or indirectly by anti-Semites. I played Arnold, a conductor of Wagner at the opera. The sole non-Jew in the play is Jürgen, a skinhead whose life was inextricably involved in many of the deaths. I shared a central scene with Uschi—Uschi II, that is, who definitely *was* Frau Tabori and who had emerged as a brilliant actress—who played my niece. When I asked her, "What did you learn about Hitler in school today?" she responded with a reenactment of an infamous postwar trial of doctors for the murder of schoolchildren in Hamburg. I pressed her in this telling and reacted myself with horror and rage. The first time we rehearsed the scene, George said, "Good. We'll do it again opening night," which we did.

His choice of playing area was characteristically impromptu. We were on our way through the lobby to view the theater's second stage, where the production was planned, when George suddenly stopped, looked at the lobby's wall of glass that faced the main street of Bochum and said, "We'll do it here." Truckloads of earth were brought into the lobby to replicate the graveyard, and whatever happened in the street outside became part of the performance.[37] The play was awarded the German Play of the Year and is one of my most memorable experiences.

I had signed a run-of-the-play contract for the course of *Jubiläum*, so I lived in Bochum, in a theater residence we called the *Villa Wahnsinn* (Crazy House). One night, I awoke with a searing pain in my lower back so severe I couldn't stand, so I crawled out of bed, inched to the door, and threw myself down a flight of stairs to bang on the door of cast member Robert Giggenbach, a Swiss actor. He called the *Notarzt* (emergency doctor), who came and tranquilized me and took me to the hospital.[38] The doctor on duty was a handsome, clean-shaven young man who proceeded to bind my arm to a plank so the IV would be held fast. When we told him we were actors from the theater, he launched into a Nazi diatribe, outraged about the theater hiring *Ausländer*—foreigners—to play on the German stage. Crucified as I was on the bed, I was his captive audience and couldn't have much of a response. I soon "passed" the stone.

One night I met with Henry Lewis, my old conductor of the Seventh Army Symphony Orchestra, who was to guest-conduct the Bochum Symphony. When I described to him what I was doing in Bochum (acting in *Jubiläum*) he said, "Well, if you *have* to," which clearly underlined for me the difference between the life I had left in the U.S., where one was either a

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[37] One foggy night, the outdoor cast of *Jubiläum* included a pair of mounted police officers.
[38] It was kidney stones.

musician or an actor, not both. I had eagerly embraced the opportunity to act in *Jubiläum*.[39] At the end of the show, Arnold's—my role—father appears in the garb of a concentration camp inmate and proffers me a *challah* bread; in Bochum, Tabori played this role. I thank him and tear off some pieces and distribute them among the cast. I have just said, "I have always prayed that in the ovens of Auschwitz they baked bread and not people." Mitzi, my niece, tastes the bread and says, "It tastes funny." And I reply, "Well, we're a funny people."

Then I take the bread and go through the audience, distributing pieces among them, while singing an old Yiddish song: "*Wenn, wenn, wenn singt a Yid?/ wenn, wenn es hungert ihm git/ es hungert ihm git, will er doch essen, singt er a Lied als er soll sich vargessen/ den, den, den singt a Yid?"* ("When does a Jew sing? He sings when he's hungry/He sings a song so he'll forget that he's hungry./That's when a Jew sings.") After this, there was usually complete silence and no applause. The audience sat stunned and tearful until they left the theater.

(Also in Bochum and later in Vienna, I met the gifted theater composer Hans Georg Koch. He was "quirky" in that, in conversation, he would fondle the earlobe of whoever he was talking to. I later discovered that he was a non-practicing Jew and that his parents had been murdered by the Nazis after they were turned back at the Swiss border in their attempt to flee. I played my CD of Invisible Cities for Hans Georg in his chaotic apartment in Vienna and blew out his sound system. He was a dedicated alcoholic and died quite young.)

When I returned to the U. S., Jan DeGaetani and Gil Kalish, who had become a premier duo for the performance of contemporary music, asked Jacques and me for some songs. We responded with *Three Ladies*, a set of songs about Jacques' mother, grandmother and aunt.[40] Jan and Gil performed the songs, and Gil reported that they were "terrifying" in their intensity. *Three Ladies* was included on the Bridge Records that was issued in 2014, and *Grandma* is included on the Nonesuch album *Songs of America*, 1988. In the song "No Longer," I wanted to include the sound of a death rattle but was concerned the process of creating the sound might damage the voice. Jan, unconcerned, told me, "Just write it. I'll figure out a way to do it"—an example of the

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[39] One evening many years later, while I was filling in in *Oh! Calcutta!*, I went out for a walk in Riverside Park at 72nd Street, and ran into Henry again. He lived nearby and invited me for coffee. This time, he was impressed by my versatility and success.

[40] Jacques' Aunt Blanche had retired to Florida and was living with a caregiver in a condo in Miami. This caregiver was a devout Holy Roller and took Blanche to her Christian religious services, which Blanche, in her Alzheimer's fog, seemed to enjoy. Not only was the caregiver enthusiastically recruiting Blanche to convert from Judaism, Jacques discovered that the woman was also stealing and manipulating Blanche in nefarious ways. Jacques and Jimmy Siff decided to pull off their own "heist," secretly flew down to Miami, and showed up unannounced at the condo when the caregiver was not there. They hustled Blanche out of the building with a minimum of her clothing and belongings and went directly to the airport and to New York, where they had arranged for her to live in better and safer circumstances.

fearlessness and artistry that made her the voice of choice for so many composers during her tragically foreshortened life.[41]

In Cologne, 1983, I composed a version of Gertrude Stein's *Doctor Faustus Lights the Lights.* Although the opera itself was not composed while she was alive, her libretto had been a source for quite a few composers after her death, including my old friend Meyer Kupferman, who had set it *a capella.* I set it as a jazz opera, and we performed it in the *souterrain* former *Schneiderei* (costume workshop) of the theater. My version of *Faustus*, which had been translated into German, is an opera for actors with strong voices accompanied by piano and reeds. At the start, Faustus comes out and does a lighting cue check while the audience is being seated—not what Stein had in mind, certainly. The finale was also spectacular, with fireworks outside the building visible through the high windows of the *souterrain* performance space that gave onto the courtyard.

During the rehearsal period, I once again gave a solo concert of my songs in the theater. A total of ten tickets were sold. The audience looked like an octogenarian's teeth, spread out in the auditorium, so I invited them to sit around me on the stage, sent out for wine and cheese, and we spent a lovely time singing and chatting for two hours. Bob Wilson, whom I knew slightly in New York and whose work I held in high esteem,[42] saw the production and some years later did his own—in the original English, with Berlin acting students!—a production that did a world tour and raised my envy to a dangerous level.

One Passover, Bobbie and I decided to visit Israel. Dick Wernick suggested that we stay at *Mishkenot Sha'ananim* in Jerusalem, where the Wernicks had stayed when Dick went there to teach. We were put up in the rooms that belonged to Herman Wouk, who allowed them to rent them out when he wasn't present. The apartment was splendid, with a view of the seven hills. We were referred to a Jewish couple for the *seder*, where our host was an American rabbi who had made *aliyah* and the other guests were another rabbi and his wife. It was the longest *seder* of our lives, with Talmudic commentary and *pilpul* disputations between the two rabbis until the meal was served, sometime around midnight. When we moved on to Tel Aviv, we *schnorrered* at the apartment of an Israeli couple we had met in Berlin when they were assisting Tabori. They put us up on air mattresses on their balcony, quite a contrast to the luxury we enjoyed in Jerusalem.

Years later, I went to Israel again, this time by myself. I did all the touristy things: Masada, En Gedi, a kibbutz, traveling on buses accompanied by gun-toting soldiers. But my real

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[41] Jan died of leukemia at the age of 56.
[42] *Einstein on the Beach* and *Deafman Glance*, for instance

purpose for this trip was to undergo a clinic treatment for my psoriasis, at the Dead Sea. Because the Dead Sea is the lowest spot on Earth, the harmful rays of the sun do not damage the skin, but the helpful rays do penetrate the *epidermis* and clear up the plaques. The sanatoria, divided into male and female, were sections of the beach bordering the Sea, and the cure consisted of spending up to eight hours a day nude on the beach, with occasional dips into the salt-saturated water. The program was amazingly effective, and my affliction cleared up for about six months, then reappeared. Because psoriasis affects roughly 10% of the global population, there were representatives of every language, nation and color on the beach, all of us trying to shed the incursions on our bodies. I was touched to see people covered with plaques pair up in the evenings as both were obviously ostracized in their home communities. This visit was made possible by my German health insurance, which accounted for the great number of German-speaking people basking in the healing sun.

In 1984, I was invited as guest composer to the Eastman School and presented an evening of my music: the William Blake madrigal from *Fandangle*, the *Entertainments for Tuba and Three Horns*, and "*Memini Mortuarum*" plus my *Double Sonata* for clarinet and bass clarinet. Years later, on vacation in Atherton, I met the tubist, who remembered the performance as a severe but satisfying challenge.

In the summer of that year, Charles Reinhart called me to co-lead the Young Composer/Choreographer Program at that year's American Dance Festival at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina. I guess my misbehavior[43] at the Festival when it was in New London had been forgiven or forgotten. I thus had the opportunity to work with Mark Morris, who was just emerging as one of the leading choreographers of his generation. All participants in the program were required to commit to being there for the entire length of the program. Morris violated this rule whenever he wanted and took off for visits to New York and elsewhere, but his talent was so striking that all of us overlooked his behavior.

His composer partner in the project was Herschel Garfein, son of the director Jack Garfein (the Beckett specialist) and Carol Baker, the actress. Most memorable were the barbecues in the Durham/Raleigh area.

Back in Germany, *Peepshow* in Bochum starred two stellar actors, Uschi Höpfner/Tabori and Bruno Samarovski. George followed his usual practice of recycling material. Scenes and speeches from other plays of his constantly showed up in different guises, spoken by different

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[43] When I took a swing at John Cage

characters. One common thread was the Freudian connection of sex to birth, i.e., the man's desire to enter the woman's body was really his wish to get back into her womb, to be reborn (or unborn). I wrote a song for this show, "*Erbschaft*"("Legacy"), for which I did my first translation of my own lyric. The original was: "O my son, the most important facts I have to give you from the life I've lived are these: Coming hurts, and it's better to suffer than to cause another pain."

Manfred Karge, one of the leading actors of the Berliner Ensemble—thus enjoying special status with the DDR—had been allowed to travel outside of Berlin and had joined Claus Peymann in Bochum as both actor and director. George introduced us, and Manfred shared a dream he had of making a musical out of the story of Claire Waldorf, a German cabaret singer of the Thirties who ran afoul of the Nazis when one of her songs, "*Hermann hiess er*"("His Name was Hermann"), became a hit. People began writing their own verses alluding to Goering, and Claire was banned from the stage. Manfred wanted to show this career parallel to the career of Goebbels, who started out as an aspiring playwright, failed, and eventually became the monster we know. The turning point in the script came when Claire had to go underground because she refused to change her songs to accommodate the regime, and Goebbels appeared in drag as her, lip-synching the lyrics to one of her hits, my song *"Miezekatze"* ("My Pussy").

Manfred's and my work together yoked two cultures and two histories, with all the plusses and minuses that entailed. Manfred's partner at the time was Lore Brunne, a leading actress in the Bochum ensemble, and she was to be Claire. Lore did a splendid job with the acting demands of the role and took voice lessons to master the vocal range. She and Manfred came to us on Miller Hill Road, where we created the score. We also showed them around New York, allaying the anxieties about the City and this country that they had been fed by the Communist regime of East Berlin.[44] The theater generously made the Bochum Symphony available in the pit, and I orchestrated the show for full orchestra. Manfred's musical director was Alfonse Nowacki, who did a good job of conducting. I felt proud of my accomplishments in the score, writing cabaret songs for Claire and large production numbers for the entire ensemble. Unfortunately, the show did not become a hit, which I still don't understand. We did a TV version for WDR, which came off quite well. The next year we did the show in Flemish in Ghent, where the hotel furnace quit. I was so desperate to thaw out, I sought out a movie theater where a German film was playing. Unfortunately, it was in Swiss German with Flemish subtitles, so I didn't understand a word, but I was thankful for the warmth.

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[44] Manfred and Lore later worked with Tilda Swinton in Berlin on a production of Pushkin's *Mozart and Salieri*

When I first stayed in Günter Grass's house in Friedenau,[45] I met their nanny, Bethina, and her boyfriend and future husband, Knut Böser. Knut had great plans of conquering the German stage and film, plans he later realized in part by becoming the intendant for the newly renovated Renaissance Theater, and writing many hit TV films. His first project was a new version of John Gay's *The Beggars Opera*, which had been the basis for the classic *Die Dreigroschen Oper* (*The Threepenny Opera*), the ur-Berlin story, and he wanted me to write the score. When Knut visited us on Miller Hill, we introduced him to Jacques, and he brought Jacques on as director. In Knut's megalomaniacal vision, H.M. Enzensberger would write the book, two of the leading actors from the Berliner Ensemble would play the Peachums, and Jacques and I would infuse it all with a Broadway flair. Knut's vanity and ambition were such that he ended replacing Jacques, with himself, Enzensberger bowed out, and the Berliner Ensemble actors didn't play, but I remained, and set the lyrics given me by Kurt Bartsch, a Brecht clone but a good one. I wrote a diverse score, ranging from Sixties rock to Weillish songs to riffs on Gay's original borrowings of English 18th Century pop. We produced an album, which was sold in the lobby.

One day I was in my studio on Miller Hill Road when the phone rang—a call from the Philadelphia Orchestra. "Are you sure you have the right number?" I asked. The caller said that the Orchestra was about to award commissions celebrating the 200th Anniversary of the signing of the U. S. Constitution. They would like me to submit any orchestral scores I had for consideration. I was dumbfounded. This was a door I had given up knocking on. What reputation I had, especially in the U. S., was for the stage, not the symphonic world. I later found out that Dick Wernick and Bernard Jacobson, two members of the search committee, had recommended me. I was awarded the commission, which was also given to five others, including Milton Babbitt and Chris Rouse. Each piece was to use the orchestra differently.

Mine was for the entire orchestra except the strings. No strings. I met with the intended conductor, Denis Russel Davies, in Saratoga, where he was conducting the orchestra for their summer residency, and we talked through our plans. I left for Ghent, to prepare the *Claire* production there. One day I got a call from Stephen Sell, the manager of the Philly, asking if I would agree to switching conductors with the Babbitt. Apparently, Erich Leinsdorf, the scheduled conductor for Milton's work, had seen the score and felt he couldn't conduct it, so Davies would conduct the Babbitt, and Leinsdorf mine. I agreed, and when I got back home, started to work. I had decided to base the piece on Italo Calvino's extraordinary book, *Invisible Cities*, which had struck me upon reading as a wonderfully musical template, but I couldn't figure out how to use it.

[45] George arranged this first of several visits.

I spent days in my studio, unable to find a way in. Finally I made a construction out of poster board, outlining the various divisions of the book (cities of the earth, cities of air, etc.—all imaginary), hung this structure from the beams of my studio, and stared at it for a clue.

After several days of this contemplation, a form materialized for me, a set of variations, constantly changing and morphing into one another. I found particularly useful the mathematical concept of fractals, the study of the scalar relationship of structures, elucidated by Benoit Mandelbrot. I could *almost* understand it and so I asked Gil's Kalish's mathematician wife, Dianne, for guidance. I wrote for a large orchestra, with extended families of instruments, i.e., heckelphone, contrabass clarinet, five percussion including multiple tympani, etc. The piece fell into a three-movement form, modulating from one movement to the other without pause. We had a photo op with Riccardo Muti, then the chief conductor of the orchestra, and I got on with the composing.

The first rehearsal was scheduled, but when the time came, Philadelphia was hit with a major snowstorm, so that rehearsal had to be cancelled. With all the time constraints of scheduling an orchestral concert, they couldn't reschedule, so we were left with only two rehearsals for my difficult, complicated piece. But Leinsdorf was amazing. He had completely understood and mastered the complexities of the score after just one meeting at his townhouse in New York. The orchestra was also first-rate, and I was especially gratified by players of the caliber of flutist Murray Panitz, with whom I had played in the Symphony of the Air in New York. When I was studying clarinet, the Philly winds were the model for all students, and I had even had ensemble coaching with the flutist William Kinkaid when they came to play in New York. At a preconcert event, the Philadelphia players also performed my *Movements for Woodwind Trio* ("Tripthong," "Orison"). *Invisible Cities* was performed three times, one of them at Carnegie Hall. Leinsdorf tried to schedule the piece when he guested at the New York Philharmonic, but they turned it down.[46] After the New York performance, my son Matt and my old friend Jimmy Siff threw a reception at the Russian Tea Room.

[Jimmy Siff was a character who could have walked out of a Damon Runyon story. He and Jacques were boyhood friends; both had gone to Stuyvesant High School. Jimmy went on to earn his law degree at Tulane. His New York practice was mostly mob-related. My son Matt apprenticed with Jimmy for a summer before going to Law School at Penn. Jimmy successfully defended many of the fraternity—so successfully, in fact, that the FBI, frustrated by his strategies,

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[46] Some years later, George and I were having coffee in the Café Landtmann, a prototypical Viennese café, when I spotted Leinsdorf sitting at another table and reintroduced myself. He remembered our work together vividly. And it turned out that he and George were acquainted; Leinsdorf's daughter had been a gofer for George at Williamstown in 1969.

planted drugs on him and had him arrested and disbarred. Jimmy did use, but not in the way they claimed.

His wife Mary was a gourmet cook and had been the private chef for the fugitive financier Bernie Kornfeld in France and Switzerland. When Jimmy was arrested, Mary did not "stand by her man," but they reconciled upon his return to New York. Jimmy served out his disbarment in Hollywood, working with his cousin Bob Evans (head of production at Paramount and a member of the Evan Picone fashion dynasty) and Mario Puzo on the film *The Cotton Club*. After Jimmy returned to New York and was reinstated to the bar, his practice consisted mostly of public defense. Jimmy tragically drowned in a riptide off the Hamptons shore.

Jacques wasn't the only one with historic connections to Jimmy. When my family bought the house on Miller Hill Road in 1956, it had an old-fashioned wall telephone. On the phone's surface were written some old numbers, among them the number of the Siffs. Jimmy's parents had been friends of the previous owners, and Jimmy had often visited the house when he was younger.]

For the 50th Anniversary of Queens College in 1986, Reri Grist had been asked to commission two works, so she turned to her old Queens buddies, Elaine Barkin and me. I wanted to use the oboist Ron Roseman, my former schoolmate who now taught at Queens, and Morey Ritt, a pianist who had also been in our class. The resultant piece was *Two Biblical Songs*, "Deborah" and "Ruth." With "Deborah," I tried something new, a "scena"—that is, a dramatic translation of the scene where Deborah is terrified by her ability to foresee the brutal murder of Sisera. The music was a stretch for Reri, but she did a wonderful job.

George and Manfred Karge had moved on with Peymann to the Burg Theater in Vienna, and I started working with them. Manfred was preparing an evening of Brecht pieces (something that was regularly done at the Berliner Ensemble), which he called *Über Die Städte/Ein Brechtabend* (*Concerning Cities/A Brecht Evening*). I composed some new settings and orchestrated others. *Mazeppa*, an epic poem of Brecht's, I set as a ballad for baritone, and Lore, who had moved to Vienna with Manfred, sang some others. This was to be the first of 13 productions that I would do in Vienna at various theaters in the coming years.

George's first production at the Akademie Theater, a second stage for the Burg,[47] was *Mein Kampf*, which focused on Hitler's earliest days in Vienna, when he applied for a position at the Fine Arts Academy, was turned down, was penniless, and scrounged a bed at one of the city's flophouses, where he was taken under the wing of a Jewish peddler, Schlomo Herzl, who took pity on the poor schlemiel. *Mein Kampf* is funny in some scenes, brutal in others, and each

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[47] The Burg is the main stage in Vienna, and the Akademie is the alternate.

requires its own kind of music. I scored it for a quartet of clarinet, horn, violin, and cello. The piece had just one song, "*Das Lied Von Frau Tod*," ("Madame Death's Song"), a tango that Frau Death—already an unusual casting, Death traditionally being a man—sang while dancing with Hitler, whom she unfortunately didn't come to gather up but, rather, to launch on what she describes as his quest to provide her with a mountain of corpses, for she sees in him a "natural talent."

The actor who was supposed to play Lobkowitz, a Jewish cook with messianic pretensions, died just before opening, so Tabori played that part for quite a while. He had a hidden desire to be on stage, which broke into full bloom years later when he directed Lessing's *Die Jüden* (*The Jews*) at the Berliner Ensemble. He had a red plush easy chair set on the stage, from which he observed the entire production at every performance. After his death, the empty chair was placed there every night.

I had enjoyed Ron Pisarkiewicz's tuba playing on the *Frohes Fest* date and was moved to write a piece, *Entertainments for Tuba and Three Horns*, which treats the tuba both as a soloist and as fourth horn. The movements are "Entrance," "Soft-Shoe," "Aria," "Standup Comic," and "Exit." "Soft-Shoe" is dedicated to Jim Buffington, a wonderful hornist who spanned all genres in New York in the Sixties and Seventies. Pisarkiewicz never played the piece, but years later, *Entertainments* was done at Eastman.

For the *Wiener Kammeroper*, George took on a production of Viktor Ulmann's *Der Tod Dankt Ab* (*The Emperor of Atlantis* or *Death Takes a Holiday*), an opera that had been written in Theresienstadt, the Nazis' "Potemkin Village" model concentration camp outside of Prague. The piece had a subtle anti-regime message, so the camp performance was cancelled, and almost every one involved in the production was eventually murdered in Auschwitz. The score of *Der Tod Dankt Ab* was smuggled to England, where it emerged 40 years later.

George was busy directing another show for the Burg, so I came on as co-director. Bobbie and I did the preparatory work. When George came for the end sprint, the singers complained that our staging made too many demands on them, so George made one of his inspired snap decisions: "All right, if you don't want to move around, we'll have a barbed wire fence between you and the audience, and you can hang on the fence and sing from there." That staging worked out well, and when the production was invited to play some dates at the Hebbel Theater in Berlin, I suggested that we add a prelude, a showing of the notorious Nazi film *Der Führer Schenkt Den Juden Eine Stadt* (*The Fuhrer Gifts the Jews a City*), a propaganda film about Theresienstadt intended to hide the fact of the genocide. In Berlin, George added a chilling

touch: as the audience entered, they saw a German shepherd pacing alone on the stage in front of the curtain, controlled by his trainer behind the curtain. On command, the shepherd would sit and stare balefully at a section of the audience, then get up and move to the other side of the stage and stare at those seats. The dog and the film gave the opera a threatening aura before anyone sang a note.

At a certain point, George was approached by the City of Vienna to have his own theater, an unused venue in the Porzellan Gasse he renamed *Der Kreis* (The Circle). Over the next years, I did a series of productions there with him, among them *Zum Zweiten Mal* (*For the Second Time*) by Jean Claude Carrière, the main collaborator with Bunuel, Godard, and other leading directors of the new European film; *Lears Schatten*, (*Lear's Shadow*) for the Bregenz Festival; a restaging of *Sigmunds Freude*, and a concert of my music, including Manfred and Lore with songs from *Claire*, Gene Sheer (who was doing CATS at the *Theater an der Wien*) sang *Mazeppa*; Reri Grist sang my *Two Biblical Songs* with the pianist Kathia Wittlich, one of the mainstays of *Die Reihe.*[48] Hanna Schygulla and Uschi Tabori contributed; excerpts from my *Mein Kampf* score were played by members of the *Wiener Streichsexstett*, and Ron Pisarkiewicz played the tuba polka from *Frohes Fest*, in which, for this concert, George played judiciously timed whacks on the bass drum. In *Zum Zweiten Mal*, I acted along with Hanna and Leslie Malton in the three-character play, and again I faced the formidable task of learning my lines in German.

One day, while we were staying in Vienna for work at *Der Kreis*, George called Bobbie and me early in the morning, telling us that although he was scheduled to hold a session at the psychiatric hospital *Steinhof* with his ensemble and the patients, he was stuck out of town and couldn't be back in time, so would we please take charge and run the session? I was at a loss, but Bobbie felt that with all her training and degrees in dance therapy, and my experience in accompanying groups, not to mention my gift for improvisation, we could pull it off.

We assembled the Tabori group and all went out to an imposing and dispiriting architectural relic of the Austro-Hungarian epoch. The patients were assembled and waiting, and we worked with them with certain exercises that we used in our warm-ups.

I had brought my portable Yamaha keyboard and offered to accompany anyone who would like to sing. One charming elderly man volunteered, and I went over his song with him. When I thought we had it down, he stepped up before the assemblage and sang the song full out in a thick Austrian accent, so I didn't really understand the text. As I looked around, I noticed everyone in our ensemble looked shocked. What was going on? Only later did I find out that the

[48] One of the leading contemporary music ensembles in Europe.

old man's jolly tune was a rabid Nazi song for which I had provided a stirring accompaniment. All in all, a curious morning.

In Munich, Bobbie fell in with a New-Agey therapy group who invited us to a retreat with them shortly after they had returned from a visit to Puna in India, one of the go-to retreats for therapists and clients seeking illumination with a maharishi. Bobbie was to present a session of dance therapy dealing with relaxation and sensory awareness. Everything was "really groovy" as the various individuals gradually relaxed into an undifferentiated blob on the floor, and then began to reach out and start to become *very* sensory-aware of each other. We realized we were on the cusp of a group grope, with unbridled lust rampant in the room until Bobbie—and I, after she sent me a desperate signal to join in—went around trying to destroy the rising tide of lubricity. We went around clapping our hands and singing out loud, and I went to the piano and played some lively rags. I think we caught it just in time.

Chapter 10:
1989-2003: HdK Berlin, Munich, Vienna

In 1989, the HdK in Berlin was introducing a new department, Musical/Show, in its Performing Arts section, and I was a candidate to lead it, so I headed to Berlin from Miller Hill. The HdK committee asked me to watch a revue that had been put together at the end of a probationary year test course, to see whether I wanted to work with such talent. I thought it would be possible, but the most important thing to come out of that evening was my seeing the superb accompanying work done by the pianist Adam Benzwi, a 24-year-old from San Diego who somehow had ended up in Berlin. I insisted that Adam be kept on for any future work with me.[49]

To test the viability of the HdK's proposed department, I suggested a musicalisation of the German 19th century children's book of cautionary tales, *Struwwelpeter*, transporting the characters to present-day Berlin. Mathias Ulbricht, a child psychologist, was engaged to do the book, and he and I wrote the lyrics. Characters like "Hans guck-in-die-Luft" and "Suppen-Kaspar" were given the task by their creator Dr. Heinrich Hoffman of bringing the virtues of the Enlightenment—Liberty, Fraternity, Equality (and Love)—to contemporary Berlin.

We did a six-week workshop to develop the show, followed by six-week hiatus while I retired to my Miller Hill studio to write the music, then a six-week rehearsal period for the show we titled *Bahn Frei!* (*Make Way!*). Bobbie and I went to Berlin and lived in George's former apartment in the Künstlerkolonie in Berlin Wilmersdorf, where Uschi Grützmacher I lived downstairs and ran the place. Peter Kock, who had played the part of Jerry O'Carey in our production of *Pinkville* 20 years earlier, directed *Bahn Frei!* and the modern dance team Rubato did the choreography. Manfred Hübner, my musical director for *Die Bettleroper* orchestrated and led the performance. The show was quite successful, but still the HdK took its time offering me a full professorship. I finally learned about their offer while we were in Mexico City presenting *Weewis* with the National Ballet.

While waiting for the HdK to make up its mind about the professorship, which I eventually got—without even a masters degree—Jacques came up with a *meshugenah* idea: Arnold Mittleman, who had been one of the NYU students who did the strange Sound and Movement evening, was now running the Coconut Grove Playhouse in Miami, where we had done the second iteration of *Oh! Calcutta!* Arnold wanted to reach out to the burgeoning Cuban population of Miami, and he wondered whether we had an idea that would fit this plan. Jacques

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[49] Adam later became a central figure in the musical life of Berlin, conducting at the *Komische Oper* and accompanying a series of one-woman shows with stars of the German theater.

suggested that we rework *Back Country* as a salsa musical and place it in the Florida Keys, all the characters being Cuban refugees. We titled the show *Miami Lights*, and I wrote a basically new score, a delight for me as salsa had long been a favorite of mine.

Hanna Schygulla, with whom I had presented a concert at the Hebbel Theater when she was in Berlin, gave me a cassette of Cuban music with traditional salsa and also tracks by the amazing Cuban jazz band Irequera. Using this as a template, I wrote a sizzling salsa score. When it came time to orchestrate the score, I turned it over to Fernando Rivas, a Cuban-born, Juilliard-trained pianist, with special charts done by Louis Ramirez (who went under the name of El Genio) at Fania Records. Jacques and I made an appointment to meet with Louis in the far reaches of Queens. When we got there at 8 PM, we were told that Louis was in conference but would soon be free. After a long pause, Louis came out of the back room, zipping his fly and escorting a *zaftig* Latina to the door after her audition. Once again, Margo did the choreography, and Yamil Borges, who had played the role of Diana Morales in the film of *A Chorus Line*, played the lead. This second pass at the material didn't turn out too much more successful than the first, but it did get a follow-up production at TheatreWorks, in Mountain View, California.

Manfred Karge[50] had been asked to direct *Faust, Part 1* for the Bad Hersfeld *Festspiele* at their summer season, and he asked me to join him in turning this old classic into a musical. I had my qualms, but I agreed. I sent the score on and planned to join him for the final rehearsals. Before I could get there, he had a blowup with the head of the festival and quit. So I found myself in the same situation as with *Die Bettleroper*: I had composed a full score, but the director, who was my friend and partner, had quit. In both cases, I stayed with the production.[51] The difficulty had had nothing to do with me; it was between the director and the intendant, in this case Peter Loschak, who took over the direction. One day at a rehearsal of the band I arrived in the *Festspiele'*s vast open ruin of a monastery that seated thousands. I spotted a charming young woman sitting alone in the middle of the empty audience. I came to her and asked, "Is this seat taken?" She was Sabrina Ascacibar, a dynamic Argentinian singer/dancer with whom, years later, I created a show that we played many times. I remember flying from Frankfort to London during this production to hear Gil Kalish play my *Similes* at the Aldeburgh Festival.

Martha Clarke, whom I had first known when she was a student at Juilliard, had developed into a major figure in the dance/theater world. After joining Pilobolus, she branched out on her own and scored a big impression with *The Garden of Earthly Delights*. Dick Peaslee, my old colleague from The Open Theater, was her composer, and for her new piece, *Endangered*

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[50] Prominent German playwright/director.

[51] One moment I'm particularly fond of in this score is a salsa accompaniment to *"Walpurgisnacht."*

Species, she asked me to join Dick in creating it. Before we opened at BAM in 1990, we developed the piece, which involved dancers, actors, a horse, a monkey, and an elephant, at Arrowhead, Herman Melville's estate in the Berkshires.[52] One day, we had a torrential rainstorm, and the rickety circus tent in which we were performing caught the deluge but didn't drain properly. We had to run around, poking holes in the canvas and relieving the pressure before the whole thing collapsed. Flora, the elephant we used, belonged to David Balding, the producer of *Scuba Duba*.[53]

Tabori brought me in to his production of *Otello* at the Akademie in Vienna, starring Gert Voss, perhaps the most thrilling actor I worked with on the European stage. Then came the realization of George's desire to do an evening of positive theater, *Babylon Blues*, staged in the Burg Theater, Vienna. After the professorship in Berlin finally came through, I began planning the curriculum for a course of study that was, at the time, unique. I got in touch with departments in the States, and, with Bobbie, planned a four-year program in the training of singing, dancing actors, who did not exist in Germany, which was still laboring under the old Hochschule system, whereby the disciplines were taught separately. The *Stadttheaters* were expanding their repertoires to include the public darlings like *Kiss Me, Kate*, *West Side Story*, and *My Fair Lady*, but they didn't have performers in their ensembles who could fill these roles, so they had to bring in American or English performers, who learned their German lines phonetically and all sounded like Hollywood Nazis. The auditions for the 10-12 places in our program showed how far we had to come in our work.[54] I led this department for the next 15 years and am still Chairman for Life, which sounds like a prison sentence but definitely is no such thing. The program has been very successful over the past 25+ years. Our graduates appear regularly in major roles on stages throughout the German-speaking theater and beyond.

In 1991 I was invited to sit on the *Bundeswettbewerb* jury, a nationwide competition for Musical/Chanson singers. I sat on this jury, which met biannually in Berlin, until 1997. Complaints arose because even though I recused myself from voting for any of our students, they were winning most of the prizes. In a way, this was an imprimatur of our method, for some other programs had emerged in the intervening years.

In the Nineties, August Everding, the "pope" of the German theater, was opening a *Theaterakademie* in Munich. He got in touch with me about heading the Musical Department. We

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[52] Martha is monomaniacal but wonderfully creative; she received a Macarthur Genius Grant while we were in Massachusetts, but before we opened in Brooklyn, she almost bankrupted the Next Wave Festival.

[53] The touching documentary, "One Lucky Elephant" (2011), is about David's attachment to Flora, whom he eventually bought and was able to see safely retired before he died.

[54] For a detailed description of the program we developed and techniques it uses, see our book, *Life Upon the Wicked Stage*, available free on my website, stanleywalden.com.

met in the *Vier Jahreszeiten* in Berlin (he having just flown in by private jet), and I described what I had in mind. He then invited Bobbie and me down to Munich to look over the facilities and meet some possible faculty.

I was toying with the idea of doing both Berlin and Munich in the way that A-list musicians had done it in the U.S., e.g., the flutist Julius Baker flying his own plane between Chicago and New York. We had many kinks to work out, and Bobbie and I left Munich thinking we were headed into an interesting but challenging future. We went back home and waited and waited. I couldn't get a straight answer from Munich. Vicki Hall, our upstairs neighbor in Berlin, who had sung my *Fancy 2* at the *Kammerspiele* and *Memini Mortuarum* in Potsdam, was in line to get hired by Everding in Munich. Vicki had recommended me to the HdK for the professorship although she failed to get a professorship for herself in Berlin. When we returned to Berlin from the States in the fall, I asked her whether she had heard anything about my situation. She answered, "Haven't they told you? George Malvius was hired."

Malvius was a Swede whom I had first met when I was invited to take part in an international theater conference in Stockholm, and there I had seen his production of *Zorba*. I hired him to direct the final show for our first class. Somehow, he had wormed his way into Everding's graces and now was to lead the new department in Munich. I fired off an angry letter but was secretly relieved; if I had tried to do both jobs, I wouldn't be writing this now.[55]

Another jury I sat on was the Kurt Weill Foundation, which has an annual competition here in the States. We met at the Eastman School in Rochester. Juries are unpleasant experiences for me because I had been so unsuccessful myself at auditioning (not even making the second round of the bass clarinet auditions for the N. Y. Philharmonic, for instance). It's enough that I sat on the other side of the table in auditions for my shows and for the school. I don't like officiating important competitions.

The next production with Tabori was *Die Goldberg Variationen* (*The Goldberg Variations*) in Vienna. *Goldberg* is George's idiosyncratic take on the Bible, from Creation to Crucifixion. Then back in Berlin with Horváth's *Kasimir Und Karolina* at the Schlosspark Theater under Lori Stefanek.

George had been invited by Expo/Sevilla to stage his theatrical realization of The Grand Inquisitor section of Dostoyevski's *The Brothers Karamazov*. 1992 was a wonderful time to be in Seville, with the Expo bringing in attractions from all over the world. In conversation, George had the habit of slipping unintentionally between English, German and Hungarian. He did this at

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[55] Malvius lasted just a few years because he was constantly promoting his own career instead of devoting himself to his work with the Akademie students, so Everding replaced him with Vicki!

a press conference in Seville, where the languages had to be simultaneously translated. As George slipped into Hungarian, the panicked voice of the translator rang in my headphones, "What? What did he say?" I had to mouth broadly at George, "ENGLISH, GEORGE! SPEAK *ENGLISH*!" We repeated this production of *El Gran Inquisidor* (translated into German) at the Residence Theater in Munich and in Potsdam. After a second production with Lori Stefanek of the Offenbach unicum *Abendwind* (*Evening Wind*) at the *Schlosspark*[56] and Tabori's *Requiem Für Eine Spion* (*Requiem for a Spy*) at the Akademie in Vienna, George was hired to organize that year's *Mittelfest*, in Cividale, Italy.

Mittelfest involved theater ensembles from many European nations, and its theme that year was Kafka. I conducted a performance of my symphony, *After Auschwitz*, which I rehearsed in Budapest with the Budapest Chamber Orchestra. On the train back to Berlin, I met the Danish director, Fleming Anderson, who asked whether I would be interested in composing an opera he was involved with in Copenhagen: *Bachs Letzte Oper* (*Bach's Last Opera*),[57] for a new ensemble, *Der Danske Oper*, led by Allan Lauridsen. A Danish poet, Jess Ørnsbo, was writing the libretto, which was being translated into German, and various forces were being organized to raise the money.

Over the next two years, I traveled to Copenhagen many times, developing the opera and recording a demo of several sections at the National Opera—Lauridsen had a position in the administration—until my collaboration with Ørnsbo fractured. He was a virulent pro-Palestinian Communist and had great difficulty working with a Jewish American. He reached his breaking point when, in planning one scene, I tried to convince him to fix a bottleneck of text and used the phrase "cut to the chase"—he considered it typically crass American imperialist arrogance. When we played the demo for him, he listened silently, picked up his coat and left without saying a word. That was the last time I saw or spoke with him. He threatened to block any production of the opera, so I had my son Matthew, who was practicing as an entertainment lawyer in L.A., recommend a Danish lawyer, and we were able to overcome Ørnsbo's resistance.

Brut, with Angelica Domröse in Berlin, and *Die 25te Stunde* (*The 25th Hour*)George at the Akademie in Vienna preceded an evening that I gave in Potsdam in 1993, in which I presented my *After Auschwitz* with the Potsdam Symphony, *Memini Mortuarum,* and a group of songs with Sabrina Ascacibar. Sabrina gave me a book of the poetry of Alfonsina Storni, an extraordinary Argentinian—I had used her poem "Te Acuerdas" in Seville—and later I set a group of her poems for voice and piano, with cello *obligato.* Sabrina and I took part in a super-

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[56] I used contrabass clarinet!
[57] The title is absurd. Bach never wrote an opera.

concert in ‘93 or ‘95, organized by Jürgen Flymm, at that time the intendant of the Thalia Theater in Hamburg. Tabori had been invited and asked us to represent him. The concert was called “We Will Never Forget, We Will Never Let It Happen Again,” and it was televised nationally. Vanessa Redgrave and Roger Moore were the emcees, and Bono, Harvey Keitel, Kris Kristofferson, Günter Grass, Robert Wilson and many others were involved.[58]

Around this time, Bobbie and I visited Prague as tourists. Walked the Karlsbrücke, saw Smetana’s *The Battered Bride* (called by the New York smartasses *The Battered Broad*), stumbled amongst the mayhem of the old Jewish graveyard, sat in the same café that Kafka and Max Brod frequented, etc. And I had my pocket deftly picked by a band of gypsies in the subway, done so professionally that I didn’t miss my wallet or my passport till we got back to the hotel. Prague and Kafka have more in common than the long “A” in their names. Both of my visits there have had a Kafkaesque dimension.

The second time I went to Prague alone, pursuing some performance possibilities. I stayed with a woman who had assisted Tabori in Berlin, for just the one night. I was still in my Western mode, Stetson *et al.* I dined alone and had a toothsome goulash. The next day, I was expected back in Berlin for a dress rehearsal. I taxied out to the airport, and at Passport Control, discovered that mine was missing. Oh no. Not again. I had to return to the city and go to the American Embassy (the Ambassador was Shirley Temple) and get a replacement, but it was Sunday, July 4, and the Embassy was closed. My hostess did not answer her phone, so I was stranded. It was late morning and I had to somehow fill the time until my hostess was again reachable; this was before cell phones, so I had to use the notoriously undependable post office pay phones. I hung out on Wenceslas Square for five hours, driven from café to café by surly looks from the waiters. Finally, I reached Bobbie and told her my predicament and then as evening approached I was able to reach my friend and arrange for another night.

The next day, I was on my way to the Embassy when a car stopped me on the street. The driver leaned out and asked, “You looking for your passport?” I was astonished and said that I was. He replied, “Go to the Embassy, ask for [his name], and my secretary will bring it down.” I was speechless but managed to croak out, “How do you know who I am?” He said, “I recognize your hat. We had dinner last night in the same restaurant, and after you left I noticed that your passport had fallen out of your pocket, so I brought it my office today.” I thanked him profusely

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[58] At some point in this engagement, I found myself sharing a long bus ride with Bono and Kristofferson. Rhonda will never forgive me.

and went to the Marine guarding the Embassy, asked for the secretary, she brought down the passport, and I flew out of Prague at the first opportunity.[59]

In the late fall of 1994, Jochen Hahn arranged for us to travel to Russia with a group of our students—our first HdK class, in fact—to do a workshop with Russian students at Lubimovka, the former Stanislavsky estate outside of Moscow. 1994 was Wild West time in the remnants of the Soviet system, a fascinating time to be there. Soldiers were selling their weapons on the street corners. We lived in crude rooms at Lubimovka and ate meals prepared on a nearby army base, a cuisine consisting of greasy meat on kasha, swimming in a puddle of mystery gravy, three times a day. Our students got to see Michael Jackson at a stadium concert, and Bobbie and I spent an evening with deracinated Russian Jews who told of privations they had suffered and whose relationship to the religion (a taboo in Sovietspeak) was so tangential that they confused the holidays. This was the population that would soon flood into Germany and Israel, a flotilla of Jews who had to rediscover their culture. Bobbie came down with a terrible pneumonia, and we barely got out with our lives.

[Jochen Hahn has played a special role in my German career. He is one of the rare *Machers* (entrepreneurs) in the German cultural landscape and is constantly wheeling and dealing. His latest venture is turning an unused women's prison into an arts center. We got to know each other in 1981, when he appeared for about 10 seconds in the film of *Frohes Fest*, garbed as a Franciscan monk jogging in the English Gardens in Munich. At that time, he was an unknown, trying to break into the theater. He went on to become an impresario, a kind of Sol Hurok, organizing and booking festivals and guest tours in Russia, China, South Africa, etc., for major theatrical ensembles like that of Peter Stein. He created a performance space in Munich, the Gaststeig, which became a leading venue for concerts and theater. At one point he acted as a kind of agent for Tabori, but the only thing that emerged from that was our participation in the Expo in Seville. While there, he and I drove to Cordoba, to visit the extraordinary Great Mosque/Cathedral and Jewish section, home of Maimonides. We overlooked or didn't understand the parking restrictions, so when we went to pick up the car we discovered that it had been towed to a pound, and it cost us a lot of Euros to reclaim it. Most recently, I (and then we, Rhonda and I) stayed with him and his wife Sabine, who teaches acting at the UdK, in their lovely house in Zehlendorf. Ultimately, he was central in getting my musical *The Goldberg Variations* produced in Karlsruhe.]

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[59] Another time, I had to fly from Vienna to Berlin and didn't have the necessary visa (this was before the EU) so I had to get a one-day passport, which I still treasure.

Gil Kalish commissioned a piece for himself and Joel Krosnick, and the result was my *Songs and Dances for Cello and Piano*. The movements are “Keen” (song), “Traipse” (dance), “Stomp” (dance) and “Hum” (song), followed by a *Fantasia* in which the four movements are played in all possible combinations.

Busy 1995 involved the Burg in Vienna doing Behan’s *Die Geisel* (*The Hostage*). They wanted an Irish-based score, which I delivered, followed by *Maria Magdalena* with Angelica Domröse at the *Josefstadt* in Vienna, then a recital with Hanna at the Hebbel Theater in Berlin, and Enzensberger’s *Delirium* with Tabori at the Thalia in Hamburg.

Two productions with Tabori at the Akademie in Vienna started 1996, *Die Massenmörderin Und Ihre Freunde (The Mass Murderer and Her Friends)* and *Ballade Der Wiener Schnitzel* (*The Ballad of the Wiener Schnitzel*), both George’s texts, but the main activity was in Berlin. Frank Dodge is an American expat cellist who established a brilliant chamber music series at the Philharmonic *Kammermusiksaal*; my friend Eve Slattner was staging Walton’s *Façade* in the series and asked me to conduct. This was my first connection with Spectrum Concerts, a connection that was to prove very fruitful in the coming years.

Finally, 27 years after *Pinkville*, I got to write with Volker Ludwig again, at his GRIPS Theater in Berlin. Volker had had a huge hit with his *Linie 1* (*Subway Line #1*) from 1986 and wanted to do something more contemporary, so he wrote *Café Mitte*, a look at what was happening at that moment—1996—in Berlin following the destruction of the Wall. Although Volker was loath to call it a musical, *Café Mitte* has a long list of songs. I wrote the music on Miller Hill and sent it to the band, who worked out the orchestrations and contributed some of their own songs. *Café Mitte* opened and played for the next three seasons, also appearing in a DVD, a CD and a songbook. *Café Mitte* has scenes and songs for refugees, street kids, the introduction of the smartphone; my title song had traces of Kurt Weill.

While all this was going on, I still had the responsibility of leading the department at the HdK. At the beginning, I was the only professor, and we had no classrooms of our own. *Die Wende* (the reunification of West and East) was fairly recent, and because we had no spaces in the West, we looked in the East for possible studios. One night, we met with the people at *Theater Unter’m Dach* (Theater Under the Roof), a small theater in the East. When we brought up the question of rent, the *Ossis* (East Germans) just looked at us and at each other, speechless; the concept of rent had never occurred to these products of a Socialist state that owned all real property. We finally found studios to share at the *Staatliche Ballet Schule*, deep in Prenzlauerburg, in the East. Peter Kock and I acted as hosts for the First Musical Congress in

Berlin, held at the HdK. There was a lot of false information out there and terrible attempts at copying the Broadway model without really understanding it. At one point a man from the former East Berlin started his question/comment addressing me with the *sobriquet* "Comrade"; I had to disabuse him of any comradeship between us.

My office was a spare room in the *Ballet Schule*, and we started building our faculty. The actor Peter Kock soon joined me and became a mainstay of the program for the next 25 years. The schedule that we devised required the students to be in class for the entire day, from morning till night, and they had a one-hour commute each way from the West. Some who were of mixed race faced ugly challenges on public transportation. But Bobbie and I were finally working together, conceiving and leading the classes we called *Labor* (-atory), the spine of what our curriculum aimed to do. It was exhilarating work, putting our ideas into practice, discovering new vistas as they opened up while the wheels turned.

In the late Nineties, the critic/intendant Klaus Pierwoss, whom I had met in Vienna while staying with Manfred and Lore, was the intendant of the theater in Bremen. I approached him with the idea of turning Kafka's *Letter to His Father* into an opera (*Liebster Vater*). He agreed, and I started setting the 100-page screed and self-inventory into a stage event. I chose to have Kafka played by an actor, with the father sung by a bass, his three sisters as soprano, mezzo and alto, and his mother a dancer. We performed the opera in the Concordia, our old home for *Sigmunds Freude*. Sabrina suggested that we look at her boyfriend, the actor Rene Dumont for the role of Kafka; he was the perfect choice, even looked the part. The role of the Father was wonderfully realized by Karsten Küsters. I wrote for a chamber orchestra, and the piece was warmly received, with follow-up productions in Berlin and Weimar and later, in an English translation, in New York at the Center for Contemporary Opera. It was also broadcast by ncoln centeNDR (North German Radio).

Frank Dodge scheduled the Stravinsky *L'Histoire Du Soldat* (*The Story of a Soldier*) for his Spectrum Concerts series, and the actress Eva Mattes, who was appearing as the narrator/actor wanted me to conduct. I had performed the piece many times and felt I could conduct this thorny *partitur* (score) although I knew it held many rhythmic pitfalls. I studied the score diligently, and we went into rehearsal. Although the reviews were quite positive, the experience showed me the limits of my serious conducting ability.

I created a song revue for our students and worked with George's last production at the Akademie in Vienna, his play *Purgatorium*, and for his first play, *Die Brecht Akte*, (The Brecht File) at the Berliner Ensemble, where Claus Peymann had moved, taking George with him as one of his "house" directors. So I had participated in the re-opening of two of Berlin's most famous

theaters, the Renaissance and the Berliner Ensemble! There in Berlin, at the famed *Theater am Schiffbauerdamm*, birthplace of *The Three Penny Opera* and Brecht's postwar home, we presented a play based on Brecht's appearance before the House Un-American Activities Committee in 1947. The *Schiffbauerdamm* was to be George's home till the end of his life, in 2007.

At the HdK, we rehearsed Steven Sondheim's *Into the Woods*, which I conducted in Berlin and at the Dessau Bauhaus. The writer/director James Lapine, who wrote the book for *Into the Woods* and won a Tony for his Broadway production of the show, was in Berlin, happened to see our production, and told me it was one of the best he had ever seen.

As the millennium approached, I remembered my singular experience at Knossos in 1956 and I thought that this flipping of the millennial glass would be a good time to see if the power of that first visit was still so strong or had it changed in the intervening years (I certainly had). Had it modulated into something positive? I also wanted to share Greece and the glory of Knossos with Bobbie.

We had a marvelous meal in Heraklion of seafood just seined out of the Mediterranean and the next day taxied out to the Palace. It was basically unchanged from my prior visit, maybe a few more rooms restored and a few more murals reconstructed. The unease had abated and, although it was still a fascinating visit (together with the museum in Heraklion) the ghosts had fled. It underlined the subtitle of my *Fancy 1*, "the impossibility of recapitulation." After stopping at a farmer's crude olive press, we had our New Year's dinner at the decidedly un-posh dining room of our hotel, toasting each other with the local retsina and blowing on our noisemakers as the world turned.

That year, 2000, Chuck Maryan got together a production of the original English-language version of *Doctor Faustus Lights the Lights* in New York, with the Center for Contemporary Opera at the Neighborhood Playhouse—another homecoming for me, as I had accompanied Martha Graham and Jane Dudley there in their classes in movement for actors and thus had been part of a segment of *Omnibus*, the CBS Sunday show in the Sixties that had featured a segment about Paul Newman and Joanne Woodward when they were students at the Playhouse. We were lucky to cast James Martin as Faustus, and the rest of the cast was also fine. In a minor role was a niece of Mayor Koch, and Hizzoner showed up at a performance, looking quite puzzled by our *Faustus*. I was very pleased with the result—I had composed a lot more music than was in the Cologne production, turned it into a real opera—and, this time, expanded the band to quartet: piano, percussion, bass and reeds—and made it more jazzy.

Also in 2000, in Berlin, I took on the task of creating a show for our third-year class and came up with the fancy of making the HdK show itself an audition for a planned tour of *A Chorus Line*, which is, of course, a show about an audition for a planned production. I called the students' show *Final Callback*. Each student prepared a song out of *Chorus Line* along with a song of their choice. We did it on a bare stage, with Götz Helriegel, the choreographer, and me seated at a director's table in the middle of the audience and interacting with the actors onstage. I played with the whole concept of "audition," having two girls sing the same song, a guy phone in that his plane was delayed, a girl accidentally leave her body mic on after she left the stage so that audience heard her cursing me out in the bathroom, etc. Our production ended with the finale ("One") of *A Chorus Line*—which, coincidentally, Gary Crist and Yamil Borges had taught these same students in their first year, when I brought the two of them to us at the HdK when they were in Berlin on tour in 1996.[60]

And to round a busy year, George was being fêted at a festival in Eschede, and when the festival commissioned me to compose a piece, I wrote *Two Views of Transcendence* for string trio.

Love Life is a 1948 musical by Weill and Alan Jay Lerner that had never been done in German until Rüdiger Bering, our dramaturg, came up with a translation. I acted as musical director, and conducted. We performed the show in Berlin and later in Bittefeld, as part of the Kurt Weill Festival. After this 2000 production, I officially retired from my professorship, which I had already extended three years past the mandated retirement age of 65. Bobbie and I returned to Miller Hill Road, and I started to craft my post-retirement life: I would keep a hand in at the HdK in the form of an annual return to Berlin to do a guest workshop with the first-year students to be sure they were on the right path for our intentions, and I would have plenty of time to write, perform, whatever I chose. The first piece I wrote was a *Sonata A Tre*, for oboe, flute, harpsichord and cello, in memory of Ronnie Roseman and Sam Baron, that Gil Kalish had asked for at Stony Brook.

With Sabrina Ascacibar, I put together an evening of my music and Kurt Weill's, bringing out the parallels in our lives: Jewish, classically trained, writing in vernacular as well as concert styles, active in foreign speaking countries, etc. We designed the show as a letter from me to Weill and called it *Liebster Kurt….Dein Stanley* (*Dear Kurt….Yours, Stanley*). Sabrina and I played the show many times in Germany and once in New York, at the University Club.

I was hired to run a workshop for composers and lyricists in Düsseldorf and came up with the idea of using the musical *Hello Again*, which had had a brief run in New York and was based

[60] At other times, I also had Reri Grist and Gershon Kingsley speak to the class.

on the Schnitzler play *Reigen,* better known as *La Ronde*.. I had the various writing partners choose one of the scenes from *La Ronde* and, without knowing the *HELLO AGAIN* version come up with their own. Afterwards we looked at the American version and saw how the American writers had solved their particular problem. What I most remember about that job was passing out in the breakfast room, one of the first instances of my "condition" that would be addressed years later in Palm Springs.

At one point in the Nineties, Reri Grist had recommended me to the *Neue Stimmen* competition, a vocal competition held annually in Güttersloh, by the Bertelsmann Foundation. The *Stimmen* really is an opera competition, but they were trying to expand the jury to include a representative from the musical theater world. The highlight came when they asked me to work with a Japanese contestant, who was singing *Summertime*. She had learned the song phonetically, and when I explained to her that the song was a lullaby, she was astonished. But we ate well, were entertained by Liz Mohn (the Bertelsmann chief's wife) and had a delightful time hanging out with Peter Ustinov, another member of the jury.

I don't want to leave this section on Berlin without mentioning Phillip Moll, the world-class accompanist to James Galway and Jessye Norman, and my true friend. He and his wife Yuko have housed me in their Berlin apartment, traveled far to attend performances of my music, and generally made Berlin a second home for me.

Chapter 11

2003-12: Retirement--Palm Springs

My last work with Tabori was at the Berliner Ensemble, his *Erdbeben Concerto* (*The Earthquake Concerto*) in 2002. George went on to direct at the B.E. up to his death at age 94 in 2007. My opera, *Bachs Letzte Oper (Bach's Last Opera*), which had been commissioned by *Den Danske Oper* in Copenhagen but had found no première there, was finally to be done in Erfurt, Germany, in 2002, with Fleming Andersen directing. Erfurt's opera house was in transition; a new house was under construction and would open the next year, so we did the production in the old "*Blech Kugel*" (The Tin Ball), a metal-roofed structure with severe stage limitations. Critiques were mixed, but we did get a big article in *Die Zeit*, the German TIME magazine, and it was a wonderful way to celebrate my 70th birthday. The overture was made up of the chorus singing the names of the 20 Bach children, *a capella*.

In 2004, we gave up the apartment in Berlin and really moved back to Miller Hill except for the yearly short trip to Berlin. Robert Levin, the most gifted musician I have ever known, commissioned me to write a piece for him and his wife, the pianist Ya Fei, a two-piano piece they could program on their concerts. I wrote *Maquettes: Five Essays for Two Pianos*, which they premiered at the Beinecke Library at Yale and later as part of Spectrum Concerts, Berlin (also included on the album for Naxos). One of the movements is dedicated to Chucho Valdez, the fantastic Cuban pianist/leader of the Jazz band Iraquera. Other pieces I composed in this period include *Three Choral Warmups*, *Trio for Clarinet, Violin and Piano*, and *Sh'mah*, a duo for violin and cello I fashioned out of the material I had written for our production of *Mein Kampf* in Vienna. Carole Cowan and Susan Seligman premièred this piece in New Paltz, and it was brilliantly recorded by Julia Maria Kretz and Jens Peter Maintz for the Naxos disc.

I gave a talk at SUNY I called "Fiddlers on My Roof," about being a Jewish composer in Germany and the U.S. Later, I repeated this evening at the Tolerance Center in Rancho Mirage near Palm Springs. Gil Kalish included me among the 13 composers he commissioned for a publication by the Gilmore Piano Festival, *Thirteen Ways of Viewing the Goldberg*. My piece is "Fantasy Variation," in which I view the Bach *Arie* through a fractured/cubist ear.

I was tying up my HdK/Tabori years with *Dogs*, the one-act musical I wrote (after a Tabori play) for the HdK students. They performed it in 2005, and Bobbie and I were celebrated by the school. We were in our Golden Anniversary year, so we gave a big party in New York at Café Loup in the Village. Matt and Josh came in, and it was a moving and wonderful evening. I

had set up some photos from our wedding on easels at the entrance, and, to greet the guests, we stood next to the photos, in the same pose, demonstrating The March of Time.

My *Trio for Horn, Violin, and Piano*, which I had written at the behest of William Purvis, then with New York Woodwind Quintet, but which he never acknowledged, got a performance via Gil at SUNY Stony Brook. Certain movements were particularly effective—"*Battaglia*," written out of rage at the 9/11 attack, and "Salsa with Trio." I also used horn and violin practice mutes—a challenge to balance in performance, but effective. In Berlin, I went to a Spectrum Concert and heard the Schubert *C Major Quintet* (two celli), which transported me so that I wrote a similarly instrumented quintet and arranged a reading at Carole Cowan's house. Hearing it was a mildly illuminating experience: they played the piece on a summer program in New Paltz, and I've decided that the first movement is strong enough to stand alone while the other two movements are filler and should be cut. The same sort of strategy as with *After Auschwitz* in that the first movement (*Ciaconna*) is strong enough to stand alone. If I ever get a performance of the third movement, the "Totentanz," in the new, rewritten version, I could make it into a two-movement piece. I also finished a setting of *The Song of Hannah*, for chorus sopranos, chorus altos, and cello. I have no idea whether or when I might hear that performed.

Because of Bobbie's increasing COPD/emphysema, we decided to spend the winter of 2006 in Southern California, so Matt went ahead and scoped out an apartment in Upland. Maya Levy, Jacques' stunning daughter, came out from LA to visit and show us around. We went farther east, to Joshua Tree, and looked at places in Palm Springs, which pleased us with its Jewish-style delis, gay black mayor—gays, grays, and strays—almost a New York feel. In Claremont, we spent time with old friends Jim and Dora Sanders (he a renowned Biblical scholar, translator of the Dead Sea Scrolls, and dean of the Theological Seminary in Claremont, and she Bobbie's first dance teacher back in Hartford), and with Neil and Ruth Bricker (he a Nobel Prize candidate for his work in kidney research).

We decided to put down a deposit on a house in a retirement community, of which there are many in Claremont. The house was large, with space for two grands in the living room. But Matt visited and felt that we could do better, maybe in Palm Springs. So back we went to Miller Hill for the warm weather, cancelled our deposit in Claremont and then rented a couple of places in Palm Springs for the next winter.

In New York, Gene Brody arranged for a performance of *Liebster Kurt . . . Dein Stanley* at the University Club, an exclusive private club on 54th Street with a stringent no-jeans, jacket-and-tie dress code. Sabrina came up to Miller Hill with Burghart Klaussner—he of *Pinkville*, now a major movie star in Europe—to rehearse and to translate *Liebster Kurt* . . . as much as possible

for the non-German audience. Our show was part of a series presented at the Club to entertain the A-list clientele. There was a problem with selling enough tickets, but finally it worked out, and we did the show to much applause, followed by a staggering *a la carte* in the Club dining room.

Back we went to Palm Springs for the following winter and liked it so much, we decided to move there. My cousin Anne Foster was (and is) resident in Indian Wells. With the help of her real estate agent, we settled into a large, comfortable rented house with a pool in Palm Springs.

After 35 years, we had to sell Miller Hill. We decided to split the property into two parcels: 6 acres on the house side of the road, 15 acres on the studio side. Offers did not stream in. It wasn't the $1,000,000 bonanza we were imagining. I had some percolation holes dug in the upper meadow for possible development, but still it did not sell. The "pool" was really just a concrete reservoir for spring water on its way down Miller Hill. Before we could sell it, the town demanded that I bring it up to code, with a chain-link fence and an electric lock gate even though I had put in a post-and-beam fence years before. This seemed like a ridiculous expense, so I asked, "If there's no water in it, is it still a pool?" "No," answered the town, so I drained it, and now it's just a declivity in the land! The house side sold for $250,000, to a woman I only later discovered to be the manager/performer with the Wooster Theater Group.

The move went smoothly other than one bump: we thought about selling some of our art work to finance the move and, through our Poughkeepsie dentist, who showed his collection at the office, had a possible buyer come to the house. He showed interest in an unsigned Tom Wesselman in my office and offered us a $9,000 check on the spot. We accepted—it was enough to pay for the move—only to suffer acute seller's regret when we found out it was worth possibly 10 times that amount.

A sweet young couple showed up at Miller hill with a Mayflower truck, loaded up our stuff, arranged to meet us in Palm Springs, and took off. Matt arranged for us to buy a Hybrid Civic from a Honda agency, had it delivered to our hotel at LAX, and we were off to our new home. When we arrived in Palm Springs, it was almost dark, and the house had no linens, so we call upon a real estate agent across the street, and he supplied us with sheets and towels—and later, represented us in buying our present house. The rental was a nice house with sunken living room, a big kitchen and a (real) pool. We signed a two-year lease and started buying bookcases. I set up a studio in one of the three bedrooms and Bobbie started insinuating herself into the town. Josh, who was having his usual crises and was now divorced, moved into the *casita* in the back.

I looked around for possible artistic connections but found none. I arranged with a high school senior to help me build a website and settled in for my "retirement" years. In my new

studio, I did rewrites of "Totentanz" (the third movement of *After Auschwitz*) and the "Madrigal" from *Fandangle* and composed a *Quintet for Winds*.

Our first Palm Springs summer hit us with its intense heat—over 100°F every day from the first of May till the first of October—and its impact was indescribable. We quickly adjusted to an air-conditioned existence, 24/7. *Oh! Calcutta!* was released on DVD, but the big news as I experienced it at the Beverly Hills Tennis Club, where we met Milt and Rosemary Okun for breakfast, was that my title song *Oh! Calcutta!* had been sampled by Rich Harrison for a song, "One Thing," sung by Amerie, and this version has been used in the film *Hitch.* When I listened to the film version I couldn't (and still can't) for the life of me hear my song in the new record—for a very good reason, as I later discovered: Harrison hadn't sampled my recording but rather its cover by The Meters. What Milt didn't tell me that day at the Tennis Club was that "One Thing" also had become a hit as a smartphone ringtone. This use brought me royalties that dwarfed any income I previously may have enjoyed from the show. The next year, 2006, I won the ASCAP Rhythm and Blues Award—the only Caucasian in a bevy of talented African-Americans—for the use of the song in the film. And it's not really in the film; it only plays during the back crawl![61]

The second section of Miller Hill sold, so we had a reasonable bank account. We made an offer to buy the house we were renting in Palm Springs, but the seller wanted too much. We kept looking and eventually landed in a place in the Los Compadres section of town, a lovely three-bedroom, three-bath with many new bells and whistles and *no grass*, which was important because I had sworn never again to have to cut a lawn. I bit the bullet and took out a mortgage, something else I had sworn never to do. The price of the house was equal to what we got from both parcels on Miller Hill Road, a 10,255 square-foot lot for 21 acres! Josh helped us move, and we started out in our new home. The hot, dry desert air seemed to benefit Bobbie, and although she was on oxygen 24/7 and was weaker, we seemed to be generally o.k.

The golf cart portion of our garage was already converted into an office space; it now became my new studio, where I composed *Scenes de Ballet* for flute and piano (adagio/pas de deux adagietto/pas seul/dance de caractere), and *La Sonata Veronesa*—my use of the two characters' scenes together in *Romeo and Juliet (*which are amazingly few*)*—for soprano, tenor, clarinet, horn and piano. I learned from Frank Dodge that Spectrum was planning a CD of my music for Naxos' American Classic label, to follow a concert featuring the pieces that would appear on the CD. I decided on a program of *Trio for Horn, Sh'mah, Maquettes,* and *Similes* for

[61] Sofia Coppola also used the track in her film *Somewhere.*

the CD. We would go to Berlin for the concert, in which all the works would be performed except *Sh'mah*.

This would be Bobbie's last trip to Berlin, and it was difficult to bring off, what with oxygen tanks, wheelchairs, etc. The concert went well, but Frank Dodge was in a snit, apparently feeling I wasn't sufficiently grateful for his munificence in support of the project even though I had arranged for a large donation from the HdK and matched it with one of my own. But the recording sessions, including *Sh'mah* were terrific, with first-class musicians as was true of the live concert, too.

My *Trio For Violin, Cello, and Piano* got a fine reading by the SUNY Stony Brook students, thanks once again to Gil Kalish. The piece is dedicated to Jacques' memory. He died in 2004, on a day when Bobbie and I were supposed to fly to Berlin, but he was in the hospital, failing fast. We changed our tickets to a later flight and had Richie, our Miller Hill driver, drop us off at the hospital; he would pick us up later at the Levys' apartment on West Broadway. As we arrived at the hospital, we ran into Roger McGuinn on his way out with his 12-string Rickenbacker guitar. He had played for Jacques all the songs they wrote together, their whole catalog. Realizing that the end was imminent, Bobbie and I spent some time at the bedside. Jacques and Bobbie shared an "*Oy veh!*" laugh, and I sang one of our songs for him. As the final moment approached, we left the room; Claudia and their children were with him when he died. We all went to the apartment, where Claudia's coterie of women friends had prepared a meal, and Richie picked us up for our flight to Berlin.

After the Naxos concert in Berlin, I made an arrangement of the "*Slow Drag*" from *Titanic* for two pianos for the Levins. Another new piece, as yet unperformed, was *Dialogues for Clarinet and Violin*. Also unperformed is *Lullaby Variations for Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass*—variations on the song "Sleep, Baby, Sleep," occasioned by the advent of grandchildren. I also wrote a group of Emily Dickinson songs for voice and piano that awaits performance.

And so we settled into our future in Palm Springs. Josh stayed with us until I told him that he had to pick up his life in Minneapolis, with his ex and kids. He moved back, and then—a *mitzvah*! An old schoolmate from Oakwood, who had always had eyes for him although she was in Matt's class, therefore a little older: Jacqui O'Neal Privitere, a striking woman born in the British West Indies, now a widow, contacted Josh via FaceBook. They met and started a relationship. He moved in with her in Naples, Florida, where she had a big, comfortable house. They settled right in, a big relief for Bobbie and me.

At a party in Palm Springs, I met an educator named Burt Peachy, who had recently read a biography of the extraordinary Victorian lepidopterist, Margaret Fountain, and we decided to turn her story into a musical. I titled the show *Butterfly Madam* and wrote for the next several months. *Butterfly Madam* turned out really to be a one-woman show that I then defined as a "revue musical." We were lucky to get Darcy Daniels, a local singer, to play Margaret, and she did an excellent job. All the other roles were covered by a trio of men, and we set an opening at a local theater. I orchestrated for a piano/conductor (Denis Moreen), cello, reeds and drums. I saw this performance as a workshop but the show did not make the stir I expected, and *Butterfly Madam* has not yet been produced again. My relationship with Burt also did not survive.

Chapter 12

2012-14: 60 Years--Final Curtain & Encore

Bobbie's condition kept deteriorating. Eventually, she and I elected to call in hospice. They sent caregivers, some top-notch, others awful. Her old frenemy Arlene called from Florida and started right in, kvetching in her narcissistic screed. She kept it up until Bobbie said, "Arlene, I don't have time for your *mishegoss.* I'm busy dying," and hung up.[62]

She seemed to be accepting of her condition: one day I found her fallen out of bed. When I gathered up her emaciated body, she asked me, "Are we dead?" I told her that no, we weren't. She said, "Good. I'm going to die, but you go on."[63] Finally she did die, in my arms and with Josh also present, on August 4, 2012. I had arranged for a shroud, and we washed her and placed her in it. I notified the hospice, and they sent out someone with the proper paper work. Bobbie was taken to the crematorium in Banning. We had arranged (Bobbie and I) to have our ashes incorporated in an artificial reef off the coast of Florida and I waited upon the ashes.

Then a whole new nightmare started. The hospice doctor was on vacation, and there was no one to sign a death certificate. It took a week finally to effect the cremation, maybe the worst week of my life. Matt came down for one last viewing, and we sat *shiva* for a few days before he returned to his family in LA. In November, we held a Celebration of Life for Bobbie at the Senior Center in Palm Springs, which was filmed by Joel Hochberg.

Joel was a documentary filmmaker who retired to the desert after a very successful career in advertising. There is a museum in Rancho Mirage that was established by a Holocaust survivor, the Tolerance Education Center. I approached them with a fundraising idea: I offered to present an evening of a reading of an extraordinary book that had appeared in the late Thirties, *Address Unknown,* by Kressmann Taylor, that we would do as a fundraiser for them. The book is an epistolary novel, letters between two former partners in an art gallery, a Jew who remained to run the gallery in San Francisco and a non-Jew who had returned to Germany. I approached Joel with the idea that he join me in the reading and, although he had no experience as an actor, he agreed. Our reading was a great success, and we even had financial support for a video, but the rights to *Address Unknown* lay with one of the studios—a film had been made out of it—so we never went any further.

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[62] Just the other day, around the time of Bobbie's fifth *yahrzeit*, the phone rang. I answered, and it was Arlene: "Hi, Stanley. May I speak to Bobbie?" I was less than tactful, told her she's lost her mind. Apparently, I was right; an hour later, she called again, asking for me.

[63] See Appendix 2

At a bereavement group, I met Julia Ricci, widow of Ruggiero, an internationally renowned violinist who died the day after Bobbie. We discovered that we shared a lot about our lives, with concert travels all over Europe, and languages—she speaks five, I just two, plus smatterings of a couple more. Julia and I helped each other get through that terrible time but felt no romantic attraction. She was fragile, unwell, and confused, and I was lonely and adrift, but we helped each other for a while.

After a year, I tried to date. After 60 years, how do you talk to a woman who is alone and assumes any older man is after either nurse or purse? Bobbie was always the gregarious one, the political organizer, the volunteer at the hospital, the organizer of the knitting circle at the Senior Center. I was the reclusive, socially withdrawn one, for all my performing talent. But suddenly I was alone and, except for the trips to Berlin to teach, at loose ends. One night in my solitude, I felt what might be a heart attack and called for an ambulance. I was cleared, but the emergency room doctor made a note to my primary physician, Will Grimm (who spoke at Bobbie's memorial), that "Mr. Walden is deeply depressed," something I had not been aware of. I met with a therapist, who suggested I write a letter to my depression. I did so, and read it to him at our next session. He seemed satisfied, told me, "O.K. Call me again if you need help."

One of Bobbie's friends told me of a local writers group that met weekly and suggested that I might find it interesting. I thought it sounded awful, but I gave it a try and found it just the right thing to bring me out. The others were mostly beginning amateurs but the workshops gave my week a shape. And through the group I met a new real friend: Dave Weening, a retired neuropsychologist originally from Chicago, wonderfully literate, Jewish, and with a humor that matches mine.[64] Andy Harmon, the group leader, planned a presentation of selected work from the group, called it The Twilight Café, and I wrote something for it.

My cousin Anne Foster of Indian Wells was kindly trying to fix me up. Any ghastly results weren't her fault. But then she suggested to a friend that I might like to meet her, particularly since the friend, Rhonda Rockwell, was active as a freelance editor, shaping people's writing, and I had embarked on a project of self-publishing *Life Upon The Wicked Stage* in the original English in which Bobbie and I had written it, so I had plausible deniability. I invited Rhonda to the Twilight Café, with dinner before. In other words, A BLIND DATE! We met at the restaurant. I found her attractive and ebullient. At 65, she was 16 years my junior. She has a PhD in English, had taught at Harvard. Over dinner, I used the French phrase *l'esprit d'escalier.* She

[64] Unfortunately, Dave moved out of the desert in 2016. But we visited him and his gregarious partner, Bob, in Charlotte just a few months ago.

knew it![65] At The Twilight Café, she loved my performance and the piece. We made a movie date for the next day.

Matters took their course; gradually, she moved in, bringing with her Jax the Yorkie-poo, cutest dog in Palm Springs, and we have lived together ever since. Had I not met Rhonda, I think my life would have been a downward spiral of loneliness and bitterness. We have each had to make adjustments; she has never married, has no children, and lived alone for 25 years, while I enjoyed a solid marriage of some 60 years, with sons and grandchildren. But we have made a union and are delighted with ourselves and each other. And with Jax.

Before I met Rhonda, I had arranged to visit Josh's ex-wife and children later in the month, in Hawaii, where they moved in order to realize Adrienne's dream of leaving Minneapolis. I booked a room at The Inn at the Kulaniapi Falls in Hilo (my first trip to the Islands), flew there and rented a car, got lost at night on the way from the airport in a tropical rain on a dwindling mountain dirt road until I was rescued by a cheerful young woman in a pickup truck on her way down the mountain, who guided me to the hotel. The visit recapitulated many of the difficulties I (we) have always had: from the start, Josh and Adrienne's marriage was not made in heaven, and their children, Elijah and Kema, have suffered. Adrienne has pulled her wagons into a circle and made an almost impenetrable fortress of the three of them. They are dirt poor, in contrast to the Waldens, but receive little support from the Todds, Adrienne's family in Minneapolis. We (Rhonda and I and Matt and Dana) have tried to be as supportive as possible but the extended family is not all that I had envisioned.

Between 2009 and 2015, I composed the following pieces: …*for Clarinet* (for clarinet and piano); *Monkshood* (solo violin) after a Thelonius Monk tune, for Carole Cowan, leaving her room to improvise. I got a commission from the Verdehr Trio to complete the second movement of a piece that Arnie Black left unfinished. The first movement had been finished by Bill Balcolm, and they had approached Alvin Brehm to complete the second, but he had declined and suggested me. I got the check, did what I thought is a perfectly respectful job, and never heard from them again. It was 20 years since the *Similes,* and once again, I wrote a group of short piano pieces, memorializing friends who had died in the interim. I titled this *Deadications*, a sweet and awful title, but something about it appeals to me.

Earlier in 2014, I was invited to Berlin for the celebration of what would have been Tabori's 100th birthday. I was to play at a *Preisverleihung* (prize award) of a newly created

[65] She even knew how to spell it!

Tabori Prize. I sang and played a few songs, then repeated my performance for the Berliner Ensemble, a sterling evening with a plethora of guests, 25+ people from George's (and my) past.

Wendt Kaessens had organized another Tabori tribute in Eschede, and I arranged an evening with Detlef Jacobson (one of the mainstays of the Tabori ensemble), which we presented under freezing conditions in a converted cowshed. On the way back to Berlin the next day, we found the city blockaded by a monster bicycle rally. We couldn't get into the City. At all. I had to call on Jochen Hahn, who lives in Zehlendorf, to come rescue us. Luckily, he was home, and we spent the day in his lovely garden until the blockade was lifted, and he could drive us home. *A propos* "home," I was staying with Veronika Nowag, one of the Tabori ensemble. Veronika was, and remains, a survivor. She failed in her first attempt to escape East Germany, was caught and did jail time, but she succeeded in her second attempt.

Chapter 13:
2014-16: *The Goldberg Variations*

Also in 2014, I came up with the idea of turning *The Goldberg Variations*, George's play that I had worked on for the Vienna première in the 1980's, into a musical. I asked his publisher, Maria Sommer, and his widow, Uschi, for permission to do so, and they enthusiastically agreed.

My first decision had to be how much of the original to use. One couldn't simply sing the play. Music demands room and adds time. I cut scenes and moments that would impede the musical dramaturgy and looked for those where the music would bring the virtues of George's structure into a new light. For instance: two of the actors have a scene where they show Mr. Jay, the director, how they're going to act the story of Cain and Abel. I turned this familiar scenario into an old-fashioned vaudeville soft-shoe routine, keeping the external shape of George's scene but writing lyrics that support the basic idea. ("Dying is the hardest thing to act/Just think how hard it must have been for those two boys/Those two guys/Death and murder hadn't been invented yet/They had to improvise.") I portrayed Adam and Eve in a love ballad, Moses climbing the mountain as a Charleston, a crew of Jewish Hell's Angels as hard-rock gangsters, Abraham/Sara/Isaac as the Three Stooges, etc. I demo'd three songs with local singers and sent the CDs to Maria Sommer and Jochen Hahn, whom I had engaged as my agent. They got in touch with the theater in Karlsruhe, now being managed by former Tabori assistants, and the theater invited Jochen and me down from Berlin so I could play through the score. I did so, stumbling through the piano-playing and singing with laryngitis. At the end, Peter Spühle, the intendant, said, "Good. We'll do it!" The première was set for November 26, 2016.

The road to opening night is never smooth and probably never should be. I got a lawyer to represent me in the contract negotiations, and between him and the theater didn't get a contract for almost a half year. The theater wouldn't hire any performers outside of their ensemble, so several of my choices weren't hired. I wasn't going to be there until rehearsals went into full gear, so I agreed to have their musical director do the arrangements and teach the score, which led to some trouble, although in general he did a good job.

One number, which accompanies the crucifixion scene, I had set as a duet for Maria Magdalena and the Mater Dolorosa to sing over one of the Bach *Goldberg Variations*. The Mater Dolorosa sings out of the Stabat Mater in Latin, and the Magdalena from a text of mine, as a blues. The musical director objected strenuously, saying that the two styles couldn't possibly coexist, which was exactly the point of what I had done. I called for a sing-off for the director and got my way, but thereafter there lingered a certain distance and tension between the musical

director and me. The *big* decision was whether to sing the songs in English or have them translated into German? I contacted Volker Ludwig, who was willing, but the theater decided to do them in the original English, with super-titles.

The German Stadtheater is a "*Dreispartenhaus*," a three-discipline theater, incorporating opera, ballet, symphonic orchestra and drama ensembles, which operates on a repertory schedule, so they have no room for a series of previews, which any musical sorely needs in order to find its final shape. (*Oh! Calcutta!* needed a whole month.) As in *Café Mitte*, *Goldberg* had only one preview planned, and that one finally had to be cancelled because the company was hit by a flu in the final week of rehearsals. So opening night was the first time we played the piece before an audience. Maybe for that reason or maybe the show wasn't all that I thought it was, the reviews were not great. Peter von Becker gave us a good one in the Berlin *Tagesspiegel*, and some nice ones appeared online, but *Goldberg* didn't get the kind of reception that would cause other theaters to do their own productions and lead to a Berliner Ensemble production or a possible Chinese tour through Jochen. The show will play in repertoire for the 2016 and 2017 seasons, but I have to accept the reality that *Goldberg* wasn't and will not be a hit.

Chapter 14:
2015-16: 55 Years--Another Final Curtain

In 2015, Josh stopped by Palm Springs on the way back from visiting his kids in Hawaii, and it was immediately evident that something was physically wrong with him. His hands were compromised; he couldn't hold his coffee cup with one hand. He stumbled; his shoulders were slumped. These were the first signs of what would prove to be his death sentence: amyotrophic lateral sclerosis—ALS—the terrible disease that gradually shuts down the body, robbing its victims of the power to communicate and move in the world. He spent some months at home with Jacquie, then was moved to a revolting "care facility" in Naples, where Matt visited him and was appalled by his condition—he had no definitive diagnosis at that point; we thought at worst, multiple sclerosis—and arranged for him to be moved up to Tampa, to the neurological ICU at Tampa General, where the deadly diagnosis was confirmed. Matt and Dana paid for a private air-ambulance to fly Josh to L.A., with Rhonda and me jammed into the rear of the Learjet, with Josh on the gurney, two nurses and all the medical and personal gear filling the space within a millimeter of its capacity. Matt found a facility in Santa Monica where Josh stayed for a couple of months before we finally moved him out here to a facility in the desert. I told him I wanted to write something for him, on whatever theme and by whatever title he chose. He chose this:

WAITING

A POEM FOR JOSH FROM DAD

WAITING
WAITING
WAITING FOR THAT WHICH YOU HOPE WON'T COME,
WAITING
WAITING
WAITING FOR THAT WHICH YOU KNOW WILL COME.

TIME,
PRECIOUS TIME,
LEAKS SLOWLY AWAY;
THE DAYS LEAVE NO TRACE
AS THEY FADE…
WAITING
WAITING

WAITING FOR THE END,
WHEN THE END WILL BE WELCOMED AS A FRIEND
AND THEN
YOU'LL NEVER HAVE TO WAIT AGAIN.

We engaged a therapist to help him prepare for the inevitable. Toward the end, he lost the ability to speak. After a few visits, she said that she could no longer communicate with him and wished that she could read his lips. Rhonda immediately went online and discovered the one advertised lipreader on the West Coast; she lives in Seattle. We got in touch with her, and for the rest of his sessions with the therapist and his last visits with his children, we established a link via Skype and, with the iPad focused on Joshua's lips, we were able to create a three-way link. Because the lip reader had become deaf as a child, long after she learned to speak, she could still be clearly understood as she responded to Josh's lip movements. I know this was a great relief and breakthrough for him, especially with his kids.

He died, again in my arms as Bobbie had, in August of 2016. Rhonda, who was of incalculable help in this time (something she never "signed up" for), had prepared the shroud. Matt rushed down from LA, and we saw Josh off. His ashes have now joined Bobbie's in the underwater reef off the Florida coast. (This is an artificial reef and much used by the marine life- there is also a space for me) For me, August is the cruelest month, with their two *yahrzeits* and Josh's birthday, followed shortly by Bobbie's and mine wedding anniversary. I've lost my wife and son in that high-summer time, and it is a dangerous land I have to traverse.[66]

[66] Other family members preceded the two of them, of course. My father died at 72, in 1970, of pulmonary edema. My sister Terry died of breast cancer in 1985 at the early age of 58. My mother was 94 when she passed away shortly after my return from Berlin in 1989; I'm convinced she waited till our return. Bernie died in 2009, at 87. As of this writing, Aunt Sylvia is about to turn 103. We're tough.

Chapter 15:
Reflections

Questions of perspective and legacy have driven me to write this and to make my video, *Chutzpah!* with the help of Tom Gass, a computer-savvy retired dentist who stepped in after the sudden and devastating death of Joel Hochberg.

With Rhonda, I edited and self-published (on my website) the book Bobbie and I wrote about our HDK program, *Life Upon The Wicked Stage.* Josh's old friend Eric Lavigne has updated my website. We have made "inheritance boxes" for each of my grandchildren—Aliza, Casey, Elijah, and Kema—of all that I think might interest them when they're older. But my creative process has slowed and may have come to a halt—can I accept that? The papers are full of obituaries of people dying in their eighties and nineties, so my 85 years are not so exceptional, although if I think back to what my 20-year-old self considered to be old age, surviving my sixties would have qualified. (My father died at age 72).

When you open up the doors of recollection, you get a new perspective on the past, where you have to weigh things on a new scale. This account of my life may sound like straightforward reporting without value judgments, but things are not always as they seem. Here are a few segments—I hope without whining—of my new perspective:

The Clarinet: I was never completely secure in my playing, with the threat of squeaking always present. That can't be true; otherwise, I would never have achieved the position in the professional world that I did. But there must be a bit of truth in it. My colleagues on the instrument seemed to be more knowledgeable about the minutiae of mouthpieces, reeds, barrels, etc. Mostly, I just accepted the default status quo. For all my concert activity, I was always reluctant to put myself out there.

Composition: Although my catalogue list is not negligible, it includes many pieces that have never been performed, many that have received just one performance, and a few that have received multiple performances. None have entered the canon. I would place myself in the hierarchy of Contemporary American Composers below the middle point. As to my more popular commercial work, some days I feel good about the inventiveness I find, and other days, brought down by the lack of innovation or mastery in comparison to what I hear in others.

Milt Okun, my publisher and friend, was a major contributor to the Los Angeles Opera and when we moved to California, he put me in touch with the development wing of the opera. I met several times with them and suggested either my Kafka opera or the Gertrude Stein, or possibly a commission. Nothing worked out. Milt also offered to support a production of

Butterfly Madam, but although I tried, I couldn't raise one. *Butterfly Madam* was also entered into the National Association of Musical Theater showcase in New York but was not selected for a showcase.

General Music: My biggest deficit has always been my poor musical memory. When it comes to presenting already notated material (including my own), I do well, but I have great difficulty in playing and singing from memory. Also my musical hearing isn't what I think it should be: I don't distinguish intervals as well as I think I should, and the same is true of my part-singing.

Teaching: I feel good about the program in Berlin and my role in creating it. My involvement with the students could have been more intense. Bobbie made herself available to the students on a personal level, in their private lives, and I maintained a certain distance. She was perfectly comfortable in her relationships with them—after all, she was a therapist—but I preferred to focus on teaching them their craft.

Parenting: It wasn't a verb back then. I was away a lot when I had to be in Berlin or Vienna, but when I was home I could have been more involved with introducing my sons to new things. I didn't take them regularly to ball games or museums or concerts at home, but at various times, the four of us went to Berlin, Munich, Paris, London, Ireland, Sausalito, and the Southwest. I didn't teach them music the way I probably should have.[67] I had a tendency to let them discover for themselves what would motivate them. Matt didn't get his exemplary parenting skills from me. Maybe he got them in reaction to me.

Husband: The marriage endured considerable strains, but it endured. We dealt with them. I found it difficult to credit Bobbie when asked about founding the program in Berlin, considering it *my* work rather than *ours*) and conversely, she bridled when I referred to myself as a dancer. But the bond we created was so strong and loving that it survived literally till death did us part.

My body has held up surprisingly well in these aging years. I have a prosthetic right knee and should probably arrange for the left to be done. I had ablations done on my legs to reduce edema in my feet. I see the world through new eyes after cataract surgery earlier this year, and am more charismatic with new crowns on my teeth.[68] Years ago, my LAD artery (The Widowmaker) was discovered to be completely blocked; after four attempts to unblock it, I have survived thanks to a sterling set of collateral arteries. However, I am now the proud bearer of an implanted

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[67] When the boys were small, Bobbie studied dance at Donya Feuer and Paul Sanasardo's Studio for Dance, and I accompanied her classes. We took the boys and their toys with us, and they played under the piano while their mother danced and I played for her. Who knows what effect that had on them?
[68] Matt congratulated me on my new smile by saying, "Great, Dad! You don't look homeless anymore."

defibrillator following a recent episode of v-tach—while already in the E.R., fortunately. We will soon travel to the Mayo Clinic in Scottsdale for a holistic workup to try to discover what infirmity plagues me, with increasing frequency, with a *malaise* so total that I am incapacitated. Just the other day, I flunked a glucose tolerance test, indicating that I may be pre-diabetic, so that's something to look forward to. And how's everything with you?

[I am just back from two weeks at the Mayo Clinic. The diagnosis: I suffer from "age-related (sounds better that "geriatric") depression." I am started on a new medication (Wellbutrin) and am assured that I will be my old (young) self in six weeks.]

After a drought of one year, following the death of my son and the disappointment in Karlsruhe, when I didn't write a note of music, I've started again, with two chamber pieces so far: "Duo" for clarinet and bassoon and "Vln/Pno," a sonata-like work for violin and piano. I just finished "Jacob to His Sons," a setting of Jacob's deathbed talk with his 12 sons, for male chorus with piano. I have no great expectations of ever hearing them performed but as with this book, it is good to be back "in the game."

When I began this book, I put forth the idea that all is preparation: the upbeat before the *ictus*, the *plié* before the leap, the sizing of the canvas before paint strikes the surface, the blank page awaiting violation of its blankness, the dream before the act. If that is true, is it also true of time? Is "now" only a preparation for "then"? And what does that mean for the treasured quality of "here and now"? Does it relieve us of any responsibility for the future if we're so open to the present? I don't think so. I think being open to the present may be the best possible preparation for the future. If we are constantly focused on "the next" (or, conversely, on "the last"), then we are making poor preparation for that "next."

What does this relativity mean? If we can see the patterns and relationships between things, the fractal similarities, how one affects the other, then are we seeing the present or the future? And if the present, if what I've written above holds true, then we are in perpetual preparation. We draw in our breath in anticipation of the song to come.

"If it be now, 'tis not to come. If it be not to come, it will be now. If it be not now, yet it will come—the readiness is all."

Hamlet (V.ii)

APPENDIX 1

Sons

My sons' paths have not been parallel. They have not even been divergent; they have been on contradictory planes. School for Matt was never a challenge—he breezed through, had plenty of time for mischief. School for Josh was a challenge, which he often lost. You always knew where Matt was, even when he was pushing the envelope, trying to get away with something. You seldom knew where Josh was; he was out exploring, or hiding, or fighting against a reality that was threatening. Matt bent the rules or manipulated them to his own profit; Josh broke the rules, or was broken by them. Matt had a sequence of girlfriends, Josh had bromances with perhaps a toe in the homoerotic waters.

Matt's journey seemed clear early on: entertainment law. The only question, how to achieve it. Josh fought at the gates of entertainment, never fully gained entrance. Matt married in a blaze, both times; sumptuous locations—Bellagio, Italy, and the Beverly Hills Hotel, the latter professionally recorded. Josh's wedding was a poor affair in a public park in Minneapolis, recorded (or not) by incapable friends. Matt rose in his profession, with setbacks, but well within the parameters of success. Even though Josh received a scholarship to the NYU/Tisch dance program, his career as a dancer did not develop. He was fired from his dance ensemble, never found a position where he could hold a performing, teaching, or service job. Matt became a dedicated, generous parent; Josh was under court injunction to have limited and supervised contact with his children. Matt drove a sequence of glamorous, chic cars; Josh got his license late in life and crashed his truck soon after. Matt could tell a joke, Josh laughed peremptorily at his own attempts at humor. Matt could control his world as well as any of us can, Josh was terrified by his.

They were both charming, but Josh's charm was desperate and ultimately not winning. His was an unquiet life, gotten through with the help of drugs and psychotherapy from the age of seven. We bled for him, especially in the many times we had to shelter him in our house until he could return to his residence.

In the end, the ALS that destroyed Josh was a fitting metaphor for the fear in which he held his life. I know I terrified my sons on several occasions (and maybe more that I don't know). One in particular was the day Jacques D'Amboise fired me. I had been teaching in the Dance Department at SUNY Purchase for many years (had in fact participated in its founding) when I went to meet the new Dean of Dance. Bill Bales, who had been the Dean since its inception, had retired and D'Amboise was his replacement. When I naively walked into the office, D'Amboise

lowered the boom, catching me completely by surprise, saying he had his own faculty and my services would not be required.

I got back home in a furious state, and Josh started being difficult. I blew up, and he got so scared that he ran away. I couldn't find him anywhere. I drove over every road in the area and finally discovered him cowering on the other side of the Parkway; we had a mutual cry and hug.

This was not the first time I went looking for him. He had his piano lessons with Helen Lanfer on West 86th Street and would then take the West Side subway home. However, he didn't notice that there are two trains going uptown from 86th Street; one continues up to upper Broadway, which is close to where we lived, and the other turns east at 96th Street and goes into deepest Harlem. Josh stayed on that train, and eventually he was the only white person on the train. We were going frantic; it was well past his time to arrive home. I called Helen, and she said he had left at the proper time, so I got in into the car and began cruising up and down Broadway and Riverside Drive, looking for him. Finally we got a call from a stationmaster at the end of the Harlem line, saying that Josh was there. I went to pick him up. We never knew whether Josh would be where he should be on any trip, whether to Florida or Berlin or anywhere. Josh was a beguiling and maddening mixture of Peter Pan and a Lost Boy; he never really emerged from the other side of adolescence and that not only in his personality and maturity but also physically- he didn't show a gray hair up to the time of his death and for most of his life looked some thirty years younger than his chronological age.

We had a series of markings next to the front door of Miller Hill, tracking the boys' growth. At the top of this "ruler" was my 6'2" mark. I told them if and when they surpassed it, they would have to move out; they both beat me to it and left the house as soon as they reached 17.

Next to this vertical ruler was a hole in the wall, caused by one of them in the midst of some kind of a fracas. We decided not to repair it till one of them had moved out of the house. On the other hand, we had delightful food fights at the dinner table.

APPENDIX 2

Musings and jottings by Bobbie Walden as she approached her death
July-August 2012

1

To write
Perchance to dream
Let it go
Don't be careful
Just let the flow go
It is like coming home

I am closer to dying
Than I was a week ago
We are the ones and
We know each other

2

There are things tugging, pulling away at my
Concentration
There is a pounding in my chest
My mouth is terribly dry
Let my thoughts go – let me go to my poetry place
To the unreal – where magic drifts in to
Wordless places and colors and tastes
Stickle in – stickle is a new made-up
Word. Letting ideas flow – not being
Careful- trying to go to my poetry place.
Where words flow. Not real, but true
This is not what they want of me, i think
But I want so much to get to my flowing place
It will come back to me-
I know it will.
It must

3

Red and gold roses
My heart is pounding and then
It quiets
Words don't flow now

I must just let it be and trust
That my words will return to me.
At least I am on the right path.

Wait – I will meet you there

4

It has been a not so
Wonderful day. My chest and heart were not my friends. But therapists were here.

There is something strange in my head
There is a pounding – a strong pulse
And my mouth is dry
I have been away.
Where, oh where has my little dog gone
Oh, where oh where can she be?
I am trying to return to "myself"
Stream of consciousness writing – come back
I see – attention otherly directed – it's gone-
Stream of consciousness – floating

5

Try to remember
Today
Some scary stuff
My heart is not healed

I feel angry and
Of course the words
"It's not fair."
I have become my mother

How difficult to survive for years
Beyond the recommended time – the "dose"
Who wants to live to 100?

6

Touch a memory – a source
And a flood of connections spring into being
The connections are me

I am writing to reach you
And I must remember
The kindness of strangers who have become my friends.
The long song that has become
The many choruses of my life.
The searching, trying to find the pathway
To the fitness. The worrying before the wrinkles
Smooth and the words are evened out
The song is sung harmoniously. Pling and peace.

7

I went outside and sat in the sun. I am damaged goods. I don't remember how to answer my needs or my wishes. One thinks of death as a possible friend for the first time.

My husband – my love. I will let you sleep – quietly.

Saw the doctor
And he saw me
I've been away

8

The door must be locked…I am
Afraid.
This has been an awful time
Lost days- still lost,
Feeling faint, but wanting to write
I don't know who I am
I don't recognize my name-
My being who I am
I am writing to hold on to the
Person I think I am.
She is a stranger
I feel faint- determined to be here
I remember there is a person
Who writes and wants to

9

Scary times.
Mine and Stan's as well.
I must get better and be strong enough

To care for him – if even for the tiniest bit.
He is so tired – and fragile and frightened
Because he needs care and someone to do
Special treats and shows of loving kindness
For him. I so wish it were me.
Now we can both cry.

10

Inside out, right side up – smoothing out the wrinkles
In my life's hiccups.
10:30 am –feel much better now.
I'm feeling weird. If I don't make it – please
Tell everyone I love them. I will try to make it. I love you

Please, dear god, help me to find myself again
I feel closer to Jacques and George
Mom – oh, and my dad –gone so long ago.
Sweet memories.

11

I've been rehearsing with death for my final scene.
I just pray that I don't have it quite right yet
But if lameing comes into it I'm calling it all off –
Meaning – I choose to be this.

And now – perhaps otherly occupied – I can dwell with
The idea of death, postponing its occurence – leaving it
Beside me – a precautionary tale – a rehearsal with an
Outcome of wholeness and health –

The performance must be magnificent – ageing perfection
So that I wake in the morning – with my love by my side –
Both alive and healed.

12

The precious attempts of a woman whose mind is lost in empty and once known by-ways.
How do I get back to myself?
I guess she's there – without the trivia that rounds us out, that makes us the "one" we know. The "me"
I'd know anywhere

13

Each day is a wondering if it's the last.
In one sense it's good.
If it is the last, how do I want to
Spend-or use- the time.
Why do I think my writing is so
Singularly important?
Who am I writing to?

Days flow into nights and then
Again into days
They don't belong to me.

How much of what I am at this moment is me?
The wanting to know is still "me" – my stubborn self.
But I am satisfied much sooner.
It is enough to find one resolution – one quieted answer
A moment of peace. Rest 'til later.

14

As I lose weight, I lose the weightiness of my words
And the need
"Enough" enters the "possible"
Who do I care enough for to go on? And they for me?
Will there be enough moments to look forward to?
Will I be worth it? So much time and trouble
Just to maintain. Do I want to fight?
The choice must come from a surprising place.

15

Spending too much time in bed
but
Liquids pass right through

I am ill something is really wrong

Is this the end? I am not ready

Wonder if I can recover
Wonder if I will see Josh's children again

Wonder if I will knit again
a gift, my body

When it is over Stan can rest
His songs <u>must</u> be heard

16

Is this the date?
End stages
Systems breaking down
Fancy heart attack recovered
But
Beaten by the yellow stream
Of uncheckable urine
Uncontrollable urine flow
Water on a direct path
To elimination,
The flow checked by
Its frozen form
It sucks!!
Now the piss-poor process
Takes its toll
Urination, defecation
Starving, sleeping
Giving up.
Learning to say good-bye
Perhaps it is time
Accepting – so tired.

There is so much love.

APPENDIX 3

Close (and Closer) Calls

Close Calls

I have stumbled/tripped/fallen multiple times, and have suffered only two broken bones and a severed fingertip as a result. Other results were mostly abrasions and contusions. My instincts have somehow saved me; they must be related to my vaunted collateral arteries.

The first time I remember (although I did suffer from a torn "semi-lunar cartilage" as a boy, I have no idea as a result of what) was in Poughkeepsie, while playing tennis with Matt at his school courts. They were in poor repair and I turned my ankle on a crack in the cement, while going for a killer overhead smash. This forced me to wear a cast on my right foot when we left soon afterwards for our long-planned and eagerly anticipated trip to the Southwest to celebrate Matt's graduation. I couldn't drive, and Bobbie didn't drive on unknown roads, so Matt was given the burden (hah) of doing all the driving (with his brand-new license) through Arizona, New Mexico and Colorado. He couldn't have been happier. And he did a fine job.

A lovely summer day. Bobbie's family is visiting from Hartford, and I am relaxing on one of our plastic lounges by the pool. Suddenly, the shoddy thing collapses, and as I reach down to break my fall, my right pinky finger gets caught in the structure of the lounge, and the tip is neatly guillotined. We bring the slice to the doctor, but it isn't viable, so he takes a piece of flesh from my belly and sews it on and sews that down to the palm of my hand, where the new finger tip will be nourished as it grows to independence. A great day when the stitches are removed and the finger once again is free. I have to relearn certain fingering for the clarinet, but nothing dramatic—a clarinetist in Hartford had to have his instrument rebuilt so he could play with a severely injured hand.

The next time was in Paris, years later. I was hurrying at night in a poorly lighted neighborhood and went flying over the chains marking a pedestrian zone.

Next down south to Seville, walking around at night with my head in the star-filled sky and whoops, there goes Stan again, missing a curb. Nothing broken, but angry-looking scrapes.

Back in the safety of Miller Hill, working on cleaning out the growth bordering the pool, with Josh doing the other side. He looks up, and suddenly I'm not there. A three foot drop from the pool's side to the ground at that point, and I misstepped and fell like a stone, narrowly missing an iron spike set in the ground. Nothing serious.

Hawaii: The Hotel at the Falls, pitch-black, returning from town. The parking area is on a raised plateau adjacent to the rooms, but without any area lights. I step to what I think should be the path and my foot meets nothing but air. Swish (or rather "Yikes!") as my body follows the downward arc and my knees and elbows suffer their by-now usual insult.

Tampa General Hospital: we have just been given a definite diagnosis of Josh's condition. ALS. The group of others have gone in to tell him the terrible news. I have gone to the bathroom and am hurrying to join them when the boom is lowered: my feet get tangled up while I try to manage some swinging doors, and I go flying, land just in front of the nurses' station, and turn down all offers of help (it is, after all, a hospital) and limp on to Josh's room.

Karlsruhe, first day of rehearsal, our second day in town. The rehearsal hall is in an area of specialized buildings, which are mostly dark at night. I am alone, after staying behind to make some notations. There are steps leading up to the hall and when I leave the building, looking ahead to the central plaza, my foot meets the by-now familiar country of air, and I stumble down the four steps and land on my left side and head. Rhonda is waiting for me at the apartment house, doesn't have a key of her own and is getting panicked at my lateness, so I drag myself to her, and not making any reference to my fall, take her to dinner. Later, at home, I do tell her, and she insists I get medical treatment. This consists of waking the theater manager, who drives us to an emergency room, where x-rays and other scans show no damage to my head other than an impressive green bruise.

Once again Karlsruhe: it is one of the last days of rehearsal, and in the theater, I am hopping between the house (audience) and the pit and stage, making corrections and changes. The dancers have dumped their backpacks and coats in the spaces between the rows of seats and there is no central aisle. There are no house lights, either. I go flying over an unseen backpack, breaking my fall with my left hand and breaking a finger with the fall. Again to the ER, this time for a hairline fracture. I get a small cast on the hand, which I wear for the next six weeks, including a lovely trip to Paris.

Closer Calls

We are all survivors, having sidled past the final solution of life more times than we know. Anyone who has traveled by auto for any length of time has dodged the bullet many times. Two of the most egregious times for me were as follows:

The four of us were going to spend August on the Cape. We didn't have a car at that time, so I rented one from Rent-a-Wreck. (Yup, that was the name. As the Germans say *"Nomen ist omen*," "Naming is prediction.") The car was delivered to me on a street corner in Manhattan, and it performed well until the last day. As we left the Cape, we had had a flat and had it replaced at a garage. The proof that the garage hadn't tightened the lug nuts enough came in the form of a shaking as we sped down the Mid-Cape Highway. Finally, the wheel came off the hub, and with it trapped in the wheel well, we slewed across the lanes in our direction and came to rest on the divider, narrowly missing the opposite traffic and gouging a rut in the surface. Deep breath, and reset the tire.

Matt had a swanky convertible, and he and his girl-friend and Bobbie and I were tooling up Highway 1 from Los Angeles, on our way to Monterey. We were in the far left lane when we saw a big truck tire, freed and all on its own, bounding down the road toward us from the opposite lanes, crossing the divider and headed straight for our open-aired vehicle. Our adjacent lane to the right was occupied by a truck, so we had nowhere to go. We huddled all down and protected our heads, and at the last moment the tire bounded over our car and danced gaily down the road behind us. Another deep breath.

The first time I flew from Provincetown to Boston was on Provincetown Airlines, a Mom and Pop (and Pop was usually drunk) airline, with just one plane. I was 18 years old and gaga about my first flight. When we landed after the 20-minute flight over the ocean, the plane suddenly swerved to the right and sped side-ways down the macadam. I thought this was how planes landed, until I looked at the faces of the other four passengers and saw their facial bones showing through the pale grey color of their cheeks. Deep breathing for them; I was still excited by my new experience.

I've already (or will soon) write here about swamping in canoes in Canada and in a storm-tossed Aegean. The only serious car crash was the one that Bobbie had on the Taconic Parkway, (she was alone) which almost did her in (she had to be cut out of her car with the Jaws of Life and helicoptered to the trauma unit at Westchester hospital). She suffered a small stroke while in the hospital and gradually came all the way back to her pre-crash state, even though the doctor said that the brain had a limited capacity to repair itself, which was wrong. (She had the same confusion of pronoun [he for she, you for me, them for us] that Joe Chaiken had had after his stroke). She lost quite a bit of weight and we always referred to this as her crash diet. Because

of this accident and others occurring at intersections of the Parkway and local roads, the State ultimately built overpasses at all these intersection. We called ours the Bobbie Walden Memorial Bridge.

My two Taconic survivals: once with black ice in the winter, losing control, and fighting the car to a standstill against a retaining wall (it [the car] was totaled). Another time, falling asleep at the wheel and drifting up a snowfield, then using a friendly neighbor's phone to call for assistance (before the advent of cell phones). I can imagine that Matt has his own litany of anecdotes about my driving, but I'd rather not hear it.

Funny, but I don't recall any such stories of being a passenger in my father's car. Maybe I've blocked them?

APPENDIX 4

Thoughts on Improvisation[69]

Stanley Walden

Improvisation is no normal activity. It smells of the exotic, the seductively illegal or immoral. It is the life and breath, the mother's milk, of creative artists. In attempting to create something unique (that is, something personal, and by its personality unique), artists must, at a certain point, improvise with their material whether they have arrived at the material through a mystical, irrational process that we call inspiration or through highly rational means. Moreover, a performing artist who is incapable of improvising will sooner or later find himself on the stage with his pants down around his knees, and not be capable of covering his wardrobe malfunction with a moment of inspiration.

Still, has there ever been a child who has not blushed and improvised? In which case, we call it a lie. Each of us knows the feelings that accompany a lie, especially an unprepared lie that has to be improvised in the moment: increased pulse, shortness of breath, faintness and butterflies in the stomach, sweaty hands. In exactly these terms, we could be speaking of love, permitted or forbidden, romantic and chivalric, or lusting and erotic. Obviously, improvisation has something to do with the core of our basic nature.

In music, improvisation has an interesting history. "Naïve" or "folk" music has always contained much room for improvisation because the unadorned and literal repetition of basic material soon wears out its welcome. One of music's basic tasks is to delineate the form and architecture of time through adornment and creativity. Except for those cases where the suspension of time is the goal of the work, as in a trance, whereby the stasis of time through undifferentiated repetitions of a figure is desired—except in these cases, the constant feeling of discovery, whether composed or improvised, is the *raison d'etre* of the music. Renaissance and baroque music, even in the fixed forms that emerged in concert performance, allowed an unusually wide possibility of interpretation. Specialists have only recently acceded to this fact in the performance of this music, thereby rescuing from the dustbins of history many forgotten masterpieces thought to be boring and pedestrian.

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[69] The German-language version of this essay appears in *George Tabori: Improvisationen Über Shakespeares Shylock* (Hanser Verlag, 1979)

However, at the beginning of the so-called classical period (mid-18th century), the figure of the composer emerges with increasing force, not only foreshadowing the cult of personality but also the composer as a creative artist so compelled by his need for personal expression that he is unwilling to allow the performing artist to intrude upon his vision. Beethoven's Razumovsky string quartets may permit wide differences in their interpretation, but they allow for no improvisation. The composer's intentions are paramount, not those of the Rosé Quartet. (However, according to the musicologist Robert Levin, there is some evidence that Mozart expected improvised ornamentation in the repeat sections in his piano sonatas.) One exception to this practice was the cadenza, a virtuosic display allowed for in the concerto, a work for soloist and orchestra. However, even here, the cadenza was often composed or improvised by the composer at the first performance.

I suspect that it was no accident that this development took root, ripened, and came to glorious fruition in Germany, the spine of classical expression that ruled the Western canon for 150 years. A need for control and clarity, a discomfort with ambiguity, a mistrust of freedom and happenstance in art or politics—all are major components of what the rest of the world (and most Germans) would call the *Deutsche Seele*, the German soul. As Wagner said, *deutlich* (clarity) and *Deutsch* are cognate. It was left to the raw revolutionary energy of American black jazz to topple this aging structure. The central, basic element of jazz is not its melodies or rhythms or harmonies, it is the improvisation. The authority-ruled controlled Germans were slow to allow themselves the unbound possibilities of jazz improvisation and indulge in the seductive, confusing, forbidden smoke of half-formed possibility instead of the clearly understandable, clean-scrubbed objects of their own music world. (France and Great Britain reacted much earlier.) But at the end, even the Germans lusted after the American black jazzhound and dared the unknown.

But here we're dealing with a play, not a jazz session. What's the point? We've named the play *Improvisations over Shylock.* Obviously, we're thinking of something that doesn't fit comfortably within this 400-year-old box called *The Merchant of Venice.* We acknowledge that this box, this play, is anything but empty or used-up, that it can still move us, change us, and illuminate our world. Why not, then, dammit, just simply play the play as written? Isn't that enough? I have to admit that a very small, shy voice somewhere to the left of my gall bladder answers "No" even as my loud public voice says "Of course that's enough! What kind of ungrateful boobs do you take us for?" And this thin whisper is the same voice that wants to add notes to Mozart's clarinet concerto or write a fantasy over the Razumovsky quartets. I know, I know. You don't have to yell. And you add, "And why do I have to attend to your private,

spoiled, vainglorious indulgence?" and I reply, "Because I'm one of you, but one who is gifted or damned to react to this, our world, in this manner, like my equally afflicted colleagues: actors, directors, choreographers, etc."

What we've undertaken here are "improvisations over Shakespeare's Shylock. That means that we will use the entire vocabulary of our art and our personalities to investigate, to find out why this 400-year-old play still has power and why it has meaning for us today.

We will use all our technical possibilities, use our control in new ways other than those used when one "plays the play." And we will risk the dangers of boredom, ambiguity, formlessness, and emptiness to occasionally if not continuously come upon those moments of soaring freedom, breathless danger, pure pleasure, and extraordinary insight that one occasionally encounters with the best jazz musicians. That we are performing this exercise in Germany, with its nightmare history *vis-à-vis* the Jew, with its struggle to deal with this particular story in our time, further encourages this approach.

However, that which we offer is not an unconfined reaction to the material but, rather, a carefully considered and even carefully rehearsed result. But then where is this freedom of which I sang? Improvisations have never existed in an unlimited and undifferentiated context of freedom—if, indeed, such a thing is possible. The ground rules of the basis of the improvisation must be agreed upon beforehand. This basis can be the harmonic structure of a song (the chords) or the form (blues) or such hard-to-define elements as texture (the late Miles Davis groups) or energy levels (Cecil Taylor and Sun Ra), but the basic principle of structured freedom remains the same.

Still, why in theater? In the New York theater world of the late Sixties where I worked (naturally, it also happened elsewhere), there was a general tendency to redefine what, in the past, had been called a play, or theater. The same spirit was abroad to redefine everything that had come before, whether music, painting, sexuality, education, etc. One result of all this questioning was that the people whom one earlier had called playwrights, and who regarded themselves as playwrights, sought other possibilities for their expression. Actors and directors began to develop pieces in the same way that choreographers made dances.

What emerged were more like improvisations over the technique of the actor rather than written plays worked out in studio rehearsals. But where could one find the structure of such pieces without the forms of scenes and acts? The answer was in the same area in which dance finds its structure (not its content)—in the music. Like other composers, I was approached by one author after another to share with them my knowledge of musical structure: of theme and variation, of sonata form, of fugue, etc. Painters reacted to the spontaneity of jazz in the form and

gesture of their work, and suddenly music, that art form that is hardest to define as to its content, exerted a new and exciting influence over the other disciplines. After all, who can say definitively what a piece of music is about, except for itself?

Since music began, it has offered a special treasure for the improviser. In this the late 20th century, when the content of the fixed forms of art is exactly as suspect as the vagaries of improvisation once were, music has become more and more the major artistic expression of humankind, which would not surprise any "primitive" peoples.

So here we engage in an enormous, unforgiveable lie, one that will, I hope, through its insistence, lead to the truth in much the same way that a circus poster, which advertises a world of impossible adventure and danger, finally pales against the moment when trapeze artists challenge and overcome death. To win you over, to ask you to give up your mistrust, we will balance on the tightrope without a net, admit to the *chutzpah* of our undertaking, and hope that no one will be injured by our daring.

Stanley Walden
Munich 1978

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APPENDIX 5

Some Observations by an American Acting in the German Theater (1984)

Stanley Walden

I came to my role as Arnold Stern, the murdered Wagnerian opera conductor in George Tabori's *Jubiläum* (Jubilee; Bochum, West Germany, 1983) with many years' experience in the American and the German theater worlds. Yet my experience had been mostly of the "directive" nature, primarily as a composer and musical director. As an actor, I had appeared briefly in two films and in the 1978 Munich *Kammerspiele* production of Tabori's *Shylock Improvisations*.

I was, however, thoroughly familiar with Tabori's rehearsal method, having contributed to its development myself. *Jubiläum* had a four-week rehearsal, short by German standards, average by American. The beginning acting work for *Jubiläum* relied heavily on theater games, a number of which I already knew. Many of the actors of the Bochum Ensemble were new to this kind of work, and their usual method was antithetical to it, but they took to its demands quickly and fearlessly. As is the case with many American actors starting in this style, the confusion between *Schein* (appearance) and *Sein* (reality) was initially great, but generally the work went well. One of the primary goals of the exercises, in addition to the opening up and "quickening" of the actor, is the creation of a community or ensemble, and we achieved that.

But the content of the piece was a problem for me. Although I had worked on a number of plays in Germany dealing with the Nazi period, each time I opened this particular box of horrors, the monsters leapt forth. As a Jew—and in spite of my homogenized, assimilated American upbringing—I suffered from intermittent rage and fear while living and working among Germans. I am also always tempted to present an idealized, laudable portrait of the Jew *vis-a-vis* Nazis and neo-Nazis and therefore struggled with the fact that my character, Arnold Stern, was a less-than-wonderful man, that his imperfections extended to striking out at the weak, although he perceived himself as possessed by a Brechtian "unbearable goodness." I think I was able to create a believable character on the stage, perhaps because the concurrences with my own life and person were not as far removed as I first thought. No wonder Tabori, the sly fox, had invited me to play the role (if not, in fact, written it with me in mind). It wasn't too much of a stretch.

As always in the preparation of a play, the best moments occurred in rehearsal and immediately presented the inherent problem of repeatability. In Tabori's work, *something* is always going on—really going on, in the sense of being created; nothing that has already gone on is being replayed-out, no matter how wonderful it once was. Tabori never demands a repeatable

result; he is after repeating *experience*, the moments that lead to the unique, treasured result. So certain scenes (or, indeed, the entire piece) actually may appear radically different among various given performances. What remains constant is Tabori's text and the accumulated history of the actors in their interaction with that material. Each performance of a Tabori piece is a sum of all preceding performances by that ensemble. Thus, while allowing the actors' individual and collective reality of the specific moment to ventilate the fixed box of the play with the fresh, cool breezes of the mundane, one need never fear a radical change in the overall shape of the evening. In Tabori's eyes, any other acting style denies the humanity and uniqueness of a particular company of actors in a particular place at a particular time.

A German composer once asked me, in shocked tones, "You mean the piece could be different every night?! You could even exchange texts with another actor?!" (In Germany, The Word is king.) I replied that it would be unlikely, but not impossible, for actors to switch roles mid-performance. If they did so, they would deploy a kind of role-reversal, which would then significantly alter the shape of the rest of the evening. A heady prospect, and one I'm not sure I would look forward to. But on second thought . . . . He was still incredulous until I likened the moment of improvisation to a jazz performance, with its plunge into the unknown. Then his eyes flashed in recognition.

I'm not sure all theater could be played like this. For instance, musical theater, with its varied and highly controlled *tempi*, does not allow for this latitude of improvisation. As a composer, I would never encourage this degree of freedom in the performance of my own music, although in many of my theater pieces, and in some of my concert pieces I have allowed for certain degrees of deviation, either of time or of style; indeed, I have sometimes fully encouraged moments of improvisation in the course of a piece.

I also know that in pieces that have enjoyed long lives (vide *Oh! Calcutta!* 14 years as of 1983), I tend to keep my hands completely off unless, after some years, I see the piece and find that the performance violates the basic precepts of the creation of the work. For instance, I rarely drop in on *Oh! Calcutta!* It's always painful to see how the child has grown without doting parents constantly hovering around. If certain elements of the piece are not working or have changed their particulars, what can I say? "Faster and funnier"? "The guitar is too loud at letter G"? Some of the cast members have performed the show almost every day for ten years or more, playing it eight times a week for a constantly changing public. At this point, it's much more their show than it is mine, so I keep quiet and accept my ever-diminishing royalties. If I were to look in one evening and discover that the show had evolved into a fully clothed celebration of the rightist regime in El Salvador, however, I might raise a few mild objections.

This freeing-up, this celebration of the actor by allowing improvisation into the performance, encourages a kind of reality and, I hope, authenticity. So as an actor, on the stage, I laugh when something really amuses me in the moment; conversely, when something truly saddens me, I cry. This is, of course, the opposite of the relationship of *Schein* (appearance) to *Sein* (reality) that I described earlier. In fact, the opportunity for improvisation poses the basic, time-honored existential question an actor has: What is real? What only appears to be real?, which brings to mind the old saw around the theater that the actor should not cry, the audience should. I don't know who formulated that binary equation, that either/or. Some claim it was Brecht, but I *know*, as a result of my experience as actor and audience member, that it is not true: I have moved audiences by my tears, and I have been moved to tears by crying actors.

Certain German critics have called into question the legitimacy or even the morality of presenting an actor genuinely suffering on the stage. They argue that by authentically suffering, as opposed to artfully playing that suffering, the actor has usurped the reactive capacity of the viewer. He interposes himself between the viewer and the material—The Word—and thus has robbed the audience of the opportunity of genuinely suffering on its own. In other words, the critics arbitrarily assign the actor a Christ-like function and then condemn him for fulfilling it. But is authenticity a *desideratum*, or is it something to be avoided at all costs?

In the theater, authenticity manifests social currents more vividly than in music or even in the visual arts because the theater is a direct expression of the tastes and desires of a people. It is no accident that Expressionism found its most fertile soil in Germany, where all direct, unconsidered and/or undiluted emotion is suspect, a manifestation of the twist in the *Deutsche Seele* (German soul) that led to the monstrous eruptions of its recent history: the *brave, dezente Bürger* (goodly, discreet citizen) revealing himself to be the screaming insane beast he is (as are we all). But part of that *brave* façade is the denial of the beast, the primacy of control, and the inadmissibility of raw emotion. Public crying and carrying-on is all right for Jews and Italians; in fact, that's how we recognize them: they assault our senses, they're loud, they smell, they don't dress like us, etc. Small wonder a real Jew crying real tears on the stage of a German *Staatstheater* is cause for concern, suspicion, and condemnation.

In America, the goal of every actor whose work I respect is authenticity, to be true to the concept of the character and the play, as well as to what is happening in the moment on stage. The highly intelligent, brilliantly theoretical *Theaterwissenschaftler* (theater scholars) who, to a large extent, criticize and control what appears on the German stage, would probably consider this goal naïve if not downright subversive. The two critical terms I've heard most often in the German theater world are *sentimental* as a pejorative, a lapse to be avoided at all costs (almost as

bad as *larmoyant* [tearful]), and *brutal* as an encomium, a value to be sought. These may be only the values of an older, worn out, brutalized society that sees all moments of sentimentality as cheap, false, and "Hollywood." Or they are the aesthetic formulation of a small group of theoreticians attempting to stake out a territory of taste, to dictate theater by abstract conceptualization rather than through the flesh-and-blood reality of the actor.

I have seen thrilling theater in Germany, and I can be moved and excited by other acting styles. I can even be moved to tears by performances of *Coppèlia* at the ballet. So I am not a fanatic or exclusive in my tastes. As is true of so many Jews, my catholicity knows no bounds. The critics of *Jubiläum* to whom I refer may have been responding to a poor performance, but I suspect not.

The crucial scene, the one that I think caused the above critical response, is rather long and semi-improvised in its accessories but fully fixed in its content. Arnold is a Jewish musician shot to death by a young neo-Nazi who also drove Mitzi, Arnold's severely handicapped niece, to suicide. In their scene, Arnold and Mitzi document the atrocity whereby 20 children were hanged in a cellar in Hamburg in order to erase the evidence of medical experiments carried out on them by the Nazi doctors.

At the first, and virtually the only, rehearsal of this scene between Ursula Höpfner and myself, an extraordinary thing happened: we left the text, and the play, behind. Although we rendered the text faithfully, our entire histories—mine as an American Jew of Polish-Galician ancestry, and hers as a German woman of the post-War era—became the operative forces in the scene. In no way did we belittle the horror of that recounting nor did it become of secondary importance, merely a means to an end. Rather, the recounting itself became the means by which we—Uschi and Stanley—came to grips with our respective realities.

Everybody present at the rehearsal agreed that *they*, in their own reality, had somehow been involved in the event. One German man even said that in the moment of his *Betroffenheit* (dismay, shock), he was forced to deal with his *lack* of *Betroffenheit* on first reading the scene. Uschi's and my raw, authentic emotion, occasioned by horrors out of his nation's unconscious, led him to confront his innermost assumptions as a German. Tabori decided to leave this scene unrehearsed until the opening.

In the Open Theater in the 1960s and 1970s in New York, we always talked about the *Nachklang*—the resonance—that attended a particular piece or performance; we didn't want our work to stop in its effect with the end of the evening. *Jubiläum,* in West Germany, achieved a far more enduring resonance than anything else I'd done before, and it won the 1983 *Mülheimer Dramatikerpreis* for the best play in the German language.

Another American friend—like me, a Jew living in Germany—saw the Bochum show at my invitation. After the performance, I eagerly sought him out because, from the first performance on, I had been confused (as had all of us) by the absolute silence and lack of applause at the end of the play. Was it a judgment? Was it *Betroffenheit*? If it was, why had the Munich audience—in their *Betroffenheit—*applauded so loudly and warmly for our *Shylock,* which dealt with much the same material?

My American friend explained that up to the Arnold/Mitzi scene, the evening was more or less a play, an object that, had it continued in that direction to its end, could have been applauded as an achievement, an accomplishment of grace by the church of player and viewer. But that evening, something else emerged during the Arnold/Mitzi scene and the performance became, instead, an avenue into the dark reaches of the soul whereby each viewer confronted his or her own particular demons. If this was *Betroffenheit*, then it was the spectators being affected by themselves, an internal result, and not by the performance, so that at the end, the audience literally had nothing to applaud.

An odd choice, this, for my first appearance in a major role. Unique, it proved unrepeatable.

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