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Transcript of a sound recording in MS 608, WLBZ Radio Station Records, Bangor, Maine, 1931-1973

Title: Interview at the Domaine School for Conductors with Pierre Monteux, Joseph Barone, and Students

Date: 1952

Recording number: Tape 19, part 1

Length of recording: 24:08

[Transcript begins]

MINCHER: WLBZ takes pleasure now in presenting a transcribed program made at the Domaine School at Hancock, Maine. This nationally known school for young conductors is operated by Maestro Pierre Monteux, former conductor of the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra, and an interesting internationally known and respected musical authority. A little later on, we'll have a talk with Mr. Monteux, who recently returned from a tour of Europe with the Boston Symphony and its conductor, Mr. Charles Munch.

The school here is attended by young students of serious music from all over the world. You can hear them rehearsing out there now. The only operation of its kind in the world, the Domaine School is the successful carrying out of a fond idea of Mr. Monteux who retired from the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra this year to devote full-time to conducting orchestras all over the world and to operate the school. He has, for many years, been a summer resident of Hancock and started this school here in 1940. The director of the school and assistant to Mr. Monteux, is Dr. Joseph Barone of Philadelphia, where he is a professor of the University of Pennsylvania. He's standing here beside me now, and perhaps we can get some more information about the school. Mr. Barone, how many students are there here this year?

BARONE: There are 50 students here altogether.

MINCHER: Is that about the same every year?

BARONE: Yes, we accept 50 students. That's our quota, as a matter of fact. Every year we have something like 500, or more, students, applicants from all over the world, who want to study with Mr. Monteux, and of course it's our job to single them out, down to about class of 50, which is a good working class to have work here.

MINCHER: Are the students picked with an eye to forming an orchestra to work? I gather that the orchestra here is composed of students, is that right?

BARONE: Yes, entirely of students. No, we don't have an eye out for the orchestra. It just works out that we have pretty good balance every year, but for example, at the beginning of the session this year we had something like six cellos and only two violins. And as things worked out now that all the men

are here, it works out to a fairly good balance, but we consider only the men's abilities and their potentialities for the future for success, you see.

MINCHER: I see. Well you said that about 500 wish to come here each year, is that right?

BARONE: That's right, yes.

MINCHER: And from just about every country in the world?

BARONE: Just about every country in the world, Europe, Italy, France, England, but most from America, of course and we give those boys preference because they're right here, you see.

MINCHER: Umm-hmm. Are there any actual conductors here or are they all students?

BARONE: Well most of the men here are professional conductors. Other heads of music departments at universities and colleges throughout the country, or else have their own civic orchestras or professional orchestras, here or abroad.

MINCHER: How long is the course, if there is such a...

BARONE: Yes, yes, actually one month long from August 1st to August 31st inclusive, each year.

MINCHER: And a person could come back from year to year then, and...

BARONE: As a matter of fact, that's exactly what we do. Some of us have been here for 12 years. This is my 12th session and although I serve as director to the school and helping to do the administrative work, I study each year with Mr. Monteux myself. There's no, there's no way of exhausting Mr. Monteux's wisdom and tremendous repertoire and [offering ... in the symphonic field?] of course.

MINCHER: And of course, different problems come up every year?

BARONE: Each year with the different repertoire that has to be studied.

MINCHER: I suppose that even with the same selections, you would have different problems every year according to the individual conductors.

BARONE: Well, according to the individual problems of the orchestras which, which he has to conduct, you see. All orchestras aren't New York Philharmonic or NBC or San Francisco Symphony, and so that sometimes a civic orchestra has certain problems of its own because of limitations or because of the smaller size, and these problems Mr. Monteux helps us to settle, helps us to figure them out, you see.

MINCHER: Mm-hmm, well, I wonder if I could talk to some of the students here. Clinton Graffam, you were talking about.

BARONE: Yes, he's a new pupil from Maine, just joined us.

MINCHER: From Maine?

GRAFFAM: Portland, Maine.

MINCHER: Is that so? And you, I suppose, area member of the Portland Symphony, is that right?

GRAFFAM: Yes, I'm first oboe, assistant conductor.

MINCHER: Mm-hmm, this is your first year here?

GRAFFAM: Yes, it is.

MINCHER: How do you like it?

GRAFFAM: Fine. Very much.

MINCHER: Anything special that you do like about it?

GRAFFAM: Well, I like the chance to have, watching the other conductors.

MINCHER: Mm-hmm, and what's your ambition when you when you get through here?

GRAFFAM: Well, I'm in school music at the moment, but of course everybody would like to have a fine orchestra to conduct, I see.

MINCHER: Any ideas in mind?

GRAFFAM: Why, no, not necessarily at this point.

MINCHER: Okay, thank you very much, Mr. Graffam. And as Mr. Barone said earlier, the students here come from all over the world, so let's talk to two of them now representing the East and West Coast of the United States. From Boston, from the Boston Symphony, a gentleman named Willis Page. How you doing, Mr. Page?

PAGE: How do you do, sir?

MINCHER: So, what position do you occupy in the Boston Symphony?

PAGE: I play double bass on the first desk of double basses in the Boston Symphony.

MINCHER: Mm-hmm, did you go on the European tour recently?

PAGE: Yes, I did. Had a wonderful trip.

MINCHER: I've heard several things on the air about that, and I guess everybody really enjoyed himself immensely.

PAGE: Well, it was a difficult trip. We had 15 concerts in 21 days. Very successful. Mr. Monteux was associate conductor there, as you know, with the orchestra.

MINCHER: Mm-hmm. Well, one of my questions here is how do you like Maine? Perhaps I should have had that under the gentleman from the San Francisco Symphony, because Maine is so close to Boston. Is that your home, by the way?

PAGE: No, Rochester, New York, was my home.

MINCHER: So I can still say how do you like Maine?

PAGE: Well, naturally I like it very much, especially the scenery here. The coast, the world-famous rockbound coast of Maine, is beautiful. We like it very much here.

MINCHER: That's what we think, too. And what are your future plans, when you get through here?

PAGE: Well, like all of us here we, we hope to conduct sometime. It's our ambition to be conductors. It's difficult, of course, to get positions but we're just anxious to learn as much as we can.

MINCHER: You haven't set your sights on any special orchestra?

PAGE: No particular position. I'm just here to learn as much as I can about conducting.

MINCHER: Is this your first year here?

PAGE: No, this is my fourth year here.

MINCHER: Fourth year?

PAGE: Yes.

MINCHER: And you expect to come back again?

PAGE: Probably. I hope so.

MINCHER: Okay, thank you very much Mr. Page.

PAGE: Thank you.

MINCHER: Now representing the West Coast, the San Francisco Symphony, Mr. Detlev Anders. Is that the correct way to pronounce the first name?

ANDERS: Yes that is correct, exactly.

MINCHER: And do I notice an accent there?

ANDERS: Yes, I do have a slight accent.

MINCHER: Well, where were you from originally?

ANDERS: I was born in Germany.

MINCHER: In Germany?

ANDERS: Yes. I came over when I was four years old, but I have not been able to shake my accent.

MINCHER: That's a long ways, to travel from San Francisco.

ANDERS: It is, yes, we were on the road for 13 days.

MINCHER: Is this your first year here?

ANDERS: It is, yes.

MINCHER: And what especially interesting do you find about the work here?

ANDERS: Well, I find everything interesting. I like the atmosphere, and I feel what I am learning here goes deeper than just conducting.

MINCHER: Well, that's a tough question, I realize, I'm asking it with the other two boys. After you finish here, what do you plan to do, more or less to say ...

ANDERS: I will continue as a member of the symphony in the opera for the time being. As far as conducting is concerned, I'm just a beginner, being my first year here, and I have no plans in that line at all, yet.

MINCHER: You hope to come back, no doubt?

ANDERS: Oh, absolutely.

MINCHER: Everybody seems to.

ANDERS: Yes, sir.

MINCHER: Yhank you very much, Mr. Anders.

ANDERS: Thank you.

MINCHER: And another gentleman from Germany now, Mr. Thomas Baldner, who has been studying at Indiana University, I understand.

BALDNER: That's right, sir, that's right.

MINCHER: How long did you tell me before?

BALDNER: I have been studying at Indiana University for three years.

MINCHER: And your home is now in ... ?

BALDNER: In Connecticut, in Old Greenwich, Connecticut.

MINCHER: Do you plan to go back to Germany?

BALDNER: I don't think so. I will go to Louisiana State University in the fall to teach opera and to conduct opera, coach opera, and possibly get another chance to even conduct a symphony orchestra there.

MINCHER: Mm-hmm. How did you happen to come here?

BALDNER: Oh, I heard about the place from several sources and I applied and I'm very grateful for the chance, that I was accepted in, and can study here for the summer and I certainly think to come back next year.

MINCHER: Well I hope you do, and like the question that I asked all the others, what are your future intentions?

BALDNER: Well as I told you, right now I will go to Louisiana State University in the fall on the staff of the school of music of the school and I will teach opera and coach opera and conduct there.

MINCHER: Well thank you very much, Mr. Baldner. I wish you the best of luck.

BALDNER: Thank you.

MINCHER: Mr. Barone just handed me a note a minute ago with the name of another person here from Holland, Madeleine, is that M-E-N-T-E-N? Menten?

MENTEN: Yes.

MINCHER: And you play flute in the orchestra, the note says?

MENTEN: Yes, I do.

MINCHER: Now I'm on my own. Is that in the orchestra here?

MENTEN: Yes, and in Holland.

MINCHER: Uh, are you the only woman here, by the way?

MENTEN: Well, there's another violinist, but I am the only wind player here.

MINCHER: I see, and your home, your permanent home, is Holland?

MENTEN: Yes, it is.

MINCHER: You're just staying here for the summer and then plan to go back?

MENTEN: Yes, I do.

MINCHER: Well, how do you like our country?

MENTEN: Oh, I love it very much.

MINCHER: Very much different from Holland?

MENTEN: Oh, yes, we are all flat country, and it's hilly and rocky here.

MINCHER: it certainly is. Well, I'd like to ask you, too, what especially you find interesting about the school here, probably will get the same answer everybody thinks the same thing.

MENTEN: Well, the thing I like very much is that all the students come from all over the world and they assemble here and sort of it combines some older music and how you learn a lot here, not only in conducting, because I'm not a conductor, but especially in the orchestra.

MINCHER: Mm-hmm. Are you taking a course in conducting?

MENTEN: No, I'm not taking.

MINCHER: Just in the orchestra?

MENTEN: Yeah.

MINCHER: And what do you intend to do when you leave and go back to Holland?

MENTEN: Well, I will go on studying and try to find myself a job again in orchestra.

MINCHER: Thank you very much, Miss Menten. And other countries represented, I have here Holland, and we just talked to her. Canada also, England, Israel, and of course, France. Which brings us to Maestro Pierre Monteux. How do you do, sir? We've been... (muffled response from Monteux) ... well that's fine.

MONTEUX: As long as I don't work, I always feel good.

MINCHER: Well, that's good. I should try to accomplish that myself. How long, Mr. Monteux, have you been established in Hancock here as a school?

MONTEUX: Oh, twelve years.

MINCHER: Twelve years?

MONTEUX: Yes.

MINCHER: And you had the idea for long before that, is that right?

MONTEUX: Oh, well, I've started that school in Paris 25 years ago.

MINCHER: Twenty-five years ago?

MONTEUX: Or 30 years ago, I don't remember.

MINCHER: And how long have you lived in Maine, quite a few years?

MONTEUX: In Maine, 12 years.

MINCHER: Mm-hmm. Well, one of my questions here, how did the school operate, and I can see that pretty much ...

MONTEUX: Well, listen, I can't tell you how it operates because Mr. Barone is the director of the school. He has all the dirty work to do. No, all I want is to come here and say to the pupil, no it is not that, you should do it that way, but how that operate, I think Mr. Barone is more qualified to say that. I don't know anything about...

MINCHER: Well, is all your instructing work carried on right here with the orchestra, or do we have discussion sessions?

MONTEUX: Well, sometimes, sometimes we have what we call a quiz. You know, some of them come to my house, there, and they can ask me any kind of question, except personal. [Others around them laugh.]

MINCHER: They told me you had a sense of humor and they certainly were right. Well, I understand that you have public concerts here, is that right?

MONTEUX: Yes, we have every Sunday, we have a concert, with orchestra that Mr. Barone conducts. And those concerts, of course the public is paying, and that money goes always to some charity. Last week, it went to the hospital, the new hospital, which is not built yet in Ellsworth. Yesterday it went to the Jackson Laboratory, and some, I don't know exactly where it goes, you know, but it goes always to charity. Now we have some chamber music concert and those chamber music concert, the public also pay and the money goes to the the pupil would take part in those concerts. And we have also on Friday night a sort of concert recital, you know, joint recital, and also what they make in those recitals, that's for them.

MINCHER: Well and the public is of course, is...

MONTEUX: All the public is all very enthusiastic. Sometimes they'll be a full house there, you know, which is something because we have about 500 chairs here and the public is really very faithful.

MINCHER: Well, I know that you just returned a short time ago from that tour of Europe with the Boston Symphony.

MONTEUX: Yes, yes, I did.

MINCHER: Can you tell us something about it, where you went, and so forth?

MONTEUX: Well, we went first to Paris and then I went to Amsterdam and I went to Frankfurt, Berlin and some province in France. We share the concert with Mr. Munch because the tour was already a little tiring, you know, it was, it was very much for Mr. Munch and it was much for me. So we share. The only one who do not share is the member of the orchestra, as I said, you know the horse would

change, but not... no, I mean the conductor change, and there is always the same horses. [More laughter.]

MINCHER: is there anything outstanding about that tour that would you like to remember?

MONTEUX: Well, you know I cannot say that I had a wonderful trip. Save that for other people to say it. It seems that everything went very, very well.

MINCHER: That's good. And how about your plans for the winter and next year?

MONTEUX: Well, my plan, first, I will go to Boston for three weeks in November and December, and then I will come home, here for Christmas to see a little snow, because I'm used to some fancy school where there is no snow for Christmas. And then, I will go to Philadelphia, or so, for three weeks, and after that I will fly to Europe again. I will go to Belgium, to England, to Amsterdam to three cities in Italy, and to Vienna. And I will come back and go to Boston again and the Boston Symphony we'll have a tour of the country, where I will also share concert with Mr. Munch. That's my whole season.

MINCHER: And then next summer, school again here.

MONTEUX: School again. The school is always going to go.

MINCHER: Thank you very much. We go out quite frequently on programs outside like this and I can say truthfully that this is one of the most interesting that I've ever done.

MONTEUX: I'm very proud of that. Thank you.

MINCHER: Thank you, very much. [A few seconds of silence.] I see that the break is about over here now and that today's instruction session is about to resume. Let's see if we can show you how the daily activities run.

[orchestra playing]

MONTEUX: [pausing the group and offering comments occasionally] ... now you take the tempo... Shh... I want to hear some... Take your again... together, together... It's not together... Don't pick on the violins ... Excellent ...

MINCHER: The selection in the group is working on now is Beethoven's Fourth Piano Concerto in G major. The conductor, the student conductor, is Gideon Grau of Israel. He is concert master of the Fort Wayne Indiana Symphony. The pianist is Hubert Doris.

[music in background, with occasional comments by Monteux and the student conductor]

MONTEUX: Don't say it to me. I know it. Say it to him [group laughs]... much too loud when you come to that A flat... not too fast... good... follow, follow him. Listen... No, we need a chance to play that...

MINCHER: It's been our pleasure to take you on a transcribed visit to the Domaine School at Hancock, Maine, a school for young conductors of serious music, initiated and operated by Maestro Pierre

Monteux, former conductor of the San Francisco Symphony. We remind you that public concerts take place here on Wednesday evenings, Friday evenings, and Sunday afternoon. Our thanks for their fine aid and cooperation go to Mr. Monteux, his assistant and director of the Domaine School, Mr. Joseph Barone, and to the many students here. John Libby is our engineer and this is Bill Mincher saying goodbye for now. This program was transcribed. This is the Maine Broadcasting Company.

[Transcript ends]

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