

**Music at MIT Oral History Project**

**Arnold Judson**

*Interviewed*

*by*

**Forrest Larson**

**December 21, 2007**

**Interview no. 1**

**Massachusetts Institute of Technology  
Lewis Music Library**

Transcribed by: University of Connecticut, Center for  
Oral History, Tapescribe, from the audio recording

Transcript Proof Reader: Jonathan Krones  
Transcript Editor: Forrest Larson

©2008 Massachusetts Institute of Technology  
Lewis Music Library, Cambridge, MA

## Table of Contents

1. Professional Background (00:18—CD1 00:18) .....	1
<i>Douglas McGregor—U.S. Rubber—consulting—Executive Service Corps</i>	
2. Family and early life (19:38—CD1 19:38) .....	5
<i>Parents—Yiddish culture—early piano lessons</i>	
3. Music and piano studies before MIT (32:32—CD1 32:32) .....	8
<i>Heinrich Gebhard—David Stone—Willi Apel—public performances</i>	
4. Acceptance to MIT (51:55—CD1 51:55).....	13
<i>Chemical engineering—MIT during WWII—commuting—extracurriculars</i>	
5. Music at MIT (1:04:11—CD2 00:00) .....	16
<i>Tony de Almeida—Glee Club—Klaus Liepmann—George Dunham</i>	
6. The MIT Tech Show and studies with Walter Piston (1:30:03—CD2 25:53) .....	26
<i>“A Liberal Life”—MIT Music Library—“Frere Jacques”—Walter Piston</i>	

### **Note on timing notations:**

Recording of this interview can be found either as one continuous file or as split up over two audio CDs. Timings are designated in chapter headings in both formats, with the timing on the full file preceding the timing on the CD version.

## Contributors

**Arnold Judson** (b. 1927) received two degrees from MIT, a B.S. Chemical Engineering in 1947, and a M.S. Organizational Behavior in 1948. He played the Beethoven Piano Concerto no.1 with the MIT Symphony Orchestra in 1947 (This was the first MITSO concert conducted by Klaus Liepmann, the first professor of music at MIT). He was accompanist for the MIT Glee Club and played timpani in MITSO. Mr. Judson wrote the music for the 1947 MIT Tech Show *A Liberal Life*, and later studied composition with Walter Piston. He has written incidental music for theatrical productions, as well as piano, vocal and orchestral music. Mr. Judson continues to play piano and give occasional recitals. He has had a successful career in business management and consulting and is the author of four books in the field.

**Forrest Larson**, Library Assistant at the Lewis Music Library, has attended training workshops in oral history methodology and practice at Simmons College and by the Society of American Archivists, and is a member of the Oral History Association. He is also an active composer and violist.

Interview conducted by Forrest Larson on December 21, 2007 in the MIT Lewis Music Library. Duration of the audio recording is 1:50:16. First of two interviews. Second interview: April 25, 2008.

## Music at MIT Oral History Project

The Lewis Music Library's *Music at MIT Oral History Project* was established in 1999 to document the history of music at MIT. For over 100 years, music has been a vibrant part of the culture at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. This history covers a wide variety of genres, including orchestral, chamber, and choral musical groups, as well as jazz, musical theater, popular and world music. Establishment of a formal music program in 1947 met the growing needs for professional leadership in many of the performing groups. Shortly thereafter, an academic course curriculum within the Division of Humanities was created. Over the years, the music faculty and alumni have included many distinguished performers, composers and scholars.

Through in-depth recorded audio interviews with current and retired MIT music faculty, staff, former students, and visiting artists, the Music at MIT Oral History Project is preserving this valuable legacy for the historical record. These individuals provide a wealth of information about MIT. Furthermore, their professional lives and activities are often historically important to the world at large. Audio recordings of all interviews are available in the MIT Lewis Music Library.

## 1. Professional background (00:18—CD1 00:18)

FORREST LARSON: It's my honor and privilege to have Arnold Judson for an interview today. He has a bachelor's degree from MI—

ARNOLD JUDSON: No, mast[ers]—

FL: Pardon?

AJ: A master's.

FL: You also have a bachelor's degree, though, right?

AJ: Yeah, bachelor's, yeah. I'm sorry.

FL: Yeah, you have a bachelor's degree in chemical engineering from MIT in 1947, and a master's degree from MIT in organizational behavior in 1948. You're also a pianist and composer. The main purpose of this interview is to talk about your life in music while at MIT and beyond. But before we get into that, can you briefly summarize your professional career in business management? [pause] Yeah.

AJ: Well, actually, it really started with my graduate studies at MIT. I changed what I thought I was going to do when I went to graduate school, because it was a major shift from chemical engineering into a new field, which at that time even did not have its title yet. It was called—the program was an experimental program, lodged for convenience in Course XIV, which was the Economics Department at the time. But there were only about a dozen of us in this graduate program started by Douglas McGregor, who wanted to integrate the social and behavioral sciences with industrial relations. And at that time it had no title; it was called—the program was officially labeled Economics and Engineering, but it had nothing to do with either.

And what attracted me to this program was that I had had McGregor as an undergraduate psychology professor, and he was wonderful! And I heard that—when I came back to MIT from a year of meditation in the Navy between my junior and senior years, I realized when I came back that I really didn't want to be an engineer after all. And I had heard McGregor was starting this new program, and several other people involved in the program were people that I also had had some undergraduate contact with, in extra, sort of humanities and other related courses. And that attracted me to this program, although I didn't really know what I was getting into.

But once I did get into it, it was obvious that this is really what I wanted to do. And so, when I completed the master's degree, the—it wasn't at all clear what application one could pursue in business at the time, and it struck me that maybe the field of human resources, or personnel, as it was called then, was kind of a ripe field, because it was not professional. It was usually staffed by people who had tried their hand at other managerial functions in organizations and had failed, and then they were put into the personnel department. So, that seemed like an underdeveloped field. And I discussed this with McGregor, and he agreed that this was a ripe area.

And he gave me some very good advice which I followed, and that was that if I wanted to get into this field, I shouldn't go directly into it, but I should spend a couple of years getting some experience as a line manager, to find out what life is

really like at the lower levels in organizations. And I applied and was accepted for a program, a training program, at U.S. Rubber Company in Providence [RI], which led me to a position as a production foreman in the golf ball department, which was a very funny kind of situation.

FL: [laughs] That would have been 1949, probably?

AJ: Forty-eight.

FL: Forty-eight, yeah.

AJ: It was the summer of '48. And that was very convenient because I had just gotten married, or I was about to get married, and my wife was at that time at Brown University in Providence; that seemed to fit nicely. So I spent two years with U.S. Rubber Company as a production foreman, and when I was promoted to general foreman I decided it was time to move on. And I really felt very strongly that this advice from McGregor was really first class.

And so I then, through the MIT Placement Office, heard about a position at Polaroid Corporation, which at that time was a small company of about three hundred and eighty people; they had shrunk from their wartime activities, and had not—they were just—had just brought out the camera, the picture in a minute camera, in 1948, and were poised for major growth. And they had not a personnel function at the time, and they asked me if I would be interested in setting one up, which was an absolutely perfect situation for someone young and inexperienced, but filled with lots of ideas, and so on. So, it was a terrific experience.

And my boss at that time was the vice president of operations, who was a former executive of General Electric, which at—in the—at that point was a leading company in managerial professionalism. They had invested a lot of money in training people, and so on. And Dave Skinner, who was also an MIT alum, was kind of my mentor in the early days at Polaroid. And I ended up spending twelve years at Polaroid. The first five was setting up and running the personnel function, and then I got kind of bored, because the rapid growth kind of forced most of the attention, or resources, be put on hiring: selection and placement. After you've done that for several years, it became a little mind-numbing. So I decided to go back into manufacturing management, and I was selected to run the first coating plant in Waltham [MA], which was a new facility for Polaroid. And I did that for a couple of years.

And then I was approached to set up a corporate training and development function, which was non-existent, had been non-existent, and something that I had been very vocal about advocating for. And I said I would do that, provided it was not part of the personnel function. So I was allowed to do this independent of the personnel function, and I had a ball, because I positioned this new function as kind of an internal consulting operation, which gave me a lot of latitude and a lot of freedom in applying innovative ideas, all of which were supported very much by the management group at Polaroid. So it was twelve very happy years.

And I got very intrigued with consulting through this experience, and I set up a little part-time consulting operation on weekends and evenings with a colleague at

Polaroid, and that made my interest in consulting even more strong. And my wife and I used to read the *New York Times* Sundays, and were very taken with the Travel Section. My income was not sufficient to support a lot of travel at that time, particularly with a growing family, and we thought that maybe a good idea would be to live abroad for a while. And I saw, one Sunday, an ad for a New York consulting firm that was just setting up operations in the U.K. And I applied for that, and six months later was selected to be, I think, the second or third employee of this office, the Emerson Consultants.

The Emerson Consultants is one of the oldest consulting firms in the U.S. Emerson, Harrington Emerson, was a colleague of Frederick Taylor, who's sort of infamous in terms of applying industrial engineering—applying those ideas very vigorously. And the Emerson Consultants were really following in that pursuit—mode, except the guy who was running the U.K. operation was a deviant from the typical Emerson Consulting operation. And he was—his background was cultural anthropology, and he had just achieved a real breakthrough in Britain, at the—in a very innovative union-management collaborative project at the Folly Refinery of Esso Petroleum Company. And that had gotten big publicity in Britain, and on the strength of that, Emerson decided to build an operation in the U.K. And so he was put in charge of that, and he was the one that was recruiting for it.

And what attracted me [laughs]—the ad was a very unusual ad, in that it talked not only about professional qualifications, but cultural interests, and it made a big play for a very diversified, a person with very diversified interests, particularly in the cultural area. I learned later that some fifteen hundred people applied for this position, and that's why it took six months to—between the time I responded and the time I was hired. And we sold our house in Concord [MA], and moved our family to London, where we spent the next four years.

And this was the first really full-time professional involvement in consulting, and I found that I really loved it. And that was really the beginning of the rest of my career. Initially, the focus was on helping organiza—large organizations improve productivity through innovative approaches, particularly involving union-management collaboration. And I led a very successful follow-on project also with Esso, but in a totally different area, and that was distribution. And that, too, got a lot of publicity, and was very successful, and several other projects followed that.

But after four years, we decided that we really felt we were getting out of touch with what was going on in the U.S. This was driven home to me when I discovered that I understood the cartoons in *Punch*, and I didn't understand the cartoons in the *New Yorker*, which I continued subscribing to. And that was a very sobering epiphany. So we decided to come back to the U.S., and I was—I applied for and was given a position as a senior consultant with Arthur D. Little [Editor's note: business consulting firm], in Cambridge [MA]. And I spent ten years there.

The first five was following pretty much in the same kind of consulting that I was doing with Emerson in the U.K., but with U.S. companies, mostly large, and several of them international organizations. And then, I got very interested in a new area which was just developing, and that was strategic planning, and Arthur D. Little

did not have a professional practice in that. And two other colleagues of mine from Emerson had followed me to Arthur D. Little, and the three of us collaboratively developed Arthur D. Little's practice in strategic planning, except that what we were doing differed from our competitors in that we were much more focused on the hard part, which was actually implementing the plan.

But implementing the plan meant that you needed to consider yourself—concern yourself with that right from the very beginning of plan formulation. And so our approach differed from our competitors in that we tended to do it with large groups of key managers at different levels in the organization, not just the top people, but those people—involving those people who would be crucial to successful implementation as well. So typically we worked with groups of anywhere from twenty to thirty-five, and we developed a whole process which was very participatory, and focused on trying to build understanding and commitment to the plan, as well as a quality plan.

And that really kind of formed the basis of the rest of my career. And after ten years at Arthur D. Little, my most crucial colleague and I decided we should leave Arthur D. Little, and do this on our own. And so we set up our own shop in Boston, and had two other, younger guys join us at—from Arthur D. Little.

FL: What's the name of that organization?

AJ: That was the Berwick Group, and that operated for about five years. But we've had problems with our two younger colleagues, because there was generational differences in terms of priorities of interest—not professionally, but personal. And they were sort of—it became pretty clear that these were irreconcilable differences, and so my senior colleague and myself—my senior colleague was also a product of the same graduate program that I was in—he was in it a little bit after me. His name was Dan Gray, and he also was an MIT alum, in graduate school. And so we formed Gray, Judson, and that became Gray, Judson, Howard when we added another senior colleague a little later on.

And that—we were really quite successful, grew to about fifteen professionals, and operated until the early nineties, when Dan retired and I decided to retire shortly after that. But I continued kind of solo consulting for several years after that. I really didn't stop working with clients until the early 2000's. And I—but I've continued, on a voluntary basis, with the Executive Service Corps, working with non-profit organizations, and I'm still doing that, but at a pretty modest level of intensity.

FL: Your website mentioned that you had worked for some performing arts organizations.

AJ: Yes. This is with the Executive Service Corps, particularly.

FL: Yeah, so which groups have you worked with?

AJ: Well, let's see. I've worked with a dance company, and I worked with the Strand—

FL: Which dance company was that?

AJ: Oh, god! I think they've since folded, but I don't remember the name of it. That was several years ago. A theater, the Coyote Theater, I worked with. And I worked with the Strand Theater. They're officially called the Elizabeth McCormick something or



other. Also, a performing arts organization that's kind of a producing organization in Natick [MA], called the Center for the Arts in Natick. And also, let's see, who else? Yeah, those are the major arts organizations. Also, a museum in Beverly [MA], the Beverly Historical Society Museum.

FL: The Strand Theater—where are they based? I'm not familiar with it.

AJ: They're in Upham's Corner, in Boston.

FL: Uh-huh, okay.

AJ: And they're also a producing organization. I mean, the city gave the Elizabeth McCormick whatever the rights to use the Strand Theater for, like, a dollar a year kind of thing. And then, that was the venue, and they filled it with a very wide range of activities.

## **2. Family and early life (19:38—CD1 19:38)**

FL: So, we're kind of going back in time a little bit. Can you—just some basic biographical questions. What year were you born, and where were you born?

AJ: Yeah, in 1927, in Brockton, Massachusetts, on the day that Lindbergh landed in Paris! [laughs]

FL: Tell me your parents' names, and their professions, and interests that they had?

AJ: Yeah, my father was Moses Judson, and he was a superintendent of a shoe parts company that made rands and inner soles, and various pieces that went into shoes. Brockton, historically, was a center for high-priced men's shoes, and there were a lot of sort of supplying—suppliers that grew up as manufacturers in the area as well. And this was a smallish company of about—I think they employed about two hundred and fifty or so people, called Caroline Becker. And the founders of this company were relatives of my mother's, and they employed my father to run the shop.

FL: And your mother's name and—?

AJ: Her name was Fannie Becker, a maiden name Becker. And she did not work; she was a housewife.

FL: That's a noble profession! [laughs]

AJ: Yes, yes, right.

FL: It's often forgotten! Did they have interests in music?

AJ: Yeah, my father did. He came from a fairly large family, and—I think there were five brothers and three sisters. And the eldest bro—my father was the second oldest, and his older brother Solomon Judson was the music and art critic for the *New York Morning Journal*, which was one of three Yiddish papers in New York City. And he was the first of the family to come to the States, a little, I think about 1899, or something of that order. And he was a writer, initially, and the newspaper sort of

moved him into a variety of positions, but one of them was music and art critic, and he sort of continued to be that.

FL: Was he musical at all? Did he sing or play an instrument or anything?

AJ: No, but he was very interested in music.

FL: Yeah.

AJ: And he had an extensive record collection. He lived in Flushing, Long Island [NY], and we used to visit there quite a lot. So he sort of adopted me as his favorite nephew. He did not have any children of his own, and so I have memories of listening to records at his place in Flushing at very early ages.

FL: So what were some of his interests musically, in his record collection? Was it lots of things?

AJ: Yeah, it was lots of things, but it was a lot of opera. And I also had an aunt, not—by marriage—who lived in the same three-decker that we lived in, in Brockton, in my early years, and she also was a big opera enthusiast. And so I got exposed to that at an early age. But I think my mother's interests were more in the theater, and she was an amateur actress and she appeared in local productions of Yiddish plays in Brockton, at the Y.M.H.A. And my father liked to listen to music on the radio.

We did not have a record collection when I was a ki—young, but what happened: we had a—on this three-decker, it had a big porch, and there was a swing that my father, who was a cabinetmaker on the side—actually, he was a professional cabinetmaker before he went into this shoe plant. And he built a swing for me on the porch. This is in, we're talking like, I was two to three years old. And I used to spend a lot of time in this swing, and I used to sing a lot. And I made up songs. So it was this that attracted my family's attention to my musical capabilities at a very early age, and when I was five they connected me with a piano teacher in Brockton, who turned out—who was very good, it turned out.

FL: And who—what teacher was that?

AJ: Pardon me?

FL: What was the name of the teacher?

AJ: Yeah, Oppenheim.

FL: Uh-huh.

AJ: Ruth Oppenheim. And so she was my first piano teacher for, until I was about eight, I gue—no, I think even longer than that—nine or ten. So, it was about five or six years. She was a very good teacher for a beginner, and so I thrived. And I sort of immersed myself in the piano, right from the beginning, because my parents were—our—the household that we lived in was not a very happy one. My—it was an arranged marriage. It was my father's second marriage; his first wife died in the influenza epidemic after World War One. And the second marriage came about seven or eight years after that.

And my mother was brought over from Poland by her family—it was her brother that owned—was one of two—the two owners of this shoe factory that

employed my father. My father originally lived in New York, and then he—when he was married he lived on a farm in Connecticut with the relatives of his first wife. And when my mother was brought over by her brother, who by that time was already successful as a manufacturer, this was all done with the idea of getting her connected with my father.

And temperamentally, they were very different. My father was a very withdrawn, kind of silent man, and I always felt that he was very different from the rest of his brothers and sisters in his family, who were all very successful, very outgoing, and my father was not. And matter of fact, the family referred to him as “Poor Mo.” And he was extremely intelligent, and very capable, but his personality sort of undermined him, and was not able to really capitalize on that. My mother, on the other hand, was a very outgoing person, sort of the life of the party, *joie de vivre* kind of woman, and the marriage was not a happy one, because there was really—my father was extremely conscientious, diligent, and supportive to my mother, but there wasn’t a good emotional connection.

Furthermore, the household also contained my mother’s father and mother, who were very old-school European. My grandfather—maternal grandfather was a pillar of the synagogue, Orthodox synagogue, and a real sort of autocratic patriarch kind of person. And so, I’d soon discover that music was a wonderful solution for me, because I could immerse myself in piano, get a lot of praise for doing so, and it gave me an excuse to have minimal contact with my—the rest of my family. [laughs] So I used to practice a lot, you know, like several hours a day. That was—nobody had to really bug me to practice!

FL: [laughs]

AJ: It was a ready-made solution.

FL: Were there opportunities to go to concerts, and stuff like that?

AJ: Well, no, this is the odd thing. Yeah, somewhat. The only concerts I remember going to as a kid were sort of community—the Community Concert Series? I don’t know whether you’re familiar with that. But this was a, kind of a—I don’t know what the right word is, but it was something that went on in small cities around the country, and it was a system of organizing enough support to attract [clears throat] major performers.

FL: Was this a federal program, possibly?

AJ: No, I don’t think so.

FL: So it was maybe a private, philanthropic organization?

AJ: Yeah, I think so, yeah. I’m not sure. But anyway, it was not unique to Brockton. Brockton at that time was about seventy thousand people, and so, you know, it was a sizeable town, sizeable city. And I remember going, you know, to hearing Artur Rubinstein. You know, I mean, they attracted, were able to attract first-rate people.

FL: Right.

- AJ: And those were pretty much—but they tended to be individual recitalists, as opposed to symphony orchestras. No symphony orchestras, and not—rarely chamber music, too. It was mostly individual performers: vocalists and instrumentalists.
- FL: So was it not until you got to MIT that you heard the Boston Symphony? Or did you—?
- AJ: Well, I got taken to the Boston Symphony by—well, we weren't very well-off, that was the other thing. I mean, we had really very, I would say, sort of, middle to lower-middle class income. And so, money was a major constraint, and, but we did have a number of much more well-to-do friends, and I got sort of taken up by one of them, and they used to take me to Symphony on occasion.
- FL: Did you get to any opera performances then?
- AJ: No, I wasn't—even though I was exposed to opera early, I was never that taken with opera.
- FL: What about musical theater?
- AJ: That came later, yeah.
- FL: Uh-huh.
- AJ: I mean, that really—that wasn't until I was at MIT that I got into that.

### **3. Music before MIT (32:32—CD1 32:32)**

- FL: Okay. So you mentioned your first piano teacher, Ruth Oppenheim. And there's three others: somebody named Heinrich—
- AJ: Gebhard.
- FL: Gebhard?
- AJ: Yes, now that was—I reached a point with Ruth that she felt I really should be, you know, moving on to somebody more appropriate than she was. And Gebhard was a famous teacher in Boston, kind of a celebrity-type. And so I got connected with him; he was, you know, happy to take me on, but he was a rotten teacher, I thought, because he really didn't do much for me. He was—he sort of pretty much let me do my thing, and I didn't feel I got much from him. He was the kind of person who people used to like to brag that they studied with him, but I don't know why.
- FL: Did he have a performing career as well? Is that what his reputation was?
- AJ: I don't know, I really don't know. I was only with him for like a year and a half or two years. And then, the third teacher, David Stone, who was in Brockton, was a really fine teacher, and he had studied at Curtis [The Curtis Institute of Music] and Juilliard [School], and with Rosina Lhévinne, and he was a very good pianist and very good teacher—wonderful teacher. And so, I thought that was a really good move, to get involved with him.

And then he, it was through my involvement with him that I met my wife, because she also studied with him. And I first saw her at a recital when I was fourteen and she was twelve, and I was really taken with her, because I thought of all the other students, she was—showed a lot of ability.

FL: And your wife's name is June, right?

AJ: Yeah. And so, I was smitten at an early age, but I was totally hopeless, socially. And [laughs] was unable to follow up with this until my senior year at MIT, I'll—we'll get to that later. But anyway, and then when—after several years studying with David Stone, he took a position with Curtis as a professor—no, no, no—Temple University. And so he left Brockton, and that's when I got hooked up with Willi Apel.

FL: Can we back up just a little bit? Some more questions about David Stone. What was he like as a pianist? Did he give recitals that you heard?

AJ: No, no, but he was a wonderful teacher!

FL: What were some of his, kind of, repertoire and expertise? You know, what kinds of repertoire did he emphasize? Or did he have any particular composers that he particularly liked, that he taught students?

AJ: Well, it was very, pretty much the standard, you know, eighteenth and nineteenth century. No, I think the most contemporary was [Claude] Debussy. [laughs]

FL: Mm-hm.

AJ: But, it was very solid, in terms of, you know—he was very well-versed—seemed to me, anyway, very well-versed in the classical galaxy.

FL: Are there any things that he taught you that stay with you today that you consciously think about?

AJ: No, not really.

FL: Not really, yeah.

AJ: But then, my musical education was kind of weird, because it was very focused on the piano. And although I was very excited when I went to Boston Symphony and heard other people play, my exposure to music on a, you know, broad level, was very limited. It was mostly piano music, and not a very wide—I never really listened to or—a lot of different stuff. I was very, sort of, immersed in things that I was studying, but I didn't listen to a lot of other music. It was kind of weird. And that all changed when I came here, to MIT.

FL: Wow. So I have some more. So tell me about your studies with Willi Apel.

AJ: Oh, yeah, well he was—he came in when David left. And David sort of brought him in to Brockton. Willi was at that time, I think, hard up for money, and so he was eager to supplement his income! [laughs]

FL: Was he teaching at Harvard at the time?

AJ: Yeah!

FL: Yeah, uh-huh.

AJ: And, but you know, Harvard never had much respect for practicing artists. They were into scholars, you know, but the people who actually did it were really given not—I was very shocked when I first visited [Walter] Piston in his office. His office was tucked under the stairwell at Paine Hall, and it was really grotty! [laughs]

FL: This was Walter Piston, the composer?

AJ: Yeah, yeah, right.

FL: Right. So—

AJ: So anyway, Willi was, I think, very—he—his influence was important, because he sort of got me to think just beyond the performing, playing-performing bit. He sort of urged me to study harmony, and study counterpoint, and that kind of thing, which I did. This is all—I was still very—I’m a kid, you know. This was all before I was sixteen, we’re talking about here. And my wife also studied with him, and he sort of supported my notion about her, when he said she was the only other student of his that he had any use for! [laughs]

FL: [laughs]

AJ: But, he did sort of broaden my horizons a lot by sort of emphasizing that I needed to understand more about the music. It was all—so much of what I did in the early days was pretty much instinctual. You know, it wasn’t—it wasn’t through formal study of structure and that kind of stuff that I did what I did when I was performing. And I started performing publicly a lot when I was pretty young. I think—

FL: You had a recital in 1942?

AJ: Yeah, right. But I mean, before that I performed at, you know, for the local Lion’s Club—you know, that kind of thing, and short, not major programs, but little bits and pieces at various community organizational events. And I think I started doing that when I was around like eleven or twelve. And I was very ambivalent about performing. I didn’t really pursue it, particularly. I mean, it was all, they sort of put the heat on me to do it, and I wasn’t overly eager to respond. But on the other hand, I enjoyed the attention and the notoriety, if you will.

FL: So what were some of the pieces at that young age that you were playing, at those events?

AJ: Well, I have the program for—that I did on my formal recital.

FL: Uh-huh, but before that, like playing for the Lion’s Club? What kind of pieces were you doing for those things?

AJ: Oh, well, let’s see. They were usually fairly short things: [Felix] Mendelssohn’s *Songs without Words*, you know, those kinds, several of those kinds of things. *Children’s Corner* suite, Debussy—you know, bits of it, not the whole thing.

FL: Right.

AJ: [pause] Nothing—light—fairly light stuff. And it wasn’t until I gave my formal recital that I sort of branched—got more serious in terms of what I performed publicly. But in high school I got very involved with music there, and Brockton High School was a very excellent public high school in those days. And they had a terrific

music director named George Sawyer Dunham who directed the Glee Club, and he was then hired at MIT during the war years. And he had just come to MIT when I came here, so that was a natural.

FL: My goodness!

AJ: [laughs]

FL: I'd wondered about him, yeah. Back tracking just a bit, with Willi Apel, what were some of the bigger pieces that you studied with him?

AJ: I really don't remember. You know, Beethoven Sonatas, that kind of thing.

FL: Uh-huh.

AJ: He was major on Beethoven, and Beethoven was certainly somebody that I loved playing from an early age onward, and still do, so I guess—he was a student of [Artur] Schnabel's.

FL: Oh, wow!

AJ: Yeah, so, not surprising that that should be a major focus.

FL: Did he introduce you to any baroque literature, any kind of earlier stuff, given the fact he was also a musicologist?

AJ: No, not really, no.

FL: Not really?

AJ: I think Beethoven was—Mozart and Beethoven, probably, were the two major things, with some Haydn.

FL: Any contemporary repertoire with him?

AJ: No, no, the contemporary stuff didn't happen until later on.

FL: Mm-hm. Were you aware much of what was going on with current contemporary classical music at the time?

AJ: Not before I came to MIT.

FL: Not before you came to MIT.

AJ: No.

FL: Had you started composing at all?

AJ: Yes, yes. That started I guess when I was around eleven or twelve. Oh, one of the major—well, I should tell you the major story about my wife connection. When I was eleven, my parents wanted to get me a better piano. We had an upright piano, which was okay, but they wanted to get me something better. And that was—we answered an ad in the *Brockton Enterprise*, and we saw this piano, which I absolutely wanted, died for! It was a seven and a half foot Mason and Hamlin, and it was an absolutely gorgeous piano, but it was too expensive, and too big, and we had to pass it up. And my parents bought me a—it was a baby grand of indeterminate make [laughs]. But it was better than the one I had. So this is when I was eleven. And the

guy who was selling it was going blind, and he wanted to vet who the prospective buyer; he didn't want to sell it to just anybody.

So the first date that I had with my wife, we had—our paths crossed because her mother took her to some concerts that I gave, and was rumored to have said, “That’s the kind of guy I would like as a son-in-law.” This is an apocryphal story! [laughs] This is before I was sixteen. And then when I came to MIT, she was at Cushing Academy in Ashburnham [Massachusetts], and so on vacations she would come home by public transportation, often, and I bumped into her several times on the tube, because I commuted to MIT for the first three years. And I used to bump into her occasionally.

And anyway, we didn't really start dating seriously until I was a senior, and what happened there was I was general manager of *The Tech*, and one of the guys who was working for me on *The Tech* was dating a girl from Pembroke, Brown, who was in the same dorm as my wife. And I had lined up this Radcliff girl that I was dating for the Senior Prom, and she ditched me about two weeks before the Senior Prom, and I was desperate to get somebody to come with me. And it just so happened that this guy, Bob Kingston—I can remember his name—mentioned to me, “Oh,” I said—he said one day, just out of nowhere, in *The Tech* office, that, “I bring you regards from June Brenner, who is at Brown.” So I said, “Gee, well, why don't I ask her?” And much to my amazement, she accepted!

So she came with me to the Senior Prom, and they had parietal rules in those days, you know. You had to get approval to—you couldn't come back to the dorm after eleven. So it was too late for her to go back to Providence, and so—and she lived in Easton [MA], which was eight miles from Brockton. So I brought her home, and walked into her—for the first time—into her parents' big house. Her father's a doctor, and he had his offices in the house. And we walked in this living room, and there was the piano, that I had—that Mason and Hamlin that I couldn't buy when I was eleven years old! [laughs] So, I couldn't believe this! And she said, “Oh, would you like to play it?”

So, at midnight, I rattled off a few things. And her parents' bedroom was just over the piano, on the second floor. And so after I left, she walked into her parents' room, and she said, “Did you hear? That was Arnold Judson playing the piano.” And her father said, “How the hell do you think I could have not heard it?” [laughs] And that was the beginning!

FL: [laughs] Oh, wow! When you were in high school, did you sing in the chorus or anything like that?

AJ: No. Well, I was accompanist to the Glee Club, and I also, I think, accompanied—I don't remember whether I was in the Gilbert—they had a Gilbert and Sullivan Society, and I was involved with them. I think sometimes I played, I did the orchestra on the piano bit, or I think I was in the chorus, too. And so, I was heavily involved with George Dunham through the chorus, because they had a good chorus and did some good stuff at—in Brockton.

FL: Mm-hm. Were there other musical theater shows in high school that you were involved with at all?



AJ: No, just the Gilbert and Sullivan stuff.

FL: Uh-huh, uh-huh. Were you aware much of what was going on in the musical theater, you know, Broadway and stuff like that?

AJ: Not in those days, no.

FL: Yeah. Were there other instruments that you played?

AJ: No.

FL: I know at MIT you played timpani in the orchestra.

AJ: Yeah.

FL: Did you pick that up in high school?

AJ: No, no I just, I faked it! [laughs] It was just an excuse to get into the orchestra.

FL: Mm-hm. There've been other MIT timpanists who've done the same thing, so.

AJ: Yeah, yeah.

FL: [laughs] Did you play any chamber music, or play with other instrumentalists, you know, accompany violinists or singers in high school? Did you do any of that kind of thing?

AJ: I don't recall doing that, but I did later on. But I—not in high school

FL: Not in high school. Did you play any ragtime or jazz in high school, anything like that?

AJ: No. No, that I got interested in later on. Oh, the other, one really big publicity-type thing that I did in high school was I accompanied a production of *Ballad for Americans*. I don't know if you remember that or not.

FL: No.

AJ: Oh, this was a piece that was written, you know, during the early days of the war. It was very patriotic, by John La Touch, and Earl some—Robinson. And it was for baritone, chorus, and orchestra, and I did the orchestra part on the piano. And it was a fairly virtuoso-type thing. And I did that with the Brockton choral group, and that was performed—and it was a fairly long piece, and it was the kind of thing that was staged as an event. And because of the patriotic fervor at the time, it went over big.

FL: Mm-hm.

AJ: And so I got a write-up about that.

#### **4. Acceptance to MIT (51:55—CD1 51:55)**

FL: So before you came to MIT, what were your interests in engineering and science?

AJ: Well, I was very taken with chemistry, high school chemistry. I always did very well; I was an all-A student. You know, this is no big news as far as anybody who comes to MIT. But, I had no problems in terms of getting those kinds of grades with minimal

effort, and so I had plenty of time to spend on extracurricular stuff. And—sorry, what was the question again?

FL: Your engineering and science interests.

AJ: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. So, I always did very well; math came very easily to me. And the first—and I had skipped a couple of, you know, much earlier, I had skipped second grade. No, sorry—yeah, I sort of was, yeah, I sort of skipped second grade, and I skipped sixth grade, and so I was much younger than everybody else. So, I was just barely sixteen when I came to MIT. [laughs] And so the first real science course I took was chemistry, and I was very taken—this was my junior year in high school. I was very taken with that, and I set up a little lab in our cellar at home. And I had an arrangement with my chemistry professor, who was very supportive, and he used to give me unknowns to analyze and bring back the answers to him.

So I spent a lot of time, you know, sort of extracurricular stuff, with chemistry. But that was really about the only—oh, and the other thing I was very intrigued with was airplanes, and I used to build model airplanes and fly them. And I thought I wanted to be an aeronautical engineer; that's what I registered initially as when I came to MIT. In my sophomore year—the first year is, you know, standard for everybody, so there was no opportunity to discover this, but when I started taking some of the required courses for aeronautical engineering, like strength of materials, I hated it. It absolutely turned me off! Because they were so regimented and formularized, it didn't seem to require much creative imagination at all, so I switched. And when I came to MIT, we were on a wartime footing—

FL: That's right.

AJ: And there was no vacation, so it was three semesters a year. As I said, I was just barely sixteen when I came, and so by the time I was eighteen, I was almost finished with my junior year. And the war was still on, and—so anyway, so I—we'll come back to that. So in the beginning of my sophomore year I decided to switch to chemical engineering, which I enjoyed much better, because that was much less regimented and formularized. And in the chemical engineering courses, the credit, most of the credit, was given for approach and method, as opposed to answers—very unusual!

And it turned out much later that I realized when I went to graduate school—I didn't really come to realize this until I went to work, but the chemical engineering degree, training, was excellent basis for studying organizational behavior, because there's a lot of parallels between the way organizations work and the way chemical processes work.

FL: Interesting.

AJ: You don't—they're both systems, and they're both very mysterious, because in chemical engineering, you know, you're dealing with tubes and vessels and vats, and various unit operations, which you can't really see what's going on inside. And it's all a bit mysterious. You know what comes in and you know what comes out, but you're not really sure about what the hell is going on inside, and so you have to make a lot of assumptions, and trial and error approaches to solutions. And that's the way it

is with organizations. It's very similar. So I realized that the mindset for dealing with understanding the way organizations work, and changing the way organizations work, requires this same kind of mindset that chemical engineering does. And so it isn't such a strange switch after all, it turned out. Well anyway, I digressed.

FL: Yeah, so before you came to MIT, you were a fairly well-developed pianist, at least to a large degree. What were your musical, kind of, plans for the future, when you—?

AJ: Well, yeah. The other thing is, because I was sort of a minor celebrity in Brockton when I graduated high school and went to MIT, everybody assumed that I was really—they didn't know why I was going to MIT. I'm talking about the general public. You know, people would come up and they'd say to me, "Why are you doing this?" You know, "why aren't you pursuing a musical career?"

And I never for a minute, ever, considered that seriously, because even at that young age, I realized, first of all, that in order to be successful, it would require an incredibly narrow focus. You know, I would really have to devote myself entirely to music, and at the expense of everything else. And secondly, I had questions about whether I was really good enough, anyway. You know, I mean, I was not under any illusions that I was some undiscovered genius. I thought I was okay, you know, but I never really thought I was good enough to compete in that world. So I had never seriously ever thought that I was going to pursue a musical career. But, I always was interested in doing it as kind of a secondary avocation, which I did.

FL: Why did you choose MIT, which at the time was fairly, more narrowly focused on science and engineering than it is today, given—?

AJ: Yeah, because I thought I was going to be an engineer, and I mean my father had studied engineering. He never followed through on it. He went to Cooper Union. But you know, I was good at math and science, and so that was—I was so unquestioning about that that I never applied to any other place. I only applied to MIT.

FL: Uh-huh.

AJ: And I was put on the waiting list, which was an absolutely horrible thing that happened. And I didn't find this out until I was in the—in my senior year in high school. And that, I think, happened, because of the Jewish quota.

FL: Oh, there was a Jewish quota!

AJ: Yeah.

FL: [sighs]

AJ: So, I mean, I didn't really find that I was accepted until kind of the last minute. And, but anyway, that was kind of a hanger, cliff hanger.

FL: Right. So you probably knew about some of—the MIT Glee Club through George Dunham, and other musical stuff that was going on at MIT before you came? You knew there was something?

AJ: Yeah, I knew—vaguely.

FL: Yeah, vaguely.

AJ: Vaguely. But as soon as I got here, you know, it was like a whole new world opened up. And even though I commuted, which was a real constraint, I actually spent most of my time here. I would leave home, take the 7:27 train in the morning, and I would get here by about 8:15. And I typically did not get home until after 8, 9 o'clock at night, because I would do all my studying in Walker Memorial music room, and I was heavily involved in all kinds of extracurricular stuff right from the beginning. And so I may as well have lived here, you know. And I did live in Boston in my senior year. But the reason that I commuted was I couldn't afford to live here. I was on scholarship; I got a hefty scholarship from Brockton High School, and then I got one here as well. And so, even though tuition then was only six hundred dollars [laughs] a year!

FL: Which at the time, that was a lot of money!

AJ: Yeah, but half of it, more than half of it, was paid for by scholarship. But I made a very conscious decision right at the beginning, and that is that I was not going to try to become an all-A student here. I was, decided to do well enough to keep my scholarship, but spend my time on other thing—extracurricular stuff. And I was a very—I was happy I made that decision.

FL: So besides music, what were some of the other extracurricular stuff you did?

AJ: Well, I got involved with *The Tech* right from the very beginning, because I was also—

FL: *The Tech*, that's the student paper here.

AJ: Hm?

FL: *The Tech*. That's the student paper?

AJ: Yeah, yeah.

FL: Yes, right.

AJ: Yeah, I was on the student paper in high school, and I wanted to continue that here. And so I was involved with them right from the beginning, became general manager, editor and general manager, in my senior year. And then I was involved in the Glee Club; I was accompanist to Glee Club, and I got involved in the Symphony Orchestra. And then I was in a number of other, sort of minor, lesser, committee-type things. Those things were not significant in my recollections. But the things that heavily involved—and the Tech Show, in my senior year.

FL: Right, and we're going to get to more details on that.

## **5. Music at MIT (1:04:11—CD2 00:00)**

FL: So during the World War II, MIT was very much on war footing, as you mentioned. There were three semesters a year, and there were lots of special students, and things were very different at the time.

AJ: Yeah.

FL: And some of the things, the casualties of that, seems to be some of the musical organizations really struggled with that. The orchestra, actually from the late forties to the—late thirties to the early forties was sporadic, if it existed at all.

AJ: Yeah, I think when I got involved with it, it was being revived.

FL: Right, and there's two people who, this guy Antonio de Almeida—

AJ: Yes.

FL: —and somebody named Ralph Huschke.

AJ: That's after my time. It was Tony de Almeida.

FL: Okay, anyways, the yearbook says that Ralph was also involved in reviving the orchestra. Now whether, again, I'm just going by what the yearbook had said.

AJ: That's a name that's totally unfamiliar to me.

FL: Okay, okay, so Tony was—looks like he was really the driving force behind that. I found the *Annual Report of the Combined Musical Clubs* from 1939. They were talking about the orchestra, and that was the year they disbanded. And they said due to lack of interest from enough students, and it says, to quote them, "It has never put on an acceptable public concert without ringers."

AJ: Oh, yeah, well that's true. We had ringers.

FL: Uh-huh.

AJ: That's true! [laughs]

FL: Then they said that they should consider the formation of an intercollegiate orchestra, which was, I thought, interesting. So it was 1946 that the orchestra was revived, and on your word, mostly though the work of Antonio de Almeida, or as he was known, Tony. Were you involved in any of the work to get the orchestra going? Did he recruit you, or anything? Were you involved in that?

AJ: Well, I'm not—I'm a little hazy as to whether—I know I was involved in the orchestra in '46—I wasn't here from '45—June of '45 to September of '46. That's when I was in the Navy. And I'm not clear whether the orchestra existed before then.

FL: It wasn't, prior to that.

AJ: So I think my involvement in the orchestra was when I came back from the Navy, just that one year, with Tony de Almeida. But I do remember that we did some terrific things. We did a production—a performance in Jordan Hall, of Haydn's *Creation*, which is not a trivial piece.

FL: Wow! Who was the—the chorus, was that the Glee Club?

AJ: The chorus, and the orchestra.

FL: Which chorus was it? Was it the MIT—?

AJ: Yeah!

FL: Glee Clubs? Yeah.

AJ: Yeah!

FL: Yeah, okay.

AJ: And I'm not sure whether de Almeida conducted that or not. But anyway, I played the timpani in that, and I remember that. And then we also did a production of *The Messiah*.

FL: Right, I've read about that.

AJ: Yeah, and—

FL: That was the first time it had been performed at MIT, according to what I read.

AJ: Yeah, that was also in '46, I think.

FL: Right, right.

AJ: And we took it on the road, because I remember we did it with the Lasell—not Lasell. Yeah, Lasell Junior College Glee Club, in New Hampshire. Lebanon, New Hampshire. [Editor's note: Lasell Junior College was renamed Lasell College in 1989 and is located in Newton, MA.]

FL: Wow.

AJ: Because I remember I couldn't get the timpani skins to go down low enough, and I had to swab them! [laughs]

FL: [laughs] Wow! Those were the days when you had the cranks on the—?

AJ: Oh, yeah, right!

FL: On the rim, no pedals.

AJ: Yeah, no pedals, yeah.

FL: Do you remember what kind of financial support that the orchestra got from MIT at the time?

AJ: Absolutely no idea!

FL: Yeah. How were musicians recruited?

AJ: I'm sorry?

FL: How were the musicians recruited? Was it mostly MIT students?

AJ: Yeah!

FL: Yeah. Were there any—?

AJ: Because there were several friends of mine involved in the orchestra, as well.

FL: Right. Were there any MIT faculty or staff?

AJ: Yes, yes, some, yeah. Not a lot, but there were some. It was a really motley crew, but I mean—

FL: Mm-hm.

AJ: They were good enough to have fun with. You know, I mean, I enjoyed the experience.

FL: And as you mentioned, they usually had to get ringers to kind of fill out the ranks?

AJ: Yeah, right.

FL: So, tell—

AJ: And that was easy to do, you know. It still is. I mean, Boston is loaded with musicians who are only too happy to have a chance to play.

FL: Uh-huh. Were they usually students from other—?

AJ: Yeah.

FL: —other colleges?

AJ: Yeah, that was [trails off].

FL: Yeah. So tell me about Antonio de Almeida as a conductor. Do you remember much about him, just his, you know, conducting style, his rehearsal technique, and things like that? Just kind of him as a musician.

AJ: Well, he was very enthusiastic, and he had a kind of a latin temperament. I think he was born in Argentina.

FL: He actually was born—he had French citizenship. He studied in Argentina prior to coming to MIT.

AJ: Yeah. Well, it's Argentina that I—sticks in my mind, but I don't know much about his background beyond that, except—you know, in those days, a lot of students at MIT came here because they were pressured to do so by their parents. And they really hated being here. And music and other kinds of extracurricular activities were an outlet for dealing with this frustration of being pressured to be here. And Tony was certainly one of those, and he didn't stay after that year, either. I don't know how long he was here all together.

FL: I think it was a couple years. He left after '48.

AJ: Yeah. Yeah, because I—yeah, I remained—I was involved with the orchestra when I was in graduate school as well, so yeah, it was two years that I was involved with the orchestra. And it was just the Choral Society before that, before I went into the—

FL: Uh huh, right.

AJ: But the Choral Society was pretty active. I mean, it was just men.

FL: Right, and at the time it was—they called it the Men's Glee Club.

AJ: Yeah, right.

FL: Right.

AJ: And there were two of us. There was another accompanist as well. Some things we played four hands.

FL: Who was that?

AJ: A guy named Gustafson. [Editor's note: John Gunnarson]

FL: Uh-huh, do you remember his first name?

AJ: No.

FL: I can probably dig that up. So did—Tony de Almeida, did he strike you as somebody who had prior conducting experience, or was this kind of his first—?

AJ: I don't—I doubt if he had—he was a kid!

FL: Right, right.

AJ: Like us. [laughs]

FL: Do you know what instrument he played?

AJ: No, haven't a clue. But I mean, he seemed very knowledgeable. I mean, you know, he was certainly good enough to pull it off with us.

FL: Right, yeah.

AJ: And I think the musicians respected him. And I mean, you know, of course the whole music thing at MIT, in all my four years here, was amateur, you know.

FL: Right.

AJ: And there were no music courses when I came.

FL: There seemed to be one called "Introduction to Music" that was offered in the Department of English.

AJ: That's right. That was by Bill Greene, "Wild" Bill Greene [William C. Greene], who was an English Professor, and he did this as a hobby! I mean, you know, it was a side interest of his. But that was the only official music course.

FL: So you mentioned some of the, like the Haydn *Creation* and the Handel *Messiah*. What were some of the other pieces that the orchestra played?

AJ: Well, we played, I remember very distinctly, Beethoven's *Eighth [Symphony]*, we did. And some [Gioachino] Rossini overtures. Some [Jacques] Offenbach, I think.

FL: Tony was a scholar of Offenbach.

AJ: Yes, yes, I know. He made some recording of his.

FL: And did a thematic catalog of his work.

AJ: Oh, really?

FL: Yeah, so. What was your kind of gut feeling about how well the orchestra played?

AJ: Oh, it was sort of ragged, you know! [laughs] But, it was fun, you know. I mean, the participants were—what they lacked in technique they made up for with enthusiasm! As an aside—this has got no connection with this—there's an orchestra in Edinburgh [Scotland], where my daughter lives, called the Really Terrible Orchestra. [laughs] And it's made up of, you know, enthusiastic amateurs.

FL: Uh-huh. [laughs]

AJ: [laughs]

FL: Wow!

AJ: And one of the performers is a famous writer, Alexander McCall Smith. He plays the tuba and bassoon.



FL: My goodness!

AJ: [laughs]

FL: Wow.

AJ: Well, anyway—

FL: So, just a couple more things about Tony de Almeida. After he left MIT, he went to Yale and studied with Paul Hindemith.

AJ: Yeah.

FL: And Professor Klaus Liepmann, who was the first professor of music at MIT, had previously taught at Yale. Do you know if there was any connection, or do you know if Klaus had—?

AJ: I don't, no. This happened after I left.

FL: Okay, I just wondered if you might have known if there was some way that Klaus had helped with that. And Tony went on to—

AJ: It's quite possible.

FL: Uh-huh.

AJ: I mean, he was miserable here, Tony. I mean, the orchestra was like his salvation. I mean, I don't know how he managed to survive being here for two years.

FL: Yeah, Tony went on to have a very distinguished career as both a conductor and as a musicologist. Just a couple things here for the record: he conducted widely throughout the U.S. and Europe. He had posts such as the Portuguese Radio Symphony Orchestra from 1957 through '60, the Stuttgart Philharmonic Orchestra.

AJ: Yeah, and the Monte Carlo Orchestra.

FL: And it said also the Houston Opera from 1969 to 1971.

AJ: Yes, that's right, I remember that.

FL: And made lots of recordings of neglected French orchestral music, among many other things. So, as I mentioned earlier, Klaus Liepmann, the first professor of music at MIT, he started in the fall of 1947.

AJ: Right.

FL: And he was already in the Boston area, teaching at local private schools. And previously he had been at Yale University as the conductor of the undergraduate orchestra. So in the spring of 1947, he was brought in to conduct the MIT Orchestra, but he wasn't officially hired yet then.

AJ: Yeah, it was part of his selection process. This was a test.

FL: Uh-huh!

AJ: To see how, you know, how he would do. And that's when I performed the Beethoven *First Piano Concerto*.

FL: Right.

AJ: That was done at Rindge Tech [Technical] High School.

FL: Wow. So, I have some more questions about that in just a minute here. Were there other candidates that they auditioned as well?

AJ: Not that I know of.

FL: Uh-huh.

AJ: There might have been, but I mean, nobody else did that; you know, nobody else was brought in to—

FL: Right. Do you know what circumstances brought him to come to conduct that particular concert?

AJ: No.

FL: Uh-huh. So this first concert that Klaus Liepmann conducted, you played the *Piano Concerto no. 1 in C Major, op. 15*, of Beethoven?

AJ: Right.

FL: Can you tell me how that—your performance went, and all that?

AJ: I thought it went fine. There was a recording made of it, you know, and it really kills me that I think I got rid of it, because it was on a oversized shellac or vinyl disc. But, 'cause I had no way of playing it!

FL: Wow.

AJ: But, anyway.

FL: Was this your first time as a concerto soloist with an orchestra?

AJ: Well, I had done something at Boston Pops, you know, at Tech Night at the Pops. But it was with the Glee Club, I think, so it was not with the orchestra.

FL: I see, right.

AJ: Yeah, this was the big experience of doing that, yeah.

FL: Had you subsequently done any concerto playing with other—that was—?

AJ: No. Not for want of wanting to do it. I just didn't have any opportunity.

FL: Yeah, so how did it come about that you were playing timpani with the MIT Orchestra? Did Tony kind of come to you, or—?

AJ: No, I think I volunteered. You know, I mean, they needed a timpanist, and I wanted to play with—play in an orchestra. And so that seemed like a fun thing to do, which I did.

FL: And you played timpani through most of your years at MIT here?

AJ: Well no, actually, this was just the senior year and the graduate year.

FL: Just the senior—I see, those two years.

AJ: Yeah, and then I did it at Brown after that.

FL: Oh!

AJ: Well, this is a whole, funny story. See we got married—when I got my master’s degree, we got married that year, ’49. No, wait a minute. I’m sorry, it was a year after I got my master’s degree. And that was between my wife’s junior and senior year at Brown [University], and I was at that point working on the night shift at the U.S. Rubber Company, as a foreman. And so I presented myself in the Brown Music Department, and just hung out. And it was one of these don’t ask, don’t tell situations. They didn’t ask me whether I was a registered student, and I never volunteered, so they assumed I was, you know, a student!

So I got heavily involved in all kinds of stuff. I took a counterpoint course, and I took a couple of other courses, and I played in the orchestra—played timpani in the orchestra. And then there was also a resident cellist at Brown at the time named Otto von Copenhagen, and he and I got together once every week to explore the piano-cello literature.

FL: Wow! Was that your first real serious involvement with chamber music-type playing?

AJ: I think so, yeah.

FL: So what stuff did you play with him?

AJ: Oh god, I don’t remember.

FL: Probably at least the Beethoven Sonatas?

AJ: Yeah, I think we did one of the Beethoven. We didn’t do any Brahms. Oh, I did, yeah—yes, I did. We did do the Brahms *Horn Trio [in E flat Major, op. 40]*.

FL: Oh, wow!

AJ: We got somebody else involved in that, and yeah, that was a very favorite piece of mine.

FL: So getting back to MIT and Klaus Liepmann, tell me about what kind of conductor he was. That’s kind of a vague question, but his kind of rehearsal technique, his stick technique, and just kind of his expectations of the orchestra?

AJ: Well, he seemed, I mean, it was a very refreshing experience from my point of view, because you know, for the first time I really was in the presence of somebody who was a professional, you know, thoroughly professional. Because Tony was an enthusiastic amateur, in my mind, at the time, and, I mean, this was a whole different dimension. So it was a wonderful experience, from my point of view. And I certainly had no other bases for judging him. But it was a thoroughly satisfying experience, from my point of view.

FL: Did you find him a particularly demanding conductor?

AJ: Yeah, I think he was, yeah.

FL: Uh-huh. Was he particularly—maybe not particularly, but working students who were not music majors, was that initially frustrating for him, or was that something that he—?

AJ: Yeah, I think he took it in his stride. I mean, it seemed to work out okay. The morale, if you will, of the players certainly seemed positive enough. But I think he did pepper the orchestra with some ringers, so—

FL: Uh-huh. Was he somebody who was—you know, some conductors have a real capacity for patience, and others easily get frustrated. How was he on that kind of scale, with the orchestra? Was he relatively patient?

AJ: I thought he was. You know, he didn't get obnoxious, from, you know, from that point of view. No, I thought it was—it was a good experience.

FL: So, Klaus had a real particular interest in choral music, and he was a violinist. But he had a real passion for choral music. This would have been, yeah—so by the—the year that, I guess, that you played with them, did they do any stuff with the glee clubs?

AJ: Not that I know of.

FL: No?

AJ: But I don't think—I wasn't involved with the Glee Club when I was in graduate school.

FL: I see.

AJ: So my involvement with the Glee Club had kind of come to an end.

FL: I see. I have some more questions a little later about the Glee Club, which we'll get back to. Did you get any sense from Klaus Liepmann what kind of music really was, that he really felt passionately about? Did he express any—?

AJ: No, I didn't have that—I didn't have that much involvement with him, other than that one experience.

FL: Yeah, I see. All right, so, at MIT at the time that you were here, there was one music course offered in the English Department called Introduction to Music, and you mentioned being taught by William Greene. There was—according to some other records, there was somebody, Dean Fuller?

AJ: Oh, yeah, right, right, Fuller. Yes, I remember him too.

FL: And according to Klaus Liepmann's autobiography, Dean Fuller had a musical background. Do you know if Bill Greene—?

AJ: I don't think Bill did. I think he was an amateur.

FL: Mm-hm. You didn't possibly take that course, did you?

AJ: No, I didn't, no!

FL: No.

AJ: Bill was a—I liked Bill a lot! He was a real character. He was one of these sort of outrageous eccentric types, and students loved him for that. But I really don't know anything more about him, other than that he was very popular.

FL: Did you ever hear Klaus Liepmann play the violin?

AJ: No.

FL: No. So, when you played for the Glee Club, that was for all four years that you were at MIT here?

AJ: Well, I wasn't—there were only two calendar years.

FL: Oh, that's right. That's right.

AJ: That was 1943 to 1945.

FL: That's right, all the time you were here. And George Dunham was conductor?

AJ: Right.

FL: And it seemed like, according to the records I found, during the World War Two years he had come in, and there was somebody named Henry Jackson Warren, who had previously conducted, but then went off to military service?

AJ: Yeah, right.

FL: Okay, that's just—did you ever meet Henry Jackson Warren?

AJ: No.

FL: No. So, tell me about George Dunham as a conductor.

AJ: Oh, he was very good! I mean, you know, very clear, and was able to explain what he wanted; his communication with the group was very good, and I thought—he was a real disciplinarian, in terms of being demanding. But I mean, I think he had high standards. I had a lot of respect for him.

FL: Do you know what his background was?

AJ: No.

FL: Where he was trained, or anything like that?

AJ: No, no.

FL: Was he doing any professional choruses, conducting any professional groups in Boston? Do you know if he did anything like that?

AJ: Not that I know of, no.

FL: Uh-huh. Was he also a pianist?

AJ: I don't know.

FL: Uh-huh. What kinds of—I mean, glee clubs do a huge variety of repertoire. Was there any particular stuff that he had a particular interest in doing?

AJ: I don't recall, really. I mean, we did have a very eclectic repertory that we did.

FL: Right.

AJ: And of course, the highlight was "Take Me Back To Tech."

FL: Uh-huh.

AJ: [laughs] It had a great piano part! [laughs]

FL: [laughs] There's a yearbook picture that credits George Dunham conducting a small instrumental group. Do you know if he did anything like that?

AJ: No, that's news to me.

FL: I don't know if the credit is correct, because I wouldn't recognize his picture, but I just wondered.

AJ: Yeah.

FL: So in 1945, a women's glee club was started for the first time. And, did George Dunham conduct that group as well?

AJ: I don't know. This is when I was gone.

FL: Okay, okay.

AJ: That happened after I left.

FL: I see. When you were at MIT, did you play any chamber music, or accompany any singers, or anything like that?

AJ: No, I don't think so.

FL: No, no. There was a group called the Techtonians—

AJ: Yes, right.

FL: —a jazz dance band. Did you ever hear them play?

AJ: I don't remember. Maybe at a fraternity party or something like that. It's all very hazy. Yeah, the name rings a bell. And there was also the Logarithms then.

FL: Oh, they were going back then? Wow.

AJ: I think so.

FL: Wow! That's interesting. I'll have to—

AJ: I'm not sure about—I think so. I mean, that name popped into my mind.

FL: Yeah, it possibly could; they're a longstanding a capella group.

AJ: Yeah.

FL: One more question about the Techtonians: do you have any impression about how well they played? Did students talk about them?

AJ: No.

## **6. The Tech Show (1:30:03—CD2 25:53)**

FL: No. All right. Moving on to the MIT Tech Show, there had been a longstanding tradition at MIT of an annual musical theater production, written and produced by students, called the MIT Tech Show.

AJ: Right.

FL: It had ceased for a number of years, the last production being 1936.

AJ: That's right, yeah.

FL: According to the yearbook, after that, at this thing called Freshman Camp, there was an MIT alum, Orville B. Dennison, or Obie, as he was known, class of 1911, would sing songs from old Tech Shows, and supposedly out of this was an inspiration to revive the Tech Show. Do you remember this gentleman?

AJ: Well, the name is familiar, and it's familiar because I think he arranged a book of MIT songs or something.

FL: Uh-huh.

AJ: I think.

FL: Okay, I'll look at that. We have some of those collections here; I'll look. This name was new to me as I was doing research.

AJ: He was—I remember—his name was attached to arrangements, you know, choral arrangements, of MIT stuff.

FL: I see, uh-huh. So you were, you wrote the music for the first revived show?

AJ: Yeah, in '47.

FL: How—tell me how you got involved in this production?

AJ: Well, it was my idea. I mean, there were—two of us were involved, Jack Kiefer and I. Jack was a friend of mine, and he's another, you know, one of these people who were sent to MIT by their parents under protest, kind of thing. I mean, his interests were mainly literary, and he had a—he wrote poetry, and you know, that was really what he was interested in. And he and I sort of came up with this idea of why don't we—let's put on a show! [laughs]

And I got really interested in musical theater when I was in the Navy, when I went to New York and saw *On The Town*. That blew me away! You know, the [Leonard] Bernstein. That was Bernstein's first thing. And I had been interested in jazz, and the—confronting a theatrical experience where jazz, you know, very jazz-influenced music was the basis for a show was a very eye-opening experience. And so that really led, propelled my interest in doing this thing, the Tech Show.

And so, and the book for, the whole concept of *A Liberal Life*, was something that Jack and I hatched, because it was a radical idea, the whole idea of humanizing MIT, you know! [laughs] It was not in the history, at that point.

FL: Right. The yearbook mentions two other people supposedly involved in this revival: somebody named Phil Macht?

AJ: Phil Macht, yeah.

FL: And Jim Edelstein?

AJ: Yes. Well, they were performers.

FL: Uh-huh.

AJ: And Geri [Geraldine] Sapolsky.

FL: Okay.

AJ: She was the ingénue.

FL: But it was you and Jack Kiefer who were the kind of organizing kind of brains behind this?

AJ: Yeah, yeah. He wrote the book and the lyrics, and I wrote the music. I wrote, and directed the orchestra. I conducted the thing as well. And we did it in Jordan Hall; that was where it was performed.

FL: Wow. And the dates? May 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> of 1948, it says here.

AJ: No, '47.

FL: I'm sorry; that's right. Okay, that's the '48 show. That's right.

AJ: Bill Katz [William E. Katz, MIT class of 1948] and I did the '48 show, yeah.

FL: That's right. That's right. So, what were some of the challenges in kind of reviving this show? It must have been an awful lot of work to—?

AJ: Oh, it was a colossal undertaking! Well, the big challenge was to devise music that, you know, people could do! Because we were not dealing with people who were particularly musically trained or anything. And most of the chorus and so on were not. So I had to be very careful about what I expected, you know, demanded of them, musically.

FL: Right. And they were people not necessarily involved with the Glee Club, right?

AJ: No. Well, some of them were.

FL: Right, but not necessarily.

AJ: Yeah.

FL: Can you give a brief summary of the story of this show?

AJ: Oh god, I don't remember. But you have this?

FL: Right.

AJ: The script.

FL: Right, yeah, in the MIT Archives. There's some sketchy stuff there. We don't actually have the—I forgot exactly; there's something missing that I—when I started doing research on this. I forgot exactly what's there, but I wasn't able to—there's a summary of it in the yearbook; that was the best I could get.

AJ: Yeah, but in there is the libretto.

FL: Okay, that's right.

AJ: Yeah.

FL: That's right.

AJ: So I really don't remember too much.

FL: Yeah, but the premise being MIT becoming a liberal arts institution?



AJ: Yeah, but I think it was initiated by the students. You know, it was like a revolution by the students.

FL: Right. There was, the whole thing about the humanities at MIT was very much talked about. There was the famous Lewis Committee, a Committee on Education Survey, which brought about the School of Humanities, so there was—it seemed like there was something—

AJ: Yeah, but, but, when I was here, even in '43 and '44, they had some sensational people teaching in the Humanities Department. I mean, this was before the Lewis Report.

FL: Right.

AJ: And the quality of—I mean, I got totally swept away by my elective courses in the humanities, particularly in the history of philosophy. And I mean, they had Giorgio de Santillana, and Karl Deutsch, who were superb! And I mean, that was one of the things that made me dissatisfied with becoming an engineer, you know, because I got exposed to this stuff! And it was mind-blowing! And that's what also attracted me to this graduate program, because some of these people were involved in the graduate program as well, this experimental graduate program.

So, there's one thing that we didn't get clear about my musical education at MIT. My most important influence at MIT, musically, was the Music Library, which at that time was housed in Walker Memorial. And it consisted of [laughs] the main listening—there was this lounge room that overlooks the Charles Basin, on the second floor, and it had a—and this was in the mid-forties—what was at that time a really high quality hi-fi reproduction system. It had a big, huge woofer and a couple of tweeters, and a good turntable and so on. And then they had an enormous—well, it seemed to me enormous—collection of shellac 78 rpm—and that's the only thing that existed then—discs, most of which were in cases in the balcony on the second floor of Walker Memorial.

And I literally spent all my time there, I mean, you know, time—all my study time. And my time when I wasn't involved in classes or other activities was spent in that room, listening to music and doing my homework. And there were a small group of us who used to congregate up there. It wasn't big. It was like, we're talking about a dozen people maybe. And they had, I mean—that's when I began to discover music! I mean, even though I had studied the piano and all that, all I really knew was a very narrow range of piano music, relatively speaking. And the things that really opened me up were Mahler, they had twelve and fourteen record albums! [laughs]

FL: Yeah! [laughs]

AJ: Mahler's *Second [Symphony]*, with Dimitri Mitropoulos. That was the original recording of that. And Shostakovitch.

FL: Uh-huh, and he was hot at the time!

AJ: That's right. And that really—I mean, the thing that really blew my mind in that one was the first piano, that first *Piano Concerto*, and the *First Symphony*. And all kinds of other stuff! And I just learned so much from doing that! And then I also went to

BSO friday rehearsals, and that was the other major influence in opening up my horizons, too, to what music was all about.

FL: So the Music Library over in Walker—were there any scores as well, or was it all—?

AJ: No.

FL: All recordings?

AJ: And yeah, no, they did have some scores, yeah, not too much.

FL: Did you do much with the score collection?

AJ: Yeah, some, yeah.

FL: Did you also, in the library there—you must have then also heard Stravinsky and [Béla] Bartók, and stuff like that?

AJ: Yes. Well, not too much Bartók. There wasn't much Bartók recorded at that time.

FL: That's right.

AJ: But Stravinsky, yes, Stravinsky. Yeah, *Symphony of Psalms* was another one that blew me away. And *Les Noces*, and yeah, that.

FL: Did *The Rite of Spring* make a big impression on you?

AJ: Yes, yes.

FL: Yeah, it does so many people.

AJ: And also *L'histoire du soldat*, a very early recording of that. I mean, these were, you know, first recordings—

FL: Right, right.

AJ: —of a lot of that stuff.

FL: Right. A couple more things. So the 1948 Tech Show you co-wrote with Bill Katz. Tell me about Bill. What was his instrument, and had he done other kinds of theatrical productions?

AJ: Not that I know of, no. He was also piano, and, but not a serious pianist, you know. More of sort of a sing along pianist. But he had some good ideas, and he—actually he wrote most of it. I did—only did a few numbers for that, because I was in graduate school, and I didn't have a lot of time.

FL: So was it pretty easy co-writing the songs with him?

AJ: Yeah, yeah!

FL: Yeah, because sometimes, co-writers, they kind of go at each other.

AJ: Oh, no!

FL: Yeah, yeah. Did you conduct the orchestra for that?

AJ: No, no.

FL: No. Do you remember who did?

AJ: No, I don't. But that had a Parisian theme.

FL: Uh-huh, it was called *Frere Jacques*.

AJ: Yes, right. It had nothing to do with MIT, the book.

FL: Right. Were there any—was there any faculty involvement in production of the Tech Shows?

AJ: Nope, not that I remember.

FL: I know that in later years there were, but I'm wondering for these two.

AJ: No. Well, there was no faculty. I mean, there was no music faculty.

FL: Right, but as far as just faculty. Like, I read some reference that William Greene had assisted in some Tech Show productions. It must have been after you were here?

AJ: Yeah.

FL: And I was just wondering if the reference in this book—it's a very vague reference—what extent that was.

AJ: Well, he was certainly not involved in ours.

FL: Yeah, yeah. What did Klaus Liepmann think of the '48 show? Did he come, do you know? [Editor's note: Klaus Liepmann conducted the MIT Symphony in this production.]

AJ: I don't know. I have no idea.

FL: Uh-huh.

AJ: See, by that time I was, you know, I was in graduate school, and my involvement in that kind of activity was sort of peripheral—much more peripheral than it had been before, because the graduate program was very demanding, both in daytimes and in the evening, too. There were—we did some very avant garde, experimental stuff. We started one of the very first tea groups in the graduate program, and that met weekly in the evening. And all twelve of us went to that, and we brought significant others with us.

FL: Uh-huh.

AJ: And so, you know, there wasn't much time for involvement in undergraduate stuff.

FL: So when you were at MIT, did you find time to practice the piano, and sort of keep that up?

AJ: Well, see, that's the interesting thing. My interest shifted away from performing, as soon as I got to MIT. I mean, my recital that I gave in Brockton before I came to MIT was sort of the high point of my performing life. And because I had a lot of ambivalence about performing anyway, I really was much more interested in composing. And so I didn't spend much time practicing after that, you know, after I came to MIT. You know, I did enough to sort of keep my fingers limber, and learn what I had to learn to do the glee club stuff and so on, but I never really got into that. I wasn't into performing. And I pretty much stayed that way until the seventies. I was—whatever time I had for music I spent more on the compositional end.

FL: Mm-hm. We'll get more into this in detail in the next interview. But how did it come about that you studied with Walter Piston at Harvard?

AJ: Ah! Well, as I said, because I was increasingly interested in composition, I heard about this deal they had in graduate, you know—when you went to graduate school, you could take courses at Harvard, free!

FL: Oh! Uh-huh.

AJ: You just had to be accepted, you know.

FL: Right.

AJ: So I hied over to Harvard, and I got an appointment with Piston, and I brought some stuff that I had written. And he took a look at it, and he accepted me, much to my amazement!

FL: So tell me about some of those pieces that you showed him.

AJ: I, god, I don't even remember what I showed him! The stuff I had written up to that point was pretty awful! [laughs] I mean, I don't know why he accepted me, to be honest. I mean, I guess I—maybe I showed him the Tech Show; I don't know. I don't remember what the hell I showed him, because I didn't—there wasn't that much that I had written that I really felt that good about.

FL: Beside the Tech Show, was it mostly piano music?

AJ: Yeah, it was mostly piano music. It was all piano music!

FL: Uh-huh.

AJ: And so anyway, he accepted me, much to my surprise! And the group in his course turned out to be very small. It was like, I don't know, seven or eight of us, I think. And they were a distinguished group, in retrospect. The names that I remember was Noël Lee was one of them.

FL: Yeah, who went on to be a very fine pianist.

AJ: Yeah. Nicolas Van Slyke—

FL: Yes, right.

AJ: —was in my class. Klaus Roy.

FL: Klaus George Roy, yeah.

AJ: Yeah, yeah. And then there was a guy whom I've seen around here at various concerts; I keep bumping into him, and I can't remember his name. He was in the class. Birtwistle—Birn—Birtwistle?

FL: Harrison Birtwistle?

AJ: Yes, yes, he was in the class.

FL: The English composer?

AJ: No, wait a minute.

FL: There was a Harrison Birtwistle—he couldn't have been—

AJ: No, no.

FL: No, he's much—

AJ: It was a name like that, though.

FL: Harrison Birtwistle is much—probably wasn't born then. But, hm. I'll have to look. There's a book on Walter Piston's students.

AJ: Yeah.

FL: And I'll see if I can dig up some names for you. I'll look around and see.

AJ: Yeah, but anyway, that was the group. And it wasn't—there were only two, like two other names that I can't remember, and me! [laughs]

FL: Uh-huh.

AJ: And I mean, it was—all we did was write stuff, and bring it in with performers, and we'd talk about it. And he commented on it. I mean, that was really what the class was about. There was very little structure to it.

FL: Did he also from time to time bring in other pieces, just to analyze and to kind of show you—

AJ: No.

FL: —things?

AJ: No. No, it was all stuff we worked on, and brought in, and talked about. It was a very informal class, and I learned a lot.

FL: So in our next interview, I'll have some more questions about Walter Piston, and I think this is a good stopping point. I want to thank you very much for your coming in today. This is really good. Okay?

AJ: Are you getting what you want? I mean—

FL: Yes, this is very good.

AJ: Oh, okay, yeah.

FL: Okay.

[End of Interview]