

**Music at MIT Oral History Project**

**Arnold Judson**

*Interviewed*

*by*

**Forrest Larson**

**April 25, 2008**

**Interview no. 2**

**Massachusetts Institute of Technology  
Lewis Music Library**

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### **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 April 25, 2008 in the MIT Lewis Music Library. Duration of the audio recording is 1:41:33. Second of two interviews. First interview: December 21, 2007.

## 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. Humanities, art & science at MIT (00:21—CD1 00:21)

FORREST LARSON: It's my pleasure to welcome back for a second interview Arnold Judson. He received two degrees from MIT: a Bachelor's Degree in Chemical Engineering in 1947, and a Master's Degree in Organizational Behavior in 1948. I'm Forrest Larson. It's April 25th, 2008. We're in the MIT Music Library.

ARNOLD JUDSON: Okay, just one quick correction.

FL: Yeah.

AJ: The degree, the master's degree was officially called Economics and Engineering [Course XIV] —

FL: Oh!

AJ: Because organizational behavior was a term that wasn't invented until several—several years afterwards. But that's what it was; it was organizational behavior, and that whole field was really invented at MIT. That was the program—that was the very first graduate program in organizational behavior that I know of in this country, or anywhere.

FL: Wow, that's very interesting.

AJ: I mean, that—that whole story is, I mean, it's a—aside from this—it's a very fascinating story. And it was really because of the humanities that I got into this—this is a very interesting—

FL: Right, and you got into some of that in the previous interview, about how you got into that with that psychology professor that—?

AJ: Yeah, [Douglas] McGregor.

FL: Yeah, who was really helpful to you. Just a little bit of background information about the humanities at MIT at that time. When you were a student in the late 1940's, there was a Division of Humanities, and someone named Robert Caldwell was Dean of Humanities. There was a Department of English and History, and a Department of Social Sciences within the Division of Humanities. And Professor Klaus Liepmann, the first Professor of Music, was in the Department of English and History, interesting enough.

AJ: Yeah, well that was at the very end of my undergraduate.

FL: Right.

AJ: Actually, it wasn't—it was after my undergraduate degree.

FL: Well, as of 1949, and prior to that there was the Division of Humanities.

AJ: Yeah, but I'm not sure whether it was—I started here in 1943, and I'm not sure what the status of it was then.

FL: I'm not sure how far back. I don't have a date right with me, but it certainly predates—it didn't start in 1949, but when I've been looking at course catalogs and some stuff written actually by Dean Caldwell from that time. So, I don't have the—

AJ: Yeah, that name doesn't ring any bell with me at all.

FL: Yeah, okay.

AJ: Because my first contact with humanities courses were as electives in 1943 and '44.

FL: Right, right.

AJ: And '45.

FL: And they were all electives; there was no humanities degree offered, not until the School of Humanities and Social Sciences started in 1950, which there was a—right. Okay, so I want to ask you about the arts and humanities, and social sciences at MIT. In the previous interview, you had mentioned the importance of humanities courses you took as an undergraduate, and you specifically mentioned William Greene, Professor of English, George de Santillana [Giorgio Diaz de Santillana], Professor of History of Science, and—

AJ: Yeah, well, yeah. Actually, he taught philosophy, history of philosophy.

FL: Right, but he's listed in the course catalogs as Professor of History of Science, which'll obviously include history of philosophy, you can't have—and then there's the psychology prof—

AJ: Karl Deutsch [Professor of History] was another one who was very important.

FL: Oh, okay. All right.

AJ: He was also, like de Santi[llana]—he taught the second semester of the history of philosophy, but he was an economics—history of economics and economic philosophy.

FL: Uh-huh. Do you want to talk a little bit about the history of philosophy courses, and just what—?

AJ: Well, it was a two-semester course, and I loved it! [laughs] I mean it really—it was a—it really turned me on, and—. I mean, the whole—oh, I never took anything with Greene. I knew him. But I mean, I had frequent contact with him.

FL: Okay.

AJ: But I never actually took any courses with him. And I don't remember who I—there was a freshman English course which I took, which Greene was part of that group. And I don't remember who taught that, but that was kind of a, basically a writing course. But the really meaty stuff started in my sophomore year, which was the two philosophy courses. First semester was de Santillana, and the second semester was Deutsch. And then in my third year, it was—I took an economics course with George Schultz [former U.S. Secretary of State, taught at MIT 1946-57].

FL: No kidding! Our, our—

AJ: Yeah! He was—and a psychology course with McGregor.

FL: Wow. So the history of philosophy courses—were there particular ideas or thinkers that you got familiar with that have kind of stayed with you?

AJ: Well, it was just all new stuff me. I did a lot of reading, extensive reading. Both de Santillana and Deutsch were inspiring professors, and it was a small—you know, it wasn't a big lecture course; it was a small class, so it was a very intimate kind of situation, and quite unlike anything I had ever had before. It was a great relief from my technical courses [laughs], and part of the reason I was attracted to this mysterious graduate program that I got into, the organizational behavior thing. I mean, they didn't even know how to describe it. It was—I call it mysterious because it had no real name, and they were only acc—they only accepted—I think there were only twelve of us in this program, twelve or fourteen, something like that. And it was sort of presented as an attempt to integrate economics, industrial relations, and social sciences; I mean, very mushy.

And—but the reason I was attracted to it was that—was McGregor was running it, and Deutsch was involved, and a couple of other people whom I'd—had—oh, and another thing, too. I used to hang out—there was a small group of us that used to sort of hang out at Norbert Wiener's [Professor of Mathematics] office, and talk about all kinds of stuff. And as—some of the other people in the Math Department were—I was kind of a hanger-on to as well. I mean, I was a commuter, and I was—I did all my studying here, mostly in the Music Library, all my homework and everything!

FL: [laughs]

AJ: And so I used to hang—you know, I had all—I was here from like 8:15 in the morning to, often 'til ten o'clock at night. And I was very involved in a number of extracurricular things, like the Glee Club and *The Tech* in particular. Those are the two kind of time-consuming—and the orchestra, later. And so I was around, you know, all day! And so I had opportunities to sort of hang out in various places. [laughs] And so there was a sort of a funny little group that was attached to Norbert Wiener. Oliver Selfridge [MIT class of 1945]—is that a name that rings any bell?

FL: Oh, I've seen the name someplace. Didn't he write some lyrics for a show that you had done?

AJ: No.

FL: No?

AJ: Oh, well maybe he did!

FL: There was a thing called the “Concord Town Meeting” or something? It was a name—

AJ: Oh, no, that was a show that my wife [June Judson] and I did later.

FL: But there was a Selfridge. There was a name; it said O. Selfridge on that.

AJ: Oh, that is—yeah, I guess that is Oliver Selfridge, yeah.

FL: Okay.

AJ: That's right too, because I encountered him later on. He was a resident of the town of Lincoln.

FL: Okay, it was the “Lincoln Town Meeting,” not Concord?

AJ: Yeah, yeah, yeah, right, right, yeah.

FL: Okay.

AJ: But I first met him as one of the little group of hangers-on with Norbert Wiener. Another guy was Wally Pitts [Walter Pitts, logician, associate of Norbert Wiener]; I don't know [unclear]. These were all sort of boy genius types [laughs], who were attracted to mathematics, especially. But we were also—I mean, one of the—that was, you know, when the bomb was dropped, and the Manhattan Project became known—this was in my senior year. And Wiener was very vocal about being anti-nuclear. I mean, he was probably one of the pioneers of the anti-nuclear movement! And it was very unfashionable to be anti-nuclear in those days. So, that was a subject of considerable discussion at the time. So we were into politics, and you know, all kinds of stuff. And so, I really had a very lively, varied group of contacts and so on, while I was here as an undergraduate.

FL: Mmm-hmm.

AJ: And that continued as I got into the graduate program.

FL: So MIT's—

AJ: So anyway, so the bottom line was that it was the humanities, really, that was instrumental in undermining my commitment to become an engineer! [laughs]

FL: [laughs]

AJ: So, and you know, and in my senior year was when I met my wife, and her father was a doctor, a general practitioner, but he was also, had just come out of the Navy, in World War Two, where he had done neurology and was transitioning to psychiatry. So he was very involved—well, Boston was a very lively scene of psychoanalysis. There was a big group of psychoanalysts in Boston, and there was a number of very fascinating lectures which were sponsored by the Boston Psychoanalytic Institute [Boston Psychoanalytic Society and Institute], by leading psychoanalysts and psychiatrists in the area. And my father-in-law-to-be schlepped me with him to attend these lectures, which coincided—this was when I was in graduate school, and that—or, when I was beginning to go to graduate school—and it really reinforced my change of orientation from engineering to organizational behavior.

FL: Mm-hm. That's fascinating. So MIT's core educational mission has always been a science based—science/engineering based curriculum, but it's never been strictly a technical school. But for a while, it had narrowed its curriculum where it was mostly an engineering school, even neglecting pure sciences. But it was Karl [Taylor] Compton, President Karl Compton, who broadened the humanities program, but also added more pure science courses, and included more pure scientific research. And I find that fascinating. But over the years, the humanities and arts program have expanded, but still MIT has maintained the science/engineering kind of core curriculum.

From your experience as a student, and some of the things you were just talking about now, in your professional career in business management and consulting, and also your continued life in music, looking back, how do you see the

arts and humanities at MIT as it is in a school that has a science-based curriculum? Do you have any comments about it? I know that's a big subject. That's kind of a hard one, but do you have any comments about that?

AJ: Well, I think it's an absolutely vital piece of the whole MIT curriculum. I'm kind of prejudiced, because my wife is on the MIT Council for the Arts [editor's note: formal name, Council for the Arts at MIT], and she's been on it for like twelve years. And she was recruited at my fiftieth reunion, and—because she was in the theater and so they wanted somebody with her kind of background on the council.

FL: Right.

AJ: And through her activities, you know, contemporary activities on the council, it's very clear that there are a lot of students whose life have been saved by the arts program here! [laughs] Because they have these varied interests, and it's an outlet for these interests. And it's a terrific counterbalance to the technical stuff.

FL: Right, right.

AJ: And I originally, when I first came here, I was thought I wanted to be an aeronautical engineer, and the initial freshman program was uniform for everybody. And I found, in the first semester of my sophomore year, that the courses that really turned me off completely were [laughs] the kind of nuts and bolts courses which were crucial to traditional engineering, like aeronautical engineering. Like “Strength of Materials,” for example—boring! Absolutely boring! You know, it's all loads, formula crap, and all that. I couldn't stand it.

And so that's when I decided that I really didn't want to be an aeronautical engineer, and chemical engineering appealed to me, because it was more mysterious. It had all of these processes that you couldn't see, and you had to sort of theorize about what was going on. You knew what was going in, and you knew what came out, but you didn't know what the hell was going on in between them. The courses, the exams, in chemical engineering, were much more challenging, because they marked you in those days, and probably still do, on your thought processes and method, rather than on the answer. Which is totally different from mechanical engineering as it was then.

FL: Right.

AJ: So I was very happy with the shift to chemical engineering. And then in my junior year, when you'd get very serious about the chemical engineering courses, I got exposed to a professor of colloidal chemistry named Hauser, who was a real character.

FL: What was his first name?

AJ: Ernst Hauser [Ernst A. Hauser, Professor of Chemical Engineering]. He was a German. And colloidal chemistry kind of appealed to me even more, because it was even more mysterious than—! [laughs]

FL: [laughs]

AJ: There was all kinds of weird things going on. So that was—sort of captured my interest, and but, all the other stuff I was doing here, that had nothing to do with technical stuff, was even more interesting to me. So that's what kind of—and then what happens, I was here for, I finished my junior year in two years, because there was no vacation. This was during the war. And so I never had a chance to think about anything. You know, I was just doing, doing, doing, all the time. And then, happily, I got into the Navy. And, this was—didn't I cover this before?

FL: Some of it, yeah.

AJ: Because I don't remember. I don't want to repeat myself. But anyway, the Navy, going into the Navy, was a blessing, because it was an enforced vacation from here. And you know, I had a chance to sort of reflect about a lot of stuff. Then when I came back to MIT on the G.I. Bill, after—I was only in the Navy for a year, because they dropped the bomb right after I finished boot camp. And I was supposed to get a year's training in radar technician stuff. They offered deals to cancel the contract, when they dropped the bomb, because they were committed to giving me this year's program, and they didn't need to do it any more!

So the contract, the deal that I finally had, was to get sent to a Separation Center nearest my home for duty until discharge. That was the—and so I got sent to the Fargo Building, and I did some real crap there for a little while, and then I got transferred to Quonset Point, Rhode Island, where I sort of finished off my year in the Navy. A lot of the time there I spent sailing boats, which I had learned how to do on the Charles River.

FL: [laughs]

AJ: [laughs] But anyway, that was my secret. But when I came back, the idea of becoming an engineer suddenly lost its appeal completely. You know, I hadn't really thought about it. It was just sort of an unconscious process. And I really didn't know what the hell I wanted to do. And all of a sudden this—I heard rumors about this new graduate program in organizational behavior. And because of the people who were associated with it, and the kinds of stuff that was involved, which I really didn't know much about—but it all sounded a lot better than engineering, and it all sort of fit the kind of trajectory I was unconsciously moving toward. And all of that was really fueled by my interest in the humanities and all the extracurricular stuff I was doing.

FL: Right.

AJ: So that's—and none of this would have happened if they didn't have a good humanities program! [laughs]

FL: That's amazing. When you were a student in the late forties, do you recall fellow students' views about, particularly, the arts and the music that was going on? Was there—what was their—?

AJ: Well, I mean, my buddies, who were all people who were like-minded, and they, all of them were unhappy campers, from a point of view of traditional engineering. I mean, for example, the president of the my class, Norm Holland [Norman N. Holland, class of 1947], who was in electrical engineering, and he was—had—probably, some of the best marks in his class. But he was a writer and a poet, and he was only here at

MIT because his father was a patent attorney and was forcing him to follow in his footsteps, which he didn't want to do, but he did.

And so what happened to him was, I think, very revealing. I mean, he was—he got his degree in electrical engineering. He was accepted to Harvard Law School, and he got his lawyer's degree, and he became a patent attorney for just long enough to save up some money to go back to graduate school at Harvard, where he got a Ph.D. in Literature. And he's become a very distinguished professor of literature [Professor of English at MIT] ever since! And he ran a very, very popular, successful program in the fifties called "The Shakespearean Imagination" on WGBH. This was in the very early days, and he hired my wife to act in a few illustrative scenes which he had on his program.

FL: Wow!

AJ: He used to get fan mail from all kinds of people—unbelievable! And he wrote some pioneering works in analysis of Shakespearean characters. He was psychoanalyzed, also, and so he had a very psychoanalytic point of view, in terms of character—kinds of Shakespearean characters. So he was a very—one of my best friends here. And a lot of my other friends were also heavily into non-technical stuff. [coughs] I mean, the guy who wrote the lyrics to the [MIT] Tech Show, Jack Kiefer [MIT class of 1947], was also very—very interested in writing, and you know, he was here mainly because his parents pressured him into becoming a—learning a trade, that kind of thing. But he wouldn't have been here otherwise.

FL: What did he go on to do professionally after? Did he—

AJ: I don't really know. He died fairly young, and so I don't remember. I didn't really maintain contact. One of my other very good friends, however, whom I'm still very good friends with, did become—got a Ph.D. in mechanical engineering, finally, but he was heavily into music, and he—but not from a performing point of view, just from an appreciation point of view.

FL: What was his name?

AJ: Fred Ehrich. And he's on a—he's still got a faculty appointment here. [Fredric F. Ehrich, Senior Lecturer in the MIT Department of Aeronautics and Astronautics as of September 2008.]

FL: The *MIT Tech* newspaper, May 2nd, 1947, had an article and it mentions the formation of a new student organization called the MIT Liberal Arts Society. And they were—their purpose was to publish a literary magazine. Did you know about that?

AJ: I don't remember, really.

FL: I wondered if anything came of it. I haven't had a chance to see if there's any—

AJ: Probably Norm—Norm Holland must have been involved in that, because I would imagine he would have been a seminal figure in that.

FL: There seemed to be something in the air on campus: lots of discussions of articles in the *MIT Tech* newspaper, editorials concerning the liberal arts. Even in *Technology Review*, MIT's magazine, there are articles about the need for the humanities—

AJ: There was real ferment in that, because the subject of “A Liberal Life” was all about it.

FL: That's it, right.

AJ: And that didn't come out of nowhere. I mean, that was Kiefer's idea; he wrote the libretto.

FL: Right, right.

AJ: And so that was emblematic, I think, of what was going on.

FL: Right, there was a lot of that going on.

AJ: Yeah.

FL: So, we'll get more into the '47 Tech Show, as you said.

AJ: Well, there was also some funny crossovers that kept happening. I went to a performance of *R.U.R.* [*Rossum's Universal Robots*], the play by Karel Čapek, you know, about robots. That was the original play. And Norbert Wiener appeared on stage before, and demonstrated a little robot that [laughs]—he was manipulating an antenna-driven device!

FL: Oh my goodness!

AJ: And I mean, [laughs] this was not an MIT production. This was some theater company in Boston that did it, but somehow they got Norbert [Wiener] involved in it!

FL: My goodness! Wow!

## **2. Music in Boston at mid-century (26:51—CD1 26:51)**

FL: So to move on to another subject, music in Boston in the 1940's and 50's was a really interesting time, for not only Boston but the country at large. Serge Koussevitzky was still conducting. He finished in 1949, and Charles Munch, 1949 through '61.

AJ: Right.

FL: Koussevitzky's strong advocacy of American and Boston-area composers, such as Walter Piston, was significant. This really challenged the predominant view that classical music can only be composed by Europeans from Germany, France, and Italy.

AJ: Yes.

FL: He also gave performances of important European works as well. As we talked about in your last interview, you had studied with Walter Piston. In the classes, was the subject of American classical music discussed, this whole issue? Because it still seemed to be somewhat of a radical idea about classical music by Americans. Was that discussed at all?

- AJ: No. This course that I took with Piston was very focused. I mean, all he did was we wrote things, brought it into the class, listened to it, and commented on it. And that's what it was.
- FL: I just wondered, if just in the course of conversation, if these things came up? Maybe not as an official course—
- AJ: No, it was never—I think it was sort of taken for granted. This was '48 that I took this thing with Piston. And I think it was taken—it was already apparent that there was some pretty good American music being written and played. And so I don't think it was a cause anymore, at that point.
- FL: Because among music critics, it was still controversial.
- AJ: Oh, well—music critics.
- FL: It was still a big deal, and Koussevitzky ran into lots of problems, even with programming stuff at the BSO. And there was a lot of push-back. When you were kind of involved in a—it seemed like that, as you said, it was just kind of taken for granted, but I just wondered. That in itself is interesting.
- AJ: There was a small group of us that went regularly to the BSO Friday afternoon concerts, rush. We would wait in line, and go.
- FL: Right.
- AJ: And so that's when we heard all this stuff. And it was very exciting! I mean, we did this for several years, and this is when I heard the [Béla] Bartók premiere, and lots of other premieres: Marc Blitzstein's *Airborne Symphony*.
- FL: Wow! Did you get a sense that classical music was changing? Did you kind of think of it in that way, when you were hearing some this, these new American works that were quite different from the European tradition? Were you consciously thinking, "American classical music is changing the"—
- AJ: Well, I was already attuned to that, because I've heard a lot of this stuff on records here at the library. I mean, there were a few people that really sort of grabbed me. Roy Harris was one.
- FL: Mm-hm. And there was a lot of premieres that the BSO did of his work.
- AJ: Yeah. And I mean, he had a very distinctive sound, American, you know, like [Aaron] Copland.
- FL: Right.
- AJ: And the thing that—another experience which I had earlier, which really was an eye-opener was I went to *On the Town* by [Leonard] Bernstein. This was when I was still in the Navy, and I was on leave when I went, got into this, you know, the opening. Not the very opening, but it was the opening run. And that was a revelatory experience, because it was very different from the kind of more traditional music which had preceded it. And it was a very fresh and exciting sound, and that influenced *A Liberal Life* a lot.

FL: You were saying in earlier conversations that it was some of the jazz elements in that that—

AJ: Yeah. Well, yes, the jazz elements.

FL: Mm-hm. We'll get more into that subject in just a little bit. Were you at the Boston Symphony premiere of the Copland *Third Symphony* in 1946?

AJ: I think so. Yeah, I think I was there.

FL: What about some of the premieres of some of the Walter Piston symphonies?

AJ: Yeah, yeah, I think I heard—

FL: Do you have any comments about kind of being at the BSO for some of those premieres? Just—

AJ: I don't know.

FL: Yeah.

AJ: [pause] You know, there were a few—there were not too many that really kind of stood out, as—oh, another one that really grabbed me was the [Arthur] Honegger *String Symphony* [*Symphonie pour cordes*].

FL: Oh, interesting!

AJ: Yeah, you know, with the three trumpets coming in at the very end.

FL: Right.

AJ: And I really liked that a lot.

FL: So, and you had mentioned they had the premiere of the Bartók *Concerto for Orchestra* in 1944.

AJ: Yeah.

FL: Was that seen kind of locally as a big event? Were people kind of talking about it, or was this just another premiere of another—?

AJ: I think at the time it was just another premiere.

FL: Yeah, mm-hm. And as you mentioned just a little bit ago, you got familiar with a lot of contemporary music here at the MIT Music Library.

AJ: Yeah, right.

FL: Besides going to hear new works at the Boston Symphony, were there other local venues for hearing new music that you recall, or that you went to?

AJ: Well, I wasn't particularly, at that point I wasn't that taken with chamber music. That came later. I was really pretty much focused on symphonic stuff during, while I was here, and—symphonic stuff, and some choral stuff, too. But, you know, big scale stuff. And I guess that's the immaturity of youth! [laughs]

FL: [laughs]

AJ: But [pause] and you know, my time availability, the time that I had to do this kind of stuff was still pretty limited, because I was heavily still a student, and you know, doing all this other stuff.

FL: Right.

AJ: And also, I didn't have much money, so I had to limit what I did to carefully selected events. That was—so in the four [years] the BSO was really kind of the main scene.

FL: So you mentioned that you have a keen interest in jazz. When did that come about, and how did that come about?

AJ: I'm trying to remember. [pause] I mean, it developed also while I was at MIT, but I don't know how it started.

FL: Were there any jazz records in the Music Library at the time?

AJ: I don't remember. I don't think so. But I mean, I don't recall sort of listening to jazz here, in the library. I think I really got interested in jazz when I was dating, with my wife-to-be, and we used to go a lot to hear live jazz. There were lots of places in Boston—well, not lots of places, but there were a few very good places. The Savoy, we used to go to the Savoy [Savoy Café] a lot.

FL: Right, you've mentioned that.

AJ: And that was mostly, at that time, traditional jazz. I mean, New Orleans stuff.

FL: Like Sidney Bechet? He did a long run there.

AJ: Yes, yeah, right, right. He was there what, almost a year, unbelievable.

FL: Right.

AJ: [pause] And then I started—yeah, but then we also, there was also some other places. We heard Dave Brubeck at a very early stage, and that was an exciting experience. There was a place in Kenmore Square where he appeared. It was a very sparsely filled room! [laughs]

FL: Do you remember what the place was called?

AJ: It was where the Brunswick [Hotel]—you know, the corner of where Brookline Avenue [in Boston] goes up? You know, right on the corner there.

FL: Oh, uh-huh.

AJ: And there was a jazz place there.

FL: Wow! I'll have to look up and see what the name of that place might have been.

AJ: And then, the interest in jazz really started then, started in the late forties, and then I started buying records like crazy. At a pretty early stage I got turned on to Thelonious Monk, which was a revelatory experience.

FL: Mm-hm.

AJ: And the Modern Jazz Quartet. And we went to one of the first Newport—I think the second Newport Jazz Festival, but that's later; that's '55, I think it was. And we met Dizzy Gillespie and had a chance to have a little interchange with him.

FL: Wow!

AJ: And also, Monk was there.

FL: Wow, did you talk at all with Monk?

AJ: Well, one doesn't talk to him! [laughs]

FL: No, he's a cryptic figure, but—[laughs]

AJ: Yes, yeah. So the jazz, the major interest in jazz—oh, and then I had a friend that—when we moved to Concord [Massachusetts] in '55, there was a, we made friends with a guy who was a major jazz buff. He was a painter, and he painted jazz artists.

FL: What was his name?

AJ: Dick Freniere [E. Richard Freniere]. And he and my wife—he was a very good dancer, and they did a jazz—a program called “History of Jazz Dance,” in which they demonstrated stuff from the turkey trot onward. And I put together all the music, and was the disc jockey and the narrator for this dance program.

FL: Wow! You mentioned to me in a phone conversation about playing some what you called atonal jazz with a group called The Wreckers?

AJ: Oh, yeah, it was a Polish group. This was after the friend—actually, this guy Freniere, they had a sort of a lawn party. Most of the socializing that went on at that stage in our lives was going to other people's houses, dinner parties or lawn parties, that kind of activity. So he threw this party in which he got this Polish group that happened to be touring in Boston at the time. And they appeared, and so I had a chance to sit in with them. That was only a one time experience. But I had another friend who was a sort of an amateur pianist, and we did four-handed improvised stuff, and that was sort of atonal jazz.

FL: With that, were you working from any charts, or anything like that? Or was that kind of more free jazz? The two piano stuff?

AJ: No, it was one piano, four hands.

FL: Oh, piano, four—I'm sorry. But were you working from charts, or were you, was it—?

AJ: No, no, no, no charts. No, it was all off the top of the head.

FL: Mm-hm. Did you ever hear the Herb Pomeroy Orchestra?

AJ: Oh, sure!

FL: You know that he taught here at MIT from 1963 to 1985.

AJ: Oh, I didn't know that.

FL: He started the MIT Festival Jazz Ensemble.

AJ: Yeah, see, well I was living in England at that time, so I didn't—but I knew him from—I had heard him before we moved to England.

FL: Mm-hm.

AJ: Yeah, he was a major figure in the Boston scene.

FL: Yeah.

AJ: And we also know The Aardvark [The Aardvark Jazz Orchestra].

FL: Yeah, Mark Harvey [music director of the Aardvark Jazz Orchestra and Lecturer in Music at MIT].

AJ: Mark Harvey, yeah.

FL: Yeah, I've gone to many of their concerts, and actually been a recording engineer for some of their concerts, and stuff like that. So you actually know Mark Harvey? That's great!

AJ: Yeah, actually my wife knows him better than I do. She's had some involvement with—I've forgotten what the context was.

### 3. Influences as a composer (41:55—CD1 41:55)

FL: So, to radically change the subject, or at least to some degree—

AJ: [laughs]

FL: —in a previous phone conversation, you mentioned you had some thoughts on the music of Arnold Schoenberg and serialism. A little bit of kind of prefatory comments here: in your classes with Walter Piston, was the music of Schoenberg discussed at all? Did the students talk about it? Or was that—?

AJ: Oh, yeah, yeah. I mean, I don't think anybody in the class was very gung-ho twelve-tonal compositional style. I mean, [pause] so, and Piston certainly was not an enthusiastic supporter of that then. So we really never got into it, that I can recall.

FL: So here's an interesting thing about Piston with twelve-tone music: he had some reservations about twelve-tone theory and serial theory, but he did write a few pieces actually using twelve-tone technique. There's a variation movement of the *Partita for Violin, Viola and Organ*, and another organ piece called *Chromatic Study on the Name of Bach*. It seemed like—there's an article that he wrote called, "More Views on Serialism." It was from 1958. He seemed to have an open-minded attitude towards that.

AJ: Yeah, he was very eclectic in his—he didn't have any major—the only big prejudice he seemed to have, that I can recall, was that he was not at all keen about what he called extramusical ideas, namely tone poems, and the things with literary—so he was certainly not in favor of pursuing the Richard Strauss approach to composition. But that was about—that was the only thing I can remember that he really had some pretty strong views against. And the twelve-tone stuff never really came up in that context.

FL: Just, here is, quoting from his article, he said that his difficulty was not the systematic ordering of the twelve-tones, rather it was the lack of perceived harmonic rhythm. And I quote him exactly [reads]: "Harmonic rhythm, the rhythm of root change, seems to be lost to the music of twelve-tone technique. The constant presence of all

twelve-tones creates a motionless harmonic texture, just as it previously did in styles of overdone chromaticism, like Richard Strauss.”

AJ: Yeah. Yeah, well the way—I mean, I am—I’ve never been a fan of twelve-tone stuff, but my objection to it is based on the impact on the listener. And that is that it’s anxiety-producing, I think, which—and, it never seems to go anywhere. You know, it, one has the feeling that it’s meandering. And I have that kind of feeling about other composers that preceded twelve-tone, like [Frederick] Delius, for example, who’s very meandering in his—but it’s also Wagnerian. You know, the whole, this is all comes from [Richard] Wagner.

And I feel very strongly that the architectural element in music is a very important piece of what makes it a satisfying aesthetic experience. And if you destroy that, or replace it with something that has the effect of removing the feeling that you’re going anywhere, [laughs] that you’re just sort of aimlessly seeking—I mean, once in a while I can see doing that [pause] as an interesting essay on something different. But to make a whole—to make that everything you do is like that, I think is awful.

And so I think it was a real disaster, in terms of its impact on composition. And I think it’s a dead end for that reason, and I think that’s proven historically to be the case, because, you know, I think the number of people who really are still practicing that have dwindled away. But it had a terrible effect on me, because for a lot of my actively—when I was still actively writing stuff, it discouraged me, because, you know, everybody seemed to be hot about twelve-tone music, and it was, it had an enormous appeal to academia, and to grant writers, and all of that kind of stuff. And I just sort of said, “Fuck it,” you know. I didn’t want to get into that.

FL: There are so many composers, like yourself, who were devastated by that.

AJ: Yeah. Because I think, I mean, when all is said and done, music has to create in the listener a satisfying emotional experience. And if it isn’t satisfying, what’s the point?

FL: Yeah.

AJ: I mean, you know, I have a fairly broad definition of what potentially is, you know, could be satisfying, but, including some anxiety-producing segments. But, you know, you have to end up with a feeling that you’ve been on a voyage, and you’ve, you know, been somewhere, and ended up somewhere. If that’s been removed, what’s the point?

FL: Mm-hm. So you mentioned Alban Berg, who was also a student of Schoenberg, but you mentioned that there’s some pieces of Alban Berg that you like. What’s different about Berg’s music that appeals to you, that you’re not finding in Schoenberg?

AJ: Well, [pause] he’s an apostate twelve-tonalist! [laughs] He didn’t stick to the religiously pure theory. And that’s why I think his music is much more satisfying. I mean, it’s emotionally often horrendously difficult, you know, but it’s powerful. I mean, *Wozzeck* is a terrific opera! And we saw a wonderful production of it, by the Hamburg Opera Company, when we lived in London. It was absolutely terrific experience.

FL: Do you know the *Violin Concerto*?

AJ: And I love the *Violin Concerto*! That's another one. There aren't that many. He didn't write that many things that are well-known, or that are that often performed.

FL: Right. In an earlier phone conversation, you mentioned that you've played some of the piano music of Henry Cowell. How much of his music did you get to know?

AJ: Well, I didn't play it; I haven't played it myself. Oh, no, no, just on records.

FL: Okay, uh-huh.

AJ: Yeah, well he's a lot of fun. There's a strong folk kind of element in his music. I don't know, he's sort of lost any popularity. I mean, he's sort of out of the picture now.

FL: He kind of comes and goes.

AJ: Yeah. Harrison is somebody I like.

FL: Lou Harrison?

AJ: Lou Harrison, yeah.

FL: Yeah, yeah, wonderful composer. Somebody who's dropped off the radar scope, but recently, in the last few years, is coming back again, is somebody named Leo Ornstein. Were you familiar?

AJ: I've heard—not very familiar. I've heard a little bit. He was early.

FL: That's right.

AJ: I mean, he was sort of turn of the century.

FL: Right. He lived 'til he was a hundred and five, or something like that. He just died a few years ago.

AJ: Really?

FL: But it was after the 1930's, he just kind of dropped off the scene.

AJ: Yeah, right.

FL: But there's a new biography out of him, and I just, I've heard some recent performances of his music. I just wondered if at your time, if you had known any of his music. Somebody during your, particularly your student days, who wasn't particularly well-known, but has gone on—his star continues to rise—the music of Charles Ives.

AJ: Oh, yeah, oh I love Ives. I think he's good. Well, Ives, you know, is sort of a hero of mine, because he, like me, was not a professional—I mean, that was not his major—

FL: Right, he was in the insurance business.

AJ: Yeah, and apparently he was very good at it, too, which surprised me when I learned that! [laughs] But I mean, he's certainly an odd-ball, a unique, original voice.

FL: What are some of the Ives pieces that you've particularly liked? You know the *Concord Sonata*, the *Second Piano Sonata* [*Piano Sonata no.2; Concord, Mass 1840-1860*]?

AJ: Yeah, I'm not too crazy about that, but I love his *Second* and *Third Symphonies*.

FL: Mm-hm.

AJ: And some of his songs are wonderful; I love those songs.

FL: Those are great. Did you ever play piano for a singer for any of the Ives songs?

AJ: No.

FL: No. The music of Aaron Copland—is there any—is he somebody that you're interested in?

AJ: Well, he's a lot more varied than—I mean, his major popular stuff is very similar, but there are some others things which he's written which are much knottier and—

FL: Like the *Piano Quintet* [interviewer meant "Piano Quartet" (*Quartet for Piano and Strings*)]. That's actually, he—

AJ: Yeah, and the *Piano Sonata*.

FL: Yeah, right, and the *Piano Variations*.

AJ: Yeah.

FL: And there's a piano trio that uses quarter tones. I don't know if you know that piece or not.

AJ: No. And his earlier stuff, that he wrote in the twenties, that organ—symphony with organ—

FL: That's right, yeah.

AJ: And there's some music for the theater.

FL: And there's a, sort of an organ piece, that's really dissonant, that doesn't sound at all like the Copland of later years. I was quite surprised; it's a really good piece. You mentioned that you've played some George Gershwin. Which Gershwin pieces have you played?

AJ: I've played the *Preludes*, and I played the *Concerto in F* [*Concerto in F for Piano and Orchestra*] with an orchestra.

FL: Oh you did?

AJ: Yeah.

FL: Do you remember which orchestra that was?

AJ: Oh god, it was not—

FL: Was it here in Boston?

AJ: Yeah, oh yeah. [pause] I'm not sure it was ever—I think we just did a bit of it. It wasn't an official performance. But I did learn it, and I'm currently, actually, working on the solo piano version of the "Rhapsody in Blue" which he did, which is very—

FL: Wow.

AJ: And then I love his show music. He has written a number of improvisations on his show stuff, which I think are his best things, really.

FL: I don't know much of those, other than there's a solo piano piece, or a piano and orchestra piece, based upon "I Got Rhythm," [*I got rhythm variation: for piano and orchestra*] which I've heard recently.

AJ: No, these are just for solo piano.

FL: Yeah, right. I don't know those others. Have you played any ragtime?

AJ: Yeah, oh yeah. Scott Joplin. Yeah, I enjoy that.

#### **4. Early compositions (56:01—CD2 00:01)**

FL: So you mentioned being really inspired by hearing *On the Town* by Leonard Bernstein, and you said that the jazz elements really caught your eye. What was it about jazz that interested you to use some of those elements in your music? Can you talk about that? Because there's traces of that in your music, some jazz inspiration; there's that—

AJ: Well, the dance thing, *Thixotropy*, is very—

FL: Absolutely, yeah. We'll get more into that in a minute. Were there some other pieces that had a real direct influence?

AJ: No, I don't think so.

FL: Mm-hm.

AJ: But I enjoyed fooling around with improvisation and stuff, which I've done on and off, with or without audiences. [laughs]

FL: So, just a couple more questions about your studies with Walter Piston. You know, as a composer, his music is distinctive for its clarity of lines and textures, and intricate counterpoint, and vital rhythms. Were any of those things that you kind of took with you as a composer? Any values from that that were close to you?

AJ: Yeah, I think all of those things!

FL: Mm-hm.

AJ: I mean, I have always been attracted to music that had a strong structural element to it, and that's why Beethoven still remains my all time favorite. I mean, you know, it's hard to beat him in that regard, the whole economy of ideas—I mean, he does a lot with a little. And so does Stravinsky—that's another guy who I admire for not squandering the ideas. You're doing a lot with a limited number of ideas.

FL: Mm-hm, and your music certainly shows that, too. When you were taking these classes with Walter Piston, what pieces did you write? Do you remember?

AJ: Well, yeah. The first thing I wrote [laughs] was a duet for trumpet and trombone!

FL: Yeah, I saw that in your manuscripts there, uh-huh.

AJ: And I got two guys to play it, and I brought it into class and they did it live, which was fun. That's a fairly craggy piece. And I also wrote a sonata for trumpet and piano, which, at that time—[pause]. I think [pause] I don't remember what else. Maybe some songs and stuff like that.

FL: Uh-huh. Who was the trumpet player for the sonata? Was it somebody in the class?

AJ: No! No, no, no. Marty Lesser was his name. He was a professional trumpet player. I think he was—I found him at the Conservatory, the Conservatory Orchestra [the New England Conservatory].

FL: How about the trombonist for the trumpet and trombone piece?

AJ: Yeah, I don't remember who I got for that. I think Marty found him. I sort of relied on him to find the trombonist.

FL: Mm-hm. Your orchestra piece, *Prelude and Allegro*—

AJ: Yeah.

FL: —did you work with Piston at all on that?

AJ: No, no, that was after that.

FL: That was after that. Did you write any orchestra pieces while you were taking the classes with Piston?

AJ: No, they were all small scale stuff.

FL: So the *Prelude and Allegro*, that's your big, your first kind of solo orchestra piece?

AJ: Yeah, I think that's really the only full orchestra thing that I wrote, that was completed. I started a number of things that I never—but I gravitated toward dance and theater stuff because I knew it would be performed. Even if I had to do it, you know, find instrumentalists myself, and conduct them, you know, which I often did. But to find, to get other people to play my stuff, major—I remember having a meeting with Lukas Foss [composer, conductor, and pianist] at one point, where he was the—I've forgotten what his role was at the time with the BSO. But I got an interview with him.

FL: He was a pianist with them for a while.

AJ: Yeah, he was the pianist, but I mean later he had some other role. And I had a—you know, I was trying to promote, find somebody who might be interested in performing some of the stuff I wrote, and it was very discouraging, in terms of getting anybody to even think about looking at it seriously, you know. He talked about piles of stuff that people send in, and he never gets to see any of it. So, it was really that that sort of got me to search for another way of getting, or hearing what I'd written. Because you don't learn anything unless you hear it. It doesn't necessarily match what you think it's going to sound like, on paper, until you hear it.

FL: Right.

AJ: And so I got involved with a—I first got involved with a dancer who was a choreographer in where we lived, in Concord. And she and I collaborated on—

FL: That was Martha Baird, right?

AJ: No, no, no, this was before Martha. No, Martin, her name was, Caroline Martin. And I wrote this thing called *Leaving Behind Him* which was for cello and piano. That was done—she was a modern dance, Martha Graham type. That was done on WBU [WBUR]—on television. GBH [WGBH], I guess it was. And I was interviewed by somebody, and [unclear]. But it was nice; it was fun. And that kind of got me more and more interested in dancing. I spend two summers—this was in the fifties—working as a rehearsal pianist, on a volunteer basis, with two Martha Graham stars who came to Boston and gave a summer seminar in jazz dance. And I'd sort of improvise, while they did the thing—class. And I did that to sort of learn more about choreography and dance, and so on, and it was a very useful experience.

And there was a very lively dance scene in Boston at the time, and they—I've forgotten the name of that; it wasn't the Dance Collective, it was something like that—that got the Graham Company to send these two people—not at the same time. One came one summer, the other person came the following summer. And I got involved with that.

FL: Mm-hm.

AJ: And then the Martha Baird thing sort of grew out of that as well.

FL: I wondered how that—

AJ: And the lead dancer was Gus Solomons, who now had—who was an MIT—

FL: Right, class of 1961.

AJ: Yeah, and he subsequently had his own company. I just bumped into him recently.

FL: Wow!

AJ: At a Cultural Council event [laughs].

FL: My! Just a couple more technical things about your own music. Looking at some of your scores, a lot of the pieces don't have key signatures, but your harmonies are still based upon thirds. There are some dissonant passages, but overall, it's consonant, if you want to kind of roughly summarize it. Talk about how you were thinking about, how you think about harmony, and kind of what you, how you were using harmony.

AJ: Well, I would sort of—I think there was—I would characterize it as polytonal, for the most part. I never got hooked on key signatures, particularly.

FL: Mm-hm.

AJ: But [pause] I also, you know, in, my education in music was so disorganized, in a way. I mean, I started out just being a piano student, and performing. And for most of that time, I really didn't learn much about music theory at all. And then toward the end of—I'm talking about when I was a kid. You know, I was just taking lessons from a piano teacher, but we never really talked about theory at all. But toward the end of that, I did take a course in harmony, privately, with a guy.

FL: Who was that?

AJ: This was somebody in Brockton named Dominic Procopio, was his name—very nice guy. And I also took a course in—well, no, I, that was, yeah, that was harmony, really, was a—and that’s about the only formal training I had before starting with Piston. I mean, the fact that he accepted me was astonishing! Because I was really not particularly well prepared.

Then subsequently, then I had this, after Piston—I don’t know if I mentioned this. My wife was at Brown and we got married between her junior and senior year, and I used to hang out at the Music Department at Brown. And they assumed I was a registered student, so I took courses! [laughs] And I took a counterpoint course there, which was the first time I had done that. But I did a lot of reading, you know, I read Piston’s books on harmony and counterpoint. But it was a very unorganized kind of training. But as a result of that, I never really thought about, you know, the formal aspects. It was more by feel than by conscious theoretical preconceptions.

FL: Mm-hm. So the last interview, we—

AJ: Well, and what informed my approach to composition more than anything is music that I had heard, that I liked, you know, I mean, and attempts to sort of emulate things that I found satisfying. So, [pause] I would remember passages from Stravinsky, or passages from Honegger, or you know, that kind of thing, or Mahler or whatever, and try to do things that were in that spirit. You know, that probably influenced me more than an attempt to have a preconceived theoretical concept which I then tried to develop. Does that make any—?

FL: Sure, absolutely! Absolutely.

## **5. MIT Tech Show (1:09:52—CD2 13:52)**

FL: In the previous interview, we talked somewhat about your involvement with the 1947 Tech Show. I have some things that I was able to find, some back issues of the MIT *Tech*, that might jog some memory for you, and I want to ask you about. And the Tech Show had been defunct since 1931.

AJ: ’31?

FL: That’s what I’m finding in the research that I had done. That was the last that had been done.

AJ: Oh, I thought—I wasn’t aware of that. I thought that it had just ceased during the war.

FL: No.

AJ: But I thought that it was going on—oh!

FL: No.

AJ: Well, we decided to revive it. I mean, we being Jack Kiefer and myself.

FL: Right.

AJ: We did, you know, it was all our doing.

FL: Right. There's an article, October 18<sup>th</sup>, 1946, in *The Tech*, and the title of the article is "Revival of Musical Review is Subject of Undergrad Referendum October 23<sup>rd</sup>." And the article goes on to say that somebody named Robert Hildebrand, class of— [1947]

AJ: Oh, yeah, Bob. Yeah, that's right.

FL: —was chair of the committee investigating the revival.

AJ: Yeah, Bob was head of the Interfraternity Council at the time.

FL: So do you remember anything about this referendum that he did?

AJ: No! [laughs] But I'm not surprised, because Bob was a sort of a politician. And he was in my class, and a very active guy, you know, big man on campus type.

FL: Mm-hm.

AJ: And I think it was—yeah, he probably thought this would—he probably heard about it and thought it would be a good idea or something.

FL: So it sounds like you and Jack Kiefer and Bob were kind of the people getting this thing off the ground?

AJ: Yeah.

FL: It's also interesting, in the same article—this is to quote from the article exactly: [reads] "Hildebrand wishes it to be understood that this is not a revival of the old Tech Show, and for the main part, the content will be different." Did you—

AJ: Yes, because I think the old Tech Shows were revue type things. You know, skits, and—

FL: Right.

AJ: Not a real musical comedy.

FL: Okay, but here's the next thing to that point. He says, [reads] "The new revue will differ mainly in that it will consist of a series of acts and presentations held together by a Master of Ceremonies."

AJ: Well, that was not what—

FL: But that's not what happened.

AJ: No.

FL: And that's—*The Tech* shows that. Do you remember having conversations about that?

AJ: No. This is—I'm surprised.

FL: Uh-huh, because originally they didn't, they wanted to make it clear that it was not a revival of the Tech Show. Then, I forgot which issue of *The Tech*, comes out, and says, "Due to prior," what they called, "misunderstandings, it is a revival of the Tech

Show.” They—obviously at some point there was a decision made that you were actually going to revive the Tech Show. And I just wondered if you had—

AJ: Well, I think what we revived was the tradition of having it.

FL: Yeah.

AJ: But what it turned out to be was very different from what they had.

FL: Well, there were some that were not just revues, some of the previous ones. They were actual musical comedies.

AJ: They were?

FL: Yeah, yeah.

AJ: Yeah, I mean, I don’t know anything about that.

FL: Yeah, right.

AJ: All I knew was it hadn’t happened for a while, you know. I didn’t know for how long.

FL: Right. What was really different about the ’47 show was the first time it was not an all-male cast. All the previous ones, even the female roles, were played by men.

AJ: Oh, really?

FL: Yeah.

AJ: Well, that was like the Harvard Hasty Pudding.

FL: Mm-hm. I mean, there are pictures in the old yearbooks of the female characters all dressed up in drag, and nice portraits.

AJ: [laughs]

FL: It’s very funny! Was the issue of the casting—was it just a given that it would just be male-female, or was that even a part of the conversation? When you were figuring out the cast for the ’47 show, was it just a given that it would be male and female?

AJ: Yeah, yeah!

FL: Yeah, it was just a given, yeah.

AJ: But the females were not all from MIT.

FL: Mm-hm.

AJ: I think we got some ringers in from—. But Gerry, the lead, Gerry [Geraldine] Sapolski, was MIT.

FL: Right, right. The program booklet for the show, which you kindly loaned me, in the credits it says “Musical Scores” and it mentions two people: Ed [Edward J.] Kratovil [class of 1948], and Fred Sylvander [class of 1947].

AJ: I have no idea.

FL: Were they involved in maybe copying out parts or something?

AJ: I have no idea.

FL: I wondered what their—

AJ: I don't know, I don't know.

FL: As far as your work with that, did you have any help, or any guidance, on orchestration and stuff like that?

AJ: No, no, I did all my own orchestration!

FL: Yeah, yeah, because it shows a basic grasp of the tunes there, and I just wondered, that's just very astute, and I was really struck by that. The program booklet mentions Faculty Advisors William Greene and Dean Fowler. Do you remember what their involvement might have been, as advisors?

AJ: I don't know. I don't recall what, if any, involvement! [laughs]

FL: Uh-huh. It might have been—some groups at MIT, they need a Faculty Advisor in order to do certain things, but those advisors don't do anything.

AJ: Yeah.

FL: They're just there.

AJ: I don't even know if they were given the script to read beforehand. Maybe they did.

FL: Mm-hm. When you were writing the songs for the show, were there particular models that you kind of had in mind?

AJ: Well, as I said, *On the Town* was a very recent imprint.

## **6. Compositions for the theater (1:16:28—CD2 20:28)**

FL: So, you mentioned how you got interested in writing music for the theater. There's a number of things that you've done. There was *Incidental Music for The Glass Menagerie*.

AJ: Yeah, this was much later now.

FL: Right, right.

AJ: That was—now, the things that I did for the theater—this is when my—really as a result of my wife getting involved in the theater. She had—she really didn't seriously get involved with the theater until after our second daughter was born. And she got interested—this is when we were living in Concord, and she took a course at the DeCordova with a terrific guy who was a professional theater person.

FL: Do you remember who that was?

AJ: Yeah, Jackson Barry was his name. He subsequently ended up on the faculty at the University of Maryland, when that sort of new town was built between Baltimore and Washington. But anyway, he was a very good teacher, and he directed this production of *The Glass Menagerie*, and my wife had the leading role, Amanda. And I noticed in reading, you know, when we were talking about it, that Tennessee Williams called for music, you know, specifically, in the script. So I said, "Oh, I'll do that." And I

hadn't, prior to that I hadn't written anything for the theater at that point, other than—I was interested in doing the dance stuff before.

And so I read the script, and noted very carefully, you know, where the stage directions called for music very specifically. And that's how I did it, and how I got into it. And having—I scored it for trumpet, flute, piano, and percussion, and a couple of other instruments I've forgotten. And the reason I scored it for that was, well, first of all, I think he was specific in mentioning a trumpet or something, in—you know, there's a reference to that. And also, one of my friends was a very good flute player! [laughs] And so I pulled a group together and rehearsed them, and we recorded it. You know, that's how it all happened. That was my first attempt, and it was a very successful experience. And I thought it went very well; people were very complimentary about the music.

And then, as my wife's involvement in the theater blossomed, after that, whenever there was something that either she was involved in directly, or that I heard about through her that involved music, I got into, you know, that's how I did it. So I wrote a lot of stuff for—and they were all local productions. Most of them were not professional productions. Some of them were.

FL: So there was *Death of a Salesman*, *The Cherry Orchard*—

AJ: Yes, yeah.

FL: *Mr. Arcularis*.

AJ: Yeah, that was—*Arcularis* was a very wonderful experience, because Conrad Aiken actually came to the performance!

FL: My goodness!

AJ: And sat in the front row, and cried! Because it's an autobiographical piece, and it's a horrendous story. He found his—he happened upon his mother and his uncle in flagrante delicto on a boat, by a dock, when he was a kid. And it was a really traum—major trauma in his life, and this play was about that.

FL: My!

AJ: So anyway, and so the major, the biggest-scale thing I did for the theater was in Britain. It was a—we were involved with a semi-professional theater called The Questors, and they built a new theater, and Michael Redgrave was sort of Honorary Chairman of the theater. It was a sort of an off-Broadway, semi-professional operation. And they built this new theater, and the Queen Mother was—did I tell you about this?

FL: No, no.

AJ: Oh, she was invited—she came to the opening. And the opening production was [Henrik] Ibsen's *Brand*, which is kind of one of his epics. It's like *Peer Gynt*; it's huge.

FL: Yeah.

AJ: So I wrote a fairly ambitious score for that.

FL: That's a—

AJ: For wind orchestra.

FL: Yeah.

AJ: And also it has a piece for organ in it, because again, it's specified in the play.

FL: There's even a movement that's just organ in there?

AJ: Yeah, yeah, yeah, it opens the third act, or something. And we recorded it with a professional organist at some church in the city of London, and we recorded it at midnight so there wouldn't be any traffic noises! [laughs]

FL: [laughs] Wow! Did I miss it? The name of that theater company?

AJ: Questors.

FL: The Questors, okay.

AJ: Q-U-E-S-T-O-R-S.

FL: Okay. Yeah, that piece looks like your, one of your really big, kind of ambitious pieces. And some really good writing in there.

AJ: Yeah, yeah. Well, so. You know, we had some very good musicians, and it was, you know, we had the luxury of professional quality people.

FL: Fantastic!

AJ: Because most of the time, you know, we had to sort of make do with what we could get together.

FL: You could also write more ambitious music then, too.

AJ: Yeah, yeah.

FL: And that shows in the score there, too. I wondered about that. When you were writing incidental music, were there certain kind of guiding ideas you had about what you were trying to do with the music?

AJ: No. The guiding all came from the play. You know, I mean, what's going on, and what the—the music had—all of the things that I wrote for the theater were specified in the script by the author. For example, in *The Cherry Orchard*, [Anton] Chekhov actually has this whole act with this Jewish orchestra playing in the—offstage. And the characters are coming in and out of this ballroom where this Jewish orchestra is playing offstage. And so, you know, that's pretty clear! [laughs]

FL: Mm-hm.

AJ: And in the *Arcularis* thing, a lot of the play takes place on a ship, a mysterious kind of ship, and it's not clear whether it's real or phantom, or what. But the notion of a ship's orchestra sort of informed that, and I scored it for string—mostly string quartet. And I think a little percussion. Again, I don't remember, but. So, the cues all came from the playwright, because the music was functional and specified by—. The Japanese Noh plays, by, that I wrote, [unclear] by Yukio Mishima, you know, again has, the score was suggested by traditional Japanese classical flute and drum, and a couple of other weird things. So, you know, that's what I did.

## 7. Other compositions and performance (1:25:33—CD2 29:33)

- FL: So we had spoken a little bit ago about your music for dance, and you had worked with Martha Baird, who had a group called Dancemakers. And apparently this was, at least in one of the programs that you loaned me, said it was the first professional modern dance company in New England. And so, you got to know Martha Baird through—what's her name?
- AJ: Caroline Martin?
- FL: Right. Do you know much about Martha Baird, kind of her background? I did some initial research, and I wasn't finding much about her. Do you know, kind of, much about her background?
- AJ: I really don't remember too much about it. She was—there was a kind of an association of—there still is—of modern dance people who used to—there used to be studios on Green Street in Cambridge.
- FL: Right.
- AJ: And that's where they kind of congregated. And there was this informal society of people who were really seriously into modern dance, and Martha was one of them. She was one of the founders of this group. And her company kind of came out of that group. But I don't remember what—much about her background.
- FL: So, there was this performance at Sanders Theater at Harvard University on July 13<sup>th</sup>, 1960. They did a dance to your piece called *Thixotropy*. Can you explain that title?
- AJ: Oh, yeah. That's from my chemical engineering—that's from my Colloidal Chemistry days. A thixotropic substance is a colloidal mix which is solid, apparently solid, but when you step on it, it become fluid. And the most common example of that is mud at the seashore, you know, where the sand is apparently solid, but you step on it and it squishes?
- FL: Yeah.
- AJ: That's a thixotropic gel. And certain clays are thixotropic, because of the particle size, and they remain in suspension surrounded by fluid. But you know, that's an evocative dance idea!
- FL: Absolutely! Absolutely!
- AJ: [laughs]
- FL: When you were working with the choreographer Caroline Martin, what was that collaboration like? Did you write the music first, and she—?
- AJ: No, no, no! We talked about it, I mean she said what kind of a movement she thought she wanted to do next, and sort of—I mean, it was really a very active collaboration. It wasn't—it was to and fro.
- FL: Wow! The program for that concert lists only two musicians, but your—that piece, at least according to your score, is for trumpet, trombone, piano, bass, and percussion.
- AJ: Right.

FL: Who were—do you remember who the other musicians were?

AJ: Well, I was the pianist! [laughs] No, I don't know. I don't remember where I got people from, but you know, I had to find them!

FL: Yeah.

AJ: And usually what happened, I think, I found one, and then that one—I looked, tried to get people, you know, from the Conservatory, that sort. You know, people who had some reasonable proficiency.

FL: Right.

AJ: And usually I found one, and they helped me find the others.

FL: Uh-huh. The only other musician listed in the program book was someone named Masa Fukui? There was a percussion piece on the program, and I'm wondering if that person maybe did the solo percussion piece. I just was wondering.

AJ: It may not have been the one that was on my piece, though.

FL: I mean, they mentioned, the same program mentions this *Thixotropy*. But it didn't list the other musicians, and so that's why I was asking.

AJ: No. Yeah.

FL: Dancemakers also did another piece of yours, January 14<sup>th</sup>, 1961, and the title in the program says "Design for Seven." Is that the name of the dance and the piece? Do you remember what music you used for that?

AJ: No! [laughs] No, I don't remember that at all! That's very odd. Yeah, I don't remember. That's—I'm amazed! I don't know.

FL: Were there some other collaborations that you did that just aren't programs that I've seen, other dance pieces?

AJ: Well, this *Leaving Behind Him* I mentioned?

FL: That's right, yeah.

AJ: That was a fairly extended piece. That was, you know, like, I don't know, a ten or fifteen minute piece.

FL: You said that was with cello and piano?

AJ: Piano and cello, yeah.

FL: Who was the cellist for that?

AJ: I don't remember! Somebody I found.

FL: Wow!

AJ: It was me on the piano.

FL: Wow.

AJ: I mean, another, the music I wrote for *View from the Bridge* was for oboe and piano, and oboist was the number two guy at Polaroid [William J. McCune, Jr., MIT class of 1937, chairman and CEO of Polaroid Corp.], who happened to be an amateur, a very

good amateur oboist. And I sort of seduced him into performing the thing, which he did, and was very good.

FL: Wow. Another example of another engineer, scientist, who happened to be a good musician!

AJ: Yeah.

FL: They seem to be around.

AJ: Well, I used to work at Polaroid.

FL: That's right.

AJ: So I knew him then. He was an interesting guy, and he lived in Lincoln, so you know, it was a natural.

FL: Uh-huh, wow. Were there other musicians, do you remember, working at Polaroid at the time?

AJ: Hmm. Nobody that stands out in my mind, but there probably—I'm sure there were.

FL: Mm-hm. Talking about some of your other music, there's a "Concertino for Piano and Orchestra."

AJ: Well, I never finished it. That's an unfinished piece.

FL: Ah, it's unfinished.

AJ: That was—

FL: But there's a *Piano Concerto* in three movements that—

AJ: Oh, yeah, that's a very early kid piece. That was when I was still into my Rachmaninoff period. [laughs]

FL: It shows! [laughs] Did you by chance ever get a chance to play it with an orchestra, or even a run through?

AJ: No.

FL: No, no.

AJ: It's really kind of just for fun.

FL: Mm-hm. So this *Prelude and Allegro for Orchestra*, which was performed by the Boston Civic Symphony Orchestra on April 7<sup>th</sup>, 1951—how did that come about, that they did your piece?

AJ: God, I don't remember how! I just lucked into it, I guess. I—you know, that's when I was flailing about, trying to find people who might be interested in performing my stuff. This was when I also saw Lukas Foss. And I think I, you know, met with the conductor, and gave him my pitch, and I guess he said, "Show me something." You know, I think that's how it happened. But, you know, it was like being a salesman! [laughs]

FL: Yeah, absolutely.

AJ: And I hated it!

FL: Yeah, that's the hard part of the—

AJ: Yeah.

FL: Because you just want to—

AJ: You know, that's really—it was after that experience that kind of convinced me to forget about that route as a way of getting to hear my stuff performed, because I knew it was so unlikely, the chances were so low, that it was not worth the effort. So that's when I sort of shifted gears, and started writing small-scale stuff, for theater and dance.

FL: Right. Some of your solo piano music—have you played that in recitals and stuff like that?

AJ: Actually, very little. The only thing I did was a four-handed piece called *Prisms*, which I did play at a—in front of other people.

FL: When did you write the *Petite Suite*? That looks kind of interesting.

AJ: That was also pretty early. Maybe I should give a look at that! [laughs] Include it on my—

FL: Yeah.

AJ: No, that's pretty early stuff.

FL: Mm-hm. So over the years, you've been giving recitals and stuff, and there's some—I heard your performance a year ago here at MIT. How often are you playing currently, these days?

AJ: About once a year. I mean, it takes me that long to sort of put together something that's a reasonable quality. And I'm having a hell of a time with these [Dmitrii] Shostakovich Preludes [*24 Preludes, op. 34*], which I've been working on.

FL: Oh, those are great!

AJ: [laughs] I mean, they're wonderful pieces!

FL: Yeah.

AJ: And they're not that difficult technically, but they're very difficult to remember, you know, where he's going from measure to measure! It's getting into his head as to—and then remembering it.

FL: You're working on learning the whole cycle?

AJ: Well, I'm doing about half of them, and I'm doing about half the Chopin ones.

FL: Wow.

AJ: So, I thought that would be kind of an interesting program.

FL: Wow! When do you think that might be?

AJ: Well, toward the end of the year! [laughs]

- FL: I definitely want to be there. I missed your performance earlier this year and I'm sorry about that. What are some other pieces that you're—that you'd like to learn in the coming years?
- AJ: I don't know—I don't really—I just focus on the ones currently, and then when I finish that program, then I start thinking about what I might want to do next.
- FL: Mm-hm. So, are there any concluding remarks you want to make about music at MIT? Or if there's some subject that I haven't asked you about, that you think is—I should know about?
- AJ: [pause] Well, I don't know. I mean, I found it a very kind of fun thing to do at MIT. The Glee Club stuff was very congenial, and I particularly loved the touring. You know, we went on tour, and we sang with women's colleges. And then we did a wonderful—one great thing we did was *The Creation*, Haydn's *Creation*. At Jordan Hall we did that.
- FL: Yeah, wow!
- AJ: And it had a great timpani part, which I played.
- FL: That's right. In the overture, there's a nice timpani part in there.
- AJ: Yeah, yeah. And, so that was just a lot of fun, you know, the Glee Club stuff. And so was the orchestra. The orchestra stuff—I don't remember that we performed a lot.
- FL: It was like twice a year, according to The Tech.
- AJ: Yeah, there were few performances, but lots of rehearsals. [laughs] And again, it was a very nice kind of social experience, too, because a lot of the people in the orchestra were people that I saw a lot of. Not a lot, but several of the people in the orchestra were friends of mine, anyway.

I have one very funny story which you will be amused at. One of my friends at the time was a physicist named Don Smith [Donald O. Smith, MIT PhD 1955], who was quite a good violinist, and he was in the orchestra. And he also had a string quartet which he played in regularly. But he was a serious physicist. And after we both left MIT, I got a call, and this was during the McCarthy period. I got a call on the telephone; this was shortly after we were married, in the early fifties. And he says, "This is So-and-So from the FBI." And I think my wife answered the phone, and she said, "Oh, you must be joking!" or, you know, "Come off it!" [laughs] "No, no," he said, "This is for real, and we have you listed as a reference from Don Smith, who is applying for a job with the Nuclear Energy Commission," or something, "And we're doing his clearance. And so when can I come and talk to you?" So we ran around the house hiding all the incriminating literature! [laughs] Any incriminating literature!

And it turned out—this guy was, Don was from New Mexico, an all-American boy type guy, very innocent politically. And the people he gave as references were members of his string quartet and me! [laughs] Well, it turned out that I think a couple of the string quartet members were politically suspect [laughs], in terms of their membership in various organizations, so he had a lot of trouble getting his clearance! But I thought you'd find that kind of funny! [laughs]

FL: Wow! The McCarthy era certainly had a devastating effect on MIT.

AJ: Oh, yeah.

FL: Wow. Well, I want to thank you very much for your generosity in sharing your thoughts and memories and observations. This has been really, really good.

AJ: Oh, well, I enjoyed doing it.

FL: Thank you very much.

[End of Interview]