

Newsletter

Vancouver Cello Club



OCTOBER 1993

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Please enrol me as a member of the Vancouver Cello Club:

NAME: _____ PHONE: _____

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Robert Bardston Workshop

	NAME	ADDRESS	PHONE
Intermediate Masterclass			
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Adult Technique Class			
Workshop Fee (\$30)			
V.C.C. Dues 1993-94			

Mail to: Vancouver Cello Club, c/o Judith Fraser
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"... masterful, an ear-tickler 'par excellence.' "
 Hannoversche Allgemeine

"... a young cellist with remarkable concentration
 (and) keen musicianship."
 "Courier Journal", Louisville, Ky.

"Robert Bardston est un instrumentiste très doué
 et don les qualités sont certaines."
 André Navarra

"... freshness and bubbling vitality."
 Goettinger Tageblatt

Robert Bardston, cellist

Scenes from Summer

CYMC

This summer I was enrolled in the Courtenay Youth Music Centre. At first I was nervous because I had no idea of what to expect, but by the end I learned that it was the greatest experience of my summer. Not only did I meet various talented musicians, but I was also taught by incredible instructors from around the world.

As the two weeks progressed, I became much more confident with my playing ability. I learned a sense of discipline. I became more experienced with playing in a quartet, ensemble and full orchestra. Through the theory lessons and music appreciation I expanded my musical horizons. All in all, I had a most memorable two weeks.

Rebecca Foon

I arrived at Courtenay on July 18th. After settling in I waited for other people to arrive. Later I met people in different programs and I met several people from different places in the world including Germany.

After supper the first night everyone had an audition to determine their placement. I was placed in the intermediate orchestra, which was conducted by Mr. Sheldon Grabke. The structure of a normal day was to start with warm up and technique for half an hour, and the Orchestra rehearsal of our pieces and musical theory.

In orchestra we practised the "Carnival of the Animals" by Camille Saint-Saens, and played it at the Friday evening concert of the first week. In musical theory we created a time capsule on the different types of music, both classical and modern, in the world. It was stored in a vault which will not be opened for 100 years. We had lunch break in the cafeteria, and after that private practice and sectionals in the afternoon. Students are required to attend all evening concerts some of which are faculty recitals, concert band, musical theatre and the intermediate and festival orchestras.

The second week I was moved up into the Festival Orchestra which was conducted by Mr. David Zafer. At the final concert we played the Stravinsky "Firebird", the Overture to Mozart's "Il Seraglio", and two concertos. Our schedule was basically the same except we had orchestra rehearsal all morning. Also for both weeks we received classes from assigned teachers. I had two classes with Mr. Brian Epperson from Toronto.

Downtown Courtenay was about a ten-minute walk from the school. We participated and were spectators in many festivals going on during the summer. The recreation staff working at CYMC were very busy taking us everywhere. They took us kayaking, where we paddled 8 nautical miles to Tree Island, swimming at various small rivers and even to Dairy Queen. Everyone at Courtenay was very helpful and made us feel welcome.

CYMC was very enjoyable and I met a lot of nice people. I hope to go back next year.

Joel Aird



Evolutionary Assimilation—A Story of P. G. Anton and his 'Cello

My Experiences at the Marrowstone Music Festival

This summer, searching for a new musical experience, I decided to go to the Marrowstone Music Festival. As I look back now, I think that I made a good choice. I played in both of the orchestras there and I found them to both be of quite high quality (although one was a good step up from the other). In both I found myself challenged and both had very good conductors, with whom I enjoyed working.

There were however a few drawbacks. At Marrowstone there were "Counsellors" who would keep an eye on the dorms and were supposedly recreation directors. Unfortunately, the recreation activities were usually pathetic! In the entire three weeks I was there, there was one organized off-campus trip. Although students could still take the bus into downtown Port Townsend, it would have been better with almost daily recreations or trips that were enjoyable. Because of the lack of transportation, I highly recommend to any student going to Marrowstone without a car, to bring a bike. It's very useful.

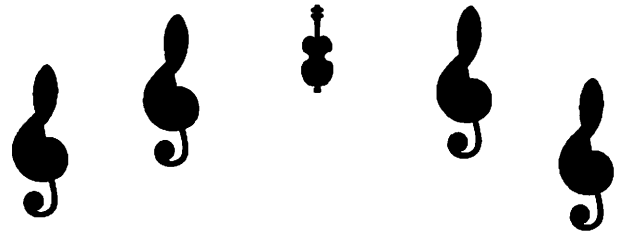
Overall, I had a good musical experience at Marrowstone. Head cellist Hamilton Cheifetz was inspiring, helpful and overall a nice guy. With masterclasses by Ron Leonard, Principal cellist of the Los Angeles Philharmonic and Tsuyoshi Tsutsumi, Professor of Cello at Indiana University, I received heaps of helpful advice to improve my cello playing. I was inspired and awed in particular by Mr. Tsutsumi, from whom I learned an unbelievable amount, by being able to watch and listen to him in concerts, and by being taught by him in the master class.

I had a great experience this year at Marrowstone. I feel that I matured musically from this experience and I hope to return to Marrowstone again.

Jonathan Braunstein

A big 'Thank-You' to the Vancouver Cello Club for my summer scholarship! I really enjoyed my 3 weeks at the Calgary Summer String Academy.

My days were very busy from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. My schedule was practising 4 hrs, 30 min. private lessons, 60 min. master class every second day with different teachers, and a 90-min. orchestra practice.



Everybody performed in 2 solo concerts with new pieces to learn.

In the evenings we watched movies and went bowling. We also went on rides at the Calgary Amusement Park! I met many new friends! I hope to return next year.

Leah Zielinski

ROBERT BARDSTON
CELLO



Robert Bardston holds a Bachelor, Master and Doctorate in Music. He has studied with Walter Joachim, Andre Navarra, Edward Culbreath, Janos Starker, Lutz Rath and Grace Whitney.

He has been an instructor in Cello and Voice at Medicine Hat College, for cello and chamber music at McGill University, for Bach Masterclass in Ottawa, for chamber music at CAMMAC, for cello at Städtische Musikschule in West Germany, at the Musikschule der Stadt Bielefeld, West Germany and at the Scala Music School in Montreal.

He has performed with Trio St. Louis, as the conductor of the German Choir of Montreal, the Goettingen Cello Choir in West Germany, as the assistant-principal cellist with the Tibor Varga Chamber Orchestra in Switzerland, as co-ordinating principal cellist in the Goettingen Symphony Orchestra, as assistant-principal cellist with the Washington Chamber Players, as principal cellist with the Canada Symphony Orchestra in Montreal and as the section cellist with the Louisville Symphony Orchestra in Kentucky.

Robert Bardston's present teaching posts include the Medicine Hat College, the McGill Conservatory in Montreal and the University of Lethbridge in Alberta.

ROBERT BARDSTON WORKSHOP

Sponsored by the Vancouver Cello Club and the Vancouver Academy of Music

November 5th

Concert at the Vancouver Art Gallery

12:10 p.m. to 1:00 p.m. - a Performance Choice presented by Ian Hampton
Robert Bardston, cello & Allen Stiles, piano

Cost: VAG members: free
Others: \$4.75
Students: \$2.50

CANADIAN MUSIC PROGRAM

Sonata for Cello and Piano	Jean Coulthard
Barolo for Cello and Tape	Bruce Mather
Variations for Solo Cello	Jacques Hetu

November 6th

Intermediate Masterclass and Technique Class

10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
Vancouver Academy - Recital Hall
Pianist Provided - Allen Stiles

November 7th

Senior Masterclass and Technique Class

9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
Vancouver Academy - Recital Hall
Pianist Provided - Allen Stiles

POTLUCK LUNCH - ALL CELLISTS WELCOME

Come and meet, mingle and eat with Bob!

Adult Students Technique Class
All Levels including new beginners
2:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Cost: \$30.00 for participating cellists
\$ 5.00 for non-cello auditors

Excerpt from a letter from Jeehoon Kim, one of six cello students at Harid Conservatory. Recommended by Aldo Parisot at the Banff Centre Cello Masterclass last July, Jeehoon also attended Orford as did Timothy Bartsch, where they both worked with Janos Starker and Tsuyoshi Tsutsumi.

"My teacher here, Ms. Johanne Perron, teaches quite differently from what I'm used to. She's very young (28-29 years old), but she seems very experienced as a teacher and a player. She has very high expectations and she's very, very picky about mistakes. Energetic and enthusiastic about her students. The cello students (there's six of us) are all quite amazing. There's a guy from Shanghai, Xi Cheu, who's got both extreme talent and flawless technique. Another guy, Cheung Chau, studied with Mr. Parisot at Yale for three years before coming to Harid: He can play Pezzo Capriccioso faster and cleaner than anyone I've heard! A girl from Yugoslavia, Tasha, is 15 yrs. old. Her playing is full of talent and she's definitely in the running for a great musical career. The quartet I'm playing in kind of reminds me of the Sausalito quartet (the U.B.C. quartet). The first violinist (my roommate) Nick, is a violinist from Romania who just came from Juilliard. He can play. We're playing Mozart's quartet in D minor K421. Our rehearsals are very productive and seems like we all get along. The course teachers teach in such a way that lets the student do the learning, not just plain memorization. Whenever we answer a question in class, we always expect the question back, "But why?" Especially in orchestra. The conductor doesn't just tell us how to play, but instead, let us learn how to play through his guidance. He never says, "Violins: play louder here, or cellos play softer there" Instead, he gets right to the core of the problem right away: He unravels the lines of the music, dismantles the intricate layers and shows us the way we must approach music, so that we can inherit this skill and be critical to ourselves whenever we play - whether it be solo work or chamber music. That's what's special about Harid: They don't just teach you, they teach you how to teach yourself. It really happens here. People here are excited about music and are focussed. Seems like I've really lucked out in finding such a great school. As soon as the admission info for next year is ready, I'll definitely send out the stuff to Nick, Paul and to the Academy. My apartment is comfortable and clean. Luckily our apartments have 2 swimming pools, but for variety, the famous Boca Raton Beach is a mere 2 miles away! Every morning I jog to the beach, unless it's over 80°F which it sometimes is. The first time I jogged there, I totally underestimated the heat - I almost passed out while waiting for a light to turn green. This city is very safe and very wealthy. The people are kind and well-tanned. And of course, the women here are out of this world. But I'm too busy to take advantage of that offering.... time to practise again. My address is: Apt.#3040, 301 S.W. 1st Street, Boca Raton, FL 33432, Ph. (407) 395-9392 ---- Harid's address: The Harid Conservatory, Music Division. 2785 Potomac Rd., Boca Raton, FL 33431, Ph. (407) 997-2677."

♪ ♪ The Vancouver Academy took advantage of Music in the Morning Concerts opening Sept. 14, 15, 16 with Shauna Rolston and Jane Coop performing Debussy, Beethoven G Minor and Shostakovitch Sonatas to present a Junior Cello Workshop in the afternoon of Sept. 16th. Those participating (in this first week of the Academy semester) were Leah Zielinski, Elenita Tseng, Wilson Ho, James Takizawa, Kay Blunt-Clayden and Christopher Wilding - all 12 yrs and under. It was wonderful to see a number of very young cello students attending their first masterclass. Here are a few comments from Tyr Jami Klyman-Mowczan, age 9.

"Shauna Rolston was wearing pretty clothes; Shauna said to a boy that usually people's wrists are tight when they're playing hi notes, but with him, it's the other way around. She made him turn his cello to be comfortable. She told lots of people to put all their weight from their hands, on her hands, so they would know how much weight to put on their own cello while playing."

♪ ♪ Music in the Morning Series

- | | |
|--|--|
| Oct. 19, 20, 21
10:30 a.m.
V.A.M. (Recital Hall) | St. Lawrence String Quartet
(cellist Marina Hoover)
Program will include a premiere of a work by John Oliver |
| 10:00 a.m. Coffee | |
| Nov. 30, Dec. 1, 2 | Academy Strings with Ramsey Husser, violin
"Four Seasons" - Vivaldi |
| October 22 | <i>Joseph Elworthy</i> plays the Schumann Cello Concerto with
The Richmond Civic Orchestra |
| October 28
7:30 p.m.
V.A.M. | <i>Michael Olsen</i> , 1993 winner of the Florence Mary Docherty Memorial Scholarship
will perform the 1st movement of the Buslav Martinu Sonata No.1 at the Honours
Recital |
| November 27 | B.C. Sinfonetta Orchestral Concert at the Orpheum
<i>John Friesen</i> will perform Haydn C. Major Concerto |
| Oct. 29
12:10 | Edinburgh String Quartet (Tchaikovsky, Shostakovitch)
Vancouver Art Gallery |
| Jan. 7, 1994
12:10 | Marc Destrube, violin; Robert Holliston, piano and <i>Paula Kiffner</i> , cello
(Shostakovitch Piano Trio #2 (1944)
Vancouver Art Gallery |

Steven Isserlis is the winner of the 1993 New England Conservatory / Piatigorsky Artist Award. He appeared in April with the New England Conservatory Symphony conducted by Michael Tilson Thomas at the Piatigorsky Legacy Concert at Carnegie Hall, the first major tribute to the great cellist since his death in 1976.

THE RARITY OF ITALIAN CELLOS

by Robert Bein

While the proportion of violinists to cellists in most modern string ensembles is approximately two to one, there are probably ten existing violins by the great Italian masters for every cello. This naturally makes cellos by these makers quite scarce and relatively speaking much more expensive than violins by the same makers.

Though there were a few notable makers who specialized in cellos - *Montagnana*, *Goffriller*, *Tecchler*, and the *Rugeri Family* - most of the other great makers made few cellos, if any. *Antonio Stradivari*, *Joseph Guarnerius Filius Andreas*, *Petrus Guarnerius of Venice*, and *J.B. Guadagnini* devoted ten percent of their output or less to cellos. The makers *Joseph Guarnerius del Gesu*, *Carlo Bergonzi*, *Gaspar da Salo*, and *Petrus Guarnerius of Mantua* each made one or two cellos at most according to current research.

Clearly, the Italian masters made fewer cellos than violins and far fewer than would satisfy current musical needs. The primary reason for this was a matter of demand. In the 16th and 17th centuries, the role of the cello was more restricted to handling the bass line in smaller and varied ensembles and there is very little virtuoso cello music *per se* from the period. Hence, most of the relatively few cellos made during that time were of slightly larger physical dimensions than the currently favored size. The establishment of the modern symphonic proportions among the stringed

instruments and dominance of the string quartet as the favored from in chamber music by Joseph Haydn (b. 1732, d. 1809) occurred some years after the death of the last classic Cremonese maker, Carlo Bergonzi who died in 1747.

Cellos have been subjected to more damage than violins due to their greater size and the lack of suitable cases in the past. For instance, the ribs of a stradivari cello are only three tenths of a millimeter (about the thickness of a calling card) thicker than violin ribs yet they are considerably larger and subject to much greater stress due to changes in humidity and temperature. Similarly, it is also evident that cello bows suffer much greater wear and tear than violin bows due to the greater force required to produce a tone from a cello than a violin.

Virtually any cello repair takes more time and materials than the same repair on a violin. Cellists' pay does not reflect the higher cost of maintenance not to mention air travel! Many cellos have been subjected to *economies* that have, in some cases, reduced their longevity and value.










A major cello restoration can take a single repair person a year or more. It takes considerable resources to even begin a large cello job given the economics of today. Simply stated, cellos frequently do not receive the attention that violins do.

Finally, there is another economic issue that extends to the present. A cello requires roughly four times as much wood as a violin does. It takes more than twice as much time to make with modern tools and probably more in the past. And yet, a new cello is traditionally priced at only double the price of a new violin from the same maker. Today there are several makers who simply will not make cellos because the physical demands are too taxing and the remuneration is too slight. Fortunately this is, in modern times, somewhat offset by a few excellent makers who do specialize in making cellos and are set up to produce them efficiently.

The standards of cello *playing* have increased dramatically in this century on a worldwide basis. The need for excellent and reliable cellos is great. A modern cellist needs an instrument that has a firm bass, a brilliant upper register, a full middle range, comfortable physical dimensions and a set-up that facilitate virtuoso playing. He or she also needs a cello that is reliable and capable of being flown from one end of the world to the other without making a fuss. Last, but not least, cellists at any level need cellos that are affordable and that will represent excellent investments for the future.

There *are*, of course, some wonderful cellos in the world today and some excellent new makers that deserve consideration. The point of this article is simply to put great cellos and their relative rarity in perspective for those lucky enough to possess one and for those who strive to acquire one. A great cello should be treasured.

Drawings: Patricia Mary Row

ORCHESTRA IS HELL (with apologies to Matt Groening)			
The Nine Types of Section String Players			
TYPE	BEHAVIOR	ADVANTAGES	DRAWBACKS
	Brown-noser Continually chats with conductors	Always has a pencil handy	Receives favors from management
	Entertainer Attracts attention	Never a bore	Likely to get you in trouble
	Know-it-all Checks for misprints in loud, exposed runs	Conscientious	Will point out your mistakes
	Space Cadet Stares into space	Pleasant	Shares unusual insights with you
	Show-off Practices before, after, and during rehearsals	Lots of stamina	Never stops playing
	Talentless Worm Tone-deaf and dumb	Unfailingly confident	Will never retire
	Whiner Complains constantly	Easily cowed	Likely to be your stand partner
	Stoic Does job, goes home	Does job, goes home	Suffers quietly
	Stud/sex kitten Smiles invitingly	Will sleep with you	Will tell everyone

(We have been unable to trace the author of this document which has been circulating among viola sections of certain orchestras.)

THE POPPER HIGH SCHOOL OF CELLO PLAYING by Charlotte Lehnhoff (continued from last Newsletter)

When (we) cellists sit around and talk about technical problems of playing the cello, on occasion we resort to a platitude or generalization - that each area on the instrument has its own particular and unique set of problems - and mean two opposing things by it. One of them is helpful, the other is counterproductive. What's helpful is a recognition or understanding that the musculature (the contour or shape of the hand, and the placement and positioning of the arm) required for the various locales, such as high up on the fingerboard, on the neck or in the shoulder area, has to be adjusted accordingly. Many sets of etudes and exercises have been written for effective development of the correct posture and position.¹⁹ These exercises contribute to the student's developing an enlightened and informed appreciation of what's needed to play correctly. Cellists sometimes also interpret their own generalization to work against good development, because they infer that some areas on the cello are harder to play, by their very nature, and others are inherently easier to play. This perspective is counter-productive, because as soon as we attribute different degrees of difficulty to one area over another, we give students reason to fear being able to play (well) in that area or areas. There are etudes that have the effect of reinforcing this perspective. In them you'll find musical gestures or types of passagework restricted to one locale; the premise under-lying them is that a given area can have only one possible function.²⁰

One of Popper's intentions was to make a case against the counter-productive point of view. In his etudes, a difficult gesture has to be equally transferable and translatable anywhere: you can't just play it on the neck; you have to be able to do the same thing high up on the fingerboard as well. This is why he restates the problem all over the place, and it's what makes his etudes so difficult to learn as well as to play, because they take us into a new and different realm of looking at the possibilities of the instrument. But his method has the salutary effect of freeing us. I liken Popper's teaching to that of consciousness-raising. He tells us not to be afraid of one area over another. Once we learn his message, we are released from the shackles of constraint produced by fear and apprehension. And, we can't have mastery over the instrument until we stop being afraid of certain areas.

The structure and organization of the etudes is designed to teach us his message. The melodic and rhythmic contents are inseparable. They demonstrate for us, by Popper's example and by our own experiences in playing through the etudes that technique per se cannot be separated from musical gestures. Because technique cannot be contemplated, understood, or developed in a musical vacuum,²¹ Popper made no rhythmic accommodation to locale. He didn't accord any one area special deference, nor did he subject one area to harsher treatment than any other. He also did not treat the matter of changing locales - that is, shifts - with any special deference. His shifts occur whenever and wherever the melody and harmony require them. There are rhythmic and physiological - i.e., muscular - implications for this. Rhythm-wise, the placement of shifts ignores whether they occur between a weak beat and subsequent strong beat,²² or between a strong beat and following weak beat.²³ If the distance covered is large, the shift will, of course, take more time, and will require different musculature, but Popper's intent is that the connecting of areas, regardless of distance, has to be viewed the same. That is, there are differences between large and small shifts, but they are based upon the amount of time needed and the musculature involved. Hence, large shifts aren't to be viewed as being more difficult or easier than small ones.²⁴ This is one of the sources of chromaticism - especially the minor 2nd ascents and descents - the Popper inserts into each and every etudes.²⁵ These tiny shifts have to be as accurate as the large leaps.

Van der Straeten said of Popper that he "is one of the greatest masters of his instrument of all time" (page 447). According to De'ak, Popper's bow technique was highly praised and was "judged to be as remarkable as his left hand technique" (page 293). Overall, Popper's playing was described as being "distinguished by its very pure... and clever technique, as well as by a refined and graceful manner of rendering."²⁶ However, even in his own day, Popper's style of playing was eclipsed by, according to De'ak, three different but related factors. New types of pieces, expressing a "new aesthetic language" (De'ak, page 241), were being composed and developed, and Popper found much of it hard to comprehend. In a footnote, De'ak quotes Popper's response to Strauss' *Salome*: "It would have sounded just the same if the musicians had the music on the stand upside down." (De'ak, page 241). A second factor was an attitude that we now all take for granted, and which is responsible for the efforts made today in the move towards what is called "authenticity". Joachim, Bülow, and Clara Schumann began advocating that the performing artist must sublimate her or his will to that of the composer (De'ak, page 238). This meant that rhythmically distorted slides were becoming increasingly unacceptable, which leads directly to the third factor that saw Popper's style of playing eclipsed within his own day: the innovations brought by Casals.

Popper was shaken by Casals' drastic and radical changes. De'ak describes at great length the significant differences in bowing. Casals' bow arm was unlike anything Popper had known or seen. Popper played with a loose wrist and a straight thumb. Casals did not lower his wrist when he played in the upper half of the bow; he kept his wrist straight when playing on the C string, and compensated for a loose wrist by a "gradual pronation and elevation of his arm" as he drew out the bow (De'ak, page 240). Casals' left-hand alterations included use of extensions and different fingerings needed to avoid sliding between positions.

I noticed, in reading discussions of cello tutors that Popper's contribution to the advancement of technique is given scant attention. But something doesn't fit. How can Popper's etudes be so important for us today yet not receive much written notice? I think the answer can be found in that folk wisdom we've all heard, that Casals single-handedly dragged cello playing into the 20th century. No one will argue that Casals' radical alterations contributed to the style and taste of cello playing by eliminating slides and changing the way we hold the bow, which also affected the tone we produce. But we must give credit where credit is due. Popper's etudes are, it seems to me, doubly remarkable. Not only did he make use of melodic characteristics and harmonies that he grew up with and felt comfortable with, but his etudes are forward-looking and not just rooted in the musical materials that he was familiar with. Popper disliked *Salome*; he was, nonetheless, open-minded enough to see where music was headed. He would never play *Salome*, but he knew his students, and future cellists, would (have to), and he responded accordingly. His etudes thus use chromaticism to an extent that no others did. As a result of his musical and technical innovations, his etudes represent the pinnacle of what is possible on the cello. Even the newest concerto written today incorporates aspects of what Popper's stunning foresight envisioned almost 100 years ago. Without these etudes, cello technique would not be what it is today.

As a composer, Popper's concern was the melody. He felt one's technique has to take second place to the expression of the melody. His (choice of) fingerings reflects this aspect even as it reflects the tastes and styles of his own day. De'ak observed that Popper's fingerings were "designed to cope with the technical demands of the... music of his time and [they fitted] his artistic purposes" (page 261). As a teacher, Popper wanted us not to be afraid of any type of gesture, of any place on the instrument, and his one underlying principle was to teach us how to gain complete control over the cello. This principle is relatively easy to state, but takes time to learn - and to believe. In his Preface to De'ak's biography, Janos Starker shared his deep respect for the etudes when he said "One cannot truly master the cello without having learned" Popper's etudes (page 11). Casals played practically all of Popper's concert pieces and said of Popper that, no matter what people think of him, "I will play [Popper's] music as long as I play the cello, for no other composer wrote better for the instrument."²⁷ Popper's etudes speak to us to the eternal verities of cello playing. As long as we continue the study of his etudes, they will hold the primacy of place they have today.

I would like to express my appreciation to Joseph Sciacchitano, former cellist with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, for his assistance in graciously allowing me to examine his personal copies of the first editions of Volumes I and II of the *Hohe Schule*.

