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The Many Careers of Bassoonist Loren Glickman:

An Interview by Nora Post

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New York University Double Reed Day
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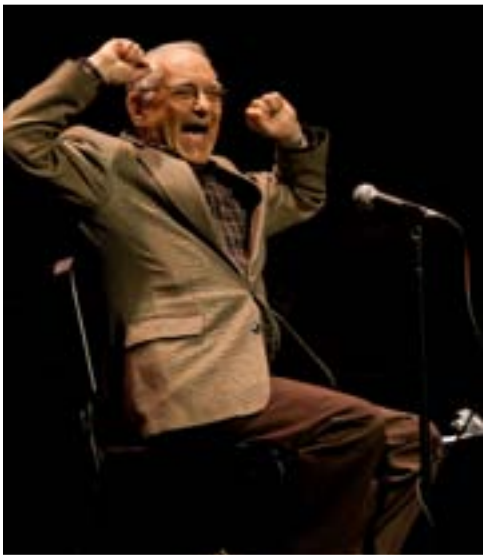
Nora Post,
Kingston, New York

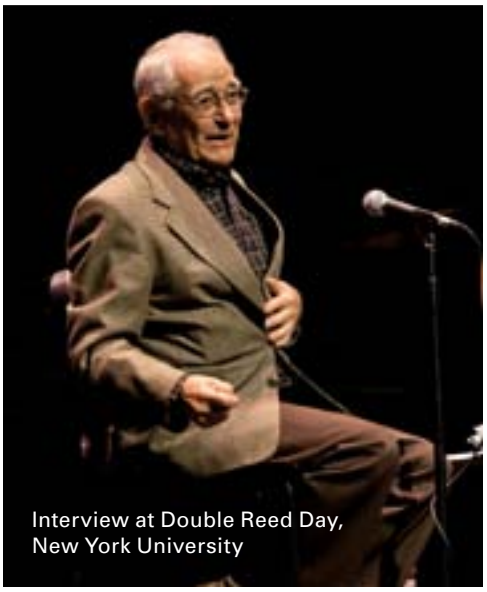
Loren Glickman

Introduction by Matt Sullivan
Director of Double Reed Studies, New York University

New York City is probably the most exciting musical city in the world. Two years ago, we decided that we wanted to honor one great double reed player each year at our annual double reed day. We started two years ago with the great bassoonist ***Bernard Garfield****, principal bassoonist of the Philadelphia Orchestra for fifty years. Last year we honored* ***Ray Still****, principal oboe of the Chicago Symphony for forty years. This year we are very, very pleased to have the legendary bassoonist* ***Loren Glickman*** *with us.*[1] *Loren Glickman has had one of the most varied and diverse careers of any performer of our times. Thirty-five years ago, before there were double reed days at so many colleges and universities, not to mention bassoon camps, Glick-*

1 All three of these players are honorary members of the International Double Reed Society.





Interview at Double Reed Day, New York University

man and Mark Popkin started a bassoon camp.

We have a tradition here at New York University of having my good friend Nora Post interview our guests about their lives. No one does an interview better than Nora. So I would like to turn the program over to Nora and Loren.

Loren Glickman (LG): Even before we get started, I would like to say that I am deeply honored to be here at New York University with all of you today. I am also sincerely grateful to the International Double Reed Society for their interest in publishing my thoughts about music throughout the many years of my thoroughly enjoyable career in this wonderful art.

Nora Post (NP): ***I know all of you have Mr. Glickman's biography in your programs, so by way of introduction, I would like to mention only a few things. Born in Cleveland in 1924, Loren Glickman went to the Eastman School of Music as a bassoon major, where he was engaged to play contrabassoon in the Rochester Philharmonic during his sophomore year. At eighteen, he was co-principal bassoonist in the student orchestra at Tanglewood with Koussevitzky. As soon as he graduated from Eastman, Glickman won the job as principal bassoon in the National Symphony Orchestra in Washington, D.C. He stayed for one season and then moved to New York, where he played principal bassoon for Leonard Bernstein in the New York City Symphony. By the 1950s Glickman was already busy freelancing in New York, playing and contracting for RCA Victor Records, Columbia Records, the Casals Festival, for violinist Alexander Schneider, and composer Igor Stravinsky, among many others. He was a founding member of the Mostly Mozart Festival at Lincoln Center in 1966, as well as a founding member of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, where he was the bassoonist for twenty seasons. In 1978, he started The Glickman-Popkin Bassoon Camp that is still going strong. Thus, we have with us a very distinguished bassoon soloist, chamber and orchestral musician. But Loren Glickman is also a conductor, the composer of more than ninety published works, plus numerous film scores and jingles in the commercial world. Mr. Glickman has also had careers as an arranger, publisher,***

author of three books, and orchestra manager, and has taught at The Juilliard School, Queens College and Montclair State University in New Jersey. As I was telling Mr. Glickman earlier today, the most difficult part of preparing to interview him was just wrapping my mind around all the activities of a person who has had five careers in the music world. As amazing as all his achievements are, you'll all just have to trust me that one person actually did all these things!

I thought that since New York University has so many diverse programs in music, programs in music technology, music and business, and dual majors, isn't this the perfect setting to talk about the idea of a classical musician becoming an entrepreneur? Also, at some point or other, most musicians and other artists have to do at least some of the management of their careers themselves—whether they have the training for it or not. I wanted to start by asking how you became an orchestra manager and a contractor. Did you know this was something you wanted to do, or did you just fall into it?

LG: It all happened very simply. A colleague of mine, David Oppenheim was an executive at Columbia Records. We had played together many times—he was a wonderful clarinet player. He called one day and said: "How would you like to be the contractor for orchestras at Columbia Records?" I said: "Dave, I've never done this!" He asked me if I thought I could do it. Well, I told him, if it involved hiring good musicians, yes, I thought I could do that. Suddenly I became a top dog in the business of hiring musicians, because to hire for Columbia Records was being the top dog. So I started out at the top of the heap. I was in my late twenties at the time.

The one thing David and I talked about—and I agreed with him completely—was to hire the very best players. Most contractors in New York at the time hired orchestras composed of other contractors so that they would all hire each other! Hiring an orchestra with twenty contractors meant getting twenty jobs. David and I talked about this, and I assured him I would never do that. He told me that was all he was asking—that, plus everyone had to show up on time.

MUSICAL EDUCATION

NP: ***I would like to go back to the beginning of your interest in music, if I may. Can you tell me how it all got started?***

LG: Of course. I started playing the piano at four. My older brother, who was about eight years old, was studying the piano. He would have his lessons and then practice. Then I would go to the piano and play what he had just finished playing. I had perfect pitch, so playing the piano seemed simple enough. When my brother's teacher heard what I was doing, she announced that I had to study the piano, too. After graduation from high school, I had the choice between scholarships to Oberlin as a piano major, or to Eastman as a bassoon major. So I picked the bassoon and Eastman.

NP: ***Do you feel that the education you received at Eastman prepared you adequately for all the different activities in your career or, if you had it all to do over again, were there other things you might have added into the mix?***

LG: I don't think there is anything else I could have added from an educational institution, although I do wish I had studied composition. I would probably have felt more secure as a composer, especially writing for strings. I have to admit, too, that I have always felt that I could do anything well in the music world. I know that sounds terribly egotistical, but I always felt that confident. One evening at a party I met a man named John Hubley, who had worked for Disney. As we talked, I was commenting that I had played so much film music, and so many jingles, and the music was *so* bad. I told him I was sure I could do better! Two or three weeks after that party John called me and asked me to take a shot at writing a jingle. He told me exactly what he wanted, I wrote it, hired the musicians, and conducted the group. You have to understand that in my twenties and early thirties, I thought I could do anything. I conducted the recording session, John liked my work, and that was how it all began. After I wrote a lot of these things, John asked me to write the music for a half-hour movie that he was producing. I explained that the only music I had written was jingles for him. He asked me if I thought I could write film music. I answered

Explaining a musical point at his home in New Jersey

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that I thought I could do it. He told me what he wanted, and I wrote the music for the film. Shortly after that I started to get calls from other producers asking me to write for them, too, so I wrote a lot of music for a lot of people and thus was born a completely new aspect of my musical career.

BASSOON CAREER

NP: ***I'd like to go back to the bassoon for just a minute. As far as I can put this together, you were in your early twenties when you came to New York. You had played in the National Symphony only one season, so there you were in New York with no job. Most bassoonists of your caliber would have gone for principal in a major orchestra. You chose not to, and to go with the freelance world. Can I ask you what it was like making that decision? Was it easy or was it difficult? Basically you were giving up a guaranteed everything!***

LG: I have to tell you, I didn't have any job at all when I came to New York. I did one year in Washington as first bassoon, and I was sure I could be a very good player. I went to the management of the National Symphony Orchestra, and asked for a raise for the following season. They said no, so I left. When I got to New York, I got a job as a shipping clerk in a factory. I worked very hard picking up heavy crates all day for a number of months until I began to be called to work as a freelance bassoonist.

CONDUCTORS

NP: ***I'd like to ask about several of the conductors and composer/conductors you played for. In one of your books, you wrote about "Some conductors I have worked with" and then "Some composers I worked with who also conducted." I thought that was just great. Looking at both groups for a moment, I would like to begin with Koussevitzky and Stravinsky. You played first bassoon for Koussevitzky at Tanglewood when you were just a teenager. What was that like?***

LG: Fortunately he was a *very* nice man. To play for one of the great conductors of the world at the age of eighteen was something unbelievable. But I have to tell you, by the way, I was not the first bassoon of that orchestra. Bernard Garfield and I alternated on first bassoon. The reason that we were Koussevitzky's orchestra was that it was World War II time, gas was rationed, and the Boston Symphony couldn't come to Tanglewood. So the student orchestra became his orchestra. Once we did a Russian war relief concert with Koussevitzky. We had to play the *Star-Spangled Banner,* as well as the Russian national anthem, which at that time was called the *Internationale.* Somehow or other Koussevitzky had not informed the orchestra which piece to play first. The orchestra was all tuned, Koussevitzky came out, the orchestra stood and he began to conduct, facing the audience. All the strings played the *Internationale* in B♭. All the woodwinds and brass players played the *Star-Spangled Banner* in B♭. Koussevitzky was conducting the audience; they were singing. When Koussevitzky finally realized what was happening in the orchestra, he turned around to the orchestra and shouted: "The *other* one!" The strings then played the *Star-Spangled Banner,* and the brass and woodwinds switched to the *Internationale.* Finally Koussevitzky stopped conducting. He turned to the orchestra and announced in a very icy Russian voice: "Starr Spengled Benair." He just glared at us, and we were all so scared. We were such young kids, and he was so angry that we had ruined his concert.

NP: ***Since your master class today was on Igor Stravinsky's bassoon writing, I would like to ask about him, too. I knew two people who played for Stravinsky. One was*** *Richard Nass,* ***the retired English horn player at the Metropolitan Opera. He can usually reduce anything to about one sentence, if not two words. I asked him if he remembered playing for Stravinsky. "Oh, yes," he replied. Well, I asked, what did he think? "Too square!" The other was the late oboist*** *Ronald Roseman,* ***who played on the Stravinsky recordings with you. He was a huge Stravinsky fan, and he loved Stravinsky's music, but told all his students at Yale that Stravinsky didn't know what he was doing, and that he couldn't conduct his own music. What do you think?***

LG: I don't agree. He *could* conduct his own music. He was a very clean, rhythmic conductor. What he didn't have—and what he didn't ask for in his music—was lyricism. He would have been *terrible* doing Brahms or Dvořák. But for his music, he was clean and rhythmically exact. He demanded that of the players in the orchestra. I can remember playing the opening bassoon solo in the *Rite of Spring* with him. I was an expressive, romantic player, and that's how I played it in rehearsal. He stopped me twice, saying all he wanted was what was written on the page, with perfect rhythm and no romanticism. After the concert at Carnegie Hall, I went out for a drink with my dear friend and mentor, Alexander Schneider. We talked about the concert and other things. After about fifteen minutes I asked him why he hadn't mentioned the famous bassoon solo at the beginning of the *Rite of Spring.* He sighed and told me it was *so* boring. "That's not the way to play music," he told me.

I did a *lot* of work with Stravinsky. I was very lucky. I loved him dearly, but it took a while. He was not an outgoing guy. He was a very accurate conductor who conducted all the difficult rhythms exceedingly well. You never wondered what or where the beat was with him. That was not the case with Aaron Copland, who was not a good conductor. I did a number of recordings with Copland. He was pleasant enough, and I think he knew what he wanted, but he just didn't know how to get it across. He didn't have enough conducting experience, I imagine, to understand what the orchestra needed. We would often just play, and hope we were going to come out in the right place. But I did enjoy working with him, and we had wonderful players. I contracted the orchestra for him, and we managed very well. I liked his music, but he was not what I would consider to be a fine, artistic conductor.

NP: ***Tell me about Bernstein. You played for him shortly after you moved to New York, and he wasn't famous yet. What was it like?***
LG: Well, I knew him at Tanglewood, where he was a conducting student of Koussevitzky. The first job I took in New York about five years later was with the New York City Symphony. I had turned down Radio City Music Hall—which was a fifty-two-week job—in order to have a seven-week-a-year job in the New York City Symphony conducted by the young Leonard Bernstein, plus the New York City Opera.

NP: ***Wasn't Bernstein the person who helped you with that decision?***
LG: Yes. After I had accepted the New York City Symphony position, I auditioned for the Radio City Music Hall Symphony. I got the job, and they offered me a fifty-two-week season. I went up to New England and met with Bernstein. I didn't own a car in those days, so I took a bus. He knew it was very important to me. Before we even started talking, I remember he said, "Let's take a swim!" He had an extra bathing suit, and he had a summerhouse with a pool up at Tanglewood. He was already a big deal, since he was Koussevitzky's prize student. So we went for a swim, had a drink, and then he said: "Well, what's the problem?" I explained that after I had accepted his offer to play several weeks with the New York City Symphony I was offered a fifty-two-week season at Radio City Music Hall, and asked him if I could be released from the New York City Symphony in order to accept the Radio City position. He said that would be no problem, and that I was completely free. Then he said, "Let's talk about it." He told me: "You are twenty-two years old, you are very talented, and why are you eager to play at Radio City? You will play the same thing four times a day, six days a week, probably three months for each show. Why do you want to do this?" I answered that I was married and I needed some kind of job security. He told me that I was too young to worry about all of that, and that I should be thinking instead about becoming the finest bassoonist in the world, and becoming a great artist. I told him I would mull it over. Then I talked to my young wife, who said she was content if I didn't do Radio City and did the more artistic things I wanted to do.

NP: ***Yes, but she was a pianist, and she would have understood. A lot of other people might not have.***
LG: Right. Then I called Bernstein, and told him I was with him. I knew him until the end of his life. Whenever we ran into each other, it was hugs and more hugs. He was one of the most gifted people I ever knew. He was a real romanticist, and I think musicians loved being in an orchestra where they could play

Loren Glickman rehearses Edwin Cabrera and Jill Dispenza of the Glickman Ensemble

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so expressively. Of course, the audiences loved it, too. Bernstein was also a great showman. He never did anything with small movements—his movements were *huge*. It wasn't that he was showing off—that was his personality. He had a huge personality, and when he conducted, all that came to the fore. It was a joy to play for him. I always loved him. He was a warmhearted guy, and it wasn't in his nature to be nasty. He was never insulting. I knew any number of conductors who would insult members of their orchestras regularly, and they were awful. Not Lenny. He was warm and sweet. He was always a pleasure to be with.

NP: ***Tell me, do you think there were any other American conductors during the second half of the twentieth century who had quite the package he did, or was he alone in that? How about someone like Stokowski?***
LG: Well, the others were different. Stokowski was a real romanticist. I played for him and recorded with him many times. When he did romantic music, I loved it. He was a great showman, but he was not a great conductor in the sense of being able to conduct everything well.

NP: ***What were the big differences between them?***
LG: Lenny jumped around and moved around more than anyone else I knew. Stokie (as he was known among his musicians) didn't do that as much. But Stokowski was a tall guy, he had very long arms, he was charismatic, and Philadelphia loved him. I was very lucky to have worked with him in New York after he left the Philadelphia Orchestra and Eugene Ormandy had taken over. Ormandy didn't have the delight and warmth that Stokie had. But poor Stokie took on things he just couldn't do. I remember recording Stravinsky's *L'Histoire du Soldat* with Stokowski, and he just couldn't conduct it at all. Fortunately, since I had hired the musicians, I had hired players who knew the piece very well and had all played it many times. Within ten minutes of the recording session, we knew that he couldn't conduct it. Without saying a word to each other, we did what chamber musicians do, which is to play together. We didn't even look at Stokie. Although Stokowski wasn't the ideal conductor for difficult music, he was still a very smart fellow. He understood very quickly that we weren't even looking at him, so he quit even trying to conduct. He conducted in 4/4 while we were playing bars in 7/8, 5/8, whatever. The engineers in the control room didn't realize what was happening, and we didn't say anything. When there was a problem, we would just stop, Stokie would ask where we would like to start, and we would pick out a bar. Then he would give a downbeat, we would start, ignore him, and go on.

NP: ***So you were the original Orpheus Ensemble!***
LG: Right! We did six hours of recording, and nothing was ever said between the conductor and the players. Not a word. The recording came out, and I remember reading a review about how Stokowski had done such a wonderful job with such a difficult score *(laughter).*

NP: ***You know, this brings up such an interesting subject. Some of the great conductors were so incredibly well trained—think of Reiner or Szell, for example. They were like ice guys. They really had it down cold. Other conductors—like Stokowski and Koussevitzky—just did not have the training and education that Szell or Reiner had. Koussey (as he was known) was trained at the second tier conservatory in Moscow as a contrabass player. He had been a cellist—his father was a fabulous Klezmer musician who could play absolutely any instrument—but Koussevitzky could only get a full scholarship if he would agree to play the contrabass. He did. He became the contrabass virtuoso of Europe, and the great conductors all knew him that way, not as a conductor, since he had played with nearly all of them as a soloist. So, since he was educated as a bass player, conducting was something entirely different for him, and he was not trained for it at all. He and Stokowski both got their starts through the connections of influential and wealthy wives. As I recall, one of Koussevitzky's wives basically rented out the Berlin Philharmonic for him, so that he could get a review to launch his conducting career. Obviously it worked. Like Stokowski, Koussevitzky had a lot of problems with difficult rhythms. Since he was Russian, he was asked to conduct the*** Rite of Spring. ***He couldn't do it. He hired a pianist colleague to***

re-bar everything for him so that it was simple enough that he could get through it.
LG: Is that true?

NP: ***Absolutely. He never was able to conduct from the original score. They said the same thing about Toscanini. He was terrible with modern music of his times, but was fine as long as it was a Brahms symphony.***
LG: You are completely right.

NP: ***You know, if I am nudging you—since a lot of musicians prefer not to discuss the conductors they played for—it is only because you remember them all personally, and played for them all. There will come a day a hundred years from now that people will say, "Wow, he played for all those people!" This is history.***
LG: But of course I didn't know most of them that well personally, with the exception of Lenny Bernstein, whom I did get to know well, and felt very warm and friendly toward. But there was usually a big interpersonal gap between conductors and their players. I got to know some of them because I was often the manager of their orchestras, and I hired them. I was once in a taxi with George Szell, but we never talked as if we were equals. I always felt that Szell was very kind to me, but we were never buddy buddies the way colleagues in an orchestra are. I worked under so many of the great conductors, but I can't say I really got to know them. Like Reiner, for example, who was a wonderful conductor, but a miserable human being.[2] I even disliked him when he conducted. I did a lot of recordings with him at RCA Victor. He was unfriendly, but he wasn't insulting. We all just put in our three hours and then went home.

NP: ***How sad. Reiner was probably the perfect example of a conductor with a huge divide between himself and the rest of the world. During the nine years he conducted the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, he never even had a residence in Chicago. He lived in Connecticut, and took a sleeper train home every Saturday night after the last Chicago Symphony performance each week. When he stepped down from the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, he didn't even know most of the board members. He had never met any of their wives. He kept a huge distance between himself, the management and the orchestra. Mitropoulos was the only one who really fraternized with the orchestra. He was unique and very wonderful that way. Did you ever play for him?***
LG: I played for Mitropoulos while I was still in school, since he guest conducted the Rochester Philharmonic, and I was playing contrabassoon in the orchestra. He was a delightful guy. He had a fantastic memory. He never brought a score to a rehearsal. I never saw a score on his stand. Yet he could count off

2 Glickman shared the details in one of his books: "When Fritz Reiner conducted at RCA Victor, I was frequently his first bassoonist. Reiner was not an easy conductor to work with. He usually had a dour almost malevolent look, as he peered at us over his half glasses with head lowered, as if he were a bull preparing to charge. On one occasion before we had even played one note, he stepped off the podium and began walking toward the woodwind section. Due to his unpleasant countenance, we all sat with great trepidation wondering who or what could have annoyed him before any music had been played. He passed through the first row of woodwind players, the flutes and oboes, and stopped at our row, the clarinets and bassoons. Then, standing directly in front of *me,* he said (without an ounce of friendliness in his voice):

'Mr. Cavalcabo died last night.' (Calvalcabo had been a bassoonist at the Metropolitan Opera.) 'I'm terribly sorry to hear that,' I responded. 'Never mind that!' Reiner barked. 'Do you want to join the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra?'

The invitation had come out of the blue, and there was Reiner, scowling into my face waiting for an answer. I wasn't too happy playing opera at the New York City Opera, and the thought of playing opera for thirty-some weeks a year and having to look at Reiner persuaded me to answer quickly. 'No, I don't think so.' He stared at me incredulously. 'How many weeks do you play at the New York City Opera now?' he asked. 'Seven,' I answered. 'Do you realize that I am offering you thirty-five weeks of work, every year, year in and year out? *Do you understand what I am saying, young man?'* he bellowed. I cringed under his ugly stare, but finally replied, 'I'm sorry, Dr. Reiner, but the prospect of playing opera the rest of my life just doesn't appeal to me!' 'Harrunph!' He harrunphed, totally exasperated, and stalked off, and although I did play on recording sessions with him many times subsequently, he never spoke to me again." (Loren Glickman, *Maestro! Where's the Beat?,* pp. 83-84)

Demonstrating a passage in a master class without bassoon

bars, he could stop and say: "Second flute, four bars before letter A." I'll never know how he was able to do it.

NP: ***They said Toscanini was just like that. He was said to have 15,000 pages of opera scores committed to memory. That doesn't include any of the rest of the orchestral repertoire, all of which he also conducted from memory.***
LG: Really?

NP: ***Yes. He was also terribly nearsighted, and also*** **incredibly** ***vain, so maybe he memorized everything rather than have to wear glasses in an era long before contact lenses? Who knows? But Toscanini most likely had a photographic memory. Mitropoulos did not. He got up every morning at 5:00 A.M. to study and memorize those scores. And often he didn't get to bed until 2:00 A.M. or so after concerts. He loved American movies, especially Westerns. He used to go to double features in Minneapolis to unwind after long concerts. He said that he didn't care how good or bad the movies were—that was how he relaxed. Oftentimes he went with orchestra members. He didn't have the ego that other conductors had, so he didn't need that separation from his players. They said there was not a movie house usher in Minneapolis who was not on a first name basis with Dmitri Mitropoulos! There was no ego there. He lent or gave so much of his own salary out to members of the orchestra for this, that, and the other that he always had to borrow money to pay his own taxes. Basically, he was always broke. He was always sending talented conducting students to music school, buying instruments for members of his orchestra, etc. There was no one else like that. When he was the conductor of the New York Philharmonic, they made a tour of Europe in 1955. The King of Greece (where Mitropoulos was born and educated) requested that the orchestra play in Greece. The business manager of the Philharmonic at the time was an Italian named Bruno Zirato, who was terribly abusive to Mitropoulos. Zirato said the Philharmonic would not consider it.*[3] ***Mitropoulos countered by saying he would pay for the hotels, meals and all expenses for the entire orchestra for the extra three days out of his own salary. Imagine picking up the tab for three days on tour for the Los Angeles Philharmonic or the Boston Symphony out of your own pocket. If I ever have to be reincarnated as a conductor (heaven help me), I am coming back as Dmitri Mitropoulos! As a human being, he outclassed every conductor of the last century, at the very least. It is no accident that his biography is titled*** **Priest of Music**.

But before we leave the subject of conductors, there is just one other I absolutely have to ask you about. You wrote that you played for Paul Hindemith. What was that like?
LG: He was a delight. I played a concert at Town Hall, which was then one of the busiest chamber music halls in New York, much like Alice Tully Hall at Lincoln Center is now. We played a new work of his called *Hérodiade*. It was scored for string quintet and single winds—maybe nine people in all. I remember it very well because it had one the *longest* bassoon solos I ever played. The Guarneri Quartet was playing with us. Hindemith was probably in his 60s at that time. He was a good conductor for his music, and

3 "Athens was not on the original itinerary, but the financial support of a wealthy Greek patron (Vasilios Goulandris) made possible a two-day layover on October 1 and 2. Unimpressed by Goulandris' generosity—perhaps even miffed by it—Bruno Zirato let it be known that the Philharmonic's management refused to allocate funds for the orchestra's food and lodging in Athens. Mitropoulos, incredulous at this petty obstructionism, thereupon guaranteed to cover all such expenses out of his own pocket. As Philharmonic trumpet player John Ware recalled the incident:

We were to be there for three nights, and Mitropoulos sent a message to us saying that, 'I'm going to pay the entire orchestra's hotel bills and food for the three days we're there because this is my home and I want to have you as my guests and therefore that's what I would like to do.' So we had an orchestra meeting, because while we really appreciated that offer, we thought we couldn't accept all that, so we sent him a message back that we would accept his offer of paying our hotel bills—which he did, the whole orchestra for three nights—but that we would respectfully decline to accept money for the food. And after that, we took up a collection. I don't know the amount, but it probably amounted to whatever the hotel bills cost him, and we told him we wanted to donate that to his favorite charity, which he named as an orphanage there in Athens…so it was a kind of switching of the funds, but nevertheless, he made the gesture, and it's never been done before or since by any other conductor." (William Trotter, *Priest of Music: The Life of Dmitri Mitropoulos,* pp. 376-377)

The Glickman Ensemble in rehearsal
(L to R: Lisa Alexander, Catherine Marchese, Edwin Cabrera, Jill Dispenza)

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I enjoyed it very much. He had a close friend who came to that concert. He was a pianist, and he wrote to me that he thought I would like to know that Hindemith was very impressed with my playing. I have the letter framed on my upstairs wall.

I have a story for you. In the freelance world, you get a call for such and such a date, and you either say yes or no. I learned early on not to ask questions. If you ask questions like "What are we playing?" the contractor would say that if you needed to know all of that, and were concerned about what we were playing, maybe he was calling the wrong person. So I stopped asking. Well, one day I accepted a recording, and what were they recording? *Hérodiade!* The bassoon solo is very high up, then in the middle, then very low down. As a bassoon player, you have to make a reed to work for that particular long solo, and it goes on for four or five minutes in all those registers. As it turned out, I got by, but it's funny—in the freelance world you can never ask: "What are we doing?" since it shows you might be insecure!

CHAMBER MUSIC

LG: I found that I enjoyed playing without a conductor much more than playing with a conductor *(laughter).* We didn't have to wait for someone to tell us how to play. I was going to say I don't have anything against conductors—well, *some* of them *(laughter)*—but when I think of my career, I don't think of the conductors at all. I think of the music, my colleagues, and the places I played. Conductors? They are incidental. Also, I wasn't with one orchestra the way someone plays for thirty years with the New York Philharmonic, for example. I think I got so much more musically out of working with colleagues like Alexander Schneider, the Guarneri String Quartet, and the Budapest Quartet. Those were great artists, and I feel that they raised my level of artistry far more than sitting in an orchestra would have. My heart is truly in chamber music. And I was lucky because when the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center got started, they called me, and I stayed for twenty years.

NP: ***Let's talk about your chamber music colleagues for a moment. Can you tell me a bit about who the most memorable of them were for you, who you enjoyed working with the most?***
LG: Violinist Jaime Laredo. He's a wonderful player, and a very subtle and dedicated artist. I loved working with him and listening to him. Of course Alexander Schneider was great. Then there was the Budapest Quartet. At the Chamber Music Society we had many guest artists—people like Isaac Stern, Itzak

Perlman, and so many, many others. Stern was very easy to work with, and was a very demonstrative guy. We also played the same level of ping-pong together!

For some of the woodwind players, one of my great favorites was Murray Panitz, who was first flute in the Philadelphia Orchestra for years. Then there was Jean-Pierre Rampal. My very favorite flutist of all time, though, was Tom Nyfenger. A lot of people don't know him. He died very young—he took his own life. I felt so awful about that. He was the most sensitive and artistic flutist I ever worked with, and I worked with nearly all of them. He could do everything, and did. He was exceedingly subtle. And he was one of the few flutists who played *in tune!* It's true. I don't mean to be uncharitable, but so many flutists play sharper and sharper the higher they go. Tom didn't do that. For oboe players, Robert Bloom had the most gorgeous sound I ever heard from the oboe. It just brought you into it—it invited you in. We did a lot of orchestral recordings together. I was on call at RCA and Columbia Records, and Bob was the number one oboe player. That was the freelance world. The phone rang, and that's how it worked. So I played with Bob Bloom very often. He was a joy to listen to. He was just great.

NP: ***Did you ever play with*** *Bruno Labate****, the first oboe in the New York Philharmonic from 1920 to 1943?***
LG: Sure. He didn't play the way anyone plays the oboe now, that's for sure. It was a different approach to the instrument. I can't say it was a beautiful sound, but he played everything well. It was a kind of shaky vibrato sound—very European. It wasn't a gorgeous sound like **Bob Bloom's**. I substituted at the Philharmonic a bit while he was still there, but I can't tell you too much about him. When you sub for a performance at the Philharmonic or the Metropolitan Opera, for example, you are often sight-reading, and you are trying so intently not to make mistakes or do anything bad! You can hardly take in what else is happening.

CAREERS IN MUSIC TODAY

NP: ***We have an audience of aspiring young musicians here with us today. You have seen so many changes in your career, over many decades in the music world. Are there any observations you would like to pass on to a young person growing up today—either encouraging or discouraging?***

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The Glickman Ensemble in concert at New York University

LG: What has changed is that the economy is terrible, and hundreds of good musicians are without work. That is a huge change.

NP: ***Do you think you would have taken the same career path you did if the economy for the arts was like it is today?***
LG: I really can't answer that. I was very, very fortunate in that I was successful in five different aspects of the music business. In this economy, I don't know what I can say. There are dozens and dozens of wonderful players who can't make a living. As a matter of fact, after we finish this interview, you will hear the *Glickman Ensemble*. All four members of the group are first-rate professional bassoonists who cannot make a living playing the bassoon. They all have to do various other things in order to make a living. That is so sad to me. It makes me feel terrible because they are wonderful players.

NP: ***But since you were so entrepreneurial, I know you would have been successful no matter what the circumstances. I think that what your very diverse career in music can teach people is that if they are willing to think very creatively, to think outside the box, they may find something that works for them.***
LG: You may be right. I just don't know. What I can suggest is that players should play for nothing if necessary, because they will be heard. Eventually they will be paid. The players in my ensemble are not getting paid here, but are very thankful to be playing together. One comes from Chicago, one from Indiana. They are here because they would rather play than not play. Musicians are like that. Eventually, I know the economy will change, and good players will be paid!

I can tell you the freelance world is suffering *badly*. Ninety-five percent of my work was in the freelance world, and I made a good living at it. My wife, Lisa, who is truly a first-class bassoonist, and one of my most favorite bassoonists—aside from the fact that I love her dearly—can't make a living. It's terrible! Freelance orchestras are playing half the number of concerts they used to play. These are *good* orchestras. New York's 92nd Street Y Orchestra is the perfect example. I put that orchestra together for them. But then, little by little, they played fewer and fewer concerts until they finally went out of business. It's such a shame. Lisa, for example, is a very busy bassoon teacher, and her students graduate from school and they don't know what they are going to do.

NP: ***And just look at the top professional orchestras!***
LG: Exactly. Look at the Philadelphia Orchestra. *Imagine* one of the great, great orchestras of our country going bankrupt. I don't know when things are going to get better.

NP: ***Yes. And when you started your career, it was really like a golden age in classical music in this country. There were free parks concerts for the New York Philharmonic during the 1960s when close to 100,000 people showed up![4] There were huge crowds of people who wanted to hear classical music. That doesn't exist anymore.***
LG: I can remember substituting in the New York Philharmonic for a summer, and we played at Lewisohn Stadium. We filled the place regularly. It was a giant outdoor athletic stadium.

NP: ***Yes. Tickets were something like twenty-five cents during the 1920s, when it all got started. These were known as the "People's Concerts." Those concerts had so many great soloists. Lewisohn Stadium***

4 The opening concert of the second season of the free New York Philharmonic Parks Concerts in 1966 attracted the largest audience the New York Philharmonic has on record. Leonard Bernstein was conducting Beethoven's *Eroica* and Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring*. According to the New York City Commission of Parks, the crowd was somewhere between 75,000 and 90,000 people. The twelve Parks Concerts during the summer of 1965 had a combined attendance of almost half a million people.

The city's Department of Parks & Recreation also supplied the unsung, essential, and apparently amiable cleanup squads that went to work after each performance. "These people leave the nicest trash of all," one worker remarked appreciatively to a Philharmonic official (see Howard Shanet, *Philharmonic: A History of New York's Orchestra*, p. 336).

later became the summer home of the New York Philharmonic as well as the Metropolitan Opera. It was affordable, New York was full of Italian and German immigrants who loved classical music, and they loved going to those concerts.

LG: I don't know what is going to happen to the art that I love more than anything in the world.

THE GLICKMAN-POPKIN BASSOON CAMP

NP: ***I would like to change the subject completely and talk to you a bit about your bassoon camp. You started it in 1978 together with*** *Mark Popkin*, ***whom I also knew when I was a high school student at the North Carolina School of the Arts. How did it all get started? Whose idea was it?***

LG: It was Mark's idea. He and I worked together in New York for many years, and we did a lot of work together. He was a very likable guy, very smart, and very knowledgeable in many subjects other than music. One day he asked me what I thought about the two of us starting a bassoon camp. He was teaching at the North Carolina School of the Arts when he got this idea. He explained that there was an oboe camp in North Carolina at the top of a mountain, it was a success, and we could do the same thing. I told him he was crazy: "A bassoon camp? Who would ever come to a bassoon camp?" Mark said that since I was so well known, he thought they would come. In a year or two, we started the camp. Mark wasn't well known, although he was certainly a wonderful player. It started in 1978 and we are about to start our thirty-fifth year. I can't even *imagine* thirty-five years of it. Sadly, Mark died this year, and we will have to manage without him. He will surely be missed. He always ran the camp, and his wife, Elsie, ran the business end of it. At the beginning it was one week long. Now it is ten days. Mark used to do a bassoon reed-making class every morning. Then we had artistic classes for the rest of the day. Even last year he did two or three master classes, sitting in his wheelchair. He would demonstrate things on his bassoon even then. I will miss him so much at this next camp.

Loren Glickman and the late Mark Popkin at the Glickman-Popkin Bassoon Camp

NP: ***Looking over the list of the guest artists for the bassoon camp, it's like a*** Who's Who ***in the bassoon world. The only other list that is as impressive was*** Bassoon Monsoon ***in New York, which we will get to.***

LG: Yes, we have had many wonderful guest artists. To give a good master class, you have to plan and prepare. I spend many hours in the months before camp planning exactly how each of my master classes is going to go. They may not always go the way I expect, but I do have a plan. I always tell the students that our guest artists will differ from each other. I suggest they take notes. Each one will find something in one of the teachers that really suits them. And if something doesn't suit someone, that's fine, too. Each teacher has something important to tell the students. The students are all college age or older. They are all quite able to play difficult music and to understand it. Each guest artist has totally different ideas about musicality, how to produce a sound, and about technique.

THE BASSOON MONSOON AT LINCOLN CENTER

NP: ***I would love to ask you about the*** Bassoon Monsoon. ***This was ten years after the camp started and by then you had heard a lot of bassoon ensembles.***

LG: Right. The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center wanted to raise money to endow the bassoon chair for the society. We had about forty wonderful bassoon players—they all played for free. We rehearsed, they sounded great, and I had written some transcriptions for the bassoon band, and it was a joyous occasion.

NP: ***But wait! Wasn't this also black tie, with free champagne courtesy of Moet-Hennessy, and a dinner dance afterward at the Vivian Beaumont Theater with Peter Duchin's band playing? As I recall, Dawn Upshaw sang with you, and the bassoon band included luminaries like*** *Arthur Weisberg, Joseph Polisi, Frank Morelli,* ***and*** *Donald MacCourt****. It was a real gala event, and you got such charming and delightful reviews. Whose idea was all of this?***
LG: Well, the management of the Chamber Music Society said they wanted to do a fundraiser for the bassoon chair, so I suggested why not have a whole band of bassoons? They liked the idea, I had the music from bassoon camp, and what I didn't have, I wrote. We played the Weber bassoon concerto. I reorchestrated the accompaniment for an orchestra of bassoons. Gene Shalit, who was a very well known TV personality, was also an amateur bassoon player, and had studied a little bit with me. He was the Master of Ceremonies for the evening.

CURRENT ACTIVITIES

NP: ***Can you tell me a bit about your musical life right now, and the projects you are working on?***
LG: I stopped playing about twelve years ago. As you know, I am very cocky, and I always think I can do anything in the music world, and so I started thinking about transcribing music I love for the bassoon. I am comfortable at the piano, although I can't say I am a very good pianist anymore. I started arranging so many pieces for bassoon, and I was fortunate enough to find a publisher who loved my stuff and said that he would publish anything I would write. TrevCo-Varner Music has published ninety pieces of

Lisa Alexander (left) and Catherine Marchese (right) of the Glickman Ensemble

mine. At this very time, my wife, **Lisa Alexander**, **Catherine Marchese** and **Edwin Cabrera** are editing recordings of my music that they recorded about three months ago. It's a lot of music, and by the time they get everything edited, there will probably be 100 published works!

I have to tell you a story. About four months ago, when I was thinking about what music I wanted to write, I started to think about Russian music. My parents were both Russian, but they never spoke Russian in the house because they didn't want their children to grow up with an accent. They never even spoke Russian to each other in the house. When I was an infant, my mother used to sing Russian songs to me. For whatever reason, I can remember the songs she sang to me when she changed my diapers, gave me a bath—all the things you do with a baby. I don't speak one word of Russian, but I remember the music. So, I started writing Russian songs for bassoon and piano. The first completed work was about five minutes long. Then I started another, and then another. To make a long story short, I wrote four volumes of the most beautiful Russian songs for bassoon and piano. I can still hear my mother's voice in my head, and I can hear it as if she were singing to me today. I loved doing these Russian songs.

I am an old man now (I am eighty-eight), and I don't know how long I am going to last. My father lived to ninety-eight, so I would say I probably have another week to go, maybe a month. I walk, exercise, and am in pretty good shape. I am so lucky to have Lisa. Not only is she a wonderful player, but she is also such a wonderful person. I even tell her that every once in a while!

NP: ***I would say you are a very fortunate man. You have done what you love, and a lot of people never get that in life. But I think you have some other, very special gifts, too. There are many wonderful bassoonists in the world. But you had a good business head, you were practical, and you were able to put everything together in a way that gave you great satisfaction. You were also in the right place at the right time.***

LG: Yes. I never felt I was above anything, although I would say I am glad I didn't go to Radio City Music Hall! I am glad I got into artistic things early. I love music with a passion. The T-shirt that a niece of mine sent to me reads: *Music is life: The rest is just details.* I always tried to instill that in all my students. I love to hear them play with real passion, and to feel that I may have helped to bring that out.

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My thanks and gratitude to photographer ***Matt Dine****, who graciously contributed the images found in this interview (www.mattdinephotography.com). When Matt isn't behind a camera, he can be heard as the principal oboist of New York's Orpheus Ensemble, as well as the American Ballet Theatre, where he is also orchestra personnel manager.*