

THE PIERRE MONTEUX SCHOOL

for Conductors and Orchestra Musicians

NEWSLETTER SPRING 2006



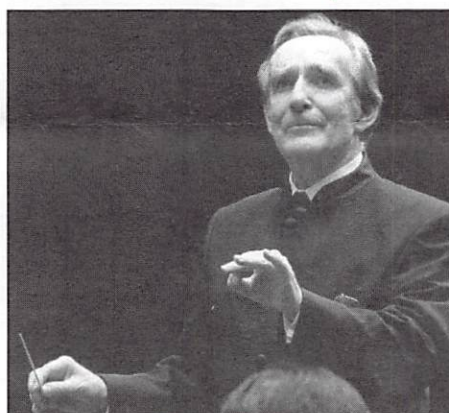
At the Podium:

Thomas Baldner and Barbara Yahr

Thomas Baldner was born in Berlin, the son of cellist Max Baldner. In 1951, Mr. Baldner began studying with Pierre Monteux. In 1954, he founded the Greenwich Philharmonic Orchestra, of which he was principal conductor for four years. Upon his return to Europe, he was guest conductor for many of the most famous orchestras, including the Berlin Philharmonic, the London Philharmonic, Philharmonic Orchestra of London, Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra, Stuttgart Philharmonic, Santa Cecilia Orchestra, and many others.

He is in his thirtieth year on the faculty of Indiana University's School of Music, twenty-six of which he served as Chairman of the Department of Instrumental Conducting. Twenty-six former Indiana University School of Music students are sitting Music Directors in this country, two in Europe.

Mr. Baldner has fond memories of his first experiences as a student at the Monteux school in the summer of 1951. Before Maitre arrived, there were baton technique sessions of a rather elementary kind. This was decidedly not what Baldner had come to Maine for. He deserted the class on the second day, but was hauled back in by George Hurst, a distinguished English conductor



Thomas Baldner

today and a fellow student then. In no uncertain terms, Hurst advised Baldner not to make enemies where it was not necessary. "Wait until Maitre gets here," he said, "and you will get what you want." And so it was. "Papa Pierre," as the students affectionately called him, took a shine to Baldner, and for two summers he and his wife had a wonderful time on Frenchman's Bay living in a trailer the size of a Volkswagen Beetle – no heating, no cooling. To this day, whenever Baldner conducts Brahms' *Second Symphony*, he remembers Monteux standing behind him on the floor, tapping Baldner's foot, and saying, "Not so slow, Tommi, not so slow!"

Baldner last saw Maitre in Cologne, Germany, when Monteux conducted the Guerzenich Orchestra in a program that

Continued on Page 2

Our 1924 Baldwin Piano Returns

We are looking forward to a long-run "return engagement" of our 1924 Baldwin grand piano, which Phoebe and Phil Devenish have had completely rebuilt. This piano, which has served us nobly from the very inception of the School, has been

played by guest soloists as well as by many of our most prestigious students over the years. Imagine its musical memories! We now anticipate that it will be played by many more equally notable Monteux musicians in the future.

Capital Campaign Reaches Halfway Point

The Campaign to Ensure the Legacy of the Monteux

School has reached the halfway mark of its total goal of \$855,000, thanks to a recent major gift from Philip and Phoebe Devenish. In addition to seeking pledges from Friends of the school, we have begun a mail campaign to alumni from the Monteux and Bruck eras, chaired by Michael Charry, Marc David, Neil Gittleman, and Hugh Wolff. Current efforts also include seeking donations from local businesses and Maine foundations. Plans are underway for special fundraising events during the summer and a mail campaign to Jinbo-era alumni. All of the Board and Campaign Committee have made pledges or gifts to the campaign. A \$25,000 pledge from Ginia Davis Wexler, President, has inaugurated the phase of the campaign focused on building an endowment for student scholarships. The \$25,000 grant from the Stephen and Tabitha King Foundation has been spent for completion of the hall shingling and initial renovations of student housing on campus. To contribute to the campaign in any way, please put a note in the annual pledge envelope and a member of the campaign committee will contact you.

At The Podium

Continued from Page 1

comprised *Petroushka*, *Jeux*, and *Le Sacre du Printemps*. Fuming, Monteux sat in the green room at intermission muttering, "I am not a ballet conductor, I am not a ballet conductor!! I want to conduct Brahms!" One of Baldner's strongest memories is of Pierre Monteux's humanity and kindness, which, he says, "was an example to all of us – for life. To return after fifty years to Hancock, where I learned so much from the great French musician, is a significant event in my life".

Now in her fourth season with the Greenwich Village Orchestra, Music Director Barbara Yahr has brought the orchestra to a new level of distinction. Her dynamic programming and outreach to the Union Square neighborhood has established the GVO as an important part of the New York City music scene. A native of New York, her career has taken her from the United States to Europe, the Middle East, and Asia.

After a four-year appointment as assistant conductor to Lorin Maazel (also a Monteux era alum) and the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, Ms. Yahr made her European debut conducting the Bayerischer Academy Orchestra on tour, with Maazel as violin soloist. An invitation from the Symphony Orchestra of the Bayerischer Rundfunk in Munich for the following two seasons and successive engagements with the Munich Radio Orchestra for both concert and radio recordings earned her recognition in the German press. She served as Principal Guest Conductor for the Munich Radio from 1998 to 2000.



Barbara Yahr

Her guest appearances include performances with the Dusseldorf Symphoniker, Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie, Frankfurt Radio, Orchestra Sinfonica Siciliana, Janacek Philharmonic, NHK Symphony Orchestra, Singapore Symphony, National Symphony, New World Symphony, New Mexico Symphony, Louisiana Symphony, Chautauqua Symphony, Ohio Chamber, St. Paul Chamber, Cincinnati Chamber, and orchestras in Columbus, Chattanooga, Richmond, Lubbock, Anchorage, and Calgary. She has also appeared in Israel with symphony orchestras in Jerusalem and Elat.

Ms. Yahr made her German operatic debut with a new production of *Rigoletto* at the Stattheater Giessen, followed by a new production of *l'Elisir d'Amor* at the Opera Frankfurt. She conducted *Tosca* with the Tulsa Opera in what *Tulsa World* called a "superb" performance and has appeared with the Minnesota Opera, Pittsburgh Opera Theater, Fort Worth Opera, and Stattheater of Hanover, Germany. Her debut with the Cincinnati Opera conducting *Carmen* led to a return engagement with a new production of *Samson and Dalila*. Her performances of

Mozart operas at the Mannes College of Music were praised by the New York critics.

She attended the Monteux School during summers from 1984 to '87, where she studied conducting with Charles Bruck. She considers Bruck's approach to teaching conducting and music one of the most important influences in her life.

"Bruck warned us," she says, "that being a conductor was not the easiest way to 'enjoy your life.' He was right, of course. It is a hard road, but I always felt that Bruck also believed life should be lived to the fullest, and being a conductor is part of that for many of us."

In one way or another, she has always followed that advice. After conducting that first small orchestra, she went on to be assistant conductor for the Pittsburgh Symphony under Lorin Maazel. "I learned a lot about the life of a professional orchestra musician there," she says. After four years as an assistant, she was able to start guest conducting in Europe and the U.S. in both opera and symphony.

That nomadic life was "great as a single person," she says, but her life changed when she married and had a child. Travel became very difficult, both with a baby and without. She wanted to build a more "normal" life and, as luck would have it, she conducted an orchestra in New York City when she was about eight months pregnant. They asked her to be their music director, and she has been with the Greenwich Village Orchestra ever since. Her son will turn four in a few weeks, and the GVO was recently written up in the *New York Times*. She is thrilled with how well both of them – her son and the orchestra – are doing.

Ms. Yahr says, "For me, Charles Bruck stood for integrity, both in life and in music. There are only a few teachers who are able to merge those ideas so convincingly.

The message she took away from the Monteux School and Bruck was "Live a life you can believe in." This motto has served her well as her life has taken its many twists and turns.

We invite all alumni of the Pierre Monteux School to tell us of their conducting achievements for future *At the Podium* columns.

Volunteer Opportunities

Are you looking for a way to get involved in the school? The school needs you! We are planning a 'painting party' of the cabins in May and could use your hands! Our goal is to paint the interior and exterior of all the cabins, as well as to spruce up the buildings with newer carpets, throw rugs, and framed pictures. Please call our administrative assistant, Roslynne Lowry, at 422-3280 to get more details and sign up to help.

"A Tale of Two Maitres"

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times... I'm not talking Dickens. I'm talking life as a student conductor. Why? Because two concerts in this program book bring to mind recollections of my days as a conducting student at the Pierre Monteux School in Hancock, Maine. January has Bartók's Concerto for Orchestra, a work I first studied and conducted (the first movement, anyway) at the Monteux School. And February features guest conductor Ludovic Morlot—like me, an alum of the School. And the Monteux School is also on my mind because as I write this, playing in the upper right hand corner of my computer screen is a DVD of Monteux himself, conducting the Boston Symphony in a 1959 televised program of Brahms, Hindemith, and Stravinsky. I just picked up the disc, and it's a rare and marvelous chance to see the master conducting Brahms' noble Tragic Overture (the first piece I ever conducted in Hancock) and Stravinsky's *Petrouchka* (which Monteux led in the ballet's 1911 premiere and which I had the honor of teaching in a visit to the School several years ago.)

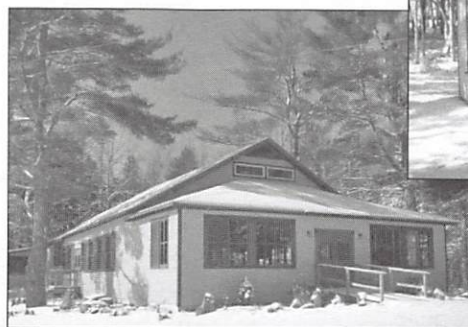
Maitre is the French equivalent of the Italian word *maestro*. The two *maitres* of this essay's title are Pierre Monteux and my own teacher (and Ludovic Morlot's)—Monteux's first pupil, Charles Bruck.

Monteux was a special and unique man. Typecast as an expert in the music of his French homeland, Monteux's favorite composer was Brahms and his recording of Sir Edward Elgar's "Enigma" Variations is the definitive performance of that quintessentially British work. A collaborator with some of the greatest egos of all time—Diaghilev, Nijinsky, Stravinsky—he was the most self-effacing of *maestri*. In a time of tyrannical conductors who controlled their orchestras with intimidation, Monteux was universally beloved by the musicians whom he led.

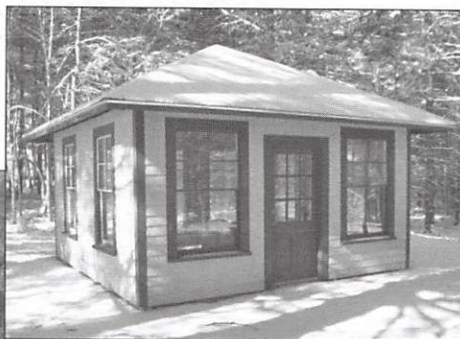
What was Monteux's secret? He loved the music more than he loved himself. He wasn't a showman. The little mustachioed Frenchman I see on my computer screen doesn't dance and jump around on the podium. He stands calmly, conducting for the musicians before him, not for the audience behind him. His gestures are simple, elegant, and—most of all—clear.

THE PIERRE MONTEUX SCHOOL *for Conductors and Orchestra Musicians*

Right: New Rehearsal Studio



Above and Right:
Forest Studio in Winter



Throughout the 62-year history of the Pierre Monteux School, there has been one and only one rule: "One is down." In other words, on the first beat of every bar of music your stick must go down, so the musicians know where the downbeat is. Now you'd think that was an obvious thing. Of course a *downbeat* must be beaten down. Oh, you'd be surprised! But seeing a clear downbeat is vital to every orchestral musician. A musician who sees a clear downbeat from the podium can play calmly and confidently.

The one and only one rule of the Pierre Monteux School has one and only one corollary: "Beat clearly." In other words, once you've given a clear downbeat, be sure that the musicians can easily understand everything else that you do. The real magic of the "Monteux Method" lay in the subtext behind a clear beat: that the conductor's one and only one job is to help the musicians play their best. Don't get in the way. Don't put on a show. Don't be a show. Be master of the musicians by being their servant.

No wonder the players of Monteux's orchestras loved him!

Though Monteux had a career in the major capitals of the music world, he returned every summer to Hancock, in Downeast Maine, just due north of Bar Harbor, to teach. Why Maine? Because in 1926 he had married a "Maine girl", Doris Hodgkins, who built a him forest studio in 1942 as a surprise present: a place where Monteux could fulfill his fondest wish: "to create fine young musi-

cians." After Monteux died, leadership of the School passed to his first pupil, Hungarian-born Charles Bruck, the second *Maitre*, who taught there from 1970 to his death in 1995. I studied with Bruck from 1978 to 1983 and Ludovic Morlot was his pupil in the last years of Bruck's life.

Bruck was very different from Monteux. He was as prickly as Monteux was genial. He had a temper. But he was a true Monteux disciple. He believed in the "Monteux Method" and insisted that his students do likewise. He taught the "Monteux repertoire"—Haydn, Beethoven, Brahms, Debussy, Stravinsky—and also championed the works of his Hungarian countrymen Bartók and Kodály.

The Monteux School continues to thrive under its third generation of leadership. Michael Jinbo, one of my classmates, is now the Director. And there are many Monteux-Dayton connections. The University of Dayton's Margaret Karns, a summer resident of Downeast Maine, is a trustee of the School. Not only do I try my best to model the Monteux/Bruck spirit, but many of our best guest conductors of recent years—Jinbo, George Cleve, Enrique Barrios, Carlos Miguel Prieto—were trained in Hancock. And don't forget perhaps the greatest conductor ever to lead the DPO: Pierre Monteux himself, who led an all-Beethoven program in 1959!

Reprinted from Neal's Notes in a Dayton Philharmonic Orchestra program by permissions of Neal Gittleman.

Pierre Monteux Memorial Foundation, Inc.

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We apologize for any errors or omissions in the list above

THE PIERRE MONTEUX SCHOOL *for Conductors and Orchestra Musicians*

Sponsored by

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2006 CONCERT SCHEDULE

Six Symphony Concerts on Sundays at 5:00pm

June 25, July 2, July 9

July 16 Thomas Baldner ('51 & '53), conductor

July 23 Memorial Concert featuring Music Director Michael Jinbo

July 30 Pops Concert

FREE Children's Concert

Monday, July 24 10:00 a.m.

Five Wednesday Chamber Concerts at 7:30 p.m.

June 28, July 5, 12, 19, 26

For Season Ticket information, phone or fax 207-422-3280
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THE PIERRE MONTEUX SCHOOL

FOR CONDUCTORS AND ORCHESTRA MUSICIANS

Sponsored by The Pierre Monteux Memorial Foundation, Inc.

Michael Jinbo
Music Director

April 2006

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Dear Friends,

Soon our 63rd season will be upon us. We open on June 25th in our lovely hall, refurbished and increased in size. School begins on the 19th with daily sessions of reading through a large repertoire and learning more about how to conduct this repertoire or to play it.

Our very gifted teacher Michael Jinbo will be going into his 11th year at the school. He was the assistant to Charles Bruck who succeeded Maitre Monteux, so the tradition goes on. We continue with our policy of inviting back each summer one of our former conducting students for a working visit. This year it will be Thomas Baldner ('51, '53), who is in his thirtieth year on the faculty of Indiana University's School of Music, twenty six of which he served as Chairman of the Department of Instrumental Conducting. Read more about him in the newsletter.

Much repair work was done this year on our cabins, the barns and finishing the shingling of the hall, thanks to a grant from the Stephen and Tabitha King Foundation. And we have a delightful new rehearsal studio, gift of Phil and Phoebe Devenish, as well as a rebuilt grand piano also thanks to the Devenishes.

We are reinstituting our annual free concert for children on July 24th at 10 a.m. with the Woodwind ensemble "Young Audience" style. The program will be planned by the student musicians.

Please let us hear from you. We depend on your annual contributions to run our seasonal programs and to pay our operating expenses. These include Maestro Jinbo's salary, scholarships for students, utilities, maintenance and other routine needs. We appreciate your help in keeping this wonderful project going.

Cordially,



Ginia Davis Wexler
President