

Doris Fukawa Oral History

San Francisco Conservatory of Music Library & Archives

San Francisco Conservatory of Music Library & Archives
50 Oak Street
San Francisco, CA 94102

Interview conducted August 11, 2015
Tessa Updike, Interviewer

San Francisco Conservatory of Music Library & Archives Oral History Project

The Conservatory's Oral History Project has the goal of seeking out and collecting memories of historical significance to the Conservatory through recorded interviews with members of the Conservatory's community, which will then be preserved, transcribed, and made available to the public.

Among the narrators will be former administrators, faculty members, trustees, alumni, and family of former Conservatory luminaries. Through this diverse group, we will explore the growth and expansion of the Conservatory, including its departments, organization, finances and curriculum. We will capture personal memories before they are lost, fill in gaps in our understanding of the Conservatory's history, and will uncover how the Conservatory helped to shape San Francisco's musical culture through the past century.

Doris Fukawa Interview

This interview was conducted at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music on Tuesday, August 11, 2015 by Tessa Updike.

Tessa Updike

Tessa Updike is the archivist for the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, where she has established the school's historical collections, oral history project, and historical sound preservation project. Tessa holds a B.A. in visual arts and has her Masters in Library and Information Science with a concentration in Archives Management from Simmons College in Boston. Previously she has worked for the Harvard University Botany Libraries and Archives, the GLBT Historical Society, and the Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley.

Use and Permissions

This manuscript is made available for research purposes. All literary rights in the manuscript, including the right to publish, are reserved for the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. No part of the manuscript may be quoted for publication without the written permission of the Conservatory's Archivist or Library Director.

Requests for permission to quote for publication should be addressed to:

San Francisco Conservatory of Music Library & Archives
50 Oak Street
San Francisco, CA
94102

August 11, 2015

UPDIKE Doris, if you could start out by telling us where you were born, and where you grew up?

FUKAWA I was born in San Francisco. I think it is now Pacific Medical Center, it used to be called Stanford Hospital. I grew up in what was at that time kind of a slummy area in J-town [Japantown], according to my mom and my dad. And then when I was about four, we moved to Berkeley. I would say from four years old, I was really a Berkeley kid. My family was never one of those liberal Berkeley families; in fact, I think during the 1960s my mom really considered moving to San Mateo, or somewhere safer, because Berkeley was rife with protests. But as a kid, that was a really interesting time to grow up. I was really aware when I was a child growing up that we were different. Berkeley doesn't appear to look like that, but my elementary school – I think I could count on one hand how many Asian kids were there. I could also count on one hand how many black kids were there. It was predominantly middle class, it was called Jefferson Elementary.

I remember my very first music teacher was a man named Dean Williams, and he played bass for the Oakland Symphony. He was the one who put a violin in my hands. It was public school, so it was fourth grade. But I remember even before that – I think I was in third grade – the San Francisco Symphony had an outreach program and they sent out a string quartet and a pianist to my elementary school. I remember they played on the auditorium floor and somebody, I think it was the pianist, asked if anybody knew how to turn pages. My hand shot up, because I was a pianist. I was a pianist first, when I studied at age five with a man named Charles Adams. So I got picked to turn pages, and they were playing the Schubert *Trout*. I just remember when hearing the violinist play, I just thought, “Oh my gosh, that’s the instrument I really want to play!” It was so beautiful, it just sang. I remember being captivated. Verne Sellin, who used to be the orchestra manager, was one of the violinists. I have a funny story about that which I can circle later, but I remember that I had an epiphany that I wanted to play violin. But my family was such that we couldn't afford to do two instruments, let alone two private instruments. So I started in fourth grade with Mr. Williams in the school orchestra, and I really enjoyed it, I really loved playing. But I was horrible; my hands were double-jointed and I think it was just due to my own tenaciousness that I figured out I could play in tune – at a terrible cost, but it was still playing in tune!

I went to – at that time it was called Garfield Junior High School. May Kurka's daughter Mira also went to Garfield, she's a little older than I am. And then somewhere it got changed to King Junior High School, in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King. But I remember going to orchestra there, and a fiery orchestra woman – her name was Phillis Magnusen. Oh my God, she had that kind of look where if she stared at you, you just didn't want to be the recipient. She was very

much like that. She sometimes conducted with a drum stick instead of a baton, and she'd shriek at us. I remember wanting to play violin really well for her, and in seventh grade I think I got a scholarship to Cazadero Music Camp. So then I went up, and the world opened up for me – all these people were playing music. I met some wonderful friends that are friends for life. But I realized I really wanted lessons – the urge for private lessons surfaced again. I got a list from Ms. Magnusen in eighth grade – because I was still at King – and on that list was a number of teachers, and Anne Crowden's name was one of them. I called a number of teachers, and they didn't have space. My mom didn't speak English well enough to communicate, so I remember being twelve or thirteen and calling these people and asking them, "Could you take me on as a student?" and "We don't have a lot of money." I called Anne about three times, and by the third time she said, "OK, you're the only one that's called me. You're a kid, and I have to meet you." She was lovely. She scared me a lot, but she had very kind eyes, and she could see right through you. She said, "I could tell you really want to do this." She gave me a personal scholarship – I think it was all of \$9.00 a lesson – and then I started. Of course Anne's friends were Bonnie [Hampton] and Nate [Schwartz] and Paul Hersh – and so I became part of that world – and Margaret [Rowell]. It's just been amazing.

Anne was the one who told me when I was a junior that she had heard that this chamber music program was going to start at the Conservatory in the Prep, and – would I consider auditioning for it? By that time I think I was in the Oakland Youth Orchestra, and Dennis de Coteau was the conductor, and a lot of Anne's students and other colleagues of mine who I'm still with all were part of that orchestra. I just think that's really amazing – like Shinji Eshima, who plays in the [SF] Ballet, and Gloria Lum, who plays for Los Angeles Phil, and of course Anne's daughter Deirdre, who now plays – she was BBC, but she's with the Smith Quartet and the London Philharmonia with Esa-Pekka. So these are people that – it was our tribe. It was a great tribe. I auditioned in the old building, and I remember it was really a small program. May Kurka was there, Milton [Salkind] was there. I don't remember – I think Izzy [Tinkleman] might have been there. One of the pieces that I had to sight-read was Mozart's *Hunt* – the first movement. I felt really lucky because I actually had played it somewhere. I didn't play the first violin part, but I knew it well enough so I could do a good job, and I knew the phrasing. I was a serious chamber musician, even though I didn't have the facilities, quite, to pull it all off. But Anne's teaching was quite amazing, because she made you go for the music, even if you couldn't technically pull it off. And because you couldn't pull it off, it made you practice harder, to try to really play it in tune and in time, and with the right kind of tone production.

That year, I think I might actually have the program, my quartet – we were a prototype, and my quartet was Dan Smiley, who was principal second for San Francisco Symphony for a while, but Dan has been a friend forever. Amy Lozano, who was a violinist – she went to Lowell High School – but she's a violist in the Colorado Phil. And the cellist was Carol Morrow, and I think Carol studied either with Margaret or with Bonnie, and she was a fellow Berkeley High kid. That

was the quartet, and I just remember being amazed – every Saturday in the afternoons I would get to the Conservatory – my dad would drive me. Somehow we’d either pick up Dan Smiley, or we’d drop him off – he was in Mill Valley. So I credit my dad for doing a lot of driving. I don’t remember doing this by BART, and because it was way out in the avenues there wasn’t an easy way to get to the Conservatory. I remember the first piece we got was Beethoven op. 95. Anne Crowden’s reaction was, “Oh my gosh! How the hell did they give you that piece to start with?!” So it told her a few things. I think Izzy wanted a piece that was going to be a knockout piece from the start, but that’s a really tough piece to give a new quartet that doesn’t know one another. We had a lot of great times, though. Our rehearsal was in Mack’s [McCray] old studio on the ground floor of the old Conservatory building. And I think most of us – Dan and I certainly, and Amy to a certain extent – I wouldn’t say goody two-shoes kids, but we knew we had to rehearse and do it by a certain time. Carol had a little of a different attitude, where if we were tired she said, “OK, let’s go,” but we couldn’t go in the hallways because we’d be busted – meaning somebody would see us and say, “Oh, you’re supposed to be rehearsing!” So we figured out we could jump out of Mack’s window. And so it was really funny, we would just open the window – the door would still be there, you couldn’t really see in, and we’d just leave the Conservatory. We’d go to Noriega to get some food, or we’d walk to the reservoir that was nearby, and then we’d come back and go through the window again, and resume rehearsing. That building was porous. This was in the early ‘70s – you could just kind of walk in and out, and nobody really stopped you. There were no ID badges, it was really a different time.

Izzy was, I thought, a really incredible musician. He used his hands a lot to demonstrate, and I remember thinking – he was in a wheelchair at that time – and sometimes his passion would just make him feel like he was going to pop out of that wheelchair. I would just watch him with fascination. He got a lot out of us. It was not an easy piece, and I don’t actually remember our second piece, I think it was another Beethoven because we hadn’t quite mastered some of the things that he wanted. But that was a really instructive time for me, because I realized this was the world that I really wanted to be a part of. And I had a lot of work to do in order to catch up to becoming a musician. And that’s when I first got to know Stuart Canin. Stuart was Dan Smiley’s teacher. Zaven Melikian was also in the building, and Zaven had the bushy eyebrows that would make you kind of feel like you were one inch tall.

I didn’t take lessons there because I took them from Anne, but they had opened up this lovely chamber music program to others, so it was really a nice program to be a part of. Hellman Hall was relatively new at that time. That was the first time I was in Prep, and I remember May and Milton distinctly. They were just really trying to size up what the talent pool would look like to do this program. The thing that I thought was interesting – it was in response to the program that Anne Crowden was doing over in the East Bay side, where she would organize her students along with Bonnie’s East Bay students, or Margaret’s East Bay students, and they would do chamber music for high school students. At that time there weren’t any programs for high school

kids, they thought that chamber music should be for collegiate students. I think Anne's courage to do that, and just kind of say, "Screw you!" to this side of the Bay was fortuitous, and it set an example, not only to the Prep Division, but also to youth orchestras, because it became an add-on, or an extra incentive for someone to join a youth orchestra if you could do chamber music.

What they didn't realize of course was you couldn't just put principal players together and expect them to gel. Sometimes they don't. If it's set up well – meaning that it really is in the spirit of trying to communicate and find communications between three or four or five people to do a teamwork effort to pull this piece off, that was the best way to do it, as opposed to – you have a reputation to uphold because you were concertmaster, or principal. The goals were a little different. And Anne's groups were not meant to be showcase groups to represent organizations. She just thought it was a waste of time for us to just do private lessons, and then go to orchestra. For her, she thought chamber music was a great way to try to figure out how to communicate ideas, and how to communicate and work with others. And she had some lovely, lovely programs. I think May – when I talked with her later, when I was a grownup – she did say that it was in response to seeing that you could apply chamber music principles to pre-college aged kids, and they didn't have to wait until college to do this. That was curious, and I realized also later that Anne sent me and also Carol Morrow, from the East Bay side, to kind of size up what kind of program the Conservatory was thinking of doing. Of course as a kid you don't think about these things – "Oh! Here's a new program, let's go."

In 1974 I graduated from Berkeley High, and I think by that time San Francisco Youth Orchestra started its existence, and then I spent a year at Cal (U.C. Berkeley) because I didn't know if I really wanted to try to do an audition and work up to try to get into a conservatory. I knew that the only way I could do that would be on scholarship, because my dad and my mom were not able to do that. My dad, just as a side note, was a Teamster truck driver, because he couldn't get work otherwise. It was in the 1950s, and there was still backlash towards Japanese-Americans. He served in the Korean War, but when he was released he didn't have any work. And he had a wife who didn't speak English, with two kids at that time who needed benefits. So he got a job driving trucks for the Teamsters Union, and it was for Ernie's Liquors and Wines, which at that time serviced the San Francisco Giants' clubhouse. That's probably why I'm a diehard Giants fan to this day. But my dad was very supportive, and my mother is very musical, but her training and her ability to do anything musically was interrupted by World War II, so there was no resource and nothing that she could return to. But she has a lovely singing voice, and she's the one who said if my dad was really serious about education, that we should try piano or violin, or to be some kind of musical family as well – at least to do the training. I thank them for that, really, because they really didn't have means and they figured out a way into the right people to help.

Anyway, so when I was going to Cal (and I actually hated it – I felt lucky to have gotten in, but I really wanted to play) unknown to my parents I applied to Oberlin, to Cincinnati, and to Manhattan School. Oberlin was because of Andor Toth, who Anne had talked very highly of, and thought he might be a good teacher. And then to Manhattan School to Raphael Bronstein or Ariana Bronne, because of my friends and her former students had made the transition and went to Manhattan School and found the training to be very helpful and good. And Cincinnati ... I don't remember why Cincinnati. I remember doing an audition for them on tape. And so I applied, and was accepted to audition at Oberlin and Manhattan School. I sent the tape to Cincinnati and didn't do very well – it was such an informal, icky experience. I remember my parents – my dad particularly – were furious. Because he didn't think that I could make anything of myself as a musician. Frankly, that's just not having any experience with it, and he didn't know how I would make a living. My mother was also a little worried. Her worry was more of, "Well, you're not going to find a husband doing something like this." It was an interesting time – the mid-'70s. I remember I told them, "I hope you co-sign my loans, and I'm sorry you're not supportive of this." We had a big family argument and fight.

I flew out to Cleveland. At that time I knew Beth Baker – she was a violinist, and Virginia Baker's daughter. And Peter Jaffe, who conducts for Stockton. I stayed with them in the dorms, they were my buddies that kind of put me up, and I auditioned for Toth. I really liked Oberlin, but I was struck by the fact that it was in the middle of nowhere in winter, and it looked so desolate to me, I just thought, "I don't know about this." I took a Greyhound bus to New York City, to I think Port Authority. Of course New York in the mid-'70s was still – it's a huge life, but there were homeless all over, and it was a little scary in parts. I took a subway up to my friend Claudia Bloom's, and she was staying at the Union Theological Seminar, across the street from Manhattan School. I took the audition there, and it struck me – I thought to myself, I would benefit a lot from Toth. I really liked him a lot. But I didn't think I wanted to live in a dorm in Oberlin, and be in (for me) in the middle of nowhere. I'm one of these kinds that learns the hard way – the school of hard knocks. I thought, "I'm going to either sink or swim in New York City. It's a harder place to be."

This woman, Ariana Bronne, was a mac truck. She was a tough, tough woman – but very soft hearted. She would teach with a cigarette hanging out of her mouth – [in gruff voice] "Doris! Do it again!" Out of fear you would just have to do it again. But I just thought I would probably respond better to that. Fortunately, they gave me a half scholarship. Oberlin did a nice job too, but I just thought that New York would probably be the place. So I went to Manhattan School, and I was one of a tide of Californians beginning to come out and do the traveling. My friend Deirdre Cooper – Anne's daughter – was also the same year. We decided the two of us would go, and we were roommates because I think Anne felt comfortable having her daughter with me. I was fairly responsible, I'm one of the kind who will make sure our rent's paid on time, and – Oh

wow – there’s no food in the refrigerator, we’d better do something about that! Her daughter Deirdre was not that same type.

It was a real adventure, I’ll tell you – for the first year I was so homesick. So homesick. Not only for my parents, who I was still kind of distant with, but for California. I had never been in a place where it was so cold, and it was such a city, and I was ill-prepared. I remember running out of my apartment to the next apartment building because we had no hot water. I took a shower at my friend’s apartment, and then thought that I could just run back to my apartment. And my hair froze. It froze straight back – you never think about those things! I’d never really been in snow before, or had to function in snow. So it was a real learning experience, and I really attribute being in New York as putting a really tough skin on me. The first two summers I was there I would come back, and still teach at Cazadero. That way I kept my teaching roots, because I really liked teaching. Then the third, fourth, and fifth years I went to Santa Fe, New Mexico, for Santa Fe Opera. At that time I was working for the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival in New York for the two directors as a research and kind of an executive assistant. That was a great part-time job to have. It put me through school.

I had done some failed things – I played in a disco band, but the hours just killed me. This was in disco’s heyday, I remember we were the opening band for something at Studio 54 when it was in its heyday. I liked pop music all through high school, but for some reason when I went to Manhattan I thought I would be just classical. So I immersed myself in Shostakovich and Mahler and Brahms and everything, so I really didn’t listen to pop music. All of a sudden to be thrust back into that and realize – wow, this is just like disco. We were the opening band – it was wild, it was really wild. I thought, “Oh, I could actually make a living doing that, but this is not why I went to New York.” The hours were horrible, and I just remember failing miserably. And I tried to be a waitress, and that was dreadful as well.

I found this job as the New York assistant for the Santa Fe Festival directors – artist and executive director – who at that time were Alicia Schachter Rich and Sheldon Rich, who founded that festival. Alicia passed away – they no longer are the artistic and executive directors, but that world was people like Heiichiro Ohyama, or Andre Micho Schub – the Lincoln Center crowd – Danny Phillips, Tim Eddy. All of those folks would go to Santa Fe in the summers – Walter Trampler, Ani and Ida Kavafian. I thought, “Oh my gosh, this is fabulous!” I would sit in on those rehearsals and watch them as they would duke it out – “Are you going to go down-bow here, or up-bow here?” I thought, “Oh! That’s kind of what we do on a mini level”, but here they were struggling with *Death and the Maiden*, and trying to come to a compromise about that. Paul Hersh would do that in the summer – I remember Bonnie and Nate going out. So again, I kept having these loose connections with folks I had known when I was growing up. Not to mention it was a great job to have, and I would do research – I would spend hours at Lincoln Center looking for repertoire that was different, or Alicia would say, “I need these two piano works,” –

repertoire that I wasn't familiar with, but it needs to be of a certain timeframe. I think it's funny, Music at Menlo has that format now – this was in the early '90s – so quite a few years later to do the same kind of thing. They have people who do that kind of research and I thought, "Oh! I cut my teeth in stuff like that."

UPDIKE That's a wonderful experience.

FUKAWA Oh, it was great! And then I saw the business side of it, because I would have to interact with management, and get photo releases, and all of these kinds of things that one has to deal with, and realize it was not simply – you just go and play somewhere. I was married to a trumpet player, Jim Dooley, who plays principal down in Silicon Valley – it used to be the San Jose Symphony – with George Cleve. And then we graduated from Manhattan, I went to Columbia for a Master's in Education, because I didn't know where we were going to end up. He was making finals all over the place, and I thought the best thing I could do, because violinists are more than a dime a dozen, was to do a teaching Ed degree in case I was going to teach somewhere and they needed that. It was fortuitous – the job that he won was principal trumpet for the San Jose Symphony, and I thought, "Oh, we can make our way back to the Bay Area." He was not from here, he was an Upstate New Yorker.

At that point I was doing one more summer at Caz and that's when May Kurka came up to watch me work with these kids and conduct, and I had auditioned for the San Francisco Symphony – I was put on the sub list. When we got the news that we were coming out to California, she called and said, "I really like the way you teach, I remember you when you were a kid." So that circle completed, and I remember she was very interested in having me do a string ensemble for younger children, somewhere between 9 to 12ish, and starting a string orchestra program in the old building. She took me over to Zaven, and Zaven said, "Oh, you're Russian school." He goes, "You know you can't teach that straight off the bat." I said, "No." I started out Franco-Belgian, I showed him my grip. I said, "I have gravitated a bit, but it's not this." He put his hand to his chin, and considered me thoroughly – I felt like I was fifteen or sixteen again. And then he goes, "OK, we'll give it a try." And that's how I got hired in the Pre-college. It must have been 1982 when that all happened.

In 1983 we moved to California, and I thought, "Oh, this is a good way for me to have a living. I'm on the sub list for the Symphony, and then I got on the sub list for the Opera." I was teaching violin and string ensemble at the Conservatory, and then Anne had just opened up her Crowden School, and there was an extension after-school program, so I could teach violin and do the same thing there. It was easy to craft a living here, and when I came back to the Conservatory I know that Chamber Music West was in full stride, and I remember watching some of the artists and how they incorporated their grad students. It was a really heavy time; to have grown up here as a kid and looked up to them, and then to be part of this music scene that was here. Although I

didn't do a lot in the collegiate part because I had done all my training on the East Coast, I certainly knew a lot of the artists that were coming in – we knew each other from other places. And then in 1983 I came in, and May said it would be really good to see if we could do something in the summer. And I thought, “Oh, what are you thinking of?” She wanted kind of a more intensive program, and so she and I started to flush out what that might look like, and we came up with this.

So in 1984 Summer Music West launched. I think the intention was of course to recruit students to come into the Pre-college and to open it up a little more, so it wasn't just for private lessons. I think in a way she saw that I was very tied in to Anne Crowden, and working with young kids to do chamber music. Because you have to really find the repertoire that works with younger students that makes that balance where they get excited about accomplishing a chord in tune, or coming off together, or making it from point A to point B. That is an area that a lot of people don't spend time with and don't really know, because you have to have some of those steps before you launch them into *Ghost* and Mendelssohn and the biggies. But it was fun, and it was a labor of love. I think Milton was on board from the start but we really had to convince Pat Berkowitz. Pat of course was the financial person. She was quite stern with both of us, and I just thought, “Oh my gosh, she's one that really wants everything.” How can you forecast?

I was not a business person, and neither was May, but between the two of us we kind of figured out a budget and we presented it, and we kept it going. And so we created the chamber music, and we both thought chorus and voice was really important, because you don't need an instrument. Not everybody wants to sing, and the point isn't to make everybody the next Renée Fleming, or Pavarotti, or anybody like that. But to get in touch with what you can do – and it was also a way to help equalize a lot of things. Everybody could sing in chorus. So we had the choral intensive, and composition was always something we were interested in from the start. I remember a young Dan Becker, I tapped him into the program. I don't think Dan was the one who started with us – that was Andy Thomas from Juilliard. But the idea was the same, that student composers would write, and we tried to have a mix of professionals or grad students, or people who could play so that the composers wouldn't be too discouraged; because honestly, the high school students were not well versed with modern language – about how to play their instruments, and were still struggling with tone and how to figure things out. We didn't think that was a great way to do it. Andy would always come out here in the summers, so we thought that was great, and he was very patient with the kids. They primarily wrote for piano, and a couple of instruments. But it was really quite encouraging because people were open to that. That's when a lot of new music was really beginning to happen here, so we tapped into that energy. I thought the chamber music worked out really well. Chorus was a hard sell, and then they had always – prior to us doing Summer Music West there was always a pre-instrumental class, it was just offered kind of ad hoc, and then musicianship. So we thought of three intensives, and three classes, and that's how that got started.

UPDIKE And it worked.

FUKAWA And it worked. A lot of our students during the regular school year who didn't take chamber music or weren't in string orchestra would come in the summer. So it was a really nice way to keep those students engaged. There really weren't programs for kids between the ages of eight through about twelve that were designed for them, or thinking of them, that were serious. A lot of them were like, "Oh, have fun." May and I thought, "Well you can still have fun and play in tune. And play in time, and with others who aspire to the same." It wasn't a high powered program, but there were serious students who really wanted to learn, and the teachers were really good teachers. We were always trying to tweak, and find ways to improve it. I remember Milton coming in and he said, "Oh my goodness! They actually play in tune." I don't think they expected that. And honestly, these were kids running around in the hallways too, so we had to figure out how to not get them to run around and [busy] with other activities.

UPDIKE To keep them from climbing out windows?

FUKAWA I realized that they had put nails in Mack's studio, so you could raise it to a certain degree, but I think some collegiate students probably figured out you could bend the nails a little bit and still open the windows. By that time, the '80s, things had started to change. I remember having the guards at the main entrance by the parking lot, so there was some level of security, and thefts were beginning to happen. So I think in the '80s they really started to realize that we had outgrown the building – there was so much going on between Adult Extension and the Collegiate Division and Prep.

UPDIKE What was the atmosphere of the school like at that time?

FUKAWA Bustling, just bustling. But it was great, I liked that old building because it was circular. You could walk around on the ground floor, and walk upstairs and see everybody, and then make your way back. Really, they were carving out office spaces underneath stairwells and it was really tight. But it had kind of a down home feeling about it, and a personal feeling, even though we were all squeezed. I remember we always wished we had a real library, and a couple of things that we have in this building, but I miss the community of the old building. And I have to say that in this building it's a little more sterile – you have to really make an effort to see other people on other floors, otherwise it's just people on the 6th floor. And even then, with all the closed doors you don't really see everybody. In the old building you could walk around and see everybody as you were going to the bathroom, or the copy machine, or you were just kind of taking a stroll. I appreciated that, and I thought that the teachers were more accessible then – you could just kind of peek your head in and see if Bonnie was teaching, or you could see that Zaven was teaching. If you found an opportune moment you would just knock at the door

and it didn't have that feeling of, "Do not disturb, and tiptoe." I think for the collegiate that's probably better. For Pre-college aged kids, it's really not very inviting. Saturdays here are still manic, but at the old building the kids would just sit on the floor in the lobby of Hellman Hall, or in the lounge, and it would be a hub of activity.

UPDIKE Are there specific students from that time that you would like to talk about?

FUKAWA Oh gosh, I remember Amos Yang – I remember the whole Yang family. There are so many kids to remember – the Lee sisters also, Melinda and Angela, and there's one other. I remember them coming for lessons, the Lins – the twins, one who passed, unfortunately. I have two girls that I used to teach in the '80s, the older sister is Vita Yee, and the younger is Jovina Yee, and that family – their parents Jean and May – they all lived at the Salvation Army downtown, in a one bedroom I think. They were very close to the Salvation Army, so they did a lot. They found a way to have the girls come and take lessons and chamber music – and I think musicianship as well. I remember them. I remember Vita playing for ChoLiang Lin for a master class among others, and making her switch to viola as well to play in chamber music because there are always viola shortages at that age group, and it's amazing to me that they have come back into my life. Jovina has a young daughter named Meilani who is a student here in the Pre-college. She was taking piano with Machiko Kolbialka, and musicianship, and she's a student at the Crowden day school, which is fourth through eighth grade academic and music. I just think it's really interesting – they're not kids!

Now another one, his name is Christopher Selby, I think he was about 1986 or '87, but he's now Dr. Christopher Selby, and he's in charge of music in the schools in Charleston, South Carolina. Everybody calls him Dr. Selby, and I still remember him as Chris. We've hooked up through the ASTA conventions, it's been great to see him and to see the work that he's been doing. So it's lovely to see some of these students, and when they come I remember faces. I don't always remember their names, which is kind of scary. At that time John McCarthy was a musicianship and solfège faculty member. Scott Cmiel also was faculty – Jim Wimer, I remember Jim also being the head of that – Dan Becker for a short time also was doing that, Suzy Bates was doing the ensembles program and overseeing that. She had the older aged kids, initially, and I had the younger students, to help put them in. Andy Luchansky – Luch and I have been long friends from New York, when he used to freelance – he was going to Stony Brook, or Purchase, or somewhere. I remember we crossed paths freelancing, and then he went to Cazadero one summer and I said, "You ought to think about coming to California." And I'm really glad he did. I remember the prime students that we had from chamber music were from Mack's studio, Zaven's studio, and Irene's. Most of those kids came into the chamber music program – John's kids came in a little, Izzy had one or two students who would also come in. This was a way – I think May really wanted a way for these kids to find a community – not just in the teacher's

studio, but to start to commingle and to find common ground, which was really great. Bonnie's kids would come in when she was here, and I thought it was a really lovely program.

UPDIKE Is there anything that you'd like to say about Milton Salkind?

FUKAWA Oh, Milton! Milton was a really shrewd guy in a lot of ways, but he had a really disarming way and he would set you at ease, like he was one of you rather than all of us knowing that he was part of this elite group of movers and shakers here in the Bay Area. Milton had a really wonderful way to take time to talk with you, and then he would ruefully say, "I think I'm late to an appointment," and he would walk you out, but he'd be talking to you the whole time. He was great in many ways because he was so generous, and he was always open to ideas. He's the one who, I know for many years, wanted to get us to downtown. He said, "We shouldn't be here, we really should figure out a way to go downtown." And he and May were great friends as well. May always looked very, very stern, but May was a Lakers fan, she was a diehard basketball fan. I didn't know that until one day after juries – we were doing juries and I think it was particularly tough. I think Izzy Tinkleman and Zaven Melikian and Serban Rusu were all power ego stuff, and all of us junior types were like, "Oh my gosh you guys, you are guys acting badly."

I went downstairs to the Prep office, because I thought, "I just need to take a break." And May's office was closed but I knocked on her door, and she had this little TV and she's watching the Lakers. They were in the finals and I am a basketball fan, and I said, "Oh my gosh, they're doing a fast break", and the two of us sat with this little TV and watched the rest of it. It opened up my idea of what a prep director was like, because she always seemed so stern and so exacting and so formal, but here she was and she's a diehard basketball fan, and she liked her Vermouth, and I like my scotch or Campari and soda, so the two of us would just shut the door ... and this was after hours, so we didn't feel like we were doing anything awful, but we were often there late. It was pretty funny. She was a great swimmer, she'd go swimming to take care of herself. She would scold me, she would say, "You're taking too much time – you should take care of yourself." She would call Milton "Mickey". At first I remember thinking, "Who is Mickey?" And then I realized it was her affectionate name for Milton, so I realized there was a great deal of affection between those two. Milton was nothing but kind to me. Sometimes when I would get discouraged about my budget meetings, or anything like that – he would just say, "We'll find a way." He was very reassuring that way, and I really appreciated that he was open to ideas. I don't know that he would always figure out how to make them work, but he would make them work. I remember when he was ill and visiting him and thinking, "Oh my gosh, this era is passing." This whole era was passing. It was quite a moment. I remember getting back to my car and thinking, "The Conservatory's really going to change now." And it did. I have nothing but fondness for Milton.

UDPIKE I know that we've already talked a little bit about Izzy Tinkleman, but is there anything else you would like to say about him?

FUKAWA Izzy was hot tempered, but he was a great guy. He was a poker player, he liked to gamble, and he liked to just look at people and consider the odds. He thought he was a pretty good read on people, but he was another one who showed great humanity, in small ways. I wasn't his student but I did chamber music with him. He would sometimes have these terrible arguments with a collegiate faculty member, and he would just turn quietly to us – "This too shall pass, I'm just sorry you have to see this full activity." But then he would turn around and go start shouting again. He never made his frailty a condition – he would just matter of fact say, "Do you mind holding the door open for me?" or – "Just hang onto that elevator." Things like that. But again, he would just show tremendous humanity to his students, and to his colleagues.

UPDIKE Is there anything you'd like to say about Scott Cmiel?

FUKAWA Scott I just remember when we were all newbies. I'm fond of Scott, and his son Matthew – I remember when Matthew was a little kid. Scott I think spent some time trying to find his identity, because he was up against all the big guys, but he found his niche as a really good guitar instructor for pre-college age. Once he figured out he didn't have to compete on that level with Dave [Tanenbaum] and Larry [Ferrara]. I remember Scott and John and I would regularly get together for a beer, or for a quick Thai meal, and just check in and see what the temperature was, because we were all working grunts.

UPDIKE And Paul Hersh?

FUKAWA Oh, Paul. I remember Paul when I was a teenager, and he had so much music to offer, he was so sharp and he was not always politic about how he would tell you you didn't play very well. But I remember thinking, "Well, there's a lot to be gained from that." He would always ask questions like, "Why are you putting your bow on the string like that? Anne would not have done that!" or – "What's the pedaling here?" The thing about Paul that I always remember, and even still when he gives master classes, he would always refer to the music as, "What's the voicing?" Especially piano trios. When you're a string player, you're not thinking of that. You're thinking about your projection, your tone – how do I cut above? I thought, "Oh, wow!" And then he would talk to pianists, and I learned a lot from him. A similar colleague is Machiko Kolbialka. I learned so much from them because they have big ears, and as pianists of that caliber, they would force me to have a bigger ear. He said to me a couple of times, "Why are you playing so loud? You're at the top of this octave, and really you should be resting your sound on the pianist." It never even occurred to me. Or things about touch – he said, "Here's the touch of this chord, how would you make that sound?" Being a string player himself, he would really challenge you. He wouldn't tell you directly, so you'd have to figure that out. I think that's

the beauty of Paul and his teaching – he would make you have to figure it out. Paul has a sizable ego as well, so if you didn't get it fast he was kind of impatient. (I'm so glad we can edit this out later!) I love Paul, Paul had nothing but the best intentions for his students, and he's very protective about his students, so I appreciate that about Paul. But I thought he carried the spirit of chamber music beautifully, and tried to be inclusive. Like I said though, he would get impatient.

UPDIKE Is there anything you'd like to say about Irene Sharp?

FUKAWA Irene is a wonderful teacher, and she really pushed everybody in her methodical way of teaching. I know she rubs people the wrong way – she rubbed a lot of people the wrong way – but she tried to get her students to go from a certain point to this point as effectively and efficiently as possible, rather than kind of a circuitous route. And you know, Irene's another one – she's got a sizable ego and I think she just got impatient with some people. I think for her too, once Milton wasn't the dominant force anymore, she's one that tried to help shape the direction that the Conservatory would go in, not realizing of course that everybody wasn't on that same page. I still think Irene's an excellent teacher, and very shrewd.

UPDIKE Yaada Weber?

FUKAWA Yaada just turned 90, I think. Now Yaada I knew when I was a teenager because my sister took flute from her. I think my sister might have been twelve or thirteen, so in middle school and early high school years. I knew Yaada because I would have to drive my sister to Yaada's house every week for lessons. Yaada's look never changed – I remember thinking even then, this was 1972 through about '75 – she still had the same look! She lived in this house in Oakland – a steep driveway, lots of stairs. She had a lot of students, and I knew that people respected her because she was one of the pioneer flute players for women, and she had studied with Doriot Dwyer, I believe, in Boston – who's another pioneer. Yaada held firm to those ideas, and change wasn't easy for her. I think certainly as she got older, she wasn't able to adapt easily. I felt terrible for her, she had a lot of students with beautiful tone, and I always liked Yaada. She had a twinkle in her eye and was just very stern. People were afraid of her, but her bark was worse than her bite. But I remember driving all those times to Yaada's house.

UPDIKE Is there anything else you'd like to say about Bonnie and Nathan?

FUKAWA Oh, Bonnie and Nate were just great. Bonnie to this day remains a mentor to me. It was a really terrible time when Nate passed, but he's another one – at the piano, they wouldn't have to describe a lot, you could just hear what they were trying to do. And they were terrific partners. I knew Bonnie when she was with her former husband, Colin. And Colin Hampton was one of my early coaches when I was a teenager, so I knew Colin well enough. I had been coached by Colin and Colin's son Ian up in Canada, and by that time Bonnie had

already divorced from him, but she was still part of the mix because of Anne; they all kept in touch. I thought that was amazing, that all of these divorced people would still be in such close musical harmony. Colin was a fabulous coach, and Bonnie was also, but in a different way. I learned a lot from Bonnie about fingerings – again, she and Paul left deep impressions for me about how to coach, and what to coach, and how do you tell a young kid who’s still trying to figure out a song what to go for? Between the two of them – especially with teenagers – I had a lot of tools, and I really thank them. And Nathan was very funny, he would just poke fun at Bonnie. It was really fun to see the two of them, they were quite a couple. When I go to Bonnie’s house even now, Nate’s piano and his music are still there. When he was ill, it was a tough time, that was a tough time. And he loved food – it’s nice to remember those kinds of things about them.

UPDIKE Is there anyone else from that time who you’d like to mention?

FUKAWA Machiko Kolbialka – I can’t say enough. She and I have been partners in crime for many, many years. I have to tell you – she’s a gem, as a person and as a pianist. Leah Tinkleman, and Susan McCarthy I remember. Susan McCarthy was another musicianship teacher – a redhead. I remember she was the kind of person who would just sit down with a bunch of kids, and just be at their level to play with them, it was just fabulous. And Leah Tinkleman was another one – a gentle spirit, but she was not afraid to be with kids at their level. Neither one of them ever talked down to those kids, which was impressive. But they had a really tough job being with little kids, too. Wiping their noses, and making sure they went to the bathroom – all those kinds of things. I thought, “Wow, that’s a skill set that’s pretty unique.” One starts to learn from that.

Summer Music West faculty didn’t change a lot over time. We were a pretty strong core, but I attribute a lot of that to what Milton and May had given us, and then when John took over he really wasn’t going to change a lot of it. We did tweak here and there. Caroline Renshaw is another one who was just great – a wonderful pianist, a gentle manner, but also could pair kids really well, she and Machiko did a great job with pianists. I still think that they’re a terrific force together.

Tim Bach was somebody that I didn’t realize we had parallel lives. He was in Palo Alto, and we were both in the Junior Bach Festival at the same time when we were in high school. I just remember everybody – anything piano accompanying, or repertoire, you just went to Tim.

Camilla Wicks – she was a formidable teacher. Bob Ward – these are all my Symphony colleagues, and going on tours with them, I have different impressions. Peter Shelton – Peter was a Berkeley high grad, so Peter and I went to high school at the same time, and I was so sad when Peter was not doing well. Sonja Neblett – Sonja also taught at U.C. Berkeley – musicianship.

That year that I was at Cal, the year that I really hated – she was one of my musicianship teachers. She was the one who made me realize that I really wanted to be in music, and I actually enjoyed her class, even though a lot of people didn't like musicianship. I just thought, "Wow, this is something that I really wanted to be a part of." I don't think I ever told her that, and I probably should. And Don Ehrlich, of course ... Stuart Canin. Elly's [Armer] another one, I just thought it was quite amazing what she was doing.

UPDIKE Is there anything that you'd like to say about the Conservatory's move from Ortega Street to Oak Street? How it might have changed the character of the school?

FUKAWA I don't think we were prepared to move here. It was a really terrible transition. I just think that there were so many things that were not completed here that nobody had the time to think things through. The early years just set the tone for everybody's departments to be separate. I understand I think why we had to leave so quickly, but still, I don't think this building was ready, and part of it for example was they thought that this was mainly for the collegiate faculty and the collegiate students, so the very first year was terrible when they separated young students from their parents, and told the parents they couldn't enter into the building. We spent quite a bit of time trying to educate people what you do with a four year old – they have to have their parents. And these policies – there's not one size fits all. I think it's much better, but it did set a tone that's taken a long time to work through. And there was no support staff on Saturdays here. I like to think that I'm in pretty good health, and I can manage moving pianos and lifting lids, but not all your Prep teachers can do that, so it's that kind of thing that I still think that we have a ways to go.

But the first year – it was exciting to be here, and not exciting to be here, because there just weren't a lot of systems that were put into place, and the infrastructure still I think is not quite there to be able to serve everybody well. All I can think of is that brick and mortar is a really tough one, because you have to be at least (I think) 90% of the way completed before you actually start to move in, and there's not enough time to be able to set the message straight. So I think that it was a really tough time, and it took a while to get used to this communal, circular building that was only two stories – to this six story building that was vertical. You met everybody in the elevator if by chance, or you had to make a special appointment to go see people, and then you didn't know if people had rooms. I still think in the Pre-College, I appreciate that there's a serious effort to make it so there are enough good teaching studios for Pre-College teachers, but boy, to teach in a practice room is really not viable. So it's those kinds of things, and I'm hoping that things will ease up as we keep moving along here.

UPDIKE Can you talk a little about how Pre-College has changed since you joined as a teacher?

FUKAWA Well, the biggest one is when I was teaching in Prep, when I first joined, it was kind of elitist – it really was primarily geared for students and private teaching, and teaching of certain studios. So the thought was, if you studied with a teacher at the Conservatory, you were already of a certain caliber of playing. I think that's fine, and what May I think was trying to help open up with me and a couple of others was that there's serious teaching, but at different levels. It could be opened up to people who weren't necessarily going to be Conservatory musicians. So in that sense it was kind of a community music school, too. But albeit a higher level one than what's here in San Francisco with Chris. I like Chris Borg a lot, and I see what he's trying to do, but the Prep was never that, although it was kind of a high end community music school. I think now with the new program that Joanie Gordon has put in, it really harkens to the pre-college of the Juilliard model, where you have to take all of your classes in one day. It remains to be seen – I think some of the lovely access parts, I'm sad about that part, because I don't think all students can be here all day. It certainly puts it more into the realm of haves and have nots – who can afford to be in, or who's talented enough to have a scholarship to be here. So it remains to be seen.

UPDIKE And how have the summer programs changed?

FUKAWA The summer programs I would say – they didn't change a lot in character. Some summers were better than others, due to the whims of the enrollment, because it was open. There were some years when we were frankly like, "Ooof! That was a really bad year and I'm so sorry" – and other years were fabulous. That also was contingent upon which youth orchestra was going on tour – those kinds of things. And once we're in this building, once the budget demands became a certain level, that you had to provide X number of dollars, then that changed. And I would say that really changed from leaving the old building and coming into the new one. But you know, on the other hand I think Summer Music West did its job and provided a format for other programs in the Bay Area.

UPDIKE I know that we've talked about some students and the different programs and performances that they have, but are there any memorable student performances – chamber music ensemble performances – that stand out to you?

FUKAWA Oh boy, well the very first one we had was the Luna Trio – Tessa Seymour, Doorri Na, and Mayumi Tsuchida. That was in the old building, and that put us on the map with the From the Top folks. They were fabulous, we really had a great chamber music program. But that started it, and there's been also the Mondo Trio, and the Soul Trio, which was Kenneth Renshaw's group which was here in this building. The chamber music program has been very strong throughout – I would say from the mid to late '90s, and then coming into the building. But you know, a lot of other programs have been catching up, so I think we still have to

teach well. The other programs that I know of don't always teach the kids well – they give them fancy pieces to play, but not with a lot of understanding.

UPDIKE Is there anything you'd like to say about the From the Top taping that was here?

FUKAWA Oh boy! Those were really fun. I'm still in touch with a lot of them, and you know, funding streams for them is a little tough, but we caught it in its heyday, because we were one of the groups that we put on. I think that because we could field an ensemble they really opened it up for ensembles, and we were one of the first groups that was on PBS, so I thought kudos to us for being able to do that. We'll continue to try to aspire to that level.

UPDIKE Is there anything else you'd like to talk about that we haven't covered?

FUKAWA No, I don't think so. You can tell that music education is really important, and it's our job to keep it – I guess that's part of being a conservatory – it's our job to really keep nurturing it and promoting it, and to advance it into the future, because boy – we need kids who have studied it and understand it from the inside, because they'll be better citizens.

UPDIKE Thank you so much for doing this.

FUKAWA Thank you.