Bonnie Hampton 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 April 1 and 2, 2013
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.

Bonnie Hampton Interview
This interview was conducted in two sessions at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music on Monday, April 1 and Tuesday, April 2, 2013 by Tessa Updike.

Tessa Updike
Tessa Updike is the archivist for the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. 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 and the Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley.

Bonnie Hampton

Cellist Bonnie Hampton leads an active music life as a chamber musician, soloist, and teacher. A founding member of the Naumburg Award-winning Francesco Trio, she has also performed as part of the Hampton-Schwartz Duo with her late husband, pianist Nathan Schwartz. Her solo debut with the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra was followed by appearances with orchestras nationally performing the entire standard repertoire and many of the 20th century cello concertos.

She has been involved in performances of new music since the beginning of her career. Her contemporary recordings include CD's representing American works, often commissioned and premiered by the Trio and Duo. Ms. Hampton's chamber music guest appearances have included performances with the Juilliard, Guarneri, Cleveland, Mendelssohn, Alexander, Budapest, and Griller String Quartets, and concert tours have take her to Europe and Asia. She has performed in many of the major halls in the United States, including Davies Hall and the Opera House in San Francisco, Alice Tully Hall, the Library of Congress, the Kennedy Center, Jordan Hall, and many chamber music venues throughout the world.

A student of Pablo Casals, she participated for many years in the Casals and Marlboro festivals. She has performed at many festivals including Chamber Music West, Seattle, Ravinia, Santa Fe, Kneisel Hall, and the Yellow Barn Chamber Music Festival. Her early studies were with Margaret Rowell, the Griller String Quartet, and Zara Nelsova.

Her Francesco Trio Residencies have included Grinnell College, Stanford University, and the San Francisco Conservatory of Music where she taught for thirty years. Ms. Hampton was awarded an "Excellence in Teaching Award" from SFCM as well as the "Eva Janzer Award" from Indiana University. Ms. Hampton has also taught at Mills College, and the University of California, Berkeley. She is a past president of Chamber Music America. In September 2003 she joined the faculty at the Juilliard School.

Table of Contents

UPDIKE Alright, so it is April 1st and we are at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. This is Tessa Updike, interviewing Bonnie Hampton. So Bonnie I'll start with our first question, which is to tell us about your early history. When and where you were born, and where you grew up.

HAMPTON Well, I was born in Berkeley, California. That's where I spent my early years. I'm still living there, although I've been in many, many places in-between. I was a Berkeley kid. That's where I started not only my education but my music. It was very much a part of my life.

UPDIKE Can you tell us about your parents?

HAMPTON Sure. My mother was an amateur musician. I can remember very early her playing – she was a violinist – she had a quartet, and also a trio. They would do sometimes little performances for weddings or things like that. My father was an attorney, he worked in San Francisco. But I felt that he was also always creating, always making artistic things. They were in that period of the arts and crafts movement, and had built a wonderful log cabin. He did a lot of that iron work of that period – Stickley. And photography. Later, he would take me on trips down to Big Sur or up in the mountains. Wonderful photography. He was also a rock hound, polishing rocks. I always felt that that artistic, creative side was his passion, and being an attorney is what he did to make a living, to provide for his family.

UPDIKE Did your mother teach you music?

HAMPTON No. She was mainly a house-maker at that point. When the war [WWII] came of course she did war work – the shipyards and so on. In those early days I remember not only was there music in the house, and instruments around, but also remember going to concerts very early. At the university I remember hearing the London String Quartet. That's probably the first one [concert] – I must have been about six, something like that. It was an unforgettable experience. And then going every week – at that point they had the youth concerts at the San Francisco Symphony on Saturday mornings. Music was a very active part of my life, right from an early time.

UPDIKE Did you start by playing the cello, or did you experiment with other instruments first?

HAMPTON No, it was not a matter of experimenting – well, I suppose the first was experimenting, in that there was a piano in the house. As a four-year-old, I was starting to fool around with it, and the next thing I knew I was having lessons. So that's how that started. I think at that time kids were encouraged to study the piano first. I don't think that happens quite as much now, but learning piano was the starting point. Which I actually like very much, because it means you learn the notes, you learn lots of things about music. If you start by playing another instrument there are lots of mechanics that are more difficult than the piano, as far as the initial stages. I was four when I started the piano, and I loved it. I played Bach, and all these good things. I was about eight when – there was a cello in the house, in the corner, and I got curious

about it. I was about eight when I started that, and I actively had lessons on both instruments for a couple of years, anyway. And then the cello took over.

UPDIKE Do you remember who your first piano teacher was?

HAMPTON Her name was Janet Rowan Hale. And then Wanda Krazoff, for a little bit. Wanda was a wonderful concert pianist. She studied with Alexander Raub, who was a European, he was wonderful, one of the big teachers in Europe. He came over probably in the late '30s as so many Europeans did. He lived in Berkeley and had a wonderful studio. For whatever reason he was willing to take me as a student. It was before I started the cello, so I must have been seven or so, at least, by the time I started studying with him. Actually, I'm not sure [what age]. He was a wonderful teacher, and had a big studio. I remember he invited me to come and listen sometimes when his students were giving a house concert in his home in Berkeley. Some of them became big concert pianists. But it might have been wise for me to stay with Wanda, or somebody who was used to that more fundamental developing phase. He was right into the music right away, and learning things through the music, which was great. I loved it, that's fine. It's a balancing act. Having said that, I'm really grateful for having the exposure to him. And also, he was very good about, even at a very young age, getting me to look into the music and analyze what was happening in the music. Not just playing the notes, but trying to understand the language of the music. So I was lucky in that way, as far as the piano.

And then of course Margaret Rowell was the teacher my mother took me to. My mother had known Margaret and of course she was such an important person in Berkeley and in the Bay Area already, even at that stage in her own life and teaching career. I was very lucky with Margaret. I worked with her from the time I was about eight until I was about fifteen. She was a remarkable teacher, and a remarkable human being. It wasn't just learning the cello, everything came into it. She would take us to art galleries and shows, and a lot of concerts. We went to so many concerts in those days. I hope young people go to as many concerts these days. I suspect they do not because recordings and other ways of hearing music are so much more available now. We went Saturdays always to the Symphony youth concerts. That was when we were very young. And then as I became a teenager a friend and I would often be able to get tickets from somebody who knew one of the critics, who would give us tickets. And so we went to the Symphony almost every week.

But particularly chamber music, because in those days at the University of California, Berkeley, they had enormous numbers of quartets come, and chamber music trios too. It was in the era of Mrs. [Elizabeth Sprague] Coolidge, who sponsored music all through the country. There would be six or eight quartets in a given season. It's for good reason – now, to engage a string quartet is a lot cheaper than even engaging a soloist. And these days of course the big concert series – they put on dance and all kinds of things – so we were lucky growing up in that we were able to hear a lot of chamber music because economically it was something that the concert series could afford. There was also a wonderful Berkeley audience. I went to a quartet concert recently at the University and of course I didn't know anyone anymore – I used to know everybody – because I've been away for a few years, but there's still a feeling about the Berkeley audience that has its own character. There's still that nucleus.

UPDIKE Could you describe Margaret Rowell?

HAMPTON Well, I started a little bit. She was so alive, and so enthusiastic, and so positive. She was willing to be very creative in the way she communicated. She was also very physical. In these days we are told we should never touch a student. She'd take our arms and shake us out to make sure we were really free and to get the energy through. It's very interesting because she had a way of communicating, especially with kids, where she'd be talking from two or three angles. An adult would be very puzzled because of the logic and the way she was very quickly getting a lot of ideas across, but a kid would understand exactly. I guess it was to get the completely free use of the body connected with the music. Also one had the feeling of the love of music. The enthusiasm and the love of music. Wanting a beautiful sound, wanting the best kinds of qualities.

She created such an environment. Quite a few of us had get-togethers once a month, so we would get to know each other as kids. We became friends and played a lot of ensemble music. That's part of what she did in her workshops. She would always have some new idea that she was investigating, and we'd contact each other to see what it would be that week. This is going to sound crazy, but she would get these little rubber frogs and put them on the fingerboard to show the suction, how you put this and that suction and have that flexibility. You don't have anything hard, your hands are constantly flexible and connected, but with good suction. She would make the analogy of an octopus, how very gently an octopus would come and put his tentacle on you – you hardly knew it was there but you couldn't get away. The only way you could have that contact with the string was to be completely free. If you had any rigidity you could pull away easily, you see. She had all kinds of analogies like that, but she also had the sense that you could do anything. So you believed her, and you'd try to outdo yourself. It had a very positive quality. She had a very welcoming, warm personality.

As the years went by, every cellist who came through the Bay Area wanted to visit her, to get to know her. That's how the Cello Club began. She was such a magnet and became a legend. Later in her life when she was traveling for the American String Teachers Workshops – doing workshops in this country and all over, also in Europe – there was this terrific magnetism of a personality because she was so warm and welcoming and positive. That was a force that is very attractive and not so common. She had an early career as a cellist. She was first cellist – there was a radio orchestra in San Francisco at that time – an NBC Radio Orchestra – she had a trio and they would play every day. There was a lot more live music from local people on the radio because that was the medium at that time. She played every day. I remember her telling me how they had a morning show with their trio and then they had to take the ferry across because the bridge wasn't there – this was in the earlier '30s – and then they'd get a taxi and would have to go to the hotel Leemington, I think. These three gals would have to change in the taxi because then they had to do this appearance. That's what they did every day – it was a riot hearing the description of those early days.

I think it must have been later in the '30s that she got tuberculosis, and in those days that was pretty serious. She was out for I think three years recuperating. Before that she'd been teaching in San Francisco and then she decided to go to the University of California. She was interested in psychology and other subjects. It was a real crossroads for her. And as she said – she went to the

university and got her PhD in six months. In other words – she married her husband after six months and her husband had a PhD. I knew her after that in the late '40s, that's when I started working with her. She was living up in the Berkeley hills, which was the home that we all knew and musically grew up in. She was a remarkable human being, such a joy.

UPDIKE You had all of your classes in her home?

HAMPTON Yes, all of the lessons. After the war my mother couldn't always drive me up to Margaret's, so Margaret would drive down to my house and give me lessons there. Not every time, but according to our needs. Mostly it was in her home, but it was very flexible. She was born in 1900, so in the '40s, which was when I started studying with her she would have been very active. Terrifically energetic. She was a mountain climber. There are some wonderful pictures of her up in the mountains. She climbed half-dome, all kinds of things.

UPDIKE You said your mother knew Margaret. Was she a family friend?

HAMPTON Probably. Well, in the musical world everyone knew each other. I didn't know this, but evidently when I was six months old my mother took me up to Margaret's and plunked me down on the rug and said "Well, she's going to be a cellist." I didn't know that, I thought I chose it for myself! Everyone has a force behind them, I guess, whether they know it or not.

UPDIKE So your mother was very supportive?

HAMPTON Oh, yes. Absolutely. In fact, she made a lot of things possible. Even having lessons with Mr. Raub, that was an expense and we didn't have very much money at all. Before the war, the Second World War, she had been a homemaker and then she worked in the shipyards. After that she always worked, she always had employment. For a while it was in Berkeley, but then she started teaching out in Contra Costa County. My last memories of my mother's life were as a teacher. She had that independence of spirit, of wanting to provide. I was much younger, I had an older brother and sister. Although they had lessons too, it took with me more. Pretty early on I knew that's what I wanted to do.

UPDIKE And so Margaret Rowell started the cello club in the 1950s?

HAMPTON What happened was that Margaret had her monthly get-togethers – workshops – and then as she did with every cellist that came to the area – when the Griller Quartet came, she very much welcomed them, and very much welcomed Colin Hampton. Colin had been used to the London Cello Club and that was already a big organization. I have a wonderful picture of at least a hundred cellists with his teacher Herbert Whalen in which Zara Nelsova is a little young kid there and there's [John] Barbirolli who become of course the famous conductor. He is probably a seventeen-year-old in the thing. Anyway, he was used to that idea of cellists coming together from different studios and so on. So he suggested [to see] if Margaret was welcoming of the idea, and it evolved. At first it was the Berkeley Cello Club, and it evolved with various teachers, various studios, bit by bit. Actually what it made was a real

cello community. We'd have monthly meetings. It was a real cello community, so if a cellist came to town they were always invited. And they started loving to come.

Over the years we'd have every cellist you could name. Gabor Rejto was an early one I remember. Zara Nelsova came. Then later, I don't know exactly the chronology, but [Mstislav] Rostropovich in his early days, right from his first trip, was there. And [Gregor] Piatigorsky when he came up to play with the Symphony, said "Oh I've heard about the cello club" (except with a good Russian accent, I can't quite do it). "I must come and visit." So he changed his flight back to Los Angeles later and came. [Leonard] Rose, of course, and [János] Starker. Bernie Greenhouse came early. It was early when he came and then went back to New York and said, "Oh, well they've got a cello club out there, we'll have to have something like that here." And so that's how the Cello Society in New York started. It was a cellist society and we were a club; we felt good about being a club. And eventually it got larger and people from San Francisco and down the Peninsula came, so we changed it to The California Cello Club. Of course, it is dormant right now, but who knows, maybe in the future it will reemerge. But there is also the Los Angeles Cello Club, or Society, I don't know what they call themselves exactly. I have a feeling that if it reemerges as a group we need to think of a different name because, you know, we have to get more specific to the area.

Of course, [Mstislav] Rostropovich came many times and finally, we had master classes. I had already been studying with [Pablo] Casals; in 1960 and 1962 we had the Casals master classes here. And also the University [of California] would engage young cellists, not only well-known ones, but also young ones because they knew that there'd be an audience for them which gave some young players a chance, which was a very good thing. It was very active. With Margret [Rowell] and Colin [Hampton] – they were the two that were really the role models, if you will. There were so many things that wouldn't have happened without that kind of atmosphere and that kind of community.

UPDIKE So you studied with Margaret until you were about 15 years old. After that is about when you first came to the Conservatory?

HAMPTON I never was a student at the Conservatory. But the Griller Quartet came – they were at the University [of California] in Berkeley, because Albert Elkus brought them both to the University and to the Conservatory. They had already done a summer school at the Conservatory, but that was before my time. I think that was the summer I went to the Casals Festival, so I hadn't made the contact yet with the Griller Quartet. I'd gone to their concerts but I wasn't part of it. They [the Griller Quartet] allowed me to and sit in on their chamber music classes in Berkeley. I was a high school student. I remember one week a group of college students were playing Beethoven's *Grosse Fugue* and I was really excited by it. I was probably about fifteen, maybe sixteen. I was really excited and I went home and practiced it like crazy. The next week the cellist was sick so they asked if I wanted to come and sit in. Well, I was able to play it because I'd been practicing it – they didn't know that – but I was in the quartet after that. From then on, I was always in their chamber music classes at the University. In the summer – it was in the early '50s that I started participating in the chamber music there – after that they [the Griller Quartet] were teaching at Saturdays at the Conservatory.

I'd already started teaching – Margaret [Rowell] had gotten me – from the time I was about sixteen she saw that I could do some teaching. I don't know exactly how it evolved but I started having some young students at the Conservatory. I can't remember quite how it happened, but I had a few on Saturdays. But there was no space, no studio. It was busy on Saturdays – it was the two houses on Sacramento Street. So I got the kitchen in the smaller building. Which was fine, it was a nice place to be, actually. And then the violist of the Griller Quartet needed a place to teach, so I got kicked out of the kitchen – I was the low kid on the totem pole. So I went out to the garden to teach, but that wasn't so good if it rained. I discovered that over in the other building, where the library was, which was down in the lowest floor – the ground-floor … I don't think it was the basement, but it might have been – there was a big closet underneath where the staircase came down that had a slanting roof. If you put your chairs at just the right angle you could just get two people and two cellos in there. That was my first studio at the Conservatory, my modest beginnings.

The chamber music sessions – I remember that first summer – that was wonderful because there were a lot of older, very advanced students. I remember the first violist of the Salt Lake City Orchestra, people like that. I remember there was a girl who played in the studios down in Los Angeles who came up for some chamber music. There were some very good players that came, so that was exciting.

About that same time – and I can't remember which was first, whether it was the Griller Quartet class or the Alma Trio summer session – I participated with Gabor Rejto, who was the cellist and Adolph Baller, who was the pianist. At that point it was Roman Totenberg, whom I got to know the last few years at Kneisel Hall, many, many years later of course. Margaret would take us to their concerts in the summers. I must have been about sixteen or seventeen. I got to hear lots of trios that way. So I participated in that summer school, and that was fun because there was a young kid who was eleven or twelve at the time who had just been brought from South America. Adolph Baller, who had been touring down there with the Alma Trio, had encouraged him to come to the Bay Area to study. That was another thing. When I was growing up a lot of European musicians had come over in the late '30s because they had to get out of Europe. So it was a remarkable group of musicians that we all grew up with. The kind that would have their own quartets every week. You had that sense that there was that active music-making. I can't remember who, but it was one of the well-known teachers of that ilk, that taught this young kid. Well, it was Jaime Laredo, who has had a stellar career. So here was this little kid, and he played like an angel. He sounded so wonderful. We always would joke that he had the violin attached to his chin, he seemed to always be playing no matter what. Those were some wonderful early chamber music experiences. It was very positive.

I got bitten by the chamber music bug very early. I'd had chances with Margaret, when I was studying with her from the time I was about thirteen to play concertos with orchestras and that sort of thing. I'd already played in the Oakland Auditorium with the Young People's Symphony, that was my youth orchestra – it was the only youth orchestra in the Bay Area at that time – now there are a whole lot of them – and then again when I was fifteen at the opening of the Berkeley High School Auditorium. So I had those opportunities, but once I started getting into chamber music I just felt that's what I wanted to do. As a seventeen-year-old I can remember – as only a seventeen-year-old can do – I was invited to play a recital up in Sacramento at the Crocker

Gallery, and I wrote back from a very great height and said "Oh, I only play chamber music now." I wish they'd invite me now! So I was very much bitten, and I was really immersed in it. There would be bunches of us playing all the time, that was our life. We were crazy. I remember particularly one year, I can't remember sleeping for the whole year. All-night chamber music sessions.

UPDIKE If you don't mind going back to the Griller Quartet, can you describe the different members of the Quartet?

HAMPTON Oh gosh! As a matter of fact just recently I found that I could get a recording of the Griller Quartet from the National Gallery during the war, because they were in England, they were in the RAF, the Royal Air force. But as the string quartet they'd be gotten up at all hours of the night to go play for the pilots, just to – you know, if they flew in and had an hour or so – to give them some sort of relief from the tension of their lives. And Myra Hess, the pianist, was a great supporter of theirs. She started the chamber music concerts there, every noon, [to have] that culture and the musical life – they were always packed, and they played a lot [during] those. There is a recording of the Brahms' *Piano Quintet* with the Griller Quartet and Myra. They would have been in their twenties. They started in the Royal Academy when they were seventeen or eighteen, and they were put together by Lionel Tertis, who said "All right, you are going to be a string quartet" – so that's what they did. Once they made the commitment to themselves, they decided not to do anything but [be a] quartet. It was very hard to make a living, to make a career. Because now mostly groups that try and make a chamber music group, they also do other things to try and pay the bills – because that's the reality. But they became a European quartet – one of the big quartets, along with the Busch Quartet, which was older of course. But the War cut in – they had just come to this country to play their debuts in New York – and they were given rave reviews and management – and then the war came, exactly when their careers should have been blossoming.

It was right after the war – and of course Albert Elkus, having the English connection – he was kind of an Anglophile I think – one of his dreams was to get them over here. They came over after the war – I think it was '47 and '48 when they were at the Music Academy of the West – that's where it started. Albert got them up here I think in '48 and '49 for some trial things – summer things. He was the Head of the Conservatory at that time but also the Chairman of the Music Department at Berkeley. So he was able to get the support – it was tenuous, but fortunately he really rallied the Berkeley community and people got behind bringing them and having them – at first just part of each year. Maybe in 1951 or '52 they were at Berkeley more full-time – at least both semesters instead of just one semester a year. They played concerts, that was a big part. They were a remarkable quartet in their prime. They played with such a musical passion and involvement. They would rehearse quartets three to six hours a day, like a person practices an instrument. So there was a unity of sound that one doesn't hear a whole lot. One hears remarkable playing – there are wonderful groups now.

Sidney was – well, it was the Griller Quartet – so he was Sidney Griller. Those were the days when that often happened – there was the idea of the leader. It was an older-fashioned idea, where there was a leader and he had his quartet. Some of the old groups, the Hungarian Quartet was like that, where the leader established much of the musical direction and the others were to

fit into that. It's gotten much more democratic these days. I can't imagine that happening very much – maybe somewhere depending on the personality of the people involved, but … no, it wouldn't happen. Sidney was that way it was an interesting dynamic. As I've gotten to know string quartets since, one always sees the dynamics of a group.

Jack O'Brien was second violinist. He was from South Africa originally, but then he came to the Academy. He was a wonderful musician – a wonderful violinist. He was exactly the right kind of support person. Sidney, as a kid at the Royal Academy, had a lot of flair and played concertos some. He really made a name for himself – I think he was around seventeen when the Quartet started. So early on chamber music started being the commitment. Jack was the perfect support person for that because he admired Sidney a lot. He was willing to put himself into that role of support. I don't think he ever would have dreamed of competing – he was a support person. He was also the librarian – I remember he would collect the things and carry around this huge briefcase of their music.

Philip Burton was violist. He was a very elegant kind of guy. He was a little older, maybe a year or two older than the others. He was a very sensitive kind of fellow. Probably the tension in the Quartet got to him – I suspect quite a lot. I don't know because he certainly never talked to me about it. He was a real English gentleman and enjoyed the good life.

Colin Hampton was – again, I don't know whether one becomes the role of the quartet or whether the personality is attracted to that role – but Colin was the solid foundation, absolutely. He was also probably the balancer in the Quartet. As I got to know him later I know that he felt a lot of directions they went of necessity, musically, were not the directions he would go. That's why he valued his teaching. He never performed other than with the Quartet – they had this kind of pact that they weren't going to. Later, in Berkeley, people wanted Colin to play other things – Beethoven Sonatas or some of the other music he was so attached to – Bloch's music, because he worked with Ernest Bloch a lot. (That's very connected with the Conservatory from earlier, of course; Bloch wrote the last three quartets for them specifically.) But Colin really identified himself as being the base of the quartet. That was his role.

He was also – with Margaret – that kind of attractive personality that cellists liked. I know that during the war the quartet was brought over with the RAF Orchestra. There was also the RAF band. They were probably on a fundraising tour to the United States, it was during the war. They all came over and played in Washington, D.C. It was crazy, because they had the RAF band, the Griller Quartet in-between – this single string quartet – and then the RAF Symphony Orchestra. A strange idea! But evidently that's when Colin got to know all of the cellists of the time – Bernie Greenhouse, David Soyer, quite a few of them that were also either in the – I don't know if it was Army, or Navy, orchestra – but they had a band and all of these musicians, these cellists – I know Bernie Greenhouse played the oboe … I don't know what David Soyer played. I think Claus Adam was there too. But anyway, they got to know Colin at that time. All through the years – and Rostropovich later, when he started coming – they just had the sense that Colin was the kind of musician, and the kind of person – earthy and a real friend and colleague. There was that rapport, and attraction. Both Margaret and Colin had that attraction for people.

UPDIKE Could you describe the teaching style of the Griller Quartet?

HAMPTON Oh, gosh. Each one was different, and they taught individually. It wasn't so much teaching.... Even though I studied a little bit cello repertoire, I remember studying the Elgar *Concerto* with Colin. He talked sometimes about specific technical things, but mostly … these days you might call it more musical coaching. Don Wallerstein was an early student of Sidney's. He'd been studying here in Berkeley, and then of course he went on to Juilliard to have his quartet, the Cleveland Quartet. I don't know the others, I have a feeling Sidney did quite a bit with technical things, he got very intrigued with Dr. Dounis – Margaret had too, she had taken me to have some lessons with him – he was a doctor and a scientist in his thinking – he analyzed and dissected all of the aspects of playing. Sidney got very interested in Dounis' ideas as well. I have a feeling he projected those to his students. I know Jack [O'Brien] had some students – probably they all taught somewhat the way they had been taught at the academy. I think they probably did teach their instruments some. Philip Burton, of course – one of his students was John Graham, who became a colleague of ours too, a wonderful violist. I think the whole English way of thinking and teaching was that you get your technique through the music. In terms of the chamber music coaching, Colin was very inspirational. He was very dynamic and had such convictions and passions. He would get one very wrought up and involved in the music, and just absorbed. Again, each one reflected their personalities through it.

Philip was – I don't remember too much – I did have some coachings with him – but I remember one time – it was really funny because I hadn't studied with [Pablo] Casals yet but I had been to the festival. My mother took me there in the early '50s as still a teenager. Casals sometimes would come down and get the base of the bow at the crack of the feral, which would have a kind of click. And so I started doing that, of course. Philip called me on it one time at a coaching, and I said, "Well, Casals does it!" and he said "Yes, but when Casals does it, it sounds good!" Okay, point taken!

They were all so musically oriented, and Sidney was the despot. I remember a project – we were a quartet, I was still in high school, but the other three were graduate students at the University. One was in physics, one was in Slavic languages, and one was a composer, I think, but also getting a higher degree in music. We played Beethoven's *Opus 132*, which they had been told as students, "You have to be fifty before you play late Beethoven." He was obviously defying them – he wanted to spend time not only studying it in great detail but also analyzing it. Being at the University probably had that kind of influence on him. So we spent quite a long time on it, and I remember he was very picky, and would make us go over and over things. But I've always been grateful for that experience because it meant that even though (who knows how we performed it) we impressed the university professors a lot, but notes at a certain level, but you know that you're not getting into the depths of the music, you have to live with it, and give it time.

Each members of the Griller Quartet, their personalities came through. That period, there was a kind of enthusiasm. Quite a few of us stayed in Berkeley and the Bay Area because of them. They did more and more on Saturdays over at the Conservatory, and had a chamber orchestra and all kinds of projects with chamber music. Not only in the summer, but all through the year. We stayed in Berkeley, where we would have normally gone off to one of the big East Coast conservatories. That had very much an effect. I think there is something very important about having a resident group. I think it can in some way have a rally cry. They played so wonderfully

in their day. At the end it was more inconsistent, but you knew that this was an important quartet and that had such a level and an excitement about it. Quite a bit the same with the Alma Trio, although they weren't as present at all. But that was another group that was important to the Conservatory.

UPDIKE I know that we've talked a little bit about the Alma Trio already, but could you talk more about the members?

HAMPTON Sure. Of course Gabor Rejto I knew from – he came and visited Margaret Rowell – again, Margaret was somebody a cellist came and visited – I think it was in 1942. That was even before I started the cello, but I can remember she must have invited me up to meet him, and to hear him. Of course he was a young man, I think he was teaching at Eastman at the time. I don't know exactly when he came to this country, I know he had to get out of Spain. He had been studying with Casals. It was very interesting because in 1960 when Casals was here, at that point Gabor Rejto was at USC teaching – he came up with some students and so on. That was the first time Casals had seen Gabor Rejto, from the time he put him on the train. The Spanish Civil War had been just starting. Casals had to get out, soon after, himself. But any of these musicians would have been totally vulnerable to Franco. That was the first time Casals had seen him since that time, so it was a really nice reunion. He was a lovely man, and a really fine cellist. A really elegant cellist. He was also, I can't remember exactly, but he was very nice to me. He was just really sweet, very nice. Of course we heard him a lot with Adolph Baller, who lived down in Palo Alto at that time already. Menuhin had brought Baller over. Baller had been in concentration camps, and had his hands broken. They crushed his hand. It was a Nazi doctor, actually, that set the hand and fortunately it healed well. I know Menuhin and Baller played a lot. I remember pictures of both of them in Army uniforms playing up in Alaska and all kinds of places. Of course Menuhin had the family home in Los Gatos, so that's how Baller came to that area. I think at first he stayed with Menuhin. I guess soon after, Elkus hired him at the Conservatory. He attracted a lot of important students to the Conservatory. I remember he had some very talented kids, I remember playing with some of them. Roman Totenberg was the violinist, at first, I heard. I think Wilkie – I don't remember exactly his name – I never knew him in terms of working with him, but I heard some of their concerts. And then later Andor Toth. It was just that one summer school I actually worked with him. I remember studying the Debussy *Sonata* with Gabor Rejto. He had a very good sense of that piece. I've really always been grateful for his concept that he got across to me. They played as a trio a lot at the University and certainly their series in San Francisco. And then Rejto and Baller played a lot as a duo, so through the years I heard them a lot. They weren't such a teaching presence, I think, except for a couple of those summer schools.

UPDIKE Could you tell me about Zara Nelsova?

HAMPTON Sure. Well, Zara was amazing. I was pretty young, maybe seventeen, when I first heard her play. Of course, Colin had known her – well, they were both students in London. Zara had a sister who lived in Berkeley, and she came to visit. She had grown up in Canada … I shouldn't say, because I'm not absolutely sure about this … maybe she grew up in London but studied there as a young person. I think later she came to Canada and was teaching in Toronto. Anyway, that's beside the point. This was in the '50s and she was out visiting. So

Colin said that she had to play for me and give me a lesson. Because he had known her. He wasn't around, I guess they were off on tour, or in Europe. But anyway, she made contact and I went and listened. And it was just amazing because this was high-powered virtuoso playing. She probably would have been in her thirties at the time, this was a long time ago. It was amazing virtuoso playing, I'd never heard anything like it.

Growing up, Pierre Monteux had been the conductor when I was going to the Symphony. He didn't believe in having cellist soloists with the orchestra, he didn't feel the cello was a solo instrument. So we would hear recitals and chamber music, and now and then the first cellist would get to play something, Boris Blunder, but mainly we didn't have any soloists with the orchestra. So Zara was – I just sort of sat there with my mouth open – hearing this high-voltage virtuoso playing. Studying with her was very good for me. There were just two or three lessons that first time when she was just visiting, but then later she came to San Francisco State University. Jane Galante got her there for one semester each year for two or three years. That first year I went over there and studied with her. Margaret has always – as a young person she would assign me technical things – give me all of her (as she called it) her vegetables. In other words, my scales and my Klengel and my etudes and this kind of thing. But then she often wouldn't check up on it, she'd get into the music. So of course as a student, you know what happens with that. Well, Zara believed very much in etudes and technical things. So that was always part of the lesson. She gave some very hard ones. I remember one time – only one time, but still – it wasn't good enough, and I had to bring it back the next week. That made an impression – "Okay, I get it." In a sense the teaching was much a standard conservatory teaching – probably the way she had been taught in London. It wasn't the creative kind of teaching I'd gotten from Margaret. But on the other hand it was very good for me because it meant I did a lot of Grustzhacher etudes and things like that. And that was good, I needed it because I'd been playing so much chamber music and that had been the emphasis, so I'm really grateful for that. And also being around that kind of level of virtuosity. I remember this was a little later, but there was one point at which I got some competitions, and played with the San Francisco Symphony, and things like that. I was getting some concerto engagements. And I got engaged in an orchestra out of town somewhere, I can't remember where, to play the Tchaikovsky Rococo variations, and I had never studied that. At that time I had played Haydn and Dvorak and a few of the others, but I hadn't played the Tchaikovsky. So I thought maybe it would be a good idea for me to play it for somebody. And Zara and some other cellists, [Leonard] Rose also, used to play it on recitals a lot, so they very much had it in their repertoires. So I asked Zara if she would let me play it for her – it was at the time I was in New York – and she said "What?! You haven't been playing this since you were thirteen? Well, I suppose something can be done." Well, that was Zara. She was great. She was just a very lively, earthy kind of person. She and Colin got on like a house on fire, they came from something of the same background but also there was something very real about them. Enjoying fun, and stories, and a good time. I'm very grateful for that connection.

UPDIKE How long did you study with Zara?

HAMPTON Well, it was patches. A bunch of lessons in that semester at San Francisco State. Then a few other times when I played for her. I remember I got a little bit of money during

the time I played the Tchaikovsky for her, and had a series of lessons, five or six maybe. It was that kind of thing.

UPDIKE And when did you start studying with Pablo Casals?

HAMPTON That was in the late '50s. My mother had taken me to the Casals Festival when I was an early teenager, in 1951, and I got to play for him at that time. Margaret had introduced Casals to me through his recordings at a very, very early age. I can't remember when I first heard the recordings of the Bach suites. And of course she had heard him in the '20s here in California. Evidently it made a lasting impression, she had all his recordings. Soon after that I got to start working on the first suite. Casals was just part of my growing up consciousness. And so then going to the festival and hearing him…. We went to quite a few of the rehearsals, we were able to get in to this old condemned theater where they had the rehearsals. I think I was about fifteen. The orchestra was down in this condemned opera house. A small theater, but an old style in Perpignan, in Southern France, because Casals was living in Prades and that's where the festival was. In the first gallery they would sometimes let us sit to listen at the rehearsals. I have a picture – across from where I was sitting there are these two boys, and a woman. Of course, it was Paul Hersh, as a ten year old. Because his father, Ralph Hersh, was the first violist of that orchestra. Talk about the connections. Anyway, so we were at the festival. And at the end we stayed on for all of the recording sessions. In fact at one point I had to go, because there was nobody to turn pages for Eugene Istomin in the Beethoven *E flat trio* – and they looked up at the few audience members left and asked me if I could read music. I said yes and went down. I was terrified. I got up so quietly from this old rickety chair to turn pages. I had such a charley horse the next day because of having to get up so carefully. It was a terrifying experience to turn pages for Casals' recording.

At that time I got to play for him. He said that he would take me as a student but he felt I was too young to come and live in Prades by myself, so I should come again in two years. Well, it was actually four years before I was able to get back. I went in 1956 to study with him. That was pretty much almost the whole year, that first year. Sometimes two or three lessons a week, and then master classes up in Zermatt. That was a very, very intense time. And an incredible time, because here was my total hero, he was everything that I'd ever dreamt of and believed in, in turns of being a musician, being a cellist. As a teacher he was very patient, very thorough. He wanted one to understand what he was getting across. He was willing to work on real basics, but once he saw you got it, what you did with it was your own responsibility. He was very patient, and insisting, he didn't just sluff over anything. In terms of getting into the music, he wanted always to show that notes had character, that they were in context, and had meaning – they weren't just notes. That everything was in its proportion. I had studied with Zara not too long before I went to play for him, so my playing was kind of excited and hyper, that was Zara. And so when I played for him that first day he said "Well, it was very electric, it was very exciting. But pretty soon, if it just goes on being electric, it's not interesting anymore." So variety – every note in terms of intonation – really hearing, really listening. Combined with that was great detail, always having the total in view so that one understood the context, one understood. He would say, "No! With character. Say something. Even if tomorrow you say it differently, you need to say something." That was the most terrible thing, if he said anything was cold. He wanted it always to have meaning, always to be connected. At the same time he was very much a

perfectionist. He had a standard for himself, and he insisted on it with students. He was very willing to just stay on something until one got it. It was a very intense experience.

I remember that first fall. I was in a twelfth-century house where I had a room, with very thick walls, no heating at all. It was freezing cold. I think there were some sweaters I never changed – I just would change things underneath them. It was really cold. So it would take half an hour of warming up just to even start playing, to start working. You didn't dare stop, in case it got cold again. I practiced a lot – I really practiced a lot. I was living right across the street from Casals' house. I would give myself a break at 5 o'clock or so to get something for dinner. I'd try to find little bits of wherever the sun might be to try to warm up, to sun myself a bit. That was a remarkable time.

It was about then that they were planning to move to Puerto Rico. When I had played for Casals earlier in 1951 Madame Captevilla had been there, but she had died since. Marta, who was about the same age as I, had come as a student, and then he needed a lot of help. The relationship evolved so that she was there with him. She was from Puerto Rico, and of course Casals' mother had been born in Puerto Rico. Casals suffered terribly from the cold, he'd get these terrible headaches. Puerto Rico's climate is – as he said – the climate is so delicious. The governor there made him so welcome, and offered him so much – that he could have the festival there, and so on. They decided to go and live there, but he had a heart attack at the first festival there, so he was out. I had gone probably the next year, I had to postpone that, so it was in '58 that I went again, and was there for several months.

He would only take one student a day, so we were kind of a mixed group. There was a boy there from Japan, who had already been there about three or four years, a boy from Mexico, and I think there was one from Guatemala. For a while a boy from Ceylon, from India and from Ceylon – came. Although he'd had most of his training with Cassado, in Spain and then also in England. We were a combination of different cultures. It was a good bunch, we did some ensemble playing. What Casals and Marta would do – it was a tradition, maybe it's a European thing – I had a feeling he had always done that when he had his home in Paris and earlier in his life – on Sunday afternoons he would invite us over to listen or to play music. We'd all be working hard and would have our lessons on different days, but we'd all come together on Sundays. Which was wonderful. It started in Prades, first, and the same thing continued in Puerto Rico.

Occasionally – I remember one time we students rented a car and went up into the country to explore a little bit. Puerto Rico is wonderful, beautiful, the rainforests and the fruit and trees. I thought, this would be a good place if you were going to be poor, to be, because look at the abundance of fruit. But then you'd see so many people go to New York to try to make it rich. There's plenty of poverty in Puerto Rico too. We were treated very nicely, people would invite us in. We did one event at the governor's palace, honoring Casals. They wanted us to play an ensemble piece of his. It had these other aspects about it, but the important things were the lessons themselves. For me, that is absolutely the peak of my musical experience in terms of influence.

Things constantly come up for me – it's not that I didn't understand things at the time but it's also that that much more realization hits again in a different context. It's been a terrific life-long influence. Such a positive one. Recently I came across my notes from those lessons … maybe a couple of summers ago. I was inspired all over again, just reading them. I was total adulation, and the rest of it, you know – I'm writing as a much younger person – but it had me delving deeper in a way that I had forgotten, and I'm so glad I did that. When you're doing something that's very important to you, you think, "Oh, I'll always remember this." It's interesting, because being able to re-read my notes, they brought so much back. Yes, maybe it was in there, but it brought it up to the surface, which I'm really grateful for. He continues to be an inspiration in so many ways. In his playing, and the way he lived, and his conduction – just everything.

UPDIKE Could you describe his home in Paris?

HAMPTON Oh, no, you read about that, that's when he was a young man. That's why I mentioned it – from what one reads it was a gathering place for musicians. I guess there were certain times when they'd come and there would be that exchange. He enjoyed people. He worked hard, he had a routine, absolutely. In fact, when I was in Puerto Rico a couple of the different times I was living in the house. I'd hear the door creak at 7 o'clock in the morning because he always took a walk on the beach – their house was right on the beach – so I'd dash and throw on a dress and go running after them to catch up. I remember one time – it was really silly – he was going barefoot. He was bald of course and was wearing a hat – he was very sensitive to the sun so he'd have this umbrella as well to protect himself from the sun. He and Marta would be walking along. So here were Casals' footsteps. I went jumping along in Casals' footsteps, wondering if it would help my cello playing. It was really silly. Marta was a lot of fun, too.

I have to say, you know, when you're practicing in the same house with Casals, you pay attention how you're playing. I remember I had to play – this was in the '60s – one of the times I was down there I was preparing for Darius Milhaud's concerto, with Milhaud conducting, which I would perform soon after I got back. Casals, even though as a younger man had done quite a bit of contemporary music of his time – there was a certain point in his fifties when he didn't do it anymore and got very disturbed by some of the more avant-garde directions. I was careful about contemporary music around him, even though by that point I'd already been playing a lot of contemporary music because I got involved in the Bay Area in the contemporary music scene. Anyway, I was playing the Milhaud, and I would be careful that he [Casals] would be down in his studio, and I could hear him either playing the piano or cello or something so I knew he wouldn't hear me, and that's when I'd practice the concerto. One night at dinner Marta said, "Bonnie, what was that piece you were practicing with those funny dissonant chords?" I thought, "Oh, no." Casals right away perked up his ears and wanted to know what it was. He had known Milhaud's music, and he said, "Yes, he was very talented, but then he took the wrong direction." There it was, those things happen. Even though he had known Schoenberg, and Schoenberg of course wrote his concerto, or made the cello concerto for him – although it's a Schoenberg version of a Mohan concerto – Mohan was a contemporary of Haydn, but just the same. Interestingly enough, just recently I was involved in a Casals celebration concert in New York and they'd been publishing some of his old music recently. And there was a movement of a violin sonata of his on that concert. And it was really quite – there was nothing harshly

dissonant, but it was very modern, which was interesting. That's a whole other thing – that was the highlight of my New York time. I played on Casals' cello at that concert and played some of his pieces, and also conducted his pieces.

UPDIKE Shall we go back to the early 1950s at the Conservatory?

HAMPTON Sure.

UPDIKE Could you describe your memories of the house on Sacramento Street?

HAMPTON Well, it had a good feeling about it, a really nice feeling. There was a shop right next store where we could go and get sandwiches with this funny guy, we got to know him. It had a very homey feeling, a very comfortable feeling. Everybody was working, and enthusiastic, and friendly. Very Californian. Saturdays were probably what Saturdays are here too, all crazy busy with lots of kids. At that point I knew some of the students that were regular students, because some of them participated in the Griller Quartet program. But I really didn't know too much of the day to day workings, except that I was having counterpoint lessons with Lil Hodghead during that time. She taught very much with Ernest Bloch's methods, with his books, actually. The whole method of the counterpoint – very strict – you know, with all the species and so on. She was a tough teacher, but I learned things, that's for sure. I had the feeling that it was a small Conservatory at that point, although there were a lot of piano students. It started as a piano school, as piano studios. Margaret had studied with Stanislas Bem, who was the cello teacher there. So we all knew his studio, which was up the stairs. I think he was still teaching some, except his heyday had been earlier. I'm not sure how active he was at that time, but we'd see him sometimes and certainly he was present there. I don't remember who the regular violin teacher was other than the Grillers. They were teaching Conservatory students on Saturdays, so they were teaching some of the regular students who were going to the Conservatory full-time. But it's a little hazy. There would be concerts there, they had a small concert hall. It was a lively place. I once saw pictures from some of the earlier days. A couple of people I know would talk about it. It was an adventure because it was a new enterprise. Everybody was excited that this was something that hadn't existed before – a San Francisco Conservatory. Talking with my friend, Cornelia, who had been a student right from that first class, was always fun. Bloch would sometimes come down. I remember I heard him at a lecture at the University, after he had retired. I remember him at the Conservatory too because there was a special Bloch concert. He came and was coaching a group, I think they were playing the piano quintet. His presence was always exciting. He spoke with a very high voice and kind of excited all the time. He was definitely a presence. I can imagine when he was there teaching it must have been a pretty high-powered time.

UPDIKE Do you have memories of Ada Clement?

HAMPTON Sure. Not as much as with Lil, whom I did get to know more. Ada was always very nice. You had the feeling that she was a very good teacher, and a very strict teacher. These ladies, they were demanding. And they said it the way that it was. They didn't coddle anything. It was very straightforward, but one respected them a lot. When you consider that Ada played the first performance of the *Emperor Concerto* in San Francisco … I mean, that's history.

I don't know what the dates were, but when you consider that that's the first time that was played in San Francisco…. By that time, there was a lot of touring. San Francisco was very much on the map for musicians to come, one way or another and make the cross-country trip. She and Lil were real pioneers, in terms of starting something – having the vision and really starting something. Not only toughness, but also insistence. They were willing to just go at it and not give up. It was part of the times too, even Margaret, even though she was later, there was that kind of willingness to just go for something and not compromise. Ada died probably just the following year, after I was around.

UPDIKE 1952

HAMPTON Yes. But even if she was not well, which she must not have been at the end there, she was very much of a presence there, working and doing her thing.

UPDIKE Could you describe her?

HAMPTON Well, I think I sort of have … I didn't really have too much personal interaction. Although she would always be very supportive of me, personally, and encouraging. I never really worked with her, but I had friends who did. I had the feeling that she of that group was the strong person and the leader. Absolutely, they all looked up to her very much. You had the feeling that this was the driving force there.

UPDIKE And could you describe Lillian Hodghead?

HAMPTON Lil was a lot of fun, very earthy. Loved having a good time, but she was a hard task-master. I especially remember the times over in Mill Valley. But she was always just right in there. Even as an older lady – I'm talking quite a bit later – I remember I was playing some new Bloch suites. She came in, even though it was harder for her to get around, she came in especially because she wanted me to play them for her individually. It was a private airing, so to speak. She hung in there, she was really involved. She kept connections with things. She was a terrific supporter of the Griller Quartet, and was enthusiastic. I can remember her studio on Saturdays, it was always filled with students coming and going. She was teaching, wall to wall. A lot of fun, she was lively.

UPDIKE Nettimae Felder?

HAMPTON Nettimae Clement, as we knew her, she lived in Berkeley and had a studio there. I only knew her there in the fifties, I didn't really know her over at the Conservatory. She had a different personality from Ada or Lillian. The other two were very strong ladies, very strong women. Nettimae always seemed softer, somehow. Who knows, maybe underneath there was that good toughness. She was very busy teaching, she had a very active studio. But I don't know at the time I knew her how much active connection she had with the Conservatory.

UPDIKE Do you remember Albert Elkus?

HAMPTON Oh, Albert Elkus, he was wonderful, everybody's loving papa. I played with him at the University, he would sometimes conduct the orchestra. His wife was wonderful, we all loved Elizabeth. You just had the feeling that he was one of those quieter guys who was just going to get things done. He did something that nobody's been able to do since at the University and at the Conservatory, well, actually that's right, we were a trio in residence – but there have not been too many groups in residence and that's always a step for an institution to take. That was a pioneering step in those days because the whole phenomena of having chamber music groups in residence at schools really hadn't very much existed yet. In that sense he was a pioneer, and just a lovely person. We respected him a lot. One had the feeling that he was a very thorough musician.

UPDIKE Do you have memories of Roy Bogas?

HAMPTON We were kids together. We were about the same age. When I was about sixteen we played some together. He had been studying with Baller, and his earlier teacher had been Ada, who he felt made him. He'd grown up in Philadelphia and had some bad luck with teachers, I guess, from what he says. But Ada really put him straight in terms of piano playing, in terms of technique. He valued her so much. He was in the Griller Quartet class. Very much a part of it. And he and I played sonatas, quite a few during that period. He was already studying with Baller, by then, who had a big class at the Conservatory. We were just all kids together, making music. The all-night chamber music sessions, Roy was often a part of it.

UPDIKE Did you want to talk a little bit about Jonathan Elkus?

HAMPTON Well, let's see, Jonathan was in the Young People's Symphony at the same time I was. Incidentally, I didn't talk about one aspect of my mother. She was very much an instigator of starting the Young People's Symphony, which as I say was the first youth orchestra in the Bay Area. She had gone up to Portland to visit some relatives there, and heard for the first time the Portland Junior Symphony, who, by the way, as a seventeen-year-old, Robert Mann was concert-master, he grew up in Portland. It was really a small world. And so she came back and at that point – my mother as a girl had had violin lessons – and her father, my grandfather, drowned in a terrible accident up in the Columbia River, he was putting in electricity. So the family became very, very poor, so she couldn't have lessons anymore. It was later, in the period when I started becoming conscious, when she was having lessons, she had quartet, she had her trio, that kind of thing. That was that period when she came back and told her teacher about this youth orchestra, and that we had to have that in Berkeley. So that was how the Young People's Symphony started. Her teacher, Jessica Marcelli, was the first conductor, and they got sponsorship there in Berkeley. Jonathan, during the time I was in orchestra, he was also playing. Bassoon, of course. He's a little older than I am, so I always kind of looked up to him as one of the big guys. That's mainly how I knew Jonathan.

UPDIKE I know we've already talked about Adolph Baller, but….

HAMPTON There was something about Baller. He was such an extraordinary pianist. There were some things he would do – you felt it was true Viennese playing. There were some things he would do in control and finesse, that were so, so beautiful. So beautiful. He was very

encouraging and supportive, he was a very positive kind of person. He was just very nice. He had that kind of attitude toward people, it was just his way. Music just came out of him; it was just part of him, totally integrated.

UPDIKE Could you talk about Ernst Bacon?

HAMPTON Well, Ernst Bacon I only knew later. I had known Madi, his sister, who was a very active force in the Bay Area. She started the Boy's Chorus and was a real character. She was not only enthusiastic, but very dynamic. She told people what they needed to be doing – including me, sometimes, in terms of studying when I was a young student with Margaret. Not that we had that much contact, but she would check up on people and ask them questions about what they were doing – "You have to shape up here!"

Anyway, Ernst had been a student at the Conservatory with Bloch and then he'd gone off … I'm not sure where his later studies were. He'd been Dean at the University of Syracuse. So he'd had quite a career. Then he came back to retire in the Bay Area. He still had a lot of energy, and was lively. Somehow I was asked to play his cello sonata with him. By that time I already knew one of his daughters; she had been a student of mine at Stanford when my trio was in residence. It was a small world. I think I knew the daughter first as a student, then Ernst came. I must say, it was quite an experience because his sonata was of that period – very passionate music, very much Americana. It had a middle-America feeling about it. Ho-downs, and things like that. As a pianist, he would get very passionate, and he would start rushing – well, you could call it rushing – or getting excited, or going ahead. He was like a torrent. You either went with him, or forget it! You would fall off the cliff. I remember him as this force of energy. He was a very good pianist too, it was an experience working with him, I must say. I enjoyed it, it was lively. He was such a character.

When I think back about some of these people we're talking about, there was a lot of personality and they were not afraid of being who they were, and saying what they thought. Even if they were going to offend somebody, they'd say it, and often in a way that you'd accept it or at least accept that that's the way that they worked. They weren't moddle-coddling anyone. It was very honest, in that sense. I'm really grateful that I had contact with some of those musicians, because you get the sense of that willingness to make a stand, willingness to have the convictions.

UPDIKE Could you talk a little bit about your memories of Giulio Silva?

HAMPTON Well, I didn't really have any personal contact with him, but he was this wonderful old gentleman – or at least he seemed that way to me at that stage. White hair, and beard. He was always so nice in terms of greeting one. You know, as a young kid, if somebody says hello to you, and is an important person, you notice it. His son, of course Luigi Silva, is such a great cellist, and I have a feeling that knowing I was a cellist made Giulio take note of me. I appreciated that, it was fun to have him around. We all had the sense that that's where the Gregorian chant was coming from – from his studio, or classes.

UPDIKE What are your memories of former Conservatory President Robin Laufer?

HAMPTON I remember meeting him in Paris before he was actually hired. Lil [Hodghead] was over there, and somehow we knew her and the Grillers were there. He was being introduced around. I was teaching at the Conservatory at that point. I have a feeling that it wasn't such a happy period for the Conservatory, ultimately. He was a very suave guy, and he had certainly good credentials. He gave the impression obviously to the board and to the powers-that-be that he would understand how to run a conservatory. But he was a very, very different personality certainly than Elkus or the others that had been around. I always had the feeling that he was – I don't want to say operator, that's too much – but he would try to squeeze things out of people. I remember he wanted to start something over in Berkeley connected with the Conservatory. But it meant that we would have to pay part of what we had been getting as teachers – pay it back into the Conservatory. So one was in a way losing money – I was already teaching in Berkeley – so he wanted me to put all my Berkeley students through the Conservatory. That earned a little more for the Conservatory – fine, but it earned a little less for me. It was a little bit taking off the back of people. He knew what he was doing, and we knew what he was doing, and we allowed it to happen for a while. I think it was around that time that I didn't have connections anymore with teaching at the Conservatory. I think it was in the '60s, I'm not sure exactly the dates at this point. You probably know when he was there.

UPDIKE Late '50s.

HAMPTON Late '50s, yes. It was for a while that we were connected. His wife was nice, I liked her. He was very suave, and nice. A very smooth guy. I don't know … it was a period of unrest. A lot of the students – not just at the Conservatory – were protesting. I remember – I think it was Bloch's – Ernest Bloch's granddaughter that was one of the leaders in the rebellion. The students didn't feel that they were getting the education they deserved. They started protesting. I wasn't really involved anymore, I don't think I was teaching, but I would hear about all the things that were happening. That was kind of fun. I don't know what happened with the end of that, but I must say they lucked out with the next direction that things took. The Conservatory went in a very good direction with Milton Salkind, but I think that was one of the less happy points in the Conservatory's existence.

UPDIKE Could you talk about the culture of chamber music in the Bay Area?

HAMPTON Well, let's see. I have a little bit already, in the sense that there was a lot of it. As we all moved on from being students – well, one is always a student – but moving on, there were a lot of groups forming. A lot of individual groups. There were also of course the guest musicians, and a lot of quartets were presented, particularly in Berkeley but also in San Francisco. It was interesting – the Budapest Quartet would always play both places, and they would always get a bigger audience in Berkeley than they would in San Francisco. San Francisco was very much oriented to the Symphony and the Opera, very much. So chamber music was a little bit more in the cracks. But in Berkeley, definitely there was a chamber music environment. People would come over for it. What I mentioned earlier about the Symphony players, the older guard Symphony players, many of them still had their quartets and would play regularly. What happened then was that we started our chamber music groups and tried to find concerts. That's how the San Francisco Chamber Music Society started, in the sense that Norman Fromm (connected with the winery) was used in Europe to being chamber music patrons and so when

they came to San Francisco, continued that idea. It was Norman Fromm that decided – alright, there are all of these individual groups that are trying to make their concerts. Let's give them an umbrella of support and make an organization that then will have a series, so all of the groups can have a couple of concerts every year. It was very idealistic, raised a lot of money from San Francisco patrons and chamber music lovers. The Conservatory had a supportive connection with that, but it wasn't a direct product of Conservatory activities. Growing up, I felt very lucky because there was such a culture of chamber music. I heard every quartet, every chamber music group that came through the Bay Area.

UPDIKE Could you talk about your memories of the house in Mill Valley that was owned by the Conservatory?

HAMPTON Oh, that was special. I have some really, really happy, fun memories. It was very rustic, you would climb up the hill, and they had a wonderful garden, with paths and redwoods and big beams in the house. It was rustic, although there was a downstairs area which they had redone, especially for Bloch, earlier, with a couple of bedrooms and nice new modern bathroom. Originally it would have been a lot more primitive. It had a huge sun porch. Mostly we all just lived out on the porch. I even remember a whole bunch of us sleeping – I think it was the whole Griller Quartet and I don't know who else – we were all sleeping in various corners of this large porch. In a sense it was a Bohemian type of atmosphere. Always kind of a *joie-de-vivre*. Sometimes the Grillers would be there rehearsing for a bit, and afterwards they would relax and have fun. I loved it, it was right in the trees, with a view across. It had a wonderful, rustic feeling about it. It was very real, somehow.

UPDIKE Could you tell us about your relationship with Colin Hampton?

HAMPTON Well, we met of course in 1951. I had heard them [the Griller Quartet] before that. I played for Colin in the late '40s as a young student. I had a couple of lessons with him – Margaret took me along to play for him and have some lessons. I was studying with her, still, for some years after that. I remember he made a lot of impressions on me as a teacher at that point. I think I already said this but he had a lot of conviction about things, and he would get things across in a very meaningful, dynamic way. He had me thinking about things I hadn't thought about before, both musically and technically. This was after I had been to the Casals Festival in 1951. I was very different when I came back. My eyes had been opened. I of course loved music before that, and knew that was what I wanted to do, how I wanted to spend my life. But there was something about the international sense of the festival and meeting Casals that really opened my eyes as to what it was you needed to do, what you needed to be, to really participate in the musical world. So my attitude had been devoted before that, in the sense of – "Oh, isn't this wonderful, aren't we having a wonderful time" – to understanding the seriousness of the endeavor; it was a lifelong work. Something that had changed in me. At that point he was living – he had a room in a house about a block away from where I lived. He was part of those all-night chamber music times.

So the relationship blossomed, let's say. We were married at the end of '53. I was very young. I was his student. I'm not sure I would advise me to do that now. But there it is, one does what one does. And there was quite an age difference. We were together for quite a long time, maybe

about fourteen years. His marriage had broken up before that. I did meet his wife in ’49, when I played she was there. He had two sons, one is a cellist, a very fine cellist. We’re in touch quite often now, and we have been through the years. He lives in Vancouver, kind of a big school up there, not unlike the Conservatory, really. The other one, Andrew, is still in Scotland, I think. Colin and I were together until later ‘60s. Later, when he was living alone, I used to have Sunday morning coffee with him, I’d go up and talk, this was even after I was married to Nathan. Everybody had studied with everybody, and everybody knew everybody, and we used to talk about everything with music. I really value that late period up until his death in the later ‘90s. He was about eighty-five, I guess, when he died. But he was a remarkable musician. It was a whole era of music … it was a part of him, he just absorbed it. A through and through musician. I’ve already talked about him in the terms of the influence he had on other musicians. He was a fun guy. It was just that whole ambiance, with that group over in Mill Valley. The English can be really crazy. I can remember some crazy parties with the Cal students up at our house. One might think that the English are very proper and staid, but no, they can be the craziest people in the world when they let their hair down.

I remember the Conservatory people were very nice to me at that time. I remember there was a party after we got married, where they had pitched in and made a wedding present, and had a reception. Which was nice of them because it was an unusual kind of situation for them to be as openly receptive and welcoming. Oh gosh, I’m having a senior moment because I don’t remember the names of the people I’m thinking about, but I can visualize them. Forbes … what was her first name….

UPDIKE Beulah?

HAMPTON Beulah! Yes, she was there, a young teacher at the time of course. Marion Murray, she was there. I really appreciated their attitude toward me. It was an unusual situation, and they could have handled it in a different way. It was a very positive sort of thing.

UPDIKE In 1956 the Conservatory moved from Sacramento Street to Ortega Street. Could you talk about that move?

HAMPTON I don’t remember a whole lot about that because I was away that whole year. That’s the first year I was studying with Casals. It was only later that I was doing some teaching again for the Conservatory … I don’t remember the chronology of that. I do remember visiting the building and there were these little tiny rooms. A lot of it was changed of course as they renovated the building from an infant shelter into the Conservatory. But it was a big move in terms of the space, in terms of being able to develop and expand, so to speak. I kind of liked that building, in the sense that I knew it more when I came back, and my trio was in residence there. That was after the ‘70s. I still have very fond feelings for that time. We’d all meet in the hallways, do our business, have our social life, see everybody, then go off into our rooms and teach, and then come out. It had a very friendly feeling about it. I have good memories of that building.

UPDIKE In the 1960s you took some time away from California?

HAMPTON Yes. Actually, it was more the late ‘50s. I wasn’t so much away, it was ’56 and then in the late ‘60s, ’69 to ’72. In the ‘60s I was in California, I just wasn’t around the Conservatory so much. I was teaching at Mills College at that point, and then at Stanford. I’d have to go back and figure out when I was doing what, where. We were away at Grinnell College – my trio had started in the early ‘60s. And so we became pretty busy with that. I must have been – in the ‘60s yes, I must have been teaching at the Conservatory. Yes, of course I was because I can remember – we did quite a lot of touring – so I can remember having to make up lessons. It was in and out, it wasn’t that I was away. In ’56 I was away pretty much all that year. Otherwise it was in and out.

UPDIKE Could you tell me about the Francisco Trio?

HAMPTON Francesco Trio.

UPDIKE Sorry, the Francesco Trio.

HAMPTON It’s very important, because Dick Howe, when they engaged us to be a trio in residence, said, “Be sure we don’t start being called the Francesco Conservatory.” We wanted to imply San Francisco, but we didn’t want to be the Frisco Trio, you see. It sort of evolved. I’d been over at Mills College and had the Mills chamber players. I’d been doing many things, I was an extremely busy musician. I’d been teaching all the way along, privately, some at the Conservatory. I was playing in contemporary groups, I was playing my own solo concerts, I’d been in the chamber music groups – doing everything a young cellist does. And that’s what I tell my students. When you’re in your twenties, do everything you can possibly do, because you find that there are some things that you didn’t know you could do, or liked to do. You need to find out everything.

With the trio, I’d known David Abel since we were both about thirteen. I’d heard him play with the San Francisco Symphony at one of the youth orchestra concerts. So I’d known him a little bit through the years. Nathan Schwartz came to the University – I was married to Colin at the time, I think. He came in the early ‘50s. He’d been a student at Columbia University, and he came out to study with Manfred Bukofzer at Berkeley to get a PhD. Musicology, he was planning to do. We started playing very soon, sonatas. I know Seymour Shifrin had us play the first performance of his cello sonata, and some Beethoven. Through the years I played quite a bit with Nathan. David had been touring for Columbia Artists. He’d had a young career as a soloist. But he’d always migrate back to San Francisco, this was his home. What happens with the whole young soloists thing is, Columbia Artists takes you on for two or four years, and sends you all around the country. And then they need the newest young person. So David was back, and he was still having some concerts but not as much. So he looked around to see who there was to play with here, and he saw that I was one of the busiest people around. He wanted to play Brahms *Double Concerto*, he wanted to learn it. So we had about four dates, two or three different orchestras to play it with. We started working on it months ahead, to work it out and let it rest, and work it up and let it rest, etc. Then came the point where we wanted to play it with a piano, to get it more focused. I had already been playing with Nathan. So we played together and it somehow clicked, as far as the potential for being a trio. So the next year we had about four concerts. We liked playing together. What I liked about the trio was that it evolved quite naturally. We didn’t say

"Let's have a trio, and what do we call ourselves." No, we had concerts and had to have a name. We called ourselves the Pacifica Trio at first. We liked the name, but it was during that time of all the protests, and KPFA, and radical stuff. Pacifica was somehow connected with that. We were being presented by the San Francisco Chamber Music Society for a debut concert, and they said, "Well, it's a little radical. Maybe you should find something more neutral." So we started thinking, "Well, Tamalpais Trio … Mount Diablo Trio … Frisco Trio …" I don't know, Francesco came out of it – implying San Francisco. I remember on our first review the critic said, "I don't know where they came up with the name Francesco, but maybe if they're around long enough we'll get used to it."

But it was successful, and one thing led to another. In the second or third year we were given a tour of Alaska and British Columbia. We had about twenty evening concerts and about forty or fifty school concerts, so we were up there for about five weeks. There was a lot of touring. It was somehow evolving and working. Then the Lenox Quartet had been at Grinnell College – it's a really small world, this music world – they had gotten asked to go to Binghamton to replace the Guarneri Quartet, which was a young quartet at that time who was going to Maryland. So they needed somebody at Grinnell. We had been – all of us – working part-time at all of these things. I was already at Stanford, and also at Mills College. Then the trio became involved some at Stanford, I got them to hire us. Again, we got paid very little, but we were involved in the chamber music program. In the Bay Area at that time – and I have a feeling it may be a little bit the same now – because there are so many fine musicians in the area, they don't really have to create residencies, or create jobs. They can get people by the hour, and that doesn't cost as much. So here we were, being engaged for a real job at Grinnell College, our first real residency where two-thirds of our job would be playing concerts – which is ideal for a young chamber music group because that means you're learning repertoire like crazy. That's what you need to be doing as a young group; you need to be performing a lot. So we decided to take it, and of course the great Stanford University was shocked that we would leave to go to Grinnell, Iowa. So we went, and we were treated very well there. Actually, the person that had been involved with that was Richard Howe, and of course Paul Hersh, who was in the Lenox Quartet. So all of those things were connected. We were there from '69 through '72. Around '70 or '71 Paul decided to leave the quartet and come to the Conservatory. He wanted to get back to the West Coast. It was around then that they were looking for a dean at the Conservatory, and I think it was Paul that recommended Richard Howe.

Stanford still was a little bit smarting that we had left, so they got the chairman to hire us back to Stanford. At the same time Milton Salkind and Richard wanted to get us connected … well, wanted to get me connected, at first, it was just the cello. So we went back to Stanford with the trio. With the trio, things evolved. Musically, when I think back about it, I've been lucky in that I've done many, many, many different things. Probably for me, the most important musical part of my life – where I felt that we got the furthest, musically, in a single direction, was with the trio. Especially that early one. It was wonderful with Miwaki later, when she came in too, when David went a different direction, but you know, we can venerate all of the groups and all of the wonderful people that have been inspirational to us. Ultimately it's when you get down to the nitty-grit and dig it out yourself that that's a very important part of one's musical life. I value that. Of course with the duo, with Nathan, we also were able to accomplish a lot. It was a year or two later – I don't remember exactly but it wasn't too much longer after that – that Milton and

Dick Howe wanted to get us connected with the Conservatory as a trio. We had a series of concerts here, it was a part of our job. It was a very natural kind of thing, and probably we'll get into that a little later, but that's how the whole chamber music emphasis started at the Conservatory, in a very natural way. It wasn't something implanted, it was something that grew in an integral way out of the people involved. Paul was very much one of them. Baller, in his time, had been one of them with the Alma Trio. The Griller Quartet had been here. So there was a whole tradition of it. We had the good fortune to find a welcome, nurturing place to carry on that energy. That brings us up a little bit in terms of the trio, and what our influence in the area became.

We were lucky, we got a lot of concerts, we won the [Walter W.] Naumburg competition so we had our New York recitals and concerts, including at Tully Hall. We played a lot later, especially in Boston every year. We had concerts in quite a few places, we had for quite a while the New York management, and so on. We did a lot all over the place on the West Coast. In fact, part of our residency here at the Conservatory was – they would use us to go places to play but also do workshops as representatives of the Conservatory. It's very curious because there wasn't always a one-on-one return on that. The students didn't necessarily turn around and come, although we did have some direct things with students. But over the years I've had people who studied with somebody who heard us, and then came, you see, so there'd be that second generation kind of thing. We played many places on the West Coast. We did some of the Arts Council tours, everywhere. Up and down the coast, but then also Idaho and Montana and Wyoming. Arizona – I loved Arizona. We played everywhere in Arizona. And of course, California and Portland, we did quite a lot in Oregon and Washington, too. I was counting up recently – I think with the trio and individually, I've played in about forty of our states. That's not all of them, but that's not too bad.

UPDIKE Could you talk about your relationship with Nathan Schwartz?

HAMPTON Well, that kind of evolved naturally too. We started playing together in the '50s. We played quite a bit together, but we were also all doing other things. It was only in the '60s when the trio started that we became more involved musically, that became a very central part of our lives. We were together I think from late '60s, we got married in the early '70s. We were at Grinnell College at that time. Like the trio, too, everything just sort of evolved very naturally. Not only musically, but our personal relationship too. Nathan was interesting in the sense that he had had all of the training for a PhD and had done all of the work. [Manfred] Bukofzer liked him a lot, was very supportive of his work. Then Bukofzer died, and that changed things a lot. The person that came in put in a lot of Greek and Latin into the program, and I don't know what else, all kinds of other requirements, and it looked like the PhD program was going to be that many more years. Nathan – all the way along, the piano had been an important part for him – he said "If I go on with this, I'm going to lose that." And so he decided – he threw it away – he had finished all of his work for it, but he just didn't take on all these new requirements. He was going to be a pianist. At Grinnell, and then at Stanford, also at the Conservatory, it became very apparent that Nathan could talk about music very well. In a very stimulating way that really brought it alive for people. His classes at Grinnell were enormously popular, the same thing at Stanford. Here at the Conservatory he would give more specialized classes. At the Universities, at Grinnell and at Stanford, he would give classes around specific music, but then they also

wanted him for classes that were going to really involve – not necessarily music students – but bring them into the music, that kind of thing. He was good at it. David was gregarious, he could talk a lot, but if he'd have to do it formally and "Forget it, nevermind." Nathan would just be able to schpeel it off. He'd get very nervous about concerts, and that was a little more natural for us, especially David, he never got nervous, it was disgusting. That was a very important part of how we developed, not only as a group. Also, what was a good thing at Grinnell, was that, you get in a small liberal arts college, and the more things you can do, the more use you are to a place. And so Nathan started that outlet, which he went on with the classes. He'd had all the training so this was a way that he could really use it. David, as Nathan said, had always been a Brooks Brothers type, always very proper … he grew his hair long, he got into blue-grass, that was his hippie period.

When I got to Grinnell, the harpsichordist there, who was very stiff and a little uptight, said "Well, we've just ordered a whole consort of viols, and who's going to teach them, you or me?" I could see how he used his hands, how tight he was, and I decided I guess I'd better. So I learned about early music, and all kinds of things with that. This was the late '60s, remember. The President put me on a committee – they were getting pressure for equal rights for women – I guess he thought I was too nice, I wouldn't make much problem for anybody. Well, we got all the women together, all the women faculty, and we were willing to be honest and open with each other. We began to discover the inequalities in salaries. They had a nepotism law at that point. It was very difficult, because this was the middle of Iowa – there were a lot of wives there who were very educated, but they weren't allowed to work at all because of that law. That we weren't able to change, but the equality of salaries – we embarrassed them a little bit. There was some protest there. The thing that was funny about the nepotism was, it was the beginning of the last year that we were going to be there. Nathan and I got married, and we got back. I remember when we told the President, he – a little bit jokingly, but not totally, said – "You never asked my permission." I doubt if they still have that nepotism law, it's probably not legal anymore.

UPDIKE I hope not.

HAMPTON Yes, so I got a little bit into the politics of academia, I guess you might call it. But I'm really grateful for all of the different schools where I've worked. Just leaving Juilliard now, it's been over fifty years that I've been connected with educational institutions. And of course there are always frustrations. But I'm really, really grateful for all of those experiences that I've had. I really have a fond feeling for the Conservatory, in the sense that I especially felt – my most active time was probably with Milton, but also with Colin – but I always felt that it has that creative kind of feeling that there's a receptiveness to ideas that will benefit the process. In other words, you're not as much put into a pigeon-hole. You have the opportunity – many of the things that developed for us were new ideas that seemed as if they would be important to try. That doesn't always happen in places. Sometimes things are pre-prescribed – you do this and you do that. I have to say I've been in some places where the bigger the institution, the more difficult it is to have that creativity. So I really appreciate that.

UPDIKE Bonnie, could you tell me about first meeting Milton Salkind, and your relationship with him?

BONNIE Sure. I'm not sure exactly when I first met him. I know the work that we did with him most intensely was after we came back, from the early '70s on. But he was already there, before, you would have the dates of when he came to the Conservatory in the '60s. It was interesting because here was a performer and a teacher who probably had no idea that he was going to become an important administrator. He had been on a search committee, and somehow the rest of the search committee and the board said "Well, what about Milton?" It was a good choice because the Conservatory, when he took over, really needed him – or someone like him – who was going to go the extra mile, have the personal touch, have the imagination. All those things very much Milton had. He always had a good instinct for new ideas, for things that would be interesting in terms of taking the Conservatory to a new place or something innovative. He was good about that, and I really appreciated it as we started working more closely with him in the '70s. But even in those earlier days, he used to go out of his way to pick up a kid out walking to school in the morning. In other words, he had that personal touch. There was an open-door policy and you always felt you could go talk to him about things, or ideas, and he was receptive. Of course he couldn't do all of them, but he was always interested in things, and in building. The Conservatory very much needed it at that point, because it had hit a little bit of a dip, I think, from its previous period. So I really appreciated him. And I appreciated him because he was very anxious to get us back to the Conservatory, and that's always nice, to be asked.

It was from 1972 that I started working more closely. We were at Stanford, we had just come back to the residency at Stanford: that was our main job. But I came up and would be teaching; Margaret was teaching at the Conservatory but needed some help. So I started teaching a few students there. Then it evolved that the Trio, we started being involved in coaching chamber music. I can't remember exactly how it evolved, but it was very interesting because in the early '70s Joan Gallegos was coordinating the chamber music but the Trio was there. There was one year that a group David was coaching won the first prize at the Coleman Chamber Music award in Los Angeles and the group Nathan was coaching won second prize. That's a big prize that often hotshots from Juilliard win, or a young group that's already been in the profession, so to have our students take first and second prize was a big deal. It was wonderful, and they were terrific kids, too, they really had the goods. The upshot of that was that they really wanted to get us more involved in the Conservatory as a trio, and so that's when we also took on some residency aspects at the Conservatory. That was Milton. He would get an idea, and if it was an idea that he would think was good, it would bring something good to the Conservatory. Probably as he walked out of the office he had no idea how he was going to fund it. But he knew that he wanted to find a way to do it, and that's how some of the things … in other words, it's that creative willingness to sometimes go out on a limb. There are several things that I know about now personally, and that that's exactly how they happened. They were things that were exciting that maybe a more cautious person wouldn't have taken on. I really appreciated him for that. He was a performer himself, so one could definitely relate to him as an administrator because he understood what it was. And he wanted a teaching faculty who was serious about teaching and good at it, but who always was a total musician. In other words, someone who was working with both sides of things at the same time.

UPDIKE What was your impression of chamber music at the Conservatory in the early 1970s?

HAMPTON A little bit I've spoken about. There were some very good kids because Stuart Canin was teaching here, and Zaven Melikian. I think [Isadore] Tinkleman had come by then. So you had some very good violinists. The cello department had been thriving with Margaret. And the piano department, of course, had always been a very strong department. You had kids that really could be good at it. Joan Gallegos was coordinating it. It's always tricky because with a group you sometimes have three people that are committed, and then the fourth person … maybe there are some problems, or you're not so sure … and that's one of the biggest things is to really get the seriousness and the enthusiasm of a total group. There could be shipwrecks where a group exploded or imploded or something. There are always difficulties. Things did evolve later, but I think that there was always the potential for something very good. There had been a long tradition of it. That was one thing that we consciously – we, meaning faculty – the trio, my colleagues, David and Nathan, and Paul Hersh and some of the other faculty – of course we were involved in chamber music, that was our life. We also felt that Milton had this sense – he'd been a Juilliard guy, so he had the sense of what that was about, the large Conservatories on the East Coast – he wanted to create something like that. So did Ada [Clement], frankly. She went east, and said "Okay, they've got this, we can have this out in San Francisco too." You see there have always been these goals and this vision, to create something on the West Coast that is going to be of the same worth and validity of long-established organizations and institutions. We saw ourselves as a nucleus of chamber music. Maybe we can't compete with the East Coast conservatory yet, on some levels, but chamber music can be special. And we're dedicated to it. We can make chamber music something that is perhaps more special than some of the other conservatories. And that's what began to evolve. That was our energy, that was what we projected, the importance of it. Bit by bit this reflected in the work of the students too. They saw that they could really achieve something with this. Plus, you've got some of the most wonderful music you're dealing with, so why not? That was the kind of philosophy. We didn't say "Okay, we're going to do this, this, and this." No. It evolved because of who we were, what we believed, what the school wanted. It was a combination, a natural constellation that came together. And the energies were coordinated in that way. That's a little of what evolved in the '70s in chamber music. It was the important roots of what came later.

UPDIKE Could you talk more about the people involved in chamber music in the '70s? Robert Mann …

HAMPTON That's later, that's Chamber Music West. They weren't involved then at all. Would you like to talk about Chamber Music West Festival? If you want to ask about that, we can talk about the people that came.

UPDIKE Well, Chamber Music West started in 1977. Could you talk about how that came to be?

HAMPTON Well that came to be, again, because we already had set a very fertile ground swell for it. It evolved out of that. I had been in Marlboro quite a bit in the '60s so I knew that whole tradition of older and younger players playing together. An apprentice system where you learn by doing it with the older, more experienced musicians as opposed to only being coached by them. It's a very different experience. It can be quite wonderful, and also demanding because you're expected to reach those professional levels as a young person. I think the idea

started rattling around with our series – we were in residence, and had already started, with Paul and some of the others, a regular series of concerts at the Conservatory. And we wanted to have a festival in June, before the other summer festivals started seemed a good time. So we started thinking about some of the East Coast musicians who were wonderful to work with. Milton had a particular relationship with Robert Mann because they had been students together at Juilliard. So he got in touch with him, and with Jaime Laredo, who I had played a lot with at Marlboro – and Felix Galimir. He was somebody I worked with quite a bit at Marlboro in the '60s and was an inspirational person to work with. He was tough!

Anyway, I had, with my trio in 1974, won the Nuremburg music award in New York, of which Robert Mann is the President. I had heard the Juilliard Quartet right from when they were first touring in 1950, I remember that was the first time I heard them out in Berkeley. There were just all of these connections, some of them more personally related than others. But these musicians came to our Chamber Music West. I don't remember exactly, but I know in the first two or three years. Jamie came the first year. The Vermeer Quartet came that first year. I think Robert and Felix may have come the second year. That was the first time I'd actually played with Robert. I remember we played Brahms' viola quintet. It was very dramatic, very dynamic. Then with Felix, over the years of Chamber Music West, I got to play all of the *Second Viennese School*. The Schoenberg and Berg chamber works. That was extraordinary. I'm getting it from the horse's mouth, because he was there in those early days, in Vienna. He was younger than some of the ones who were working with Schoenberg, but he was also a part of that and he had his quartet later. He would hit you over the head and you'd have all kinds of bumps. And then after the session he'd hug you and so you knew he loved you, even though he hit you over the head because – don't be so slow and stupid! The point is, those works that I played with him, they're in there – the Schoenberg *String Trio*, the *Pierrot Lunaire*, the *Kammersymphonie*; all of those that I played with him are very much in there. And of course the works that I played with Robert Mann. They're very different personalities as violinists and leaders but extraordinary personalities, musical personalities. Playing with Robert was the beginning of what has been a really long relationship, many years of playing together in many places, which I valued enormously.

I'm going to be going to a concert at the end of this week with the Mann Quartet. He's 92, he's playing here in San Francisco. That's a role model. It means none of us are going to be able to retire from playing we'll have to keep going. He's really doing it to us! It's not what it was, but he's playing *Ravel Quartet*, he's playing one of his own pieces, I think he's playing some Hayden. Felix, also, at Marlboro, was playing into his 90's; he couldn't see anymore but he was playing the second violin part of the *Lyric Suite* of Berg by memory, because he couldn't see it. These are musicians where the music is who they are, and they keep doing it until the last breathe. The thing that's fun about Robert's quartet, he's at Manhattan School now, and it's with the son of his original cellist, with Peter Winograd, and with his own son, with Robert's own son, so that's already a second generation, playing viola. Peter Winograd is the first violinist of the American String Quartet, in New York. And then David Geber, who's at the Manhattan School. They sound wonderful, I heard a little bit of them in New York. You've got to hand it to these guys.

Jamie's still going strong. That first year we had some of our own students playing, some of the very best ones who have gone on into very important professional careers. They were students at the Conservatory at that time – Peter Shelton and Amy Lozano. But then Peter Oundjian, who came out later from Juilliard – I think either Felix or Robert had recommended some of the younger students that would be good, because Milton asked him for recommendations. Peter became the first violinist of the Tokyo Quartet; now he has quite a conducting career. They've moved on into their peak with the profession. As our own students developed over the years of Chamber Music West, they had more and more opportunities, and there were more and more of them that were ready to be an active part of it. Which made for a very big growth of not only the standard, but the involvement of the Conservatory itself. Because these people were also coming out from the East Coast, seeing what we were doing, it kind of put us on the map. Let me tell you – I know from experience, being in New York City – they don't really think there's anything west of the Hudson River. I had a graduate student – really good, really very good – he was getting ready to graduate and going to audition for orchestras to get a job. He was going to Chicago Symphony and New York Phil, and then he saw that there was an opening in San Francisco, and he thought about taking that audition. He said, "Well, is the orchestra any good out there?" I said, "What?!" But you see, what happened with this is when the older musicians realized there was a lot going on here, there was much more of a flow of students who came applying for the Conservatory after that. I don't know if we're still reaping any of that benefit (that was a long time ago) but there was definitely a response over the next few years because they realized there was something going on out here, so that was a good outcome. But the main thing was the content of what happened.

UPDIKE Would you talk about the master's degree that the Conservatory offered in chamber music in 1985?

HAMPTON Sure. That was a natural progression because of the good things that were happening, but it was also a step. There was some question from other parts of the faculty – not the chamber music faculty but from other parts. They wondered if this was going to give too much importance to the chamber music, and whether there would be a financial impact. If you're going to attract very good students, you're going to need to give them good scholarship support. I have to say that my concept – I was asked to coordinate it and present a vision – my concept of it was different from the way that it has evolved. It's quite different from that now. But my concept was that we would have two groups – I proposed a trio and a quartet, which would be supported for two years. They would have coaching – intensive coaching – quite a lot of time. They would have concerts, their own series and their own studio for rehearsing. You see what happens, with a young group that wants to become a group: they have to be running around like crazy, taking jobs and doing other things. So it's really hard to have those chunks of time that you need to learn repertoire and perform. So that was a dedicated time so they really could establish their roots as a group. That is how it was, at the beginning. We had a group which became what is now the Peabody Trio, they're playing a concert in a couple of weeks in New York, in fact, at Carnegie. And we had a quartet, which called themselves the Sierra Quartet. We had two people who had heard about the possibility of this and wanted to do it – a violist, and we had to hear the cellist while we were on the East Coast auditioning people, and that sounded good. We needed to audition violinists, to find two violinists for them, so we did that and we

chose two violinists. In a way it was an arranged marriage. These people were put together – "Okay! Now be a quartet."

They were excited about it: it was an adventure and a good opportunity. The thing is, I think they made some terrible mistakes. First of all, the four of them rented an apartment together. That meant they were going to be rehearsing three to six hours a day, they were going to be living together, etc., etc. One of the hardest things about a young group, or any group, is learning how to work well together. And of course these people had made a commitment – and they had the potential to play together well – but there was one who, the way he learned, was to argue. And so there was a lot of arguing and fighting in the group. All musicians, we all get intense about what we're doing. So the group wasn't a lot of fun to coach, I have to say, from a faculty point of view. But on the other hand, they played very well and they had a lot of success. And if a group has success they tend to stay together, even if they have to struggle. So it was interesting. They had the two years here and then they decided to stay together. You could say, "Well, it's too much of a struggle." No, they stayed together and had a lot of success for competitions, and so on. They didn't ultimately stay together, but they did have quite a bit of success. A couple of them are in serious string quartets, and the others are all actively in chamber music.

In fact, of our early people – these ones who were groups – most of them are still in the chamber music field, making their livings as chamber music players. And we're talking quite a few years ago, so this is long down the road that they're still doing that. I remember, though, there was one – a cellist, a very talented cellist – she probably made more money than anyone because she went to Columbia Artists and became one of their representatives, so she was on the other side of the fence. And then some of our other – Fidelio Quartet they called themselves came. Very good players. They're all involved very actively in chamber music, even though they're not together as a group now. So many of those early majors … it was a good experiment. As I say, it has evolved in a way that was different from my original vision. The Peabody Trio has been stellar, with Seth Knopp and Violaine Melançon – they have a different cellist, but a wonderful cellist, for them now – Natasha Brofsky. She was actually my replacement at Juilliard, and her husband has just gone into the Juilliard Quartet – Roger Tapping. That's a chamber music family, that's for sure. That's the way it is with the chamber music world: it's really a very small world; we all know each other. There are several younger generations now, but there are a lot of good things happening. And I would say that even though Chamber Music West ran its cycle and had its day as such, as a festival, it later evolved into something else which is going on here, which we'll probably talk about on down. It had a very positive lifespan.

UPDIKE Shall we talk now about your memories of some of the faculty and staff?

HAMPTON Sure.

UPDIKE Shall we talk about John Adams?

HAMPTON Yes. What's been fun is that during my time now at Juilliard I see him fairly often because he often rehearses there with some of his New York performances. He's riding high, he's really riding the crest of the wave in his own profession now, he's at the top of the peak. So we'd catch up very briefly in the hallways there. But here I remember him as a

young person. It was probably a very early job, if not his first job out. He'd been at Cambridge at Harvard with Leon Kirchner, I believe. And then he came out here and had the job at the Conservatory. Milton must have hired him. I remember him being very serious and also professional, in his attitude and the way he did things. I remember he asked us to do some things, and he made a very nice, but a little bit formal letter with it. Often it's just a casual phone call, but he was doing things … that was obviously a little hint at the way he would follow through with things.

I have a little interesting aside too. In the early '70s I was in festivals in New Hampshire. And somehow I got to know his mother, who worked in a museum there. I can't remember which town, one of the towns in the southern part of New Hampshire. Somehow we started talking, and she said, "Oh, my son is out at the San Francisco Conservatory, he's taken a job there." And she said, "I'm so worried about him because he's a composer, and he really wants to be a composer … I just don't know how he's going to make a career, a life, that way." Well, mama, John has done just fine! That was kind of a nice little personal thing, that was actually before I first met him, I met the mother first. She was a very nice lady; she had a chamber music series there. She was in New Hampshire – somehow I met her there, but her series was in Massachusetts.

UPDIKE Could you talk a little bit about your memories of Scott Foglesong?

HAMPTON Sure. Scott I knew first, of course, he was a student of Nathan's. Always very lively, and always very inquisitive, and enthusiastic. I really only knew him then, as a student, and not so directly because I didn't actually work with him, but Nathan did of course. He would have evolved very naturally into the whole teaching side of things. I always had the sense although I was never in any of his classes – probably he was lively, probably enthusiastic, probably very good at it, but in a way that made it a very alive experience for his students, and that's always a good thing.

UPDIKE Could you talk about James Schwabacher, Jr.?

HAMPTON Sure. I don't know what his role was at the time, he must have been on the Board. And he was certainly a serious patron in San Francisco. You know, San Francisco – there are wonderful supporters of music now – but there was a kind of older style patron, Agnes Albert was certainly one of them, and Norman Fromm and so on. But there was an older style, almost European style – San Francisco, New York, any of the bigger cities that had cultural lives. In those earlier days there was a whole patronage thing. And James was definitely one of them. Plus he was a very good singer, so he liked the chance to have performances, and did some very nice things. I remember he was a tenor, I believe. He was so friendly, as a young person he decided I was somewhat talented, and he would always be so encouraging and warm. He always gave a very nice, welcoming greeting whenever we were together somewhere. He was that kind of supportive person, and such a good friend of the Conservatory.

UPDIKE Could you talk about Marion Murray?

HAMPTON Marion Murray. I suspect she was here earlier too, because I think I remember her from those earlier, '50s or '60s or whatever, as a young teacher. I only knew her

as we knew so many people in the hallways. But she was always such a friendly kind of person. You know, that is one of the things that has been such a trait of the Conservatory, is that friendliness, that support, that's what I always loved about the Sacramento and Ortega Street building, because we'd meet each other and see each other in the hallways. We'd conduct our business, we'd do it quickly; we'd have our social life and our greeting life. I don't know too much about her teaching, except that I suspect she was a very, very good teacher because she had some very devoted students. She was the kind of person that probably was both demanding and very encouraging. That was her personality.

UPDIKE Do you remember May Murka?

HAMPTON Sure. May was one of those people that would go the extra mile, many extra miles, for a person. She was really willing to serve people, and to do the jobs that needed to be done to help them meet their goals. I remember she helped us a lot just with our trio, in those early days. Some of the things you need to do to try to publicize yourselves, to get concerts, detailed work like that. I remember she offered to help us in that way. And then of course Milton was a very smart guy, he got her involved with the Prep Department at the Conservatory. And she just did so much to build the Prep Department. Her husband had been a really wonderful composer and died very tragically. She obviously was just dedicating her life to the service of musicians, and of music. She was one of those wonderfully supportive people, you could really count on her to be there.

UPDIKE Could you talk about Mack McCray?

HAMPTON Well, Mack, in those early days, I didn't know him really well personally. I've gotten to know him more in these past few years than those earlier days. Of course Milton hired him – he had been a California guy – who obviously was talented. I didn't see him as he was coming up, I was already off doing other things so I didn't know him as a young talent. Then he went off to Juilliard and did his thing there, and obviously did a lot of good work and a lot of good playing. I think he probably won various competitions back here too. Milton hired him. Probably took a chance, because he probably was untried at that point, but again, Milton had that sense of taking a chance with somebody. I have a suspicion that may have been what happened, because here was someone who was making a stir, and getting the performances, and playing very well, because he's such an accomplished and talented guy. But I can also remember that he kind of enjoyed stirring things up, and he used to write letters – liked to write letters – I don't want to say controversial – but questioning. Every now and then Milton would have to try to get him back in shape. "Come on, Mack, behave!" But he was a lively person, with a lot of energy. It's good to have a live being around, but also he has the balance. Now he's more serious – as we all get as we get older – not such *enfants terribles* anymore. Well, he was always … in terms of teaching, he worked very hard because he had a lot of students and a very lively class. So he had that balance. I'm surmising, so I may be getting myself into trouble. What he's doing, involved in the chamber music here now, coordinating it, and so on … but also has the summer thing in Italy, which he and Meikui, his wife, run. I've participated in that, and that always takes a lot of energy, a lot of coordinating, a lot of work. A kind of enthusiasm too. He's been doing that in the summers for quite a long time. Not only his own, but even before that he was doing various festivals. Mack's a live one … he's a live one.

UPDIKE Could you talk about Sol Joseph?

HAMPTON Sure. Well, I didn't know Sol that much. Again, he was earlier, I think. I can remember him from those earlier times, from the '60s, or the '50s. He was teaching. You just had the feeling he was a solid kind of guy, he was doing his work and was one of these serious teachers, giving these – it might not have been so flashy or so popular as somebody who was more of a performer, because he was dealing with more of the theoretical and serious sides of the study of music in the classes. You had the feeling he was a very solid person who was doing his thing, and probably giving the students a really good education.

UPDIKE And could you talk about Andrew Imbrie?

HAMPTON Sure. Andrew I knew quite well, in fact we commissioned a trio from him, a wonderful trio. I knew him of course more at Berkeley, at the University of California, and I believe that his students at the Conservatory, they'd go over to Berkeley. So he didn't have so much presence around the Conservatory, but I do know he was a very serious teacher, and a good teacher, so the Conservatory was lucky to have him in terms of somebody who was a live, active composer who had a national reputation, and a somewhat international reputation too – especially in Asia – and who was giving them some really good compositional direction and support.

UPDIKE Would you talk about Elinor Armer?

HAMPTON Sure well, Elly I knew from the time she was a student at Mills. Mills was my first college job, that would have been late '50s and '60s. I can't remember exactly when Elinor arrived there, but she was a live one – again, you could always tell where she was because there was some kind of energy going on, and liveliness. She had that real spark of enthusiasm. She had been a very good student of Darius Milhaud, and of course of Kirchner too, but particularly of Milhaud. First she wrote a duo for Nathan and myself, and then she wrote a trio for the Francesco Trio, so she's a very lively and fine composer. We played her duo on the East Coast and it made quite a splash with the musicians and with some of the people who heard it. They felt here was a talent to be really taken note of.

UPDIKE And could you talk about Paul Hersh?

HAMPTON Well, Paul I knew of course from back in the '60s when he was with the Lenox Quartet. And then he was part of getting us to Grinnell College, when we replaced the Lenox Quartet. I guess during the '60s I had actually played the Schubert *Cello Quintet* with the Lenox Quartet, so that would have been the first time I actually played with Paul, although I mentioned already earlier that even though we didn't meet, I had been across the auditorium from him at the Casals festival in 1951 – so that was extraordinary. I didn't know that, I just happened to be showing Paul the picture once, because his father was first violist, and he looked up and said "Oh, that's me!" And then of course when we came back from Grinnell, we came back in 1972 – Paul had come I think the year before – from then on we collegially did things. We often invited him to be a guest with the Francesco Trio – we played piano quartets. All

through the years, at the Conservatory of course, and Stanford and other places as well, we worked with Paul. Paul was always such an interesting, alive guy with ideas and enthusiasm and he still is, very much. I consider him a very important friend and colleague because he's always supportive and enthusiastic. I just called him the other day about something that I had a question about and he really gave me some very good advice. I really value him as a musician and as a person and a friend. And also he's had some wonderful students over the years. I know, because I've played with some of them. I'm playing with one of his students now: Julio Elizalde came to Juilliard after he'd done his undergraduate work here at the Conservatory. I'm playing with him quite a bit on the East Coast now. That's just one of many that Paul had that turned out to be really first class. First class musicians, absolutely. He's one of these musicians also who talks about music very well. Nathan did, too; not all of us have that talent. Some of us, it would be better if we just stayed behind our instrument. We can do it because we have to at various times, but Paul has that gift of being able to communicate that way as well.

UPDIKE I know that we've talked about Richard Howe, but would you like to add any personal memories?

HAMPTON Well, the connections with Richard, of course – we knew him first at Grinnell because he was the chairman there, of the music department, when we first arrived. Again, he and his colleague there had been the ones to first have the idea of getting a string quartet to Grinnell College, which would bring that much more life to the college. These were the early days of residencies in this country. Richard had been a pianist, he had gone to Juilliard and to Eastman – or maybe it was Eastman and then Juilliard – so he had been a performer. He had that sense of having groups in colleges and of course we are appreciative of that concept – we were lucky, we were in the early days of that. It makes a huge difference. If a group doesn't have a residency, or some kind of support, it's really hard to stay together. It's almost impossible just to make a living from concerts. If you have a residency it means your work is coordinated, so you have the chance to develop as a group. So I really appreciated that concept. Of course when the Dean – there was a dean opening here – Paul was already here, I think. Paul must have been one of the ones who strongly recommended that Dick come here and be Dean. He had a good sense of being an administrator, too. He really did. With Milton, I know he was a big supporter of getting the trio here – he may have been actually the stronger supporter in the beginning because he knew our work, he knew what we could do in an institution, whereas we were a little more unknown to Milton. I have a feeling that Dick was our supporter in getting us to come as a trio in residence at the Conservatory. But Milton was very supportive too. I really appreciate – it's the efforts, the way things come together, it's like chamber music – we need all the different parts. Things come together because of the support and vision of many people. We all need each other very much. So I really appreciate Dick's role in that. He was good, he was really very good.

UPDIKE Colin Murdoch came to the Conservatory in 1988. He became President in 1992. Could you talk a little bit about Colin?

HAMPTON Well, sure. He came as Dean. That must have been right at the tail-end of Chamber Music West. I know we went ten years, we may have a little more. We started in 1977….

UPDIKE Chamber Music West went until 1992.

HAMPTON Oh, did it go that long? Oh, my goodness. So he saw some of those last years, while he was Dean. It's interesting: Colin came, he had been at Lawrence Conservatory, and we were very enthusiastic about him because he seemed so good and solid. He'd been a violinist – even though he had dedicated himself to administration at that point – but he'd been a violinist and a teacher. He was a person – interestingly enough – he was a person that really understood how to listen. In fact it could be a little disconcerting in those early days before we got to know him very well because he would ask the questions he would want us to talk about, what we thought, and get everyone's opinions – but then you wouldn't know what he thought about what you said. You were making your stand – and that's not a bad thing, to be faced with that. One felt good working with him as a dean – as a faculty person – going in and talking about things. You felt it was a good open-door policy and you could really discuss things. By that time we were definitely full-time at the Conservatory with the trio. Really immersed in our own work. We were working very closely with everything, and it was a very active period, we were teaching up a storm. Colin – one could trust him, he was such a solid and personal kind of guy. In a quieter way you felt that here was someone who was really, really solid who was going to be behind things and taking things seriously.

Now, this was already after he was President, but I can remember he had – I don't think it had happened very much before – but I was invited to be on a retreat. It was quite a few of us representing different aspects of the Conservatory to come together for a weekend. I can't remember where we went, but we stayed there. With questions about the Conservatory, the questions had to do with: were we outgrowing our building; how was the Conservatory going to grow; and all those things. And of course, you get a whole lot of musicians, you're going to get a whole lot of opinions. And he did. I'm sure it was all recorded and duly taken down. He asked lots of questions, there were a lot of different kinds of sessions, questions and opinions. The consensus was that yes, if we were going to move on, not only was our building beginning to get worn-out, but we were also bursting at the seams. Well, Colin took the responsibility for getting out to see what could be done. It took, I don't know how long a period, but I do know he explored so many different avenues of what could be done. Quite a few of them [he] came back to us to talk about – the Presidio, this other place, and that kind of thing. He went and really explored it. He really did the leg-work. What's interesting is that having done the same kind of thing, building a whole building at Lawrence, he had had that experience, which is a good thing. I really hand it to him, what he's done, what he's been able to do for the Conservatory. Of course I left before we moved into this building, the new building, so of course I have some nostalgic feelings about the old building, but the truth is what this building has done has put the Conservatory on a different level, and on the map in terms of a more professional level. It's very good for the students to be this close to the Opera House, Davies Hall, the center of the arts here in San Francisco. To be close to what professionals are doing, and what you need to be doing, and how to prepare yourself if you have any intentions of being a professional. So I think that to have accomplished this – to have gone out and not only spent days and weeks and so on just figuring out about this place – and how is it going to be done – and how is the money going to be raised – it's huge! It's huge. It's something that most of us can't even contemplate. Step by step

he did it, and I really have to hand it to him because that shows such a character. I really hand him so much for this accomplishment.

On the other side of things, what happened personally for us, with the chamber music program, was, Chamber Music West had probably lived its cycle. Although it was still going. He decided – he pretty much made this decision himself – I'm sure he spent quite a lot of time thinking it through – that we [Chamber Music West] were in June, and even though it benefited some of our students, our chamber music majors particularly, it wasn't benefiting the students during the year because the concerts weren't happening while the students were in residence here. So he thought that it would be better to bring some of the guests and have a series of concerts during the year. Well, this kind of evolved … first, it didn't evolve into what it is now, but it evolved into a whole series of concerts which were – the role was a little bit the same to what we had in Chamber Music West – it was the faculty and the older players, along with some of the part-time teachers here who were in the Symphony, so they were professionals, and then some of our best students. We had quite a series of concerts, I think it was about eight a year, which is a substantial amount. He put the support that had been going into Chamber Music West and turned it over to this series that went through the year. Of course it was very much connected with the chamber music major.

By the way, I forgot to say that with the beginnings of Chamber Music West, this was way back, was when Milton first wanted to start it, he went to Mr. Getty, who gave real seed-money that made the difference. We're so lucky and fortunate, Getty had taken some classes or lessons here in composition so there was that personal connection with the Conservatory. These were the kinds of connections and associations that Milton had developed over the years.

The other thing I wanted to say about the chamber music major – this was later – what happened, when it started, it made a real jump-up in the attitude of some of the younger students. Because if you have – every year we'd usually have two groups that had the chamber music major – they would be rehearsing very seriously. We'd usually give them practice rooms where they were – one would be walking down the hall and you'd hear them practicing seriously. This made such a difference to the total attitude of some of the younger kids who were just learning how to play chamber music, learning how to get together, learning how to rehearse together. You had a pyramid, so that the top ones that were the most advanced and the most serious, they were working very seriously – this affected the whole pyramid. It really made a huge difference to the whole chamber music classes, and classes. In our classes – they're still doing this, I visited this year, in fact, it's a terrific class – where all of the chamber music students and all of the chamber music faculty come together once a week – it's in the concert hall, and about four works are played every time. Somebody other than the regular coach leads the discussion, often other faculty pitch in but one person is responsible for giving a mini-coaching – it's not a whole lot of time. It gives the students a platform, a chance to play. And it gives the other students a chance to not only hear their peers, but to hear a great deal of chamber music. So it's a great class and it's one of the things that's evolved. It started right from the beginning – they've had it every week from the time I coordinated the chamber music for sure.

But anyway, I've gotten away from Colin. With chamber music he's always been a supporter. And still is. We've really appreciated that. It can make a difference – everybody has their own

interests and I'm just glad for us that Colin very much has had the interest in chamber music.

UPDIKE Would you like to take a few minutes to talk about some of your former students from the Conservatory?

HAMPTON Well, let's see. There's so many, I don't know … I wish I had kept a book with all the students over the years, because there have been so many. So many of them are out in the profession and working. From all the schools I've been, because I've taught forever … a really long time. I have to say that in my life, what has been a real joy – you know, I've been traveling around the country quite a bit and playing these mini residencies, where you go into a college or a university and you do your thing, you give a master class, a chamber music class, you play a mini concert, you're just there for a few days in residence. Very often I will have either been invited by a former student who has the job at the institution, or see them, they come and visit me. It's been an absolute joy to meet up with students twenty years later, or thirty years, who are contributing to their communities, getting on with their families and their lives, doing what they should be doing. Because the work that they do here at the Conservatory or at any school is the beginning. It's supposedly giving them the foundation and the tools for being able to move on in their lives. It's a lifelong process: as a musician with any luck you go on growing and developing. And finding out what you like to do, what you can do well, all the things that one needs to do to keep growing and developing.

It's a real joy to be meeting up with and working with former students. That's what I really, really, really like. When they're no longer a student I can become really a friend – not that I wasn't a friend before – but it's a different relationship. What's interesting – there's such a difference – here on the West Coast I'm always called Bonnie, from the beginning. On the East Coast it's always Ms. Hampton. What's really funny is with some of my East Coast students, after they've graduated, I start insisting that they call me Bonnie, and some of them can't. They still have to call me Ms. Hampton. Whereas there was one student here who was applying to Juilliard as a freshman. Her teacher had been a student of mine about twenty years ago, so it was a grandchild, I'd suppose you call it. She was doing very well and I was encouraging because she had the potential for getting into Juilliard and she did. But at first she was in the hallways and was calling me Bonnie there, and I said "I guess maybe you shouldn't do that right now. Later…." It's very funny, it's a difference of code. But I have to say, our California, or Conservatory, style, I like it. It shows no less respect or seriousness. My sense is that as a teacher my job is to try to give the tools, the foundation, what a person does with it that's their business. My feeling is whether one goes on into the profession or not – if you've learned about music and if you've learned to do as well as you are able to do, to already be at the Conservatory, you've accomplished a lot. If you've learned how to learn … as far as I'm concerned, if you need to learn how to do something else for a bit, there's no reason why you can't do it. You have the capacity – the understanding of how to learn. But with music, and I've said this to students sometimes, it's not easy. It's sometimes not clear, and people develop at different rates. I've said "You can have music all your lives and you can keep developing and growing as a cellist, as a musician, but you may need to earn your living in another way for awhile." That's the reality of it, and that's okay. It used to be the older style, and I've heard some of the older teachers – ones that I've admired and respected – saying "Look kid, you haven't got it, give up." I think that's tough. It might be on some levels that their goals are unrealistic. But life teaches one that, and

it's important to have a mindset that doesn't say "This is over" – it just says you've got to look at the larger picture. I guess that's what I've tried to – there are many things one tries to give students along the way – but I think what is really important – we're so lucky to have music – and if I've given the students a sense of a love of the music and the life-giving quality of music, then there's not a heck of a lot else I can do. That's what it's about, I think. Sometimes in the middle of it, it's not easy to remember that. One sees as one goes into the profession, and some of them that are very successful get into orchestras and so on, and then get burned out. It's really important not to let that burn out really take hold. Somehow one has to take the responsibility of going and recharging the batteries. We all have to do that, I've gone off the rails, I've gotten discouraged, absolutely. We have to go and find some of that magic, some of that life-giving energy that is in music inherently, and one's relationship to it.

I haven't talked about specific students, I could but that's not I think the purpose of this moment. I'll just talk about the fact that I think they are a terrific bunch. I've enjoyed every single one of them. Every single one. Some of them are a bigger challenge than others, you know. That's the interesting thing, I meet up with somebody twenty years later who gave me a really hard time those twenty years ago, and they have a really positive feeling about the lessons, so "Okay, well, we tried!"

UPDIKE We've talked about this a bit, but could you talk about the Conservatory's role in music education and how it differs from a place like Juilliard?

HAMPTON That's a loaded question, I'd better be careful. Let's see, what did you say – the Conservatory's place in….?

UPDIKE The Conservatory's role in music education, and how it differs from the culture, or the mission, of Juilliard.

HAMPTON Juilliard or some of the eastern universities or colleges. Well, you know, each school has its own character. It's interesting, I had this sense even a long time ago, before I was connected with Juilliard, but … there are a couple of things. I'll just say what my feeling was quite a while ago – was that I appreciated or believed in the fact that our students here don't necessarily have the pressure or the sense of competition – there's a natural human sense of competition probably – but it's not a word out here at all, at the Conservatory or even on the West Coast. The East Coast people think we're really laid back, which is silly because we're always terribly busy. But anyway, my feeling is that it's allowed students to develop and blossom in a much more natural kind of way. With a different sense of time. I've seen that especially with a teacher like Margaret [Rowell]. There are some teachers that you have to have accomplished this by this time and that by that time. But Margaret would work with students, and we all benefited from that, would work with us in our own rhythm, in our own time. I saw that very much on the other side of the fence, when I was teaching on the faculty with her, with some students who were very talented, some things they would excel at and be extraordinary. A wonderful flare. But with some of the basics, they were nowhere. At the juries there'd be questions. With her charm and her persuasion she'd talk the kid out of any difficulty, and the kid would pass. By the time they became seniors they had gotten it all together and they were so much further along because it had been a natural process. That was Margaret, and she was a

genius of a teacher. But I also saw with many students that they were really able to blossom and develop. They were sometimes the kinds of students, if they'd been putting the pressure on, their sensitivity might not have survived. I've also seen with some of those same students, when they go east to go on to school or start trying to work in the profession, very quickly they get themselves together in the way that they have to be able to compete. You pull yourself in, you get your blinders on. We've all experienced this, where you get yourself focused – even the way you look, the way you put yourself together – it's different. Very quickly you can do that, that just takes a little bit of effort and awareness. A lot of our students have done extremely well when they've gone into the market place and the larger world. It's a whole direction that I believe in, because there are some students who have wanted to develop themselves as musicians who might not have had the opportunity to in another environment.

Now, to put it on the other side. What I found at Juilliard was a terrific pool of talent. I've always felt that there was a very good pool of talent here at the Conservatory. Some students who were on par with students anywhere. The only difference between the Conservatory and Juilliard – since you made this specific comparison – is that the cream is thicker there. They have a bigger pool. We have 180 students applying for maybe 20 slots – this is just cellists. Forget it with pianists, it's 400 or 500. Fortunately the students try out everywhere, so they get somewhere, most of them, I suppose. The fact is that there is a very big pool of talent to work from. That can be very exciting, very good. There is definitely more pressure, more competition. Within a studio, and I certainly tried to create it when I was there, there can be a sense of support – supporting each other and being responsible for each other, and taking care of each other in terms of development. That's an important thing to try to create with a studio because otherwise … I remember I took two students who had just graduated … one was an undergraduate and the other had gotten a master's in chamber music and they have a one-year graduate diploma … so the two of them went and they were some of the best students here. They were at a crossroads here, so I wasn't taking anything away that wouldn't have been a natural movement. They were recognized there as being two of the best students – they did very, very well. But discussing things later, at the end of the semester or the year – we were talking as a studio – I had a bunch of freshmen there who were a little overwhelmed with what they needed to do; they said they wouldn't have wanted to come to a place like Juilliard as freshmen, but still, a lot of kids do and they survive. That's youth. The ones who have come through the pre-college there are used to it, they can hit the ground running and that does help them. The others do okay, most of them, I think. Not all of them, it's tough – it's not only New York City, it's Juilliard. But also the thing that's very positive in a way is that you're faced with reality. You see right away what you need to do, if you have any intentions on a certain level to enter the profession. What happens is these students probably reach toward their potential more. That's something I would like to see more here. This statement is not fair, and I could be called on it, but it is really important for a person to be really aware and striving towards their potential. These are the formative years, these are the years where you get your foundation, you face the reality of what it is you need to do to develop yourself. I've seen students there – anywhere, I suppose – within a short amount of time get the basic skills that give them the technical foundation to develop themselves for all of their lives. Some of them stop there … they get their chops, their techniques, and then that's it. That's sad, because they figure, "This is enough, now." It's all these different environments, and these different visions. One place though, in relation to Juilliard, that I can definitely give kudos to, is the chamber department at the Conservatory. While there's some very good chamber music

going on – the Juilliard Quartet auditions and coaches groups, so there are some good players and some very good work – I had some groups at the beginning when I was there – I had so many cello students that I took some chamber music because otherwise I would have had an identity crisis, if I wasn't doing something in chamber music. These kids would come – they played well enough that they could come each time and play perfectly well – but I was having to say the same thing each week because they just weren't doing anything with it. It's not fair to say this always happens, but sometimes it happens, that they played their instruments well enough that they didn't have to go that extra mile to work things out more carefully – but on the other hand I did have about three or four groups there over the nine years that I was there, that were very good and very serious. In fact, one of them because the Afiara Quartet. They came here after I worked with them at Juilliard and they were chamber music majors. They went on and got a couple of other residencies, and also got the Juilliard assistantship, then management and won quite a few prizes. They really made a very good professional start. There was another group that I found there that I could tell was serious. We worked very hard and they did a wonderful Tully Hall performance as young students. That can happen, and it has happened, because there's the potential in terms of the talent. But it's a different environment. I really think that each one has its role to fulfill. There are certainly things – that's the case here – there are some things that are so good, that you just wish were better. That's the frustration anyplace, and that was also one of my frustrations at Juilliard. The kids practice like crazy – a lot of them anyway – you should see the fourth floor with all the practice rooms, it's like a beehive. But the vision is more narrow. I think it's really important to have both – to work very, very hard, to have a sense of reality about how you need to prepare yourselves for the profession. At the same time you have to remember why you're doing it. You're simply getting the skills to serve the music and grow musically. That's the problem: the kids are playing better and better, they're getting more and more skilled, but music takes time. You have to live with it, you have to grow with it. There are some works I know I haven't gotten to the end of. I keep feeling like I'm getting a little further, I'm scratching the surface a little more deeply, but there are some of the masterworks that you just know there's more there. That's both wonderful, and it's to be struggled for.

UPDIKE We've talked about this a little bit already throughout the interview, but when you are looking at the Conservatory today, could you talk a little bit about how its character or atmosphere has changed over the past sixty years, from when you started in the 1950s?

HAMPTON Oh, Lord. Is that all? You know, I have a feeling it hasn't really changed in character a whole lot. I don't know so well now, as I did then. It was a very, very small school then. In the days when we were most involved, which was during my time with the Francesco Trio, we were very central to it. There were a lot of very good things going on, in terms of activity and even struggle, to try to achieve and get better. That was the most active. And now these last nine years I've been away but I've been back as a guest with the Chamber Music Masters program. By the way, I didn't mention but that was after Chamber Music West – then Colin, probably it was Colin, had the idea of bringing in guests for Chamber Music Masters now. So it's taken a different direction, but I've had the privilege of being a part of that, which I've always enjoyed. So there is a nucleus of the chamber music faculty and the chamber music majors and the guest that comes in. In that sense I've had a little bit of association over these past nine years that I've been away. I participated in that three times, which I've been delighted to be

invited to. I have to say when I've visited the chamber music class on Thursday afternoons I've really enjoyed that a lot. The last time when I was here in October I came in and quietly sat at the back – and I thought, "Boy, this is a terrific class." Because here are some of the youngest, inexperienced kids playing – it's still on a very good level. And yet everybody is there, participating, a part of it. That didn't happen at Juilliard – for a while they tried to do chamber music master classes. They would get one faculty member in, the students would come and play, and would leave when they were done. They weren't interested in hearing their peers, or other people. Even though they were told that they were supposed to be there, there wasn't the inherent larger interest. They had a really different attitude. Here they have no choice, they have to be there. It's a good thing, because they're hearing a lot of music, they're hearing each other, there's a sense of support and excitement about it. I remember back in the times that I was coordinating it – Thursday afternoon, four to six. In the evenings you'd hear all kinds of people, all kinds of groups rehearsing. They were excited about it. That's the spirit and enthusiasm that the Conservatory still has. I don't know what is going on everywhere, but I have a feeling that is still part of it. In that sense that essence has been part of the nature of it.

I just want to say one thing. I think with any institution, what it is has to do with who's in it. Who are the students, who is the faculty, who are the administrators? Who is the staff? What is their character and attitude? Those are the things that make up the Conservatory. I always felt that with my class and studio – here and at Juilliard, anywhere. That each year it was a different personality and it needed to find itself. You see, this is also where a building can make a difference. I was complimenting this building on its positive qualities, of where it's put the Conservatory. I think it has inherently, some of the same challenges that Juilliard has. What happens at Juilliard, is they have all these nice wide hallways and studies. Everybody's very busy. When I first got there I had quite a few colleagues that I knew. I knew the Juilliard Quartet guys and I knew some other people. But there were an awful lot of people I didn't know. Coming from California I was used to meeting people and talking to people. At first I'd look hopefully at somebody, I should have just gone up and introduced myself – but sometimes I was waiting – and they'd kind of look at me like "What's wrong with her?" Even if I saw somebody that I knew, we'd be going in the opposite direction in the hallway, we'd say "Hello, how are you?" and we'd go rushing off to our studio and hermetically sealed in the room. Often we'd go the whole day without seeing any one knew. They had very nice Christmas parties after the final faculty meeting at the end of the semester. We'd go down and there would be a very nice spread of food and all the faculty would be there … also from the drama department and the dance department, but the music department is the biggest department at Juilliard. And at first I'd kind of wander around – now and then I'd stop and chat if I knew somebody – but I'd wander around because the groups of people knew each other – again, this is my own personality – somebody else would have had a very different way of managing it – but I was feeling they were slightly enclosed, so I'd talk to people and then I'd take off. But one time after I'd been there about two or three years, it was very funny, there was a place where they had some tables. So I got a snack for myself and went and sat there. There may have been one person, and I said "Do you mind if I join you" just in a casual way. And a couple of other people came, they right away introduced themselves – from the drama department, the dance department, and they were very friendly and very nice. And I thought, "Well, I'm just going to hang out with the dance and drama department from now on – forget about these musicians!" It was very funny. But my point is that even though people would get to know each other, it was very rare – I never saw the Juilliard Quartet

guys at those parties, and very rarely any studio faculty – there was not that interaction. The reason I'm saying that is I think there's probably an importance of collegial exchange. That sense of talking to each other some. I think that in the building – it was very easy at the old Conservatory because there was the hallway and there was no way of getting back and forth – even if we were busy and running around we would do it [bump into each other]. This is not so essential – I suppose you could say, "Well, what has this got to do with teaching a student how to play." But I think that that kind of lively exchange among faculty – that sense of being able to communicate – that was very easy at the other building. I think that in terms of character, I hope that the Conservatory now has enough sense of collegial exchange. That's also where one can get stimulation, and also a sense of community. I think a sense of community among musicians and within an institution is a very important thing. That sense of – yes, we're all working together, we're all doing what we need to do as musicians. We have to go off into our little rooms to practice, nobody else can practice for us, but we also need each other very much as musicians. I think this is something that inherently, by the nature of a building, can make a difference. And I think it's really important whether it's built in or there's the sense of effort made. Some personalities, some people just are better at that than others. I wasn't so good at it. I'm just saying it makes a difference. You could question, "Does that really make a difference?" but I think it does. I think it makes a difference to the character of a place, and the feeling of a place. The sense of a certain dignity, which this building has, a certain importance, to be taken seriously, a certain distinction, a certain sense of elegance and style, and I like that in the studios I've been in of some of my colleagues. Some of them very much personalize them. It means that a student goes into a certain environment and gets a certain feeling. These are all important things that one takes away. One of my students, she was a Columbia/Juilliard student, I was having a little problem, they did a lot of building my third or fourth year – they were adding to the building and some of our rooms were shunted around and were pretty terrible, with a lot of noise from jackhammers and things like that. This student came in, she had done some work at the Paris Conservatory – one of these big old institutions, and she said, defending me, "Here you are, a teacher at Juilliard," – it was a terrible room, it was freezing cold – "And [this other professor] has a beautiful piano, paintings on the wall…" she was getting all irate for me. Well, that can make a difference. It shouldn't make a difference in the content of what you do, but it makes a difference in how one is addressing what one is doing. I think anyone, again back to Colin, anyone who builds a school, I hand it to them. It's a courageous act. But it is, in a way, every single person's responsibility too. Every single person can make a difference. I'll go back to Margaret Rowell. Wherever she went she would make a difference. It was just in her attitude, her way of being, her appreciation of people and seeing the best in people. That meant she got the best out of them. It's those kinds of attitudes that make a place, I think. That makes a difference in the character. It's an ongoing thing. It's a living entity.

UPDIKE In your opinion, how has the musical culture of the Bay Area changed from when you were a student in the late '40s and early '50s to today? Just in general.

HAMPTON Well, we've touched on a lot of that I think, in the sense that it was a much smaller town. One taps in when one taps in. It was an older culture that was here, the older musicians that represented the Symphony. And the cultural life was around the Symphony, and the Opera too. I can't remember exactly when it was but all of a sudden it felt like it was such a young orchestra, and it's true, a lot of people had gotten to retirement from the Symphony and de

Waart brought in a lot of new people. I've been out of the loop for quite a few years now. There was one period of time we haven't talked about, there hasn't been a need to, but in the '60s and '70s I was very involved in contemporary music. In a way involved in the avant-garde and involved in the cutting edge of things, where the scene was, in the center of it. Of course that was very alive to me, and I felt that it was very important. I don't have a sense of what's going on in contemporary music now, but of course it is going on. There used to be lots of groups, and I'm sure there still are, and performances are still going on, but I'm not a part of them anymore so I don't have a sense of it, but I think that because things were smaller, more centralized, I think that one had the sense of more unity of things whereas now I think there are a lot of these efforts going on but I think it's more fragmented. I see that in the cello world, and it has to do with the personalities involved. There's some very good work going on, I have no problem with that, but it feels like everybody's working in their own corner. In fact, it's what I was talking about with the Conservatory too. Everybody's working in their own corner. If everyone could just come together – I think the cello department is doing well in that way, they're bringing things together very well. Around the larger Bay Area there are a lot of good efforts going on. At the Symphony, wonderful things. Thomas – what he's done there is terrific. And of course, the Opera is such an institution. And there are the groups – the Alexander Quartet is going strong and has its own direction and is able to be here as a resident quartet. A lot of our players are doing excellent things. I think the whole field of chamber music, and that's not just here, there's so much more diversity, so much more crossover. It used to be string quartets, trios, the solid European chamber music and contemporary music. Now I think it's becoming defused.

I feel that careers, also, with the whole electronic direction are really changing. The ways of making a living or a life in music, that's changing too. I always knew I wanted a life in music and I had a sense that I was happy in my life in music. When you get to New York right away, and I'd been in New York long enough, from the '60s on, working there almost every year, or playing there. Not only New York – Washington, Boston, we used to play every year in Boston in the '70s and '80s. I always had a feeling people were thinking about career. It had to do with career. Here, I think it's more a life in music. I honestly don't think about career in music so much here. That's just semantics – it's just a word, in a way. But it's a concept as well. The direction – I don't know where it's going to go. It's certainly not going to be the way it was when I was growing up, in developing your career or your life in music however you want to call it. It's not going to be like that. Some may choose to follow the old models, and they may be very successful, but I think that it's really going to develop in a new way. And I'm not sure how. That's for the younger generations to take care of and find, just as we did too. Everyone has to find their own way. And it does make a difference where you are, I think the geography of it changes. One thing I've always told students – of course as musicians we always gravitate to the centers because that's where other musicians are and where the action is. But we're a large country, and there's a lot to be done still in this country. Still a lot of pioneering work. When I think back to what Ada and Lil did here at the Conservatory, they were pioneers. Margaret was a pioneer. And of course there were people before them who were doing things too, but they had a vision and created something new. Traveling around the country with my trio we had the chance to play in many, many, many different communities. You can tell the difference – whether there's somebody there in that community. It could be somebody, it could be some group who want it, who are creating it. And there's talent everywhere. That's not an exclusive commodity. It's there if it's nurtured, if it's developed. You can tell the difference. You can tell where you go

into a place if the civic-minded people have said "Oh, well, we have to have a concert series" and so they buy a concert series. But if there's not that core of people and students who are really excited about developing it themselves it's a really different feeling. They treat you very well, you go to the concert, you are taken care of, sent back to your hotel, you go back to the airport afterward, but it's not the same as an exchange you have if they're really excited. That's for individuals to do, and there have always been people who are willing. We saw that very much in Alaska. That was back quite a while ago. That made the difference there – talk about pioneer and frontier. But there are plenty of places in this country where it's exactly the same thing. There's always fruition. There's the possibility of development for a person. I think it's an important social responsibility. We're given wonderful training, we're given the skills. What are we going to do with them for society? It's just an idealistic question, it's a question of responsibility too. I'm really glad we had a period of time in a small liberal arts college in a small town in the Midwest where fifty miles on either side was the place we'd get to a city. Because you find out that if you have things you can do or want to try to do, you can really make a difference to a community. Sometimes it's a little harder in a larger city, or in a larger institution because you get a little bit pigeon-holed. You do this, and someone else will do that, and so on. I'm getting a little off the track of your question but I think that again, back to that central thing – it has to do with the people involved. I feel optimistic. Yes, it's going to change. People may say "Well, it's not the way it used to be." Of course it's not the way it used to be. Yes, there are things that are happening now that I'm really not interested in and I don't want to spend time with, but that's my choice. It doesn't mean necessarily that it's good or bad, it's a lot of different directions. What is important is that those that still want some of the core, older music – or newer music too of various kinds – they need to also spend time and energy with that. I think there's plenty of room for everybody, I really do. Our society takes fads here and there, and says "Oh, this is wonderful, that's wonderful." Well, yes, the things with value and real life to them will survive, I think.

UPDIKE Thank you so much, Bonnie.

HAMPTON Well, it's been my pleasure.