

## Chapter 5

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### Philadelphia and Rochester

There have always been two distinct types of students: the 'parrots,' who passed on the exact tradition; and the creative geniuses, who absorbed the traditions and added to and enriched them. In the latter case, the basic purity and sanctity of the music remain, but ornamentation and new beauty are added. And that is why we say that, no matter how great a genius one is, without a very deep and proper training, one's contribution is meaningless and the effect of the music is lost or fleeting—the virtuosity of the playing shows no inner depth or tradition.<sup>1</sup>

Ravi Shankar

Ravi Shankar's reflection on students of Hindustani music acknowledges the importance of their deep understanding of the musical tradition at hand. With years of intense training, students are able to use this knowledge as a platform for their own musical expression. But as Shankar notes, some musicians merely repeat what has been done before, whereas others carry the tradition forward. The same is true in Western music where some follow established paths while others create new ones. Reflecting on Nexus in this context, one would have to say that the ensemble represents the latter. Nexus has indeed created a new path for percussion; however, its roots lie deep in tradition. These roots have many branches and the largest ones stem from the musical traditions of Philadelphia and Rochester. Four of the members of Nexus trained as orchestral musicians in these cities, and it is from here that they derive much of their musical aesthetics and concepts of sound.<sup>2</sup>

While the previous chapters have focused on the social and musical aspects of Nexus, this chapter draws attention to the historical foundations of the ensemble. It is in this chapter that I wish to show how certain musical aesthetics and concepts of sound developed over a long period through a social and musical dialogue between musicians in both Philadelphia and Rochester. These musical aesthetics and concepts of sound were then passed down from one generation to another, and eventually on to some of the members of Nexus. Throughout the transmission process it is evident that tradition is not static, but is rather a living, constantly evolving cultural expression formed through interacting agents. It is not a recitation of established discourse, but rather a retelling of the past.<sup>3</sup>

#### *Nexus' connection to the Philadelphia Orchestra*

Four of the members of Nexus were influenced by the musical traditions of the Philadelphia Orchestra. As discussed in Chapter 2, both Wyre and Cahn were raised in Philadelphia and

<sup>1</sup> Ravi Shankar, *My Music, My Life*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1968, p. 14.

<sup>2</sup> Although Engelman grew up in Baltimore, Maryland, he had no connection with the Philadelphia Orchestra during his youth. His main contact with these traditions came through his work as principal percussionist of the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra during the 1960s. By that time, however, he was already a professional percussionist and had developed his own ideas on playing. These traditions had no bearing on Craden, who had no formal music education, and resided for most of his life in Buffalo, Los Angeles, and Toronto.

<sup>3</sup> Susan M. Felch, "In the chorus of others", p. 56.

studied with Fred Hinger during their formative years. Hartenberger studied with Hinger during his four years at the Curtis Institute of Music. During this period, Hartenberger continued lessons with Alan Abel and helped him with the percussion ensemble at Settlement Music School, of which Cahn was a member. Hartenberger continued to study with Abel during his master's degree at Catholic University. While Becker grew up close by in Allentown, Pennsylvania, he never took formal lessons with any of the members of the Philadelphia Orchestra. He did, however, attend many of the orchestra's concerts, and learnt from them through observation and listening rather than through personal contact. Becker also used the Philadelphia Orchestra recordings as his point of reference for learning the orchestral repertoire.<sup>4</sup>

Nexus' connection with the Philadelphia Orchestra is perhaps best illustrated by three events. The first is Charles Owen's recognition of the connection between Nexus and the Philadelphia Orchestra percussion section of the 1950 and '60s. As mentioned in Chapter 1, Owen acknowledged this connection in 1984 at a party in Ann Arbor, Michigan, when he announced to his guests: 'There will never be another Philadelphia Orchestra percussion section and there will never be another Nexus.'<sup>5</sup> This was the first time, to my knowledge, that the connection between Nexus and its members' teachers and mentors in the Philadelphia Orchestra had been publicly articulated, and as mentioned before, it came as a surprise to some of the members themselves. Hartenberger said that he was surprised to hear this comment, as he had not thought of a connection between the two before. He said Owen's comment made a big impact on him, as did Cahn.<sup>6</sup>

The second event occurred in 1990 when the Philadelphia Orchestra performed at Roy Thomson Hall in Toronto. This event drew my attention to how important the Philadelphia Orchestra was to the members of Nexus as four of them attended the concert.<sup>7</sup> It is extremely rare in Toronto to see so many members of Nexus in the same audience, especially for an orchestral concert. After the performance, Hartenberger held a reception at his home in Toronto for the Philadelphia Orchestra percussionists where the respect that Nexus held for these percussionists was clearly evident.<sup>8</sup>

The third event occurred in March 2001 when Nexus performed Takemitsu's *From me flows what you call Time* with the Philadelphia Orchestra. After an international career spanning thirty years, this occasion marked the 'coming home' of Nexus to Philadelphia. Friends, colleagues, and family of the members of Nexus and their teachers and mentors travelled from afar to Philadelphia to share the occasion. It was revealing to see that not only were these concerts important to the members of the group, but they were also important to all these people who had made such an effort to be there.

During the first concert in Philadelphia, Wyre took the opportunity to pay tribute to the four members of the orchestra's renowned percussion section of the 1950/1960s—Alan Abel, Michael Bookspan, Fred Hinger, and Charles Owen. In particular, he paid tribute to Hinger

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<sup>4</sup> Becker, Interview with author, 10 August 1999.

<sup>5</sup> Lesson with Hartenberger, 30 November 1995, Faculty of Music, University of Toronto.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid; Cahn, Interview with author, 5 July 2000.

<sup>7</sup> Becker, Engelman, Hartenberger, and Wyre attended this concert.

<sup>8</sup> Abel and Bookspan were still playing in the orchestra at that time and both attended Hartenberger's reception. It was surprising to find that after all these years, Hartenberger still called his teacher 'Mr. Abel.' When questioned about the formality of this form of address, Hartenberger said that he could never call him by his first name, even though Abel had invited him to do so.

who had planned to be there with his wife, but unfortunately, both had died just weeks before. Wyre acknowledged the families of Hinger and Owen who had flown in for the concerts and invited Abel and Bookspan to join him front stage. Both were playing in the orchestra—Bookspan in his usual capacity as principal percussionist and Abel returning for this event.<sup>9</sup> A large photo of these four percussionists, taken at Owen's party in 1984, was displayed centre stage (see Figure 16). Wyre remarked on the greatness of these players and the influence they had had, not only on Nexus, but also on many percussionists around the world.<sup>10</sup>

Wyre's speech not only confirmed Nexus' connection to Philadelphia, but also indirectly threw light on the fact that this connection took place decades ago. Sitting in the magnificent hall of the Academy of Music listening to the opening of Takemitsu's work, where the principal flutist took great liberty in shaping the sound and phrases, it was evident that this orchestra had long encouraged a creative approach to music. It was here in the Academy that the Philadelphia style of percussion playing emerged, and it was the great fortune of the members of Nexus to hear four of its remarkable percussionists playing together during that period.



Figure 17. The Philadelphia Orchestra Percussion Section 1959–1967.  
From left to right: Alan Abel, Michael Bookspan, Fred Hinger, and Charles Owen.  
The photo was taken at Charles Owen's house in 1984 after a Nexus concert at the Percussive Arts Society International Convention in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

These three events illustrate the different dimensions of Nexus' connection to the Philadelphia Orchestra. The first confirms the ensemble's musical and aesthetic connection, as observed by Owen. The second demonstrates the members' social ties with the percussionists in the orchestra, and their deep respect for their teachers and mentors. The third shows that Nexus' connection with the orchestra is acknowledged by a wider community, as many people travelled from afar to hear Nexus perform with the orchestra.

<sup>9</sup> Abel requested to perform in this concert. (Alan Abel, Interview with author, 14 March 2001).

<sup>10</sup> Wyre also made a plea to the local government to support music in the school system as it had done in his day, when thousands of school children had benefited from the extensive public school music program.

In order to understand Nexus' connection to the orchestra's percussion tradition, we must look at the primary institutions through which the transmission of knowledge occurred. What is remarkable is the way that creativity and exploration have been at the fore. By untangling all the connections and influences, we gain insight into how each generation has inherited the knowledge of its predecessors and creatively shaped it to its own musical environment and sensibilities.

### *Origins of the Philadelphia Orchestra percussion tradition*

The following discussion focuses on three distinct generations of percussionists and conductors in the Philadelphia Orchestra. The first begins with the founding of the orchestra in 1900 and the recruitment of its first conductor, Fritz Scheel. One could argue that Scheel was partly responsible for creating the Philadelphia percussion tradition, as he invited Oscar Schwar, the legendary German timpanist, to join its ranks in 1903. After Scheel's death in 1907, Carl Pohlig took the helm, but it was not until 1912 when Leopold Stokowski replaced him that we see significant development in the percussion section, and thus the emergence of a second generation. Stokowski picked up where Scheel had left off five years earlier. His sensitivity to sound brought a new dimension into the orchestra, and his interest in percussion and the music of non-Western cultures laid the foundation for percussionists to take an exploratory approach towards their music making. Benjamin Podemski joined the percussion section during this second period, and the combination of Schwar and Podemski under Stokowski's baton raised the standard of playing to new heights. The third generation includes the four musicians in the percussion section of the 1950s and '60s mentioned above. By this time, Eugene Ormandy had taken over from Stokowski. Rather than making drastic changes to the orchestra, Ormandy chose to build upon Stokowski's work, and in so doing consolidated the sound of the orchestra and its percussion section.

It was during this third period that four of the members of Nexus were attending Philadelphia Orchestra concerts in the Academy of Music, listening to and absorbing the sound and musical aesthetics of their teachers and mentors. More importantly, they witnessed the coming together of these four creative percussionists who, despite diverse backgrounds, formed a unified section that was at the leading edge of their profession. Here was what may be called an older Nexus, imbedded in the heart of the Philadelphia Orchestra, creating its distinctive voice through exploration and cooperation. Owen observed a link between the older generation and Nexus in 1984, and this chapter provides the historical context in which the transmission of this musical knowledge occurred.

The discussion will focus on the contributions of the conductors first, as they determined the overall musical aesthetics of the ensemble. This is followed by a discussion of the percussionists in the orchestra, and then how these percussionists' musical aesthetics and concepts of sound were transmitted to the members of Nexus.

#### *Conductors*

##### *Fritz Scheel*

For the purpose of this discussion, the Philadelphia musical traditions with which we are concerned begin with the establishment of the Philadelphia Orchestra in 1900 under the baton of Fritz Scheel. Although various orchestras existed in Philadelphia during the 1800s, the city had become increasingly dependent on visiting orchestras from Chicago, Boston, and New York to fulfill its growing musical needs. In 1893, the Philadelphia Symphony Society was

formed to promote interest in orchestral music, and in the summer of 1899, some of its members heard Scheel conducting his orchestra in Woodside Park, on the outskirts of Philadelphia. The Society was impressed with his work, and offered him a contract to conduct its orchestra, an amateur choir, and a series of popular concerts during the upcoming season. Scheel accepted, with the condition that the Society arrange two orchestral concerts comprising professional musicians at the end of the season, which it did. Scheel recruited the best local talent for these two performances and Philadelphian pride mixed with patriotism led to much publicity of the events.<sup>11</sup> The success of these two concerts was the deciding factor in establishing a permanent orchestra in Philadelphia. With both musicians and the public eager to maintain the orchestra on a permanent basis, a special committee was formed and a Guarantee Fund was raised.<sup>12</sup> Four thousand women were invited to be patronesses and by November 1900, the first of seven concerts for the Philadelphia Orchestra's 1900-1901 season was given at the Academy of Music.<sup>13</sup>

Scheel's exceptional musicianship helped establish the percussion tradition in the Philadelphia Orchestra from the outset. Scheel literally devoted his life to the orchestra, and within a matter of years, it began to rival those of Boston and New York. The orchestra's rapid development is not surprising given his background and talent. He was born in Lübeck, Germany, to a musical family, and although his principal instrument was the violin, he also played trumpet, trombone, tuba, and horn.<sup>14</sup> He played in orchestras and municipal bands during his youth, and conducted his own orchestra for subscription concerts in neighbouring towns. He conducted a band in Chemnitz and taught a wide range of instruments in that town. After studying in Leipzig from 1864 to 1867 with Ferdinand David, he was offered a life appointment as first violinist in the Court Orchestra at Schwerin before reaching the age of twenty.<sup>15</sup> It was here that his professional conducting career was launched when he agreed to conduct Meyerbeer's *Robert Le Diable* at short notice from his violin part after it was discovered that the second act of the conductor's score was missing.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Wister (p. 17) states that 'Scheel selected his players by visiting the theatres and making notes each evening about the various musicians in the orchestras.' The two concerts were arranged to raise funds for families of soldiers and sailors killed or disabled in the war in the Philippines. (Frances Anne Wister, *Twenty-Five Years of the Philadelphia Orchestra: 1900-1925*, Freeport, New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1925, reprinted 1970).

<sup>12</sup> Wister (pp. 20-21) states: 'Within four weeks of the second Philippine concert, the first circular announcing the plan for forming a Philadelphia Orchestra was mailed by this Committee.' The circular included the following statement about Scheel: 'The professional musicians of Philadelphia are virtually unanimous in expressing hearty admiration for his rare ability as a leader; they acknowledge that his work among them this winter has been a real stimulus to the advancement of their art, and they therefore desire to secure the advantage of his services next season.'

<sup>13</sup> Finkelman (p. 33) states that six concerts were given in Philadelphia and one concert was repeated in Reading, Pennsylvania. According to Wister (p. 12), the Philadelphia Orchestra acquired a set of timpani, music stands and music library from the Philadelphia Symphony Society, which debanded that year. I was not able to ascertain whether the orchestra still owned these timpani. For more information regarding the establishment of the Philadelphia Orchestra see Wister, *Twenty-Five Years*; Herbert Kupferberg, *Those Fabulous Philadelphians: The Life and Times of a Great Orchestra*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1969; John Ardoin, ed., *The Philadelphia Orchestra: A Century of Music*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1999; and Michael Finkelman, 'Philadelphia story: An English horn's eye-view of the life and times of a great orchestra over six decades, 1900-1960,' *The Double Reed*, 24 (3), 2001.

<sup>14</sup> Wister, *Twenty-Five Years*, p. 25.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26.

<sup>16</sup> Scheel recalls the experience: '. . . the first performance that I conducted . . . was an opera. Meyerbeer's "Robert Le Diable." I was exactly nineteen and a half years old, and a lost orchestra score led to it. I was the concertmaster then in the Chemnitz Orchestra, which in summer played for the opera performances in Bremerhafen at the Court Theatre. The opera of "Robert Le Diable" was announced, and when the morning of the first rehearsal came it was discovered that the entire second act of the conductor's score had been lost. Herr

Scheel became Kapellmeister at Chemnitz nine years later where he succeeded Hans Sitt. The orchestra frequently performed in other German cities and engaged soloists of the rank of Hans von Bülow, Pablo de Sarasate, August Wilhelmj, and Joseph Joachim. Scheel also performed solos with the orchestra on a weekly basis, and later became the leader of the 400-voice choir, Sitt Chorgesangverein. He spent four summers in Russia where he conducted four different operas each week and trained the chorus. In 1890, he moved to Hamburg at the invitation of von Bülow to 'drill the orchestra for concerts which he and the pianist alternated in conducting.'<sup>17</sup> Scheel was well connected and knew many musicians, including Tchaikovsky, Brahms, and Rubenstein.<sup>18</sup>

Scheel came to the United States in 1893 to conduct the Trocadero concerts at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago.<sup>19</sup> In 1895, he brought an orchestra to San Francisco where he founded and conducted the San Francisco Symphony Society in addition to conducting opera. After four years there, he accepted a summer appointment at Woodside Park on the outskirts of Philadelphia. Here, he spent two months conducting his own orchestra comprising New York City musicians, giving two concerts a day, seven days a week.<sup>20</sup> These concerts drew the attention of members of the Philadelphia Symphony Society, which eventually led to his appointment as the first conductor of the Philadelphia Orchestra.

Scheel's initial task for the newly-formed Philadelphia Orchestra was to raise its standard of playing. It became evident during the first season that local talent did not suffice, so Scheel spent the summers of 1901 and 1902 recruiting some of Europe's finest talent.<sup>21</sup> Among these musicians was the legendary German timpanist, Oscar Schwar, who joined the orchestra as principal timpanist in 1903 and remained in that position until his death in 1946.<sup>22</sup> Schwar's previous appointment was timpanist of the Royal Opera Orchestra in St. Petersburg, Russia. By the turn of the century, he had established himself as one of the finest timpanists in Europe having played in many orchestras across the continent. He began his career as a violinist, and he brought a high level of musicianship to his playing, which will be discussed later.

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Pohl, the conductor, a young man of thirty-three, refused to go on with the opera. It was too late to think of getting another score in time for the rehearsals necessary for the performance. The only way out of it seemed to be the withdrawal of the opera. Some of the singers, who had noticed the cue for their phrases that I had given them on the violin, asked whether I would not conduct. "If the conductor invites me I will," I said. When this was repeated to the conductor he promptly gave the invitation, and it was a pressing one, for they wished to give the opera and keep faith with the public. That entire second act I had to conduct from the first violin part, memory supplying the rest. The performance went without a break. That settled my career. Three days later I conducted Gounod's "Faust," and immediately afterward "L'Africaine," of Meyerbeer, Herr Pohl himself supplying the harp part on the piano. In the years that followed many were the performances that I conducted, including the entire 'Nibelungen Ring' of Wagner. But I never hear a fragment of Meyerbeer's 'Robert Le Diable' without smiling to myself at the recollection of the time when I conducted the second act from the first violin part. (Wister, *Twenty-Five Years*, pp. 26-27). It is possible that Scheel may have been referring to the Court Orchestra of Schwerin rather than the Chemnitz Orchestra.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 28.

<sup>19</sup> Kupferberg (p. 16) erroneously states 1894 as the date for the World's Columbian Exhibition.

<sup>20</sup> Finkelman, 'Philadelphia Story,' p. 31.

<sup>21</sup> Wister (p. 32) states: 'With artistic ambitions ever growing, it was discovered that some of the needed instruments were not to be found in the city and in addition to this a number of players would not accept the terms of the contract. The situation became acute, so in the summer of 1901, and again in 1902, the conductor was commissioned to seek musicians in Europe.' Finkelman (p. 33) suggests that Alexander van Rensselaer, president of the Philadelphia Orchestra Association 1901-1933, provided the funds for Scheel's European trips. Van Rensselaer was a banker and a devout supporter of the orchestra.

<sup>22</sup> In an interview with Cloyd Duff by Andrew Simco, Schwar is erroneously said to have died in 1943 instead of 1946. (Andrew Simco, 'An interview with Cloyd Duff,' *Percussive Notes*, 31 (3), 1993, pp. 55-60.)

Scheel set a solid foundation for the orchestra and was immensely popular with the audiences. He received the support of the community and dedicated himself to the welfare of the ensemble. The orchestra began touring to cities in New Jersey and Pennsylvania during the 1901-1902 season, and to New York, Washington, and Baltimore the following year.<sup>23</sup> He introduced children's concerts and popular concerts, and devoted time to premiering new works. Within a few years, he had built an orchestra comparable to that of New York.<sup>24</sup> The rivalry between the orchestras in Philadelphia and New York stems from this early period.<sup>25</sup> This rivalry still exists today and has perhaps played a historical hand in defining the distinct musical styles of the orchestras in these two cities.

Scheel's extensive knowledge of musical instruments and ability to correct technical problems helped him build a fine orchestra. A close friend of Scheel's reveals his discriminating ear and knowledge of the timpani during his work with amateur orchestras: 'On another occasion the tympanum was not in tune. Scheel stopped the orchestra and asked the tympanist to tune his instrument. When the man started to turn the keys, Scheel said, "No, it is not on that side; it is on the right-hand side of the drum," showing that he, at the distance of a great many feet, could tell that the false vibrations were coming from the right side of the drum.'<sup>26</sup> In the same vein, Scheel understood the way instruments blended and the way they could be used to create the sound of missing instruments. The same friend recalls his sensitivity to sound: 'He also had the peculiar faculty of being able to get the effect of instruments that were not in the orchestra by the combination of other instruments that would give the same tone. The writer remembers very distinctly Scheel's using the French horn and the 'cello together to play the third bassoon part.'<sup>27</sup>

In addition to his appointment with the Philadelphia Orchestra, which had significantly increased both its season and touring schedule, Scheel became the conductor of the Orpheus Club and of the Eurydice Chorus in 1905.<sup>28</sup> His workload therefore increased, along with the

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<sup>23</sup> Wister, *Twenty-Five Years*, p. 31.

<sup>24</sup> The standards of these two orchestras, as perceived by Richard Strauss who was employed as a guest conductor by both in 1904, is evident from the following anecdote related by Frances Wister:

Strauss's first American concert was in New York, where the practice of sending substitutes to rehearsals was common. In the middle of "Don Juan" the orchestra broke down and they had to stop and begin again. Therefore, when Dr. Strauss reached Philadelphia, he was prepared for another such occurrence. He arrived for rehearsal in a perturbed state of mind, and proceeded brusquely to the conductor's stand. Mr. Scheel, however, had spared no pains in preparation for the great event. The rehearsal was held at Odd Fellows Temple, in a small room, where the reverberations in the fortissimo passages were tremendous. After simply bowing to Mr. Scheel, Dr. Strauss began to lead. He had played but a few measures before he discovered an orchestra thoroughly proficient and well-rehearsed in his numbers. After playing a few bars he dropped his arms and allowed the orchestra to play on. There was an entire change in his manner. He turned to Scheel, and, throwing both arms in the air, exclaimed, "Famos!" Every few moments he cried, "Wunderschön!" "Ausgezeichnet!" After making one or two corrections in the parts, he stopped the rehearsal and became highly enthusiastic over the playing of the orchestra. (Wister, *Twenty-Five Years*, pp. 36-37).

<sup>25</sup> The review of Strauss' concert, published in the *City and State* on 10 March 1904, highlights the rivalry felt by Philadelphians towards New York: 'Indeed, we see no impropriety whatever in publishing the fact that Mr. Strauss was immeasurably better pleased with the work of our orchestra than with that of the New York orchestra, which he conducted last Thursday evening. On Tuesday he declared himself entirely contented with the single rehearsal for the Friday concert. . . . we ought not to hesitate to boast bravely of this advantage of ours over New York.' (Wister, *Twenty-Five Years*, p. 39).

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45.

stress of keeping all the organizations afloat. In January 1907, he came down with influenza, but continued to attend to all his responsibilities.<sup>29</sup> His health declined in February and he immediately took leave to recover.<sup>30</sup> Scheel conducted his final concert in Reading, Pennsylvania, and was taken to a sanitarium to aid his recovery. While at the Sanitarium, he contracted pneumonia and, weakened by his previous illness, died on 13 March 1907 at the age of fifty-four.<sup>31</sup> Tributes poured in from far and wide. In the course of less than a decade, Scheel had given Philadelphia something that it had long wanted and it became even more precious given the circumstances of his death.

The Philadelphia Orchestra had been fortunate to find someone of Scheel's talent and integrity in their midst. Through his hard work and dedication, he had built a fine orchestra from scratch, and some of the musicians he recruited from Europe would have long-lasting influence on musicians in the United States. His employment of Oscar Schwar, for instance, set a high standard of timpani playing in the orchestra, and this inspired generations of percussionists and timpanists in Philadelphia and surrounding regions. Finding a suitable replacement for Scheel proved to be a challenge. Offers were given to prominent conductors of the day, but all declined, favouring their current positions.<sup>32</sup> On the recommendation of Fritz Steinbach in Cologne and Professor Felix Mottl in Munich, Carl Pohlig was finally appointed and resumed duties the following season.

### *Carl Pohlig*

Carl Pohlig was of the same pedigree as Scheel, having had a substantial music education and career in Europe. He was born in 1864 in Teplitz, Bohemia, and while still a boy accompanied Franz Liszt to Budapest, Rome, and other cities. He toured Europe and Russia and was the Kapellmeister at Graz. He worked at Covent Garden,

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<sup>29</sup> Finkelman, 'Philadelphia Story,' p. 38. Scheel's dedication to his work is apparent in an article published in the *Public Ledger* on 10 February 1907:

Never a moment of freedom did he allow himself. In Odd Fellows' Temple each morning he rehearsed one group of players, in the afternoon another group and in the evening the entire orchestra. At his meals he arranged the sugar bowl so that it would keep the score of some symphony or other in an upright position where he could study while eating.

In Harrisburg, only three weeks ago, Scheel had the grip, and when the business manager, Charles Augustus Davis, went to see him, he found the leader lying in bed with water bags over his heart and a score in front of his eyes. All this time Scheel was also attending to his work as leader of the Eurydice and the Orpheus Clubs, rehearsing and leading at concerts. (Wister, *Twenty-Five Years*, pp. 72-73).

<sup>30</sup> An article published on 3 March 1907 portrays the sense of loss felt by the community:

Fritz Scheel's illness is not only a personal tragedy; it is a public calamity. The fine orchestra which he has created for Philadelphia, and into which he has poured to exhaustion his own nervous energy, remains the pliant instrument he made it, ready to the hand of whatever master may be found to carry on his work, if he should not return to it. But the orchestra has been so peculiarly the expression of Scheel's artistic personality, that his withdrawal at the end of what had been a most prosperous and buoyant season leaves the great constituency built up for it in these seven years with a sense of bereavement and depression.

Mr. Scheel is a remarkable instance of a concentrated musical temperament, that views all life and thought through its own medium alone. In the years that he has spent in Philadelphia, he has been scarcely known beyond the immediate circle of the orchestra and the musical societies that he has directed. (Wister, *Twenty-Five Years*, p. 72)

<sup>31</sup> Finkelman (p. 38) and Gerson (p. 169) erroneously state Scheel's age as fifty-five (Robert A. Gerson, *Music in Philadelphia: A History of Philadelphia Music, a Summary of Its Current State, and a Comprehensive Index Dictionary*, Philadelphia: Theodore Presser, 1940).

<sup>32</sup> See Finkelman (pp. 38-39) for a discussion of the potential candidates.

Bayreuth, and with Mahler at the opera in Hamburg. After conducting orchestras in many European cities, Pohlig was appointed First Court Kapellmeister to the King of Württemberg in Stuttgart. It was here that he received and accepted the offer from Philadelphia.<sup>33</sup>

From all accounts, it seems that Pohlig had the talent and experience to step into Scheel's shoes; however, over time it became evident that his arrogant style of working with the musicians, board of directors, and audience left much to be desired.<sup>34</sup> On a musical front, he extended the concert season and continued to introduce new works into the orchestra's repertoire. But it seems he failed on the human front, assuming the role of martinet in the midst of a supportive and musically-developing environment. Conductors define orchestras, and Philadelphia began looking elsewhere.<sup>35</sup> The orchestra had experienced seven years of tremendous growth under Scheel's leadership, and this growth was based on cooperation and hard work not only by the conductor, but also by the musicians, board of directors, women's committees, and numerous patrons of the arts. In those seven years, Philadelphia had defined its musical ideals, and it needed someone to further enrich them and allow them to grow. Unbeknown to the search committee at the time of hiring Pohlig, that person had already knocked on its door and had been declined.<sup>36</sup> After three years conducting the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, however, Leopold Stokowski was back knocking on Philadelphia's door, seeking an environment where he could grow.

### *Leopold Stokowski*

In 1912, at the age of thirty, Leopold Stokowski began his tenure with the Philadelphia Orchestra. For the next three decades, Philadelphia supported Stokowski in an unprecedented journey exploring music and sound. The timing was perfect for both Stokowski and Philadelphia. Stokowski immediately stepped into the shoes left by Scheel five years earlier, and his artistic vision and eccentric personality took the orchestra to greater heights.

When Stokowski took over the Philadelphia Orchestra, he quickly recognized the solid foundation established by Scheel, and the demise of the orchestra under Pohlig. As mentioned earlier, Scheel had spent two summers recruiting Europe's finest talent, and some of these players were still in the orchestra when Stokowski arrived, as he indicates: 'The man who really made the Philadelphia Orchestra from a musical standpoint was Fritz Scheel. I never knew him personally but he must have had very high musical ideals. Such artists as Rich, Horner and Schwar, to mention only a few of the many who are still remaining in the Philadelphia Orchestra from Fritz Scheel's time, are absolutely in the first rank for their instrument, not only in America but in the whole world.'<sup>37</sup>

Stokowski was not impressed with the overall standard of the orchestra, however, and realized he would have to fire many musicians. He said that it 'was no orchestra at all: very

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<sup>33</sup> Wister, *Twenty-Five Years*, p. 89.

<sup>34</sup> For more details, see Wister, Finkelman, and Abram Chasins, *Leopold Stokowski, a profile*, New York: Hawthorn Books, 1979.

<sup>35</sup> It took until 1912 to find a suitable replacement for Pohlig. After a final dispute with the board in which Pohlig threatened to sue the Philadelphia Orchestra Association, he was released from his contract one year early with a full-year's salary of USD\$12,000 in compensation. See Finkelman (p. 41) for a full account of the events that led to his dismissal.

<sup>36</sup> Finkelman, 'Philadelphia Story,' p. 61.

<sup>37</sup> Kupferberg, *Those Fabulous Philadelphians*, p. 16. Stokowski always mentioned Schwar and first horn Anton Horner in this context, and sometimes added third horn Otto Henneberg.

disappointing. It had a stiff rhythm, hard tone, and no flexibility or imagination. Everyone played meaningless notes. Everything was terribly mechanical. . . . So I had to rebuild that orchestra, get good players in each choir, and strong leaders to head the sections. It was very difficult. One can't fire everybody. Without a job, they would all starve. It had to be done gradually, but it had to be done.<sup>38</sup>

Stokowski immediately began the long and arduous task of improving the quality of the orchestra, and in the first season dismissed thirty-two musicians.<sup>39</sup> His strategy was 'to find a good flute, a good oboe, a good clarinet, a good trumpet, and so forth . . . Gradually we found great players as leaders, and then we filled in back of them with good players.'<sup>40</sup> Stokowski recruited some outstanding musicians, many of whom remained for decades. Paul Robinson notes that the 'length of tenure of so many of these players is profound evidence of Stokowski's ability to choose exactly the player he wanted from an audition. He has the uncanny power to be able to determine not only technical facility, but also how well a sound will blend with the rest of the orchestra, and whether a player's musicianship is compatible with his own.'<sup>41</sup>

As well as improving the personnel of the orchestra, Stokowski also improved its rehearsal conditions. Through some serious lobbying, Stokowski was able to move all the rehearsals from inadequate quarters to the Academy of Music, where the musicians could hear each other more clearly and he could work on balance and sound.<sup>42</sup> The Academy was built in 1857 by the Music Fund Society, and had been used as the main concert venue for the orchestra since its founding. It had excellent acoustics and was considered one of the greatest halls in the United States at that time. It played a significant role in the shaping of the sound of the orchestra.

Another change that Stokowski made quite early on was using English rather than German for rehearsals. Reflecting the European origin of its first two conductors and many of its members, all the rehearsals had been conducted in German, as Stokowski notes: 'When I went and started to rehearse in Philadelphia I noticed that all the men were talking German. I was told: "Our first conductor, Scheel, was a German, then we had Pohlig, another German, so we always rehearse in the German language." I speak German, so at first we rehearsed in German. It was ridiculous to be doing that in Philadelphia, but that was the custom there at that time.'<sup>43</sup>

In addition to changing the personnel, rehearsal venue, and predominant language of the orchestra, Stokowski also expanded the orchestra's repertoire. He devoted Wednesday morning rehearsals to reading through new scores, and thus began his long tradition of premiering new works. Stokowski did not shy away from complex scores, difficult logistics,

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<sup>38</sup> Chasins, *Leopold Stokowski, a profile*, pp. 69-70.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 72.

<sup>40</sup> Stokowski in Paul Robinson, *Stokowski*, New York: Vanguard Press, p. 54.

<sup>41</sup> Robinson, *Stokowski*, p. 22.

<sup>42</sup> See Wister (p. 36) for the locations of the previous rehearsal venues, and Chasins (pp. 72-73) for a description of their dismal conditions, which included a low ceiling and upright piano for the soloists placed in the far corner of the room. See also Chasins (pp. 74-75) for details of Stokowski's lobbying techniques on this issue.

<sup>43</sup> Kupferberg, *Those Fabulous Philadelphians*, p. 105.

or opposition from board and audience members. He was committed to contemporary music and premiered the works of both famous and obscure composers.<sup>44</sup> He frequently entered into a dialogue with the composers, making suggestions on how their works may be improved. Abram Chasins provides one such example of how Stokowski improved his *Second Piano Concerto* during a rehearsal with the Philadelphia Orchestra in 1933:

It was not long before Stokowski called a halt. Completely immersed in the music, he called out with hardly a trace of an accent, "Second trombone, you be quiet here for eight measures. Third horn, I want you to play the first two measures and then nothing. All right. Letter *P*." The section emerged with a totally unexpected clarity, and all I could do was smile my gratitude at Stokowski's questioning face as he turned toward me. . . . Stokowski realized a dozen things for me that I had been unable to realize myself. A conductor like that is not by accident called an interpreter. He actually becomes a partner of the composer. This is one of the many reasons why Rachmaninoff regarded the Philadelphia as his favorite orchestra. He once remarked, "Stokowski has created a living thing. He knows what you want, he puts it in, and he infuses vitality into every phrase."<sup>45</sup>

In addition to creating a dialogue with composers, Stokowski entertained a long-term dialogue with his audiences whereby he would berate them for being late or making noises, and they would do the same when his innovations stretched them too far. Ultimately, though, he had the winning hand, and he often immediately repeated works that received unfavourable responses. In this way, Philadelphia Orchestra concerts developed a sense of excitement about them, and subscription tickets became highly guarded treasures which were passed down through the generations—a practice which continues to this day. He also knew how to generate young people's interest in the orchestra and its music. His Youth Concerts attracted full houses, as Helene Hanff recalls:

No seats were reserved. You just knocked people down when the doors opened and got to the best seats you could. All the ushers had to do was stand back out of the way and hand out programs. Once in a seat, you scanned the program breathlessly to guess who the soloist was. No one could be absolutely certain, for instead of the soloist's name there would be just a big black question mark. If some Wagnerian soprano arias were listed, it was sure to be Flagstad. If there was a violin concerto, it was sure to be Heifetz. But, of course, it *might* be anybody, we would say to each other, just in case.

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<sup>44</sup> World premieres conducted by Stokowski with the Philadelphia Orchestra include Bruch's *Concerto for Two Pianos and Orchestra* (1916); excerpts from Granados' *Goyescas* (1916); Griffé's *White Peacock* (1919); Varèse's *Ameriques* (1926) and *Arcana* (1927); Malipiero's *Pause del silenzio* (1927); Chavez's *Caballos de vapor* (1932); Morton Gould's *Chorale and Fugue in Jazz* (1936); Gretchaninoff's *Symphony No. 5* (1939); Rachmaninoff's *Three Russian Folk Songs* (1927), *Piano Concerto No. 4* (1927), *Paganini Rhapsody* (1934), and *Symphony No. 3* (1936); and Schoenberg's *Violin Concerto* (1940); among many others. United States premieres with the Philadelphia Orchestra include Sibelius' *Symphony No. 5, 6, and 7* (1921, 1926, 1926); Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* (1922), *Song of the Nightingale* (1923), *Symphonies of Wind Instruments* (1923), *The Firebird* (1930), and *Oedipus Rex* (1931); Prokofiev's *Le pas d'acier* (1931); Shostakovich's *Symphony No. 1, 3, and 6* (1928, 1932, 1940); as well as works by Arbos, Auric, Berg, De Falla, Enesco, Fitelberg, Mahler, Medtner, Miaszkowsky, Piston, Rimsky-Korsakov, Saint-Saens, Schoenberg, Scriabin, Richard Strauss, and others. Note that dates in parenthesis refer to performance dates rather than date of composition. For more information on these premieres and others, see Edward Johnson, ed., *Stokowski: Essays in Analysis of His Art*, London: Triad Press, 1973, pp. 77-82.

<sup>45</sup> Chasins, *Leopold Stokowski, a profile*, pp. 139-140.

Then the moment would come and Heifetz (or Flagstad) would walk out on the stage, and, after a split second of stunned gratification, pandemonium would break loose as three thousand of us lost our lungs entirely. The soloist would give us encore after encore, and later there would be encore after encore from the orchestra. Nobody in the audience wanted to go home. They'd get rid of us, finally, about 12:30 A.M., by turning off the house lights and playing a Sousa march.<sup>46</sup>

Over time, Stokowski built an orchestra that brought together talented musicians, contemporary composers, a wide range of audience members, and dedicated committees and benefactors that supported his projects. The orchestra became the vehicle through which his musical aspirations could be met, as well as those of the community. Stokowski was once aptly described as 'a nineteenth century man with a twenty-first century mind.'<sup>47</sup> Whether he was premiering new works from the leading composers of his day or experimenting with recording and film technology, he was always at the cutting edge. Chasins noted that his 'restless and inquiring mind took nothing for granted.'<sup>48</sup> This attitude set in motion an era of innovation in the Philadelphia Orchestra where experimentation and exploration were both encouraged and expected. Before moving on to a discussion about the nature of this innovation, however, we must first look at the basis of Stokowski's musical values.

Stokowski came to conducting through a professional career as an organist and choirmaster, rather than the more standard route of an orchestral player. As an organist, he was somewhat detached from the orchestral tradition as it had not been ingrained in his blood from a young age. Most conductors of his generation apprenticed in European opera houses, learning their trade under a master's watchful eye. Stokowski launched his conducting career in Cincinnati, with no experience and no watchful eye.<sup>49</sup>

During the course of his education, Stokowski was more interested in learning about music than technical matters, as he indicated at a meeting in 1927: 'I wanted to get to the heart of music, and I refused to learn things that would only develop my technique. My teachers understood that I was in love with music and that I wouldn't go in for anything that made me hate it. They let me play Bach before I knew the key signatures or could name the chords.'<sup>50</sup> Chasins observed that Stokowski 'supplemented his haphazard study of the techniques of music by a supreme intuition for sonic phenomena.'<sup>51</sup>

Stokowski's innovation lay in his ability to reorder the hierarchies of the orchestra. Sound is not often afforded the same priority as musical structure or style, but to Stokowski, it was of prime importance. This had tremendous ramifications for the orchestral musicians, including the percussionists, as a new order began to evolve. To increase the sonority, Stokowski

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<sup>46</sup> John Francis Marion, *Within These Walls: A History of the Academy of Music in Philadelphia*, Philadelphia: Restoration Office, The Academy of Music, 1984, pp. 233-234.

<sup>47</sup> Kupferberg, *Those Fabulous Philadelphians*, p. 40.

<sup>48</sup> Chasins, *Leopold Stokowski, a profile*, p. 77.

<sup>49</sup> Robinson (p. 12) observes: 'There is no doubt that he had talent, but he had had very little experience, and none of the preparation usually associated with a conducting career, never having either played in an orchestra or worked as a coach in an opera house. Apparently, Stokowski had decided that if he had it in him to be a conductor, he need not bother working his way through the usual apprenticeship. So, with phenomenal innocence and arrogance, he presented himself to the Parisian public as Leopold Stokowski, conductor. And the result was not an assistant conductorship with a small orchestra or opera house, but the directorship of an orchestra in a big American city. Not bad for a young man of 27.'

<sup>50</sup> Chasins, *Leopold Stokowski, a profile*, p. 8.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

frequently experimented with the seating of the orchestra, and replaced the normal practice of unified bowing with his concept of free bowing.<sup>52</sup> This enabled a continuity of musical phrases, and gave the string players an opportunity to express the music in their own way. As Stokowski said, 'the players of classical music are called upon to convey warmth and intensity and poetic passion which cannot be ideally realized when everyone bows together like robots.'<sup>53</sup> Stokowski extended this concept to the winds and brass where he often doubled parts to cover the gap in the line when a player took a breath. This produced long, uninterrupted melodic lines in the orchestra and avoided any false accents in the middle of phrases.<sup>54</sup>

According to Robinson, Stokowski 'always came to rehearsals with a concept in sound of what he wanted, and often insisted on achieving it no matter what the technical problem for an instrumentalist. It frequently happened that a player would find what Stokowski wanted impossible. Stokowski's advice, that the player "go home and think about it and come back tomorrow," usually solved the problem.'<sup>55</sup> Stokowski believed that if the players followed their own musical instincts, then the overall sound of the orchestra would improve. He encouraged individuality among his musicians and inspired them to find their own way. As Ainslee Cox observed: 'Some orchestras, unused to the responsibilities of individuality, find it difficult to play as individuals at first, but in time every orchestra I observed Stokowski lead was finally persuaded to play far beyond its usual level in this way.'<sup>56</sup>

Stokowski was constantly exploring different sounds, and it is likely that his early career as an organist influenced the way he approached the orchestra:

Stokowski began his musical career as an organist—and the pipe organ was a potent influence on the Philadelphia Sound. [Sol] Schoenbach likened him to a painter mixing colors; from the same perspective, he was an organ virtuoso mixing his stops when he instructed "more trumpet" or "less bassoon." His predilection for billowing waves of sound was an organist's predilection for the swell box. The hair-trigger precision, rocketing propulsion, X-ray clarity and sharp accents of the Toscanini sound were not parts of Stokowski's recipe. And the Philadelphia Orchestra—as Virgil Thomson put it—knew "no lilt or swing." It specialized in color, legato and sheer sonic splendor.<sup>57</sup>

Robinson notes that Stokowski 'likes to improvise during a concert, making changes in tempo or balance as the mood takes him. . . .'<sup>58</sup> This statement is supported by Sol Schoenbach, who likened Stokowski to a painter: "'If we were playing a Mozart symphony and he didn't feel like making a *da capo* in a minuet, he just didn't," said Sol Schoenbach, the principal bassoonist as of 1937. "Or, if he felt that bassoons would help the clarinets in the beginning of a Tchaikovsky symphony, he would just point to us and we were supposed to play even though we didn't have anything in front of us. He was just like a painter who decides he wants to put a little red here, a little blue there. . . . He would do things right on the spot. He couldn't

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<sup>52</sup> Free bowing was one of Stokowski's innovations. For more information about this see Robinson, *Stokowski*, pp. 23-24; and Chasins, *Leopold Stokowski, a profile*, pp. 78-81.

<sup>53</sup> Chasins, *Leopold Stokowski, a profile*, p. 79.

<sup>54</sup> Robinson, *Stokowski*, p. 24.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>56</sup> Johnson, *Stokowski: Essays in Analysis of His Art*, p. 20.

<sup>57</sup> Ardoin, *The Philadelphia Orchestra*, p. 43.

<sup>58</sup> Robinson, *Stokowski*, p. 25.

stand anybody who was so rigid and would say, 'I'm sorry, I don't have those notes here,' or 'I don't have that on my instrument,' or 'It can't be done!'"<sup>59</sup>

Stokowski explains his commitment to individuality in his book, *Music for All of Us*, by stating: 'I believe that the individuality in each player should be spontaneously expressed in the music, and that the deepest-lying emotional and imaginative characteristics of each player can add immensely to the multicolored eloquence of an orchestra. I am completely opposed to standardization, regimentation, uniform bowing, uniform fingering and breathing, and all the other conventions which tend to make an orchestra sound mechanical.'<sup>60</sup> When taking over the Philadelphia Orchestra in 1912, Stokowski noted how mechanical the orchestra sounded after several years with Pohlig, and he immediately set to work improving it on many levels. In the process of overhauling an orchestra, rarely does a conductor encourage freedom and individuality, as conductors are often more interested in authority and conformity. Stokowski was unique in this regard, and he laid the foundation for creativity and individuality to become an integral part of orchestral life. Stokowski expanded on these ideas during an interview in March 1956:

I said to them [musicians in the Philadelphia Orchestra], 'each one of you must be a poet, as well as a great player of your instrument. And through your poetic feeling you can express every kind of music.' I also said to them, 'do not permit yourselves to become, as is a tendency in the world today, standardized, so that you all think and feel the same way. Do not crush your real individuality, but express your individuality through the music. Give ... your personality, all your inner feeling, give that expression through the music. Do not be all alike. Be different, as you really are different in your natures. No two violins are alike. No two bows are alike. No two hands are alike. No two nervous systems are alike. No two minds are alike. No two emotional characters are alike. You are all different. Be different! Don't standardize yourself. And, put all those differences, all that richness of different colouring of personalities into the music.' They finally did that, and that orchestra became so flexible and so extraordinary.<sup>61</sup>

At every level, whether he was experimenting with the seating of the musicians in the orchestra or changing the notes on a score, Stokowski was constantly pushing the boundaries of the Western orchestral tradition. However, he was also creating an environment within the ensemble that fostered a level of cooperation quite rare in Western orchestras. In his book, he outlines how he balanced the opposing poles of individualism and cooperation:

These two opposing poles—individualism and co-operation—in an orchestra are somewhat like their counterparts in the lives of individuals, communities, and nations. In a country of unbridled individualism without co-operation, there will soon be chaos. In a country of perfect co-operation, but with complete neglect of the development of each individual, and a ruthless disregard of the differences among all personalities, there will be a mechanical standardization of thought and feeling and action which can result only in a low standard of life and dull cultural values. Only where the individual is encouraged to develop all his or her potentialities, and is at the same time willing to

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<sup>59</sup> Ardoin, *The Philadelphia Orchestra*, p. 43.

<sup>60</sup> Leopold Stokowski, *Music for All of Us*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1943, p. 195.

<sup>61</sup> Interview with Leopold Stokowski, 'Philadelphia Orchestra,' Recorded March 1956, Otto E. Albrecht Music Library, University of Pennsylvania. <http://www.library.upenn.edu/exhibits/rbm/stokowski/interview.html>. Accessed 16 May 2006.

contribute his or her talents to the community and nation, can we have high standards of life and exalted cultural values. In the balancing of the opposing poles of co-operation and individualism, the ideal orchestra is analogous, in a broad and deep sense, to life in its fullest expression.<sup>62</sup>

In the same book, Stokowski suggests that there are three types of orchestras. The first he describes as technically and musically inferior due to the limitations of its players. The second is technically accomplished but is so overworked that the musicians have lost their love of music and consequently its spirit. The third is described below and closely resembles the Philadelphia Orchestra:

There is a third kind of orchestra whose players sincerely love music. They live it in their daily lives—they are in constant contact with their instruments, trying to find new and better ways to make them sound. To these enthusiastic, progressive, forward-looking players every rehearsal and concert is an exciting experience. The rehearsals are not too long, because the players concentrate so intensely that the musical problems are solved quickly. They pour all of their being into the music as they play it, so that the music glows as if with the heat of creation. They put such intensity of their love for music into every note they play that every rhythm is impulsive and dancing with vitality. By varying the timbres of each phrase according to the feeling of the music at that moment they are not limited to one standardized timbre but have an unending variety—the tone vibrates with the feeling that is in their souls. Above all, they seek to express the *inner spirit* of the music—an electric current of comradeship and fused psychology inspires each player, so that the pulse of the orchestra beats with unified emotion—the players and conductor are comrades always trying to reach higher levels of musical expression. This ideal type of orchestra plays inspired music with inspiration, and only then do we really hear music with its fullest potentialities. Then music is not only a physical delight of sound, but a *profound expression of spirit*.<sup>63</sup>

Stokowski's knowledge of and appreciation for percussion was extraordinary, especially for conductors of his time. He spent long periods travelling and studying the musical traditions of non-Western cultures, and applied this experience to his orchestral work. His book, published in 1943, includes extensive discussion of non-Western music. By that time, he had already lived and travelled in India, Indonesia, Tibet, and China. With a personal interest in sound and rhythm, it would have only seemed natural that he demanded a lot from his percussionists. He was fortunate to have Schwarz as his principal timpanist, and in 1923, he hired Podemski, a Latvian percussionist who had immigrated to the United States in the early 1920s. Stokowski's influence on these two musicians, and subsequent generations of percussionists, will be discussed later. In 1936, Stokowski began sharing the podium with Ormandy, and he finally left the orchestra in 1941 to pursue other projects. His legacy lived on, though, as is evident in the percussion section of the orchestra, and in Nexus.

### *Eugene Ormandy*

The Philadelphia Orchestra has had few conductors over the course of its history. After Stokowski's reign for almost three decades, Ormandy took over for another four. As

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<sup>62</sup> Stokowski, *Music for All of Us*, p. 196.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 198-199.

Stokowski had stepped into Scheel's shoes many years earlier, Ormandy likewise stepped into Stokowski's. Reflecting on taking over the Philadelphia Orchestra, Ormandy said, 'I think most conductors, stepping into a new job with an orchestra, would have said: "Now I'm going to show them how *I* conduct, how *I* approach Tchaikovsky or Beethoven or Stravinsky or anybody else." I instinctively, without talking to a single human being, said to myself: "My dear friend, you've found a marvelous orchestra, one of the greatest in the world, with an incomparable sound. Be careful to preserve that sound." So I decided to continue with the Orchestra as I found it, making gradual changes according to my own ideas.'<sup>64</sup>

Ormandy's path to the Philadelphia Orchestra was perhaps as unconventional as Stokowski's. A Hungarian violinist who at the age of fourteen had the honour of being the youngest graduate of the Royal State Academy in Budapest, Ormandy set his sights on an international solo career. After giving concerts in Germany, Austria, and France, his first tour to the United States at the age of twenty-two ended in crisis, as his agents and their proposed engagements disappeared. Left to his own devices in New York City, he joined the Capitol Theater pit orchestra, and within a week became its concertmaster and later associate director. He began conducting other orchestras on the side, and he soon came to the attention of Arthur Judson, who had close connections with the Philadelphia Orchestra. Judson introduced him to radio broadcasting, and he conducted many programs on the CBS network. Judson later set up engagements for him with the New York Philharmonic and the Philadelphia Orchestra during its summer season at Robin Hood Dell. After five years conducting the symphony in Minneapolis, he joined Stokowski as co-conductor of the Philadelphia Orchestra in 1936, and then in 1941 became its sole conductor until his retirement in 1980.<sup>65</sup>

Ormandy once explained his gift for conducting in the following terms: 'I study sound, and I know how an orchestra should sound. Nobody taught me—I feel it.'<sup>66</sup> Like Stokowski, Ormandy was sensitive to the sound of the entire orchestra, and he helped shape the percussionists' musical aesthetics and concepts of sound. How he did this will be discussed below, as it was through the interaction between the percussionists and the conductors that the Philadelphia Orchestra percussion tradition evolved.<sup>67</sup>

### *The Philadelphia Orchestra percussion tradition*

The main players in the evolution of the Philadelphia Orchestra percussion tradition are Oscar Schwar, Benjamin Podemski, Fred Hinger, Michael Bookspan, Charles Owen, and Alan Abel. Other percussionists and timpanists played in the orchestra during the first six decades, but they were not influential on younger generations. James Valerio was a percussionist for many years alongside Podemski, however, apart from his triangle which Abel used as a model, he was largely a theatre percussionist who had no long-term influence. The members of Nexus' main point of contact with the Philadelphia Orchestra tradition was largely with Hinger, Abel, Bookspan, and to some degree, Owen. (See Appendix 1 for details of all the percussionists in the Philadelphia Orchestra from 1900 to 2006).

As we have seen from the previous discussion about the conductors of the orchestra, a sensibility towards the percussion section was established from the outset due to Scheel's

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<sup>64</sup> Ardoin, *The Philadelphia Orchestra*, p. 79.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 74-78.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 75.

<sup>67</sup> Throughout this chapter, the term 'percussion' and 'percussionist' also applies to the timpani.

discriminating ear and his choice of Schwar as timpanist. Schwar established a high standard of playing, against which subsequent players are still judged. When Stokowski joined the orchestra in 1912, he made new demands on its players. Schwar was inspired by Stokowski's conducting, and related the following impressions to his friend Abram Chasins:

He [Schwar] would never forget, he said, that Monday morning of October 7, 1912, when an amazingly young and handsome Stokowski, wearing a light blue shirt open at the neck and gray flannel trousers, sprang onto the podium of their depressing and overcrowded rehearsal room. At a prearranged signal the orchestra rose simultaneously. Having heard of Stokowski's Olympian detachment, they themselves had decided to remain formal and silent. As they stood there, somewhat awkwardly, a look of surprise and a forced smile appeared on Stokowski's face as he gestured for them to be seated. They were to start the rehearsal with Brahms's Symphony no. 1 in C-minor. After a few seconds of reflection, he raised his ice-blue eyes and said crisply, "*Guten Tag*. Brahms! First *mooment* [sic]." Then, almost instantaneously and with a slashing stab, down came his baton.

The unexpectedly swift downbeat caught most of the players unprepared to begin that monumental opening. When two or three straggled in late, Stokowski stopped them. Bending slightly forward, fixing them with blazing eyes, the baton held aloft like a sabre, he gave the downbeat again in a lightning stroke. This time, all the players involved came in like one man.

"But how they came in," Schwar recalled. "I could hardly recognize the men I had been playing with or the music that we thought we knew so well. It was as though we had been given some magic potion. Of course, in a way we had, for none of us had ever experienced such authority and vitality before. This man went straight to the heart of the music. He formed and molded every phrase and with almost no physical effort. Everyone had heard that Nikisch achieved maximum precision with a minimum of bodily motion and that he was Stokowski's idol. It was immediately obvious. With almost invisible indications, Stokowski led us through that famous movement in a way that made it seem like a new piece. With hardly a word of explanation, with no more than the twitch of a wrist or an eyebrow, he extracted the most from every player. Only his facial expressions became more intense and his shoulder muscles more contracted as his burning eyes and curled fingers coaxed us to ever greater expressivity and sonority. At the end of the movement, having played our hearts out in response to the man's irresistible sweep, having been interrupted only a few times by some gentle suggestion or helpful comment, we were all filled with new hope and excitement."

"But our joy was short-lived. Before breaking for intermission, Stokowski said, 'Gentlemen, we must do better, much better. We are too far from an acceptable performance.' Almost the entire rehearsal time was devoted to the four movements of the symphony, the central work of the first program. The reason we had been subjected to comparatively little detailed criticism became painfully clear. Stokowski was not going to waste time or energy or instruction on a group of musicians, most of whom he had already decided would not be members of that orchestra one minute more than necessary. There was no use teaching or scolding, for it was not unwillingness, but sheer inability of all but a few musicians to meet the standards of our new leader."<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Chasins, *Leopold Stokowski, a profile*, pp. 70-71.

Stokowski immediately raised the standard of the orchestra in time for the first concert on Friday 11 October 1912, as Schwar recalls:

"During the arduous days of rehearsal for that difficult program," said Schwar, "Stokowski never grew angry or disturbed. He gave confidence, he inspired us to play way beyond our ordinary capacities. On the day of the concert, he stepped onto the podium in front of an orchestra he had literally rebuilt in less than a week. The concert was a sensation. At its conclusion, the huge and excited audience and a grateful orchestra gave Stokowski an unprecedented ovation. Sounds like this had never come from that stage before, and our eyes were moist with happiness."<sup>69</sup>

These two anecdotes are some of the few writings available on Schwar. Although they do not give us any insight into Schwar's own style of playing, they clearly show the impact that Stokowski made on him and his colleagues. Schwar and Podemski played for many years under Stokowski, and together they established the foundations of the percussion section. Whereas Schwar concentrated on timpani, Podemski became the principal percussionist, and he established a high standard of playing on cymbals and snare drum.<sup>70</sup> How one played the cymbals became a determining factor in judging one's musicianship in the section, and Hinger won the principal percussion position in 1948 due to his fine cymbal playing. The Philadelphia Orchestra is one of the few orchestras where the cymbal player is the principal, a legacy that stems back to Podemski.

According to Bookspan, Stokowski pushed both Podemski and Schwar to greater heights. Bookspan shared his thoughts about Stokowski's influence on Podemski in an interview in 1992:

Podemski . . . was known as an artist of cymbal-playing. That artistry, I'm sure, was developed in Stokowski's time because of Stokowski's demands on percussion, which were very different than Ormandy's. Ormandy's was more in terms of quantity and specifics, where Stoki was more of a colorist and demanding many different colors. I know Podemski used to roundly curse Stokowski and then Ormandy because of their demands, but I think those demands are what made them an artist.<sup>71</sup>

Schwar's death in 1946 marked a period of change in the percussion section. Within the space of a few years, three timpanists were employed, but none of them secured the position. During this time of change, Ormandy offered Warren Benson the principal timpani position. Benson declined, however, as he wanted to continue his studies at the University of Michigan.<sup>72</sup> Podemski left the orchestra in 1948; however, he returned in 1951 for a period of three years. Hinger was awarded the principal percussion position in 1948, and when Podemski returned, he transferred to principal timpani. It was during these years that Hinger became familiar with the percussion traditions established by Podemski and Schwar.

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid., p. 73.

<sup>70</sup> Podemski joined the orchestra in 1923 and played as principal percussionist from 1924-1948 and 1951-1954. He was famous for his cymbal playing, and before immigrating to the States, had played in the Hazomir Symphony and Russian Opera Company.

<sup>71</sup> Sharon Eisenhour, 'Michael Bookspan: Interview with Sharon Eisenhour,' *Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania*, 10 July 1992.

<sup>72</sup> Benson, Interview with author, 16 August 2000. Also see Wagner, *A Bio-Bibliography of Composer Warren Benson*, p. 24. Wagner states that Ormandy made this offer in the spring of 1948 after Schwar 'had just passed away.' Schwar in fact died in 1946.

Although he had never met Schwar, or heard him play, Hinger researched his playing style by talking with other members of the orchestra. Hinger became the pivotal point between the traditions established by Schwar and Podemski under the leadership of Stokowski, and the newer generation of percussionists under the leadership of Ormandy.

Hinger talks at length about Stokowski and Schwar in an interview with Gary Werdesheim:

Well, my idol was Stokowski. Don't misunderstand me. I don't have idols, but I thought he was a fantastic colorist. We used to get along famously.

One of the greatest influences in my life was being in the Philadelphia Orchestra, first of all. Now, I had somebody to follow there—Oscar Schwar—who was already a legend. Schwar had *a* way of playing. I never heard him play but people tell me that [Cloyd] Duff and I play much like Schwar; I suppose that is because I did a lot of research on him. I asked people questions; I asked how he played. When Stokowski came back to conduct us, I found that his ideas of balance and knowing what the instrument could do are what made Oscar Schwar such a great timpanist. I'm not putting him down—don't misunderstand. I'm not saying he didn't have talent. Schwar patterned his ideas after Stokowski. So, without knowing him, I, too, patterned my ideas of music after Stokowski. He would never ask any player in the orchestra to play at full volume. All of a sudden, once in a while, he'd ask for full volume and it would sound great. My idea of timpani playing is that you never overplay the drum, because if you play it too loud, it shouts instead of sings.

When Stokowski came back to the orchestra, I found that what I was trying to say was correct because of all the research I'd done on Oscar Schwar and because of the phrasings I was using. He (Stokowski) was really a genius and a charlatan. He could be a bastard, but if he liked you, you couldn't do anything wrong. When he returned to Philadelphia after being away for such a long time, he came over to me after and said, "Mr. Schwar, I presume." Every time he would come to the orchestra he would ask, "What have you got new for me?" And I'd always try to have something. He was always there early. You know how timpani players are usually the first ones at the hall; I could never beat him there!<sup>73</sup>

As can be seen from the above statement, Hinger modelled himself on Schwar and to some extent assumed his identity. Stokowski acknowledged this by his comment 'Mr. Schwar, I presume.' So influential was Schwar's playing on succeeding generations that according to Bookspan, even in 2001, almost a century after Schwar's appointment by Scheel, the highest compliment another musician could give a percussionist was to compare their playing to Schwar's.<sup>74</sup> Hinger's statement also gives us some insight into the way styles of playing are continued within the orchestra, even after the player leaves. Hinger noted that people told him that he and Duff 'played much like Schwar.' Duff studied directly with Schwar for four years at the Curtis Institute, yet Hinger had never met him. Hinger was able to become familiar with Schwar's playing through talking with Podemski and others in the orchestra.

During Podemski's final year in the orchestra, Ormandy asked him to pass on his style of cymbal playing to Bookspan, who had joined the percussion section in 1953 and remained there until his death in 2002. According to Bookspan, Ormandy was fond of the sound of the

<sup>73</sup> Gary Werdesheim, 'An interview with Fred Hinger,' *Percussive Notes*, April 1984, p. 69.

<sup>74</sup> Michael Bookspan, Interview with author, 16 March 2001.

cymbals and it was 'impossible' to play them too loudly for him.<sup>75</sup> Bookspan relates how he learnt Podemski's style of playing:

[H]e took me backstage with a pair of cymbals, and he said, 'Hit the cymbals.' I played the cymbals. 'No, not like that.' He picked them up and he played. Then I picked them up again and I played them again. He said, 'No, no, not like that. Like this.' Then he played. Then I played. He would say, 'No, that's not it.' Then finally Podemski said after about four or five minutes of my cymbal lesson, he said, 'Look. I'll tell you the secret of cymbal-playing. Either you got it or you don't.' And that was the secret of cymbal-playing.

Five or six years later, I was sitting next to Mr. Ormandy in the audience, listening to percussion auditions, and after five or six people played, Ormandy turned to me and he said, 'You know, none of them play cymbals the way you do.' And I said, 'Well, Podemski gave me the secret of cymbal-playing.' (Laughter) 'He did? What is it?' And I told him. He said, 'Go away.' But he did believe that I had Podemski's secret. I know he introduced me to a European manager on a tour once as, 'Here is the greatest cymbal-player in the world.'<sup>76</sup>

As well as passing down styles of playing, musical instruments were also passed down to younger generations. Podemski owned some old K. Zildjian cymbals that he left with the orchestra when he retired (see Appendix2B for more on Podemski and his list of instruments). Bookspan described the sound of these as 'rich and dark, as opposed to the newer cymbals, which are bright, more brilliant, with more high register sounds, high register overtones, which to my ear can be very nice, but they sort of sit up on top of the orchestra sound. . . . Whereas the old K.s are very rich in the middle register, where it fills out the sound of the brass, and they still have this quality and brilliance. To my ear, that's the way cymbals should sound.'<sup>77</sup>

Not only were cymbals passed down to younger generations, but also other instruments including triangles. Podemski's triangles, which were made from disused knitting machines spindles in Massachusetts, were passed on to the younger players. When Alan Abel joined the orchestra in 1959, he used the triangle belonging to his predecessor, James Valerio. After a couple of years, however, Valerio asked for his triangle back, and by doing so, Abel was faced with the prospect of not having a suitable triangle to play on. He thus took Valerio's triangle to an engineering company to get it copied. After some experimentation, he was able to produce triangles that suited the sound of the orchestra. These triangles are reasonably high-pitched instruments and are now used by many orchestras around the world.<sup>78</sup>

Abel and Hinger would frequently sit in the auditorium to listen to each other's playing so they could determine how their instruments were sounding. They were constantly experimenting with the design of their instruments, and the mallets and sticks which they used to strike them. Out of this experimentation came a number of innovations. Abel and Hinger were carrying the bass drum across the stage one day when one of them tapped it and they realized that it was far more resonant when suspended. Abel thus designed a ring to freely suspend the bass drum, and this has also been adopted by percussionists around the

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Eisenhour, 'Michael Bookspan: Interview with Sharon Eisenhour, 10 July 1992.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Abel, Interview with author, 14 March 2001.

world. On another occasion, the percussionists from the orchestra were enjoying a picnic at Hinger's house where Hinger was playing a drum with no bottom head on it. Another drum close by picked up the vibrations of the head and resonated accordingly. One of the percussionists picked up the second drum and placed it underneath the first, thus increasing the volume of the sound immensely. From this experience, Hinger developed the Hinger Space Tone snare drum, which consisted of a top and bottom section which could be separated to allow more sound to escape, thus increasing the volume of the instrument. Hinger also created a new design for timpani with a rotating bowl to accommodate different beating spots during the course of a performance. He constantly experimented with timpani sticks, and Abel advised him on how they sounded from the auditorium.<sup>79</sup>

This experimental approach to sound was fostered during Stokowski's era and nurtured further by Ormandy. The famed Philadelphia Sound extended to all sections of the orchestra, although attention thus far has mostly been given to the strings and woodwind. The percussion section was fully integrated into the orchestra and it too was affected by this sound. Abel said that Ormandy conducted in circles and this affected the sound of the percussion section. Because Ormandy's beat was not well defined, the percussionists had to have their stick virtually sitting on the instrument so they could react to Ormandy's gestures without delay. This was necessary given the imprecise nature of Ormandy's conducting and the distance between the percussionists and the other members of the orchestra. Abel said that it was therefore necessary to use an up-stroke as the stick needed to begin near the surface of the instrument. Abel and Hinger had been trained in this style of playing by William Street at Eastman School of Music, and this style was further confirmed as an ideal way of coping with Ormandy's conducting style.<sup>80</sup>

Bookspan mentioned that later in his career he was told by a conductor that some conductors purposely choose this vague downbeat. As there was no distinct bottom to the beat, it was very difficult for the musicians to determine where their notes should be placed. This created a softer entrance, which was at the basis of the Philadelphia sound.<sup>81</sup> The percussionists were so well integrated into the overall sound of the orchestra that they too needed a soft edge to their sound. The upstroke perfectly fulfilled this need, and they all applied it to their playing. The upstroke further compensated for the dry acoustics of the hall, as the percussionists were able to project their sound into the auditorium.

### *Transmission to the members of Nexus*

Regarding the above discussion about the conductors and musicians in the Philadelphia Orchestra, is there any evidence that some of these ideas, concepts, and styles of playing have been transmitted to the members of Nexus? I would argue in the affirmative. If we begin with Stokowski's model of an orchestra, we can see Nexus as his ideal ensemble. The members of Nexus are in constant contact with their instruments, trying to find new and better ways to make them sound. They do not rehearse too much, and they put the intensity of their love for music into every note they play. They vary the timbres of each phrase according to the feeling of the music at that moment, and they are not limited to one standardized timbre, but have an unending variety.

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Eisenhour, 'Michael Bookspan: Interview with Sharon Eisenhour,' 10 July 1992.

Many of the characteristics of Nexus can be traced to the musicians in the Philadelphia Orchestra. Perhaps the most defining characteristics, though, are the belief in individuality and retaining a creative and progressive approach to one's artform. The members of Nexus experienced the benefits of this first-hand when they were students in Philadelphia. They witnessed an orchestra that promoted and supported the creativity of its artists, and no doubt this became an unconscious role model for their future careers.

In Nexus we hear five, or originally six, distinct voices. The members of Nexus make no attempt to unify these voices in any way, and thus the ensemble comprises a mixture of playing styles, techniques, and approaches to the production of sound. This avoidance of standardization within the ensemble is Nexus' strength, as the players are open to try things in different ways or learn new approaches to their artform. The promotion of individuality clearly has its historical roots in the Philadelphia Orchestra, where Stokowski encouraged his players to avoid standardization of any kind. This is evident with Abel and Hinger, where their constant experimentation has brought forth new instrument designs.

Hartenberger said that during his lessons with Hinger at Curtis, Hinger advised him to read Eugen Herrigel's *Zen in the Art of Archery* as a way of opening himself up to other influences that he may adopt to his playing.<sup>82</sup> He said that this encouraged one to be not 'so tunnel minded and think only of percussion in a narrow sense, but would allow other aspects of your daily experience to come into play, and make your playing more well-rounded by becoming more worldly.' Hartenberger said that 'Hinger would constantly be on the look-out for other things in his life that might impact his playing rather than just the normal technical aspects of playing. He would come in for a lesson and say, "You know I was driving in today from New Jersey and I saw all these ticky-tacky houses." And by that he meant these housing developments where every house was the same. And he said that playing sometimes becomes like that, just all the same, and he spoke of it despairingly. Everything needs more personality, and it was a sign of deterioration of society that it allowed ticky-tacky to become endemic.'<sup>83</sup>

In Nexus, the individuality of each performer is respected, and each is free to contribute in his own way, resulting in an egalitarian approach to music making. The members of Nexus are open to external influences and new experiences, and are keen to learn from others. Hartenberger explained how Hinger lived his artform in his everyday life, and what influence it had on him as a student:

He bought shoes with big treads so that he could grip the timpani pedals better. [Laughs] But in a way that's great, because [when] you see that as a student you realize the completeness with which you have to dedicate yourself if you want to reach that level. And that you have to be constantly concerned about it. And to me that's the basis of this concept of sound, that you have to be aware of every sound you make on the instrument. So I've told my students that if you walk through the percussion studio and tap on a drum, or you know how people just nervously tap on stuff, you should be aware of the sound you're making if you do that, otherwise you're not developing sound

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<sup>82</sup> Eugen Herrigel, *Zen in the Art of Archery*, New York: Vintage Books, 1989.

<sup>83</sup> Hartenberger, Interview with author, 11 October 2004.

awareness enough in your life. So that every sound you make should have either a purpose, or it should have some kind of focus to it.<sup>84</sup>

This focus to sound is one of the unifying elements within Nexus. Becker, Cahn, Hartenberger, and Wyre, use an upstroke as their basic means of sound production. Each member has maintained his own approach to the use of the upstroke, however, so there are also nuances in its use that allow for the individuality of each member to manifest. Craden and Engelman did not adopt this approach to their playing.

According to Hartenberger, the upstroke is a concept of sound production that produces a sound that is centred and pointed rather than unfocused and ill-defined. There is a degree of energy invested in producing this sound, as it requires the player to draw the sound out of the instrument rather than simply drop the mallet onto the surface of the instrument. The sound is protected from the full impact of the stroke through the application of resistance, which is generally applied just prior to impact.<sup>85</sup> This produces a rounded sound that projects well into the auditorium. The connection between the Philadelphia Orchestra percussionists' use of an upstroke and that of some of the members of Nexus is a common factor between the two groups.

Other aspects of sound are common to both groups. When the members of Nexus produce a sound they generally have a certain intent in mind behind each sound, shaping it in a meaningful way within the context of the music. They also have a commitment and conviction to every note, and thus each sound is given a full presence within the overall ensemble. In order to achieve this, a high level of concentration is exerted whereby every note is shaped accordingly. Furthermore, each player has a wide vocabulary of sounds that he is able to produce at will, allowing him to spontaneously choose the appropriate sound for his part. This approach to sound is advocated by both Abel and Hinger. In an interview with Abel, he said that one needs a large vocabulary of strokes on hand so that one can spontaneously choose the appropriate sound for the moment. He said that he and his colleagues in the orchestra were constantly thinking about sound, and even if it required turning upside down to get the right sound, they would do it.<sup>86</sup>

While performing, the members of Nexus listen intently to each other so they can shape their individual parts in relation to the whole ensemble. They are also very conscious of the interaction between each other and between themselves and the audience. This awareness enables them to interact with one another as if they were engaged in a musical conversation. Their interaction takes precedence over producing note-perfect performances, and enables a relaxed performance style as there is less concern about always hitting the right notes. Thus, their performance style exudes a sense of confidence and security. Nexus also prefers to perform rather than rehearse, so as to allow for spontaneous music making rather than following prescribed scripts. This approach to not over-rehearsing was also advocated by Stokowski in his model of the orchestra.

The members of Nexus draw upon a large collection of musical instruments and mallets in which they orchestrate their music. These instruments are of a high quality and produce a good sound. Nexus generally chooses to perform on its own instruments rather than use other instruments while on tour, as they have carefully orchestrated their parts with select sounds.

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Abel, Interview with author, 14 March 2001.

This is not typical of percussion ensembles which frequently use other people's instruments while on tour. It is one area, however, which Nexus rarely compromises on, even though they pay a large sum on transportation costs and have to spend additional time dealing with packing, custom clearances, and the like. Given the importance of sound to their teachers and mentors in Philadelphia, it is not surprising that the members of Nexus are not willing to compromise with the quality of their instruments. During their student years in Philadelphia, they heard Podemski's beautiful K. Zildjian cymbals and many of the other fine instruments belonging to the orchestra. Their instruments are the vehicles through which they realize their music, and sound is of paramount importance to them. Is it possible that their collection of non-Western musical instruments, of which most are metallophones including cymbals, gongs, and other sustaining instruments, was somehow inspired by the tradition of cymbal playing in the Philadelphia Orchestra? All the members of Nexus are sensitive to the complex sounds of cymbals, so it may be the case that they unconsciously carried this aspect of the Philadelphia Orchestra tradition forward and gave it a new form.

### *Rochester*

As mentioned above, Abel and Hinger were students of William Street, former principal percussionist and timpanist of the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, and former professor of percussion at the Eastman School of Music. Becker, Cahn, and Wyre also studied with Street when they pursued studies at the Eastman School. Street began his career as a theatre drummer, then developed a duo xylophone act with his brother Stanley, playing in all the major theatres in Rochester. When the Eastman Theatre opened in 1922, Street was invited to join the Eastman Theatre Orchestra, which later became known as the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra. In 1927, he joined the faculty at the Eastman School, a post he held until his retirement in 1967.

Street was an influential figure in percussion during the twentieth century. In some respects, he was like many other percussionists of his age group who began their careers in theatres and ended them in concert halls. Street's name, however, will be remembered not only for his fine playing of diverse styles and his students who have established prominent careers in many areas of percussion, but also for his adoption of the upstroke in his playing and teaching. Street's name is synonymous with the upstroke, as he espoused this style of playing above all others.

When beginning this research, Hartenberger suggested that it may all lead back to Street. In fact it does, as we see that both Abel and Hinger were Street students. Although they adapted themselves to the nurturing environment of the Philadelphia Orchestra, they took the upstroke with them, which formed the basis of their sound production there. The upstroke is a central element in Nexus' own sound production, and although the stroke received further refinement in the Philadelphia Orchestra, its true origin is in Rochester. A famous story surrounds the origin of the upstroke, and Street is at the centre of this encounter. In the late 1930s when Street was playing in the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, a Japanese xylophone soloist, Yoichi Hiraoka, was featured and Street was impressed by his sound. Apparently, he was lifting his sticks off the instrument, and from that time on, Street did the same.<sup>87</sup> This story was confirmed by Cahn and John Beck, and has become a legend in the percussion world. The story speaks well of Street's openness to outside influences, a trait that was certainly central to his character.

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<sup>87</sup> Cahn, Interview with author, 5 July 2000.

Although not doubting the accuracy of this story and the influence of this encounter on Street, there may be more to his adoption of the upstroke than is immediately evident. On searching through the archives at the Sibley Music Library at the Eastman School of Music, I came across a document that may lead to other avenues of influence. In a personal file, Street had listed his teachers as George Hamilton Green and Joseph Zettleman, timpanist of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. On checking with the members of Nexus and their teachers and mentors, the general impression was that Street had been largely self-taught. Beck said, however, that when he took lessons with Street while a student at Eastman, Street had a photo of the Green brothers placed above a photo of the Street brothers in his studio. He said that Street emulated Green, and perhaps used him as a model.<sup>88</sup> This would not be surprising, as

Green was one of the foremost xylophone players of his day. If Street did in fact learn from Green, then there would be little doubt that the upstroke had its origins there, as Green lifted his mallets off the keyboard and produced a rounded tone that was characteristic of this style of playing.

So does this now bring us back full cycle? In the early 1970s, Becker revived the novelty ragtime music of Green, not knowing that Green was in fact a distant musical ancestor. One could even say that to a large extent Becker assumed Green's identity, as Hinger had done with Schwar. Becker obviously realized a close connection, and phoned Green in the 1970s. Unfortunately, by that time, Green has passed away, but Becker later visited his grave in Woodstock.<sup>89</sup> Green's grandchildren have come to hear Nexus play the music of their grandfather. There is a connection there, between young and old, and it extends beyond the musical realms of Nexus' endeavours.

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<sup>88</sup> John Beck, Interview with author, 15 September 2000.

<sup>89</sup> Bob Becker, Interview with author, 10 August 1999.