

# INTERMISSIONS

MARCH-APRIL

2009

## FEATURED INTERVIEW: ENDRE GRANAT

Adjunct Professor of Violin at University of Southern California's Thornton School of Music

*Endre Granat is one of Hollywood's busiest studio concertmasters and soloists, and has earned an enviable reputation as a distinguished concert artist and chamber musician. Born in Hungary, he studied violin first with his father, a pupil of Jenő Hubay, until he entered the Franz Liszt Academy of Music in Budapest, studying violin there with György Garay, also a pupil of Hubay, chamber music with Léo Weiner, music theory with György Ligeti and composition with Zoltán Kodály. He emigrated to Switzerland, where he pursued post-graduate studies in violin with Sándor Zöldy, a member of the Végh Quartet, and played in the Orchestre de La Suisse Romande under Ernest Ansermet, before becoming concertmaster of the Göteborg Symphony in Sweden. He first visited the US to study violin with Josef Gingold at Indiana University, afterwards returning to Sweden. He then accepted an appointment as assistant concertmaster of the Cleveland Orchestra under the great George Szell. In the US, he made his Carnegie Hall debut playing the Beethoven Concerto, and was invited to appear as soloist*

*with the Chicago, Pittsburgh, and St. Louis Symphony Orchestras. A former student of Jascha Heifetz, he toured extensively throughout Europe, South America, and the Orient on a Fulbright Grant. He recorded a number of albums on the Orion label including music of such composers as Korngold, Rózsa, Ysaÿe, and the complete violin and piano music of Liszt, for which he received the Grand Prix du Disque from the Liszt Society in Budapest. As Hollywood's premier concertmaster and soloist, he has been chosen by such composers as Henry Mancini, Miklós Rózsa, and John Williams to be their concertmaster, and has played for well over 1,800 motion pictures. Recently, he joined the faculty of the Thornton School of Music at the University of Southern California as adjunct professor of violin. For a number of years, Endre Granat has been engaged in researching the pedagogical works of Otakar Ševčík, and just last month presented a seminar on Ševčík for the American String Teachers Association National Conference in Atlanta. He recently spoke with INTERMISSIONS.*



## STEVEN PALINCSAR TO TEACH SELECT STUDENTS AT MIDWEST YOUNG ARTISTS

Steven Palincsar will accept a limited number of advanced private violin students at the Midwest Young Artists Center beginning in the Fall of 2009. A native Chicagoan, he recently became the first Haynes Family Distinguished Master-Teacher in Violin Studies and is widely earning a reputation as one of America's premier violin teachers

specializing in the training of the pre-college aged violin student. Steven Palincsar, who studied at the Eastman School of Music, Indiana University, and The Juilliard School, as well as at the Meadowmount School of Music, has twice had his students invited to perform at New York's famed Carnegie Hall. A Life Member of the Suzuki Association

of the Americas, he is a former faculty member at The School for Strings in New York. Further information about the Steven Palincsar Violin Studio, including audition requirements, is available on the studio website at [www.palincsar.com](http://www.palincsar.com).

INTERMISSIONS: In Hungary, where you were born, you began your violin studies with your father didn't you?

ENDRE GRANAT: Yes, that's true.

INTERMISSIONS: Would you talk a bit about your father as a violinist and teacher?

EG: My father was mostly a student of Hubay. Actually, everybody in Hungary who was a violinist was a student of Hubay, because it was required that everyone who earned the Artist Diploma from the Franz Liszt Academy had to study the last two years with Hubay—as did my father. He was an excellent violinist and he was a member of the opera in Budapest, and he was an extraordinarily fine teacher. I was lucky that he was patient enough to teach me because usually parents don't have the patience to teach their own children. The only problem for me was that my father was in forced-labor camp during WWII, and I had to study with other people. Then I studied with someone who was his assistant during the war, and after the war I resumed my study with my father until at the age of nine, when I was accepted into the Franz Liszt Academy in Budapest. That's when I switched teachers—because I had to. You see my father wasn't on the Liszt Academy faculty. So I studied with György Garay, who was an extraordinarily fine teacher.

INTERMISSIONS: What was Garay like as a teacher?

Garay was one of the finest violin teachers who ever was. First of all, he was an extraordinary violinist. He was a student of Hubay. He was talented as a violinist—he knew virtually the entire repertoire—and as a concertmaster—he was chosen by Klemperer as concertmaster of the Budapest Philharmonic. Later, he moved to Leipzig and did some fine recordings—but these were done much later in his life.

As a teacher, he was second to none. He could analyze any problem and offer solutions. Other teachers were not so analytical, but Garay was. He could explain.

He could give you the solution. And give you the practice methods to the solution. If my teaching resembles anyone's, it resembles his. I hope that I could be half as good as he was. He was tremendously knowledgeable. He had read everything. He would analyze every violinist who came to play. Szigeti, Menuhin, Oistrakh, Kogan, Ricci, Neveu, and Grumiaux played at the Academy's recital hall. Garay would be there and at the next lesson, he would analyze and explain how it was done and what he thought of it. It was so eye-opening to look into someone else's method. Garay also invited these people to come to our class and talk to us.



Endre Granat with  
the great cellist  
Gregor Piatigorsky.

We had two lessons a week—one with piano and one without piano for etudes and Bach. So that was two hours per week. It's a wonderful method—it's something that I follow now in my teaching at USC.

INTERMISSIONS: What was the Franz Liszt Academy of Music like?

EG: The Franz Liszt Academy is an old institution. All the great Hungarian musicians studied there—János Starker, György Sebök, György Sándor, Eugene Ormandy, Josef Szigeti, Zoltán Székely, Béla Bartók—everyone. It's the finest school in the land. The faculty does not change much

because there is nowhere else to go. There is no more "up." So many who studied there had the same teachers. For example, Zoltán Székely, who was first violinist of the Hungarian Quartet, and who is forty years older than I had mostly the same teachers as I did. I got them old, he got them young.

When I was studying there, Kodály was teaching a folk music course, and I got very interested in composition, so I studied composition with him. You see at the time I went to the Liszt Academy, you couldn't graduate until you got yourself a high school diploma, and I completed all requirements as a violinist by the time I was about thirteen. So, that's when I switched to composition with Kodály. György Ligeti was my theory teacher.

We also had a great chamber music teacher, Léo Weiner. Everyone studied with him. I know that Starker studied with him and Sebök studied with him. He was just extraordinary as a chamber music coach.

INTERMISSIONS: Could you talk about Weiner as a teacher?

EG: Well, Weiner was a composer. He was about the same age as Bartók or Kodály. He was not an instrumentalist but a composer and an extraordinary musician who could teach you to play a phrase better than anybody else. His musicianship was stellar. It's not for nothing that you have so many quartets coming out of Hungary—the Véghe, the Bartók, the Takács. That was due to him, not to the individual instrumental teachers. Weiner taught only chamber music—nothing else. He was on the faculty virtually forever. He taught my father in the twenties and he taught me in the fifties. He was tough. He could spend two hours or even the whole afternoon on the first couple of lines in a Beethoven quartet. But from that we learned how to phrase Beethoven in general, how to pay attention to your partners. He provided a good balance with regard to musicianship at the Academy. I think I was extraordinarily lucky to have been there in the "golden years."



INTERMISSIONS: When you left Hungary in 1956 where did you go?

EG: It was a long story about how I got out, but I ended up in Switzerland, where I studied violin with Sándor Zöldy of the Végh Quartet in Basel. My choice was based on that Zöldy was a student of my father before he became a student of Hubay. He took me under his wing, and I got my master's there at the Basel Conservatory under Zöldy. It was great since the Végh Quartet was in residence there and they gave many concerts, and I also had the opportunity to go to their rehearsals. Also, Zöldy was a very fine violinist as was Végh, who was in his prime then.

INTERMISSIONS: What did you do once you received your master's?

EG: Well, I played in the Orchestre de La Suisse Romande under Ernest Ansermet in Geneva. You know Pierre Monteux did the first performances of Stravinsky's ballets. Ansermet was the conductor who did the next performances. He was a very close personal friend of both Debussy and Ravel. Once, he made a change in a Debussy piece,

and I asked him why he did this. Ansermet said, "Well, Debussy told me to." So that was the end of the discussion. I learned a lot from him. His interpretations of Stravinsky and Debussy, Ravel, and the early French impressionists were second to none, as well as Milhaud, Albéniz, and de Falla. His performances were really extraordinary.

Since we were "THE" orchestra of the entire French-speaking area of Switzerland, we had to repeat our concerts in many cities. Once, for example, Nathan Milstein, who was living in Switzerland at the time, played the Tchaikovsky Concerto with us, so I got to hear him play it ten times. I was able to observe how he and other soloists played night after night, and how they rehearsed and practiced.

Then after that I became concertmaster of Göteborg in Sweden for four years.

INTERMISSIONS: Who was the conductor at that time?

EG: It was Charles Mackerras—he's now Sir Charles. At the time he was Charlie. We had lots of guest conductors and soloists too.

I also studied with Joe Gingold in between. Very briefly—end of one semester and a school year.

INTERMISSIONS: What was Gingold like?

EG: I learned a lot from him. I knew the young Gingold. He was a firebrand then. He was still in his prime. He could play anything then and brilliantly. He had a photographic memory. He was extraordinary. He looked at the music and it was memorized. He was capable of playing any chamber music and orchestra music as well. It was an amazing gift.

INTERMISSIONS: After Göteborg, you came to the US?

EG: Yes, I was in the Cleveland Orchestra. I was assistant concertmaster under George Szell. I succeeded Arnold Steinhardt, who gave up orchestra playing to devote his time to the Guarneri Quartet. Druian was concertmaster in those days. I also taught at the Cleveland Institute of Music.

Pierre Amoyal and Andre Granat join their teacher, Jascha Heifetz, on the beach.



INTERMISSIONS: When did you move to the University of Illinois?

EG: That was at the invitation of Paul Rolland, who was a professor there and a founding father of ASTA. He took three years off from teaching to work on his String Project. It was a very interesting opportunity. So, I taught his class and as well as my students from the Cleveland Institute who followed me to Illinois.

INTERMISSIONS: You also studied with Heifetz too?

EG: Yes, that was a totally different plateau. I studied with Heifetz after playing in the Cleveland Orchestra and teaching at the University of Illinois. Heifetz was not a teacher, he was a performer—so you had to watch and learn by watching. Heifetz never really offered any explanation. But just watching him pick up the violin was a lesson second to none.

INTERMISSIONS: When did you begin concertizing as soloist?

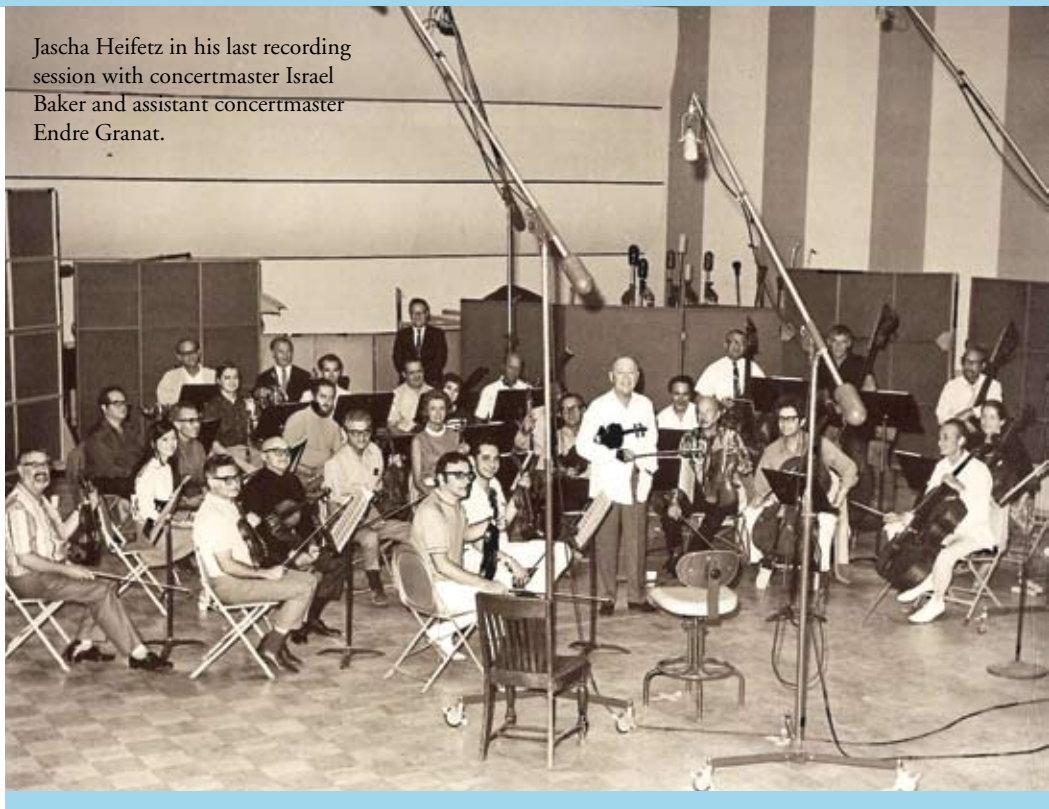
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EG: I was a child prodigy, then later I entered the competition circuit and won the Heidelberg competition—first prize, and at the Queen Elisabeth competition in Brussels, I received the Ysaÿe medal. I played my Carnegie Hall debut and after that, I was invited to play as soloist with the Chicago Symphony under Georg Solti, but at that point my wife passed away, so I never played with them. I did play as soloist with the Pittsburgh Symphony and Saint Louis Symphony, and I played the first performance of the Schoenberg Concerto in Los Angeles. I played Schoenberg everywhere—in Europe, Scandinavia, and South America.

I also played lots of community concerts. There used to be an organization called Affiliate Artists, which took me to audiences which would never go to a concert. I have no problem talking to audiences because of this experience. I'm completely at ease.

One year, I played in a hospital in Peoria, Illinois, for mentally disturbed children. During this performance I was playing

Jascha Heifetz in his last recording session with concertmaster Israel Baker and assistant concertmaster Endre Granat.



something with harmonics which sort of sounds like whistling and one of the kids started whistling. I learned later that this was the first response of this autistic child to anything.

I was awarded a Fulbright Senior Grant and I moved to Seoul, Korea where I was teaching in several universities including Seoul National University, and I was touring for the USIA and USIS. Pretty much everywhere in the Far East including Thailand, Hong Kong, and Tokyo, where I played the first performance of the Luciano Berio Sequenza No. 8, which he wrote for me. It helped to open doors. I played the rarely-heard Lalo Concerto Russe, and I played recitals. You know, it's frightening to play a recital in Japan because there's hardly any applause. You never know how they feel about your playing until the end of the recital—and then they go nuts and they don't let you go, and you play encore after encore.

INTERMISSIONS: When did you begin playing in Hollywood?

EG: In 1976, I began to play in the studios, and at that point I devoted my entire life to working with the finest in Hollywood including Miklós Rózsa, Hank Mancini, John

Williams, Jerry Goldsmith, and so on and so forth. All the greats, plus a crazy number of records for all the pop stars, and virtually thousands of television shows. This is not in any way an exaggeration. I did somewhere between 1,800 and 2,000 motion pictures. Most people don't even know that there are that many made. And I'm still doing it.

INTERMISSIONS: How should a young player prepare for a career in Hollywood?

EG: Hollywood today is different now. Much of the work we used to do is now in Europe, Asia, South America, even in Mexico, so it's harder to get going. Someone needs a good orchestral and chamber background. You need to be a sight-reader second to none. You need to be a wonderful violinist—a really top player, because the microphone is right on top of the player. You need to have experience with various different styles—jazz, classical, gypsy, etc., and be completely at home with them. You need an extraordinary sense of rhythm—which is of paramount importance. Pitch, perfect intonation is vital. Then you need to have a good personality also because it's important that you get along with people since you will be working with people all day



Endre Granat confers with pianist Leonard Pennario about their recording of composer Miklós Rózsa's music for violin and piano on the Orion label.



long and even into the night. You need to be a quick study. You need to listen to every kind of music.

INTERMISSIONS: How did you happen to join the USC faculty?

EG: I've always been teaching, but it might be two students at a time, and it might be for two months. Teaching is always a two-way street. I learn as much from the student as they learn from me. I learn how to solve their problems. Every student has in addition to common problems, their own individual problems.

Anyway, I was asked to do a master class at USC, and to my amazement, I got a call a few days later asking if I would teach there regularly. I was totally speechless, and to my amazement, I said "yes"—I really want it.

At USC, we treat students as if they are at a music conservatory. We have an extraordinary faculty, second to none. We are all different. We have Midori, who is our department chair, and who is doing a heck of a job. I share my studio with Alice Schoenfeld, who has been here for many years, and she's still here and still teaching. I'm very blessed to be here.

INTERMISSIONS: You've been doing research into Ševčík's works. Could you talk a little about what you've been doing?

EG: Ševčík lived a very long life—teaching well into his eighties. The studies that we have represent a very small part of his output. The last opus number that people know is Op. 9, which is from about 1910, but he lived another twenty-four years after that. I am working with Prof. Stephen Shipp, of the University of Michigan; to update Ševčík's well-known works and to prepare Ševčík's unpublished and long out of print works for publication. We are also preparing a book on Ševčík. After Op. 9, he wrote a few Czech songs and dances arranged for violin and piano. Then he wrote Op. 11, a monumental work that he thought was more important than his earlier works. His Op. 12-15, are lost and I have little hope to find them. Ševčík also prepared editions of some masterworks. He added a second violin part and produced practice methods. Among others, the Brahms, Mendelssohn, Tchaikovsky, and Wieniawski violin concertos, the Paganini First Concerto (first movement only), as well as such pieces as *Zigeunerweisen*, *Witches Dance*, *Moses Fantasy*, and the Joachim Cadenza to Brahms

Concerto. Then for his last known opus, which is Op. 26, he prepared the Kreutzer studies. He published fifty studies, Kreutzer's 42 plus eight additional variants which are his own, using octaves, fingered octaves, etc. The last of his works is lost. It is the study material for the Dvořák Concerto. He may not have completed this work. During my research I was interviewing some still-living disciples of Ševčík, as well as second generation Ševčík students who studied with Ševčík's assistants, about Ševčík's methods. My findings will be part of the upcoming Ševčík book I mentioned before.

INTERMISSIONS: What kind of violin do you play?

EG: I play on a violin made by Greg Alf (of Ann Arbor, Michigan). I have many great bows. I have Carl Flesch's Pecatte. I have an Henri and a Simon. I'm a bow fanatic and I've been collecting a long time. I think a young violinist who is starting his career is so much better off buying a modern (and affordable) violin, and growing with it.

## IN CONVERSATION STEVEN PALINCSAR ON VIOLIN TEACHING

INTERMISSIONS: Today, we're going to talk about transitions.

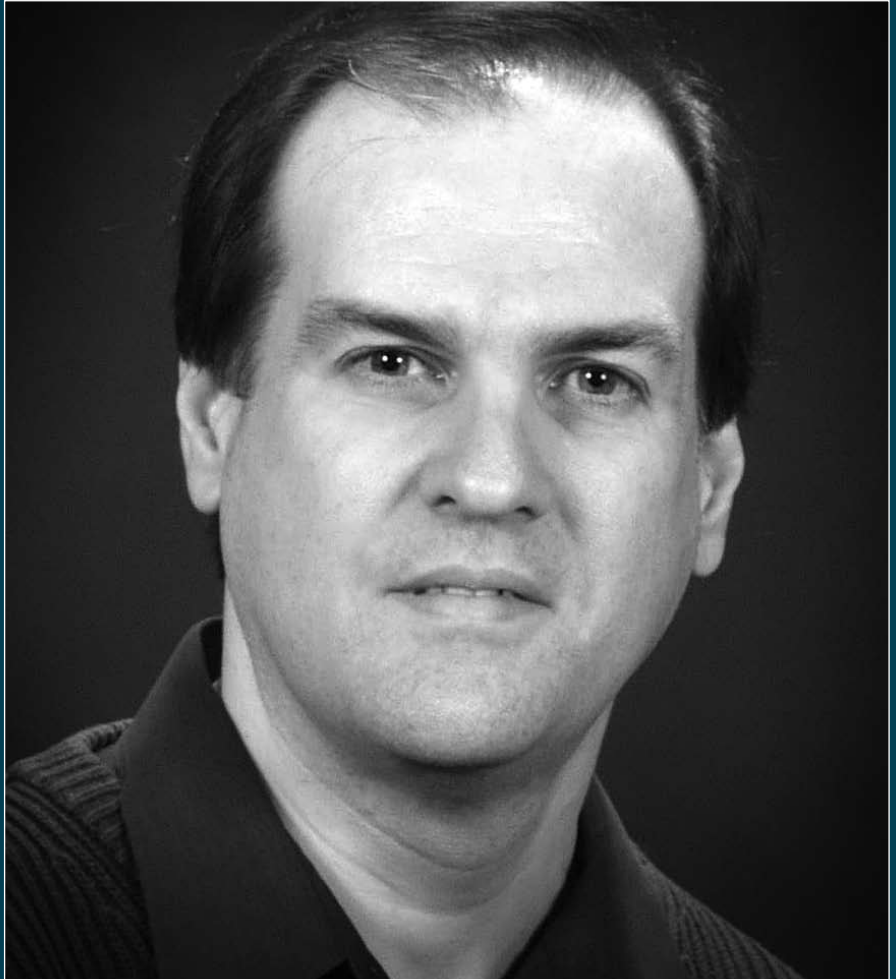
STEVEN PALINCSAR: Yes, well at a certain point in every student's life (and teacher's), there comes the time when I want each student to move forward and to leave me behind. It will be time for the student to go on to another teacher.

INTERMISSIONS: When should a student move on?

SP: Well, certainly for college studies since right now I don't teach on the college level. Second, for me, I believe that not every teacher is right for every student. Even

6 Dorothy DeLay was not right for every student. I remember that Joshua Bell spent two summers at the Aspen Music School, but was very unhappy there. I believe that a teacher's approach must change with each student.

In my own case, once or twice I have worked with a student who preferred a much harsher approach than what I am capable of, so I recommend that the student find a more appropriate teacher. I don't yell at students. I'm not sarcastic to them or mean to them, and I'm not going to yell or threaten students or be mean even if a student or their parents want me to be that way. Believe it or not, I've even heard from one of my colleagues that a student's parents once asked him to hit their son! I would never do that or even accept that family into my studio.



One of America's premier violin teachers, Steven Palincsar was recently named as the first Haynes Family Distinguished Master-Teacher of Violin Studies. A Life Member of the Suzuki Association of the Americas, he is a Registered Suzuki Violin Teacher through Level 8. Since founding The Steven Palincsar Violin Studio, his students have twice been invited to perform at Carnegie Hall. Next fall, he will begin accepting private violin students through Midwest Young Artists. He can be contacted through his website: [www.palincsar.com](http://www.palincsar.com).

If a student just will not do the required preparation or is disrespectful towards the teacher, these are legitimate grounds for the teacher to drop the student from his/her studio. Every really nationally-known teacher has a huge waiting list, and students must remember that it is a great privilege to study in my studio.

Normally, however, when one of my kids is accepted into the studio of a really top-level teacher, I am overjoyed—provided that I feel the student is ready to move on. You know, I prefer that my kids move on once they have really mastered the violin both technically and musically. At that point, they will need to go on to a school such as Curtis or Juilliard, or to find a teacher who can provide them with the opportunities and further training that they will need.

INTERMISSIONS: Besides Curtis or Juilliard, where else can a student go to pursue further opportunities and training on the level you describe?

SP: Oh, Indiana, Manhattan School of Music, New England Conservatory, Colburn, USC's Thornton School of Music, Rice, Northwestern, Cleveland Institute of Music, perhaps Michigan, Peabody, Mannes, Texas at Austin. There are a number of choices. The student must determine which is best for himself or herself.

INTERMISSIONS: Isn't this an emotionally painful time for you and the student?

SP: I don't think it should be, but sometimes it can be. I remember that at the Suzuki

Association of the Americas National Conference in Minneapolis one year, Pamela Frank talked about how when she was accepted into the Curtis Institute, her teacher in New York, a very prominent one, virtually cut her off and would have nothing further to do with her. I thought then and think now that this is dreadful.

It is my job to prepare the student both technically, musically, personally, and emotionally for this next step so that it becomes a very positive next step, and I believe it is part of my job to continue to provide each student with my undying support even at this juncture in their lives.

Of course, sometimes the student severs the relationship himself or herself because another teacher has gone behind my back and has plied that student with promises of achieving greater things in that teacher's studio than what I can provide. That's the pitfall when you develop a national reputation as a top-notch teacher—that your students are known as being some of the best-trained kids in the country. Some unscrupulous teachers will try to raid your studio. Mostly, however, my more distinguished colleagues know that I am happy when one of my kids is accepted into their studios, and that I willingly seek out the best opportunities and further training for my students.

You know, when I accept kids into my studio, I hope that I have the support of their previous teachers. A teacher who specializes in teaching beginners is really not the best-qualified to take kids to the much, much

higher technical and artistic level that my students are capable of playing at.

INTERMISSIONS: How do you continue to provide support to your students after they leave to go on to the next teacher?

SP: By staying open to their needs. I try always to be supportive of the student and of their new teacher and also of that new teacher's approach. I never speak ill of the new teacher, and try to help the student to become supportive of the new teacher as well. I try to do whatever the student needs me to do (within reason) so that the student feels that they have my support.

However, there is one thing that I will not do, and that is to continue to teach them. This is no longer my job. Sometimes kids feel as if they are deserting you, and come back wanting to study with me during vacations. I do not permit this.

Instead, I may suggest that they (and their parents) have lunch with me instead. I can show them that I'm still interested in them, but that I am not their teacher anymore, and I try to show them that I still believe in them, and would like to hear about their studies, their concerts, and their activities, and that they continue to be important to me as friends, as colleagues, and as people—but not any longer as students. That's their new teacher's responsibility.



# DAVID OISTRAKH COMPLETE EMI RECORDINGS REISSUED

Over the past few years, CDs from some of the world's all-time greatest violin virtuosi have been appearing more and more in new reissued versions. The great Russian master David Oistrakh, whose brilliant technique, powerful and rich tone, and authoritative musicianship, is no exception.

Born in the city of Odessa in the Ukraine on September 30, 1908, David Oistrakh studied violin with Piotr Stoliarsky, making his debut playing the Bach Violin Concerto in A minor. In 1937, he won first prize in the Brussels competition, which would soon become the Queen Elisabeth of Belgium International Violin Competition.

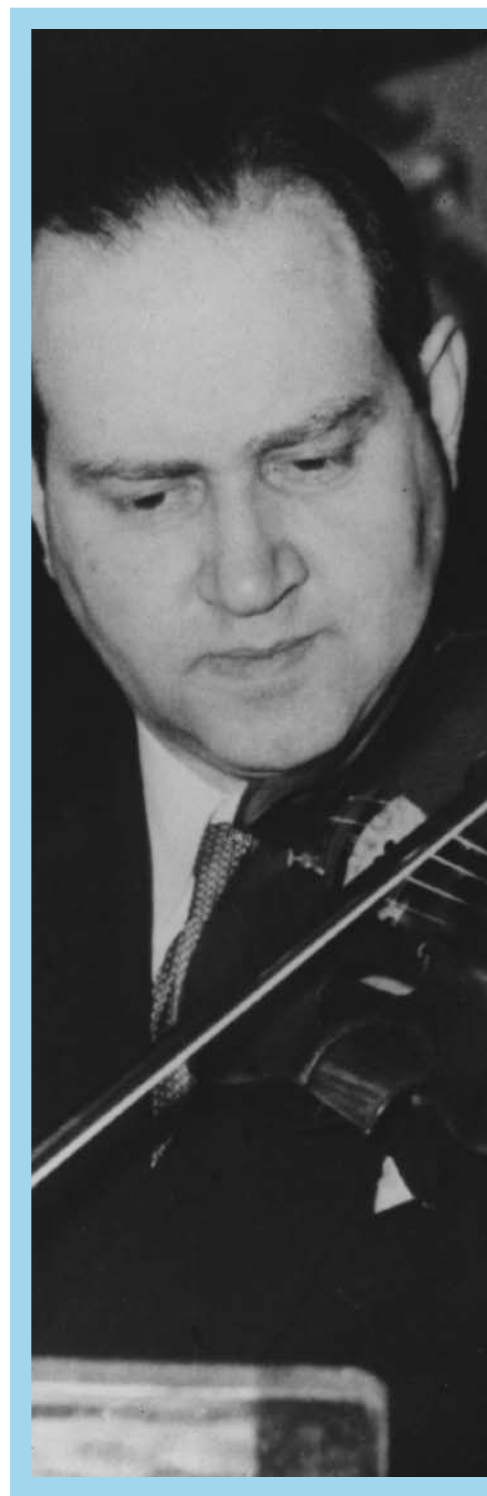
During the course of his career, he performed throughout the former Soviet Union, as well as Europe, Japan, and the United States, both as violin and viola virtuoso, as conductor, and as chamber musician. Oistrakh formed a trio with pianist Lev Oborin, with whom he had often appeared in violin-piano sonata programs, and cellist Sviatoslav Knushevitsky.

Oistrakh, who was married to Tamara Rotareva Oistrakh was the father of one son, Igor, who was born in 1931. His son became a well-known violin virtuoso, who regularly toured and recorded with his more famous father.

David Oistrakh was also a distinguished violin professor, who taught at the Moscow Conservatory and numbered Gidon Kremer, Viktor Pikaisen, and his own son Igor Oistrakh among his students. Composers Aram Khachaturian and Dmitri Shostakovich dedicated their beloved violin concerti to Oistrakh, as did Sergei Prokofiev his two violin sonatas. David Oistrakh died while on tour in 1974.

Oistrakh left a large recorded legacy including albums on DGG, EMI, Philips, RCA, and Sony Classics as well as on the Russian Melodiya label. He recorded concerti of Bach, Bartók, Beethoven, Brahms, Bruch, Dvořák, Glazounov, Hindemith, Kabalevsky, Khachaturian, Mendelssohn, Mozart, Prokofiev, Shostakovich, Stravinsky, Szymanowski, and Tchaikovsky, as well as the Lalo *Symphonie Espagnole*. He also recorded sonatas of Beethoven, Brahms, Franck, and Prokofiev, as well as showpieces of Paganini, Ravel, Sarasate, Vieuxtemps, Wieniawski, Ysaÿe, and Zarzycki. The EMI collection includes the following music:

DAVID OISTRAKH—THE COMPLETE EMI RECORDINGS • (Concerti including Beethoven, Brahms, Bruch, Khachaturian, Mozart, Prokofiev, Shostakovich, Sibelius; Beethoven Triple Concerto and Brahms Double Concerto; Sonatas including Beethoven No. 3, Brahms No. 3, Franck, Mozart K. 454, Prokofiev No. 2, Szymanowski, Tartini *The Devil's Trill*; Lalo *Symphonie Espagnole*, Taneyev Suite de Concert; Mozart Concertone and Sinfonia Concertante; Beethoven *Archduke* Trio and Schubert Octet; various encores) • David Oistrakh (violin, viola, cond.); Igor Oistrakh (violin); Lev Oborin (piano); Sviatoslav Richter (piano); Sviatoslav Knushevitsky (cello); Mstislav Rostropovich (cello); Sixten Ehrling (cond.); Aram Khachaturian (cond.); Jean Martinon (cond.); George Szell (cond.); Herbert Von Karajan (cond.); Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra; Cleveland Orchestra; London Symphony Orchestra; Philharmonia Orchestra; Stockholm Festival Orchestra; various pianists; • EMI 50999 2 14712 2 3 (17 CDs)



The best advice is to practice slowly, carefully, and to live with the violin all day, every day.

— David Oistrakh

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