

The Orchestra Society of Philadelphia

After I started teaching at Glassboro State College in the '70s, I came to know Bert Greenspan, a professor in the music school who taught violin. I ordered several of his performance classes and played chamber music at his home. This was the beginning of a 50 year friendship which continues to this day.

One day, Bert told me about an orchestra in which he was participating called The Orchestra Society of Philadelphia (Note: this is not the Philadelphia Orchestra). Directed by Sidney Rothstein, it met once a week in an auditorium at Drexel University. Periodically, it gave concerts open to the public at no charge. Bert asked me if I was interested in participating, and after some thought, I decided that it would be a good idea. I was then invited to join the first violin section. This began an interesting two years.

Several interesting concerts come to mind. One was the Beethoven Symphony no 9, with the Mendelssohn Chorus of Philadelphia performed outside in front of The Philadelphia Museum of Art to a large audience. Another memorable performance was the Mahler Symphony no. 8, (The Symphony of a Thousand) which officially opened Philadelphia's Bicentennial Celebration. The performance was broadcast nationally and widely acclaimed.

From time to time, members of the orchestra had the opportunity to perform as soloists with the orchestra in open rehearsal. On one occasion, I performed the Bach Concerto for two violins with another member of the orchestra. I also had the opportunity to perform the Stravinsky Violin Concerto, a difficult work for any violinist, and I was no exception.

It's pretty much sums up the memorable occasions I associate with the Orchestra Society of Philadelphia.