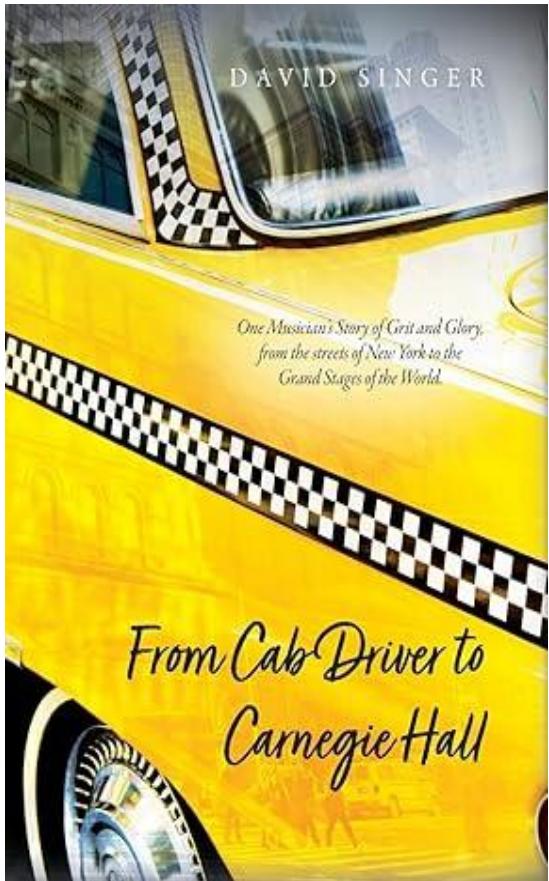


Acclaimed Clarinetist Who Performed at the White House & Drove a Cab the Same Day Reflects On a Lifetime of Stories & Accomplishments in a Moving Memoir, *From Cab Drive to Carnegie Hall*



"David Singer was uniformly exhilarating ... fervent but poised...to describe his playing would be to enumerate a catalogue of virtues."

--*The New York Times*

"An intimate, candid look at the highs and lows of one musician's artistic pursuit."

--*Kirkus Reviews*

"This book will pull readers in immediately. Singer's twists and turns are familiar to all musicians and his incredible career, connections, and stories should be read and known by all clarinetists."

- *The Clarinet Magazine - The International Clarinet Society*

"This is an excellent view of an inspired life, a life in the turgid world of classical music in the 1960s and 70s by one of its key players. Singer was at the apex of music-making in the musical capital of the world in its peak era. He was the finest clarinetist among many, and reading of his struggles to reach and survive at that peak is stirring."

--5-Star Amazon Book Review

David Singer has had an exceptional musical career playing for decades on world-class stages, but his life's story is one of humble roots, grit and determination, and at one time, holding down three jobs to provide for his family. He shares his inspiring story of how he rose from an abusive childhood to ascend to performing at some of the most elite venues in the world in a stirring memoir, *From Cab Drive to Carnegie Hall: One Musician's Story of Grit and Glory, from the Streets of New York to the Grand Stages of the World.*

David Singer performed many times in Carnegie Hall including a chamber music performance, a trio, with the iconic violinist Yehudi Menuhin, and pianist Gyorgy Sandor. He appeared as a soloist with the Grammy Award-winning Orpheus Chamber Orchestra for whom he performed

and recorded with as co-Principal Clarinetist for 36 years. In addition, he performed with “Music From Marlboro” and The Lincoln Center Chamber Music Society at the White House for Presidents Carter and Clinton. At the Marlboro Music Festival the legendary pianist and Director of Marlboro, Rudolf Serkin recorded a Max Reger Clarinet Sonata with David Singer which was re-engineered and released internationally by a former chief engineer of the BBC, Andrew Rose for Pristine Classical.

This story-filled book, *From Cab Driver to Carnegie Hall*, is more than a musician's memoir; it is an inspiring narrative that resonates with anyone who has faced life's challenges head-on. An ode to the power of never giving up and giving oneself every chance to succeed. This book will not only entertain but also encourage and inspire, making it a must-read for anyone looking for a story of triumph, perseverance, and the transformative power of music.

David Singer shares in his book stories of performing with: Yehudi Menuhin, Yo-Yo Ma, Itzhak Perlman, Rudolf Serkin, Andre Previn, actress Stockard Channing, Pablo Casals, Branford Marsalis and more. He became a member of the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra when the group was performing for free; before the Grammy Awards and the more than 70 Deutsche Grammophon recordings.

There are also funny stories about Leonard Bernstein, Yo-Yo Ma and others.

“This enthralling memoir oscillates between the grandeur and prestige of performing on the grand concert halls of New York, Vienna, and Tokyo with the day-to-day struggle of making ends meet,” says Singer. “One minute I am on stage with world-class musicians, the next I am staring down the barrel of a gun held by someone who wants to rob me.”

David Singer was raised by two depressed parents. His father was physically abusive, his mother psychologically hurtful. He discusses his Jewish roots, and how his grandfather, who fought in the Russian Revolution, confronted burning KKK crosses on his lawn. David writes of how that grandfather also appeared as an amateur flutist on TV’s The Andy Williams Show as part of the Senior Citizen’s Orchestra of Los Angeles.

In an interview, Singer will share the following:

- * What it was like to go from playing for free with Orpheus to become celebrated all over the world with Grammy Nominations and Awards plus a major recording contract, 70 CDs with Deutsche Grammophon. These recordings are still playing on every major classical radio station in the world including Sirius XM in the US.
- * How it felt to perform with musical royalty: Yo-Yo Ma, Yehudi Menuhin, and Itzhak Perlman.
- * The grit and determination that was needed to overcome an abusive childhood.
- * How his Jewish roots and grandparents shaped his life.
- * What it took to develop his musical talents at such a young age.
- * Why he felt compelled to support his family and move across the country to Seattle to sell

welding supplies during a time when his musical career was peaking.

- * Why he was driving a cab on the very same day he performed for President Jimmy Carter at the White House.

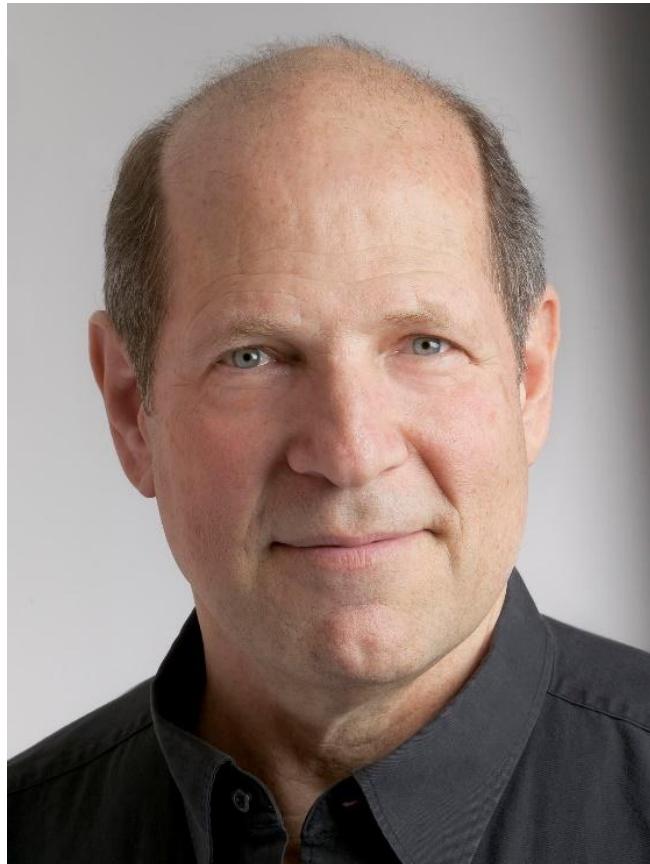
“As readers traverse through my life,” says Singer, “they witness the transformative power of music and determination. People might appreciate my life as a testament to the relentless pursuit of one’s dream, irrespective of life’s ups and downs.”

From Cab Driver to Carnegie Hall is not only a chronicle of musical achievements; it is an inspiring story of resilience, a clarion call to never give up.

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David Singer

Biography



David Singer is an internationally acclaimed musician whose performances include at the White House for President Jimmy Carter and later, for President Bill Clinton, and as a guest artist with the Lincoln Center Chamber Music Society and chamber music concerts with Yehudi Menuhin, Yo-Yo Ma, Rudolf Serkin and members of the Guarneri and Emerson String Quartets. He is an Emeritus co-Principal Clarinetist of the multi-Grammy Award-winning Orpheus Chamber Orchestra. His performances have been seen on the BBC and heard on Sirius XM.

Singer performed with Yehudi Menuhin in Bela Bartok's Contrasts for violin, clarinet and piano in Carnegie Hall, and was also a featured performer at the Marlboro Music Festival for six

summers where he recorded a Max Reger Sonata with Rudolf Serkin, which was remastered and reissued internationally by Pristine Classical in 2021.

Naxos and American Classics released Singer's recording of the Aaron Copland Clarinet Concerto and from England, Gramophone Magazine wrote, "Singer's Copland performance is one of the finest accounts around. His playing is exceptional...sensitive and expressive...technically brilliant."

Joseph Horowitz wrote in *The New York Times* about David Singer, "An exceptionally gifted clarinetist, to describe his playing would be to enumerate a catalogue of virtues."

Singer appeared with actress, Stockard Channing in the play, "The Lady and the Clarinet" at the Long Wharf Theater in New Haven, Connecticut and Alex Klein of *The New York Times* wrote: "Moods are eloquently and wittingly reflected in the musical passages played by David Singer. There is a breath-catching single steady, elongated tone: a startling moment in which the words and the music come together."

The Max Reger Institute in Karlsruhe, Germany and Pristine Classical selected a recording Singer made with the legendary pianist Rudolf Serkin in 1977 of the Reger Sonata in Bb, Op 107 and it was reissued internationally in November, 2021 to begin the celebration of the 150th anniversary of Max Reger's birth, 2023.

Professor Singer helped establish the now thriving chamber music program and collaborative faculty/student performances at Montclair State University, NJ where he served as Coordinator of Chamber Music and Woodwinds, Professor of Clarinet for 23. He was awarded Emeritus status from the University in October 2012. He also taught at Yale and Princeton.

He has served on the Music Advisory Board of Young Musicians Foundation of Los Angeles, an organization dedicated to helping many of the most accomplished young musicians in Southern California, ages 10 – 26, thrive through creating performance opportunities and scholarships.

Rudolf Jettel, Principal Clarinetist of the Vienna Philharmonic, was his musical father. He studied with him as a 12-year-old boy, sat next to him during performances of the Vienna Philharmonic during opera season, which is when he became obsessed with the idea that he wanted to be a musician. "I went back to study with Prof Jettel in my 20's as an out of work musician, and then in my 30's, I was performing all over the world including Vienna, at the most famous concert halls and Prof Jettel came to hear me perform."

Today, you can hear David Singer perform nationally as a soloist as well as on many Orpheus recordings from Deutsche Grammophon on Sirius XM's Symphony Hall.

He recently appeared as a 1920's Polish klezmer musician at the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB) in a play called "Indecent."

Singer coaches young musicians throughout Southern California and performs with both the Singer Chamber Players and the Channel Islands Chamber Orchestra.

From Cab Driver to Carnegie Hall marks David Singer's debut as an author encapsulating his life's journey on and off the revered stages of the world.

Born and raised in Los Angeles, he also lived in Philadelphia, Seattle, New York City for 35 years, and Vienna for two years. He resides in Camarillo, CA, where he lives with his wife Barb, and dogs Rosie and Raspberry. For more information, please see: www.singerclarinet.com.

David Singer Q & A *From Cab Driver to Carnegie Hall*



1. What is your debut book, *From Cab Driver to Carnegie Hall*, about? I performed a special concert in the White House for President Jimmy Carter, and members of Congress and the same day went back to NYC and drove my cab. With Yehudi Menuhin, recognized as one of the greatest violinists of the 20th century and his pianist Gyorgy Sandor, I performed the Bartok

Contrasts in a sold-out concert in Carnegie Hall and six weeks later I was climbing fences and running from guard dogs selling welding supplies to welders in the Seattle/Tacoma area.

Performing with the greatest musicians on the most prestigious stages of the world for many years I also had my life threatened more than a few times trying to make a living. Funny stories as well regarding Leonard Bernstein, Yo-Yo Ma and more.

2. What inspired you to pen it? In the beginning I wanted to leave something for family to remember me by. Most who know me understand that I had a good career, filled with many highlights like winning a Grammy with the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, NYC, but few know that when I began with Orpheus, we were playing in libraries for free. For several years I was one of those cab drivers picking up and dropping off concert goers in front of Carnegie Hall yet I could have performed there the night before. I lived in fear of being noticed by one of my colleagues. That could have cost me my career. I suffered child abuse, had no financial support to fall back on, yet I made it work. Others can too.

3. What are some of your greatest memories as a performer? My West Coast premiere of the Robert Aldridge Clarinet Concerto with the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, which was written for me, had special meaning. The performance took place in Royce Hall, UCLA where I used to roll down the grassy hills as my father was attending classes there. The evening of the premiere my entire family, including my dad - who was very sick with emphysema and could barely walk – was there. After the performance I was surrounded by family except my father. I went back into the hall and there he was, hunched over, coughing uncontrollably. Unable to take a deep breath he was overcome with emotion. For the first time I heard him say; “David, I am so proud of you.”

4. What are three take-away messages you hope readers will enjoy after reading your book? Three take-away messages are: 1. Find something that inspires you and that you are good at. 2. Make short term and long-term goals for what you are working to achieve and each day do something, even if it is something very small, that will keep you on the road to achieving your goals. 3. Never give up.

5. You had a tough upbringing under two parents that you describe as depressed; a father who was physically abusive and a mother who was psychologically abusive. How did this influence or shape you? Instead of keeping my anger bottled up inside forever, I decided to face my parents, particularly my father, before it was too late. I asked my dad if his father had beaten him. He laughed answering, “of course not”. “If your father didn’t beat you, why did you beat me?” After a few very quiet and uncomfortable moments, I left and was about to get into my car when I felt a very warm, loving hug from behind. Tearfully my father said he was sorry and that he hoped I could forgive him. Facing my parents about what they did and getting my father’s apology helped me get past the abuse I had to deal with as a young child.

6. One set of your grandparents came from Russia, including a grandfather who fought during the Russian Revolution. Did they have to confront anti-Semitism here? I heard

nothing specific about the anti-Semitism they faced. My mother's family with her two uncles and their families drove from Cleveland, where they were living, to the Los Angeles area looking for work. Together they purchased a farm outside of Los Angeles. The Ku Klux Klan burned a large cross by their house. After weeks of threats, they all moved back to Cleveland. A few years later, when the Depression hit, my mother's immediate family moved back to Los Angeles where eventually, my grandfather got a job working for the city, painting prisons. Sometime in the 1970's, I saw my grandfather playing his flute as part of the Senior Citizen's Orchestra of Los Angeles on the Andy Williams Show on TV.

7. A man you call your music father was a hero and saved Jews during World War II, but he was punished for his good deeds. Please tell us more. My teacher, Rudolf Jettel, was a member of the Vienna Philharmonic from the 1940's when many were part of the Nazi Party. Jettel's wife was Jewish and musicians in the orchestra told him, "...if you ever want to get rid of your wife, just say the word." Other Jews had already been sent with their families to the death camps. Rudolf Jettel was expelled from the Philharmonic for being part of a network working to help Jews. The famous conductor Wilhelm Furtwangler spoke up on Jettel's behalf and within one year he was put back in the orchestra. Today, a large plaque hangs in the Vienna Philharmonic Museum and celebrates Rudolf Jettel's bravery helping Jews escape the Nazis.

8. To make ends meet, you were driving a cab. You wrote in your book that you performed before President Jimmy Carter and his wife at the White House by day, and by night, you were back driving a cab. How did you navigate these two very different worlds?

After performing for President Carter, taking a train back to NYC and getting into a cab to take my shift, I picked up passengers and said, "...Guess what I did today?" Of course, the people I was driving around reacted in different ways. Mostly they just rolled their eyes, nodded, became fidgety and could hardly wait to get out of my cab. On another occasion, weeks after I performed in Carnegie Hall with Yehudi Menuhin, I was literally running for my life trying to avoid guard dogs in my attempts to sell welding products to the welders of large companies in the Seattle/Tacoma area. For more than a year, the money I made to pay rent and eat for both my daughter and me came entirely from the welding products I sold.

9. You were a cabbie in 1970s New York City. A rough time. Were you ever robbed or threatened with violence? A gun was pointed to my head a few times when I was driving a cab. I was able to distract the young men by telling them about a place where they could meet beautiful women. It worked. A young woman was standing on a street corner crying, holding a baby. I took her to another part of town where many were lying about on the sidewalk. Broken glass was everywhere. She left in a hurry but said she would pay me. When she didn't come back, I foolishly got out of my cab and went into the building after her. BIG MISTAKE. People were lying around, some putting needles into their arms. The place smelled of excrement. I got off there, fast.

10. How did you come to choose the clarinet – or did it choose you? In fifth grade I had a crush on a girl who I found out was going to be in a talent contest. Wanting her to notice me I told my dad that I thought it would be a good idea to enter the talent contest too. "But David,

you don't know how to do anything", he said. Being the band director of the local high school, my father began bringing home different instruments until we found one that I could make a sound on. He taught me a song, "Long, Long Ago", I entered the contest, took first place and the girl I had a crush on liked me even less than before. I lost the girl but found the clarinet.

11. What was it like performing with Yehudi Menuhin, Yo-Yo Ma, Itzhak Perlman, Rudolf Serkin, Andre Previn, actress Stockard Channing, Pablo Casals, Leonard Bernstein, Branford Marsalis? Casals, existential music making; Yo-Yo, great sense of humor; Bernstein, flamboyant and full of compliments; Branford, slightly insecure when playing classical music. One cold day I saw Itzhak Perlman standing in front of Riverside Church before our rehearsal. He needed someone to open the very heavy doors for him to get in. Easier for him to play the violin than take off his jacket. Serkin was serious, detailed and patient with me. Very earthy sense of humor. Previn was kind, except for the time he told Kathleen Battle that she had the "greatest, most beautiful voice", "a fabulous musician", and that she was the "BIGGEST BITCH" he "had ever worked with." After our performance in Carnegie Hall, Yehudi Menuhin was so kind toward my mother.

12. You once met Bernie Williams, former star of the New York Yankees. He dabbles in music and praised you. You are a music all-star but I gather you don't dabble in baseball, right? I love baseball! After a concert in Carnegie Hall, I was being congratulated by one of my heroes. Someone else came up, annoyed that I was spending so much time with this one person and asked my new best friend who he was and what he did for a living. He replied very modestly, "...my name is Bernie Williams and I play centerfield for the NY Yankees." Unimpressed, the man congratulated me and walked away. I hit Bernie on the shoulder and exclaimed, "Ha!!! I'm a bigger star than you!!!" Bernie and I had a good laugh together. I was making \$12,000 from music that year and Bernie was probably making \$12,000,000 from baseball.

13. Which was harder – performing on elite stages or teaching college students how to play an instrument for a quarter-century? A rewarding class I taught each semester as a professor was Music Appreciation. My classes each had more than 100 students and no one had ever attended an opera or classical music performance. I introduced the opera Don Giovanni, who thought he was God's gift to women, and Carmen, the very sexy woman who seduced the police officer into letting her out of jail for her promise to run away with him. These stories, along with the vivid and graphic videos I showed inspired them to travel to the Metropolitan Opera and see how fun and entertaining operas could be. Performing on the grand stages of the world was personally exciting and getting unsuspecting students interested in opera was rewarding in a completely different way.

14. How would you describe your writing style? My inspiration to write comes from many authors. Among them: David McCullough and his vivid descriptions of famous people and places making history come to life. John Steinbeck and the manner in which he expresses the raw emotions of desperation and hope in telling the story of one of the most devastating chapters

in American history, the Depression, and James Hilton, in perhaps my favorite story of all in his unforgettable tale of “Lost Horizon” and the resident’s motto to live by, “Be Kind.” I also love his quote, “people make mistakes in life believing too much, but they have a damned dull time if they believe too little.”

15. What challenges, if any, did you overcome to write your book? The challenge was, thinking logically, how can someone who has not taken an English class since high school, write a book?? I began going decade by decade filling in memorable moments. Then it became like a game, a jig saw puzzle, filling in the events of my life. By just writing - unconcerned with mistakes, not trying to be perfect, allowing my sub conscious to take over - and enjoying the ride, I was able to better express myself. Through stories I have related to friends and family over the years about my adventures driving a cab, playing at the White House, barely escaping hysterical mobs in Calcutta, being frantically searched by hotel security in Tel Aviv at dawn just after Israel was almost over run during the 1973 war, and memories I have working with many of the greatest musicians of the music world - Leonard Bernstein, Yo-Yo Ma, Yehudi Menuhin, Rudolf Serkin - so many told me that I should write a book, so I did.

Testimonials & Sample Book Reviews

“Sharply observed, articulate, and engaging, Singer's story is one to understand not just his own career, but that of an entire industry of instrumentalists who make beauty in a sometimes bleak and unforgiving world. If you want to know the reality, as well as the glamor of a musician's life (and how to have some laughs along the way) this is the book for you.”

—Rodney Punt, Classical Voice North America, LA Opus, and the Huffington Post

“David Singer takes readers off stage, out of the concert hall, and into real life. We meet his teachers, mentors, and the pivotal experiences, both high and low, that have contributed to all that he has become as a man and musician. An inspiring read for musicians and non-musicians alike, rich lessons are revealed, and I find myself reflecting on those of my own life.”

—Hans Boepple, Professor Emeritus, Santa Clara University

“I remain fascinated with the compelling history David Singer has laid out before us. It is a truly heroic account, not only of the trials and tribulations that he encountered in his quest to emerge victorious from a background filled with turmoil, but of the marvelous and precisely-detailed adventures that took from those humble beginnings to his eventual attainment as a noted artist: one of the world's great clarinetists.”

—Dr. Betty Oberacker, Professor Emeritus, University of California, Santa Barbara

“As a Psychology Professor, Clinical Supervisor, and Psychotherapist for over 30 years, of particular importance to me are the dynamics in David Singer's family of origin. He shares beautifully the deep pain of family relationships and also, after many years of struggle, coming to terms with his family, utilizing these experiences as a source of significant growth. Truly inspirational!”

—Dr. Ellen Faulk, Professorships, Phillips Graduate University, Antioch University, Campbellsville University

“This is a funny and heartwarming story of a child who learns early in life that obstacles don't have to equal defeat. By looking each opportunity in the eye and applying a little grit you can achieve your dreams and do what you love in life. Read this book and take this remarkable musician's journey.”

--5-Star Amazon Book Review

“I really appreciate the “keep moving forward, never quit and good things will happen” theme. Reading this book helps motivate me to work harder - to try more without just giving up in stressful situations, because I have Mr. Singer's real-life experiences to look at, showing me that it is really worth it to just put in the effort. Entirely apart from the motivational aspects of the book, this is just a really interesting story. The author has led a fascinating life across the world, pushing through struggle and strife to achieve great things. The writing style is heartfelt, and time really flew by when reading it. Highly Recommended.”

--5-Star Amazon Book Review

Selected Book Excerpts

Introduction

I have enjoyed an exciting and perhaps even eventful career, having performed and recorded with a virtual who's-who of musicians at the Marlboro Music Festival, around the world as a principal member of the Grammy Award-winning Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, and with other esteemed colleagues including Yehudi Menuhin and Rudolf Serkin. My early experiences with music began in Vienna, sitting with and surrounded by the world-famous Vienna Philharmonic as a twelve-year-old, turning pages for my teacher during opera performances.

I was also a cab driver, a welding rod salesman, and I sold telephone rests on the streets of New York City. My debut memoir, *From Cab Driver to Carnegie Hall*, provides a panorama of life from the late 1950s in Southern California to Philadelphia; New York City; Vienna; and Bnei Brak, Israel; and the opportunities to get to know many of the greatest musicians of the twentieth century, perhaps in a slightly more personal way than hearing them perform or reading their reviews.

You will also get to know Rudolf Jettel, my musical father, who was suspended as a clarinetist from the Vienna Philharmonic in the 1940s for helping Jews escape the Holocaust.

Today, December 6, 2023, a plaque hangs in the Vienna Philharmonic Museum in Vienna, honoring Rudolf Jettel for his heroism saving the lives of many Jews from the Nazis during the 1940s.

Raised By Abusive Parents

Even after so many years, I find it difficult to honestly face what happened and understand that what I suffered was a form of child abuse.

Like a mistreated puppy who still comes to their master when called, tail wagging, I thought what was happening to me was normal. I didn't know this wasn't happening to the other boys and girls. Reporting their actions was unthink-able; thankfully I didn't even know the option existed. If I had, I would have most likely been taken away to child protective services and become another not-so-good statistic in the foster care system.

The hysteria and out-of-control physical and mental abuse I experienced from both my father and mother are complicated at best and unforgivable at worst. Yet perhaps their behavior is somewhat better understood through their own traumatic stories as Jews born in Eastern Europe during the early 1920s. My parents had their own unique histories.

The Honor of Playing With Casals

Casals exuded music, and every musician considered it an honor to play for him. The slow movement of the Italian Symphony is beautiful and emotional, the music transcending the conductor on its own. But with Casals, it was an existential experience. In what were the last years of his life, this old man was now sitting in front of us in a soft chair on the podium, still able to move and raise his arms with such passion. Audibly groaning, visibly sweating he personified both the pain and longing of this glorious movement. Many in the orchestra were in tears, me included. I was mesmerized watching him and struggled to play through this emotional moment.

Playing with all these great musicians and being led by perhaps the greatest icon in classical music inspired each of us to reach even deeper into our souls to express this great music. These moments I still remember, and they personify the essence of why I chose to be a performer. I was honored to play with these great musicians, and that particular day rehearsing with Pablo Casals remains one of the most memorable experiences of my career.

From Carnegie Hall To Cabbie

I found a job driving a taxi during the night shift, 5:00 p.m. to 5:00 a.m. Every time I drove by Carnegie Hall, I was afraid that one of my colleagues might recognize me. I had been doing enough high-profile performances, recordings, and tours that many working musicians in NYC might actually recognize me. At that time, it might have been the end of my career if they spotted me driving a cab. Image was very important in those days. Attitudes are different now,

understanding the realities of the entertainment business, so many talented musicians and actors both in NYC and LA take jobs driving Uber, waiting tables, or even walking dogs while they wait for their big breaks.

Driving for a cab company with a large fleet, I had to show up at 12:00 p.m. and wait in line with the other drivers for several hours for a cab to drive. Whether you got a cab or not all depended on how much money you brought in the night before. The company and the driver split the fares, so they assigned cabs the next night to their more profitable drivers. I would often wait four - five hours, until 5:00 p.m., hoping to get a cab for the night shift. More than once, I stood around for hours without an assignment and then was sent away. It was demoralizing to have to show up back at home without having made any money.

The job was not without its dangers. One night, a rider reached through the protective glass and pushed a gun into the side of my face.

Performing at the White House by Day, Driving a Taxi that Night

During this period, I was called to be part of a chamber music group from Marlboro to perform Mozart's Piano Quintet at an event for President Jimmy Carter and members of Congress. After our performance, we met President and Mrs. Carter, who I remember had the softest hands. I bet she didn't wash a lot of dishes as First Lady. It seemed so incongruous that there I was, hobnobbing with elite society at the White House where I had just performed, still hearing the bravos, and at the same time, thinking about what I needed to do later that same day.

Within hours I was on a train back to NYC, on my way to work driving my cab. Later that night, when I picked up some passengers, I said to them, "Guess what I did today?" Of course, when I told them I played at the White House earlier that day, they rolled their eyes and had a good laugh.

Performing With Branford Marsalis

On one occasion, Branford Marsalis, the former leader of the Tonight Show Band, joined us for performances of Darius Milhaud's Creation of the World. Most musicians who specialize in any of the instruments of the saxophone family most often perform popular and commercial music and in particular, jazz, to make a living. Improvisation also plays a key role in the opportunities they have to play. Generally, the saxophone is not used in classical repertoire; however, in Milhaud's Creation of the World, the alto saxophone is a prominent voice throughout the piece. It was fun touring with Branford. In rehearsals back in the States, he was always fun, relaxed, easygoing, and very friendly. Once we arrived in Tokyo, a fourteen-hour flight from JFK, Branford spent a lot of time practicing.

Playing With the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra

Expectations of performing in major concert halls all over the world in front of audiences paying a lot of money to hear the concert are facts of life that go with major performers in many fields: medicine, athletics, law, music, and more.

Performing for me sometimes felt like a matter of life and death. I was striving to measure up to my expectations as well as what my colleagues expected of me at each performance.

Today, the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra is celebrating its 51st Anniversary Season. I do not know of any other American orchestra that has accomplished so much—from playing for free in 1973/74 to establishing themselves as one of the most highly respected chamber orchestras in the world—without significant help from city, state, or federal funding.

It was all incredibly rewarding and a great honor to play a part in this unique American success story.

Full Circle

Sixty-four years ago, I began playing the clarinet in a small town in the morning shadow of the Santa Monica Mountains on the outskirts of Los Angeles. I am now living in a different small town, in the evening shadow of the same mountain range, with fertile orchards and dusty fields, playing the clarinet. Late at night when it is very quiet, which is most of the time, I can hear a train's whistle and the tracks rattle as it makes its way through our town, up and down the Pacific Coast. As I go to sleep, I am thinking about how many miles I have traveled and all the adventures I have had and will continue to have because of my love for making music.