

Please note that this transcript is being made available for research purposes only and may not be reproduced or disseminated in any way. Should you determine you want to quote from the transcript, you must seek written permission from UCLA's Department of Special Collections:

UCLA Department of Special Collections  
Box 951575  
Los Angeles, California 90095-1575

TRUE LYRIC SOPRANO

Dorothy Warenskjold

Interviewed by Sybil D. Hast

Completed under the auspices  
of the  
Center for Oral History Research  
University of California

Copyright © 1996  
The Regents of the University of California

## COPYRIGHT LAW

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. Under certain conditions specified in the law, libraries and archives are authorized to furnish a photocopy or other reproduction. One of these specified conditions is that the photocopy or reproduction is not to be used for any purpose other than private study, scholarship, or research. If a user makes a request for, or later uses, a photocopy or reproduction for purposes in excess of "fair use," that user may be liable for copyright infringement. This institution reserves the right to refuse to accept a copying order if, in its judgement, fulfillment of the order would involve violation of copyright law.

## RESTRICTIONS ON THIS INTERVIEW

None.

## LITERARY RIGHTS AND QUOTATION

This manuscript is hereby made available for research purposes only. All literary rights in the manuscript, including the right to publication, are reserved to the University Library of the University of California, Los Angeles. No part of the manuscript may be quoted for publication without the written permission of the University Librarian of the University of California, Los Angeles.

## CONTENTS

Biographical Summary.....	ix
Interview History.....	xiii
TAPE NUMBER: I, Side One (April 15, 1992).....	1
Warenskjold's childhood malaria forces the family to move to Oakland, California--Norwegian grandfather, Axelrod Warenskjold--Father, William E. Warenskjold, and mother, Mildred Stombs Warenskjold--Decision to take voice lessons--Attending an all-girls school--Interests in sports and law--Spends one year at Mills College--Interest in becoming a conductor--Studies political science at University of California, Berkeley--Year devoted to studying voice with Mabel Riegelman--Expense of a voice teacher--Returns to Mills College to graduate in languages.	
TAPE NUMBER: I, Side Two (April 15, 1992).....	34
Teaching voice and singing in choirs--The techniques of singing in a choir and working with an accompanist--Auditions--First full recital--First newspaper review is complimentary--Experience gained from National Federation of Music Clubs audition--Pierre Monteux--Second full recital--More about Warenskjold's grandfather--Inaugurating <i>Evening Concert</i> radio series in San Francisco--Developing a repertoire--Meets Noël Sullivan--Singing lead in the musical <i>Mrs. Moonlight</i> .	
TAPE NUMBER: II, Side One (April 22, 1992).....	63
The different types of sopranos--The danger of forcing a voice beyond its natural capacity--Finding the natural voice for men--Asian voice students--Difficulty filling the Queen of the Night role in Mozart's <i>The Magic Flute</i> --Use of supertitles in operas--Vocal-instrumental balance and the responsibilities of the opera conductor--Placido Domingo and Luciano Pavarotti--Natural versus learned ability--Difficulties in the role of Carmen in Bizet's <i>Carmen</i> --Choosing the right role for one's ability--Making sung English understandable to the	

listener.

TAPE NUMBER: II, Side Two (April 22, 1992).....92

Auditioning for the *Standard School Program*--Called to be on the *Standard School Program* two years later--First performance with an orchestra in 1945--Tradition of inserting a climactic high note in the Micaëla aria from *Carmen*--Sings in *Der Freischütz*--Learns the importance of movement on the stage from watching Lily Djanel in *Salome*--Training other than singing required to do opera--First performance on the *Standard Hour* radio program--Gaetano Merola--More on singing in *Mrs. Moonlight*--Called in at the last minute to replace Licia Albanese in *Falstaff*.

TAPE NUMBER: III, Side One (April 22, 1992).....120

More on preparation for *Falstaff*--Learning not to depend on others for musical cues--Licia Albanese returns to play Nannetta--Warenskjold asked to perform the role after the opening.

TAPE NUMBER: IV, Side One (April 29, 1992).....129

Hectic costume changing during the performance of *Falstaff*--Performing a condensed version of *Carmen* for the *Standard Hour*--Opera begins to be broadcast on television--Present-day opera productions on television--The "falcon" soprano--Elitism and opera--Receiving coaching from Georges Sebastian--Taking out an advertisement in *Musical America*--Receives recommendations from various luminaries.

TAPE NUMBER: IV, Side Two (April 29, 1992).....160

Travels to New York in search of a manager--Last-minute meeting with Marks Levine leads to contract with National Concert and Artists Corporation--The Civic Music Association, the Community Concert Association, and the concept of the organized audience plan--Independent managers acquire access to Civic and Community lists--Artists' financial arrangements under the organized audience plan--Costumes--The role of stage directors and set designers--Props--The need for performers to have adequate rehearsal time.

TAPE NUMBER: V, Side One (May 23, 1992).....191

Warenskjold hires publicists--Usefulness of generating  
publicity about oneself--Singing with James Melton  
on the *Harvest of Stars* radio program--Meeting Fred  
G. Gurley at a Hollywood  
party leads to performances on the *Railroad  
Hour*--Difficulties in working in television for the  
first time in the broadcast of *Tales of Hoffmann*--  
Traveling to do Civic Music Association concerts in  
1949--Fiancé killed in action during World War  
II--Warenskjold's experience of feeling that she was  
watching herself perform--Performing as Sophie in  
*Der Rosenkavalier* in 1950.

TAPE NUMBER: V, Side Two (May 23, 1992).....222

Learns the role of Sophie quickly enough that she is  
able to perform it without the score--Stops accepting  
church engagements in San Francisco--The *Railroad  
Hour* programs--Experiences doing the *Ford Festival*  
and the *Firestone Hour* television  
programs--Performing the role of Cherubino in the  
San Francisco Opera Company's *The Marriage of  
Figaro*--Changes management to Columbia Artists  
Management--Traveling with parents on recital  
tours--More on the *Ford Festival*--Regret at not having  
accepted offer to perform with the Metropolitan  
Opera--Sings Mahler's Symphony no. 2 with the San  
Francisco Symphony Orchestra conducted by Bruno  
Walter--Commuting weekly between Los Angeles and  
New York--Performing on the *Voice of Firestone*  
television show.

TAPE NUMBER: VI, Side One (June 3, 1992).....252

Adventures while driving around the country on recital  
tours--Coping with harsh weather conditions while  
traveling--Performing at the Hollywood Bowl in  
1952--Projecting the voice at all dynamic  
levels--Adjusting position onstage to the acoustics  
of a hall--Audience consumption of food at the  
Hollywood Bowl--Ferruccio Tagliavini and his  
claques.

TAPE NUMBER: VI, Side Two (June 3, 1992).....281

Employing a new accompanist, Rollin Jensen--

Warenskjold's view of the role of an accompanist--  
Acknowledging the accompanist in a recital--Problems  
with bows on television show appearances--The death  
of Gaetano Merola during one of his  
performances--Merola's replacement at the San  
Francisco Opera Company, Kurt Adler--Performing in  
*Werther* in 1953--Parents move to Los Angeles--Father  
dies of a heart attack-- Warenskjold manages to get  
through the opening performance of *Turandot* the day  
after her father's death--Performing *Turandot* with  
Fausto Cleva conducting.

TAPE NUMBER: VII, Side One (June 6, 1992).....307

Claques in San Francisco--Proper procedure for bows  
in an opera--Proper places for applause and proper  
bowing procedure at a recital--Bows at an orchestral  
performance--When it is appropriate for an audience  
to applaud for symphonies and concertos--Responding  
to the audience's mood--Guild Opera Company opera  
productions for schoolchildren--Difficulties with  
the conductor in Warenskjold's first solo recording.

TAPE NUMBER: VII, Side Two (June 6, 1992).....336

Method of recording when Warenskjold made her recording  
debut in the fifties--Second solo recording, *On Wings  
of Song*--Appearance at the Rebild Festival in Denmark,  
1954--The Cincinnati Zoo Opera--Performing *Fidelio*  
in San Francisco with Pierre Monteux and Inge  
Borkh--Changes in opera's emphasis over the  
years--The audience for opera today--Favorite  
roles--Maintaining the quality of one's voice over  
time.

TAPE NUMBER: VIII, Side One (June 12, 1992).....362

Learning Virgil Thomson's *Stabat Mater* in one  
day--Problem with a mentally unbalanced fan--Working  
with Elisabeth Schwarzkopf and Paul  
Hager--Knowing when to end a singing career--Solo  
performers are superseded by group attractions in  
the mid-sixties--Resulting career slump leads to  
formation of Dorothy Warenskjold's Musical  
Theater--Producing and touring with the Musical  
Theater--Teaching offers--The touring schedule.

TAPE NUMBER: VIII, Side Two (June 12, 1992).....391

Singing the same material night after night--Learning from an audience's responses--Meeting Eleanor Steber--The Vaccai vocal exercises--Singing with Steber in *Der Rosenkavalier*--Stage director Margarete Wahlmann--Giuseppe DiStefano--Jussi Björling--The difficulties of performing *La Traviata* at an altitude of eighty-five hundred feet--Maintaining proper singing techniques--Diagnosing a failing voice.

TAPE NUMBER: IX, Side One (June 18, 1992).....418

Coping with laryngitis--Safeguarding one's health--After-performance parties--Discontinuing Dorothy Warenskjold's Musical Theater after a problem-filled third year of touring--Discontinues all public performances after 1972--Teaching voice--Wide range of skills necessary in a singer's training.

TAPE NUMBER: IX, Side Two (June 18, 1992).....450

Usefulness of piano and/or ballet background to a young opera singer--Offered a teaching position at UCLA--Teaching voice students and a master class in stage presence--Teaching stage presence to musicians who are not singers--Conductors' movements--Death of Warenskjold's mother in 1991--A letter from Rollin Jensen--The future of opera and solo recitals.

Index.....477



## BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY

### PERSONAL HISTORY:

**Born:** San Leandro, California, 1921.

**Education:** University of California, Berkeley, 1939-40; B.A., languages, Mills College, 1943. Studied voice with Mabel Riegelman, 1941-48.

### CAREER HISTORY:

Soprano soloist with the following opera companies:

San Francisco (1948-55)

Pittsburgh (1953)

Vancouver (1953)

Cincinnati (1954-58)

New Orleans (1954-55)

San Antonio (1954-65)

Kansas City (1957)

Lyric Opera of Chicago (1959)

Dallas (1959)

Miami (1960)

Tulsa (1960)

Washington, D.C. (1962)

Seattle (1964)

Major roles:

*La Bohème* (Mimi)

*Carmen* (Micaëla)

*Così fan tutte* (Fiordiligi)

*Falstaff* (Nannetta)  
*Faust* (Margu  rite)  
*Fidelio* (Marzelline)  
*Die Fledermaus* (Rosalinda)  
*Der Freisch  tz* (Agathe)  
*Gianni Schicchi* (Lauretta)  
*The Magic Flute* (Pamina)  
*Manon*  
*Martha* (Lady Harriet)  
*The Marriage of Figaro* (Susanna, Cherubino)  
*Der Rosenkavalier* (Sophie)  
*The Tales of Hoffmann* (Antonia)  
*La Traviata* (Violetta)  
*Turandot* (Liu)  
*Werther* (Sophie)  
Soloist with the following symphony orchestras:  
Ann Arbor  
Atlanta  
Chicago  
Cincinnati  
Glendale, California  
Los Angeles  
Minneapolis  
New Orleans  
Pittsburgh

Portland

Saint Louis

San Francisco

Savannah

Seattle

Spokane

Toronto

Tucson

Vancouver

Washington, D.C.

Radio appearances:

*Standard Hour*, 1947-54.

*Carnegie Hall*, 1949.

*Harvest of Stars*, 1949-50.

*Railroad Hour*, 1950-54.

Television appearances:

*NBC Opera (The Tales of Hoffmann)*, 1949.

*Ford Festival*, 1951-52.

*Voice of Firestone*, 1951-58.

Producer-director, vocalist, Dorothy Warenskjold's Musical Theater, 1969-71.

Visiting professor, Department of Music, UCLA, 1984-present.

RECORDINGS:

*Selections from the Student Prince*, Capitol Records, 1952.

*Songs of Grieg and Dvořák*, Capitol Records, 1953.

*On Wings of Song*, Capitol Records, 1955.

*A Live Recital Experience*, Grand Prix Records, 1981.

*Opera Arias, Mozart and Romantic Composers*, Grand Prix Records,  
1985.

## INTERVIEW HISTORY

### INTERVIEWER:

Sybil D. Hast, B.A., French, Smith College; M.A., French, University of Pittsburgh; M.A., German, UCLA. Lecturer in Music, UCLA.

### TIME AND SETTING OF INTERVIEW:

**Place:** Warenskjold's home, Los Angeles.

**Dates, length of sessions:** April 15, 1992 (78 minutes); April 22, 1992 (87); April 29, 1992 (79); May 23, 1992 (77); June 3, 1992 (78); June 6, 1992 (82); June 12, 1992 (80); June 18, 1992 (71).

**Total number of recorded hours:** 10.5

**Persons present during interview:** Warenskjold and Hast.

### CONDUCT OF INTERVIEW:

In preparing for the interview, Hast conducted research in the UCLA Music Library and had several informal background discussions with Warenskjold, who also supplied Hast with articles, reviews, and biographical information.

The interview is organized chronologically, beginning with Warenskjold's early life in Northern California and her early voice studies and recitals and continuing through her career as an opera soloist and recitalist, her performances on radio and television, and her work as a visiting professor in the music department at UCLA. Major topics discussed include the learning and teaching of proper vocal technique and stage presence; major roles for operatic sopranos; the life of a nationally touring recitalist; opera on radio, television, and recordings; and the future of opera in the United States.

### EDITING:

Rebecca Mead, editorial assistant, edited the interview. She checked the verbatim transcript of the interview against the original tape recordings, edited for punctuation, paragraphing, and spelling, and verified proper names. Words and phrases inserted by the editor have been bracketed.

Warenskjold reviewed the transcript and made minor corrections and additions.

Alex Cline, editor, prepared the table of contents and interview history. Lisa Magee, editorial assistant, assembled the biographical summary. Kathleen McAlister, editorial assistant, compiled the index.

#### SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:

The original tape recordings of the interview are in the university archives and are available under the regulations governing the use of permanent noncurrent records of the university. Records relating to the interview are located in the office of the UCLA Oral History Program.

TAPE NUMBER: I, SIDE ONE

APRIL 15, 1992

HAST: Let's start from the beginning about your life, because you've had such an interesting one and such a wonderful career.

WARENSKJOLD: Well, I'm glad you think so. [laughter]

HAST: Well, we know so. Now, as I recall, you were born in 1921 in San Leandro, California. Is that correct?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes.

HAST: And then your family moved to Piedmont, California. Is that right?

WARENSKJOLD: No, actually from there I think they moved down to Merced. My father [William E. Warenskjold] had the Baldwin Piano [Company] agency in Merced at that time of his life. And-- Do you want me just to keep going?

HAST: Yes, please.

WARENSKJOLD: I was just an infant when they moved down there, and I think I must have been, oh, dear, not even a year old or somewhere around a year old, and I caught malaria.

HAST: You caught malaria?

WARENSKJOLD: Malaria. In that area of central California, you know, they had terrible trouble with that sort of thing at that time. So they didn't know what the problem was for a long time. Finally they found out it was malaria. So the doctors said they were going to have to take this child out

of this area or she will not live. So they contacted my grandparents, who were up in the Oakland area at that time.

My father said, "I'm going to have to stay down here to close up the business" and all of that. So my grandfather [Axelrod Warenskjold] and my grandmother [Helen Mitten Warenskjold] came down and picked up my mother [Mildred Stombs Warenskjold] and me, as a very sick infant at that time, and took me back up to the Oakland area. My father just closed up his business.

I don't whether he sold it or what he did with it at that point; all I know is that he left immediately and came up to the Oakland and Piedmont area.

HAST: How extraordinary. I've never heard that part of your early, early life. Did they know what to do for malaria in those days?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, I don't know--

HAST: I mean, in the Far East they had handled that all the time, didn't they?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, yes. I'm sure they must have taken care of the acute part of it at that time. But I fought the results of malaria for, oh, heavens, up until I was in junior high school, something like that. I was never really made aware of it; I think my family handled that so well, because they must have gone to all of the teachers in my school and told them what the problem was. Because I was athletic and I always



wanted to do everything athletic--I wanted to do the running, and I wanted to do all of this. So they must have told the teachers that I could do just enough, but if they saw me start to wilt the slightest bit to stop me immediately. So I was not aware that there was anything really wrong with me.

HAST: So it didn't affect your relationship with the other children in school, for instance?

WARENSKJOLD: No, it really didn't, it really didn't. And little by little I began to get stronger and stronger; I could last longer and longer.

HAST: What wonderful parents, really, I guess.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. Oh, they were marvelous.

HAST: Well, that takes us to your father and your grandfather, Axelrod. Oh, tell us about him, because that's fascinating.

WARENSKJOLD: He was a fascinating individual. He came here from Norway when he was fifteen years old. He was one of twenty-one children--two different mothers, of course.

[laughter]

HAST: Oh, I was wondering. [laughter]

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, two different mothers. But anyway, when he was fifteen years old-- His father was a lighthouse keeper, and his grandfather was in whatever they call the legislature or something at that time there. But anyway, with the twenty-one children, things were a little difficult, so he decided to

leave and come to America at fifteen years old! Can you imagine?

Now, there must have been some family relationship over here who sponsored him.

HAST: But he traveled alone?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes, absolutely. All alone, yes.

HAST: So he came by ship.

WARENSKJOLD: He came by ship, and he came to-- Neenah, Wisconsin, was evidently where whoever it was who was sponsoring him-- Oh, I remember their talking about when he got off the boat in New York. I guess they have apples in Norway. But anyway, when he got off the boat, he bought what he thought was an apple, and it turned out to be a tomato. [laughter] He still remembered that years and years later. When you bite into something you expected to be crisp and juicy-- Or maybe he had never even tasted an apple. I'm not sure. Whatever it was, anyway.

Anyway, he came to Neenah, Wisconsin, and he even at that young age was very knowledgeable about engines and very knowledgeable in-- I don't know what kind of education he had by that time, but he was a wizard in mathematics and anything that had to do with engines. Well, he got a job working for some big company there. I'm not quite sure whether it was a mining company or lumber company. Whatever it was, it was something that worked twenty-four hours a day, anyway, and

the machinery had to be going twenty-four hours a day. So he was the person that they called on at any hour of the day or night to come when something happened to the machinery.

In Neenah, Wisconsin, it was very cold in the wintertime, of course, you can imagine. He would have to be called out of a nice warm bed at two or three o'clock in the morning to come because one of the machines had broken down. He had to get up and get out in this cold weather. So I guess that must have gone on for two years or something like that. He kept coming down with pneumonia, so the doctor said, "You can't do this. Either you have to change jobs or you have to get out of this area."

HAST: He was only seventeen at that point?

WARENSKJOLD: Seventeen or eighteen by that time. I'm not sure how many years he was there before that. So anyway, he decided that he was going to make the change, and he was going to move from there. So he moved. Where? To California, of all things. Can you imagine? At that age? [laughter]

HAST: But that he would know to do this at that age is extraordinary, too.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, yes, it's amazing.

HAST: So then he invented this--

WARENSKJOLD: Well, he came out here to California. I think they lived in San Diego. The next thing I know about him

is he's married. He married a woman from the East who was English [Helen Mitten Warenskjold], and that's why Norwegian was never spoken in the home, which was a shame. My father was born in San Diego. At that point, my grandfather had a bicycle shop, of all things, in San Diego. At that point, that was the way he made his living, but he was always fooling around with engines and working on that sort of thing. So somewhere along the line he began to be interested in the diesel engine, which of course was-- Rudolf Diesel was the inventor of the diesel engine. But my grandfather worked on-- What was it called?

HAST: Atlas diesel engine?

WARENSKJOLD: The Atlas diesel is what the name of it was when he began producing the engines. But it was a fuel injection system that he worked on for the diesel engine.

HAST: Which was different?

WARENSKJOLD: Which was very different, very different. And that became the Atlas diesel. I don't know when he moved up to the San Francisco area, but that of course was where the company was started, the Atlas diesel, and then it became--

HAST: So he started his own company actually then?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes, yes. It was the Atlas Diesel Engine Company, and then he took in somebody else and it became the Atlas Imperial Diesel Engine. These were mostly for boats,

ships. Practically the whole fishing fleet in San Francisco had Atlas diesel engines in them.

HAST: So it was an American company at that point?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes. Oh, yes, indeed. Oh, yes, indeed.

HAST: However, he was honored in a wonderful way, wasn't he?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes. He was asked to come back to Norway.

I'm not quite sure of the dates of that. I think it was somewhere around 1928 or '29. They asked him to come back, and they knighted him, which was rather nice.

HAST: That is so beautiful, yes. By King Haakon [VII], right?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes.

HAST: Yes, that's really nice. Now, your mother was a direct descendant of the Cromwell family in England?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, yes. I used to always say a direct descendant of Oliver Cromwell, and she used to say, "Dear, don't say that. He was not the nicest part of the family."

[laughter] Actually, it was Oliver Cromwell's uncle which was the direct descendant end of it. But yes, yes, she was.

Then her family moved over to Baltimore from England. She followed through on all of that sort of thing. She went back to Baltimore and looked it up, the family and all of that sort of thing. She had it all down. Then her family moved to California, also. Well, actually she was born in San

Francisco.

HAST: Oh, she was? I see, I see.

WARENSKJOLD: She was born in San Francisco, my father was born in San Diego, so I am second generation? Third? On my mother's side, actually, I think one of the others--I think her mother was born in California too, so that would make me--what?--third-generation Californian?

HAST: Yes, well, that's wonderful. But you have this Norse and Anglo-Saxon background, and as you said yourself to me on one occasion, that gave you that strong character and strength to go on with things.

WARENSKJOLD: I don't know. I guess so. I don't know.

[laughter]

HAST: Well, I'm sure of it. Now, the other thing, of course, that is interesting to us is that good music was always a part of your life, you said.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, my, yes. Yes.

HAST: Tell us about your mother and father and how you had music in your life as a child already.

WARENSKJOLD: Well, my mother, of course, was a pianist. She started out to be a concert pianist, and then very early on she began playing, accompanying singers. All of a sudden that became her life. The piano as a solo instrument just didn't interest her anymore. She kept it going, of course,

and she was a marvelous pianist, but her interest was in the voice. She sang a little herself, but she--

HAST: Now, was this for opera or lieder, art songs, or--?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, both. She did a lot of opera. She had small opera companies up in the San Francisco area, little community opera companies that she started. But she was always interested in solo repertoire also, and she was a wonderful coach, which was marvelous for me.

HAST: So she helped you immediately, and she was--

WARENSKJOLD: I didn't study with her. I didn't study with her, because we found very early on, when I was three years old and she began to teach me how to play the piano, that didn't work.

HAST: Very often it doesn't in families. That's interesting, isn't it.

WARENSKJOLD: You cannot learn from your family, anybody in the family. So anyway, when it got to the point that I was interested in singing and we decided that I should learn how to sing, we began to look for a good vocal teacher.

HAST: But long before that, at the age of three, you had your first piano lesson, and then you had violin lessons in grammar school.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes. When I was in grammar school, yes. That was during the time when we had music in the schools.

We had a symphony orchestra in our grammar school, if you can imagine. I was the concert mistress. [laughter]

HAST: Oh, were you really? Oh, how exciting. How exciting. Well, those days unfortunately have changed, as we know.

WARENSKJOLD: I know. Isn't it a shame?

HAST: I mean, I think I said this on some other tape when I interviewed somebody else that when my children went to school-- And this is much later than when you were in grammar school, but--

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, but it isn't, it isn't.

HAST: They call it a frill now to have music or art or theater or even really literature. They don't count literature either. So that's very sad, really.

You also had, and you mentioned it just a little while ago, an early interest in sports--tennis, baseball, swimming, horseback riding--but you had to limit that for a while, from what you said, because of this malaria thing or--?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, in the beginning, yes. But as I said, little by little, by the time I got up to junior high school and my first year in high school, I was all right by that time. I went to a girls school in junior high and high school, and our main athletic program was tennis. So I learned tennis, and we went into all of the contests and everything between the schools. I was fine from that by that time.



HAST: Tell me something that just came to mind, because I went to an English school where tennis, of course, was big too, and it was a girls school, and lacrosse was the other sport, and then the equivalent of basketball, but we called it net ball, I think. But what do you think in retrospect now? Is it a good idea to have an all-girls school? Or is it better to have boys right from the beginning? Have you ever thought about that?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, I've never really thought of it in that way. I know that by the time I graduated from this all-girls school in high school I really wanted to go to a coeducational college. [laughter]

HAST: You did?

WARENSKJOLD: I did. I did. Although I enjoyed it; I really did. We had parties, and we had dances and all of that, you know. The boys were always there.

HAST: Oh, they were?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, I mean at dances, of course, yes. I mean, we invited the boys, surely. But my father particularly for some reason wanted me to go to Mills College, and here was another girls college.

HAST: Oh, that's right. I think it's coeducational now. Or am I wrong?

WARENSKJOLD: No, no.

HAST: It still isn't?

WARENSKJOLD: No, they changed it. There was a big thing about it.

HAST: Oh, my word. I read something-- I don't remember.

WARENSKJOLD: No, no, no. They said, "No, absolutely no."

So at least for the time being it's still that.

HAST: Well, to get back to the earlier question, do you think being in an all-girls school gives you more time to seriously study the different subjects so that maybe you're better grounded in them? Or do you disagree with that? Is it better if you don't have all the distractions.

WARENSKJOLD: Well, it could very possibly be. I know the school that I went to was very small. I was only one of four graduates.

HAST: Oh, really?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. There was this private school. So we really did spend a lot of time in our school work. We were well-grounded and ready for any university.

HAST: Is this high school, also?

WARENSKJOLD: This is high school, yes. It was called Miss Wallace's school, but her name was Mary Wallace.

HAST: You became interested in law already in high school, I understand.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. At that point I was reading a lot of books

on famous lawyers and law cases, and it just absolutely fascinated me. I'd no sooner finish one that I'd go and get another one. All of a sudden I began to think, "My, wouldn't that be interesting to be up there before the jury," you know, all of that. [laughter] I think the ham in me was coming out.

HAST: I can see you doing it.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, the ham in me was coming out.

HAST: But the interest in sports and music and law, I mean, it's just marvelous how well-rounded you were.

WARENSKJOLD: Well, I was. I didn't have any one special direction. Music was just part of my life from the time I was able to understand anything, and active sports were part of my life. Then, all of a sudden, this interest in the law.

HAST: But the sports--to get to back to that if I may for just a minute--that probably stood you in good stead later on as a professional singer, did it not?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, I should say, in many ways.

HAST: Because I remember Dorothy Kirsten talking about that, how important it was physically for her, and I just wanted to ask you, did you find that also?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, absolutely.

HAST: The discipline and the energy--

WARENSKJOLD: The discipline, and the main thing, I think,

was the coordination. Very important. The coordination needed for learning a sport is the same kind of coordination you have to have when you're learning how to sing. It is all coordination.

HAST: Or being an actor on the stage.

WARENSKJOLD: No, not on the stage. Learning how to sing, learning how to keep this part of your body still and quiet while you're actually moving the throat muscles and contracting and tensing and all of that. To have balanced tension. The coordination is so important. And I found that a lot in my teaching. Some of the young people that I have have a terrible time because they cannot get the coordination, get everything working together. I sometimes ask them, "Have you played any games, any sports in school?" And lots of times they say no.

HAST: But, you see, you're known for this kind of teaching. This is one of your specialities, and this is why I find this very interesting. That's why we do interviews like this, because people listening will learn from that. Well, that's fascinating.

Now, '38 to '39, you went for a year, first of all, to Mills College. Your father wanted you to go.

WARENSKJOLD: To please my father, I made a deal with him. I said, "I will go for the first year if the next year I

can go to the University of California at Berkeley."

HAST: But during this year--am I correct in this?--you were interested in two things, either being an orchestra conductor or a trial lawyer. Is that right?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, yes.

HAST: That was your first year of college. That's extraordinary, this combination. And you vacillated between the two.

WARENSKJOLD: Well, actually the first year in college at Mills I was more seriously interested in being an orchestra conductor.

HAST: Oh, were you really?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. And--

HAST: Now, what got you interested in that particular area?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, to go way, way back, to be interested even in symphonic music-- You know, from the time I was very young I sang Schubert songs. I did all of this kind of thing, you know, making up the words as I went along, because I didn't know German or anything like that, but I made them up. So I always sang. But the orchestra itself--

I remember when I was at Miss Wallace's School--this was when I was, I think, in my first year or second year in high school--she took us to concerts and operas and all of that sort of stuff. So one day we went over to San Francisco

to see *Romeo and Juliet*. This was the movie, the old movie *Romeo and Juliet*, with Norma Shearer and Leslie Howard. This was a special showing of that. Because Shakespeare was such a big thing at Miss Wallace's School, anything that had to do with Shakespeare we always had to go to. So the whole school was taken over to see this show. At that time, the only way you could get across the bay from Piedmont to San Francisco was by ferryboat. It was a wonderful outing. We loved it.

In that movie, if you've even seen it lately--I don't know, I've never seen it on late-night television--but if you remember or have heard about it, the background music was all Tchaikovsky's *Romeo and Juliet*. I was young at that time and just becoming interested in boys, I think, and all of us were thinking, "Oh, isn't that wonderful! That music!"

So immediately the next day, I went down and bought a recording of the Tchaikovsky *Romeo and Juliet*, and I played it and played it and played it. I would start conducting it, and all of a sudden I began to think how wonderful this is, this movement and getting that out of music, my interest in that.

Then there was a rather well-known woman conductor at the time, Antonia Brico. My father's real estate office happened to be across the street from the place where they were rehearsing. This was during the WPA [Works Progress

Administration] time. I don't know whether you-- During [Franklin D.] Roosevelt's administration.

HAST: During the Depression, yes.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, during the Depression. They had an orchestra going for orchestra people who were out of work, you see, and she was the conductor of this orchestra. They rehearsed across the street from my father's real estate office, and I would go over and sit there and watch her rehearse these musicians. I absolutely fell in love with the idea of being an orchestra conductor.

So a few years later, when I went to Mills College, I decided that I wanted to be an orchestra conductor. One of the girls in my class, my freshman class, was Antonia Brico's protégée. I mean, this was heaven for me. [laughter]

HAST: Of course. And woman conductors were very rare in those times.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, very rare. She was the only one. She was the only one.

HAST: I was just going to ask you. I mean, I really don't know of anybody--

WARENSKJOLD: And she had a very hard time, because I saw those men in the orchestra really testing her, you know, really testing her, playing something wrong in the middle of something, and she would just pick it out like that. Pretty soon they

began to respect her.

HAST: I understand that can still happen today with woman conductors, that they find--

WARENSKJOLD: Well, it even happens with men conductors. You know, they test a conductor until they really--

HAST: Do they really?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. So anyway, then somewhere along the line I realized that I wasn't going to have much of a chance as a woman as an orchestra conductor, and--

HAST: But law is still, I mean--

WARENSKJOLD: Law was still--

HAST: In your mind.

WARENSKJOLD: In the back of my mind, yes.

HAST: So what major?

WARENSKJOLD: And then it was when I went to--

HAST: Berkeley?

WARENSKJOLD: --Berkeley.

HAST: Now, what made you decide to go to Berkeley? What were you looking for there?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, Berkeley at that time--

HAST: That was 1939 to '40, yes.

WARENSKJOLD: Berkeley was a coeducational school, and I wanted to-- [laughter] I had had my year at Mills in the girls school.

I had made this deal with my father. So I majored in political



science there.

HAST: Political science! My word.

WARENSKJOLD: Of all things, yes.

HAST: No wonder you're so well-rounded in every area in life.

But now, the important thing is you started vocal lessons with Mabel Riegelman in San Francisco. Is that right, at that time?

WARENSKJOLD: No, not then.

HAST: Or do I have that wrong?

WARENSKJOLD: It was the year between, at the end of-- See, again, I made a decision. I realized that law for a woman-- I was going to be in the back rooms doing the work for the attorneys, the men attorneys, who were going to be doing the work before the juries, and again I decided that wasn't going to be for me either. So at that point there was no real direction that I was going in. I knew music was important for me, and I was even thinking at times of going into tennis.

HAST: Oh, seriously?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, absolutely.

HAST: As a profession?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes. I was really quite good. I was really quite good, but I didn't have that killer instinct that you have to have. And of course, you know, most tennis players were considered at that time tennis bums, anyway. There was

no big thing as there is now.

HAST: Where they're making lots of money.

WARENSKJOLD: There was absolutely no money in it at all at that time. So there wasn't any big push toward that. I just loved it and golf and all of that.

But I just loved to sing, and we decided that if I was going to sing I might as well learn how to sing well. I had been doing all of the shows at Miss Wallace's School, and I was in all of the shows, musically and every other way, at both Mills College and the University of California. So we decided that we should look for a teacher.

That's a rather interesting thing, too. You know, most people don't know how to find a good teacher. What we did--it just seemed to be common sense at that time--we went to all of the musical events around the San Francisco area, went to all of the vocal recitals, local as well as professional.

Every time we'd hear somebody who sounded as though they sang well, we'd go up and talk to them afterwards. "Who do you study with?" we said. "I study with Mabel Riegelman."

Okay, then that was one name. All right. Then we went to some others, and we asked, and every one of them that we asked who really sang what we thought was well had studied with Mabel Riegelman. So that was the obvious person to go to see.

HAST: See, Dorothy, you're making a very important point here, because I went all through this myself with my daughter who studied piano and not being able to find the right pianist because I wasn't in the music department then. You can't do it alone as a child, of course.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, absolutely not, you've got to have parents to help, yes.

HAST: Or as a young person, even when you're in college, you really need the support from the family. But your parents were so knowledgeable, and this is why you found the right teacher. Don't you think that's--?

WARENSKJOLD: My mother was knowledgeable in that way. My father was not a musician at all but a music lover and was a great help to me later by just being what the whole audience was. He was. I could try things out on him. So in that way--

HAST: But it's not enough to be a music lover. You have to be--

WARENSKJOLD: Not at that point, no. You have to know a little bit of something. So anyway, we found this woman's name and made an appointment with her and went over to see her. I auditioned for her, and she said, "Yes, dear, you have a very pretty voice." Oh, I hated being told I had a pretty voice.

[laughter] But it was at that time, and I think everybody should start out with a pretty voice. If you don't have that

to begin with, it's awfully hard to have something that an audience is going to relate to. But anyway, she said, "It's very pretty, and yes, I think we could work together. It's absolutely impossible to tell at this point what will come of it. It will take some years."

HAST: So she told this frankly. Again, this is so important.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, absolutely. Oh, my, you never want to get in with somebody who says that in a couple of years they're going to have you singing at the Met[ropolitan Opera] or something like that. No, no, you cannot tell. You cannot tell how the voice is going to develop. You cannot tell how that person is going to work.

So that's what started, and I really wanted to prove to her way down deep in myself that I was going to have more than just a pretty voice, too.

HAST: Well, you did prove it, I'm sure.

WARENSKJOLD: So anyway, then, to go on from that, we decided as a family that I would stay out of school for one year.

HAST: That was a very big decision.

WARENSKJOLD: It was a big decision, yes. And in the midst of it--

HAST: And your parents were supportive.

WARENSKJOLD: Absolutely, yes.

HAST: But, you see, you had wonderful parents.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, absolutely. So I stayed out for that one year, and I took a lesson a day from Miss Riegelman, five lessons a week, for that full year.

HAST: One hour at a time or--?

WARENSKJOLD: A whole hour, yes, an hour at a time.

HAST: And then you had to practice the rest of the day.

WARENSKJOLD: I had to practice, too. But, you see, there was not that much time to practice. I mean maybe an hour of practicing, and in the very beginning not a whole hour, anyway. You'd practice twenty minutes, and then you'd break for a while and then you'd come back for another twenty minutes.

When the instrument is being trained, the instrument being these vocal chords, you cannot put too much pressure on them, so you have to do it for a small period of time. Then, you see, I went back the very next day, so I was not allowed to get into the bad habits. That's the thing that is so difficult for--

HAST: And you were taught not to overdo it, either.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, absolutely. Yes, yes.

HAST: See, that's so important.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. I figured it up one time: Those people who take one lesson a week--which is about all most people can take--what I had for that whole year of a lesson a day would have been the equivalent of nineteen years. It was

not just for that one year. That was for the time that I studied, which was the one year of a lesson a day, plus three years, I think it was, of three lessons a week, and then after that two or three years of two lessons a week. It would have been the equivalent of nineteen years of study for the person who takes a lesson a week.

HAST: No wonder, you see, you are so polished and you are so knowledgeable. And a lot of singers never got that background.

WARENSKJOLD: I had such a background, yes. And they're pushed out too soon. They're pushed out too soon, and then when they run into problems they don't know how to take care of them, because they haven't had that background.

HAST: Well, they don't have the patience or the discipline very often, either. But I think the teacher needs to tell them. Of course, there's another matter, that today to get a really fine voice teacher is very expensive.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes, yes.

HAST: I don't know in those days how much they charged.

WARENSKJOLD: Well, relatively speaking-- I don't know.

Relatively speaking I paid \$6 for a lesson. But relatively speaking, you see-- People were making whole careers of \$150-a-month salaries, so \$6--

HAST: It was more then, of course, than it is today.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes.

HAST: But you do realize that there are terrible voice teachers--and I've run into them--who think nothing of charging \$75 for half an hour. Half an hour!

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. Yes, I know. I know, it's terrible.

HAST: And how many people can afford that? So, no, I think you are very fortunate. But, of course, you also have the discipline and the encouragement from your parents.

WARENSKJOLD: And, I must say, I was also very fortunate in not only having my family behind me, but they were behind me monetarily as well. I didn't have to go out and get a job to try to pay for this and work eight hours a day and then try to study. In that I was very lucky.

HAST: Well, I admire you for going back in 1943 to Mills to graduate there. I really admire you, because I remember when I interviewed Dorothy Kirsten--if you don't mind if I bring this up again, because it's so interesting to see the difference in time--that she said she was determined that was what she was going to do; she didn't need college. Well, you can't possibly afford to do that today, can you? That's what I always tell the students who work with me.

WARENSKJOLD: No, absolutely not.

HAST: You can't. You've got to have that degree.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, you have to have not only the bachelor's

degree, which I had, but they have to go further.

HAST: Today.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes, absolutely.

HAST: Yes, even further than when you did this.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, absolutely.

HAST: So they're totally different times.

WARENSKJOLD: But, you see, the difference also between the two of us was that she knew what she wanted to do. She wanted to be a singer at that point.

HAST: That was the thing, yes, right.

WARENSKJOLD: I didn't. I didn't.

HAST: Well, then she had Grace Moore who said, "I'm going to send you to Italy and pay for everything," because she couldn't afford to do that. So again, today it would be very difficult to find somebody who says, "Look, honey, I'll take care of you." But I admire you for going back, because I think that's a tremendous decision to make for a young person then to go back after a year and graduate.

WARENSKJOLD: Well, there wasn't a big decision to make to go back. It was just that one thing, that I was staying out for a year, period.

HAST: Oh, you decided that--

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes. It was going to be a year to study, and then I was going to go back and finish. So it wasn't



that I ended that year and then said, "Will I or will I not go back to school?" No, no, no.

HAST: Yes, but for a young person to have a plan like that I think is extraordinary.

WARENSKJOLD: But it was perfect, because at that point I still didn't have any burning desire to be a professional singer.

HAST: Oh, you didn't really?

WARENSKJOLD: No, no, I really didn't. No.

HAST: But you continued your voice lessons, as you mentioned, until you graduated. Your major was in foreign languages, and your minor was in music, right?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. Mainly because if I were going to major in music I would have to have studied voice at Mills College, and we did not like the teacher. I mean, he was a very pleasant man, we all enjoyed him, but he was not a good teacher. Everybody turned out to be a dramatic soprano who studied with him and then had to go and have their voice repaired when they left Mills College. So the first year when I was there majoring in music--I of course did not study voice there--you had to have some instrument, so I was majoring in piano. And I realized very soon on that I certainly didn't want to spend the kind of time involved in piano. I didn't want to be a pianist.

HAST: No, I can understand that. But did you find that it

helped you read music, all kinds of music?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, I'd been reading music from--

HAST: So that was no problem.

WARENSKJOLD: There was no problem, no. No. I am not that good a pianist now. I read very well, but when it gets to the fingers moving this fast, no, because I don't practice.

[laughter] I never wanted to. I was not interested in the piano. I was more interested in the violin at a young age than I was the piano.

HAST: Yes. How long did you actually play the violin?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, I think I must have given that up when I got into my first year of high school.

HAST: It's very difficult, is it not?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes.

HAST: But I think it must be very rewarding.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, it was wonderful. It was simply marvelous.

You see, everything that happened to me all worked toward this one thing without my realizing it, without my planning it. The best thing in the world for a singer to have as a background is a stringed instrument. It's marvelous to have piano because everything is based on the musical end of a piano, but to have a stringed instrument-- No matter what it is--violin, cello, whatever it is--the ear has to hear what that sound is before you make it. On the piano, you

play that note, and whatever the note is that you hit, that's the note that comes out. The ear is not really involved in that. But with a stringed instrument, you have to make that sound, and that was so important in my early training of voice, being in the center of the tone.

My teacher always used to say, "Look at the piano strings now." She said, "Each one of those notes has three strings on it."

And I said, "Yes."

And she said, "Now, I want you always mentally to think that you're not going to hit the note on the upper part of that string, this third string, or on the lower part of that string. I want you to sing always in the center. Always in the center." Intonation was so important in what she taught.

HAST: Which again is the basic grounding that you needed.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. So, you see, this all just worked out without any plan.

HAST: It all ties in. Extraordinary, yes.

WARENSKJOLD: No plan.

HAST: And you just accepted it. "That's how it is."

WARENSKJOLD: Absolutely, yes. Yes.

HAST: Well, Louis Kaufman, who as you know is a famous violinist, said pretty much what you just said about the violin, stringed instruments being important when you learn about voice. But

he always said the voice, however, is the most beautiful instrument of all. I have it on tape, and I love it!

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, and all instruments, no matter whether it's a stringed instrument or any other instrument, they all try to sound like the voice. Isn't it wonderful, though?

HAST: Yes, it's wonderful. Yes, I love it.

WARENSKJOLD: They try to sound like the voice, and we singers try to sound as much like an instrument as possible--when we're good singers, that is.

HAST: Yes, of course, of course. Anyway, you graduated in 1943. You majored in the languages and minored in music, and then--

WARENSKJOLD: Well, then-- May I just interrupt you for a second? When I say majored in languages, I don't think that's possible to do anymore. I don't think even at Mills it's possible to do what I did.

HAST: Oh, I was going to ask you which languages we are talking about.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, yes. See, if you major in languages nowadays, you know, you're either German or you're French or something like that.

HAST: French, Spanish, or whatever.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. I majored in languages, which meant that I had German and French and Italian and Spanish, and I even

had Russian and Portuguese.

HAST: But it wasn't linguistics; it was just for languages.

WARENSKJOLD: No, it was the languages, yes.

HAST: You had Russian also? Oh, how nice.

WARENSKJOLD: Just one year of Russian, yes.

HAST: But Portuguese is very difficult when you've had Spanish.  
It drives you crazy.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, yes. I didn't have those in depth. I had Russian for one year, I had Portuguese for just one year, Spanish for two years, I think, so I didn't have that much.

HAST: Have you kept up your Russian at all or not?

WARENSKJOLD: No, I really haven't.

HAST: Do you know that it has changed so much, because when I took Russian at Smith College, the two teachers-- And they were not experienced in those days. After World War II nobody could teach Russian in this country. But they were always fighting over what was right. And then I found out that the language was changing and changing, and today they say it's totally different grammatically.

WARENSKJOLD: Really? Oh, isn't that interesting.

HAST: Well, it was always so complicated. But, oh, I didn't know you had Russian also. So you've had so many languages.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. But, you see, that was marvelous for me as a singer, again, with no idea that I was going to be a

professional singer. I just took languages because I liked them.

HAST: Did you get into the musical literature at all? I mean also Russian songs and Spanish or--?

WARENSKJOLD: Not in school or anything like that. I did that at home, yes.

HAST: And did you get any literature with German, French, and--?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. Oh, yes.

HAST: Oh, you did.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes.

HAST: Well, you see, all this ties together, and this is why you're such a fabulous teacher and why we don't have many people like you teaching the way you do, because you understand this so well. So that's great. All right. You said to me at one point that when you graduated in 1943, under the supervision of your mother and Miss Riegelman you then were a soloist in two San Francisco church choirs, and you also studied all kinds of song literature.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes.

HAST: Would you like to explain that a little bit?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, that was just an ongoing thing from early days.

HAST: The church choirs, that was something new?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. Let's see, how did that start out? Well, let's go back just a little bit further. I said that my family was behind me as far as paying for lessons, and I lived at home and all that sort of thing, but I still had sort of the idea that when I was thinking in terms of being a little more serious about the voice that I wanted to pay for some of this myself. I felt that I should. So I started to-- I taught tennis back at my old school, at Miss Wallace's School, and that--

HAST: Oh, that must have been fun.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, it was. But it paid me a little money.

I think it was two afternoons a week or something like that.

I did that. Then I also taught at the Elizabeth Holloway School of the Theater. [laughter]

HAST: Oh, you did, really?

WARENSKJOLD: I taught voice there, in San Francisco, for a year.

TAPE NUMBER: I, SIDE TWO

APRIL 15, 1992

WARENSKJOLD: So I taught for a year at the Elizabeth Holloway School of the Theater. I taught voice, the first time I had ever taught voice.

HAST: Oh, yes? You actually taught it?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes.

HAST: To young people or--?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, most of these were-- This was after the war [World War II]. Most of these people--a lot of them were men, most of them were men--were coming back from the war, and they were given whatever they wanted to go to college or to go to school, and some of these went to the School of the Theater. They were paid by the government to go-- I don't know what they called it at that time, but anyway, I taught some of these men. They were not going to be singers; they were there for acting, but they were to be taught how to sing as part of that. So this was what I was doing. It was the first time I'd ever taught, and it was fascinating. I learned a lot.

HAST: And men. It must have been difficult.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, yes.

HAST: Wasn't that harder to do than teaching girls, maybe?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, yes, because nowadays I do not teach men.



I don't think I know that much about how the man's voice works, so I don't do it. I can coach men, you know, but to teach them how to make those--

HAST: Technique.

WARENSKJOLD: --the technique of making those sounds, no, I don't think I know anything about it. But these were still young men, and they were not singers, so I could give them the fundamentals of that, and I learned a lot that way.

But then, to get back to the church choirs--this is another thing, you know--I thought, "Well, why don't I try for a church choir?" So I auditioned for the high holy days--this is the way I sort of jumped into it--at Temple Emmanuel in San Francisco.

This was the big Jewish synagogue in San Francisco, and they had a wonderfully well-known choir there. For the high holy days they brought in extra people, so I auditioned for that, and Cantor [Ruben] Rinder heard me and liked me. So I did the high holy days--

HAST: In Hebrew? Did you have to sing this in Hebrew?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes. Oh, yes.

HAST: Really?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, it was fascinating, yes, and the music was just gorgeous.

HAST: So how did you learn how to pronounce these things?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, he told us, Cantor Rinder. He told us.

So after the high holy days were over, he called me and said, "I'd like awfully much if you could join our choir." I was so pleased, because that was-- Every Saturday we were there.

The regular organist went on vacation I think six months later, and they brought in an organist who was the organist and choir director for an Episcopal church, Saint Luke's Episcopal Church. So he was there for I think six months, something like that, and he asked me if I would like to come-- He'd like to hear me in his church and see how my voice sounded in his church. So I went over and sang there, so he offered me the position of soloist in his church.

HAST: So you were busy on Saturdays and on Sundays.

WARENSKJOLD: On Saturdays, on Sundays, yes.

HAST: That's marvelous.

WARENSKJOLD: At that point, I think I got the magnificent salary of \$10 a week for the Saint Luke's Episcopal job and I think something by the month--\$50 a month or something like that--for the-- But, I mean, it was marvelous, you see, because when I was paying \$6 a lesson, that three times-- By that time, I was having three lessons a week, so that was \$18. So I was making money.

HAST: [laughter] You were ahead.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, yes.

HAST: That is amazing. Did you have to sing in Latin at all at the Episcopal church or not?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, we did some things, yes. Not in the regular services, but when we did concerts, yes.

HAST: As you know, all that has changed completely. The Latin is out and--

WARENSKJOLD: Well, in the Catholic churches, yes. They didn't ever--

HAST: Well, in Episcopal also.

WARENSKJOLD: Well, this was not, evidently. A high Episcopal, maybe that they-- This was not.

HAST: A high church or low church.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, this was not. But, I mean, we did-- We did *stabat maters* and all kinds of things where we had to do some Latin.

HAST: Now, tell me, singing in a choir, of course, is very different from singing a solo.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes, indeed.

HAST: Can you tell us something about how you have to relate to your fellow singers? How do you do that?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, I don't think you have to make a point of trying to meld in. I think you just have to sing normally and--

HAST: But you have to listen a different way.

WARENSKJOLD: Well, you have to listen, yes. I think it's a natural reaction that when you are singing with other people, that you-- Normally you blend, you blend with that. You see, I never sang in what you would call a chorus. I sang in church choirs, which means that at the very most for the high holy days I think we had probably six sopranos--at the very most.

In most of the church choirs there were probably at the very most four sopranos.

HAST: So how many all together?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, I mean, four sopranos and maybe three altos and three or four tenors and maybe-- Maybe twelve to sixteen.

HAST: So it wasn't an enormous choir.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, that's the whole thing. They still are almost individual voices in that way. The difficulty that people have when they go into choruses-- You know, they say, "Well, go into the opera chorus because then you can work up to something." That's not true. You do not ordinarily work up to--

HAST: Okay, please talk about this. It's very important.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. You do not ordinarily work up to solos out of an opera chorus. What you do do is, unless you're very careful, you begin trying to listen to yourself, which means you're trying to sing louder, because the voice comes

out of your mouth, and it has to go around here and come back into your ears. By the time it gets back to your hearing yourself, it's already too late. You're hearing the people on both sides of you, and you're trying to sing louder than they are, and it's very, very bad for the voice unless you are so intelligent and have had such good background, as I had, that when you sing you only sing by the feel. You know exactly what you're doing vocally with the structure and don't worry about hearing yourself.

HAST: Well, I've been wanting to ask as one of the questions actually later on, but let's talk about it now-- A choir like the Roger Wagner Chorale--now, that's a huge choir, or was--that's a very different thing, isn't it? We see things like that on television. I always wanted to know the difference in how a singer should sing, you see, and now you just mentioned it. That's very interesting. Now, a chorus in an opera is usually fairly small?

WARENSKJOLD: No, it's quite large.

HAST: Or can it be large, also?

WARENSKJOLD: Quite large, yes.

HAST: But the whole technique is different. And, now-- who--the conductor really should have to listen to this--?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, the technique is really the same. I mean--

HAST: Yes, but I mean that you have to be so careful--

WARENSKJOLD: You have to be so careful if you are planning to have a professional solo career. That's the thing; you have to be so careful. I think that it's best just not to go into those, whether it's--

HAST: That's interesting. I've never heard that.

WARENSKJOLD: --whether it's an opera chorus or whether it's something like the Wagner chorale. I don't think that it's good. I know a lot of singers now have come up through the Roger Wagner Chorale, but maybe they weren't there for that many years, also.

HAST: Well, from a conductor's point of view, what is the difference between a big choir, a chorale, and a staged opera or chorus? Does he have to listen to things differently or--?

WARENSKJOLD: No, I think-- I coached with Georges Sebastian, who was an opera conductor--this was the year before I was with the San Francisco Opera--and he told me that anybody who wanted to be a conductor, a symphony conductor, the best thing in the world for them to do was to start as an opera conductor, because--

HAST: Really?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, because as an opera conductor you have to relate to your orchestra here in the pit. You also have to have your chorus on stage, and you have to have your

individual soloists. If you can bring all of those together, you are a good technician, and you are a good conductor. From that point, you can go into conducting a symphony and it's duck soup for you.

HAST: Is that right?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, yes.

HAST: Aha. Now, again, this is a question I was going to bring up later, but as long as we're on the subject, because it's so interesting-- As I understand it, just from what I've read and what I've heard, opera conductors today are actually quite different from what they used to be, and that in the old days they would follow-- The singer had a lot more to say about it.

Is that true or not?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes, yes, yes. We go into cycles, of course.

But years ago the opera conductor was not the virtuoso. The singer was the one who brought all the people in. I mean, now we have singers who bring people in, also--a [Luciano] Pavarotti or something like that--but they work now much closer together with conductors. At that time, if somebody wanted to hold a high note, those many years ago the conductor would stand there with his baton like this until you were ready, wait, and then come down, and then the orchestra went ahead with it.

HAST: Well, like a good piano accompanist should really wait for the singer.

WARENSKJOLD: No.

HAST: No?

WARENSKJOLD: No, no, no.

HAST: That is not true ever?

WARENSKJOLD: No. That is not true, no. A good accompanist does not accompany; a good accompanist is a pianist who is one with the singer. You both have to make music; you both have to understand what you're after. If the singer is well-known and respected--

HAST: And experienced, yes.

WARENSKJOLD: --and experienced, any good accompanist is going to work in with that. If you have an accompanist who is much more experienced than the singer, the singer is going to depend a little bit more upon the accompanist. If they have--

HAST: And that can be a problem, yes.

WARENSKJOLD: Well, it can be a problem, and it can be a help, too, depending upon the accompanist, yes.

HAST: Yes. Well, like the inexperienced ones we get at UCLA, they do need help.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, the students, of course, of course.

HAST: They do need help, and if then they mess up something--

WARENSKJOLD: That's right, yes.

HAST: --then the pianist knows how to wait for them or just go on with them. But is there such a thing as the pianist



just doing his solo part or her solo part and--?

WARENSKJOLD: No, no, no. It has to be together.

HAST: It has to be together.

WARENSKJOLD: It has to one, yes.

HAST: But they have to work this out, don't they?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, absolutely.

HAST: I mean, this can't just be done--

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. And that's one of the reasons why I always insisted on taking my own accompanist with me.

HAST: That was going to be my next question. Now, for your auditions, you always made sure you had your own--

WARENSKJOLD: Well, I didn't go through that many auditions.

In the very beginning, you know, if you talk about auditions being the contest-type of auditions, they did not have that many at that time.

HAST: Oh, that's right.

WARENSKJOLD: And at that time there were none of these opera auditions, the contest-type auditions. There was one big contest, the National Federation of Music Clubs, and that's the only one I ever entered. It's the only one I ever entered.

As far as auditioning for a job was concerned, I auditioned for those churches that I was telling you about. I never auditioned for the San Francisco Opera, and maybe we can get into that if you want to later.

HAST: Yes, we're going to get into that. I just wondered how auditions were in those days. You didn't have as many people auditioning?

WARENSKJOLD: No, no.

HAST: I mean, today it's a nightmare for singers, isn't it? Because there are so many?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, it's a whole new career now. Auditions and contests are a career, yes.

HAST: And very often it can be political, from what I've heard, if there's a favorite from somebody and--

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, I suppose, yes.

HAST: But it's very difficult, I think, for a singer to make it today. I really think it's very, very hard.

WARENSKJOLD: Well, it was difficult in my day, too.

HAST: In those days, yes, yes. Well, I'm sure. I'm sure it was.

WARENSKJOLD: It really was, yes. You see, at that time we had radio and then later television to make a name well-known or to get people to know who you are. Nowadays, people make their name by winning major contests, and then from that they go on into their career.

HAST: Which is nerve-racking, I imagine, really very hard.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, I should think it would be terrible, just terrible.

HAST: And whom do you know and whom don't you know and what should you bring and what should you do. You know, you said that around 1943 you learned that you could by then sway concert audiences. [laughter] I loved that. So how did you find that out? By singing and having everybody swoon in the audiences?

WARENSKJOLD: [laughter] No. There is a very subtle reaction with an audience. My very first full recital-- You know, I had given half a concert for this women's music club and something else, trying out things; I had done that. You were given \$50, which was magnificent at that time, for an afternoon's short program for them. But this was the very first full recital that I gave, and it was in Berkeley at Charles Mallory Dutton's home. He had an old Victorian home just at one edge of the Berkeley campus. He taught piano, a very well-known musical figure in that area, and he presented recitals--I think it was once every two weeks, something like that--in his home. He had the piano sitting at one room here, and there was a room coming off at one L here and another room coming off the L on the other side, and the people would be seated in both of these rooms that faced the piano that was in the corner between the two rooms. He presented the local up-and-coming young musicians, pianists, singers, violinists, whoever would come to him and present a program and say they

would like to do it. Chances were if he knew your teacher and the teacher said, "Yes, I think you'll like it," he would do it. He cooked dinner.

HAST: He did?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. He had a simply wonderful casserole dish and a green salad and all of that. He had regular patrons who would come; he'd send out cards to them saying we're having such and such a person and the dinner and all of that. They would come. They paid \$1.75 for this dinner that he made, and they got the dinner and the recital, you see. Of course, we the recitalists were not paid. We were not paid.

HAST: Oh, you weren't paid for that.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, absolutely not.

HAST: This was an honor just to be asked.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, an honor to be asked and an honor and privilege to be able to give a full recital, you see. You could do a group here and a group there, but for a full recital, it was very difficult to find a place to do that. HAST: Was it?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes. So that was the first-- I think that was in 1943; I think I had the date here. I remember the night before-- Oh, I just could scarcely eat dinner the night before, I was so nervous about this. I didn't sleep very well. The whole day I just tried to get a little bit of food

in me, you know. I finally gave the recital, and this feeling that you were talking about, I began to get that feeling in the midst of the recital that I could look around and see in the expressions of the faces-- Because it wasn't that there were big lights in my eyes, you know. It was just in a home, and I could see all of the faces out there on both sides of this room. I began to see when I did certain things that I was getting a reaction. And, oh, that is a wonderful feeling. Oh, it's a marvelous feeling, yes. So anyway, that was the first one.

HAST: That's tremendous, that's tremendous.

WARENSKJOLD: Then I did two or three others of those after that.

HAST: Yes, now, let's talk about this. You said your next big career step was Alfred Frankenstein, the music critic for the *San Francisco Chronicle*, who wrote such a favorable review for your concert in San Francisco. Is that right?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, the Grieg--

HAST: The Edvard Grieg centennial concert in San Francisco.

WARENSKJOLD: --the Grieg centennial, yes. It was my first newspaper review, and wasn't that a thrill.

HAST: And it was very favorable.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, indeed, it was.

HAST: Which was incredible. I mean, it was just--

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, yes, absolutely.

HAST: And you said this led eventually in 1945 to the San Francisco Symphony [Orchestra], where you sang at Treasure Island naval base [United States Naval Training and Distribution Center, Treasure Island, San Francisco] for Christmas festivities.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, he recommended me for that.

HAST: And you'll talk about that in a minute, but I just think that must have been a really-- I mean, how did it feel to have such a favorable review for the first time?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, it was unbelievable, absolutely unbelievable.

HAST: And your parents were thrilled with it.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, I should say they were. My mother played for me. My mother accompanied me.

HAST: Did she? Oh, how lovely.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes. She was my accompanist, yes.

May we go back just a little bit? Before the full recital program at Mr. Dutton's, I mentioned the audition-- the only audition I ever went in was the National Federation of Music Clubs. Now, this was a very well-known organization nationwide, and they had-- I can't remember whether it was every two years or once a year. Anyway, it doesn't make any difference. But I decided-- I didn't. [laughter] We all,

my teacher and-- We decided that I should enter this. So we had to have two or three-- I've forgotten whether it was Schubert and-- There was a list of things that you chose from, so we chose that. And some modern American things, and then one aria. So I auditioned, went into the contest, and I won the San Francisco Bay Area part of it. Then the next step was also in San Francisco, but that included Los Angeles. So the people who had won in Los Angeles then came up to San Francisco and competed at the next level. Well, I was very young and inexperienced in the ways of the music world, and I can't remember now whether it was at the first time-- I think it was at the first one that I won that Alfred Frankenstein was one of the judges. That's where he--

HAST: Oh, he was one of the judges.

WARENSKJOLD: That's where he first heard of me, you see. So he passed me on and gave some very nice little writing in the thing about me.

So anyway, I went into this next thing, and before I sang--and I think I sang early in the numbers of us that were singing--I went into the ladies room beforehand. In there was one of the singers from Los Angeles, and she was putting it on as if somebody from down there-- I think it was Mr. [L. E.] Behymer. We all knew of Mr. Behymer as being "Mr.

Music" in Los Angeles at that time. "He had sponsored me," she said, and "I won the auditions there, and I did this, and I'm that, and I'm that." And I began to shrink and get smaller and smaller in my mind. So I went into the audition, and I'm sure I did not sing with as much confidence as I could have. Half an hour to an hour later, I happened to be sitting there when she was singing, and she was horrible! [laughter] She was terrible, and I felt like such a fool for allowing that to affect me at all.

HAST: Yes, yes. But it taught you.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, it did. Oh, I should say it did.

HAST: Was she all dressed up?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, oh, yes. Oh, yes.

HAST: But now, what kind of clothes would you wear to an audition in those days? I mean, you were very young still.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes. But these were morning-afternoon auditions, you see.

HAST: So you didn't wear formal dress?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, no, no, no. Just a very nice dress.

HAST: And makeup?

WARENSKJOLD: Just ordinary makeup, yes.

HAST: Limited, very limited.

WARENSKJOLD: Well, it all depends on where you're auditioning. If you are auditioning on the stage with lighting, you have



to make up more than that, but this was nothing as big as that.

HAST: But not in blue jeans with cut-out knees the way they do today.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, no. And you see it. Oh, I hate that, too. I just hate it. I think if you're going into something like that, you have to be an artist. You walk in--

HAST: Yes, I'm trying to teach this also, but you do it probably better than I do. So anyway--

WARENSKJOLD: So I don't know how we-- I went back to this business of auditions. I don't know where we were from there.

HAST: No, that's quite all right. We were in 1945, where you were at this centennial concert in San Francisco with Pierre Monteux. By the way, I figured out that in 1945 he must have been seventy years old, because I looked up his dates, which were 1875 to 1964. He must have been an extraordinary man.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, he was. He was unbelievable.

HAST: Because I remember him, but, of course, not the way you do. What was he like?

WARENSKJOLD: He was a very sweet, very sweet person. And maybe when we get on talking about the opera, I can tell you a story about him when he conducted the *Fidelio* performance in the San Francisco Opera. We can talk about that. He was

a very sweet man, and the orchestra adored him.

HAST: He was not flamboyant, as I recall, like some other conductors.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, absolutely not. No, no, no, no. No. From the back you scarcely could see what he was doing. I mean, he'd flick a little finger, and the orchestra knew what he wanted, because by that time he'd been with them seventeen years. They knew every little thing--

HAST: Yes, I always thought he was extraordinary, but, of course, I don't know nearly what you know.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. May I just go back?

HAST: Yes, please do. Of course.

WARENSKJOLD: One other little story that I have-- My second full recital was in the Piedmont Musical Club. You know, every little area has their musical clubs, and this happened to be one where you could give a full recital. It was an evening performance for men and women, not just the ladies, [laughter] and it was in my grandfather's house. He was a member of the Piedmont Musical Club. He had a very large living room--it was forty feet long--and there was a library behind the living room with three little steps that came down right into the living room in front of where the piano was.

The steps were carpeted, and, I mean, I'd come down those steps I don't know how many times. Here I was in this long

evening dress and high heels, and I guess maybe the high heel must have caught on something. The last step down, I caught my heel, and I landed down on one knee in front of the audience.

I felt like saying, "Mammy!" [laughter] The audience at first said, "Oh!" like that, and then immediately I started to smile, and I got up, and I must have said something--I don't know what it was--that put them all at ease, and then applause. Of course, they were with me from that point on.

HAST: Was your grandfather still living at that time?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes. Oh, yes.

HAST: So you had a good relationship with him, also?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. I respected him very much.

HAST: But he was sort of Nordic in temperament, and he wasn't effusive, I imagine.

WARENSKJOLD: No, no, no. No. My cousins, my father's sister [Aunt Olive]'s children, had lived there at the house for some time, so they were closer to him than I was. But I just respected him so-- I remember I used to--

HAST: Oh, I'm sure he was proud of you.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes, yes. He went over to see a couple of things that I did with the San Francisco Symphony. But I remember as a child going up to spend an evening with him one time-- The only thing I didn't like about it was that he smoked cigars, and even at that young age I couldn't stand

the odor of cigars. It was just so heavy. But I'd be doing my homework, and my father used to tell me that my grandfather was so good at mathematics, so I would-- And I was pretty good at mathematics, too. So I was doing algebra or something like that, and I thought, "Well, I think I'll ask Grandpa what this is." So he looked at the problem, and he just, "Uh-huh," like that. "Uh-huh," right in his head, and there was the answer for the thing, which didn't do me any good at all, because I still had to go back and go through the whole thing. But absolutely-- Right in his head.

HAST: My father was like that. And he'd say, "Well, it's logical." [laughter]

WARENSKJOLD: I know. Yes, yes. But you see, that's the way he was.

HAST: Yes, that's the way they were raised, too. When they went to school, that's how they learned it.

WARENSKJOLD: But, you see, all of these things, that falling down before the audience, got me to the point where nothing really bothered me anymore. I mean, I could carry off almost anything.

HAST: Yes, because it gives you a stage presence, which you teach so well.

So, just to go back a little bit, we said that in 1943 you had your first full recital program. Then, something

else very big: in 1944 you were asked by Mr. Frankenstein to inaugurate his new local radio [KYA] series [*Evening Concert*] in the San Francisco area with outstanding singers and instrumentalists. Now, that's a big step.

WARENSKJOLD: All of the local singers and instrumentalists that he felt were the leading lights in the San Francisco area. Having heard me in this music clubs thing and then having heard me in the Grieg centennial concert, he asked me to inaugurate this thing, not just to be a member of it. I opened it.

HAST: Yes, I wanted to ask you. You opened the whole thing?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. He asked me to open it.

HAST: That's an honor, yes.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, I was so pleased, so pleased.

HAST: Did you have to say anything, also? Or you just--?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, no, no, no. I just did the program, and it was--

HAST: So what kind of a program was it?

WARENSKJOLD: A lieder. And he asked me to do-- He gave me some certain songs by some local composers that he was particularly interested in, so I learned those songs for it.

HAST: Was this with piano accompaniment?

WARENSKJOLD: Piano accompaniment, yes, and just in the radio studio. It's the only time I think I ever sang on radio in

which there wasn't a large audience.

HAST: Well, it was a nice beginning. Then also in 1944 you had three different full recital programs for three different organizations. What was that about?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, well, only that it was three completely different recitals. You see, to learn all of that repertoire and--

HAST: Well, I wondered were they different programs that you had to--?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, yes.

HAST: Totally different? Oh, that's a lot.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. They were different organizations, and they were all in the same area, so I couldn't do the same program for them; I had to do something different. So that was a wonderful way of learning the literature and learning at a time when I had the time. See, most people now are so interested in the opera that they work on opera and they learn opera roles. They do not think in terms of the fact that when they become the professional opera singer, part of their career is to be a recitalist as well. They are asked to go around the country doing recitals as well. They have not spent any time learning the repertoire. Then they have to start learning a program for that specific thing. It's too late at that point.

HAST: And they're usually so busy at that point, also.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, that's it. That's the whole thing.

HAST: You probably, I would think, had more time for all of this than people have today. Isn't everybody so stressed for time that it's a problem?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, I think it depends on--

HAST: Or do they overbook themselves or--?

WARENSKJOLD: It depends on what they're trying to do and how far along in the career you're talking about. I'm talking about-- This was the very beginning-- I was still a student in 1944, you see. At that point I had had one full recital program, and the next year I had three full recitals. So you see, you multiply those-- How much repertoire did I have by that time?

HAST: Then in 1945 you gave a recital for the Carmel Music Society of California. You mentioned Noël Sullivan. Could you tell us about him? He wrote a good review.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes. He happened to write the review for the *Carmel Pine Cone*, which is the local newspaper in Carmel.

HAST: It is? What a charming name.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, the *Carmel Pine Cone*. He was a magnificent man, a philanthropist. He was a bass singer, always interested in singers--particularly singers--professional students, anybody who came to Carmel. So anyway, he wrote this perfectly

lovely review of my recital. I, of course, did not meet him at that time, but if you want me to go ahead with it, I think it was two years--

HAST: I just wondered, how old a man was he actually at that time?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, dear. Well, he died when he was sixty years old, so that was-- He must have been around fifty, I guess, at that time. Something like that.

HAST: At the time, you didn't know him, but you met him later. Why don't you talk about that?

WARENSKJOLD: I knew the name. Oh, I knew the name.

HAST: Yes. We can jump ahead, because we can always go back if you want.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, all right. All right, yes. Actually, I think it was about two years later, I went down to Carmel for a vacation, the first time I had ever gone away all by myself for a vacation, and I rather felt the need of it.

I mean, I loved my family, and my mother and my father were very dear people and very understanding, but I felt that I just had to get away and sort of learn all about myself, I guess.

HAST: As an adult.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, yes. So I went to Carmel for two weeks--this was during the [Carmel] Bach festival there--and got a little



apartment. I went to one of the Bach festival concerts, and Noël happened to be singing a Bach cantata--a very deep, beautiful, deep bass voice. And I, who was very shy, very shy, I said to myself, "I'm going to push myself, and I'm going to go backstage and talk to him afterwards and tell him how much I enjoyed it," never thinking that he would even remember having heard me at all.

HAST: And having written that review about you.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. So I went backstage, and here was this big, tall man. He had sort of gray hair at that point, and very quiet, always very quiet. I went up to him, and I told him who I was, and before I'd even gotten the words out of my mouth that I enjoyed him, he said, "Miss Warenskjold! Oh, how lovely to meet you." And he went on and on about remembering my recital two years before. He said, "I'm having a few people out to the house for dinner on Thursday night"--this was maybe a Tuesday--"and we'd like awfully much-- If you're still in town, would you come?"

I said, "I'd be delighted."

And he said, "Please, bring some music, because they're all going to be musicians, and sometime during the evening everybody gets up and does something. So if you don't mind-- We'll have an accompanist there."

I had brought some music with me; why, I don't know.

Then I rustled around and tried to get a place to practice-- That next day I tried to get the thing going, and somehow or other I got somebody's living room to practice in for a couple of hours. [laughter]

Then I went to his home for dinner. He had a beautiful place they called the Farm out in the Carmel Valley. Everybody who came through this area was always invited to the Farm either to stay for whatever time they were there or even just to come for dinner or for lunch or something like that. At the times that I was there I saw so many fabulous people, and--

HAST: What an opportunity for you.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, it was wonderful. So anyway, I sang. It was at that time that I met a friend of his, Lee Crowe, who was an actor and a stage director. He was going to be doing a show called *Mrs. Moonlight* by Benn Levy. That was coming up in some months. So he asked me that night if I might be interested in playing the lead. [laughter] You can imagine such a thing.

HAST: That's extraordinary. But you were always interested in acting, also.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes. Well, I mean, all through school you do all of those things.

HAST: Yes, well, you do in private schools.

WARENSKJOLD: And by that time-- Yes, we're getting ahead of ourselves because of--

HAST: Well, just follow your thought, then.

WARENSKJOLD: By that time I had already done my first opera at Stanford [University], and I realized that you needed more than just singing in order to do opera, that you really had to know what you could do on the stage and how to become a character and all of that. So I was wondering, "What can I do? How can I work this out?" And here this was dropped in my lap. Again, another thing--you know, isn't this amazing?--just dropped in my lap.

HAST: It's marvelous. It's just marvelous.

WARENSKJOLD: So I did. I came down, and we did the performances just on weekends. We did them for four weekends.

HAST: Really? For four weekends?

WARENSKJOLD: Four weekends. And I was--

HAST: And you had time to learn the part?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. There was plenty of time to be there for rehearsals. I stayed at the Farm in the guest house, and--

HAST: How ideal.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, it was absolutely wonderful. The stage director lived the equivalent of next door. I was going back and forth to San Francisco, even while I was staying there,

doing a *Standard Hour* radio program.

HAST: Oh, yes. We're going to get to that next time.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, we'll get to that. I'm getting ahead of us.

HAST: We're running out of time on the tape. At any rate, I know that acting was always one of the things you adored.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes, yes.

HAST: So this was a marvelous opportunity for you.

TAPE NUMBER: II, SIDE ONE

APRIL 22, 1992

HAST: Let's talk about this, if this is all right with you.

You spoke last week about correct voice production, and I wondered if you could discuss different types of female vocal instruments and the different roles in the repertoire as you see it. In other words, we have basically five types of sopranos: dramatic, *lirica-spinta*, lyric, *leggiero*, coloratura. But that's a pretty big area. How do you really cast people in this? And who makes the decision? How do you decide when students--? Their voices change as they learn. Do you want to talk about that a little?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, it's rather interesting, because times change, and what used to be-- For instance, you remember the name Bidú Sayão?

HAST: Yes.

WARENSKJOLD: That was a perfectly lovely-- What you would call a lyric coloratura voice. She did do *La Traviata*, and it was a bit heavy for her. But that voice-- If she were singing today, I don't think she would have become as popular, because the voices that people expect to do certain roles have changed. They've gotten much heavier. In other words, she used to do *Manon*, the [Jules] Massenet *Manon*. She did *Romeo and Juliette* [by Charles Gounod]. Some of these operas

are not done as much as they were at that time. But even these voices like hers that did Marguérite in *Faust* [by Gounod], they now use a much heavier voice for these roles. So that's why--

HAST: Who makes that decision?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, who knows? Whether it is the opera people themselves, the opera company, or whether it's that they think that's what is needed for maybe the larger houses, they think they need a larger voice-- Which is not true, by the way, because Bidú Sayão's voice went back to the very last row at the San Francisco Opera House, because it floated out over the orchestra.

HAST: Without a microphone?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, absolutely never. Never a microphone. But it's the quality of the voice that they seem to want. Now they want that heavier, deeper quality, which I don't think is good for certain roles, and it really is not good for Marguérite, and it's not good for-- Well, certainly you'd never expect it in *Romeo and Juliette*; that is the lighter voice.

But to get back to this idea of what voices are used for what roles now, it's just that times have changed, and they're looking for the heavier voice. It is much more difficult for a light or a true lyric soprano, as I was. I was not a lyric coloratura, and I was not a *lirica-spinta*. I was

a true lyric soprano.

HAST: Can you describe for the people who will be listening to the tape--because a lot of them will be students--the differences in the dramatic sopranos, mezzo-sopranos, and those things? Who decides which is which?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. Well, sometimes it's decided for you. The mezzo voice, for one thing, is a strange instrument. A lot of times it is simply a soprano that does not have the top notes, a lot of mezzo-sopranos. What you try to go by is the quality of the voice. The mezzo-soprano is lower, of course; it does not use the very high notes that the soprano has. But it is the quality itself that determines whether you are a mezzo-soprano or not. Otherwise you're just, as they say, a "limited" soprano. The contralto, of course, is the very deep voice, very deep, and you can always recognize that. And there are so few of them that you really can recognize it. But the contralto actually, if it's a true contralto, has a high C.

HAST: Really?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, yes. And that's why it is so--

HAST: That's quite a range.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, it is. It's a very unusual voice. I really can't think of one true contralto now, not one. We have a lot of mezzo-sopranos, a lot of which are limited sopranos.

Then, going upwards, we have the dramatic soprano, which is a very full, round, rich voice from the lowest notes supposedly up to the highest range. That would go up to a-- They have to do a B, and sometimes there are times when they have to do a C.

HAST: Now, they're getting rarer also. Is that correct or not?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. There are not that many real dramatic sopranos. They are using now a lot of *lirica-spintas* to do the heavier roles.

Now, the *lirica-spinta* is the next step up. It is lighter in quality than the dramatic soprano. It has the same range really as the dramatic soprano but is lighter in quality. Because there are so few true dramatic sopranos now, these *lirica-spintas* sometimes are used for those dramatic roles, and consequently some of these voices are ruined because they are doing things that are just too heavy for them.

HAST: Yes, this is the other thing. You're anticipating my question. Because if a voice uses the wrong roles too soon, and sometimes-- I think you also mentioned that conductors nowadays are not as considerate as they used to be.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes.

HAST: If somebody is forced into a role, then it could be



the end of the career in a short time. Isn't that right?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, yes. Absolutely.

HAST: That sounds very serious.

WARENSKJOLD: Either the end of the career or just a voice that becomes very used sounding. Because maybe they're good on stage, or because it's too hard to find others to do the roles that they know, they keep on using them. This is the thing that's sad to me.

To go on with this, the next is the pure lyric soprano that I was, and this is just by quality alone. One thing that's interesting: the lyric soprano voice is lighter than the *lirica-spinta* voice, but it still is a carrying voice.

It still has some dramatic quality to it. You can do certain things with it that the lyric coloratura can't do, for instance.

Oh, there was something that I was going to get into. Turn that off for just a second, would you? [tape recorder off]

For instance, my teacher, Mabel Riegelman, was a lyric soprano. She told me that she had four notes in the upper middle register--from about an F, F-sharp, G, and G-sharp, right in there--that were very round and full and almost like a dramatic soprano. And she loved singing those notes-- They really came out--all four feet eleven [inches] of her.

[laughter] But her teacher was very intelligent, and she

said, "You can go on singing those four notes and try to make the rest of your voice match those and ruin your whole voice, or you can take what your voice really is, below that and on top of that, and make those four notes match the rest of your voice." So that's what she had to work at to make sure that she did not try to make the rest of her voice sound like those large four notes in that part of her range.

HAST: Now, Dorothy, there is no way that one can do this alone. You have to have a good teacher to listen to you, and somebody who knows.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, you have to have somebody who knows, yes. Oh, absolutely.

HAST: Now, does this apply--? I know we are talking about female voices, but so often in male voices you hear that a tenor becomes a baritone or vice versa. Now, that's a big decision, isn't it?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, it's a big decision, yes.

HAST: I get students who say, "Well, I'm not a baritone anymore now, I'm a tenor." And I say to myself, "Well, who made the decision and why? Was it the wise one?" Now, the same would apply to female voices, is that correct?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, to a certain extent.

HAST: Or does the voice really change so dramatically in men?

WARENSKJOLD: No, sometimes it's there all the time, and depending upon the way they've worked-- Sometimes some teachers and sometimes the singer himself doesn't work hard enough to free that upper range at that time. I know somebody spoke to Hermann Prey once and said, "You have such lovely high notes in there. Had you ever thought of becoming a tenor?"

And he said, "Well, I probably could very easily have become a tenor, because I can go up higher than I have to sing." But he said, "I spent all of my formative years and my studying learning the roles in the baritone repertoire. I wasn't going to relearn all of these roles and learn to be a tenor again, even though I could have sung it vocally." So, you see, in that way perhaps he was a little lazy, but he's made certainly a very great career as a baritone. So who are we to say that he should have become a tenor? Even though he might have become--

HAST: Right. And that was his decision in this case.

WARENSKJOLD: In this case it was his decision.

HAST: But very often a younger student is in no position to make that decision.

WARENSKJOLD: No, that's right. That's right. But there are a lot of baritones who, when they're studying, are young-- This is the natural part of the voice for the man, this baritone voice. They should not, when they are that young, be pushing

it up. They can learn to become a tenor a little later if the voice is going to go that way.

HAST: Now, to get back to the female voices, if you have the different types of mezzos--there are four groups of them--and if it's in neither category, then there is such a thing as a "falcon" voice. Can you describe that? [laughter]

WARENSKJOLD: I really don't know.

HAST: It's because of some singer [Marie-Cornélie Falcon] who was called "falconette" or something. I have to look it up.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, really? I don't know.

HAST: It came to mind last night, and I thought maybe you--

WARENSKJOLD: No, I really don't. I really don't.

HAST: We can talk about it next time. I'll look it up.

Then there's *verismo* and *realismo*, which actually describes a certain type of opera, but from what I have read it actually implies the voices that are necessary for the performance rather than the operas themselves.

WARENSKJOLD: I think probably, yes. I think that is what you call more of the heroic tenor, the dramatic tenor, or the dramatic or the *lirica-spinta*. The *lirica-spinta*, yes.

HAST: I was going to say mostly for women's voices.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, yes. In a lot of the Puccini operas it's not the dramatic soprano, it's the *lirica-spinta*.

HAST: And then is it true that diction and phrasing is even more important for those roles?

WARENSKJOLD: No, I don't think any more important. No. I think diction and phrasing and style is just part of being a top-rate singer.

HAST: Well, we've had such an influx of oriental students, musicians. Let's stay with the female voices. Is it true that there are no mezzos? That they cannot sing those roles?

WARENSKJOLD: The Orientals?

HAST: Yes.

WARENSKJOLD: Well, no. I've heard some mezzo voices. I really have.

HAST: I was misinformed on that.

WARENSKJOLD: It's true I haven't heard many of them, but--

HAST: Their voices are lighter generally, maybe?

WARENSKJOLD: No, they're not lighter. No, they really are not lighter. The ones that I have had to work with, the Koreans and a Japanese girl I worked with, they seemed to press on the voice, which makes it heavier. You have to work really hard with them to get them to lighten it.

HAST: Oh, that's interesting, because-- Well, I obviously didn't say that to her, but somebody came in---off the street, really--a girl from mainland China-- She said, "I have a

wonderful voice and I need a good teacher," and we talked for a while. She said, "Let me sing for you." And I said, "Well, I'm not the one to go to." But she went ahead anyway. And I was appalled. Now, you said heavy. It was all from the throat. Is that how they teach over there?

WARENSKJOLD: No, I think that has something to do with the language. I think it's--

HAST: The voice production has to be different, then? It ties in with language?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, I think so. Yes, the way they say certain vowels and consonants is very guttural.

HAST: But I was in shock. Of course, I didn't send her to you because obviously it was too late. I mean, you know-- But I just wondered if--

WARENSKJOLD: But you know what I mean about that?

HAST: Oh, yes, yes. Absolutely.

WARENSKJOLD: It's very hard for them to lighten that up.

HAST: Is it true that--again, these are all things that I'm throwing at you--the coloratura part of the Queen of the Night in Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* [*The Magic Flute*] is considered to be treacherous? [laughter]

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes. It is treacherous.

HAST: Why?

WARENSKJOLD: Years ago that used to be done by a typical

coloratura, but now they are using more almost dramatic sopranos who have that knack for doing those high F's up there. It was rather interesting--I don't know whether we spoke about this; you can stop me if we have--but they were going to be doing *The Magic Flute* in San Francisco one year, and they could not find a Queen of the Night.

HAST: Is that right?

WARENSKJOLD: They had a couple of coloraturas around, but they're light. They'll go up and hit those little notes in a very typical, light, light way, and that's not what they wanted for this. That's not what the character is, you know.

So they were looking in vain and couldn't find a Queen of the Night anywhere in the United States. So Mr. Merola, Gaetano Merola, whom we've spoken of before, asked me, he said, "Have you ever done the arias?"

And I said, "No, I really haven't, but let me look at them and see." So I looked at it, and I saw the F's up there, and I said to myself, "No, I know I cannot do an F. I think I can do an E." So I went to him, and I said, "Let me try it if you'll put it down a half a step."

And he said, "Well, I don't think there'd be any problem in that. We can put those arias down a half a step. There's no difficulty there. Let me hear it."

So I went home and worked on it in the half step down,

and I did it the first time, and I got those high E's.

Then, the more I went over it, because it really is heavy--

HAST: Yes, I'm familiar with that.

WARENSKJOLD: It really is a dramatic type of thing. The more I did it and tried to give what I thought he wanted in that role, the harder it was for me to reach those E's at that point. So I finally went to him and I said, "Maestro, I really am not going to be able to do what you want with it in the half step down. I know you're not going to want to go down a whole step so that I could do it and make those E-flats."

He said, "No, we really can't go that far."

HAST: This is very interesting, because I have heard that the Mozart repertoire is subjected to many modifications, especially in the last hundred years, because of bigger opera houses and vast orchestras. Now, is this true? How do they do this?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, it's a different Mozart than it was in his era, of course, because they are larger orchestras, and they are certainly being done in houses that are almost double the audience in size.

HAST: But now, what are these modifications? I mean, are the voices going a step down if necessary, or--?

WARENSKJOLD: I don't think so. They have really found voices



for the Queen of the Night. They've found voices that have a gimmick in order to hit those notes up there. So they can find that sort of thing. What you do lose is the intimacy of the story. The banter, the recitativo, and that sort of thing, is really lost in the larger houses. In this way it's different.

HAST: So do they leave it out or--?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, no, no, no. They're putting--

HAST: Do they cut it or--?

WARENSKJOLD: There are a few cuts. But no, a lot of it is still in. And now, of course, we have these horrible supertitles, you know. [laughter] Don't get me into that.

HAST: Well, we might as well, once you've brought it up. How about the supertitles? I mean, doesn't it make more people interested in opera by being able to read what it's about?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, I wonder. I really wonder. I do know that they can understand it, but maybe if we were living in a perfect world and the translations on the supertitles were absolutely perfect to what is being sung on stage at that exact moment--

HAST: But that's impossible.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, it's almost impossible. But if we were living in a perfect world, then it would be fine. But when you go to a-- Well, sometimes it's not even a comedy. But if you go there and people are reading up here, they're not

watching what's going on down on the stage. Something is said up there that is humorous, and they laugh at what they see which has nothing to do with what is going on on the stage. So I don't see that that is any help whatsoever.

I must say, though, in one way I understand how people feel when they don't know what's going on, because I went to this opera *Kullervo* [by Jean Sibelius], the Finnish opera that was done here a short time ago and, of course, done in Finnish. This is a language I haven't the faintest idea about, so I did look. But I tried to look and then look back down again to get an idea of what was going on on the stage.

What I did see a couple of years ago-- I think it was a Handel opera. I can't remember the name of it; if you're interested, I can find it. But instead of having what they thought was a translation of exactly what was being said, they gave an overall idea of what was being said in that scene in short little things so that you could look there, get an idea of what was going on, and then watch and listen for what was happening. That was excellent, because I didn't know that opera, either, so it was helpful to me. But then, I'm not expecting to hear and see the exact thing that's happening on the stage.

HAST: I think it is distracting, but it's also frustrating for some people not to understand.

WARENSKJOLD: But I still am a purist. I think those people who are going to want to go to the opera for some purpose--you know, they're trying to enlarge their cultural understanding--I think they can do a little bit of work in advance and just at least read the story. Of course, ideally they should read the libretto or listen to some records of the opera before they go and follow the words along. But maybe that's expecting too much in this day and age.

HAST: Well, in this day and age, with television, where everything goes flash immediately-- [laughter]

WARENSKJOLD: But, you see, now, here is another thing. On television this is not bothersome, because it's right there below, and you can see that at the same time.

HAST: I agree. Well, from having talked to different singers, I understand that the dramatic Wagnerian repertoire is the most taxing of all. Is that right? Those big roles. And sometimes also [Richard] Strauss. But Wagner, that's very difficult, isn't it?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, they say taxing, but, I mean, if you have the right instrument for it, it really isn't.

HAST: It is not?

WARENSKJOLD: No, it really isn't. Because it's sung on pure vowels. You should never try to sing louder than an orchestra anyway, you know, if it's properly written--and, truthfully,

it was properly written. It sometimes is not given in the house that is ideal for it. Wagner wrote it for an orchestra that was underneath the pit, really underneath the stage. When it's done in houses where the orchestra is up, very little below the stage area, you're hearing that orchestra first and then the voices come second to you. In those circumstances it is difficult, but it's-- Still, the singers should not try to sing over the orchestra.

HAST: How about the balance between the orchestra and the voices?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes. This is up to the conductor in part, obviously.

HAST: You don't want the voices drowned out by the orchestra, which happens at universities, we know. So can the singer hear himself or herself well enough on the stage to know how to strike that balance?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, the singer cannot do anything other than sing well, really. That's all the singer can do. At that point, if you have a knowledgeable, good conductor, he-- And an orchestra, you know. A student orchestra is difficult.

HAST: No, no. I'm talking about professional.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, professional. The conductor, if he is a good opera conductor, really has that in mind, this whole balance of orchestra and solo voices and chorus. He has that.

If he is a good opera conductor, he's got that in his ear. They do have a lot of conductors now doing opera who are not that knowledgeable as opera conductors. They've worked a lot on one opera, and they know the opera musically, but as far as knowing how to conduct an opera, to have that balance of stage and orchestra, they haven't got that yet.

HAST: See, I'm fascinated that you say that, because-- I can't remember where I heard this, unless you told me, that a conductor starting out--

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, I did. I did.

HAST: You told me. [laughter] That is the best training, right?

WARENSKJOLD: I told you, I think, last time. Absolutely. The best training for a symphony orchestra conductor is to start doing opera, because if you can control all of these things--if you can control a chorus and soloist plus the orchestra at the same time and get them all to come together--you can do anything. Then just conducting a symphony orchestra is duck soup for them.

HAST: Now, what do you think of James Levine in New York [Metropolitan Opera]? Does he manage to do all these things?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, I think he's a good conductor. Yes, I think he is knowledgeable as far as the balance of voice and that. I'm not always sure of his tempi. If you saw the hundredth

anniversary event-- Did you see that program? Of course, he was conducting. He conducts everything that's going to be on television or that sort of thing. Anyway, he was conducting the quintet from *Carmen*, and he got started at a clip that none of these voices could handle. To me, this is another thing that a conductor has to have. He has to have a built-in--

HAST: Metronome?

WARENSKJOLD: --metronome. It's true. He has to have a built-in metronome so that before he starts his downbeat he has it clearly in mind what the tempo is going to be and where it's going from there. I think with Levine I've seen some difficulties in that line. At the Hollywood Bowl I saw him do a performance of-- What was it? *Don Giovanni* [my Mozart]?

Yes, *Don Giovanni*, I think it was. And I thought several times it was going to come to a complete stop. He was listening so much for little things, either in the orchestra or what was going on onstage, that he wasn't thinking of the overall, where the music is going from there. It had no forward momentum.

HAST: Now, what does a singer do when this happens?

WARENSKJOLD: You can't do a thing. You can't do a thing.

HAST: You have to stay with the orchestra.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. You have to try to make it sound as correct and right, musically speaking, as you can within that structure.

Then you also do get ahold of some conductors who refuse to work with you on certain phrases, where you know that you have to take a little bit longer or that you have to move ahead for breathing purposes. They refuse to work with you on that. There are some conductors who do that. I must say that I've worked with very few who were not willing to understand the vocalist's difficulties. Some of them who've conducted opera all their lives know those difficulties, and they're with you almost immediately. Most of them are willing if you say, "This is a spot--" I must say, there was always one spot in the Marguérite aria in *Faust*. Every single time I came to that I had to swallow before the next phrase. So all I had to do was tell each of the conductors I worked with, "Just be aware that I'm going to be swallowing before I start that next phrase," and I never had any problem with anybody.

The thing that really kills most singers is orchestra conductors who fall in love with a phrase as they're hearing it musically from the orchestra and proceed to stretch it out so that you don't have that forward jumping-off-to-get-to-the-high-note feeling. Again, there are very few that you have that problem with. Sometimes you have the problem in rehearsal, and if you draw their attention

to it they will go with you on it. Sometimes it's going to happen in a performance, and if you have a second performance maybe you can say it again to them. But sometimes they just don't realize they're doing it. HAST: Every singer is different and every conductor's different, so you have to work together. That's why rehearsals are so important.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, ho! Yes, yes.

HAST: And isn't it true that nowadays--? I mean, I remember--

WARENSKJOLD: You never get enough.

HAST: --Mehli Mehta saying that it's so different because people are jetting all over the place and there's no time.

How about Placido Domingo, who's now conducting a lot, isn't he?

WARENSKJOLD: He does a pretty good job.

HAST: Does he? I haven't heard him; I wondered what you thought.

WARENSKJOLD: He does a pretty good job, yes. I saw him do something--I've forgotten what it was--down at the Music Center [of Los Angeles County]. Of course, he's a wonderful musician.

HAST: And actor, also.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, he's a very good actor. And the voice is really magnificent. I just have the feeling that I wish I could get a little more subtlety when he sings. He always



seems to me to be so listening for this gorgeous, rich, round, large sound that he has that I don't hear enough of the subtleties that I would expect from somebody who is as good a musician as he is. But that's being a little persnickety when you hear such a beautiful voice. Speaking of voices, now, the difference between that and [Luciano] Pavarotti, for instance--

HAST: Yes, I was going to ask you about Pavarotti.

WARENSKJOLD: I mean, you can say he's fat and he's all the rest of this sort of thing--

HAST: And he's not the actor that Placido Domingo is.

WARENSKJOLD: No, no, no. Of course not. But there is something about that voice that just really touches me. It is this thing that I'm talking about, this subtlety. He can come out and sing these large high notes also, but he is also able to sing a pianissimo with such feeling. The thing that's peculiar about that is I don't think he's had as much of the actual musical training that Domingo has. I think it is more just something natural. And that's the thing that's wonderful about when you-- I'm jumping all over the place here now.

HAST: That's fine. It's interesting.

WARENSKJOLD: When you're working with students and you're listening to students audition, if you hear somebody who has that natural musicality-- If there's any instrument there at all, I would much rather work with somebody like that than

I would to work with somebody who has an unbelievable instrument and no musicality whatsoever. That is much harder to teach.

HAST: Yes, indeed. And it's interesting, because today the technical things are emphasized, whether you're a pianist or violinist or whatever. But old-fashioned people like ourselves-- I feel like you do, that inner musicality has to be there to make it magic and to make it-- And it's either there or it isn't. Do you think it can be learned?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes, it can be learned.

HAST: Really?

WARENSKJOLD: It can be learned, but never to the extent as if it's there naturally. And you're so busy working on that sort of thing that you don't have time maybe to work on some of the other things that are important.

HAST: I didn't know. I ask every musician that I interview whether it can be learned, because--

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, it can be, yes. Well, it can be improved. It can be learned and improved. But I don't think it ever gets to the point that it's just part and parcel of the voice.

HAST: Well, that's really what I mean, yes.

WARENSKJOLD: No, I don't think it ever does that.

HAST: I wanted to ask you what you think about the role of Carmen, because it's supposed to be one of the most ungrateful roles ever written, because you can't please the critics and

you can't please the public. [laughter] What do you think?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, I must admit that it is an ungrateful role, because I'm speaking from singing Micaëla. Here Carmen just works and works and works throughout the whole opera. She has to dance, she gets killed, all of this sort of thing. Micaëla comes out in the third act and does this one aria and the audience goes wild.

HAST: Everybody loves her.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. Not only the audience loves it, but in the reviews afterwards-- Every time I did Micaëla, I always got the lead review. So it must be just terrible for the Carmen.

HAST: Poor Carmen didn't make it.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. And that's people who were well-known. Risë Stevens, I did it with her.

HAST: Oh, did you?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. And this was the same thing too, although this was really her role. She did it magnificently. And this [Carmen] is one of the things that a lot of sopranos always wanted to do. A lot of them would try it once and then say, "Well, I did it. Now I'm going on."

HAST: It's tough. It's really tough. And Charlotte in *Werther* [by Massenet]. I understand it's better sung by a mezzo, but it's sung by a variety of sopranos these days.

What do you think of that?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, the very first time-- I did one of the Charlotte arias on the *Standard Hour* one time. Of course, I did it in my key. I would dearly love to have been able to do that role, but it-- No, it really is done more by mezzos than anything else. When they did *Werther* in San Francisco, I did Sophie. It was interesting, because Charlotte was done by [Giulietta] Simionato. That was a real mezzo voice. The quality really was there. But she was so short! Well, for me it was short. She must have been five [feet] one [inch], something like that, and at the time--I think I have shrunk a little bit--I was five [feet] six [and] three quarters [inches].

When I came into the rehearsal, she looked up at me and said, "My baby sister?" It really was rather strange.

HAST: That's so sweet.

WARENSKJOLD: So I played it in flats, and she had heels on, so it wasn't quite so bad. But I think it's still done mostly by mezzos. It's not done that much anymore, by the way.

HAST: No?

WARENSKJOLD: None of the French repertoire is done as much as it should be.

HAST: I love that *Werther* myself.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes. I do, too.

HAST: *La Fanciulla del West* [by Puccini] was originally for

a super dramatic soprano, and now a lot of lyric sopranos attempt it.

WARENSKJOLD: I think really a *lirica-spinta*. I doubt whether a really lyric ever does that. It would have to be a *lirica-spinta*.

I would never have attempted that. The Dorothy Kirsten-type voice is a *lirica-spinta*.

HAST: I was just going to say Dorothy Kirsten--

WARENSKJOLD: It's a *lirica-spinta*.

HAST: Yes, she did that. Did you find that you had to protect your voice and be very careful that you weren't asked to sing roles--? I mean, you touched on that just a little while ago.

Were you very careful about the roles you took on? A lot of the great singers have to be careful because they don't want to lose their careers by doing the wrong thing.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. I think I was very lucky. I just did not even think in terms of roles that were a little bit heavy for me. For instance, quite far on in my career I did my first Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte* [by Mozart]. By that time I had a depth in my voice that that role needed. I was very lucky, though. A lot of lyric sopranos do not have a good low range. A good D above middle C or even a middle C, they don't have that down in there. Their voice starts coming into bloom at about an A or a B-flat, something like that.

So I was lucky. And I was lucky in many ways. That's what

made giving recitals so wonderful for me, because so much of your recital repertoire is down in that speaking register and that range.

But, no, I don't remember ever being asked to do anything--other than the Queen of the Night that we were talking about--that was completely out of my range. I think they really heard the quality in my voice and realized that I was a lyric soprano, and why try to do anything else with it? Again, I was also lucky in that I did not have the difficulty that my teacher had. I didn't have those four notes in the upper-middle range that were larger than the rest of my voice.

My voice was balanced from the lowest note up to the highest note. A lot of that comes from good study.

HAST: Oh, yes. You did work hard, and you had the best.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes. Indeed I did.

HAST: Before we leave this subject and get back to your interesting career, because you have all these busy years that we want to talk about, how is modern music written differently for singers today? Do you think there is a difference?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, dear. I don't know. Unless you're talking about some twelve-tone or something that asks for big jumps and up and down and that sort of thing, I think that any voice can sing any kind of music now. I really do. I think the

only difficulty is when it is written in English. A lot of times the singers feel they have to really spit out the English words, and in trying to make it understandable they are singing on consonants rather than singing on vowels. Now, this is what I heard the other night. I went to *Albert Herring* [by Benjamin Britten] at the Music Center, and only one person, the tenor, who did the *Albert Herring*, was really understandable. Now, this is one time when it would have been good to have supertitles. Even though they were singing in English, you could not understand what they were singing. And I think they probably--

HAST: That's amazing, because I saw that on television. They were singing in English, and I couldn't understand a word, and they didn't have supertitles.

WARENSKJOLD: Even on television, yes. [tape recorder off]

Yes, but you see, I think probably they put a lot of thought and work into saying, "We can't understand you. You've got to project the words. We're not understanding the words."

I'm saying probably, hopefully, they were working on that.

What happens technically is that when people try to make almost any language--but particularly English--understandable over the footlights, they end up by going from consonant to consonant, and that is not the way you understand words. The word has to have a vowel in it. Then, to make it

understandable, the consonant has to come at the very end, just before the next syllable, very quickly. Very quickly.

HAST: We're talking about Western languages, of course.

[laughter]

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. I have no idea of any--

HAST: I mean, they do get their consonants together in other places. The thing that I have found is that English choirs from England are usually better in their diction than American choirs, and the Welsh seem to have a real

knack for it, don't they?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, but I think they make a point of singing from vowel to vowel. Again, speaking--

HAST: Aha! But why don't they teach that here?

WARENSKJOLD: I don't know. They teach it for musical theater.

HAST: Aha. That's right.

WARENSKJOLD: I went to *Phantom of the Opera* the other night for the first time. It's been here for three years, and I saw it for the first time. But I understood every single word. Now, I grant you, they're miked, but that still doesn't--

HAST: Oh, they are miked.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes. But that still does not make any difference. They finished their consonants, and they sang the vowel, and then a very quick and really understandable



"d" or "t" at the end of a word before they went on.

HAST: So is this what German choirs do?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, I think they must. I think a lot of--

HAST: Because the Germans are very clear.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, I think a lot of choruses and a lot of choirs do much better work in that.

TAPE NUMBER: II, SIDE TWO

APRIL 22, 1992

HAST: Dorothy, let's get back now to your own career. You were so busy in the 1940s. In 1945 you contacted Adrian Michaelis, producer of the *Standard School Program*, to see about auditioning for the program. It was a prestige program you said?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, my, yes.

HAST: Can you tell us about that?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, well, prestige meaning every singer in the area wanted to sing on the *Standard School Program*.

HAST: Oh, yes?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, my, yes. This was a wonderful engagement, and it was a very well-known program in the schools. So I wanted to audition for them, and I contacted Alfred Frankenstein, of course--we talked about him last time--

HAST: Your old friend, yes.

WARENSKJOLD: --and asked him who handled it and whom I should contact for it. He told me the name of Adrian Michaelis. So I phoned the Standard Oil Company [of California] and said that I would like to audition for the *Standard School Program*, and I had a very nice answer back from Adrian Michaelis saying that they were not auditioning at that time, but they would call me. You know, "Don't call us, we'll call you" kind of

thing. [laughter]

HAST: I've heard of that, yes.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, you've heard of that before. So I was a peculiar kind of person, evidently. I wasn't crushed by this sort of thing. I didn't think they were just trying to get rid of me. I just thought, "Well, they're not hearing people right now," which was true. So I did not force myself on them. I think a lot of people cause problems for themselves in the beginning of a career by deciding that they want to do some one thing or audition for some one person, and if they are not accepted for the audition, immediately they keep after them and after them and after them and make such a pest of themselves. Sometimes they will hear them because they've made such a pest of themselves, but they will have this idea in the back, "I don't like this person, anyway."

HAST: It's a reservation.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, yes.

HAST: Well, this makes me think, because when I came from England--I was so terribly, terribly English in those days--I never knew how to sell myself. It was impossible for me to go to somebody and say, "You really need me, I'm so good."

But I have found living in this country that to get anything you really have to do some of this, don't you? As a singer or as a performer, if you don't carry it too far, don't you

really have to push a lot of this yourself unless you have an agent?

WARENSKJOLD: I suppose so, but I was--

HAST: I mean, it's different from in your time. I'm talking of the present time.

WARENSKJOLD: Well, in the present time they have a lot more opportunities to be heard. There are so many auditions, the contest-type auditions.

HAST: But there are so many more singers, also.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, of course. Of course. Well, I wonder. There were a lot of singers at that time, too.

HAST: Really? That many?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes there were.

HAST: The competition wasn't as big as it is now?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, we didn't hear about it because there were not those numbers of contest auditions. But I've seen it happen many times that people bother somebody so much that either they say, "I never want to hear that person's name again. If they call, tell them I'm out of town," or they will hear it and always have those reservations: "This would be an impossible person to work with. You'd be bothered all the time working with that person." I think you cannot be a retiring kind of person. You have to know what you have to offer, and you have to be ready, because those opportunities

will come. They came for me, and I was ready.

But anyway, the point here was that I contacted them in 1945. In 1947, two years later, I got a telephone call from them saying, "We're having auditions for the *Standard School Program*. Would you like to come?" Two years later.

HAST: Now, how did they decide this? You hadn't sent them a demo tape or anything like this, had you?

WARENSKJOLD: No, no, no. They were having auditions, you see.

HAST: Oh, I see. They kept your name for two years?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, yes.

HAST: Isn't that rather unusual? Would this happen today? I don't think so.

WARENSKJOLD: I don't know. I really don't know. No, probably not. But this was the San Francisco area. It wasn't a national thing. In the meantime, I had been doing some things in the area, some recitals and that sort of thing. Well, anyway, I went to audition for them, and I was given the opportunity to do a series of four *Standard School Programs*. And this was just wonderful.

HAST: Well, that must have been exciting.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, it was absolutely exciting, yes. But we're already talking two years later.

HAST: Yes. Let's talk about 1945, because on December 23

was your first performance with an orchestra. Tell us about that.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, what an exciting thing! If you can imagine such a thing, it was with the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra and with Pierre Monteux--

HAST: Of all conductors.

WARENSKJOLD: Of all people. For the first time that you sing with an orchestra to have that--

HAST: Unheard of, absolutely.

WARENSKJOLD: Just absolutely unheard of, yes. Well, now, this was a special Christmas program that was given at the U.S. Naval Training [and Distribution] Center on Treasure Island. I guess they went over and gave a concert for them every year, and this year they just wanted somebody. I don't know that I was ever really told that that's what happened, but I think they contacted Frankenstein and asked him to recommend a singer, and again he recommended me.

HAST: How lovely! What a wonderful man.

WARENSKJOLD: I did just one aria, the Micaëla aria from *Carmen*, with them. I particularly wanted to do something in French because of Monteux. This was a role I was working on anyway, and it was a perfect role for me, so I thought this was the ideal thing. We got to rehearsal, and I don't think we had a piano rehearsal at all. We just had the rehearsal right

with the orchestra.

HAST: Right away with the orchestra--?

WARENSKJOLD: Right with the orchestra, yes. The San Francisco Symphony was also the orchestra for the [San Francisco] Opera Company, so those people knew these things.

So we went through the whole thing up to the very end where always, always Micaëla goes up to the high note at the end [sings] and then comes down and finishes it. I started to take off-- And he could almost see it happening in my face and my voice. I started to take off for the upper note, and he stopped the whole orchestra. He said, "Young lady, if you want to do a high note, you choose an aria that has the high note written in it. We do not do the high note in the Micaëla aria." So I was embarrassed, of course, [laughter] but I would never have known, because it was done in the opera at that time.

HAST: I was just going to ask you--

WARENSKJOLD: It was always done. Yes, every time I ever--

HAST: But it wasn't originally written into--

WARENSKJOLD: No, no, no. No, no, no. This was interpolated by somebody years ago. This is the reason that it always went over so big with audiences, because of that high note.

Nowadays it is not done with a high note anymore. They've stopped that now. In France, I guess, it never was done,

and any time that he-- He was a purist, of course, so it was not to be done. But it really never had the finish that it had [with the high note].

Now, one thing I must say, I do understand why they didn't like the high note with a lot of singers, because-- And I guess this is something nobody is going to see, so I'm going to say names. Shall I? [laughter]

HAST: Oh, of course, of course.

WARENSKJOLD: Licia Albanese. Beautiful voice, lovely, a real lyric soprano. She did some *lirica-spinta* but she was a real lyric soprano. She did Micaëla, and of course did the high note. But she took off, hit that high note, crescendoed, ended it with a big fortissimo, stopped it, and then came down and said the word "*Seigneur*" at the end. Well, now, that really is not the way you pray to the Lord, is it? You don't hit him with a forte.

So what I did was start down here-- I would go up and hit it pianissimo, I crescendoed it, and then decrescendoed it before coming down to the lower note.

HAST: And Monteux loved it.

WARENSKJOLD: No, he didn't allow me to do it!

HAST: Oh, not at all!

WARENSKJOLD: No, no, no, no. He didn't allow me to--

HAST: This is the one that he didn't allow you to do.



WARENSKJOLD: He didn't allow me to do it.

HAST: Oh, I see.

WARENSKJOLD: But this is the way I did it finally when I got into the opera, and that's the way I would have done it if I were doing it--

HAST: And he saw it coming and stopped it.

WARENSKJOLD: He saw it coming and stopped it before I had a chance, yes.

HAST: [laughter] That's really funny in retrospect.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. As far as I was concerned, it was a little anticlimactic.

HAST: You were crushed.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, I was crushed. It was a little anticlimactic to end it that way. I was so used to it.

HAST: Did the orchestra laugh?

WARENSKJOLD: I think they smiled a little.

HAST: They smiled.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, they did.

HAST: Let's see. How old were you? You were very young.

WARENSKJOLD: In 1945 I was--what?--twenty-three, twenty-four, was I?

HAST: That's young. That's very young. So that was a big experience, of course.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, yes.

HAST: Well, 1947 was such a busy year for you. First of all, you got the job at the *Standard School Program*, and then in March 6, 7, 8, 1947, you had your first opera performance.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. Yes, this was at Stanford University.

HAST: Oh, this was at Stanford.

WARENSKJOLD: And with Jan Popper.

HAST: Oh, Jan Popper. Yes, how wonderful.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, this is where I worked with Jan for the first time. And what they did there, which they don't seem to do in the opera workshops anymore, they called in people from outside--you know, professional. I was really semiprofessional at that time.

HAST: Well, Jan used to do that at UCLA.

WARENSKJOLD: Did he do it there, too?

HAST: Oh, yes, he did very often. But it was through [UCLA University] Extension, when we used to put on the big performances in Royce Hall, which we unfortunately can't afford anymore, anyway. But Jan used to do that.

WARENSKJOLD: That's what he did there. The tenor was somebody who happened to be teaching at Stanford at that time, James Schwabacher, who is a dear friend of mine to this day. He played the part of Max, and I was Agathe [in *Der Freischütz* by Carl Maria von Weber]. We did it in English, of course, and it was a wonderful experience. We had a lot of rehearsals,

which was very good for my first opera performance. But I very soon realized that singing for opera is very important, but the making of the character, making that come to life on the stage for the audience, is just as important. So I realized that I needed to do a little work on that as well.

HAST: But acting always was one of your major interests.

WARENSKJOLD: Always, yes. Actually, now we're in 1947, but I remember back-- I don't know whether we spoke about that last time--again, tell me if I did--seeing the performance of *Salome* [by Richard Strauss]. I looked it up in my book here, and I saw that it was back in 1945. The San Francisco [Opera Company] gave *Salome*, and Lily Djanel was the Salome.

I was in the midst of my studying at that time, and the opera season was a big thing for all of us who were studying. The minute the list of the operas came out, we went down to Sherman and Clay music store and bought all the tickets that we wanted for the operas that were interesting to us.

So I went to *Salome*, and, you know, in the cistern in the center where she is singing to John the Baptist-- At least as they staged it there, the cistern was up about three steps, and these steps went all the way around. She started, as you look at the stage, on the right side, and she started singing to him. I did not know how or when she moved, but at the end of what she was singing she was over on the left-hand

side of the stage, and I didn't know she had moved. I was absolutely fascinated! Fascinated! So what was I to do but immediately go and buy a ticket for the very next performance.

And I sat there, to watch for that moment to see what she did. How did she move to get around where we were not aware of it at all? This is the thing that got me really started on staging and the importance of movement on stage.

So I saw what she did with her eyes, leading every move that she made. She didn't just get up and walk around or get up and sit and get up and sit around. She would turn her body around and then come back and look down into the cistern again. Then she would crawl a little bit further, looking straight down into it. She did that all the way around and didn't make a continuous move. It was just out of the music and, of course, out of the words. And it was that motivation-- Which is a word I hate, by the way. Oh, I absolutely detest that word "motivation" so much.

HAST: So you don't say to your students, "You should be motivated"? [laughter]

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, absolutely not. I would never do that to them. I just hate that, because so many terrible things happen in the name of motivation, you know. No, you can be motivated and still not be able to get across, to communicate to the audience what you're doing. You can be motivated inside,

but unless you know technically how to get what that-- Of course, you have to have motivation, but you cannot depend upon motivation alone. But in this one case with Lily Djanel, she had this marvelous motivation, but it went along with the technical skill. Now, whether it was perfectly natural with her or whether it was something she worked out I haven't the faintest idea; I never met her. But it opened a whole world of movement on stage to me. I think it's just as important on the recital stage as it is in the opera.

HAST: See, this is the thing about you: you were open to all of these things because you were not as "motivated" but you were deadly serious about it. I always wonder how one can impart this to students who seem to lack this certain excitement. When you express the excitement that you felt, I know exactly what you're talking about. Can one impart that to students, this--?

WARENSKJOLD: I don't think so. I think it's got to be something from inside.

HAST: It's either there or it's--

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, yes. And perhaps it's best that not all students have it, because there's not a place for all of the singers if they had that and the voice and everything else. There are still a few that I see who have that, and it's exciting to work with those people. The thing that's really

very discouraging is when you see somebody who has the voice and the intelligence and the musicality and doesn't have that desire.

HAST: The drive.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, that drive.

HAST: So did you decide to take any more acting lessons or anything like that?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, no, I didn't. Not acting.

HAST: Or dance?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes, I had taken ballet. Oh, yes. That was one of the first things. From the time that I was a child I had had lessons. I had modern German dance, and I had had some ballet, not an awful lot. But the minute I went to Miss Riegelman, we decided that I was going to have to spread out that way, so I took ballet lessons.

HAST: So you moved gracefully, naturally, anyway.

WARENSKJOLD: I guess I was able to do-- Yes, I guess so, in a way. But acting lessons, no. I don't think that that really does it for you. I think you have to do it--

HAST: Oh, no? You don't think so?

WARENSKJOLD: No, I think-- Well, at least-- Who am I to say? I can only tell you what worked for me. But I realized after that first opera that I did that I needed to do some kind of work, but how to do it? I had the ballet lessons, I had

some of these other things, but how was I going to get this work? Again, it just sort of happened.

HAST: How were you going to do the acting? Because you understood the part. That went hand in hand then, right?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, I think that goes along with musical intelligence, that you have to--

HAST: How about life experience and reading literature?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes, absolutely, reading. Life experience, no, I don't think that's necessary. As a matter of fact, Helen Hayes, in an interview once somebody asked, "You feel the emotion, don't you?" And she said, "No. No, I don't feel the emotion. I put on the emotion just as I put on makeup."

HAST: That's interesting.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. She was talking about the time when she was still quite young, so she would not have lived through all of this. But she did a lot of reading. You have to have a good reading background.

HAST: I think so. That is an experience in itself, because frankly a lot of the students we have in our opera workshop in the past years-- Love as a concept isn't terribly clear to them, I don't think.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, absolutely. Yes.

HAST: So I think if they had read more literature, maybe. I'm not saying this is--

WARENSKJOLD: They don't now. It's a television era. They don't, that's true.

HAST: I know. It's very sad.

WARENSKJOLD: But you see, I also had a lot of the background of recital repertoire, and I think you get a lot of this from the poetry and that sort of thing and the idea that you were not just singing words, that you were singing the emotion, you were singing the picture that it's making, you were singing the story that's happening in this little-- That was so fascinating.

HAST: So you have to live it at the time.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. That was what was so fascinating to me about doing recitals is that in an hour and fifteen minutes you do maybe twenty songs, and you are either a different character or a different mood in every single one of them.

You have to make it come to life within this short period of the three minutes or so. It's the same sort of thing as you have to do on the operatic stage, only you have that much more time to do it, because you have one character that grows, and something happens to this one character in the opera.

So anyway--

HAST: So let's get back. Now, Jan Popper. Was Henry Holt there at the time, also? Do you know him?

WARENSKJOLD: No, no.



HAST: No, he wasn't--

WARENSKJOLD: Well, I knew Henry Holt. You're talking about the conductor. I knew his uncle Henry Holt also. He was a pianist.

HAST: His uncle is [Herbert] Zipper, isn't he?

WARENSKJOLD: No, this is--

HAST: No, that's another one.

WARENSKJOLD: This was Henry Holt, and he was a pianist in the first piano quartet--

HAST: Oh, I see. I thought he was up there with Jan Popper.

But anyway, in April 1947 you had your first four *Standard School Programs*. They were, as you told us earlier, sponsored by Standard Oil Company of California on NBC [National Broadcasting Company]. Is that right?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, yes.

HAST: And there was a favorable reaction all over the western states.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. Of all things, children and teachers wrote in--unbelievable, unbelievable--and said they liked that voice. I don't-- [laughter]

HAST: Well, I can understand it. Then on June 29, 1947--this is a busy year for you--you had your first *Standard Hour* radio program, and the conductor was Meredith Willson.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, yes. This was interesting, because they

wanted to show the *Standard Hour* listeners--the big Sunday night program--what they had been doing all these years on the *Standard School Programs*. So they gathered together the music from these four *Standard School Programs* that I did, which was the story of America's musical theater. So in this one hour they put together a conglomeration of all the things that we did on those four *Standard School Programs*. I was the soprano, Gilbert Russel was the tenor, Charles Harmon was the baritone, and then we had a marvelous young pianist, Paulena Carter. So we did this program with Meredith Willson. Of course, he was a big name at that time.

HAST: And the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra.

WARENSKJOLD: And, of course, the San Francisco Symphony, in the San Francisco Opera House. All of these *Standard Hours*, when in San Francisco, were given at the opera house with a full audience, every single one of them with a full audience.

Sometimes the *Standard Hour* went to Los Angeles, and that was with a full audience. It went up to Seattle a few times, full audience. Every place that they went it was a full audience.

HAST: By 1947 they'd been on the air for twenty-one years.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, yes.

HAST: So that's marvelous, a long time.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes, it was. Did you want to say anything more about that?

HAST: Well, if you want to say any more-- I was going to say [that] on Labor Day 1947, the *Standard Hour* program was broadcast from the California State Fair at Sacramento with Gaetano Merola, the conductor, founder, and general director of the San Francisco Opera?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, yes.

HAST: Oh, my word.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, he was a marvelous, marvelous man.

HAST: Oh, tell the wonderful story about the "Jewel Song" at the rehearsal.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh. [laughter] Well, it was--

HAST: Well, how did you meet him, first of all? I mean, how did you get this particular--? Oh, through the *Standard Hour*, right?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, yes, yes. Always during the opera season they did opera on the *Standard Hour*. They used all of the big-name singers who had come out here for the opera season.

So when they were going up to put on this hour from the California State Fair, it was at the time when they were just starting the opera series part of the *Standard Hour*. So it was Merola.

He always did the conducting for that.

HAST: What was he like?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, as a man he was a gentleman. Oh, he was the loveliest man, quiet and the kind of person who when he

said something you could depend upon it. You didn't need to have a contract, and in these--

HAST: No contract?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, yes, you did, you did have it. But I mean you didn't need to. If he said, "You're going to do such and such a role," you were going to do it. You knew the contract was going to come sooner or later. Nowadays you can have a contract and they can renege on it. Anyway, he was just a wonderful man. And he had had a marvelous background as a conductor, too, not only in opera but he toured around the country in musical comedies, so he had all of that background as well. By the time I knew him he was a little older, and he had a very bad arm--bursitis, arthritis, or something like that. It was very hard for him to raise his left arm when he conducted. But the orchestra loved him, so they worked beautifully with him. And he had such a marvelous feeling for any opera. Puccini, of course, was wonderful. Almost any opera. I learned so much from him.

So anyway, we were doing the-- Let's see. It was the Marguerite aria from *Faust*. I think that's all I did there; I can't remember now. Anyway, at the rehearsal-- This is the first time I had met him, and of course we-- Again, we didn't have a piano rehearsal; we went right in, because the orchestra was taken up there from San Francisco. So it was

the San Francisco Symphony, not a pickup orchestra from Sacramento. [laughter] They knew it, and we didn't have to worry too much about it.

So we got into the midst of the aria, and I thought it was going quite well. All of a sudden I heard this tap, tap, tap with the baton, and the orchestra stopped. My throat got dry. What had I done? He turned and looked at me and he said, "Young lady, why is it that you haven't come to sing for me?" And I guess I was dumbfounded; I didn't know what to say. [laughter] I hadn't even thought of coming to sing for him. He said, "Aha, I know. You wanted me to come to you." [laughter] Oh, I thought that was so dear.

HAST: Charming, just charming.

WARENSKJOLD: And the orchestra that heard it sort of laughed a little bit about it, you know. So we went back and started over again and went right through, and that was--

HAST: Which put you at ease immediately.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, absolutely. Absolutely.

HAST: That's a talent, isn't it?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, yes. Oh, it was wonderful. Anyway, it was Labor Day, and they had fireworks set to go off at eight o'clock, eight fifteen, something like that. Well, the program was put on from eight to nine [o'clock], and in the midst of doing my aria these fireworks were going off. My family

was up there-- My father [William E. Warenskjold] was in the audience, and afterwards he said, "I don't understand how she could continue singing? How could she hear the orchestra with that?" I didn't hear a thing of it.

HAST: You didn't?

WARENSKJOLD: I didn't. I was concentrating so much on what I was doing that I didn't hear any of this. I have a recording of it, and I can hear it in the recording. [laughter] So anyway, that was the way I--

HAST: Oh, I love that! Total concentration, yes!

WARENSKJOLD: It must have been. That was my meeting with Gaetano Merola.

HAST: Oh, that's so charming.

Now, you mentioned that in 1947 you were in a play, *Mrs. Moonlight*, in Carmel. What was that exactly? That was a legitimate play, you said.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. I think I said that I was vacationing in Carmel.

HAST: Yes, right. Oh, that was with the friend you made.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, yes. Lee Crowe.

HAST: Lee Crowe, that's right.

WARENSKJOLD: That was the thing, yes. So this is why I said it just sort of happened. You know, I was looking, for some way of learning what you do to make a character on stage,

and all of a sudden this was offered to me.

HAST: Who wrote this play? I've never heard of it.

WARENSKJOLD: Well, this is a very well-known British author, Benn Levy. As a matter of fact, quite a number of years later I was in London and went to see *The Rape of the Belt*, which is by Benn Levy. I had not heard his name before, but anyway, he wrote this *Mrs. Moonlight*. I did sing one little song in it that I had to play for myself and sing, but it had nothing to do with singing. It was a legitimate play.

HAST: So that was a new experience.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, it was an absolutely new experience to be making a character come to life onstage. It had nothing to do with singing. It was a marvelous experience.

HAST: And the speaking was projection. It's different from singing, isn't it?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. This was in a small house, the Golden Bough Playhouse in Carmel. I don't know how large it was. I would say about three hundred seats, maybe, something like that.

So I didn't feel any difficulty in that. I do think that if I did something like that in a large house I would really have to learn how to use my voice properly.

HAST: I wanted to ask you about that, because I do voiceovers, and I thought since I teach diction and languages and all that it would be a snap. Heavens, no! I had to learn how

you use a microphone and how you project your voice. Singers very often can belt out the music, but then when they have to speak you can barely hear them. Now, is that a totally different technique?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, it is.

HAST: It is? Okay.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, you really have to learn how to speak, and I haven't really spent any time on doing that.

HAST: Yes, but I've heard you at faculty meetings and so on; one can understand what you're saying. There's no problem.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. But, I mean--

HAST: But you're talking about a large hall.

WARENSKJOLD: I'm talking about a large--

HAST: But then, nowadays you'd probably have a mike.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, nowadays, yes. Everything is miked now, you know, individually miked.

HAST: It's very different talking through a mike from if you have to project your voice so that the audience can understand you without a mike.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, absolutely, yes. Yes.

HAST: So there is a technique, you think, that singers should learn, I guess?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, if you're not being miked, there is a technique. Otherwise you can be heard, but you are speaking



on the vocal cords, and all of a sudden you find you're having problems.

HAST: Yes. That's interesting.

Okay. Let's see: 1948, October 7, we have [your] San Francisco Opera debut as Nannetta in *Falstaff* [by Verdi].

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, that's a big story.

HAST: Now, that's a big one. Do you want to talk about this?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, do we have time to?

HAST: We have time on the tape if you want to, but we can wait till next week.

WARENSKJOLD: Well, actually, I was-- The year before, Mr. Merola had told me that he wanted me to join the opera company, but he said, "We can't do it this year because everything is planned for this season."

HAST: Yes, we need to talk about that, right.

WARENSKJOLD: "Everything is planned for this season, but next year, I want you to be with the company, and I want you to do Micaëla, so you make sure that you have that under your belt."

I said, "I know it already, Maestro."

And he said, "Good for you, good for you."

Anyway, he gave me the opportunity that whole season to sit in on all of the rehearsals for all of the operas, and I really took advantage of it. I was over there from

morning till night to every one of the rehearsals for every opera no matter if it was something that I would be interested in doing myself or not, just to watch what they were doing onstage.

HAST: Now, this was the fall and winter program in San Francisco?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. It usually started mid-September. Then they came down here to Los Angeles for about a two-week season at the end of the season up there. So it lasted until mid-November.

HAST: And you followed them to L.A. also?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, I did. Yes, I came down to see some of them. Actually, what happened, I-- Can you turn this off for just a second? [tape recorder off]

All right. In 1948 I was scheduled to do my debut as Micaëla in *Carmen*. That was, I think, for October 17. The opening night performance was *Falstaff*. Now, two weeks in advance of *Falstaff*-- They always gave opening night more rehearsals than they gave to any other opera. Opening night was always given two weeks of rehearsal, particularly because this was an opera that had not been done very recently, and they had several people with two casts--Dame Quickly was--so they had to have quite a lot of rehearsal.

Well, two weeks beforehand, rehearsals were getting

started, and all of a sudden they realized that the person who was doing Nannetta had not arrived. This was our friend Licia Albanese. She had not arrived for the first rehearsal.

She was supposed to be there. Everybody was there. This was a piano rehearsal, a musical rehearsal. If you know *Falstaff*, and I'm sure you do, it is made up of quartets of people--a quartet of women and a quartet of men--and if you have one voice missing, you can't make sense of it when you're rehearsing.

HAST: It's impossible.

WARENSKJOLD: So they contacted her manager. He didn't know where she was. They contacted her home. She wasn't there.

They didn't know where she was. They expected her the next day. She didn't arrive the next day. So Mr. Merola said, "We've got to do something. What can we do? We can't wait and wait and wait and not have her here." So he contacted me the following morning after they realized she had not arrived, and he said, "Do you know Nannetta in *Falstaff*?"

I said, "Maestro, I've never even seen *Falstaff*."

[laughter]

And he said, "Well, would you go and get a score of it and look it over as well as you can and come to see Steinberg?"

William Steinberg was the conductor.

HAST: Oh, William Steinberg.

WARENSKJOLD: Steinberg was the conductor. He said, "Come tomorrow morning to sing for William Steinberg, and do as well as you can with it in between."

So I ran down quickly to Sherman and Clay, and they had a score, thank heaven. I gasped when I saw the size of it.

I can show it to you here. It's that thick. That thick. So I opened it up and-- Again, I was so lucky. My mother [Mildred Stombs Warenskjold] was, I told you, a marvelous pianist, so the two of us got started at this score. In the first scene that Nannetta is in with all of the women, we got working on that, worked all the way through. And this is Italian that goes diddle-diddle-diddle-dida [many words very fast]. So we went over and over and over and all the rest of that.

HAST: And how much time did you have to do this?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, this was after I bought the score and I got home. The rest of the afternoon and that night up until about midnight. We grabbed a bite--

HAST: Dorothy, you memorized all this?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, no, no, no. Oh, not memorized. Oh, gracious, no. Oh, no, no. Heavens, no! [laughter]

HAST: But you had to get through it first.

WARENSKJOLD: So I went to sleep that night, and I'd wake up in the middle of the night and think, "What was that?"

What was that?" I'd open the score and look at it and say, "Oh, yes. Oh, yes, that's it."

So anyway, ten o'clock the next morning I went over and sat in this rehearsal room with Steinberg, who was going to play the piano. So he put his score on the piano rack and opened it to this first scene. He started out like that. With my score I'm going along, going on and going on, doing it, getting the Italian in. We came to the end of that scene, he turned the page to act two, and I said, "Maestro, I haven't even looked at act two yet." And he threw up his arms like this as though to say, "What am I to do?" I felt I was stupid because I couldn't go any further. I hadn't had time or anything like that. Evidently he must have gone in to Mr. Merola and said, "Well, if she did that overnight not having seen it before, I think she'll be some help to us." So I was called for the night rehearsal that we had.

TAPE NUMBER: III, SIDE ONE

APRIL 22, 1992

HAST: All right, Dorothy. Sorry to interrupt.

WARENSKJOLD: I think I said it was a night rehearsal. Actually, when I met him [William Steinberg] it was at ten o'clock [a.m.].

So I was there at the one o'clock afternoon rehearsal that was purely a piano rehearsal. Luckily, we were doing that same scene that I had looked over the night before. Everybody was very pleased to have the fourth voice in there, and everybody was very helpful to me. They knew that I was just doing this as a help. So that night I had to come back, and we did some other things with the chorus, and we finished that at about ten o'clock, I think. I went home by eleven o'clock and with my mother [Mildred Stombs Warenskjold] again worked on the next scene or the next act, I've forgotten what it is at this point. So we worked up until about one thirty that morning.

I had to be back at ten o'clock rehearsal the next morning.

I kept just one scene ahead of that. Sometimes they did the same scene two times in a row, and that was helpful to me.

After about six days of rehearsal we'd gone through the whole opera, and I was still-- And we were then starting to get into stage rehearsal and moving on stage.

HAST: Excuse me, [Gaetano] Merola was actually the conductor?

WARENSKJOLD: No, no, no, no. No. Merola was the general

director. No, this is William--

HAST: This is Steinberg who actually was the conductor for this.

WARENSKJOLD: Steinberg was the conductor, yes. Merola had wanted to do *Falstaff* [by Verdi] for a number of years, but he did not have a conductor that he said was strong enough to do it. He got Steinberg, and so that was it.

So by the sixth day we were onstage starting to block it stagewise, and here I was, trying to work with this huge score in my hands. I realized that wasn't going to be very helpful for anybody, so I got a libretto with just the words.

By that time musically I knew what it was, so all it was was just getting those words. So I then transferred it down to just this little libretto with the words, and that was a lot easier to move around stage with, just the libretto.

Then it got on into about ten days, and I put the libretto down, and I was doing it without anything at all.

HAST: Remarkable! Extraordinary!

WARENSKJOLD: Well, it really was. It was a marvelous experience, marvelous experience. I mean, what a way--

HAST: The concentration.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes.

HAST: And thank goodness for your wonderful mother.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, I couldn't have done it. Some of these poor

people who have to hire a pianist to play for an hour or two or something like that-- I had her at my beck and call. Whenever I wanted her, she was there. And sometimes she would be there and say, "Come on, it's time to do it again." Anyway, we had I think it was the first run-through with the orchestra, in which the orchestra is down in the pit and we were on the stage with chairs in front of the big curtain, just sitting there, just for a pure orchestra run-through. I think it took more than one session of it to do the thing. I think we got into the second session, and it was in the big fugue at the end-- Do you know *Falstaff*? There's a big fugue for I think it's all of the voices. I think eight voices come in on it. [hums theme] And then another voice comes [hums same theme higher].

HAST: Oh, yes, yes. Now that you sing it, I remember, yes.

WARENSKJOLD: Each voice comes in that way. Well, I had learned where I came in, because by the time my voice came in a lot was going on. It started with the bass, with Falstaff himself, and by the time I came in a lot of other voices were already in. Mistress [Alice] Ford, who was played by Regina Resnick--she was a soprano--

HAST: Oh, yes?

WARENSKJOLD: She was a soprano at that time, and she was Mistress Ford. I mean, nobody is a better musician than she



is. Nobody is a better musician. So hers comes [sings], and I was listening for what she did, and then I came in with exactly the same thing, following her on it. Something, I don't know what it was-- She missed her entrance, and by the time I realized she hadn't come in it was too late for me to catch my entrance, too. So again, the baton went down here like this, and the orchestra stopped. Steinberg looked up and he says, "One soprano I can do without; two is impossible."

I could have fallen through the floor.

HAST: What was he like, William Steinberg? How old was he then?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, he must have been in his late fifties.

HAST: Oh, was he that old? He's not living now, I take it.

WARENSKJOLD: I don't think so. No. Maybe he was younger than that. You know, everybody was older at that time.

[laughter]

HAST: Of course, when you were in your early twenties--

WARENSKJOLD: I was younger, yes. [laughter] Anyway, we--

HAST: But, I mean, he was very professional, and he--

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, absolutely.

HAST: But not too friendly, from what you've said.

WARENSKJOLD: No, he was very businesslike. Oh, yes. HAST: Well, he was German.

WARENSKJOLD: And, you know, the orchestra time is worth money, and you just don't waste time with that sort of thing. But he didn't realize what he had actually said and what a crushing experience it would be for me. With Resnick, that just rolled off her back. She had been in the business so long it didn't make any difference. But for me to have that-- And I was the one-- They could have gotten by without Resnick, but they couldn't get by with me not doing it, too.

But I can tell you, this is a lesson that I learned, and I never from that moment on depended on another voice on stage. Never. No matter how good. Because, as I say, nobody could have been a better musician than she was, but she missed it. And sometimes you can't even depend upon the orchestra. It has happened. It has happened. But most of the time you can depend upon an orchestra doing the thing for your entrance. But I never allowed anything like that to happen again. No other singer was going to cause me any problems on stage. [laughter] So this was wonderful. In that way I learned so much, as well.

HAST: Oh, yes, I think that's--

WARENSKJOLD: So anyway, I don't know how far you want to go with this now, but--

HAST: This is fine. We can go on next time if you like.

WARENSKJOLD: All right, shall we cut it now and then go on

from here next time? Because there's quite a bit more of this story.

HAST: Well, I wish you would do it now if you're up for it.

WARENSKJOLD: Well, shall we do it? I'll finish it. All right, why don't we finish it up?

We got on the stage for the rehearsal with-- I guess we had not gotten into costumes yet. But anyway, opening night. We had the dress rehearsal the day before. Guess who arrived for dress rehearsal?

HAST: I can't imagine.

WARENSKJOLD: Licia Albanese.

HAST: Well, wasn't it too late for her?

WARENSKJOLD: No, no, no, no. No. She did the opening performance. She did the dress rehearsal. I mean, can you imagine what they would have done trying to do all of these rehearsals without her role?

HAST: Was she always like that?

WARENSKJOLD: I don't know.

HAST: That's not very professional.

WARENSKJOLD: I don't know. It really wasn't. It really wasn't.

HAST: But you were crushed.

WARENSKJOLD: No, no. Oh, heavens, no! No, no. I was in there doing a job that they needed. As far as I was concerned--

HAST: And you didn't think you were going to do--?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, absolutely not. Oh, heavens, no! I was asked if I would help them out of a very difficult situation.

HAST: Did they thank you?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, in many ways. [laughter] Everybody was so nice and all that. Anyway, she was there--

HAST: What was her excuse?

WARENSKJOLD: I don't know. We never heard.

HAST: And she didn't thank you, either, for jumping in there?

Well, one wouldn't expect it.

WARENSKJOLD: No. Anyway, we had gone through all of these marvelous stage rehearsals. William Wymetal-- I don't know whether you knew his name.

HAST: The name sounds familiar.

WARENSKJOLD: His father had been a stage director before him in Germany, and then he followed in his father's

footsteps. He was a typical, very straight, you know, almost army-type straight man.

HAST: Prussian. [laughter]

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, yes. But he was so wonderful with me.

He gave me so many-- He was a big help for the movement in the beginning of my career. We'll talk about that a little later. Anyway, he had made such beautiful pictures for the

four women when they were doing certain little things. He'd have one of them sitting in a chair and one kneeling down on one side and two behind the chair. The pictures were gorgeous, just gorgeous. It molded into another beautiful picture in another way over here. Everything was so beautifully worked out. And everybody was willing to work at and do exactly what he wanted. It was just beautiful.

She [Albanese] came to dress rehearsal, and she said, "No, no, no. I don't do that. I do this." So everybody had to change whatever they were doing to work around whatever she was doing.

HAST: Prima donna. [laughter]

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. I mean, she turned out to be a very nice woman afterwards; I like her very much. But at this point it was very difficult.

So she did the opening night performance. I was sitting in the box as a guest of some people who were in the box next to Mr. Merola's box, and he came over to me at the first intermission, and he said, "How do you like it?" I said, "Oh, Maestro, now that I know it, I just love it. It's wonderful!" I was grinning from ear to ear. I was so pleased to have been able to have this experience. And he said, "Well, you'll be up there doing the next performance." I guess my mouth must have dropped open. And he said, "Sit down. Sit

down. Yes, you're going to be doing the next performance."

And that was, I think, a couple of weeks later, something like that. So I don't know what had happened, because she was scheduled to do all of the performances, you see. So I don't know what had happened. When they got behind the closed doors in his office, he told her, "No, no, no, you can't get by with that," I guess. "This girl has done this and this and this, and we're giving her a performance." I can only surmise what was said.

HAST: Your big chance!

WARENSKJOLD: My big chance. So instead of making my debut as Micaëla in *Carmen*, as I was scheduled, I made my actual debut as Nannetta in *Falstaff*.

HAST: Fantastic! How exciting!

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, it really was.

HAST: That's a wonderful, beautiful story. Well, thank you so much, Dorothy. This has been an exciting session. And we'll go on with 1948 and finish up next time, all right?

WARENSKJOLD: Good. I look forward to it.

TAPE NUMBER: IV, SIDE ONE

APRIL 29, 1992

HAST: Dorothy, we had started to talk about your role as Nannetta in *Falstaff* [by Verdi], and I think there were some more things you wanted to mention.

WARENSKJOLD: Well, it was just the actual performance itself, which was rather interesting, because there was a very quick costume change that I had to make at one spot. All of the dressers and I were always worried about getting me changed fast enough to get back on stage again. So at a certain point I ran off the stage, and I had to go up one flight [of stairs] to get to my dressing room. There they were waiting for me: one to take my costume off, another one with the costume that I was to step into. We did this in-- It was wonderful what they did. I was in and out and back down on the stage. All of a sudden I looked at Regina Resnik and Herta Glaz, who was also one of them--

HAST: Oh, Herta Glaz was in that production?

WARENSKJOLD: Herta Glaz. Yes, she was Meg in the production. They had the same costumes on. I looked, and I said, "Agh!" Regina Resnik looked at me, and she said, "Yes, dear, you changed one scene too soon." But she said, "Don't worry. Take your time. We'll wait for you. Go up and change back." So I ran back upstairs again! [laughter] They got me yes,

back into that-- But she was so sweet. She didn't want me to get all excited and nervous. So I got back into that costume again, did--it was a small scene that had to be done still--that scene, then back up again I rushed, made the quick change that was necessary at that point, and we went on with it. But, oh, I was so embarrassed. I really was so embarrassed.

HAST: But wasn't it really the fault of the people who were dressing you?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, no, not really. No. No, no.

HAST: No? Oh, I thought they had to have it ready for you--

WARENSKJOLD: Well, they had it all ready, you see, but I was the one who ran up, because I had completely forgotten there was one other little tiny scene that had to be done before that time. It was small scenes, and so many different ones that it was very easy just to say, "Well, where are we in the performance now?" [laughter] "What has to be done next?"

HAST: I haven't heard it for a while. I'm going to try and get a recording of it at least, because it's wonderful.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, it is a marvelous work. Oh, my gracious.

So anyway, Regina Resnik was so sweet. You know, she'd been there through all the rehearsals that I came in on, so she knew that this was my first time in the role. [laughter]

HAST: Of course. But how nice.



WARENSKJOLD: She was so sweet. She really was.

HAST: That's wonderful and very professional, also. So then, ten days later-- Is that what you were going to say about your role in *Falstaff*?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. That's--

HAST: Then ten days later, you were in *Carmen* [by Bizet] for a matinee.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, that's right. That was the role that I was going to make my debut in, yes. It was a matinee with [Gaetano] Merola conducting it. Then, that night we did a *Standard Hour* of *Carmen*--a truncated version, an hour version--with the same cast, and-- No, excuse me. It was not the same cast, because Don José for the night radio show was Kurt Baum. Do you remember that name? No? Well, anyway--

HAST: Who was he exactly?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, he was quite a famous dramatic tenor of that era. Kurt Baum. I had never worked with him before and had never met him, as a matter of fact.

You know, in the beginning there is the duet between Don José and Micaëla. So here we were onstage in front of the big curtain and the orchestra down in the pit and one microphone. In the very beginning, he starts out the duet, and then I come in answering. He says, "Parle-moi de ma mère, and then I come in and start to say what I'm there for. Well,

he was a big, brawny, burly man. He wasn't awfully tall, but he was just very, very thick through the shoulders. He planted himself with his two feet right in front of this microphone and, "Parle-moi de ma mère." Then I'm supposed to come in with my little bit. So I was sneaking sort of in over here trying to get closer to the microphone so that I could be heard, but I would not really be on the microphone.

HAST: You had to lean over his chest. [laughter]

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, I had to lean in. So I thought, "I have quite a lot to sing." All of this while I'm singing. "I have quite a lot to sing; I can't do this from this angle." So I started pushing with my shoulder as I was singing, and all of a sudden, evidently, it dawned on-- He didn't do it purposely.

HAST: Oh, he didn't?

WARENSKJOLD: No, he didn't do it purposely. He hadn't the faintest idea that anybody else was on stage with him. [laughter]

He was there to sing, and he was going to sing. Well, anyway, I pushed, and all of a sudden something must have clicked in him. He got off balance a little bit, took two steps over this way, and turned around and looked at me like that just at the moment where I am saying, "I have a letter from your mother." He repeats after me, "Une lettre?" Just that one little thing. He said, "Oh, a letter?" He was busy at that moment looking to me to say "What happened?" and he missed

his cue of *une lettre*. Here is Merola down in the pit, expecting this, and he jerks his head up and does this and just plays the chord and forgets about it. Then, of course, I go on after that. But I have the recording still of that, and I play it and still remember back to that time.

HAST: And you laugh. Now you have to laugh; at the time you didn't. [laughter]

WARENSKJOLD: Well, I didn't because I'd never run into that sort of thing before. But he apologized to me afterwards. He said--

HAST: Oh, he realized what happened?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes. He said, "I didn't even think. I'm so terribly sorry." I thought that was rather nice.

HAST: Oh, that was nice. Oh, indeed. But the performance was cut, right?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes.

HAST: It was really abridged, so it was quite different.

WARENSKJOLD: Quite different. Just one hour of *Carmen*, so all of the major solos and duets and the quintet, of course--

HAST: But was that hard to do so few hours later when you'd just done the whole role?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, not really.

HAST: They mark the score, and you have the score in front of you?

WARENSKJOLD: No, we didn't. No, no. Because we all knew it.

HAST: Oh, really? But you knew where the cuts were?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. It came up to certain spots where it stopped, and there was applause. Then you knew what the next thing was. No, it really wasn't that difficult.

HAST: Yes, but you still had to memorize that part. So all together, then, in 1945 you had thirteen *Standard Hours*.

WARENSKJOLD: Nineteen forty-eight.

HAST: I'm so sorry, '48. Then, when the program actually ended in 1954, you had given more performances than any other artist in this program.

WARENSKJOLD: That's what they told me.

HAST: Extraordinary, yes. As I understand it, and from my own experience, radio programs really had to change with the advent of TV, didn't they? I mean, radio programs were really affected by television.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, they just went off.

HAST: Altogether?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes. Live radio shows, yes.

HAST: Oh, I see.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes. It took a while, because television came in and was not as-- You know, there were not that many people who had television sets in the very beginning. As

more people got television sets, they didn't listen to radio anymore. And these were all live programs. These were all programs with audiences and being done right at that time.

And it was some time-- I've forgotten when it was. I think it was Bing Crosby--wasn't it?--who established this business of doing taped programs.

HAST: Oh, he did?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. He was the one who started that. But all of these programs that I did were all live with very large audiences, and that was a wonderful experience, too. So that--

HAST: How many years did it take then to change? Quite a few years?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, let's see. 'Fifty-four was the last one of the *Standard Hours*. Well, when did television start Didn't television start in '49, 1950? I'm not exactly sure when it started.

HAST: I think so. I remember that during the war [World War II] in London my mother came home all excited one day and said she saw this thing downtown, and of course it--

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes, in a store window probably.

HAST: It didn't make any impression on me at the time. I couldn't visualize it. The old television programs were wonderful, but they didn't have much opera or music on them then, did they?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, there was a lot of music. It wasn't--  
I did an opera at NBC [National Broadcasting Company] quite  
early on, but we'll probably get into that.

HAST: Oh, yes? That was early?

WARENSKJOLD: Nineteen forty-nine.

HAST: Oh, that's early, actually.

WARENSKJOLD: There's 1949--that was the first television  
program that I ever did and the first television opera that  
I ever did. So you see--

HAST: But at the time, how did they do that? Did they have  
a full staging of this?

WARENSKJOLD: This was in a large studio. There was an audience  
there, but I never saw it, really, because we were in two  
or three different sets. They each had three walls and were  
open to the front. And I was singing most of the time in  
a set that was far away from where the orchestra was. Far  
away.

HAST: So did they mike it in or--?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, it must have been miked, as I remember  
now. Out of the corner of my eye I could see someone with  
a baton, you know, beating. But it was very difficult. Then,  
in those days also they did not have the tape as we have now  
that can be rerun. They had what they called kinescopes at  
that time.

HAST: What were those?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, this was a different technique. For instance, when it was done in New York, it could not be done at the same time three hours earlier in Los Angeles. So what they did was kinescope this--and don't ask me what the actual technique was, but it was a primitive technique at that time--and then that kinescope was shown three hours later in Los Angeles or San Francisco.

HAST: How did they forward it across the country?

WARENSKJOLD: I think they just did it. They kinescoped it on the West Coast. The difficulty was that it was not very good. The tops of our heads were always cut off and-- No, really. They did not think of that. They did not think of that when they were doing it.

HAST: And it was black and white?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, of course. What a difference that is.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, because my family was out on the West

Coast, of course, and when they would see these shows that were kinescoped out there, my father would say, "Yes, but I couldn't see your head." And a lot of the times the faces were sort of moonlight; they didn't get all of the features.

HAST: It was blurred. Not too clear, eh?

WARENSKJOLD: Not too clear, yes. You were saying, what happened to radio? Well, the *Standard Hour* lasted as long as it could. They also knew that television was coming, so they started a thirteen-week season of television *Standard Hours*. But--

HAST: So were you involved with those?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes. I did that. And I can't remember-- I must have it down in my notes here someplace. Maybe we'll come to it, but perhaps I can tell you a little bit about it now. Where everything that I had done before that time was live, they decided that they were going to tape it to make it really better. They prerecorded the music, and then they videotaped us acting, dubbing, in other words--

HAST: I was just going to say, that's dubbing!

WARENSKJOLD: Dubbing our own-- Yes.

HAST: But that's terribly hard to do. I mean, you have to learn how to do that.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, and the funny part of it is, I think actresses and actors--maybe they work awfully hard at it--seem to be able to do a better job of it than singers who are dubbing to their own voice.

HAST: Yes. Oh, they're trained.

WARENSKJOLD: I didn't have that much trouble with it because



I knew what I was doing. I knew vocally and I knew interpretively what I was doing, so I didn't have that problem with it.

But there was a baritone who just was having a terrible time.

He'd come in just seconds after or before or something like that. And it's very annoying to an audience, very annoying.

HAST: I find it annoying to watch even when the dubbing is good, but that's my own personal taste. I've been asked to dub. You know, if you have a film in a foreign language and then you dub it in English, and they say, "Well, it's got to be exactly like--" Well, they don't understand the differences in the languages. I don't really enjoy doing that, and I'm not good at it, frankly.

WARENSKJOLD: Well, anyway, they did this for the thirteen weeks, and then they didn't do it again because it really wasn't that successful. I think if they had done it live it might have been able to go on.

HAST: They had such wonderful old shows on television in those days. I wish they still had shows like that today without blood and murder and rape all the time. Now, the television performances we have today from the Met[ropolitan Opera] are grandiose and totally different, aren't they? How do they do that? Do they actually take the real performance at the Met and tape it as they go? Or do they do it separately?

WARENSKJOLD: I'm really not sure. You hear audience reaction,

so it sounds as though there's audience there. But it could be difficult for an audience to sit and be aware, you know, because they've got to have certain lights, extra lights, for something like that.

HAST: Aren't the cameras zooming in for close-ups?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, of course, they can zoom in without causing any problem. They do that right at the camera. But I honestly don't know whether they do it at a dress rehearsal and then dub in audience reaction or whether it's done in actual performance.

HAST: You still would have the cameras and the way they're moving around, I think. It's interesting. It would be something to find out about. What do you think of the performances today on television with the subtitles that we talked about earlier?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, yes. The subtitles on television? Yes, I think that's fine. Yes, yes.

HAST: That works. Yes, you mentioned that last time, especially with television.

WARENSKJOLD: Absolutely, absolutely. And I've seen some performances that are really quite good on television that I've enjoyed.

HAST: Yes. I just wondered what you thought about it. The costumes and all that has to be the real thing, doesn't it?

But the acting, wouldn't that be different, Dorothy, with the close-ups?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, I don't think-- I mean, if you were doing an opera performance and it happens to be being taped for television, I don't think you're going to be making that any different. I really don't think so. I think they are intelligent enough now in their videotaping that they know there are certain times you can't get up too close. That used to drive me crazy on television, though, because the camera directors used to love to zoom in on you just when you were getting ready to do a high note.

HAST: Or when you're perspiring in your costume. [laughter]

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. But doing a high note, you know, you're-- And this is live, so your mouth is open and you are really working to get that note. They used to love to come in. It drove me crazy!

HAST: And you're maybe not at your most beautiful while you do-- [laughter]

WARENSKJOLD: Absolutely. How can you be?

HAST: They used to do it, too, when an actor or a singer was perspiring heavily in his costume. I always thought that was in bad taste and embarrassing for them.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. So I don't think they do that that much anymore. I think we are more aware from the audience's

standpoint of the fact that it is a performance on stage.

Aren't you aware of that?

HAST: Yes, I am. The reason I asked you the question is that stage actors always say that being in a film is totally different.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, absolutely. Absolutely. But that's a film.

HAST: Which is different again from television.

WARENSKJOLD: No, not necessarily. But that's a film that is not being shown to an audience as a performance, and these things are being shown as performances on stage. On stage.

Now, films are different. That's set up for that reason, and it is entirely different. Oh, yes. Because when you're on stage you have to project not only your voice but your personality and what you're thinking. You have to project it.

HAST: The thing that they object to if they're stage actors, too, is that you like a scene to follow the next scene logically, and of course in films they don't do that. So actually-- But television isn't that bad necessarily--right? Depending on how they film it.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes.

HAST: I think so, too. Well, I wanted to clear up this one question: We talked about voices and voice categories. Do you remember I mentioned something out of the blue about "falcon" voice?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes.

HAST: I looked it up. The last prima donnas, that's where I got it. It really took me time to find it. It says there are voices that are neither true sopranos nor true mezzos; they can reach neither the first note of the mezzo's low range nor the higher range of the soprano. The French call these "falcon."

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, I see.

HAST: I thought they were after Marie-Cornélie Falcon, a famous singer of the Paris Opera in the heyday of the 1830s.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, isn't that interesting?

HAST: So no wonder we haven't really heard about this too much.

WARENSKJOLD: Well, I had never heard that word used before.

It's the same thing--

HAST: I thought it was a bird, didn't you? [laughter]

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, yes, I was wondering. [laughter]

HAST: It's her name. It's the name of a singer.

WARENSKJOLD: That's exactly what I mean by "limited" soprano.

It's a limited soprano because the quality is not there for a mezzo.

HAST: I think most people wouldn't use that term. They threw that in, and it somehow stuck in my brain.

Anyway, as we had talked--and you just brought it up

again--about projected titles, I found something on elitism, and I'd like your opinion. Now, this has been a word that's been used for opera. Ernest Fleischmann at the Music Center [of Los Angeles County], says that the fabulous [Morton H.] Meyerson [Symphony Center] Hall in Dallas, Texas-- Have you heard of it? It was built by I. M. Pei, and it is absolutely the most incredible building. Then I heard him [Fleischmann] remark on television, "Well, it's elitist." Now, "Crutchfield at Large" [by William Crutchfield] in the *Opera News*-- Are you familiar with his articles?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, indeed. He wrote a beautiful review of one of my records.

HAST: Did he?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes.

HAST: Oh, well, I'd like to have that if we can make a copy.

Anyway, I like to read what he says usually. It's funny that shortly after that he wrote a whole article about elitism.

He says he finds this term very annoying. He didn't mention Fleischmann. [laughter] He says it's very annoying that originally opera was the product of the elite, that is the aristocracy, but now still elite in the sense of educated people. So he feels it's important to devote energy to making good opera, not to water it down, and restore music in schools.

The only elitist problem as he sees it is the ticket prices

in New York at the Met. [laughter]

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, how true.

HAST: And he also said something which I'd forgotten, this quotation of Goethe that architecture is frozen music.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, I have heard that. It's wonderful.

HAST: That really is so beautiful, isn't it? When you see this building--maybe you can get hold of a picture of it, or if you ever go to Dallas--it really is magnificent. So to have Fleischmann say this elitist business when we've lost so many incredible people through him at the L.A. Music Center--

WARENSKJOLD: When he used the word, was he meaning that that is why opera is not more popular and we should come down to--? Is that what he was getting at?

HAST: I think he was saying that we should come down to different levels.

WARENSKJOLD: Ugh!

HAST: This is why Crutchfield thinks the opposite. And what you said about supertitles, that you're old-fashioned, that you feel that people should do some research--

WARENSKJOLD: Should raise themselves, yes.

HAST: Should raise themselves. But it is a different era, and I know that--

WARENSKJOLD: But that's one thing I think that's good about television, because now we do have opera on television.

HAST: I think it's fabulous!

WARENSKJOLD: And we do have the supertitles that I say do not bother me at all on television, because they're right in my range of vision.

HAST: But I found that it was an unfortunate remark considering-- I've talked to a lot of people that I've interviewed, and they all have their own opinion about Fleischmann and what he's done with the L.A. Music Center. But these are difficult times financially and in every other way, so probably there is no real right or wrong about anything. But I wanted to know whether you thought opera is an elitist pursuit or not.

WARENSKJOLD: Well, no. I don't see any reason for it to be an elitist pursuit other than exactly what Crutchfield said: the ticket prices are so high. This is--

HAST: Yes, that only the very rich-- But of course, as we know today, the very rich aren't usually the most educated. [laughter]

WARENSKJOLD: No, that's right. No, no. A lot of the-- We always used to talk about that in San Francisco, that opening night was the night for all of them, [laughter] because they could come and get all dressed up. That was the night that everybody had to be there.

HAST: Now, do you want to go on to talk about 1948 in New



York?

WARENSKJOLD: Maybe before we get into 1948, there were a couple of things back a little ways that we didn't get into, and I--

HAST: Please do.

WARENSKJOLD: In 1946, I think I mentioned Georges Sebastian back there a ways, and I don't remember how his name came up into our conversation--

HAST: You said you coached with him.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, I did. I thought maybe I'd give you a little bit of background on that. He was in San Francisco in 1944, '45, and '46. And of course, I went to all of the operas.

He was conducting [*Der*] *Rosenkavalier* [by Richard Strauss] and, oh, I just-- It was my ideal. I loved that opera. So in 1946 I contacted him and asked him if he would coach me.

I wanted to coach the role of Sophie in *Der Rosenkavalier* because I just so loved that opera. So he said he would coach me, yes, but not in Sophie. He said, "That's for a few years from now. You must get your grounding in Mozart. If you are interested, I will coach you in Susanna in the *The Marriage of Figaro*." I was disappointed, of course, because I wanted that, but I said, fine, that was just wonderful. So I did.

I coached, and that was the most wonderful experience of my life to work with this man.

HAST: Really?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. He had a marvelous background. People laugh now when I say this--musicologists laugh when I say it--but he gave me the-- It went back from him to the man he worked with to the conductor they worked with, went all the way back. He gave me this all the way back to Mozart.

HAST: Really?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, directly from Mozart. Now, musicologists sort of poo-poo that idea, because they say "modern research" and all of that, you know. "We don't pay any attention to all that sort of stuff." But anyway, I thought that was rather interesting. His way of teaching supposedly went back to that sort of thing.

Well, anyway--

HAST: So his teachers had been where?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, in Germany.

HAST: Oh, I see. He was German?

WARENSKJOLD: He was German. Well, I guess-- I don't know what-- He spoke--

HAST: Georges. He spells himself French, right?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. He spent most of his time-- I think he was Hungarian originally or something like that. He spent a lot of his time in France, in Paris, of course. He was

the conductor at the Paris Opera for a number of years. But he had gotten his training on the Germanic side.

HAST: Well, it's a good combination.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, yes. So anyway, the type of coaching lesson that he had-- Well, first, I'll start off with just a little bit, because at the first coaching lesson he started to come on to me a little bit.

HAST: Oh, he did? [laughter]

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes, yes. I mean, typical, and typical conductor thinking that this was expected of him, I guess.

HAST: And would flatter you.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, I guess, would flatter me. I don't know.

HAST: And the French.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, yes. I was very shy, and it was a little difficult for me to know how to handle this situation, so I tried to downplay it as much as I could. Because I went alone for that coaching lesson.

HAST: How old was he?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, he must have been fifty-five, something like that, by about that time. Age doesn't make any difference to conductors, you know. [laughter]

HAST: No, or anybody else. [laughter]

WARENSKJOLD: No, absolutely not. But anyway, he was a small man--he was shorter than I was, and he was certainly not the

kind of person that I would ever have been interested in in anyway. I thought, "I'm paying him for these coaching lessons!

Why do I have to put up with something like this? I'm doing this because I want to learn." Anyway, I went home and told my family about it, and--

HAST: Oh, your mother--

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, my mother [Mildred Stombs Warenskjold] and my father [William E. Warenskjold]. Oh, yes. I said, "He's wonderful, though, in his coaching, and I just don't want to stop because of all this." So the next coaching lesson, I had my mother come with me.

HAST: Really?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. Yes, I did. Yes, I did. I can't remember now-- I think after the coaching lesson Mother went out, and I stayed to talk to him. He said something about it, and I said, "Well, I just thought that it was best because I really want to work." I don't know exactly at this point so many years later what I said.

HAST: But you did touch on the subject.

WARENSKJOLD: I did. I did touch on the subject, yes.

HAST: That took courage.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. And he took it very well, very well. And from that point on we were absolutely working every moment with him.

HAST: Well, let me ask you--which is off the subject of music--I found this to be true of French men, that they will try--

WARENSKJOLD: And then are not bothered when it's--

HAST: You know, they can get anybody they want to, of course, but if you in a charming way make it clear that not for now, they respect you intellectually, which is very hard to do with American men, I think, don't you, in relationships?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, I think so. Yes. Yes, they take it so personally.

HAST: French men will respect you intellectually, or in this case--

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. I think that must have been it, then, yes. But it was sensible for my mother to be there, because when I was--

HAST: And you handled it properly.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. And when I was rehearsing at home she was always playing for me. So when she saw what he was doing and what he did to help me and the things-- She was a great help at that point in that way.

HAST: Did she come just one time or several times?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, she came several times.

HAST: Oh, I see.

WARENSKJOLD: She came several times. Not every time. But I wanted to--

HAST: But how exciting to work with somebody like that.

WARENSKJOLD: It was marvelous, though, Sybil. We'd sit down-- It was just exactly an hour lesson. He would put this book down on the piano like this, and he would flip the pages to the scene like that, and he would start in with the recitativo and all this sort of thing. He'd start in, and I would do it as well as I could just reading it. Then he would go back over it again and do it for me. Then we'd do it again. He played all the other roles: he sang the soprano, the bass, the baritone, Cherubino. He sang all of the other roles, and it was absolutely fabulous. The whole opera came to life the way he did it. I wasn't even aware of it because the time went so fast, but at the end of the hour he closed the book and he said, "All right, I'll see you tomorrow."

HAST: Did you go every day?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, I did every day. I didn't start with him at the beginning of the season. It took me a while to get hold of him. So I think I must have worked a total of two weeks. And there were times when I couldn't do it every day because he was busy. I would have been willing to do it, but he was busy with rehearsals and couldn't do it. But every time that he was free, I took a lesson.

HAST: Now, a mundane question again. Today, what would a man like this charge per hour?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, my heavens.

HAST: But in those days--

WARENSKJOLD: Truthfully, I can't even remember how much he charged.

HAST: But what would a man like that charge today?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, I don't know.

HAST: Three hundred dollars an hour or something?

WARENSKJOLD: One hundred and fifty at the very minimum, yes.  
Just depending upon--

HAST: Yes, but this was certainly worth it--the connections and--

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, my heavens! Oh, yes. It was simply marvelous.

HAST: Oh, I'm so glad. That sounds really great.

WARENSKJOLD: And I kept up with him for years. We used to send Christmas cards for years after that. I never happened to have seen him again.

HAST: Well, he must have enjoyed working with you, also.

WARENSKJOLD: He did, yes. And I so wanted to let him know that I finally had done Sophie in *Der Rosenkavalier*, you know.

HAST: Oh, yes. So how much later did you do that? Quite a bit later, probably.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, not too much later, 1951.

HAST: Oh, really?

WARENSKJOLD: I'm just looking here at my notes.

HAST: And you let him know, of course.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, I did. I did.

HAST: So he was pleased.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, I had a little note from him.

HAST: You wanted to talk about 1948 when you went to New York to try for national management. Now, how did you get into that? Again, that was a business decision to make, of course.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. Well, maybe we can preface that a little bit with the idea of what you do to make a career--or what you did at that time, which is perhaps different than now.

There was a magazine--it's still being put out but not as importantly as it was at that time--called *Musical America*.

This was a monthly magazine, and once a year they had what they called their booking issue. I've shown you these books.

They're at least an inch to an inch and a half thick, and they have full-page ads from all of the artists for both, at that time, Columbia Artists [Management] and National Concert and Artists Corporation. Those were the two major artist management organizations. We for years had gotten *Musical America*, and every time the booking issue came we just went for that to see what was going on and how it was done, looked at different ads and said, "Now, that ad is striking; that



draws the attention. This one, they've spent a lot of money but it doesn't do anything." We were really sort of taking everything apart to see.

HAST: When you saw "we," you mean--

WARENSKJOLD: My mother and I. My father was always interested in it, but he was not that knowledgeable about this. My mother was an artist, as you've seen. She's done all of these paintings here. She was an artist as well as a pianist, a musician.

HAST: And evidently a businesswoman, also.

WARENSKJOLD: No, not much of a businesswoman, no. The business end of it came from my father's side. No, she wasn't interested in that. Well, I mean, business as far as how you make a career, yes; in that way she was very interested in it.

So we decided that it would be logical to take an ad in this booking issue of *Musical America*. Now, you had to do this months and months ahead. You had to--

HAST: Really?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes, months ahead. You had to prepare for the issue. You had to make sure that you could get a page, that you had to have your artwork all done in a certain way for them, and all this sort of thing. So this was done way ahead of time, and the booking issue in 1948 was all planned long before my debut with the [San Francisco] Opera Company.

HAST: Oh, I see.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, all planned way in advance. So anyway, we--

HAST: But you didn't know what you were going to be doing. Was that just to advertise your name?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. And the things that I had been doing on the West Coast-- I'd been doing a lot of radio and some recitals and a couple of orchestra dates. So we took a whole page.

And again, you say what you've done now. Well, the booking issue at that time was \$3.50 to buy, you see. Now I think it's \$150 to buy the booking issue--just to buy it, to look at it. So just the page itself was, I think, \$375 at that time.

HAST: That was a lot then, wasn't it?

WARENSKJOLD: That was a lot of money. Then, on top of that, you had all of your artwork and this to get it ready, you see.

HAST: The photograph and the--

WARENSKJOLD: The photograph, the artwork for your name, the paste-up, and everything else, getting it camera-ready to send to them in New York.

HAST: So who did that? You went to a professional photographer?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, the photographer, yes. I had my-- That

was a regular professional photo of me that we used. But then we had the artwork done by a professional artist.

HAST: Oh, yes. That's a job in itself.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. So then that was sent back to New York and it was placed in there. Now, because I was not under management at that time, we used the *Musical America* address, so anyone who wanted to contact me would have to contact me through this *Musical America* New York address. Well, it wasn't so much that I was looking for engagements through this; it was just to get my name known throughout the country and mainly in New York. Actually, it did do something, because when I went back to-- You were talking about going to New York for national management. They had seen that ad and wondered, "Who is that?" [laughter]

HAST: Oh, I see.

WARENSKJOLD: They'd never heard of me in New York. All right. Now we can get back to--

HAST: So then you did go to New York?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. This was right after the opera season in San Francisco and Los Angeles was over. Let's see. Did my father go back? I guess we did. I guess we drove back to New York. But before that, I had letters of recommendation from a number of people. I had one letter from my dear friend, of course, Alfred Frankenstein, and I had a letter from--

HAST: Georges Sebastian, too?

WARENSKJOLD: No, no. I didn't even think of asking him because he was not in the country at that time. This was 1948. His last year there in San Francisco was 1946. Then-- Who was it? Oh, yes, I had a letter from Lotte Lehmann--

HAST: Lotte Lehmann?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. Whom I had--

HAST: Where was she at the time?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, she was living in Santa Barbara. I had never met her, but she was a very dear friend of Noël Sullivan, whom we spoke about before. So when I was planning to go to New York, and he knew all about this, he said, "I want you to meet Lotte before you go." So he made arrangements, and I came down--

HAST: So how old was she at the time? I'm trying to think. She must have been--

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, well, she wasn't that old.

HAST: In her forties, maybe?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, no. I guess she was older than that, because she had retired from the opera by that time.

HAST: Oh, she had already retired?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes. She'd already retired. So I don't know. I guess we could look it up sometime to find out. But anyway, he made an appointment for me to go to see her in

Santa Barbara.

So I went down, and my mother went with me to play for me. So I sang for her, and she said, "Now, what do you want of me?" So I told her that I was going to New York and that I already had-- Well, now, of course, I had a letter from Gaetano Merola, a very important letter from him. So I told her that I had a letter from him and a letter from Alfred Frankenstein. So I said, "I was wondering if you knew anybody whom I should see back there or anything." And she said, "Yes, my former manager. I'll jot you a note." As a matter of fact, I don't think she gave me the note; I think she sent it directly to her manager.

So with those letters of recommendation we went to New York. One of the-- Who was it, now? I guess it was Lawrence Evans of the Evans and Weinhold division in Columbia Artists [Management] who had been here in Los Angeles at a time when I was here doing one of the *Harvest of Stars* radio programs, James Melton's program. Lawrence Evans was James Melton's manager. Jimmy asked me to sing for him out here.

TAPE NUMBER: IV, SIDE TWO

APRIL 29, 1992

WARENSKJOLD: He [Lawrence Evans] happened to be in town, in Los Angeles, with his new wife, and Jim Melton asked if he would hear me over at the Beverly Hills Hotel. They took one of the big rooms there--it had a piano in it--and I sang for him. He said, "That's very, very nice. I'd like us to hear you again whenever you come East." So I contacted his office in advance, and Kurt Weinhold, who was his partner in that division, heard me and set up Carnegie Hall, of all--Carnegie Hall, because he wanted to hear me in a larger place.

I don't know what happened or didn't happen with them, because he was very nice to me and said, "Keep going, you're going in the right direction" and all of that, but he didn't give me--

HAST: He didn't sign you up.

WARENSKJOLD: No, he didn't sign me up.

And also one of the letters that I had was to [Francis C.] Coppicus of Coppicus and Schang. This was another division in Columbia. They had about five different divisions, and each division handled a certain number of artists. \*[The heads of each

---

\* Warenskjold added the following bracketed section during her review of the transcript.

division signed up artists that they were particularly interested in. There was a certain amount of competition between them even though they were all part of this one large company, Columbia Artists Management. One of the divisions did specialize in conductors. Another was more interested in instrumentalists. A few handled all types of artists. My manager--this is what they are called in the classical music business, not agents--Kurt Weinhold of the Evans and Weinhold division, later to become the Weinhold and Thompson division, was particularly knowledgeable about singers. He had come to this country first from Germany, as the personal representative for Elizabeth Rethberg, and stayed on, joining Columbia Artists Management later.] So Mr. Coppicus heard me--I guess maybe he came at the same time that I sang for Kurt Weinhold--at Carnegie Hall. Then he asked me to come into his office to see him, and I was very excited about that, of course. So he proceeded to tell me that the ideal thing to do was to go to Europe, make a name in Europe, and then come back to America. And he said then, "By the way, that name Warenskjold, that's a very difficult name. It's awfully long, it's very difficult, nobody can pronounce it. We'll have to change that, too."

HAST: That sounds like Hollywood.

WARENSKJOLD: So of all things, he told me what he wanted to change it to. He was going to just lop off the "jold," and my name was going to be "Warensk," which I thought was the ugliest sound in the world! So I told him that some years before I had used the name Warren and that I had used a family name Cromwell at one time.

HAST: Oh, that would get them, too.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, yes.

HAST: But seeing the books that you showed me and the advertising, I think that's especially impressive, the name.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, it's very different.

HAST: You have to remember it; it's different.

WARENSKJOLD: That's right. If you ever learn it, you never forget it. And I remember one of the things after one of the *Harvest of Stars* programs. Frank Black was the conductor.

He was a well-known radio conductor at that time. Frank Black was looking at the name down here because Jimmy Melton was very interested in my career. And someone said, "No, that's not good. We're going to have to do something. We're going to have to shorten that." I guess some other people were doing that, and Frank Black was the one who said, "No, no, no. Don't do that. It's so long that when it gets up on a marquee, nobody else can get up there with her. She'll be



alone." [laughter]

HAST: I think that's good advice.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, yes. But whenever I did change the name for a short period of time, nothing particularly interesting happened.

HAST: So did you get an agent?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, let me finish.

HAST: Oh, I'm sorry! [laughter]

WARENSKJOLD: Let me finish. This is taking a long time, I know.

HAST: No, no. That's all right. But I just wondered what was happening here.

WARENSKJOLD: When he said he wanted to change my name--this is Coppicus--and wanted me to go to Europe and come back, this was not really what we had in mind for my career. I don't know whether I really thought too much about it or not, but I said no, I didn't think that I wanted to do it that way.

HAST: That's interesting, because don't they still tell a lot of singers that they should go to Europe and then come back?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, yes. So this was a Friday, late afternoon, and I was leaving New York at four o'clock on Saturday by

train to go to Spokane, where I was to sing with the orchestra.

On Friday, I told this big New York manager that that's not the way I thought I wanted to handle my career. So I was walking down Fifty-seventh Street, my head was almost down in my boots, and I was thinking, "Have I made a mistake? Is this my only chance and I've missed it?" I was really just so down, absolutely. You know, here I'd come to New York with all these wonderful hopes, and I'd just poured cold water on all of them.

Well, I got back to the hotel, and there was a telephone call waiting for me, a message saying that I was to see Marks Levine-- I had an appointment with Marks Levine on Saturday, of all things, at noontime.

HAST: Four hours before your train ride.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, yes, yes. Now, Marks Levine was the president of National Concert and Artists Corporation, what we call NCAC, which was the other big management-- There were really only two at that time, not as it is now with many independent managers.

So I went to his office on Saturday. Nobody else was around. It was all closed for Saturday. My mother went with me because she was going to play for me, of course. So I came in and sat down, and he looked at me, and he took this

out and he said, "Now, you know, I would not be seeing you if it weren't for this letter." This was the letter from Lotte Lehmann. And he said, "Also, I have another one here from Gaetano Merola. These are very important letters." So he wanted to know what I had done and what I wanted to do and all of this sort of thing. And then he was just getting ready to say, "Well, thank you so much for coming in and keep up with me, let me know what you're doing," when into his office came Samuel Lippman, I think his name was. Sam Lippman was his sort of second in command. He saw, I guess, the disappointment in my face when I was getting ready to be ushered out without having had a chance to sing for the man. So he said, "Oh, Marks, we have time. There's a piano right here. And you have your accompanist, don't you?" I said, "Yes." He said, "Why don't we? Let's hear her." And I started to get up again.

So we went in, and right in the center of this very large office that had little cubicles with glass all around them was a room all enclosed in glass with the piano in it--strangest thing that I ever saw. So we all went in this room, and he came in, and Mr. Lippman came in, and they sat down. I sang something first, and then they said, "What else do you have?" And then I sang some other type of thing. Then "What else

do you have?" I think I sang three different things, probably one aria--I can't remember what it was--an aria and a couple of songs. So he said, "Let's go back in my office." He was very quiet, very quiet. And then he said, "Now, from here where are you going?" I told him I was going to Spokane for an orchestra concert. He said, "Then you're going back to Los Angeles, are you?" And I said, "Yes."

HAST: Los Angeles, not San Francisco?

WARENSKJOLD: No, I was going to Los Angeles. I think I had a *Standard Hour*; they did a few from Los Angeles with the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra. I had some engagement down there. And I said, "Yes, I'm going to be there right after that." So he said, "Well, you contact our office." They had a West Coast office in Los Angeles. He said, "You contact our office, and they'll have a contract for you for the next season."

HAST: Oh, my gosh! Just like that.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, just like that. And I-- Oh, I was-- I thanked him so much and I said, "I'm looking forward to it." All the way out on the train to Spokane, all the way from Spokane by train down to Los Angeles, I kept thinking, "Oh, dear. Was he just saying that to get me out of his office? Will I get to Los Angeles and call the office and they'll say they

never heard of me?" Oh, all of these terrible things, you know. "Why didn't he give me a contract right there if he was going to do it?" [laughter]

Well, anyway, I got to Los Angeles and I contacted the office. The name of the man escapes me--if you're interested I can probably find it--who was the head of the West Coast office and the head of the Civic concert service [Civic Music Association] in these western states. [Alexander Haas] So I called the office, and he was waiting for the call. He said, "Yes, come down to see me." I went down there, and he said, "We have this all made up for you. All you have to do is sign it." So I signed it without even looking to see what it was.

HAST: You didn't read anything? [laughter]

WARENSKJOLD: I didn't even read it! No. [laughter] I was so excited.

HAST: Which I don't think is such a good idea usually.

WARENSKJOLD: No. I would never do it again.

HAST: In this case I could see why you did that, absolutely.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes. Anyway, it was a contract for one year with an option for a second year.

HAST: I see. Well, that's nice. That's very nice.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. So we had that one year, and then they

took up the option for the second year. We can get on into that maybe a little bit later.

HAST: Well, that brings up what I was going to ask you about the role of agents and opera companies. Now, the agent has to work with the opera company. What does the opera company itself decide?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, the opera company decides what their cast is going to be for whatever opera that they're going to do--the cast that they want. Then they contact the agent.

HAST: And he would suggest the different people--

WARENSKJOLD: No, not necessarily. Sometimes they suggest, but usually the opera company has an idea of the artist that they want. They contact the agent to see if that artist is free. If that artist is not free at that time, if they have somebody else that they want, they ask for that person. If not, they say, "Well, who do you have of that caliber?" And in that way that--

HAST: Or if the agent knows that they're putting on a certain opera and he wants to push somebody's career, he could also contact the opera company.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, that's true.

HAST: Yes. I just wondered if this is different today from what it used to be or if it still works the same way.

WARENSKJOLD: No, I think it's pretty much worked the same way.

The only thing that's different today is what happened those many years ago when I said it was the two major managements.

There were a few independent people, but they were really not very much at all. Then at a certain point they had some court cases that said that it was not legal, or however they wanted to put it, for these two managements to control the whole world of music. And--

HAST: Oh, really? This was illegal? Or were there unions or--?

WARENSKJOLD: No, it had nothing to do with unions. It was a monopoly. It was a monopoly, that was what it was. You see, it had nothing to do with operas or anything like that, because opera companies could get them from anybody. But Civic Music Association was the organized audience plan--I think we touched on that a little before--for National Concert and Artists Corporation, and the Community Concert Association was the organized audience plan for Columbia Artists Management.

HAST: We haven't talked about this.

WARENSKJOLD: We haven't talked about that? Well, do you suppose now is the time to talk about it?

HAST: Yes, I think it would be very interesting, because I know very little about it, actually.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. Well, you see, it was very expensive for individual, local entrepreneurs to put on series. They had a lot of them, but they had to book the artists, and then they had to try to sell the season tickets and individual seats. Lots of times they didn't make up the money, but they had guaranteed money to those artists, so they didn't make it. The idea for the organized audience plan came, as I understand it, from Ward French, who at that time was with NCAC. \*[This plan was to be a sales arm for the artists of National Concert and Artists Corporation. It was called Civic Music Association but was part of the parent organization.

Ward French left NCAC shortly after that and established the same type of organization for Columbia Artists Management, which they called Community Concert Association. Their logo was "ACarnegieHallineverytown." These were very successful.

They are still going on today but with fewer towns. In their heyday, Community Concert had over twelve hundred towns and Civic Music had a little over eight hundred.]

HAST: Where? In New York?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, based in New York. Oh, yes. Yes. \*[They would send representatives, as they were called, to towns all over the U.S. and Canada who would contact the most influential people in town. The representative helped them



set up a local organization which would then have a membership drive. People were told that the money raised from selling the membership tickets would buy a season of from four to six concerts.] And the people buy these tickets not knowing who they're going to hear.

HAST: Oh, really?

WARENSKJOLD: But, you see, at that time it was so inexpensive. I think it started out at about \$6 for anywhere from four to six concerts.

HAST: Extraordinary. So they'd find a local concert hall for the performance.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. Yes, usually, if you had a regular concert hall. A lot of times it was the local high school auditorium or a college auditorium or something like that. Wherever, it was the largest place that could be gotten. Then, with the money that they got by selling these tickets in advance,

---

\* Warenskjold added the following bracketed sections during her review of the transcript.

the local committee sits down with the representative and decides from the list that is given to them what they're going to have on their series. Now, if they had enough money they could have five or six recitals. They didn't like to have it less than four.

HAST: Now, are we talking about recitals or whole opera productions?

WARENSKJOLD: No, no, no, not opera at this point.

HAST: This is recitals we're talking about.

WARENSKJOLD: These are recitals and group attractions. It started out more with recitals in those times.

HAST: But this is for voice we're talking about, yes?

WARENSKJOLD: No. Voice, piano, violin, flute--

HAST: Oh, that's how Louis Kaufman also got--

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, he did them surely. Oh, yes. All, all things. Duo concerts, and then you had quartets, and all of this sort of thing.

HAST: Which is wonderful to get all over the country.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, yes. Then they also had dance groups, and they had choral groups, and then there were a few small opera groups that got together that traveled to things like that, too.

HAST: There were?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. But, you see, when they got together with the representative and the committee from the town, this committee was given this list of names of people that they could chose from according to-- The money was all over here as to how much each one of them cost. Then they would choose, from the money that they had, how many of these artists they could get for the money that they had.

HAST: So it was up to the committee to decide.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, yes. But, you see, the committee was only given this list of artists. For instance, the Civic Music local committee was only given a list of NCAC artists. And the Community Concert towns were only given the list of Columbia artists. They were done exactly the same way.

HAST: So you had to belong to one of these organizations in order to get any jobs.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, yes. It was very, very difficult for anyone to get on one of these-- It was possible if there was somebody in a town who happened to know a specific person and they said, "We want this person, period." They could get them, but it was very hard.

So what happened was that some of the independent managers got together and said, "We want in on this. It's a monopoly." So it was taken to court, and the court decided that both

Civic Concert and Community Music had to open up their list to other people. So then, when these meetings took place in the individual towns, they had to be given not just the Civic or Community list, but they had to be given a list that included a lot of other artists from independent managers as well.

HAST: And how did they get those lists? From agents?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, the managers-- Yes. Oh, yes. That was the whole point. The individual agents were the ones who brought this type of suit. \*[When they won, the court ordered Community and Civic to turn over their complete lists of organized towns with all local names and addresses to the individual or independent agents.] So the independent managers were able to get their artist lists to the local community and civic committees.

HAST: So did that work for you? Did they send you out on a lot of recitals?

---

\* Warenskjold added the following bracketed section during her review of the transcript.

WARENSKJOLD: Being under National Management? Oh, yes! Oh, my, yes. I was looking at my list here. It built up, you know. The first year I had five or six, and the next year I had twenty, and the next year I had thirty-five.

HAST: So once you got to have a name as a singer, then would the agent actually go with you anywhere? Or was this always just from his office? I mean, did you have anybody to go with you in a business way?

WARENSKJOLD: I had a personal representative who traveled with me for the last four or five years that I was doing it.

Not in the early days. Because times are changing, you know.

I think my first recital for Civic was for \$450, and I had to pay for my accompanist, and I had to pay for our traveling expenses.

HAST: Oh, they didn't pay for your traveling expenses?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, no. Oh, no. Oh, my gracious, no. No, no, no. No.

HAST: But today they do, right?

WARENSKJOLD: No. Oh, certainly not!

HAST: You always have to pay for your own?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, absolutely, yes. Yes. You're an individual artist. You're not-- The only time-- Well, no, traveling expenses were not--

HAST: I just wondered if somebody like Placido Domingo--

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, no, no. He pays for his own. Oh, heavens, no.

HAST: Oh, he does?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, my, yes! Oh, yes. He's an individual artist.

HAST: And if he travels all over the world or--

WARENSKJOLD: He pays for it, of course. So a lot of people-- Because when you're just starting out you get the lowest amount.

Now, maybe just one more little thing in connection with these organized audience plans. You were sold to the local organization for, say, a fee of \$500. I think that's the way it was with the--

HAST: "Sold." [laughter] I like that expression.

WARENSKJOLD: Well, it's exactly what it was, yes.

HAST: Is that what they called it?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, yes. They paid \$500, but you didn't get that \$500, because Civic or Community took \$150 right off the top as their fee--differential, it was called--for--

HAST: Placing you.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. Then you also paid a 15 percent commission to your own manager. So if it's \$500 and they take \$150 off,

that's \$350 that you get. Fifteen percent of that \$350 has to be paid to your own division manager. Then you pay your accompanist, and you pay for your expenses and your accompanist's expenses.

HAST: Like travel, yes.

WARENSKJOLD: Traveling expenses, yes. Now, the accompanist always paid for his own meals, and he paid his own motel or hotel.

HAST: Oh, really?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes.

HAST: It's the actual travel by train or plane or whatever.

WARENSKJOLD: Just the travel, that's it. That's it.

HAST: My word, there wasn't much left, was there?

WARENSKJOLD: Nothing. Nothing left, really. No, because at that time, when in the very beginning of your career, you don't have a nice long tour that goes from one to the next.

You're starting here, and maybe you're going a thousand miles to the next one, and then you have to back up and come someplace else, another seven hundred miles to another one. It wasn't a nicely planned tour at that point. But that's part of starting a career. I mean, you know it in advance. You know you're not going to make any money on this, and you're going to come out behind.

HAST: So the people who actually do make it, in the past and the present, make a tremendous amount of money, but then there are thousands and thousands who don't. It's just the top people always who make it.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes. That's right.

HAST: So nothing is easy. Now, did you have to deal with stage directors, set designers, props, costumes, makeup? Is this all up to you? Or do they tell you what to do? I mean, some opera singers like their own costumes.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, I always had my own costumes.

HAST: Did you?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes. Always.

HAST: Because I remember Dorothy Kirsten said that she always had her own, and she'd get them in Paris. You also had your own costumes?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes.

HAST: Who made them for you?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, in San Francisco it was-- What was the name of the costumer, the big costumer in San Francisco who did all the work for the San Francisco Opera? Goldstein Costumers. So Mrs. [Rose] Goldstein was very--

HAST: Who paid for that?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, I did.



HAST: My word! That is horrendous, isn't it?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes. I paid for all of my own costumes.

Oh, yes. There were people who didn't, who just took what the company would dredge up. Or if they were doing a new production--

HAST: Or maybe you could rent them.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, you can rent them, I guess. Yes.

HAST: But who--? Somebody had to make the decision how your costume would look and how it would go with the other costumes on the stage.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, to a certain extent. \*[In San Francisco, Goldstein did all the costumes for the opera. They were responsible for the whole production--soloists, chorus, and all. So simply because I bought my own, they were always harmonious with the rest.] We did have a bit of a problem on my first [*La Bohème*]. I'd had the costumes made by Goldstein, and they were lovely costumes.

HAST: Oh, I'm sure. I'd love to see pictures.

WARENSKJOLD: They were beautiful. They were lovely costumes.

And she--this is Mrs. Goldstein--she was always very interested in me because I was one of the few local singers who did have her own costumes, did pay for her own costumes. So she was always very interested in that.

But the first-act costume was wonderful. There was no problem with anything. The last-act costume, it was really a beautiful costume. The color was lovely, and it was made gorgeously, because she thought--and we did in working it out with her--that when Mimi comes back after having left Rodolpho, and she's been with another man, a very wealthy man who has been taking care of her, obviously she has been given all of these wonderful clothes as well. So she would not be coming in bedraggled looking, because she's coming from this when she's sick and comes back to Rodolpho. Well, one of the critics remarked on the beauty and gorgeous costume in the last act when they thought she should be coming in bedraggled. Well, the opera company then decided that maybe we'd better do something different for that costume.

HAST: Oh, what a shame.

WARENSKJOLD: So I had another costume made for the last act for the next time I did it. It made everybody happy. [laughter]

---

\* Warenskjold added the following bracketed section during her review of the transcript.

HAST: Well, doesn't the stage director have to coordinate things like this?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, I guess they do now because they have stage directors who control the whole thing. At that time the conductor conducted, the stage director directed, and the singer sang.

HAST: You mean the stage director did most of the blocking, and then--?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes.

HAST: And then there was the set designer.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, yes. But the stage director was actually in charge of scenery and lighting also. That's part of his job. That was often a set from previous productions. It isn't as it is now, that it's a whole new thing, and you've got to do it this way and this has to be that way. They did that for certain specific productions--

for instance, for the *Falstaff* that I was telling you about.

The scene design was worked together with everybody-- William Wymetal, who was the stage director-- I told you he made these beautiful pictures of the women characters. But most of the time, when it is not an opera that is being given that many rehearsals--because we had two weeks of rehearsal for that--you're getting people who have done the role time and

time again. Whether you've done it together or not, they are people who have done it. The stage director comes in and is more just a traffic cop.

HAST: Oh, yes?

WARENSKJOLD: Because we did not have that kind of rehearsal time to spend on it. So as long as somebody came in and had done it before, you just make sure that you can get together so that you're not running into each other or doing something that just doesn't work with the other characters. That's why I say a traffic cop. That's what it was.

HAST: Yes, I understand. Well, if you have a production at the Met today, they always list who does the costumes, but there is one person who actually designs those costumes?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes. Oh, yes.

HAST: Who pays for that?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, I think when it's done as a new production like that it is paid for by the opera company.

HAST: You'd really have to have one person in charge with maybe the set designer if it's a period and you need period costumes. But what if they make a modern version? We should really talk about what you think about that.

WARENSKJOLD: [laughter] Should we? I think you can tell what I think right now.

HAST: Well, you can also tell what I think. I'll never forget in London, we went to see Shakespeare in modern dress--this was years ago, before the war [World War II]--and I was horrified.

But they do so many things now, and this is why I was asking you. When it comes to costumes, it really has to be coordinated, doesn't it?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. Yes. We would get on into this later, but I might as well say it now: The only time I ever did an opera-- No, two times. Two times, I must say.

Once in San Francisco for a *Der Rosenkavalier* they did a new production there, the English production, and they had Tony Duquette. Do you remember that name?

HAST: Yes.

WARENSKJOLD: Tony Duquette designed the scenery and he designed the costumes. And they were horrible, absolutely horrible! I don't know whether Tony Duquette is still living or not, but it really was just terrible. I have pictures of the costume and all of that. But the set design was just horrendous. But anyway, I still-- I think I paid for the costume and I never used it again. When we went back to *Rosenkavalier* the next time, it was back to the original costuming. Then the only other time that they had costumes and scenery and everything as a whole was in Chicago for the

*Carmen* performance there. It was a new production. And you know the spot in *Carmen* where they say to Don José, "There was a young girl here looking for you." And he says, "Oh, what did she look like?" And they say, "*Jupe bleue*." A blue dress! The costume that they made for me--and I did not pay for this, no--was brown and yellow. Can you imagine such a thing?

HAST: [laughter] Yes, I can.

WARENSKJOLD: They had not even read the story to find out any little thing like that. Unbelievable!

HAST: So what did you do about it?

WARENSKJOLD: I had to wear it, because everything was designed along these lines, brownish in the back of the scenery and all of that. It was all designed with that in mind.

HAST: And you couldn't change the words to "*brune*"?

[laughter]

WARENSKJOLD: I can't remember now whether they did or not.

"*Jupe brune*," yes. [laughter] Oh, dear.

HAST: But Dorothy, when you had to travel with your own costumes, did you have to take steamer trunks to carry all that?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, it was a small steamer trunk, you know.

I have visions of these huge things--

HAST: Yes. It's unusual to even make them today.

WARENSKJOLD: No, I have one of those huge ones that I never used. No, I had one that was about forty-eight inches long and about that high--

HAST: You needed height, yes.

WARENSKJOLD: But you could press them down in there, and they always had people, pressers, to take care of that after you got it there.

HAST: In those days they had porters to carry the luggage.

[laughter]

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes. Yes, right.

HAST: Today you don't know where you go if you get them.

Oh, that's fascinating.

Now, the set designers. Did you ever meet Günther Schneider-Siemssen, who comes here?

WARENSKJOLD: No.

HAST: Next time he comes to town, I'll make sure you meet him. Very interesting. And the props, how does that work?

Were you one of those people who also always made sure you had your own props?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, I always made sure they were there where I was supposed to have them. Most of the props were taken care of by the opera company. I mean, they got whatever was going to be used for that sort of thing.

HAST: But you made sure it was in the right place at the right time.

WARENSKJOLD: I made sure it was there when-- Yes, that's right. The only prop was in the very first opera, *Falstaff*.

In the last scene, Nannetta plays the fairy queen, and my father made me a little stick with a large star-type thing up at the top with brilliance all over it, and I held that as I sang my aria. So he made that, and I still have that around someplace. But most of the props are handled by the company.

HAST: But like everything else, you make sure that it's there.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, my, you certainly do.

HAST: You're in charge of that.

WARENSKJOLD: Did you hear the story about Frances Yeend? She's a delightful person; I like her so much. She was in the New York City Opera one time doing *La Traviata*, and they didn't have the props there when they were rehearsing. So she got into the habit of picking up-- When she's writing her letter, she's supposed to pick up the bell to call for the maid. So, come the performance, they evidently had not thought to put the bell there anyway, so she picked this up and went "Ding-a-ling-a-ling" with nothing in her hand at all! "Ding-a-ling-a-ling." [laughter]



HAST: It must have brought down the house.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, dear.

HAST: How charming. That is so sweet. Well, those things happen all the time, and there are so many funny stories about opera and stage sets and all that.

Now, the conductors and the opera company stage directors, do they communicate at all? What is the relationship between an opera company director and the conductor? They have to work together up to a point, but they all have their own egos, I imagine. Right?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes. But I really don't know that there's any problem there.

HAST: Not a big problem?

WARENSKJOLD: No, I really don't think so. No. The thing has changed over the years. We now have virtuoso conductors and we have virtuoso scenic designers and that sort of thing as opposed to the kind of thing that most of the time it was when I was doing it. But your administration in the opera, your directors in the opera, have made their decision as to who they want to do that opera, and they have him because he is the best that they can get for that opera at that time, so they're going to give him as much leeway as possible.

HAST: They will? Well, I just wondered. I've heard so many

conflicting stories about the Music Center and how that's run, without mentioning that name again that we mentioned earlier [Ernest Fleischmann]. Do you have an opinion of that?

Because we've lost some good people, haven't we, like [André] Previn and Zubin Mehta and--

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes. You mean in the symphony orchestra [Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra], yes.

HAST: But it affects everything else, does it not? I just wondered who should have the power--

WARENSKJOLD: I don't really know too much about that. I hear the same stories that you do about it.

HAST: I just wondered whether there should be this kind of control. Or is it really a financial problem that they

have to work out? I mean, I don't know.

WARENSKJOLD: I guess the finances are very, very important.

I think there is more of a difficulty with that in a symphony orchestra organization than there is in the opera.

HAST: Is that true?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, I think so.

HAST: I see. Well, this is why I wanted to find out about how opera companies are organized, because I think that's an interesting--

WARENSKJOLD: Well, the only difficulty that you have is that some conductors, particularly European ones, come and expect to be able to have more rehearsals than they are given.

HAST: Now, is this true? That's a really interesting point, Dorothy, about rehearsals and rehearsal time. For opera you also need a lot of rehearsal time. Do you get enough nowadays?

WARENSKJOLD: No, no. I don't think you get really much more rehearsal time than we had, except for special productions, new productions.

HAST: And then you get enough, do you think?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, you never get enough. No, but the orchestra time and chorus time is just awfully expensive.

HAST: I see. So that is the problem. So for a major production--let's say they're putting on *Carmen* in San Francisco--how much rehearsal time is that?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, with *Carmen* you'd have very little.

HAST: Because everybody knows it so well?

WARENSKJOLD: Because it's the same orchestra all the time, and they have done *Carmen* time after time after time after time. And probably with *Carmen*, they're going to be using the same scenery and that sort of thing, so there wouldn't be any difficulty there.

HAST: So that's not a problem. But with a new opera or modern

opera--

WARENSKJOLD: With a new opera, yes. Yes, they do have to give more time to it. The orchestra has to be given some more time, and of course the chorus has to have a certain amount of time, because there's such a turnover with chorus people. They have new people coming in who don't know *Carmen* yet, either.

HAST: Oh, is that right? All the time?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. Oh, yes. There's a big turnover.

HAST: And then the opera stars know their roles, but there's still the staging, and all that takes time. So it depends on the opera and on the orchestra and on everybody really, the whole management. Thank you, Dorothy.

TAPE NUMBER: V, SIDE ONE

MAY 23, 1992

HAST: You said there were a few more things you wanted to add to what you said the last time.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes. We were talking about when I went to New York to try out for national management and the first manager that I sang for at Columbia Artists Management, the one who wanted to turn my name into "Warensk" and I had to go to Europe and all of that. I couldn't remember what his name was. I have since looked it up. His name was [Francis C.] Coppicus. They had divisions in Columbia, and he was the division of Coppicus and Schang.

HAST: I see.

WARENSKJOLD: It was one of the main-- I think there were about five different divisions at that time: Judson, O'Neil, and Judd; Coppicus and Schang; it was Evans and Weinhold at that time, and then later Lawrence Evans retired and it just turned out to be Kurt Weinhold, who became my manager. We'll get--

HAST: Oh, yes, certainly.

WARENSKJOLD: Where we were at that point was that I got the contract for National Concert and Artists Corporation, which was the other large arts management [company]

for performance.

HAST: Right. Well, between 1949 and '51 your career absolutely skyrocketed, didn't it?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes.

HAST: Very quickly.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. May I just say one more little thing?

HAST: Please.

WARENSKJOLD: I had a note here, going back again to 1948.

HAST: That's fine.

WARENSKJOLD: This was about my performances in *Carmen*, and the debut with the San Francisco Opera [Company]. Well, my family, who was behind me all the way, decided that this was a very important milestone in my career, so they decided that we should have a publicist. We looked into this idea in San Francisco, who the most reputable ones were, the ones who would do the type of work for my kind of business, the classical music business. We found a woman there who completely understood this end of it; I think her father had come from Russia and had been in the music business. Anyway, they hired this woman, and we sat down and talked about what I was doing and what I hoped to do. So she got some very good stories in the papers, some very interesting stories about the fact that I was a local girl and making my debut in the big opera

company and--

HAST: In San Francisco.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, in San Francisco. The paper came out and took pictures of me playing tennis and things like that.

It was very well done. Well, when I appeared in *Carmen* [by Bizet] in Los Angeles-- You know, the company couldn't make their way just in San Francisco. They came down to Los Angeles and appeared at the big--what do they call it?--the Shrine Auditorium, and they made up the deficit that they had from San Francisco because the Shrine was so large. So they came down for about two weeks of performances at the Shrine in Los Angeles. So I was doing Micaëla down at the Shrine.

HAST: That's a very large auditorium, isn't it?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes. I mean, yes, I think it was something up to six thousand at that time.

HAST: And how were the acoustics?

WARENSKJOLD: They were wonderful, and they still are good.

HAST: Is that right?

WARENSKJOLD: They still are good. It's so large that if you're way up in the balcony it's hard to see down on the stage, it's so small. But anyplace in that house the acoustics are good. They really are.

So anyway, I was getting ready to go out for my big third

act, where I have the aria, and the general director of-- I guess he was called the general director--not the musical director, not the artistic director. No, he was the manager, excuse me.

HAST: The manager.

WARENSKJOLD: The manager, yes, because [Gaetano] Merola was the general director. So this was the manager, and I'll tell you his name: Paul Posz. He had evidently seen these articles in the papers, and he had seen one particularly large one in Los Angeles. He came back to me just before I was ready to go on in the third act and laid into me: How dare I do this when I was just a debut artist, that I was not big enough at that point to have stories like this put in the paper, and all of that. What had happened evidently, some of the other singers had seen these articles and maybe thought that the opera company had put those in and was doing--

HAST: And complained to the manager.

WARENSKJOLD: And complained to him, and he was getting blamed. I was so young and inexperienced, you know, I just stood there and took it. [laughter] Later I would have said, "How dare you talk to me before I'm ready to go on in an important role!"

HAST: Extraordinary.



WARENSKJOLD: Luckily I was so in control of what I was able to do vocally that I went out and did a good job of the Micaëla.

But he could have absolutely crushed me, absolutely crushed me. And so it's--

HAST: I've never heard of such a thing. You don't do that to an artist just before performance.

WARENSKJOLD: No. No.

HAST: I've heard people say, "Well, let's wait until he's through playing this to discuss it."

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, yes. But anyway, this was rather interesting, because it showed me that I had the gumption, the stuff to withstand things like this. So that was just--

HAST: At that age, too. It showed you had a lot of strength.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes.

HAST: And of course, now, as you said, you wouldn't take it like that.

WARENSKJOLD: No, of course not. But I was just beside--

HAST: Yes.

WARENSKJOLD: For one thing, I couldn't believe that anybody would do a thing like that. I couldn't believe it. Then later, talking in terms of that, a year or so later, I think, we hired a publicist here in Los Angeles, somebody who was very well-known, Margaret Ettinger. She died quite a number of

years ago. It was a very big publicity company here [Ettinger Company]. My family came up with the money and--

HAST: You had an extraordinary family.

WARENSKJOLD: I did. I really did.

HAST: And I wanted to talk about that some more later on, because that is so lucky to have somebody like that, two parents, in back of you. Now, did the publicity help you? In what way did it actually help you?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, I think so. How do you know?

HAST: Because you still have to produce, of course.

WARENSKJOLD: Of course.

HAST: If you didn't have the voice, it wouldn't have mattered.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes. That's right, that's right. And the same thing also when you're given opportunities. You know, I was given some very good opportunities, but the point is if I didn't produce, the opportunity would mean nothing. That was it. I was ready for those opportunities when they came.

HAST: Absolutely.

WARENSKJOLD: Well, just to give a little background on this sort of thing, not everybody, of course, has to have a publicist.

But at that time there wasn't much-- Nowadays, people make their names on winning big contests, and there were not things

like that. There was only one big contest at that time. When you had something that you wanted to let people know that was on a smaller scale-- For instance, the radio things that I did earlier were only in the eleven western states. And some of those people didn't even hear them, you know. So you had to have publicity to let people know that your name was something. Anyway, maybe it might be interesting to know what it cost to do something like that at that time.

HAST: Yes, it would.

WARENSKJOLD: They charged a yearly fee of the equivalent of \$400 a month, which doesn't seem like anything now, but in those days-- The first one was '48, so this was probably 1949, '50, something like that. For two years we had this [Ettinger] Company here in Los Angeles doing it.

HAST: But do singers do this today?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, I doubt it. I don't think they think of it at all, no.

HAST: Or is it a question of having résumés that you have to shoot all over the place?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. I think there's more of this business of résumés now than there was at that time, too. No, I don't think they think of that as much anymore. I think maybe some do. I think some conductors do. But, you see, at that point,

when I had the publicity agency here in Los Angeles, it was then done on a national scale. When I had the woman in San Francisco it was done in California. She did Los Angeles as well as San Francisco.

HAST: Oh, I see. It was California.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. And so when I had this agency here, it was done nationally, because by that time I was doing national radio shows.

HAST: Of course. Yes.

WARENSKJOLD: So we did that for a couple of years, and--

HAST: I think it must have helped in some ways.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, I think it must have. I mean, everything that you do--for instance, the ads that we took in *Musical America*-- I think we spoke about that a little bit last time.

The first ad that I took was before I was under management, and *Musical America* was the booking magazine at that time for orchestras and opera companies and all of that sort of thing. So when I did go to New York--and I can't remember whether we spoke about this--to get national management, the managers that I went to talk to and sang for were aware of the name because they had seen my page ad in *Musical America*.

HAST: So it certainly was important.

WARENSKJOLD: That was definitely important. That definitely

was important, yes.

HAST: Yes, it made everything come together. I think that's very good.

WARENSKJOLD: So those were things that had to be done at that time.

HAST: Yes.

WARENSKJOLD: Well, now we've gotten past 1948, I think.

[laughter]

HAST: Good! [laughter] So we'll start with your radio shows. Do you want to start with that?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, that's fine. Nineteen forty-nine, that was the first national network radio show. This was the *Harvest of Stars* program.

HAST: And we did very briefly talk about that.

WARENSKJOLD: Did we?

HAST: Yes. With James Melton, right?

WARENSKJOLD: James Melton, right. And did we talk about the fact that when he--? He did his program wherever he was giving recitals around the country. When he came to San Francisco, he inquired about who would be a woman who could appear with him. He always had a guest, a woman artist. [Alfred]

Frankenstein, the critic, recommended me. He heard from the producer of the *Standard Hour*, Adrian Michaelis; he recommended

me. I can't remember if there was anybody else. Oh, NBC [National Broadcasting Company], also, because his program was on NBC. They contacted NBC, and because all of the *Standard Hours* had been on NBC, naturally they recommended me as well.

So I did that first show with him. I didn't do a solo; I did a duet with him. And it's fun, because I have all of the audio--

HAST: With James Melton?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. Oh, yes. I have all of the records of everything I ever did on radio, and I have that first show, too. It was wonderful.

HAST: That's wonderful. They should put that out, you know. Well, not on video, but on CD maybe.

WARENSKJOLD: It's possible. Who knows?

HAST: Yes. I think you should investigate that.

WARENSKJOLD: Anyway, after that, Jim Melton invited me to come down to Los Angeles where he was doing the next week's program. Now, I was not going to be singing with him or-- I don't know why he asked me to come down other than maybe he didn't know who his guest was going to be and maybe it wasn't going to work out and maybe he would have me. I don't know what his reason was, but he had asked me to come down.

So my family and I drove down. I went to the program, of

course, and after the program there was a party given for him at the Beverly Hills Hotel by Fred [G.] Gurley, who was the president of the Santa Fe Railway [Company]. He was a very dear friend of Jim's. This was a dinner party, and I was invited. And, oh, I thought this was simply wonderful, because at my table was Irene Dunne and her husband [Francis J. Griffin] and Jeanette MacDonald and her husband, Gene Raymond.

At my table! [laughter] And I was just young enough and just inexperienced enough to be so impressed by this.

HAST: Oh, but anybody would have been.

WARENSKJOLD: And I never will forget, everybody was telling stories, really funny stories, things that happened with their work. I had heard a story--I can't even tell you what it is now because I have absolutely blotted it out of my mind--of a conductor, a very well-known conductor. Everybody in the music business knew who and what this conductor was. When I had heard it, everybody was laughing uproariously at it.

It didn't dawn on me that the people who were laughing uproariously were all musicians who knew this conductor, and I knew of the conductor, too. Here I was telling this story in a completely different environment with people who really were not that musically attuned. So I told this story, and it got to the punchline, and absolutely nothing happened at

this table of about eight people.

HAST: It fell flat. [laughter]

WARENSKJOLD: Fell absolutely flat. And Irene Dunne--dear, sweet woman--looked over at me and she said, "Yes, dear, I know exactly how that is. I never can remember the punchline either." [laughter] She was trying to make me feel at ease.

HAST: And she made it worse!

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. Oh, dear. Oh, I nearly died! But it was great fun and also interesting, because Fred Gurley, who, as I said, was the president of Santa Fe Railroad, was also very big in the Association of American Railroads, which just happened to be the sponsor of the *Railroad Hour* on radio.

HAST: Oh, there's the connection.

WARENSKJOLD: There's the connection. So he met me there at that party, and Jim Melton made a big point of introducing me and saying who I was. And then, when he heard me-- I went back to New York and I think I did four more shows on the *Harvest of Stars* the rest of that year. Fred Gurley heard me on those shows and came a couple of times to the shows in New York and came backstage to see me. And then it was not too long before I had an inquiry from the advertising agency that was handling the *Railroad Hour* [McCann-Erickson].

They asked me to come and do a *Railroad Hour*. So I know it



was not just Fred Gurley. It was James Melton, who knew Fred Gurley, who really put in a word for me and said, "This gal is going places. You're going to have to have her for your *Railroad Hour*."

HAST: Well, it's always best to get it from the top, isn't it?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, absolutely. Absolutely. So when one of the presidents of their railroad companies says, "I'd like to have you try this gal out--" But, you see, I was given that opportunity to do that first performance on the *Railroad Hour*, and if I had not done a good job-- Now I sound like I'm blowing my own horn here, but I think it's important to know--

HAST: You have to produce. You have to show them you can do it. Otherwise they're not going to keep you on. There's no question about it.

WARENSKJOLD: That's it. Of course, the *Railroad Hour* came a year later, but I was--

HAST: Oh, in 1950.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, 1950, and we can get into that. But just to finish this, the point is that by the time the *Railroad Hour* went off the air--I think it was 1954, '55, something like that--I had done something like eighty-some-odd shows.

HAST: Really?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. So, I mean, they would not have asked me back if I had not--

HAST: Of course not! [laughter]

WARENSKJOLD: If I had not done the job. So that is the thing that is important for any young artist. You cannot just hope to do something; you have to be ready for it. Those opportunities will come, and if you're ready for it, then you go on from there.

HAST: And you have to be dependable as you go along.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, absolutely. Absolutely.

HAST: This is a big problem today, I think, for a lot of people: that you can rely on them to do the job and not just to sit back and say, "Well, I've made it."

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes. So let's see. Where have we gotten in this thing now?

HAST: Well, there's also a first TV appearance with NBC--

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes.

HAST: *The Tales of Hoffmann* [by Jacques Offenbach].

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. The NBC opera was done in New York.

HAST: In 1949.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. And they did it in the studio at Rockefeller Center, in the NBC studios there.

HAST: Really?

WARENSKJOLD: It was rather interesting--

HAST: That's exciting right there.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, it was. They were not at that point really sure of how to handle operatic-type voices on television with microphones. And the director, who was an opera conductor--again, his name has gone out of my head--kept always saying, "Don't project so much. Just let it float out. Don't project." Well, as an opera singer, concert singer, you have to project, you have to use support. You don't always sing fortissimo, but you have to do that. So he kept always saying to us, "Don't project. The microphone is right there." But it isn't the same sound if you're just sort of letting it come out.

HAST: Had you ever used a microphone before?

WARENSKJOLD: On the radio, of course.

HAST: Oh, yes, of course, on the radio shows. WARENSKJOLD:  
The only difference--

HAST: But I just wondered--

WARENSKJOLD: The difference between television, and radio--  
With radio, your microphone is right here, and you can help correct it. If you're coming to a loud high note, you can take a half step backward to help--

HAST: Do you do that, too?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, sure.

HAST: I see. I didn't know that.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. But with the television end of it, the microphone is hanging up over your head, and you personally don't have any control over it. It's controlled by the man in the control booth.

HAST: And that does make a difference, because I know for voice-overs they may adjust the mike. They've done that for me where they move it back--

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, because you have the mike--

HAST: Yes, right.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, right here.

HAST: To make it just right. But you can't do that on television.

WARENSKJOLD: That's right. But you can't do it because it has to be out of the way of the camera.

HAST: But don't they sometimes lower it and raise it? I've seen that--

WARENSKJOLD: Well, they do a little bit, but they have to be so careful not to get it down in the view of the camera. You know, it has to be up high enough to be up there.

HAST: Yes. Do you have to stand immediately underneath it?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, no, no. No, no, no. No.

HAST: No, I didn't think so.

WARENSKJOLD: That's the job of the boom man, you know, to get it wherever you happen to be. But the--

HAST: So that was difficult for you, then, to know just what they wanted?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, I just knew that they had hired me as an opera and concert singer, and I was going to sing my way.

That was all there was to it. And it turned out that it was just fine, because for people who maybe didn't have the control of the voice maybe it would be a little more difficult. But I just used a lot more support and sang with control and still kept the structure up that you have to do when you're singing.

But the thing that was interesting about that was--and that never happened in really any of the other television things that I did--they had two or three different scenes, and the orchestra was off in another room. We never saw the orchestra.

HAST: Yes, I think you mentioned that on the last tape.

WARENSKJOLD: Did I say--?

HAST: Well, we talked very briefly about that. That must be horrendous.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. Oh, it was terrible. It was terrible, because we were hearing the sound, and we were getting a beat

from a conductor who was relaying the beat from the other conductor.

HAST: [laughter] You got it secondhand.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, yes. But we got through it. But those were the early days of opera on television.

HAST: Yes. And as we said, it's very different now when they broadcast from the Met[ropolitan Opera] and so on.

WARENSKJOLD: And that was a very important thing in New York at that time.

HAST: Now, that was a big step for you.

WARENSKJOLD: That was a big step, yes. As a matter of fact, that was helped by the New York representative of this Margaret Ettinger agency, the publicist that I had in Los Angeles. She had a New York office. And the woman who handled her New York office [Ethel Kirsner] was in television, and she worked for CBS [Columbia Broadcasting System] I think. She knew all of the people in connection with that. So when my name was put up for this sort of thing, she went to see some people and put the name in a little bit more. So I think that might have had something to do with my getting that, too. Because, after all, I was a singer from California, you know.

HAST: Yes, and this is New York.

WARENSKJOLD: And this is being done in New York, yes. For people who are right there in New York, their chances of getting something like that were much better than mine were. So that's why I had to have something like that.

HAST: Absolutely. Then in the fall of '49 you also had the Civic [Music Association] concerts.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. That was the first recital for the Civic concerts. Now, that was the organized audience plan I think we spoke of a little earlier, the organized audience plan for National Concert and Artists Corporation.

HAST: Yes, we did talk about that.

WARENSKJOLD: They had some eight to twelve hundred towns throughout the United States and Canada.

HAST: That's amazing.

WARENSKJOLD: And they had representatives going out to all of these towns. It was a big step forward for the music business, because people-- These towns could have series like this and not go broke because they-- Up to that time, until the organized audience plan was started, you had to have the entrepreneur who would sign up artists, bring them there, and have to pay them no matter how many people bought tickets or not. Sometimes they made money, sometimes they lost money. This was taken care of, and it was guaranteed, because they sold the tickets

in advance. Then, with the money that they had sold for these subscriptions, they bought the artists, so there was no losing for anybody and it just worked out beautifully.

HAST: So did this mean you traveled all over the country?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, my, yes. Oh, yes.

HAST: Oh, really?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes.

HAST: Into small towns and big towns.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes. Oh, yes.

HAST: It must have been very different in different areas.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes.

HAST: Or was it that it got to the point where, well, you're traveling and it's another evening?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, it never really got to be just another evening, but there were not that many differences in audiences from town to-- Maybe you could say if you were doing something in New York or even the outskirts of New York, where people went into New York and saw recitals more often as opposed to some small towns where you were the only people they saw.

They were not as aware musically, perhaps, but they were always wonderful audiences. They appreciated so much having something like that come to their town.

HAST: Yes, I would think so. And then they put you up in



hotels?

WARENSKJOLD: They didn't, no.

HAST: Oh, that's right. You mentioned you had to pay for this.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, absolutely. Absolutely.

HAST: And also the way you traveled, you had to pay for that.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. Oh, surely.

HAST: I forgot about that.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. Now, this was handled from the office in New York at Columbia as far as making the arrangements were concerned.

HAST: At least the arrangements were made for you.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, the travel arrangements were made and the hotel reservations. And at that time-- You know, the beginning of it was 1949. We said my first recital for Civic concerts, 1949. That's a long time ago, and yet when I look back to what kind of hotels and motels there were at that time, it's amazing what strides we have made in that length of time, because it is--

HAST: For better? [laughter]

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, indeed, for the better, yes. We had to go to the hotel because motels were not the thing that we have now. Holiday Inns were not thought of in those days; they

were little local motels. So it was usually the hotel in the town. I remember being in a hotel in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho.

It was the only place in town at that time, and I remember that the bathroom, the shower was-- The water came down and went all over the bathroom floor itself. [laughter] There was nothing that held that in. And there was a door into the next room with about three inches at the bottom of it, and a truck driver or a railroad man or something was snoring away in the next room.

HAST: Sounds like an *I Love Lucy* show. [laughter]

WARENSKJOLD: Unbelievable some of the things that we had, yes.

HAST: Dorothy, it just came to mind that what you haven't mentioned at all, up to 1949, is the [World] War [II] years.

Did that affect you in any way at all?

WARENSKJOLD: I was studying.

HAST: Those were the years when you were studying, so you were in-- I mean, you knew what was going on, but it didn't affect you in any way actually?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, it affected me in that my fiancé was killed in the war.

HAST: Oh, you hadn't mentioned that. You never got married, did you?

WARENSKJOLD: No, no.

HAST: But you had a fiancé?

WARENSKJOLD: Originally, he was a dentist, but he was a member of the National Guard. So when the war came along, he became a captain, I think it was, and--

HAST: They drafted him into the army?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, because he was in the National Guard he was evidently called up, you see. And he was called up as a dentist. I've forgotten where he was stationed, but he would come back on weekends, and he would say, "Oh, it's just terrible. The people that I have to work on, they come from some of these places that have never had any dental work done, and I don't know how long I can go on." Well, he was also a flyer; he had flown for years. And he decided that he was going to leave the National Guard and the dental end of it and he was going to go into the [Army] Air Corps. So he went into the air corps, and he became a bomber pilot on a B-17. And in 1943 he was lost over Kiel, Germany.

HAST: Really? Oh, how terrible. You must have been devastated.

WARENSKJOLD: I was devastated, yes, I must say. And it's one of those-- There were a couple of other people after that--

HAST: Well, I'm sure there must have been. [laughter]

WARENSKJOLD: Some years after that, you know. But I was traveling so much of the time that even in the summer I was not home because I was doing the Cincinnati Zoo Opera, or someplace else there were things. So it wasn't that I was only traveling for a certain length of time. Then I would come home and be around with friends for the rest of that time.

HAST: So your career really came first.

WARENSKJOLD: I guess so.

HAST: Or it just worked out that way.

WARENSKJOLD: It just worked out that way.

HAST: Well, you just said that you were also traveling in the summer. I read someplace that in the old days an opera singer could rest for three months in the summer and there wouldn't be anything, and that this is one of the problems today that singers--

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. So many festivals. Yes, it's year-round.

HAST: Well, I'm sorry about the fiancé. I didn't know at all. I just thought I'd ask about the war years. Let's go back again to where we were. [laughter]

WARENSKJOLD: So anyway, we were talking about the first recital for Civic concerts. I remember that particularly. It was

in Vallejo, California, and my mother was playing for me at that time. She was a marvelous accompanist. I still can see that recital. It was the first time that I had ever felt that I was on stage and looking at myself also from the audience and seeing what I was doing from out front. It was the strangest feeling.

HAST: You mean by their reaction? Or that you just visualized yourself?

WARENSKJOLD: I don't know whether it was their reaction or whether it was just my reaction to the whole idea of being in this large--

HAST: Well, that's very interesting. That's another step, in fact, isn't it?

WARENSKJOLD: The first time that had ever happened to me.

I had always just been on stage giving to my audience. But that was the first time that I actually was almost seeing myself performing. I can't explain it any more than that.

HAST: No, I think I understand this. Did you ever practice the stage presence which you teach so well now? Singing certain arias in front of a full-length mirror? Did you ever do anything like that?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, did we not talk in terms of that when I was learning for Micaëla?

HAST: Yes, I think so.

WARENSKJOLD: Didn't I say that I rented a ballet school?  
Didn't I tell you that?

HAST: You rented--?

WARENSKJOLD: I rented a ballet school at night when they were not-- It was a ballet school for children, and their classes were always in the daytime. So I rented a ballet school that was dark at night. You know, the ballet school has mirrors all around the walls. So I rented that.

HAST: Oh, I don't think you did.

WARENSKJOLD: Didn't I do that? Yes, I rented that. This was the year that I knew I was going to be doing Micaëla in San Francisco.

HAST: Yes, right.

WARENSKJOLD: Of course, they had a piano there. My mother [Mildred Stombs Warenskjold] would play the orchestral part on the piano, and no matter where I looked, if here or in front of me or over to the right, I was being seen by this mirror. I could see what moves were good and what moves were not good, and I think I was lucky also in that I had an eye for what was good and what wasn't good.

HAST: You always did.

WARENSKJOLD: I think I must have, and I don't know how that happened. I really don't know how that happened. I did see an awful lot of performances as a child--I was brought up on it, and I think just by--

HAST: Well, you absorbed it all.

WARENSKJOLD: I think I must have.

HAST: So in this performance you saw yourself actually without seeing yourself.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, yes. It was the strangest thing. And I was sort of out of myself and being in the audience and seeing what impression I was making on myself as audience. And it was--

HAST: And what did you think of yourself as you were doing it?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, I think I must have--

HAST: Were you pleased?

WARENSKJOLD: I think I was pleased, yes. And I think that as this was happening I began to get a little more excited and a little more excited about what was happening. And my performance then took on a-- I can't really say. I just remember that that was a big turning point.

HAST: You don't forget that.

WARENSKJOLD: That was a big turning point. That was the very

first Civic concert.

HAST: It's interesting to me, and this is why I will tell my students about these tapes when we finish. What is so interesting is that you're taking the time and you have the patience to tell us all the different steps you went through.

This is what's very hard for young singers to know about and learn, both the singing and the acting. And this is why this is going to be a really good tape to listen to.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes. It isn't just learning how to sing.

HAST: Or just how to act or just how to-- [laughter]

WARENSKJOLD: No, so much more.

HAST: So this concert went extremely well. How many of these recitals were there?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, that first year-- Let's see. I'm looking back here now in my book. I had only about five, I think, that first year.

HAST: Well, that's quite a lot though.

WARENSKJOLD: And the wonderful part of it was-- You see, when I had given recitals-- I'd given a lot of recitals around the San Francisco area. But I would give a recital, and then I'd have to put a whole other program together and give another recital to another place, because--

HAST: Because they're both in the same area.



WARENSKJOLD: In the same area. And sometimes some of the people were at each place.

HAST: So you were really busy studying all the time, weren't you?

WARENSKJOLD: I was busy studying, yes, all of these new things.

But this was the first time that I had a chance to have one program and do it time after time after time.

HAST: Oh, I see.

WARENSKJOLD: See, that is the--

HAST: You could use the same program.

WARENSKJOLD: The same program, yes. You see, this was printed in New York and sent out to the individual towns.

HAST: And you were going to different areas, so that made a difference. Oh, that's fascinating. Do you have recordings of that, also?

WARENSKJOLD: No, not those early ones. Then the very next year it went up to twenty-two recitals.

HAST: Really?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, the very next year. Plus the opera plus the oratorios plus the radio and plus the television. See, I was just looking here. I had twenty-two recitals, two operas in San Francisco-- In 1949, at San Francisco Opera, I did *Tales of Hoffmann*.

HAST: Yes. And then in 1950 you did a concert version of *Der Rosenkavalier* [by Richard Strauss] with the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra, and the conductor was--

WARENSKJOLD: Artur Rodzinski. That was rather interesting because--

HAST: How did you get that?

WARENSKJOLD: That was the role of Sophie that I had wanted to do from the first time that I saw *Der Rosenkavalier*.

HAST: Oh, it's so much fun, yes.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, I just adored it. That was the role that I wanted to coach with Georges Sebastian, you know, when he told me, "No, it has to be Mozart first."

HAST: I remember now, yes.

WARENSKJOLD: So this was a concert version of *Rosenkavalier* with the San Francisco Symphony. Rose Bampton was the Marschallin, and Frances Bible, who was a very well-known Octavian at the New York City Opera at that time. Of course, I was just learning this role. I had just learned it. And because it was a concert version, I thought it was going to be with the score. It's a long, very difficult role, Sophie.

And I had been traveling back and forth to New York for the radio show there and back to Los Angeles and San Francisco.

I would have this book in my lap on the plane, this huge

score of *Rosenkavalier*, working over this, learning it on the plane going back and forth. So as well as I knew it, I felt I was going to be very happy to have this score in front of me.

So I got to the first rehearsal, and here Rose Bampton-- I haven't seen her in years now, but she was a dear, dear woman, and Frances Bible was very nice to work with. They both had done their roles so many times before, they were sitting there with no score in their laps at all.

HAST: Enjoying the flight.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh! And here I was sitting with this big thing. And this friend of mine, Noël Sullivan, from Carmel-- Do you want to change?

HAST: Yes, we'll change the tape.

TAPE NUMBER: V, SIDE TWO

MAY 23, 1992

WARENSKJOLD: This friend of mine, Noël Sullivan from Carmel, whom we spoke about earlier, had brought a beautiful music stand, a really gorgeous rosewood music stand for me to have there, and still, with this gorgeous music stand, I couldn't see myself being the only one with a score on the stage. Oh, I was just feeling so terrible about it. I think we had about two days of rehearsals before the actual performance, so I went back immediately after that first rehearsal and I went over it, over it, and over it with my mother. Then, with the next rehearsal with the orchestra, I tried it without the score and I felt okay about it. So I did it without the score.

HAST: That is so typical of you.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes.

HAST: You have this incredible memory, don't you?

WARENSKJOLD: I guess a musical memory that worked pretty well at that time.

HAST: And discipline. [laughter]

WARENSKJOLD: Yes.

HAST: Lots of discipline.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes. Yes.

HAST: So that was a big success.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. And Artur Rodzinski was--

HAST: What was he like?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, he was a very nice man. I keep saying everybody is nice, but--

HAST: Well, I'm glad to hear it. [laughter]

WARENSKJOLD: There are very few people that I had any problems with at all. [laughter] No, he was very nice, and I think he was impressed--

HAST: And supportive of you.

WARENSKJOLD: Very supportive, and I think he was rather impressed at the fact that I did this without the score at that point, too. I remember going down a couple of years later when he was conducting at the Hollywood Bowl and sending my name backstage afterwards, and he said, "Oh, yes, let her in, let her in. I want to see her."

HAST: How sweet.

WARENSKJOLD: So sweet. I didn't even know whether he'd remember me. So let's see.

HAST: Well, we could go--

WARENSKJOLD: There was one thing back in the San Francisco Opera *Tales of Hoffmann*, the opera that I did in 1949. Just before the curtain came up for the act that I was in--I did

the role of Antonia, which is just the third act--Armando Agnini, who was the stage director, came over to me and made a suggestion. He said, "You know the spot where you go and hit that high note and you expire? Why don't you get close to the settee there and just sing that and just collapse on the settee?" And at that moment, he went offstage and the curtain went up. I didn't even get a chance to think about it or try it or anything like that.

HAST: Just like that, at the last minute, he told you?

WARENSKJOLD: Just like that, at the last second. And then the curtain went up, and this was that. He was just giving me a suggestion, you know, and--

HAST: But you need to think about it.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, I'd liked to have had a chance to think about it. So we got to that point, and I did it.

HAST: Again, Dorothy comes through.

WARENSKJOLD: And he was so pleased. Stage directors are like that. If you take directions and can do things like that, they love it. They just love it.

HAST: Of course.

WARENSKJOLD: It just got in there while I was singing, evidently. I got to that point, and I did it, and it just worked beautifully. Anyway, that was just one little thing.

HAST: Sounds like fun, yes. That's wonderful.

WARENSKJOLD: But, you see, in 1949 and '50 also, while I was doing the opera and the television and the radio, whenever I was in San Francisco I was still doing my church jobs.

HAST: Really?

WARENSKJOLD: I was still singing at Saint--

HAST: How did you have the energy and the time to do that?

[laughter]

WARENSKJOLD: Saint Luke's [Episcopal] Church and Temple Emmanuel. I mean, they were very nice to me. Whenever I had to be out of town, that was fine, and they were willing to take me back when I got back into town. I liked to keep that up, because they were also doing oratorios. I did "The Creation" [by Haydn] at Saint Luke's, and I did--what was it?--a Mendelssohn oratorio, "Elijah," at Temple Emmanuel. Temple Emmanuel was particularly good because they did it with orchestra. We did it just with organ at Saint Luke's, but at least I had that outlet for oratorios, which was good. My voice was good for oratorios.

HAST: Yes, I think so.

WARENSKJOLD: So after about 1950 I just wasn't in town long enough to do it anymore. So that sort of--

HAST: That was their loss, indeed. [laughter]

WARENSKJOLD: [laughter] Yes. Then we get along into 1950--

HAST: March 1950. Is that where we are?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, that was the first *Railroad Hour*.

HAST: Now, that's the important-- [laughter]

WARENSKJOLD: Important, yes. Actually, the first really important radio one was Jim Melton's, because that was the first network radio show.

HAST: Yes, indeed.

WARENSKJOLD: This was also a network radio show. So I did that, and then they had me back for two more in that year.

HAST: So what kind of music did they want?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, during the regular part of the year, they did the ordinary musical comedy things or light operas. They did *Sigmund Romberg* and-- Oh, what was the--? I think I did-- The very first one was *Orange Blossoms*. I can't remember who the composer of that one was. [Victor Herbert] That was the first one I ever did. During the regular part of the year they did these. Then in the summer they did original stories with music. Sometimes they used well-known stories, and then they would use other music and put it together into a little half-hour musical.

HAST: Oh! So you had to rehearse for this with the other people on the show?



WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes, indeed. We did those on Monday night.

We were given the script a couple of days in advance, and then we went in for rehearsal on Sunday at noontime, and we rehearsed until about five thirty, six o'clock. And then we went in at about ten o'clock on Monday, and we went through the rehearsals. Then they started cutting to make sure that they got it down to the half-hour program. Some of those shows--

HAST: It was a half-hour program?

WARENSKJOLD: It was a half-hour program. And they got all of this story and the music and everything in. They're fabulous little things.

HAST: Extraordinary.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. They would take well-known and original stories and then use other music and just put it in, and it became a little musical comedy.

HAST: Do you have any recordings of any of these?

WARENSKJOLD: I've got every one. I have every one I ever did, all eighty-some-odd of them, yes. They're fabulous, they're just fabulous. Of course, this was with Gordon MacRae.

We didn't even talk about that.

HAST: No, we haven't yet.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, yes.

HAST: Oh, yes. Tell us about him.

WARENSKJOLD: This was Gordon MacRae's program. Gordon MacRae--

HAST: Now, he was very young then, wasn't he?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, well, I don't know. I guess he was in his thirties or something like that. But it was about that time when he was doing his movies, when he did *Oklahoma!* [by Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein], and he was quite well-known in movies.

HAST: He was quite popular.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes, very popular on records and in the movies. So this was his program. They always had a woman guest artist, and then they also had actors who could play. Now, I played and spoke my character's lines just as he spoke his. But then there were other characters who were not singing characters. I remember doing *Trilby* one time, and Raymond Burr was in it.

HAST: Oh, yes?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. And William Conrad was in *The Three Musketeers* [by Rudolf Friml]. Oh, all of the well-known people who had done radio shows by that time were called in to do these roles, people who in later years became very famous in TV.

HAST: So what was the atmosphere? Was it fun to work with them?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, it was great fun. It was put on in a studio at Sunset [Boulevard] and Vine [Street], the NBC studios at Sunset and Vine, which is no longer there. And always with an audience. There was an audience of about three hundred people there.

HAST: Did you find it helped to have the audience there to get their reaction?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, absolutely. Oh, yes.

HAST: Those were very different days and more relaxed, isn't that right? Today there'd be a lot more stress to try and--

WARENSKJOLD: Well, I don't know whether they were that relaxed, because everything was live. Nowadays things are taped, and if some--

HAST: And you can redo. You can have retakes.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. If something goes wrong you can stop it and either start it all over again or they can cut it and splice it. All of those things that I did were live. All of the radio things were live; all of the television things were live.

HAST: I know, yes. But it seemed more natural somehow.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, it was. Yes, it was. Because it was going

on, and if there happened to be a mistake--

HAST: So what!

WARENSKJOLD: It was a mistake.

HAST: Exactly. You're human.

WARENSKJOLD: I never will forget one of the shows that I did later, the TV shows with Jim Melton, his *Ford Festival* TV show. He and I were out sitting in the orchestra in one scene, and the cameras were on us, and we did a duet right in the orchestra. Frank Black was the conductor, and at the end he said something to me, and I was supposed to say, "Why, thank you, Frank." And instead of that, I said, "Why, Frank you, thank." [laughter] And Jim went right along. He wasn't even listening evidently to what I said. He went right along with the next line, and I couldn't correct it at that time.

But then we went to see the kinescope a couple of days later, and all of a sudden he heard me say that, and he nearly died.

[laughter] "Why, Frank you, thank."

HAST: But this is what is really fun. Today, of course, they would have a retake on that one.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, dear, yes. Oh, I remember also on some of those *Ford Festival* things where you had to change costumes so quickly. I remember having to get out of a small costume, a period costume, and into an evening gown with my high heels

and all of that. The shoes that went with the dress were the kind that had to be brought around the ankle and put through the loop here. We didn't have time to do that, and I had to make an entrance coming down a staircase. And I was trying to feel-- "Am I going to step on this thing hanging down here?"

Oh, it was frightening, absolutely frightening.

HAST: Yeah, that's dangerous.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. And then I think maybe-- Did I tell you about the *Voice of Firestone* hour, where we had to be in an evening gown in the very beginning for the theme, then we had to be in the same evening gown at the end of the half hour for--

HAST: Where you had the problem changing at the wrong time?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, no, that was in the opera.

HAST: That was in an opera, yes. No, you didn't tell us about that one.

WARENSKJOLD: No, this was-- We had to be back in the same evening dress at the end of the half hour, and in between you had to have several different costumes that you were in and out of. Well, when I got out of my-- And these were my own evening gowns. While I was getting out of it, they were getting me out so quickly, they must have pulled something with the zipper, pulled it off. And I didn't know what had

happened. All the time that I was changing into these other things they were working on this zipper trying to get it. Were they going to get it? They just got it together for me to--

HAST: There's nothing like a stuck zipper, believe me.

[laughter]

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, dear. It was actually off the-- So they told me about it afterwards. Luckily I didn't have to worry about that while I was out on stage. [laughter]

HAST: So you wore your own costumes through all of this at this time? We talked about this before, but--

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. In the opera, with very few exceptions, I wore my own costumes. The one exception I told you about, I think, was the *Carmen* in Chicago.

HAST: But for this you had your own evening dresses or costumes or whatever.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, my own evening gowns. But costumes, no.

HAST: No costumes.

WARENSKJOLD: No. They did the costumes. Because it was especially for television, they had to-- It was black and white, of course, for most of that time. I did one color [broadcast] on the *Firestone* hour, but the rest of this was black and white. So the designer had to plan colors to show

up well on black and white. They couldn't be dependent upon anything that we had, so all of the costumes were theirs. And not just things that they had and put together; they were designed for it and made for me.

HAST: Really? Oh, that's wonderful. But now, for the evening dresses, they didn't tell you what colors to wear?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, they wanted to know what I had. I told them what colors I had, and I never had any problem with that.

HAST: No, because, as you said, black and white, it was a different way of reproducing it.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. But most of my evening gowns were thought of for the stage and with the idea of line and all of that, so it seemed to go well on television, as well.

HAST: I'm sure it did. All right. So then, in the summer-- Do you want to tell us about that, in 1950?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes. That was again going back to the *Harvest of Stars*. I became Jim Melton's replacement on the *Harvest of Stars* radio show when he took a six-week vacation.

HAST: Oh, you took over the whole show?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, yes. He had another man come on, too.

Had to have a woman and a man, but I was the one who took it over for him, which really was rather nice, to be given that responsibility. And then later in 1950, we go back to

the San Francisco Opera again. I did *The Magic Flute* [by Mozart] there, Pamina, and I did *The Marriage of Figaro* [by Mozart]. I did the role of Cherubino in that.

HAST: Oh, yes. That's a pants role, yes.

WARENSKJOLD: It was interesting, because the role that I coached with Georges Sebastian was Susanna. But the work that I did with him on that was so good, it got me going with any Mozart role that I was to do after that.

HAST: But Cherubino-- That is really-- Did you have any trouble--?

WARENSKJOLD: Absolutely none. No. No. No.

HAST: You didn't? It just came naturally.

WARENSKJOLD: Absolutely. It came naturally. Because, for one thing, I was thinking a lot about how a young man stands--and he was a young man, Cherubino.

HAST: Oh, yes. He was quite young.

WARENSKJOLD: How does he stand? How does the ideal young man stand? I looked around at people walking on the streets and standing in restaurants, and I thought, "No, that can't be. He's the age, but he's not standing like a Cherubino."

So what I had to do was go back to the old cartoons, comic strips, *Prince Valiant*. Do you remember that? And so I went to the library and I looked at a lot of these *Prince Valiant*



things. And this was my Cherubino, Prince Valiant. The way they drew him when he stood, when he walked, how he would use his legs going up-- Putting his leg on one stair and standing and turning back like this. This is the ideal, and everything that you do on stage has to be done from the ideal of that character. Whether it is a character like a Cherubino or whether it's an ideal of evil or an ideal of ugliness even, but the ideal of whatever that character has to be. I couldn't find it in daily looking at people. I had to go for this ideal to something like that.

HAST: It's also a different age, isn't it? And different clothes that people wear?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, of course.

HAST: I think it has a lot to do with that.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, I think so, yes. Anyway, it was rather interesting. In the first performance I did, of course, my mother and father [William E. Warenskjold] were there. My father, I told you, was not a musician at all, but he was a real music lover. And I would always try out my programs on him, and I think I said that he would say, "I don't think that song's going to go over." And he was right usually. But when he saw this first performance of Cherubino, he was

talking to me about it afterwards, and he said, "You know, there's one little spot in there. When you do the next performance, why don't you just try this?" If you remember, in this one spot Cherubino is hiding in the chair, and they put this cover over him.

HAST: Yes, they cover him up.

WARENSKJOLD: He said, "When you're hidden there, why don't you just pull back the cover a little bit when something is going on over on the other side of the stage and sort of look like this and pretend that you're going to sneeze." And I did. I did [gasps as if about to sneeze], and then I pulled the cover like this. I must say, the audience loved it, and I'm sure everybody on stage didn't know what was happening.

[laughter] And the funny part of it is, it wasn't more than a year ago I talked to somebody whom I had never met before, and they said, "I was in the audience at a performance of your Cherubino. Oh, I loved that part where you started to sneeze." Can you imagine? Can you imagine, all these years?

So this was my father's idea. Tremendous, just tremendous.

HAST: What fun, indeed.

WARENSKJOLD: So let's see, now, where are we?

HAST: Now, what made you change management in 1951? What brought that about?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, I was really very happy with NCAC [National Concert and Artists Corporation], and they were doing really quite well with me--as I said, from about five recitals the first year to twenty-two the second year. They were doing pretty well. I was given the one-year contract with an option for a second year. Well, they took the option for the second year, and then, evidently, they just didn't get off the dime to take an option for a third year. I don't know what it was. But in the meantime, James Melton, who had been by that time so important in my career--I was doing so many things with him-- I don't think I was doing the television, but I was doing his radio show. He said, "If we're going to be working this closely together, you can't be with NCAC. You've got to be with my management."

HAST: Oh, I see. Well, that does make sense.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes. It was the logical step.

HAST: I just wondered if you had some altercation with them.

WARENSKJOLD: No, I had no altercation except when I finally told them. When they had not taken up that option, I finally told them that I was switching over to Columbia. Marks Levine was very angry, and I can't blame him really, because he did give me the contract at that time, and I was very grateful

for it. But these things happen, you know.

HAST: There comes a time when one has to make a change, and it can be very painful.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, yes. It was. I felt really embarrassed about it, and yet there wasn't anything I could do, because Jim said, "If we're going to be doing this, you've got to be with my management. That's all there is to it, period."

So I couldn't say to him, "No, I feel bound to stay with them." So we had to do it. Luckily it came at a time when they forgot that they should continue with this. So I left them. As bad as I felt about it, I did leave them. So I then went with his management, which was at that time Lawrence Evans and [Kurt] Weinhold, the Evans and Weinhold division of Columbia Artists Management. A year or so later, Lawrence Evans retired and it became just Kurt Weinhold. We got along just beautifully, and he was very interested in my career.

As a matter of fact, he had been in the auditorium when I sang for Coppicus in Carnegie Hall. Remember?

HAST: Yes.

WARENSKJOLD: I sang for Coppicus, and Kurt Weinhold had been there, also. He told me he had been there at that time.

HAST: But that sounds like a good change.

WARENSKJOLD: So from that point on, the majority of my recitals

were done for the Community Concert Association.

HAST: Now, what is this *Ford Festival* that you had mentioned?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes. Well, just one more little thing, a little story in connection with when I was still doing the Civic concerts. I did a concert in Kirksville, Missouri, and as I told you, when I was doing the Civic concerts, my mother was my accompanist. This happened to be a year when my father was touring with us, and we were driving.

HAST: He would go with you, also?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, at this point, when my mother was doing it. So we got to Kirksville. Of course, she didn't use the name Warenskjold at that time as an accompanist; she used her maiden name, Mildred Stombs, because we didn't want to look like a family affair. Anyway, in this little hotel in town, not quite like the one in Coeur D'Alene, there had to be separate rooms for my father and mother, because this was Mildred Stombs and my father, and we couldn't--

HAST: You couldn't have a scandal. [laughter]

WARENSKJOLD: We couldn't have a scandal, no. [laughter]  
But we often kidded about it, because in the middle of the night, either one way or the other, my mother would go down to my father's room or my father would go to my mother's room.  
At the party afterwards, I don't think they had any inkling

of it, but something happened, and somebody said something, and my mother said something, and I said, "Oh, Mother!"

[laughter] You know, in that typical way that a daughter will do. All of a sudden everything stopped and everybody looked over like that, and then, of course, it had to come out. [laughter] They got a big kick out of it. But up to that point she had been Mildred Stombs, and my father had just been traveling with us. [laughter]

HAST: That was the end of that secret.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, absolutely, at least in that town.

[laughter]

HAST: That's very funny.

WARENSKJOLD: Then you were asking about the *Ford Festival*.

This was the television--

HAST: Yes. That's in '51.

WARENSKJOLD: This was an hour[-long] program on television, and, again, live. And he--

HAST: Now, where was this?

WARENSKJOLD: This was, of course, in New York, a network TV show. I was engaged as the regular soprano soloist over the year, plus--it was a little over a year that it was on--I did twenty-seven appearances.

HAST: Twenty-seven. That's incredible.

WARENSKJOLD: Twenty-seven appearances during that time, yes.

And that was a fascinating thing, because it was a variety show type of thing, a musical variety show.

HAST: And how long was it at a time?

WARENSKJOLD: It was an hour show.

HAST: An hour. That was a full hour.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, it was a full hour. So--

HAST: And what kind of--?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, it had to have a comedian; they had skits, and sometimes I was in the skits; and they had famous actors or actresses who happened to be in town. I have a book here that I'll have to show you with all the pictures of the famous people whom I met and worked with. It was an exciting time, it really was, just an exciting time.

It was a very important show at that time. And yet, just to show the difference in the world, I was having my hair done in New York, and the man who was doing my hair said, "And what do you do?"

And I said, "Well, I sing."

"Where do you sing?"

And I said, "Well, I do a television show."

"Oh, you do a television show?"

"Yes."

"What is it?"

And I said, "*The Ford Festival*."

"*The Ford Festival*. Hmm." He had never even seen it.

And I said, "Yes, it's James Melton's."

"James Melton? Who's he?" And James Melton's name was just so well-known.

HAST: But I think things are different today where people on every level watch television so much. Don't you think so?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, I think perhaps. I think this man probably watched television--

HAST: Maybe he didn't own a television?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, I think he watched television, but he just didn't watch that kind of--

HAST: Maybe just sports.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. I don't know if they even had that much sports on at that time. But I used to think, "Oh, dear. People don't know my name. Here I've been on television, I've been on radio, and they don't know my name." But when somebody didn't know James Melton's name, I felt fine. I felt fine! [laughter]

HAST: I can understand that. Yes, indeed. So actually you were an actress the whole time. I can't understand



why the Met[ropolitan Opera] didn't snap you up at that time.

Is that because you didn't just concentrate on operatic roles?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, no. Well, I didn't concentrate on them, of course. But no, I auditioned for the Met, and they got to the point of talking with my manager. They had certain roles they wanted me to do, some of which I would like to have done.

But the point was, they said, "She's got to be here twenty-two weeks during this main part of our season. She has to be here."

And my manager spoke to me and said, "Twenty-two weeks. You know, that's right in the midst of your recital tours. That's going to cancel your recital tours. They won't let you away for that sort of thing." So in a certain way, they [the management company] were thinking of themselves and their commissions, because the money that you make in opera is not that great, excepting if you're a [Luciano] Pavarotti or something like that. Nowadays it's quite large; in those days it wasn't that large. You do just a few roles, and you're only paid for those roles. You're not paid by the week or anything like that when you're a soloist. So they would have been out of my commissions, you know. When I was doing thirty-five and forty recitals in a year, they would get the differential on the Community concert, which was a certain percentage. Then the manager got his 15 percent on top of that, you see. So they would be out that.

Now, I really wasn't thinking along that line. I was just thinking, "Yes, I do enjoy doing recitals, and that's going to cut that out, and I don't know whether it's just for the one year or whether it would be for two years or whatever." In retrospect, I wish I had done it.

HAST: I was going to ask you this. Have you ever regretted this decision?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, I really did. I regretted that. I should have been willing to do that. And I think if I were just completely left on my own to make the decision I probably would have said, "No, I want to do it. I want to do the Met." But there was a little bit of this on the side of the manager saying, "Well, you know, you're going

to be there for twenty-two weeks. You're not going to be out doing recitals," this sort of thing. And it really didn't get through to me that they were thinking a little bit of themselves, too. It really didn't get through to me.

HAST: One learns these things the hard way.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. So that's the only thing that I have been sorry that I didn't do.

HAST: Yes. That's very interesting. On the other hand, you did have a wonderful career, including the other things that

you did.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. Yes, I did. But there's always that one thing, and--

HAST: I just wondered about the Met, just how this really happened.

WARENSKJOLD: And the point is that everybody thinks you did the Met. Most people, when I'm introduced anywhere, they just say the Metropolitan Opera soprano. I've gotten to the point where I don't try to correct people anymore, because it makes them feel bad that they've made a mistake, and it really doesn't make that much difference. If you get into something like we're talking about now, you have to talk about it.

HAST: Yes, indeed. I wanted to understand just how you decided this and how it came about, because I'm sure they would have snapped you up--

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, they wanted me to do Pamina, and, of course, Micaëla. But Pamina was one of the major ones. But no, that's the only decision that I feel should have been made otherwise.

Also, just a little bit further along in that same year that I was doing the *Ford Festival*, I was doing orchestra engagements all over the country and at the same time I was doing recitals, too. But the one that really stands out was

the San Francisco Symphony [Orchestra], the Mahler second symphony [Symphony no. 2 in C Minor, *Resurrection*] that I did with Bruno Walter conducting.

HAST: Oh, that must have been wonderful.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh! That was the only time I ever worked with Bruno Walter. But there was something about that man, something about the expression in his face when he was conducting Mahler.

Now, I don't know whether he had that expression when he was conducting Beethoven or anything else, but with Mahler-- There was a point in it when I was singing where if it went on one note further I would have broken down completely just by watching the expression in his face with what he was getting out of the music. It was unbelievable! And I'm sure the whole orchestra felt the same way, just absolutely came alive with this music. Of course, I think Mahler was his favorite composer.

But that was a wonderful experience.

HAST: Well, I heard he was an extraordinary man.

WARENSKJOLD: Absolutely, yes.

HAST: Oh, that's very exciting.

WARENSKJOLD: As long as we're talking about 1951, all the time that I was doing this *Ford Festival* in New York I was also doing the *Railroad Hour* in Los Angeles at the same time.

So I was going back and forth every single week. I was doing

the *Railroad Hour* on Monday night in Los Angeles, and I was doing the *Ford Festival* on Thursday night in New York. Every week.

HAST: So did you suffer from jet lag at all?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, I think so. But, you know, you got to the point where you got used to it.

HAST: Nowadays you wouldn't even have had those two or three days in between, right?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, we had to, because we had to have rehearsals.

HAST: So actually you didn't have time in between, because you had rehearsals.

WARENSKJOLD: No, that's right. You see, we taped the radio show. It was live, but we taped it, because it went live to New York on the radio show. It was on at eight o'clock in New York, but we taped it at five o'clock in Los Angeles.

It was taped for playing at eight o'clock in Los Angeles, three hours later. By that time I was already on the plane for New York. And I got in, had breakfast-- Because it took much longer in those days. You had to land in Chicago, and then you had to go on in the same plane--

HAST: Oh, in the same plane, though.

WARENSKJOLD: But then, from Chicago to New York, we had breakfast. Then I would get out, take the taxi in, and get

into my room probably around ten thirty Tuesday morning, and then have to be there for Tuesday afternoon rehearsal for the television show.

HAST: Now, am I imagining this, or are seats on planes more uncomfortable now and narrower than they used to be? Because I also remember those years flying back and forth, and I don't remember being so uncomfortable as I am now when I fly.

WARENSKJOLD: Well, I made a point-- I mean, I still had to pay for it myself. This was not taken care of. But because I was having to do this, I flew first class.

HAST: Well, that probably solved that problem.

WARENSKJOLD: I had to.

HAST: Because you really can relax much better, and the food is better and all of that.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, I had to get some sleep.

HAST: But today to travel tourist class is absolutely ghastly! It's really absolutely awful.

WARENSKJOLD: I guess so. I don't do as much plane travel. I really traveled so much back and forth by plane that I got to the point where I thought, "It's about time. I'm running on borrowed time." I really don't care to fly that much anymore, and particularly now. I don't think they're taking care of the planes that well, and the planes are a little too old.

HAST: Yes. And you don't get the service you used to get.

WARENSKJOLD: No, that's right. I don't care. I can do without the service and even if they're a little late or something like that, but I want to know that that plane is modern and kept up well, and you can't be sure of that anymore.

HAST: No, you can't.

WARENSKJOLD: They're all fighting bankruptcy at this point.

HAST: And it isn't just of course in this country, it's all over the world. We don't know how they're taking care of any of those planes. Yes, I know, it's a real problem.

So anyway, you were back and forth, and that was exhausting.

Now, until 1954 you did the *Railroad Hour*.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, that went on until it went off the air in 1954. Later that year, in September, the beginning of the San Francisco Opera, I did *Der Rosenkavalier*. I did *Sophie*.

HAST: Which year are we talking about now?

WARENSKJOLD: This was 1951 still.

HAST: Oh, I see.

WARENSKJOLD: And *Carmen* again, also. Then in June of 1951 was my first *Voice of Firestone*. This is the television show.

HAST: I don't know how you did all those things simultaneously.

WARENSKJOLD: Well, I was just looking. I have a little, book

here that has all my list of dates, when I did them, and I was just looking through them before you came, and sometimes I wonder myself. I'd have to be in Idaho for a recital, and I'd have to go back to New York for a *Voice of Firestone* and then back for the next concert in either Montana or Idaho or something like that.

HAST: So the *Firestone* program actually was canceled for a while and then was brought back again? Is that what you said?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, some years later. I've forgotten when that finally went off. I think, was it 1958?

HAST: 'Fifty-eight I think you said.

WARENSKJOLD: In '58 it went off, yes. So I think it was going straight through until the last year. They canceled it because they felt that they weren't getting enough bang for their bucks, as they call it. There were not that many people listening, and it was getting too expensive to put it on.

HAST: Oh, that is what happened. Because I remember it was a wonderful program.

WARENSKJOLD: And then people wrote in, and they had to bring it back for another year.

HAST: Oh, that's how that worked. And you were on it for that year?



WARENSKJOLD: I was on until the end, yes.

HAST: And you enjoyed doing that?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, very much. It was an enjoyable program,  
and--

HAST: And you did this in New York, also?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, it was in New York.

HAST: So you lived in New York most of the time.

WARENSKJOLD: No, I really didn't. I was--

HAST: It was the commuting back and forth--

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, yes.

HAST: Well, thank you, Dorothy.

TAPE NUMBER: VI, SIDE ONE

JUNE 3, 1992

HAST: Now, you said you had some anecdotes about some of your trips back and forth across the country.

WARENSKJOLD: Well, some of the traveling, which I think also shows what was going on in that era. We did have planes.

[laughter] I was late enough for planes.

HAST: I remember you said you always went first class, which sounds really right to me.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. Well, I had to during that time when I was going back and forth, because it was just too tiring, you know. I had to get some sleep on the plane. Anyway, one of the trips when we were driving-- And as I remember, this might even have been the time when we went to New York to try for national management, my mother [Mildred Stombs Warenskjold] and father [William E. Warenskjold] and I. We drove. You know, the roads were not as they are today.

HAST: You didn't have all the freeways.

WARENSKJOLD: No, no. We had a number of good four-lane highways, but that was it. That was it.

HAST: So how long did it take from coast to coast?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, I can't really say, because before we got into Albuquerque we got into an accident. We heard afterwards that this was done a lot of times to people. The

poor Indians in the area would see a car, a big car (and we were traveling in a navy blue Lincoln) and they would somehow get in control with somebody up ahead, and all of a sudden--we couldn't see it at all--they herded some horses out onto the road right in front of us. My father was driving. He slammed on the brakes and couldn't-- We hit one of the horses. Well, our windshield was smashed completely and the front of the car was all smashed in. And these two Indians came down. They headed right down. They couldn't speak much, or at least we didn't think they could speak much English, but they were right there to say, "You pay me! You pay me! You pay me!"

That sort of thing.

HAST: For the horse.

WARENSKJOLD: For the horse, yes. Well, there was another man who was driving behind us, and he happened to see what happened. So he came over and he chimed in and said, "No, it wasn't your fault at all. I saw exactly what happened."

Somehow, anyway, they backed down.

HAST: Oh, they did?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, they backed down, yes, and we limped into Albuquerque.

HAST: You weren't hurt? Nobody was hurt?

WARENSKJOLD: We weren't hurt, but my father had had a heart attack a few years earlier, and my mother and I were so afraid

when something like this happened. But no, we were not hurt, but we limped in because the windshield was absolutely crashed.

There were pieces of glass coming through as we went, so we couldn't drive.

HAST: How terribly dangerous!

WARENSKJOLD: We had to put on our glasses; we had only dark glasses and were driving at night.

HAST: This was at night?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, this was at night. Yes, yes. It happened actually just when it was getting dark, so it was hard to see anyway, and then this horse thing. Well, the man followed us into Albuquerque and we reported it to the police, and the police told us, "They do this all the time out there. You were lucky you had somebody following you that was able to see what had happened, because they've gotten by with that and people have had to pay them for the horse that they say was hurt." It limped off or something; the horse was not hurt, luckily. I don't know; he was still standing when we left.

HAST: Yes, but he must have been hurt.

WARENSKJOLD: I'm sure he must have been hurt, yes, to do the damage that he did to our car. Anyway, we were in Albuquerque for, I think, three days getting the car fixed. So that took us a little longer.

Well, to get to the part of the story that was interesting, we got back to Greensboro, North Carolina, and then we were going to go north from there. And we got in at night because, as usual, as I still am today, I can't get up early in the morning. My family always had to wait for me to get going in the morning, so every time we went in the evening to put up it was always dark.

So we got into Greensboro not knowing that there was a big furniture convention on in town, and there wasn't a hotel that we could get rooms in. We called all of the motels; nothing was available. So we got the telephone book and went down looking for rooms to rent. Those were even taken. We finally got one, and we all said, "Quick, let's get there before somebody else gets it."

So we got there, and it looked like a nice, big house. We went up--or my father went up, I think--to the door, and this very nice-looking woman came to the door. She said yes, and then she looked out and saw my mother and me out in the car, and everything supposedly was all right. So there were two rooms for us still. She said, "You can park around the back of the house. They can come in the front way, and I'll show them where they are. You drive the car around in back, and I'll meet you out in back and show you where you can park."

So we took our luggage up to these two rooms, and my father

drove the car around.

They didn't tell me anything about this, but when my father came back to my mother's room, he said, "Do you know where we are?"

HAST: I can guess. [laughter]

WARENSKJOLD: [laughter] We were in, evidently, one of those-- I guess it must have been a very nice house, because she seemed like a very nice--

HAST: A nice house of ill repute.

WARENSKJOLD: [laughter] She was a very nice-looking woman.

HAST: Yes, yes. Isn't that funny!

WARENSKJOLD: But anyway, I went to bed and I slept soundly.

[laughter] My mother and father were in the other room, and they told me afterwards that they kept hearing people coming up the stairs and going into different rooms. They didn't get a bit of sleep that night.

HAST: But nobody knocked at your door.

WARENSKJOLD: Nobody knocked at my door, of course.

HAST: Don't say "of course." [laughter] She did take you in, you know.

WARENSKJOLD: But at least they knew who we were, you know.

We were not anyone looking for what she was. But my father got me up earlier than usual the next morning, and I couldn't

understand why I was being gotten up at this-- I think at seven o'clock in the morning he came to get me up. [laughter]

He said, "I think we're getting out of here. Pack up, dear, we're getting out of here." Only later did I understand what it was.

HAST: Oh, that's wonderful!

WARENSKJOLD: But it was really funny.

Then, again, talking in terms of the fact that there were no or very few freeways at that time, another trip-- And we were doing this by car, also. This was when my man accompanist was playing for me, Rollin Jensen. My father also was with us on this trip. We were going straight to New York, and then I was going on with my accompanist from there, and my mother and father were going on-- So we were driving with them to New York.

When we got--again, these are four-lane highways-- through the center of Rolla, Missouri, we were pulled over by a policeman.

I think I was driving at the time, and I had not been speeding because we were sort of in close to the town itself. They pulled us over. Two policemen came up with guns ready like this, and they looked at us and they said, "Will you get out, please?" [laughter] We all four of us got out, and they asked for identification and all of this sort of thing. We didn't know what was going on. They didn't say anything about the

fact that we had done anything wrong as far as driving was concerned. Finally my father said, "What's going on?" And when they realized we were not the ones they were looking for, they told us that there had been a Brink's robbery a couple of states away. Everybody had been alerted that the people who had done this Brink's robbery were in a big blue car, and there were four people in the car and one blond woman.

My mother was fairly light brown at that time, so--

HAST: You fit the description.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, absolutely. So they laughed about it, and we laughed, too. It was funny after--

HAST: They laughed?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, they did when they realized that we were not who they were looking for, when they told us what the thing was.

HAST: Well, that was a relief, I'd say.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, my gracious, yes.

HAST: How terrifying. Well, today this would be much worse, wouldn't it?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, I think so. Yes, yes. It would be frightening.

HAST: But I remember those days. Wasn't it actually more comfortable driving along those highways?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes. You got a chance to see the country



at that time.

HAST: Yes. Plus more relaxed and--

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. But it was difficult driving,  
because--

HAST: It's a long way.

WARENSKJOLD: And there were times when it was just a three-lane highway. You got behind a truck or something like that and you had to wait for that middle lane to make sure that you could pass. So it was slower. It was awfully nice being able to see what the country was like.

HAST: And motorists, I think, were a little more polite than today. Is that true?

WARENSKJOLD: I don't know.

HAST: No?

WARENSKJOLD: I really don't find--

HAST: Well, like the man who followed you in after that accident.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. Well, that's true, yes.

HAST: Today you'd even have to worry about that, wouldn't you?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, you would. Yes, you would. I think now when we have all of these freeways there isn't the connection between motorists that there was perhaps in those days.

HAST: Yes, this is what I find.

WARENSKJOLD: I think so. Yes.

HAST: So that's interesting. But it must have taken you several days, anyway.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes. Yes, of course.

HAST: About five days or six days?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, no. I think it really took more than that.

HAST: Oh, really?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes.

HAST: Well, even stopping overnight, it look longer than five or six days?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, traveling more than 450 miles a day is--

HAST: It's really hard.

WARENSKJOLD: And when I didn't get up early enough in the morning, it made it really difficult, too. [laughter] I'll tell you just one other little thing. I had a concert in Winner, South Dakota. This is about 110 miles south of Pierre.

This was a recital. I was flying at that time, and I flew from New York into Pierre, South Dakota. The woman who handled the transportation in the New York office--she made all the reservations and that sort of thing--looked at Pierre on the map, and she looked down at Winner, and there was no train, no flight in, and the time didn't work out with any bus schedule or anything like that. So she said, "Taxi. Taxi 110 miles."

[laughter] The people in the town were so nice, and they

realized the difficulty, so some of the people from the town came up and met us in Pierre and drove us down these 110 miles.

It was so sweet. I don't really know whether they were planning to drive us back or whether after we did the concert they were through with us. They were such nice people usually.

Anyway, we were planning to go back up by bus. Overnight the snows came, and we were absolutely snowed in, and no buses were running. What were we to do? The only thing that was going through was the postal van. You know, "Come snow, sleet," or whatever it is, the postman is always going to go. [laughter]

So some of the people in the town said, "I know he is still going, and maybe we can make a contact with him." So they did, and yes, he was going to try it. There were no seats; they put chairs in the back for my accompanist and me to sit on.

HAST: It's like a frontier existence.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, absolutely. And, of course, he had to go very slowly. All the way up there we were slipping and sliding.

There were cars off the road here, and there was a jack-knifed truck off here. A hundred and ten miles of this sort of thing.

But he did, he got us up to Pierre. By the time we got there, the plane was cleared to land and we were able to go on.

But, oh!

HAST: You don't forget experiences like that.

WARENSKJOLD: Absolutely not. No, I had another few things like that with flying and trains that just didn't match the time that I needed them. I finally decided that it was just too difficult. I thought, "I'm going to do it by car," because--

HAST: Really, it was easier to do it by car.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, it was much easier, because some of the connections, if you could do it by car, were so much closer.

For instance, one of the things we did in Dillon, Montana-- And this was quite far down from Butte, something like the Winner situation. We were able to fly into Butte, and then we came down by bus to Dillon, Montana. [It was] another one when the snows came the night of the concert and the next day no buses were traveling. The son of the people who owned the hotel in town said, "I will drive you up to Butte to make the connections." Very nice people. So he did. He drove us up there.

We got up in time for the plane. They said, "Sorry, no planes are landing. They can't; the weather is so bad.

I think you'll have to go by train." And they said, "Oh, no. Now, wait a second, we think it's coming in. So why don't you go to the hotel and rest, and then we'll give you a call.

The one that we think will be coming in will probably be going somewhere around eight o'clock in the morning." Well,

this was the night before by that time, so I'd have a night's sleep.

So we got to the hotel. I got undressed, got my face all off and grease all over, you know, feeling so good. The telephone rang. A plane was coming through. "Please get to the airport in forty-five minutes." Up, back on with the lipstick and everything, repacked, out to the airport. By the time we got out there, they said, "It's closed in again.

You can't go." So I said "Well, this is enough of this," and I found out when the next train was. That was hours and hours away, but we got that train. We had to go from Butte way over to Minneapolis, because I was going down to Texas.

We had to go clear across east to Minneapolis and then fly from Minneapolis down to Houston and then from Houston fly into Victoria, Texas.

HAST: But, Dorothy, you couldn't have driven, either, in the snow.

WARENSKJOLD: You'd be surprised.

HAST: Really?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. You'd be surprised how it really does open up on the roads more than it does for something--

HAST: They clear the roads?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, they clear the roads. And if it gets bad, you can pull off and put up for a few hours, and usually it

was clearing up.

HAST: But how do you make connections between concerts if it's closed? This would be difficult today, don't you think?

WARENSKJOLD: No, I don't think so, I really don't--I mean if you drive. It's still difficult if you depend upon trains.

HAST: No, driving is what I mean, because--

WARENSKJOLD: No, after those experiences I drove the whole rest of my tour and never had a bit of a problem.

HAST: Is that right?

WARENSKJOLD: Never had a bit of a problem.

HAST: You still like to drive, don't you?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, I love to drive, yes.

HAST: I've noticed that. Well, I used to love it; I don't anymore.

WARENSKJOLD: Let me just finish this one little thing. We finally got down-- This happened on a Friday in Montana.

I was to do a Monday concert down in Victoria, Texas. We got into Houston at three o'clock in the morning on Monday morning. I rushed to a hotel and nothing was open. I had to do my hair and then try to get a few hours' sleep before getting the plane. I had hotel reservations in Victoria, and with all of this difficulty of traveling, it didn't dawn on me that I should have called ahead and told them that I couldn't get there but I would be arriving on Monday. When

we got there our reservations were gone. There were no rooms for us. No room in the inn. [laughter] There were no rooms for us. They tried all over to get us something and couldn't.

I don't know what was going on in town. But the dear, sweet people of Victoria, the president of the local community concert association and his wife said, "Will you come to our house?"

They had a room for my accompanist and one for me. I was not aware of what the situation was for them: these two people slept in a single rollaway bed tucked away someplace in some other room. I didn't realize what we were doing to put them out.

HAST: How nice of them, yes. What I don't understand, Dorothy, is I thought all the arrangements were always made ahead of time by the management.

WARENSKJOLD: Well, they are.

HAST: But how can there not be a hotel room? Or how can there not be--?

WARENSKJOLD: There was, but we didn't arrive when we were expected.

HAST: Oh, I see. That was the problem.

WARENSKJOLD: The rooms were given away.

HAST: And they didn't hold it for you.

WARENSKJOLD: They didn't hold it. They said, "We would have held it if you had told us." But with all of that, I just

didn't think. It was my fault, of course, but I just didn't think of it.

Anyway, after all of that I said, "Never again. I'm going to do it by car." From that point on-- And I think I told you the last time, didn't I? When I was driving and I got up into Saint Paul and we were going over into-- Was it South Dakota or North Dakota? I've forgotten what it was now. It was snowing again, and I thought it was too dangerous to drive. So I said, "I'm going to do it by train." Didn't I tell you that the last time? And my accompanist said, "No, I'm going to fly." By that time I just didn't want to fly in that kind of weather either. So he flew, got in there with no problem whatsoever. The representative who was traveling with me and I went by train, and we had a train derailment.

HAST: Oh, I don't think you've mentioned that.

WARENSKJOLD: Didn't I tell you that one?

HAST: No. [laughter]

WARENSKJOLD: Yes! We had a train derailment. Four cars absolutely went off, and the only thing that held us from going way down in the gully was that the coupling was strong enough for those cars. We were actually at a forty-five-degree angle. The woman in the next compartment came out and asked the porter, "Are we off the tracks?" And he said, "Just a



little bit." [laughter] I know I was telling that story to somebody. I can't remember. I thought maybe it might have been you.

HAST: No, I don't think we have it on tape.

WARENSKJOLD: So even at that point I wasn't sure about driving.

As we went on the train, I looked out, and there was no snow at all on the actual street, so I could have driven with no problem whatsoever.

HAST: Well, you're completely independent that way, which is--

WARENSKJOLD: Yes! For me it was wonderful, because when I had to make planes and trains I had to do it on their schedule, and the schedule always was earlier than I wanted in the morning.

When I was driving, I could get up at my leisure, drive a little later at night. [laughter]

HAST: What is it about singers that they don't like to get up in the morning?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, I don't know. I guess a lot of us are that way. But this is just something with me. I'm constitutionally incapable of getting up in the morning.

HAST: No, it isn't just you, Dorothy. Believe me, it's not just you. So, at any rate, shall we go on to the Hollywood Bowl?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, please.

HAST: You said you had to tell us about that.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes, in the Hollywood Bowl. That was-- When was that?

HAST: 'Fifty-two, around then?

WARENSKJOLD: That was in, I guess, '52. Yes. My first Hollywood Bowl [performance] was opera night, and this was with Gaetano Merola, of course. He used to come down from San Francisco and do an opera night. This was different from what people see there now. You know, of course, that they've cut down a portion of the hill for parking, which they had to do. But in doing that they changed the acoustics, and now everything has to be miked. We did our opera night with no mikes.

HAST: Is that right?

WARENSKJOLD: No mikes.

HAST: Because that's a vast area to cover.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, it's a vast area, but--

HAST: And outdoors!

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, outdoors. But it was so beautifully arranged. There was a little hill on this side, and, of course, the hill on this side--

HAST: I remember that, yes.

WARENSKJOLD: --and the acoustics were just fine. Of course, it was different in those days, too. People's ears were perhaps

different; they were more attuned to a live-sounding voice.

Now you hear people going by in cars with the decibels up to who knows--

HAST: Well, airplanes fly overhead. I've been at the Bowl when--

WARENSKJOLD: Well, they try awfully hard, and they did at that time. They put those cross lights up to say "Do not fly across this." But every once in a while somebody does do it, yes. But anyway, this was opera night with Jan Peerce and Igor Gorin. Do you remember that name? He was a wonderful baritone. We did the whole second act of [*La Traviata* [by Verdi] with Peerce and Gorin, and we did scenes from *Rigoletto* [by Verdi] and all of that.

HAST: How wonderful.

WARENSKJOLD: It was.

HAST: And no mikes at all.

WARENSKJOLD: No mikes.

HAST: And it carried a long way?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. Oh, yes, right up to the very last [row].

HAST: That is so interesting, because I just learned something.

I don't want to go into that because this is your story. But to get back to the volume of the voice, the trained opera voice that you have and people like [Luciano] Pavarotti and others, did you know that the rock stars today do double takes

to make the voice stronger? Double track or even triple track if they need it. I thought of you immediately.

WARENSKJOLD: You mean it's done at the same time so then they can just build it up?

HAST: They have to synchronize it. In other words, you're singing a part, and they say, "Okay, let's take it this far; it's fine." You know, they do lots of takes. Then they say, "Now, let's do a double track," and if the voice still doesn't sound strong enough they do a third track. Since I've had this experience, I admire people like you so much more, because your voice is your voice, and you don't have to cheat. Isn't that extraordinary? You're out there in the Hollywood Bowl reaching all those people without a mike.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, and with this large orchestra, too. HAST:

Well, that's another thing. With an orchestra you really--

WARENSKJOLD: But, you see, that's the thing. If you know how to sing-- It's not just how large the voice is. It isn't that. It's how projecting the voice is. Mine was a pure lyric soprano voice. I wasn't a dramatic soprano or anything like that.

HAST: Yes, we talked about that. But you still had to have the quality of the voice, though.

WARENSKJOLD: The quality, of course. But, you see--

HAST: Then the training and the support, yes.

WARENSKJOLD: There was the training and the breath support that gets that projecting tone out there, and projecting even though I was singing at times a pianissimo over the orchestra.

HAST: That is the extraordinary thing.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. And this is the difference. Most people think of pianissimo as singing half-voice, and it's not.

Half-voice does not project. When you sing pianissimo, you have to use three times the amount of support that you do for forte, because the forte has to use the breath to get that, anyway. But in order to keep the structure up and keep this projecting, you have to use three times the amount of breath support.

HAST: How does this affect diction? When you're singing pianissimo, does it still have to be clear--?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, if you were singing pianissimo and singing half-voice, it would affect the diction. But if you are singing pianissimo [begins whispering] where you are almost stage whispering to that last row in the balcony, you see how it clears up the diction. But when everything is relaxed and you sing half-voice, then the mouth is too relaxed as well.

HAST: That is so interesting. This is what singers have to learn, of course.

As we started talking about acoustics, can I ask you something? I'd heard that the best acoustics as to opera

houses and concert places are in Venice, Bologna, and Covent Garden. Is that true? Is that still true? Do you need different acoustics for orchestras and for vocal recitals? There must be a difference in that, also.

WARENSKJOLD: I really haven't thought of that too much.

HAST: But we talked about the stadium the last time, and you said the acoustics were so good. But how do you determine--? Do you have to determine that ahead of time? Who determines that with the acoustics?

WARENSKJOLD: Truthfully, Sybil, if you sing well, it is going to go out into the auditorium. Now, there is a difference from auditorium to auditorium, of course. A lot of it depends upon how the stage is set up. And this is one of the things that I always did when I was doing recitals: I always insisted on getting into the auditorium at about three o'clock in the afternoon of the concert and setting the piano where I wanted it, looked at where the scrim was, what the drops were above me, so that I did not get behind that, where the sound is going to get caught up in that and not go out. I always wanted the piano put in a certain place so that when I looked up there was nothing out in front of me to keep the sound from going out.

HAST: This is if you did a solo performance.

WARENSKJOLD: A solo recital.

HAST: But what happens with an opera?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, opera stages-- I mean, you do have to know that when you are singing way upstage. Sometimes your stage directors get you up there for some reason, but you have to make do with the few times that they insist that you start back there. And then, little by little, you just have to get yourself a little more downstage and make sure.

Then also you have to know how to relate to your characters on the stage. Some young singers who are just starting out have not been really grilled on this idea of how you sing when you are relating to a character on stage.

HAST: That is very difficult, isn't it?

WARENSKJOLD: Most of them when they are relating to the character on the stage face the character and sing across stage, and the sound doesn't project out to the audience. Whereas if they face three-quarters of the way to the character it gives the audience the idea that you are relating to this character, but you can sing still out to the audience, and then back and forth and then out again. And it does project.

So you have to think in terms of all things like that.

HAST: Yes, indeed. Well, the stage director also should help with that.

To get back to the Hollywood Bowl, which was so different in those days, around 1952, we said--

WARENSKJOLD: Yes.

HAST: What kind of performances were you involved with at the Bowl?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, at the Bowl I did another opera night. Mr. Merola did one a year, an opera night. I did two of those with him. We also did a concert version of *Carmen* [by Bizet].

Ian Popper conducted, and I did a number of [Richard] Rodgers and [Oscar] Hammerstein's or Jerome Kern's those nights. Johnny Green was the conductor one time, and I've forgotten who some of the other conductors were.

HAST: And there were always big audiences, weren't there?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. We did use mikes for those nights. It was only the opera night that we didn't use mikes.

HAST: Oh, really? That's very interesting.

WARENSKJOLD: They were filled houses at the time. I've just looked at what we have coming up this year at the Bowl. I think there's only one thing that has a voice in it at all, and it's a very small, small portion of it. I love orchestra, and I love instruments, too. I love hearing a violin concerto and a piano concerto. But I do think that when you have a whole summer we could have one night of some voices.

HAST: Oh, I agree with you. Absolutely.

WARENSKJOLD: I really do. And I think the audience wants it, too. I really do.



HAST: I was here in '46 to '48, I suppose, and I did go to the Hollywood Bowl then, and also I came back again in the sixties. I remember the thing that shocked me was that people are eating during those concerts. That always struck me as being disrespectful or something.

WARENSKJOLD: Well, no, the eating most of the time is--

HAST: Why is that part of it?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, that's part of being out-of-doors. But really the eating is mostly out of the way by the time the concert starts.

HAST: It doesn't disturb the people on the stage.

WARENSKJOLD: Well, they're not really eating during the concert. It's almost all over. You know, they set up the tables in the boxes--

HAST: It's like a picnic before--

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, they set up the--

HAST: Especially in the boxes, you see, that's what I remember.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. But, I mean, that's set up before, and they have people come by to take away all of the remainder before the concert starts.

HAST: Before the concert.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. You can still have coffee there, and every once in a while we used to hear a cork popping. [laughter]  
But that's part of singing in the out-of-doors.

HAST: Oh, all right. This is why I'm asking you how you felt about that. I'm glad to hear it. [laughter]

So did you do any other operas during this time?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, operas?

HAST: In '52.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, '52. Let me see.

HAST: You said there were some that--

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, in '52, in San Francisco, I did *Gianni Schicchi* [by Puccini], the part of Lauretta, and [*Der Rosenkavalier* [by Richard Strauss]]. I think this was my first staged *Rosenkavalier*. We talked last time of the concert version. And then this was the time that I did my very first *La Bohème* [by Puccini], with [Ferruccio] Tagliavini. You remember that name. Now, you know, I'm probably a little shorter now than I was at that time, but I was about five [feet] six and three-quarter [inches] then, and I think he was probably five [feet] four [inches].

HAST: That makes it difficult. No heels for sure. [laughter]

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. Well, I had to, because it's very difficult to look like anything, look like a woman, a lady, on the stage in flat shoes. Very difficult. But I remember I had worked with a drama coach here in Los Angeles, quite a well-known woman at that time, Eda Edson, and we worked on the character of Mimi [from *La Bohème*] --not moves or anything but just making

the character come to life. When I told her who my Rodolpho was going to be and how short he was, she said, "Don't let it bother you at all, dear. You just look at him and pretend that he is six [feet] three [inches]."

HAST: What a charming way to put that. I was just going to ask you how you deal with that.

WARENSKJOLD: Well, it worked. It really worked.

HAST: But you don't look over his head, right? Do you do this actually facing him?

WARENSKJOLD: No. Your head is a tiny bit down and your eyes go up rather than standing up this way and looking down at him. It can be done. And I must admit, when we were in close proximity with his arm around me--of course I had a long dress on, so it couldn't be seen--I did scrunch down my knees a little bit. [laughter] I must admit I did that. But I was scared to death to work with him.

HAST: What was he like?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, to me he was dear and very, very helpful. But I had remembered a couple of years before that time when he had done a performance with Bidú Sayão, and I was in the audience, of course. Everything that Sayão did, I was always there. What's the opera with "*Una furtiva lagrima*"? [*L'Elisir d'amore* by Gaetano Donizetti] Anyway, that's the big aria in the opera. Of course, Sayão had an aria too, but it wasn't

as well-known as his. Well, he did his aria, and-- We haven't even spoken how in those days they had claques. They paid a claque.

HAST: Oh, really?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. And particularly the Italians, because they did that in Italy. I don't know whether they still do.

HAST: Oh, please do talk about that.

WARENSKJOLD: Every Italian singer who came to San Francisco paid a claque. He had his people strewn around the house out there. When he finished "*Una furtiva lagrima*"--and he did it beautifully, I must say--the regular audience applause started, and then this claque was along with it. When the normal applause started to go down, the claque would still keep going. And where he started back, saying, "Oh, no, not for me," all of a sudden he'd take two steps forward again, and the applause would come up again. Then the minute he got the applause going, he would sort of back away, "Oh, dear, not for me." And the minute it started down again, he would come forward, and the applause would-- So he did this time after time.

HAST: So he had them stationed in the audience.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, he had them stationed there, but he was working them, too, by this going back and then coming forward.

HAST: How fascinating. So how many were in the claque?

WARENSKJOLD: That I don't really know. You paid one person who was the head of the clique, and he got all of the rest of the people for it.

HAST: Did they sit together? Or were they distributed throughout the audience?

WARENSKJOLD: No, it was in different places in the house.

Most of them were in the back in the standing section, because they didn't buy tickets for them. Most of them were standees.

And Maestro Merola had made a rule that there were to be no encores. This went on and it went on and it went on, and finally the conductor after five minutes of this--I've forgotten who it was in the pit [Paul Breisach]--looked up to Mr. Merola's box, box A, and shrugged his shoulders. First of all, Merola sat like this, you know, wouldn't pay any attention.

As it kept going on and going on, finally he realized that something was going to have to be done, so he nodded. This was the first time, the only time that I know of, that there was a repeat of the aria. Well, anyway--

HAST: So there was an encore.

WARENSKJOLD: It was an encore of "*Una furtiva lagrima*." Then, the thing that sort of worried me about working with him was that-- After he finished there was the normal applause and he didn't milk it anymore after that. Then Bidú Sayão came

on, he went off, and she did her aria. Here she's waiting offstage to come on while he's going through all of this business.

Now she comes out and does her aria, and over the applause, as the applause starts to die down, he comes onstage, and they have to start the thing going. So he cut her applause.

And I thought, "Oh, my gosh!"

HAST: Stealing the scene.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, absolutely. I mean, to do that with her, I thought, "My gracious. He got by with that with her. What is he going to do with me? I have no clout whatsoever."

[laughter] And instead of that, he was the sweetest, most helpful person to work with.

HAST: How very interesting. Well, you were so beautiful, and Italianos like beautiful women. [laughter]

WARENSKJOLD: No, but he made such wonderful suggestions, and he was so helpful in many ways. He really did help. So it worked out marvelously.

HAST: I'm glad to hear that. That's a wonderful story.

TAPE NUMBER: VI, SIDE TWO

JUNE 3, 1992

WARENSKJOLD: You remember we talked about my changing managements from NCAC [National Concert and Artists Corporation] to Columbia [Artists Management]. When I started planning for my recitals for [the] Community Concert [Association]--which is the organized audience plan for Columbia, just as Civic Music [Association] was for NCAC--we decided-- My mother thought so, too. You would have thought that she would have rather gone on playing for me, but we talked it over with my new management and said that I thought I should have a man accompanying me from this point on.

HAST: Very interesting.

WARENSKJOLD: At that point that was a little more usual. Nowadays there are quite a number of woman accompanists, but we thought it was probably just-- Even though my mother wasn't my mother on the program--

HAST: I know. Officially she wasn't.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, officially she wasn't. It still seemed to a lot of people more professional to have a man accompanist. So I wanted to make sure that I was going to have someone who was going to work the way I wanted to work and do what I wanted to do and really make music and not just be an accompanist.

HAST: Well, that brings up a whole other thing: how do you find an accompanist like that?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, we can talk about that. Well, my mother knew a number of the piano teachers around in the Oakland and Piedmont area. She contacted a number of them and spoke about what we were looking for. One of them said, "Yes, I have a young man I think you would be delighted with.

Technically he can handle anything. He's very young, so you will have to tell him what you want." And he was. He was nineteen years old.

HAST: Nineteen!

WARENSKJOLD: Nineteen. And I took him out of college. He was at UC [University of California] Berkeley, and I took him out of college, because these tours were right in the center-- We'd start usually at the end of September or October.

He was gone for a good portion for the-- Well, he had to stay out for the whole year. Anyway, he came over to play for us, and sure enough, he technically could handle anything that we put in front of him. He had also a sensitivity. Even though he had not worked a lot with voices, he had a sensitivity, and he loved the voice. He loved opera in the first place.

HAST: Well, that's very important.

WARENSKJOLD: Very important, yes. Most pianists don't think anything of the voice, but he did. He had that. So we asked



him if he would do it, and he said, "Oh, yes!" He would be delighted; he'd be thrilled to pieces to do this. So we worked through the summer on the program, worked very hard at it--

HAST: Now, which program was this?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, this was my first Community [Concert Association] concert.

HAST: So you worked with him. What was his name? WARENSKJOLD:

Rollin Jensen. As a matter of fact, he is on one of the latest records of mine that was-- We'll talk about that later, but these were taken from some of my Community recitals. Anyway, we worked throughout the summer, and then I had to go to New York, because I was doing guest appearances on *Voice of Firestone* all during this. It just kept going on each year. We've forgotten that. We think I do that once and that's it. No.

I was continuing to do that and also the *Railroad Hour*. So I had to be in New York before the tour started. The tour started in Borger, Texas--I never will forget it--on October 8. This was 1951. We're going back a year now. So he flew from Berkeley and met me in Borger, Texas, and we were at a hotel there. The hotels at that time were usually very cooperative, and whenever it was possible they'd always have a room with a piano.

Sometimes the pianos were just terrible.

HAST: Oh, really?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes. You know, for their meetings and everything. But anyway, they had a room--

HAST: Oh, you mean downstairs. You don't mean--

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, no, no, no. Yes, of course, I mean one of their main banquet rooms. I mean, it was not a Hilton [hotel] or anything; it was just *the* hotel in Borger, Texas, at that time. So they made this room available for us at one o'clock in the afternoon. Well, now, that for me was just about the right time to get started. [laughter]

HAST: I thought you preferred three o'clock. [laughter]

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. Well, yes, three is better, but at that time we had to get this done. So we met at one o'clock, and we went straight through. I'm such a worker, and I concentrate so much on it, that it just gets by me. The time goes. And he was so young that he didn't dare say to me, "Can we take a five-minute break?" [laughter] So we kept working and working and working from one o'clock until finally I said, "Well, I'm a little hungry. How about you?" And it was seven o'clock. So we worked from one straight through to seven.

HAST: Poor thing! [laughter]

WARENSKJOLD: Luckily he wasn't a smoker. He didn't have to stop and break to go out for a smoke or anything like that. Nor, of course, was I. So we broke for dinner, and we had about an hour and a half for dinner, and we got back to it

at eight thirty, and we were going until ten thirty that night.

Again, two more hours of this.

HAST: So how did this work in a business way? Did you have to pay him by the hour or by the day or--?

WARENSKJOLD: No, no, no. He was paid for the concerts that he did, and I paid for his transportation. And--

HAST: So then rehearsals were--

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, that was part. And that is what it is still today. [tape recorder off] This amount of practice that we had to do was because he was so new at it, and I was really teaching him how to become an accompanist. After that he was an excellent accompanist. Today it still works that way.

You pay your accompanist for the concerts that they do, and they give you two times usually to work through the program.

HAST: Oh, they do?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. Oh, yes. But now most people are picking up somebody for one concert, and they pick somebody who is good and knows the repertoire, and it's just a matter of getting together, knowing what you want to do, that sort of thing.

So it doesn't take more--

HAST: But it's best to have your own accompanist.

WARENSKJOLD: Well, it was impossible for me to do anything else when I was doing three concerts a week, usually, sometimes two concerts a week. But the traveling in between-- I had

no time, and I couldn't worry about whether this accompanist was going to work or not. It had to be done with my own accompanist.

HAST: Can you talk about this relationship which is so important between the singer and the accompanist, the sensitivity you talked about before, and that the accompanist, in other words, doesn't give his own performance by doing brilliantly as a musician? Is this something that you can almost not put into words? Or is it a question of working together for some time?

WARENSKJOLD: No. Well, if you have somebody who is an accompanist, an assisting artist-- I mean, you hate even to use the word "accompanist" because that seems to be so secondary.

And I have never believed that the pianist is secondary in a concert. If you run across somebody who is merely an accompanist, then you're not really making music. This is somebody who's following the singer. I think there are some singers who want that, but I never did. I wanted to make music so that not only when I was singing but when he was playing his little in-betweens and his prelude and his postlude and interlude that he was making the same kind of music that I was and that we were going in the same direction. Not that he was doing something on his own when he was playing and then he was just accompanying me over here. No, you have to get together mentally and musically on what you're trying

to accomplish with each song.

That's what's so fascinating about a recital, is that each song that you do is completely separate. You have to establish the mood. It either grows with what you're saying poetically or it sets a picture, but each one of them is different.

We haven't talked too much about what else goes into a recital besides just knowing the music. Now we're talking in terms of the interpretation and how it has to be together with the pianist, but you have to be able to do the same thing with the way you present yourself, your body. You cannot just stand there with your arms down at your sides no matter how beautifully you sing. It cannot be done. The audience at that point almost has to close their eyes to listen to the beauty of what you're doing because your body is not mirroring what you're saying. This is so important. This is what was a big part of my recitals always.

HAST: And this is what you teach so well now, and we're going to get into that, because it is so important. But then the applause is really for both of you, isn't it? What is the etiquette involved as far as the singer is concerned?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, it is a singing recital, first of all.

And the applause in between-- Of course, you realize that when you're doing these Community concerts, you have an entirely different audience than you would have when you're on a campus

or in Town Hall in New York or something like that, where you have musicians who really know. When we were doing these recitals, we had a lot of the musicians in the town, of course, but we had a lot of husbands that came along with wives who didn't want to be there. Not only did we have to plan the program a little bit with that in mind, but we expected that there was going to be applause between every song. Not as it is here, where songs by one composer are done without-- You didn't have to put it on the program, "No applause between songs," as sometimes they do.

HAST: Well, that's a very interesting point. How do you know when to applaud and when not to applaud?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, that's what it is. Music by the same composer-- If you do a whole group of Schubert, you do not applaud until the end of the group.

HAST: Right. And I think that probably helps the singer also because--

WARENSKJOLD: No, it really doesn't.

HAST: It doesn't?

WARENSKJOLD: No. Truthfully--

HAST: Oh, tell me.

WARENSKJOLD: Unless it's a cycle. If it's a cycle, then you have to carry that mood and what is happening.

HAST: Well, this is what I was thinking, that you have to--

WARENSKJOLD: No, but I'm not talking about cycles; I'm just talking of individual songs now. And believe me, it is much easier for the singer if there is the applause between, because then you can break the mood completely. That song is over, and in between songs you become yourself when you acknowledge-- It's not a big bow to the audience, but it's just an acknowledgment of the applause. Then you get yourself ready and in the mood for the next song, and then you start again. It's much easier than to come to an end on one song and then have no applause and have to break that mood and start the next mood without some help from the audience. You see what I mean?

HAST: I see. I was wrong on that. I thought the concentration would be easier.

WARENSKJOLD: No. The concentration, of course, is much easier in a cycle where it--the story or mood or whatever--follows from song to song. Then, if there is a break, it's very hard. But what were we talking about in connection--?

HAST: We were talking about the pianist, and I was asking you what you do when it comes to the applause. Do you beckon to him or--?

WARENSKJOLD: When you're in a town where they are going to be applauding between, no, you do not do anything with the accompanist at all. You do scarcely very much yourself, but you do have to acknowledge a little bit, you know, by a bit

of a smile and maybe just the head down a little bit. Because you don't want to tell your audience, "No. Oh, oh, oh, you shouldn't do that. You shouldn't applaud." You don't want to do that. But at the end of the group, you always want to get your accompanist up from the bench. This is another thing that I teach in my classes on stage presentation [The Art of Vocal and Stage Presentation], how you do that.

HAST: How do you? Do you do it with your hand or with your head or--?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, it is done both ways. If the accompanist has done something that is very difficult so that the audience can really recognize how difficult that was, you turn around; you never just stand straight on to the audience and then put your arm out like this as most people try to do. You have to turn your body to the accompanist and the arm comes out this way. The minute the accompanist gets up, your arm comes down and you turn back to the audience, and he's waiting there, and then the two of you bow together. This is up to the accompanist to wait for that moment when the two of you bow together. In order just to get him up, instead of making a big thing with the arm out, all you have to do is just, again, turn your body to him and smile. And he gets up, and you do the same thing. You turn back to the audience and the two of you bow again.



HAST: Now, on television programs like the *Tonight Show*, I've seen singers with big names who will sing classical music, an operatic aria or something, and usually bring their own accompanist. Then some of them barely acknowledge the accompanist and simply walk straight out to the television host.

WARENSKJOLD: That's not very nice.

HAST: I don't think that's nice. But how could you do it when there is so little time once the artist has finished? How should he or she acknowledge the accompanist?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, I think it depends on how the stage is set up. If you're close to the piano, there's no reason in the world--

HAST: Well, usually they're right next to the piano.

WARENSKJOLD: If it's done that way there's no reason in the world why you couldn't just reach over and grab the hand and do this. Yes. But another thing, talking about television and how you relate to audiences, doesn't it drive you crazy also on something like the [Johnny] Carson show--no longer the Carson show [laughter]--when a guest, singer or actress or actor, whatever it is, comes out, the audience is out there applauding, and they come right out and go over to the host and shake his hand? And they go to the man who's sitting over here and they shake his hand, and then they go and sit down.

Only then maybe they'll turn out to the audience. But to me, when they are announced, they come through the curtains, there is applause out there, why can't they come out and just bow to the audience first?

HAST: With a nice smile, yes.

WARENSKJOLD: And then go over to the host? It would be so much better.

HAST: I thought of that, also.

WARENSKJOLD: That bothers me so. Well, it just seems like bad manners to say-- And I grant you, it is difficult, because in those studios the audience is really quite far removed. You've got so many of these cameras and people running around, scurrying around between you and the audience, that you have to think ahead.

HAST: So you probably can't even see the audience.

WARENSKJOLD: You probably can't, but you can hear it, and you know there's an audience out there.

HAST: Well, the other way I find distressing, and I'd like your opinion, is that if you have a singer that is maybe a popular singer or an actor who's a popular actor, the audience screams. I find this very offensive, don't you?

WARENSKJOLD: I know. That we have to live with. That, I'm afraid, we have to live with.

HAST: It's just a different way of applauding, I suppose.

[laughter]

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. Yes.

HAST: But enough of the *Tonight Show* here. Let's get back to your other things. Are we ready for 1953? Because that was a very serious period in your life.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, it was. In the summer of 1953-- They have in San Francisco a place called Stern Grove, which is a beautiful outdoor concert place. The orchestra plays there, and the opera usually does a concert version of something. Each year Mr. [Gaetano] Merola used to do a program in August or something like that for Stern Grove, and I did a number of them with him. This time I was not on that program--I wasn't in town at the time--but in the middle of the actual performance, Mr. Merola passed away. He just dropped down and died immediately.

HAST: But what a wonderful way to go for a musician.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, isn't it? Yes.

HAST: He was doing what he loved to do.

WARENSKJOLD: Absolutely, yes.

HAST: But it must have been a terrible shock for the--

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, for the orchestra, for the players, and--

HAST: And the audience, of course.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes.

HAST: But it's really ideal when you think about it, right?

WARENSKJOLD: Isn't it, though? Yes, really dying with your

boots on, as it were.

HAST: Yes, exactly.

WARENSKJOLD: I think he had had a bad heart for a number of years, and I know he was bothered by arthritis so terribly in his arms--this is terrible for a conductor--the shoulders, that part of his arms, because he used to have to conduct with his arms down like this. He couldn't get his arms up where a conductor really wants to have them.

HAST: Oh, of course. But conductors--isn't this true--live to a ripe old age because of all the exercise. [laughter] And they're usually in fairly good health.

WARENSKJOLD: That's right.

HAST: So it's unusual, isn't it, for a conductor to have arthritis.

WARENSKJOLD: Well, you have to realize that he conducted--

HAST: How old was he, actually?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, I guess he was in his eighties.

HAST: Oh, he was in his eighties.

WARENSKJOLD: Probably eighty-one, eighty-- I don't know.

Maybe he wasn't quite that old. He could have been younger.

He could have been younger, yes.

HAST: But that was a big shock for you.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes, because he was the one who really got me started in opera. I adored that man. I really did. I just

adored him, and I felt that he was interested in my career.

I really did. He was giving me things each year that added more to what I could do. It really was a shock. And things were never quite the same for me after that in San Francisco.

Of course, Kurt Adler became a very successful general director, but he-- At the time that I was there, he came as the chorus director. Kurt Adler. He was a marvelous chorus director.

HAST: I remember him, yes.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, he was a marvelous chorus director. Then he got away from that and was Mr. Merola's assistant for a number of years. He really did a lot for Mr. Merola, taking things off of his shoulders and helping him. So the logical thing when this happened so suddenly was for Kurt Adler to take over on an interim basis. And I did a number of things there afterwards. I've forgotten what my last--

HAST: Did you get along with him?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes, I got along with him beautifully. I always called him Kurt because he was Kurt Adler the chorus director when I went there, and we all who were there at that time called him Kurt. A year or so after that I began to have the feeling that-- And after calling him Kurt for those years I couldn't get back to saying Maestro Adler or something like that. I couldn't get back to that.

HAST: Did he expect that?

WARENSKJOLD: I had the feeling that maybe he might not have expected it from me, but I had the feeling that he always thought that those of us who were there at that time always knew him as a chorus director and that he was always fighting for the prestige as this. I may be entirely wrong, but I don't think so. I just had that feeling so strongly. And I thought that he respected my singing, and I did do some things there for the next year. That year was already planned by Mr. Merola, and the year after that some things had already been planned. So I was in on those, anyway.

Then a couple of things happened a few years after that. A French opera [*Faust*] by Gounod that I thought really was ideal for me and should have been given to me he didn't give to me; he gave it to an Italian.

HAST: Oh, dear. [laughter]

WARENSKJOLD: And I was beginning to get a little miffed at it and contracts and all of that. I know we're getting this down on tape, and it's going to be on paper--

HAST: No, that's quite all right. [laughter]

WARENSKJOLD: But with Mr. Merola, he said, "You're going to be doing such and such an opera next year," and you were doing that opera. You, of course, had a contract--I think we might have spoken about this--but if he once said it, you were going to do it. The contract came later. He never--

HAST: You could trust him.

WARENSKJOLD: Absolutely. Absolutely. Some of the management people thought he was terrible to work with because they had a hard time pinning him down to saying--

HAST: I was trying to remember what I've heard about him, that he was difficult, but I can't remember what.

WARENSKJOLD: He was difficult for the managers because they wanted to pin him down to this person and this person and this person. He didn't want to be pinned down until he had his season planned and he knew what he was going to be doing. I can see how they would be really upset about that, but once he said he was going to do it or use that person, he did. He was hard to pin down, but once he said yes, you did it. And that was not the case with Kurt Adler. You were told that "Yes, of course you'll be doing such and such a thing next year." When it came right down to it, no. No. It never happened with me, but there were times when even people had contracts and he got out of contracts in that way. But anyway, that was just one of those things. So I went on for a few years after that.

HAST: He became the head of the San Francisco Opera [Company], right?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. It was just an interim basis at first, and then he-- But he did a good job. He really did. The opera

grew and became even more important, if that's possible, under his management. So I can't take that away from him. It was just in a personality way that it was difficult.

HAST: But you had another very serious thing happen in 1953.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, 1953. Yes, yes. Well, this was during the opera season, and that year I did *Werther* [by Jules Massenet].

I did the role of Sophie. And, oh, that was just not for me at all. Well, this is another little thing I must tell you.

Giulietta Simionato, the very well-known mezzo at that time, came to do the role of Charlotte in *Werther*, and I was to be her younger sister, Sophie. Well, we got to the first rehearsal, and--

HAST: That's a fun role isn't it, Sophie?

WARENSKJOLD: Sophie, yes. Yes, it was a fun role. But I got to the first rehearsal, as did Simionato-- And she didn't speak very much English. She was about five [feet] two [inches], maybe stretching it five [feet] two and a half [inches], and she walked in, and-- I told you I was five [feet] six and three-quarters [inches] at that time.

HAST: And you were the little sister! [laughter]

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. She looked at me, and when we were introduced she said, "My little sister!" [laughter] And I felt the same way, really.

HAST: Oh, how funny.



WARENSKJOLD: But it really was a very nice performance. Cesare Valletti was Werther, and he really did a beautiful job of it. It was a nice performance. And the conductor, the Italian whose name I can't remember now--I can probably find it if you're interested-- [Tullio Serafin] It was a nice performance, but I always felt--and maybe it had something to do with that--  
HAST: Difference in height.

WARENSKJOLD: That difference in height, yes. Perhaps if I had done it again with somebody else who was a little more my height, maybe I wouldn't have that feeling about it. But it's never been one of my favorite roles. Anyway, I did that and I did *Carmen* [by Bizet] again, and then my first *Turandot* [by Puccini]. I did Liù in *Turandot*. This, then, was my very first *Turandot*, and my family was coming up for that. They had seen so many of my *Carmens*, they didn't think they needed to come up for that, but they really wanted to see the *Turandot*.

So my father and my mother-- We were already living in the Los Angeles area by that time. We had moved down from--

HAST: When did you move down?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, actually, just about that time, 1952. They moved down.

HAST: And which area?

WARENSKJOLD: Encino.

HAST: I see.

WARENSKJOLD: Encino. We bought the house. Actually, I was going to buy a small place down here, because it was during that time when I was going back and forth from New York to Los Angeles. I was spending all of my time here and I never got home at all. So they came down one time, and they said, "Well, as long as you're going to be spending so much time, let's look for a place." So I found what I thought was a wonderful little place. I was going to sell the big house and just live in the guest house, and they said, "Oh, that would be a shame to break that up. Let's buy the thing and--" So we bought the place in Encino. It was a little over an acre, and it was just wonderful. This was before the freeway, so no smog. It was just lovely. All the places around were all acre-type things.

So we were living here at the time, so they drove up for my performance. This was going to be a Sunday afternoon performance, so they drove up on Saturday and got in by Saturday evening. They got started earlier than I usually did.

[laughter] I had dinner with them, and then I went back to my hotel. I stayed at the Huntington Hotel. Then, I guess it was about nine thirty, I got a call. My father had had a heart attack and was-- "Please come quickly." So I grabbed a cab and got down to their hotel, and they were taking him out in an ambulance at that time. My mother and I both went

in the ambulance to this emergency hospital. We waited around for a couple of hours, and nobody thought to come out to tell us that he had passed away. I finally--

HAST: They kept you waiting for two hours without telling you?

WARENSKJOLD: Two hours, yes. So I finally couldn't stand it. I went around and tried to find the people, and they said, "Oh, I'm terribly sorry, yes," and told me he had passed away. You can imagine what kind of a shock this was.

HAST: Tremendous. But he did not suffer at the end.

WARENSKJOLD: No. I don't think he came back to consciousness.

HAST: Well, you were so close to him.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes. Yes.

HAST: And your parents were so close. So that is something beautiful to remember always, isn't it?

WARENSKJOLD: So what to do? All I could think was, "I have a performance." I called Mr. Adler and I told him, and he of course said how sorry he was. I said, "Is it possible to get Licia Albanese?" She had done the first performance of it. I said, "Is it possible to get her to do that performance?"

And he said, "I will try." So he contacted her and she said, "Oh, I'm terribly sorry to hear about that. It's a terrible thing, but I can't do it because I'm doing *La Traviata* two nights later, and I just can't. It's just too much for me

to do it." So he called me back, and he said, "She can't do it. Will you be up to it?" So I said, "Well, I'll have to be. I'll have to be."

HAST: Extraordinary. You did it? You really did it?

WARENSKJOLD: I did it. I did it. And I can't remember anything about it right now excepting how helpful Italo Tajo was to me. He was playing the part of the father of the tenor--I've forgotten what the name is now [Timur]--and he really helped me all over the stage even though he's supposed to be blind.

I'm supposed to be leading him, but he-- I was, I guess--

HAST: He gave you that support you needed.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, yes, yes. I got through it vocally, and at the very-- You know, she does three very difficult arias in that opera, and the last one she does she-- Oh, I know what it was. It was the first one, I think, where she falls down sobbing. I must say, I held myself together until that moment, and when I fell down, I was crying. I was sobbing. Between that and the next thing that I had to sing, I pulled myself together again and got through it.

HAST: That is extraordinary, because it goes against everything that you teach, that you must not get so involved in your part that you actually--

WARENSKJOLD: But I wasn't. I wasn't involved in my part.

HAST: Aha. I see.

WARENSKJOLD: No. I was crying simply because I couldn't help myself at that point.

HAST: Which is totally normal under the circumstances.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. I hadn't--

HAST: But that you could recover from this and get up and continue is amazing, that kind of discipline.

WARENSKJOLD: I don't really know how I got through it. I don't remember anything excepting how wonderful it was to have him [Tajó] there, how wonderful it was to have him there. And maybe I can go on with just part of this story which is a couple of years later. Do we have time?

HAST: Yes.

WARENSKJOLD: This was not the next year, this was a couple of years later. They did *Turandot* again, and this time I was doing the first performance, not just the second performance.

This had been such a traumatic experience for me that when I knew I was to do this role--I knew it, I knew the dates, I knew that I was to do it, same conductor and everything, Fausto Cleva--I could not force myself to work on the music, to study it again. I kept doing anything to do something else but that. I could not open that score.

HAST: But that's understandable.

WARENSKJOLD: I guess it is.

HAST: Oh, absolutely!

WARENSKJOLD: I guess it is. But anyway, I got to the rehearsal for this with Cleva, and as well as I knew it at that time, it kind of had gone out of my mind a bit. And most people have had terrible troubles with Fausto Cleva.

HAST: Is that right?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, I have not talked to anybody who ever liked working with Fausto Cleva. They said he was so mean, he was terrible, he said terrible things to them. Everybody was just tied up in knots anytime they had to work with Fausto Cleva.

I had worked with him several times before, and we'd always gotten along beautifully. I never had that feeling with him.

So I didn't know what to do. We got into this rehearsal, and he said-- We went through the first part of the rehearsal, and then he called me over afterwards, and he said, "Why don't you come in at noontime? Let's just go over this a second."

So I went in at noontime, and I just said, "I'm sorry, Maestro. It's my fault, I just have

not--" And he said, "I understand. But you'll know it, won't you, for the performance?" I said, "I will know it for the performance." And he took my word for it at that point. So--

HAST: Did he understand the situation?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, of course. He was the conductor at the time when it happened, and he knew.

HAST: So he was very supportive of you.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, absolutely. Very supportive, yes.

HAST: Isn't that nice.

WARENSKJOLD: So the only thing I could do-- I knew I had to find a place. Where did I go? So I called my friend Jimmy [James] Schwabacher, his family home at that time. He said, "The living room and the piano is there for you. Nobody will be around. You can come and practice and work as long as you want." So I did. They let me in, and I went into the living room, and there wasn't a soul around. I started working on it, and I broke down all by myself in there. I got it all out. I cried and cried and cried, and I got it all out. Then I started working at it, and, of course, it came back. It came back immediately. But I went over it and made sure that I had it.

HAST: It was good you got it out of your system that way.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, I had to. I couldn't have gone on without that. I can't remember now whether we finally had another rehearsal or whether we actually went on in the performance, but there was no problem with it.

HAST: You are one amazing lady. You really are!

WARENSKJOLD: But I never could understand why anyone had problems with Fausto Cleve. I think it was because I always knew what I was doing--except in this one spot, which he understood.

But I always was prepared both vocally and musically.

HAST: And he respected that, obviously.

WARENSKJOLD: Also, when he made suggestions musically, I was able to catch it and do what he wanted immediately. He respected that, because I was trying for the same thing that he was, which was the best performance that we could give. He just couldn't stand working with people who weren't able to keep up with him, I guess. I don't know. I really don't know. I always found him a delight to work with.

HAST: I like that story. That is really nice. That is really beautiful. And your father would have liked that, too.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes. I'm sure he would.



TAPE NUMBER: VII, SIDE ONE

JUNE 6, 1992

HAST: We were talking about claques the last time, and you wanted to add to that?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. Claques in San Francisco were, I guess, because they used so many Italian singers, and they insisted on claques. It was quite a big thing there. But the one-- HAST:

They insisted on this? Really?

WARENSKJOLD: The singers, the singers from Italy.

HAST: Really?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes.

HAST: Oh, I thought maybe they just picked their own people and-- Who organized it?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, this was a special-- It was always in the Italian area of town that-- And it wasn't, of course, done with the consent of the opera company.

HAST: Well, that's what I was wondering.

WARENSKJOLD: This was done individually. Oh, yes. When somebody new came into town, they were always told by the Italians who had been there before who they were to-- Well, they didn't contact them; the claque people contacted the singers, of course.

They made their money that way. So somebody told me--I think it was Lorenzo Alvary-- Of course, he was not Italian, but he was in on all of this type of thing that was going on. He came

into my dressing room one time when I was doing one of my major roles, and he said, "Dorothy, everybody else in the cast is going to have a claque. You'd better have it." And I just didn't. I said, "Oh, I just can't. I just don't feel right about it." And he said, "Well, it's up to you. I won't tell him to contact you then." So everything went off perfectly all right.

But the first time I did *Martha* [by Friedrich von Flotow], I think it was in Cincinnati, and Alvary happened to be in town at the time. He came to me again, and he said, "I really think that you ought to look into this." So I said, "Let me think about it." I called my manager in New York, and I said, "They're talking to me about this, and I don't want to cause a problem with them maybe booing or something like that if I don't pay them." So he said, "Well, I'm going to leave this up to you.

It's going to be up to you if you want to do it." So I didn't contact them at all. I didn't have anything to do with them.

But I said to Alvary, "All right, if you think it's necessary. But I'm just not happy with it." So we did have a claque, but I didn't pay them. I said, "They'll have to contact my management to do that end." So they said that they would pay for that.

Well, in *Martha*, you know, the aria is "The Last Rose of Summer," and the reason Alvary was telling me that I should have a claque was that this is to tell the audience when they're supposed to applaud. [laughter]

HAST: Oh, that's how it went. [laughter]

WARENSKJOLD: And I couldn't understand it. Well, almost any *Faust* [by Gounod]-- The *Faust* aria, almost any of those arias, you know, people know when to applaud. Well, I did it, and I felt terrible because I thought everybody who was applauding for me was the clique then. I just felt miserable when I had paid for it.

HAST: I can understand that, absolutely.

WARENSKJOLD: So I said from that point on, "Never again. I never want to feel that way again." And I never had any problem with applause being so obvious for the people who had a clique and not so obvious for me. So I felt much better.

HAST: Do they still arrange for that today?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, I'm sure. I'm not on the inside of it today, but I certainly can hear it in audiences. I can hear little areas. I don't think they have it in Los Angeles. I really don't think so. San Francisco-- The last one that I saw up there I think was a Handel opera, and that doesn't lend itself to a clique, nor do they have that many Italian singers doing it. But I'm sure they probably still have it in San Francisco.

HAST: See, I have noticed with popular singers that you can tell if in a hall suddenly there is a corner or a place where there's a lot of applause, and with popular actors, you know, all of this modern stuff, but I never thought of it for the

classical.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, really. I think it probably started there.

[laughter]

HAST: I'm sure it did. [laughter] Oh, that's absolutely marvelous. Well, again, so much depends on the audience. As we're talking about applause, what is actually the refined and proper way to know when to applaud? During an opera, for instance, if there's a special solo aria that is famous, it's all right to applaud afterwards.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes indeed.

HAST: That is fine.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes. It's expected. It helps the audience.

It releases the audience to let them show that they are enjoying it, and it certainly helps the artists on stage. I remember we were doing a performance of *Fidelio* [by Beethoven] in San Francisco--which will lead me on to perhaps another story, too.

But the woman who did *Fidelio*, Inge Borkh, after her big aria, the applause came, of course. I guess, although you wouldn't think so, there must have been a claque there, too, because the applause-- It was a good performance, but it wasn't that great. And I think I remember hearing the applause go down a little bit and then start up again. This is where you hear a claque working. For the first part of the applause, she just put her head down and took it very well. When the applause

came back up again, she broke the mood completely and went right out to the edge of the stage and went into a deep bow. And those people who really don't know--in the audience, not the clique--applauded even more at that point.

HAST: This was in the middle of a scene?

WARENSKJOLD: Indeed. Oh, in the middle, right after her aria. And it's going on after that.

HAST: So what do you do if there is applause? You've done your aria, and the audience goes wild for whatever reason. Do you acknowledge it? Or do you have to stand still and stay in character?

WARENSKJOLD: You do neither. You do not really acknowledge it by breaking out of character and going into a bow, as she did, no matter how big a bow.

HAST: I didn't think so.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. Nor do you absolutely ignore it and try to stay in character.

HAST: You don't?

WARENSKJOLD: No. That is annoying to an audience and not very gracious to an audience, also. What you have to do is just put your head down a little bit, not as a bow, but just to let the audience know that you appreciate what they are doing.

HAST: Do you look out at the audience at all or not?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, at first you do, yes. You can look out at

the audience, and then the head bows down just a little bit.

Then, if the applause goes on, you can look up again without making a big thing of it and look out at them. And they know that you are pleased with their reaction but that you're not asking for more. Then the head goes down, and usually by that time the audience has understood that you want to go on.

HAST: Aha. Now, the other artists on the stage--

WARENSKJOLD: They are just holding.

HAST: They have to freeze. [laughter]

WARENSKJOLD: They're holding, yes. They don't do anything; they are holding.

HAST: So that's difficult for them, isn't it?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, it is difficult. But the eyes are not on them at that point.

HAST: No, that's true, but they have to concentrate very hard.

WARENSKJOLD: They do. But as far as the audience is concerned, the eyes are on the singer for whom they are applauding. If you are the other person on the stage, you don't feel uncomfortable, because you know all eyes are not on you and you're having to do something.

HAST: Yes. Let's say that's a special aria and the audience applauded. Now, at the end of every act, you have a general applause, right?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, that depends upon the opera company and

the administration.

HAST: Oh, it does?

WARENSKJOLD: And it depends upon the conductor, too. I like the idea of after every act the people come out and take their bows in front of the curtain. I like that because there are times when a character doesn't appear again.

HAST: Exactly.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. But there are some conductors-- And I judge that it is the conductor who doesn't want to break the mood that will be going on even if there is a ten- to twelve-minute intermission. As a part of an audience--I'm not speaking as a singer at this point--I like to show them that we liked what they did. Certainly as a singer I like being able to be given the applause from the audience for what I've just done. So I think that is good to have it after every act and then at the end, when not only the singers come out but they bring the conductor out and sometimes, usually nowadays, the scenic designer and sometimes the chorus director and the stage director.

HAST: Yes, that's right.

WARENSKJOLD: Then you have individual bows, also. You all come out for one bow first. Then you come out for individual bows, with the lesser characters coming first and the title character last. Then the whole cast again. And then the conductor and all of the other people are brought on.

HAST: Which is really very nice.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, it is!

HAST: And I think it's always very rude when people in the audience rush out to get to the car and the parking lot.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, I know, yes.

HAST: I always feel badly about that. Am I right? That's really rude, don't you think?

WARENSKJOLD: I think it is, but that's part of what our life is now.

HAST: So if you have a lieder recital or a solo recital, what is correct with the applause? You already started to say that if you have a series of, say, Schubert lieder that you don't applaud in between each song. But is there a way that at the end you can be gracious, that you don't stay too long at it?

How do you know when it's time to get off stage? [laughter]

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, I see what you mean. Well, that's just a matter of timing and experience. If it is a cycle of songs, even the most musically immature audience can be told in the program, "No applause until the end of the group." If it is a group of songs by one composer--isolated songs, individual songs--the chances are that an audience that is not that knowledgeable musically is going to applaud between songs. We said last time that that is really helpful to the singer. It really is. On university campuses and in New York, the applause is usually



held, even though they are individual songs, if it is by one composer, until the end of the group. At the end of the last note-- The piano dies away, then the applause starts. There is a count of one, or there should be, and you go into your bow. Then you come up--

HAST: And you said how you do it with the accompanist, yes.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. You come up from your bow and take a count of one again, then you turn to your accompanist, get your accompanist up, you turn right back to the audience, you bow again, you come up, a count of one again, and then you walk off the stage, and your accompanist follows you off. Now, I'm giving you some little hints here of what I teach in my stage presence class.

HAST: Well, I'm fascinated, because I'd like to know.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, because too often you see people break after a song and immediately start into their bow.

HAST: Oh, I see.

WARENSKJOLD: So there has to be just that count of one. There also has to be that count of one when you come up. So instead of going down into your bow, coming up, and starting off at the same moment timing-wise-- It doesn't look good from the audience's standpoint. But this is a technical thing, you know.

HAST: No, no. I think that's very important. But how about staying too long and the applause starts to die down. Is that

possible? [laughter]

WARENSKJOLD: Well, not very often, really, unless you happen to be in an audience where there are so few people. But if the applause for some reason is not that great, you don't spend so much time doing your bows out there. You bow, and you hear. You hear. There is a point at which the applause gets up to the top, and then it starts to die down. You really should start to go off before it reaches that point.

HAST: I see. Now, if you have an orchestra performance, you may have a soloist. But let's say you have a violin soloist.

Does this apply to him also the same way? Or is that different?

WARENSKJOLD: When there is just one soloist, it is not that difficult, because the soloist has the impetus to make the move to go off, and the soloist has to know that timing. Where the problem comes in is where you have, say, two or three soloists on the stage and each one of them is saying to himself, "I wonder?

Is this where we should go off? We want to--" The soloists bow first, the conductor bows with them, sometimes there is handshaking between the conductor and the soloists, and then you come back and bow again. Sometimes at that point you're not quite sure if the conductor wants to get ready to go offstage or whether he's going to turn around and get the orchestra up first. You cannot be leaving the stage at the time the conductor is getting the orchestra up.

HAST: Oh. And are there no signals to tell you--?

WARENSKJOLD: No, no. This is not really talked about before, so you have to know by experience and out of the corner of your eye see what the conductor is doing while you're doing this.

And then there is that moment when you just have to make the move to go off.

HAST: That is what I'm wondering about. That must be very difficult.

WARENSKJOLD: As a woman who would be onstage with maybe another woman and two men in, say, the Beethoven Ninth [Symphony no. 9 in D Minor, op. 125] or something like that, this is difficult, because which of the two women is going to do it? Usually the soprano is the one who leads it off, so as a soprano that is--

HAST: And the women go first.

WARENSKJOLD: The women go first, yes. So that is difficult. But with some experience and just doing, all of a sudden you learn how to do it.

HAST: Well, I think it must be quite a bit of experience.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. Another problem comes with people who have not done that much with an orchestra where they have to work with a conductor and make your entrance with a conductor. I have so often seen some young singers, really up-and-coming young singers who have names, walk on stage-- They walk on first; the conductor follows. I have seen them come out, and, not

thinking at all of the fact that the conductor is coming out and is going to have to get past them to go to the podium, they stop right there where he has to-- He has to stop. They stop and bow, and the conductor either has to squeeze around behind them or has to wait with egg on his face. Again, this is another one of these things that I teach in my stage presence class, that you have to be aware--

HAST: So when they come out and there's applause, you do take a bow then?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, you take a bow, yes, but you have to be aware of other people on the stage, too. So you have to come out and take one or two steps forward as you're taking your bow, and the conductor has this room to get behind you up on the podium. Then he bows, and the two of you bow together. Yes.

HAST: And is it really understood that a soloist should then communicate at the end with the conductor? Shake hands or--?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, with the conductor. Oh, yes. Yes.

HAST: Is that understood that that is really the thing to do?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes. Oh, yes.

HAST: I can always tell when they have a good relationship or not. You can see it on their faces if they're happy.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. There are some differences between vocalist soloists and instrumentalists. The instrumen-talists usually make that connection with the conductor before they bow to the

audience. With vocal soloists it usually is a bow to the audience first, then you turn to the conductor. Of course, sometimes it depends upon the reputation and name of the conductor and how important the soloist. If the vocalist is just an up-and-coming person who doesn't have any name, chances are you might make that connection with the conductor first.

HAST: Oh, I see.

WARENSKJOLD: So these are things that you--

HAST: Very touchy.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, they are.

HAST: If there's really wild applause, how do you know if you're going to do an encore? Is that arranged beforehand?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, ordinarily encores are not done unless it's more of a pops-type program with orchestra--we're talking with orchestra now. Ordinarily encores are not given unless that is worked out, talked about beforehand, how this is going to happen. But ordinarily, no encores. But when you do have this wild applause there are things that you can do. After you bow as the vocal soloist, turn to the conductor and take his hand, and when he kisses your hand or whatever, you turn back and you bow to the audience. If the applause is still building and wild, you then turn to the concertmaster or concertmistress, and you go over and shake hands. Then you come back and you look at the conductor, and then you look out and bow to the

audience again. Then you walk off stage. Then, chances are, there's going to be another coming back on the stage for more applause and more bows.

HAST: Somebody directs you back out again or--?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, yes. Under normal circumstances you know by the sound of the applause out there that it's still going and they want to see you again. So you look around and you make sure that you don't just rush out on your own onto the stage. You look at the conductor and you say, "Shall I?" And he usually says yes. Sometimes he allows you to go out for a solo bow knowing that the applause is strong enough that by the time you bow and come off again the applause is still going to be going. Then you will bring him out the next time. While you are out there this last time with the conductor, you've both taken your bows, now the awfully nice thing to do is to turn around to the orchestra and give a little bit of this with your arms out a little to the orchestra. And especially if it's a work with chorus, up toward back there, too. And then you turn around again to the audience and you bow, maybe a very nice deep bow this time, and then you walk off. That usually will do it.

HAST: It's not easy, though. It sounds like a really touchy situation to me.

WARENSKJOLD: Well, it can be. Most of the time it works, but

it is a matter of timing, and you just have to get used to it.

HAST: Now, if it's just a symphony or some orchestral work that's being played, no voice--

WARENSKJOLD: Just orchestra by itself.

HAST: --there are people who applaud in the wrong place very often.

WARENSKJOLD: There's less and less of that.

HAST: Not very often, but sometimes.

WARENSKJOLD: Certainly never in a symphony. It sometimes is done in a concerto after the first movement.

HAST: Yes, that's right. So how do you teach people? What are the rules on that? Certainly you don't applaud between different movements in a symphony. Personally, I think that break is always wonderful for the audience, because you sort of refocus again, and then you're ready for the next movement.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. This is in a concerto you're talking about.

HAST: Oh, in a concerto.

WARENSKJOLD: In a concerto.

HAST: No, you don't applaud in a concerto, do you? WARENSKJOLD: Sometimes this is allowed after the first movement.

HAST: But for a symphony you wouldn't--

WARENSKJOLD: Symphony, never. Never applaud between symphony movements.

HAST: Well, I'm saying I think it's nice not to have applause,

but that's the way I feel. But are there definite rules about when to applaud?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, just what you've said. In a symphony, never.

Never applause. There always used to be applause after the first movement of a concerto, and even that now--

HAST: See, I never knew what the right thing was.

WARENSKJOLD: Even that is getting-- There are fewer and fewer times when that is happening. A lot of it depends upon where you are, what type of audience you have, how knowledgeable they are. But there are those moments between movements where the mood has to change. You've just finished with something very big and exciting, and then it has to calm down. Usually the second movement is a quiet, slower thing, so you have to get into the mood of that with your body and emotions and everything.

The one thing that is difficult for most people to get the timing for is between groups in a solo recital. I mean, you go off, and either you want to take a little sip of water or whatever, and you're coming out to be doing something entirely different, in a different era perhaps. So the audience has to change mood; the audience has to relax. They have to get some coughs out of their throat, and they have to be able to talk to the person next to them and say, "Wasn't that wonderful!" or "Didn't she hit that high note!" or whatever it was. You



cannot come out too soon between groups, and you cannot wait too long, and that is a very difficult timing to get. It isn't just a matter of timing with a stopwatch.

HAST: I was going to ask whether there is any way to time it.

WARENSKJOLD: It isn't really that. It's fairly close to something like that, but I've never figured out that there is a specific amount of seconds that you wait before you come out.

A lot of it has to do with what you've just finished, how exciting that was, to give the audience a chance to calm down.

HAST: And they applaud as you leave the stage.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, of course. Yes, yes.

HAST: And then when you come again for the next--

WARENSKJOLD: Then there's applause when you come on again, yes. That is the most difficult thing to catch on to, and that is a matter of just doing. And that was what was so wonderful about the era that I sang in, because we had those many recitals one right after the other. As I said, I did sometimes two and three in a week and over the period of the months that we did it somewhere between thirty-five to forty recitals. And by just doing you begin to have the feel for when you're going to come out. You're not going to come out while the audience is still talking to the person next to them, and you're not going to want to come out when they say, "Well, isn't she ever going to get on with this program?" It has to be just right.

And the only way that's--

HAST: Or when everybody's still coughing.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. And the only way that's going to happen is just by the constant doing of it. And that's why nowadays it's more difficult for vocalists, particularly. I understand there are some instrumentalists who are still doing lots and lots of recitals, but for vocalists, a great many of them are not doing more than five and six recitals in a whole year. So you don't get that feel for the audience and the reaction of the audience.

HAST: Well, speaking of audiences, you said every audience is different anyway.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, well--

HAST: Relating to an audience is a trick in itself, isn't it?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. There are times when you are outside getting ready to come in-- Each audience, you know, is going to be different.

Half of the fun of doing a recital is what kind of audience-- How responsive is this audience going to be tonight? Which songs are they going to like as opposed to last night's audience?

That's one of the bits of fun in doing recitals. But once you get out there and get the feel for the audience, then it's pretty much the same.

There was only one time when I was really caught off balance with an audience, and this was in Salt Lake City. It was in

a high school auditorium, as they usually were. I went out and did the first group, went off stage afterwards, and usually you hear the audience moving around and chattering out there between groups.

HAST: You can hear all this backstage quite well.

WARENSKJOLD: Usually you can. I didn't hear a sound. I was looking. I said, "Have they all gone home? What's happened? There's not a sound out there." And what I found out afterwards was that they, the type of people, maybe, who live in Salt Lake City, loved it. Afterwards they came backstage to see me, and they were just full of enthusiasm, but they were so quiet.

[whispers] They were whispering to each other. Instead of just talking, they were whispering between groups.

HAST: They thought it was polite to be quiet.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. But it took me a little aback there for a while.

HAST: Because you couldn't tell if maybe they didn't like it.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. Then I walked out, and I thought, "They're still there. They're breathing." And there was applause. Then I realized, I guess, "That's the way they are," and everything was all right after that. But it was strange for a while.

HAST: But in Lincoln Center, you would know what kind of an audience you would have, wouldn't you?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, of course.

HAST: I mean, they'd be sophisticated and--

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes, very knowledgeable. And hopefully you'd be doing a program that they would be interested in, you know, not--

HAST: Yes, and very critical at the same time.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes, absolutely.

HAST: But exciting to get applause in a place like that.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, I should say. Yes.

HAST: Well, then college and school audiences are different again. I mean, I was appalled last quarter when Heinz Blankenburg gave a performance--I forget what it was-- I couldn't get any tickets for the regular performance. So I went to one of those school things where several schools came from all over the city, and they were all screaming and yodeling. Somebody had to come up and explain to them that in opera you don't do that.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes. You mean this is the Guild Opera Company.

HAST: Oh, that's what it was?

WARENSKJOLD: You mean Guild Opera. Yes, yes. I'm on the board of Guild Opera, and I'm very interested in it.

HAST: Oh, are you? Oh, I didn't-- Oh, we should talk about that.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes. I'm very interested in it.

HAST: But how do you train these young people to be a good audience?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, that's one of the things we're trying to do with Guild Opera. We do have someone come out at the beginning and tell them that they are to be quiet while this is going on. But they are so used to going to rock concerts and that sort of thing where they scream and yell.

HAST: Well, as long as you're on that board I'm going to bring this up because I was going to tell you afterwards. The thing that I found terribly disturbing was that during the intermission some young chap came on and talked to them very, very fast. He said that now they could do all their screaming and yelling to get it out of their system. It was so overwhelming that I had to leave the auditorium and I didn't go back. I could not take it. Isn't that the wrong way to train them?

WARENSKJOLD: Well--

HAST: Unless you'd been there, you would never believe what it was like.

WARENSKJOLD: No, no. I believe it. I believe it, yes.

HAST: Thousands of voices and screaming--

WARENSKJOLD: I know, I know. I don't agree with that, either. I know they were doing it for a purpose, because they think that it's difficult, because these are quite young children, you know. These are grammar school children, not high school people.

HAST: Well, some of them looked older, like junior high at

least. No?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, I think they have added some of junior high, but the majority of them are grammar school.

HAST: Well, is this to let off steam or--?

WARENSKJOLD: Evidently that's what they think, that it's too difficult for them to sit quietly. They want the next half to be quiet again, so they say, "Get it out of your system so that you can be quiet for the next one." I don't happen to think so.

I think one of the reasons--and this is one of the reasons that I'm so interested in Guild Opera--is that instead of bringing opera into the school itself, which a lot of the other organizations do, we bring the children from the schools. We bus them to a venue. They have to be the largest auditoriums in town, so we have about three different places that we-- Royce Hall at UCLA was one, El Camino College was another, and Glendale High School, which has one of the biggest auditoriums. So they are coming to an opera performance. In that way it's different.

When they are in their own school and going into their own auditorium, maybe they think they can let off steam and react as they would for anything that is on their own campus. That's why I think this is good, because it brings them to a performance.

Now, I think along with that they should be told that they

have to be dressed a little differently for a performance and they have to act like ladies and gentlemen. I don't think it hurts a bit to expect something like that of children for a matter of almost two hours.

HAST: Well, I'm in total agreement with you. I was appalled, simply appalled. Because I was just a very small girl in Berlin when my mother took me to *Hänsel and Gretel* [by Engelbert Humperdinck]. To this day, I remember vividly the whole performance, but I didn't get all edgy.

WARENSKJOLD: Well, I think you had had some musical background from your family before, didn't-- ?

HAST: No, I was so small. I was just a little girl.

WARENSKJOLD: Really? Hadn't you heard good music around the house?

HAST: Oh, probably without knowing it.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, that's what I'm talking about.

HAST: But no, I didn't think of this as music. This was the show that I'd never been to, the theater. I'd never been to anything. I must have been quite small, four or five [years old] or something like that.

WARENSKJOLD: In New Orleans they used to do a performance for children along with the regular night performances. We hoped that they had some knowledge before they came there, but I'm sure they didn't. I remember their throwing marbles up on the

stage, and we were having a very difficult time walking around the stage because we had to be very sure we didn't step on a marble. Then one of the teachers told one of the rabble-rousers to go and stand in the corner at the left of the stage. Now, if you can imagine one of these children standing in the corner.

All of the children were watching that and laughing and giggling, not paying any attention at all to what was going on onstage.

They had not been given any background on the story or anything like that.

With Guild Opera, we send people out as docents giving the story and the music to prepare them for it.

HAST: Really? That's fantastic. I didn't realize that.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, yes. Because they don't have music in schools anymore, so--

HAST: No. They call it a frill.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. And they're cutting even what little music-- They're cutting it out. So we send that out to them.

HAST: But that is wonderful. I didn't know that.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. Yes. But I remember also some children coming backstage after some of my opera performances, and they loved it. You could see it, the expression on their faces. But what they would say to me is, "Oh, I loved your movie." Yes. You see, that was all they knew in some of these-- "I loved your movie."



HAST: How funny. But this is a marvelous thing you're doing.

I didn't know you were on the board.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, it's been going for forty years, and it's--

HAST: And how long have you been on the board?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, I've been on the board for about five years.

HAST: And Heinz Blankenburg is--

WARENSKJOLD: He is the stage director.

HAST: Aha. He's very good.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, he's excellent, yes.

HAST: He's marvelous. He has a very good way of working with young people.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes.

HAST: All ages, I think, because he's so natural.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes, indeed. His wife [Gayle Blankenburg] is our general director, and she does a wonderful job.

HAST: Well, thank you for telling us about that, because I didn't realize that. It ties right in.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. And we're having a harder time every single year to raise money.

HAST: How much money do you have to raise every year to keep this thing going?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, I think it was something like \$130,000, \$140,000, for these performances.

HAST: How do you raise the money? From which organizations?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, we have a few foundation grants that come in. So far they've been quite small--\$10,000, something like that. The Opera Guild of Southern California has given some money to us. Then there are people who just believe in it.

I don't know whether I should mention names, but I don't know why I shouldn't. Dorothy Forman, for instance, has been behind us, and she has given quite a lot. Then there are other individuals who give money.

HAST: But that's wonderful. I think that should be--

WARENSKJOLD: But it's awfully hard to get, especially now that some of the corporations say, "We would like to do it, but [because of] the economy and all of that we can't. Try again next year." Well--

HAST: Yes, yes. That is fascinating, and I think that should be continued if at all possible.

Now, let's see, where does this take us?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, we were talking of 1954, and that was my first solo record album.

HAST: Yes, let's talk about your recording career, because that's important.

WARENSKJOLD: This was Capitol Records. I had wanted to do an album of operatic arias, and Capitol said, "No, there are so many operatic aria albums. We want you to do something a little different." So they suggested an album of Grieg

and Dvo\_ák [*Songs of Grieg and Dvo\_ák*], and I said, "Well, that's fine. Yes, that's just fine."

HAST: That is different.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. But the difficulty with what they wanted was they wanted it done with orchestra, and the things that were done should have been done with piano. They were written for piano. They had a man [George Greely] under contract to them who was an orchestrator and conductor, and he made the orchestrations for the Grieg songs and all of the Dvo\_ák songs. I did the Dvo\_ák "Gypsy Songs" and the Dvo\_ák "Love Songs." The Grieg was on one side, all of the Grieg songs, and they wanted me to do them in English. So they were all done in English.

HAST: Does it lose, do you think--?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, I think the English-- They were adaptations. Again, we were talking about things like that, about the difference between translations and adaptations. My mother [Mildred Stombs Warenskjold] made the adaptation. She was excellent. She did so many opera-- I don't say translations, I say adaptations, because it has to be a singing translation. And it--

HAST: Well, it has to fit with the music.

WARENSKJOLD: It has to fit with the music, and it has to fit with the vowels in the right place for the singing end

of it. And it has to say the same things that the original poetry says, of course. Anyway, she did a beautiful job of that. The only problem that I had was that this was a-- The orchestrations were good for what they were, but he also conducted. He was a good conductor, but he was conducting just the music. He did not have any of the words down. He didn't know when there was an upbeat before he was to come in with his first note. It was just horrendous to go through those rehearsals.

HAST: Well, it's what you said about a good piano accompanist, what he has to know how to do.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes!

HAST: That you work together as musicians.

WARENSKJOLD: I was so beside myself!

HAST: How disappointing.

WARENSKJOLD: It was. Finally, the first-chair violin was the father of the well-known conductor Leonard Slatkin. Maybe the name will come to me. [Felix Slatkin] Anyway, very quietly, when he saw that I was just beside myself in trying to give this to the conductor, and he just wasn't able to take it, he said, sort of a little aside, "You give us what you want, and we'll do it." He didn't say it so that the conductor could hear it. So from that point on I worked really with him.

HAST: I see. And it worked better?

WARENSKJOLD: It worked better, but it still was not ideal.

TAPE NUMBER: VII, SIDE TWO

JUNE 6, 1992

WARENSKJOLD: We were talking about the conductor. I can hear it in the album now. I can hear where the problems are. I don't think the person who is picking up the album and listening for the first time is going to be aware of it. But knowing what we went through at that time, I can see-- And then also, a conductor is so important in things like that, because when you go up to a high note there is a lilt to it, and there is a fraction of a holding a fraction longer. It comes to a point of fullness of tone before you come down. A good conductor understands that and is with you when you come down. This man, as knowledgeable as he was in his orchestration, didn't feel that at all.

HAST: Do you think that it made a difference because it was being recorded than if it had been in an auditorium in a recital kind of thing?

WARENSKJOLD: No, I don't think so.

HAST: He just wasn't a good accompanist, really.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. I don't think he had worked with my kind of voice. He had done a lot of musical theater type of orchestration for them, and he had conducted a lot of things. As a matter of fact, before that first solo album we had recorded [*Selections from*] *the Student Prince* [by Sigmund

Romberg] for Capitol, Gordon MacRae and I. And this man, George Greely his name was, he made the orchestrations for that, and he conducted that. It was wonderful. He was wonderful in that.

HAST: Aha. That's interesting that this would be so different this time.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. But for something like this, he just didn't know. He just didn't know.

HAST: Well, when I interviewed Louis Kaufman, one of the things we talked about was that recording techniques keep changing and were certainly different when he started out.

When you were recording, how was it compared to now? WARENSKJOLD:

Well, I haven't recorded anything that recently, so--

HAST: No, I mean at the time that you did.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh. At the time we would go straight through, and then somebody in the booth would say, "That didn't come over too well. Let's set it up again; let's move the microphones." And we'd have to do the whole thing again. Then they'd say, "Well, now we're missing this instrument or that instrument, and the balance isn't good. Let's try it again." Then we'd do it through, and I would say, "That wasn't good. I didn't like what I did there," and we'd go back and do it. Then it was possible to put two of these takes together, to splice it. When you're recording in a

recording studio, you can do that.

HAST: Now, those are different tracks? Is that what they call it, tracks?

WARENSKJOLD: No. This was not what you're talking about, multiple tracks. I don't think they had-- I don't know, maybe they did have something like that. But no, this is--

HAST: No, I think that's more modern.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. That's an entirely different thing. No, these were just two or three takes, and we would listen and say, "That's the best take of that one," and they would splice it together.

HAST: Aha. So that could be done at that time.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, it could be done. And that's what I disliked about that kind of recording, because it doesn't have the life that a performance does when you do it straight through.

That's the difference between the later recordings, the more recent recordings of mine that are out that were not done in a studio that were taken from live performances. Whether it was with orchestra or in recitals, they were taken from my live performances, and they were straight through. If something wasn't just absolutely perfect, you went ahead with it. And that's why I was so pleased with those; they were pretty good. [laughter] Really.

HAST: Oh, I'm sure. I've heard your recordings. They're



wonderful. But I just wondered about the recording techniques, because Louis kept saying-- And when they first came out with CDs, he couldn't stand it. But he said that now the latest CDs are so much better, and they're actually republishing his recordings now on CDs. I'm wondering if they shouldn't do that also with your recordings.

WARENSKJOLD: Well, a lot of it has to do with how good the-- Some of those things that were done perhaps in the studio, yes, could be put out on CDs. But the things that I'm talking about, these later ones that were done in live performances, were taken from either tapes that were done right there or reference recordings taken off the air, and the sound, it comes from-- For instance, the orchestral things were taken from 78 [rpm] discs--if you can imagine how long ago that was--that were my reference discs. The sound that you get from that--a little crackly--I don't think they can clean it up. They did clean it up quite a bit for the recording that was put out. But to put that on a CD, you want absolute clarity and cleanness, and I don't know that you could get it from that. Maybe from the ones that were done in the studio; maybe that could be done.

HAST: But it's so wonderful that you have these records. It's almost a miracle, you know, that artists can go through history with recordings.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, it's wonderful. I know. I know.

HAST: Now, we're talking about 1954, and you were recording.

WARENSKJOLD: 'Fifty-four, yes.

HAST: And from then on, through the years you did more recordings?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, I did another one for Capitol a couple of years after that. That was another solo recital, but this one was with piano.

HAST: And what was it, do you remember?

WARENSKJOLD: They called it *On Wings of Song*. It was a--

HAST: Oh. Mendelssohn?

WARENSKJOLD: No, not all Mendelssohn. No.

HAST: Oh, no. But I mean--

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. At that time also they didn't do that so much. It was a list of songs that I would have been doing through the years in my recitals: Brahms and Schubert, a lot of different things, and then some English things--all things that would have been done in my Community [Concert Association] concerts, in other words.

HAST: Well, in the earlier years, recordings were made to a large extent in Europe rather than here. But by the fifties, a lot more was done here. Am I right about that?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, they were doing quite a lot here. I think it's going back again, or has gone back again, to Europe,

because it's so much less expensive to do over there.

HAST: I see. That's interesting. Yes, I know in London and probably also in Berlin, I would say. So also in 1954 you went to Denmark. The Rebild Festival is a really exciting story.

WARENSKJOLD: Well, it was interesting. You don't hear too much about this, because it is not just a musical festival.

They celebrate our Fourth of July. Yes, in Denmark they celebrate our Fourth of July. I think it was started by some Danish people from America who went back to their own country and established this in Alborg. It was extremely interesting, because it was an out-of-door festival. I think there must have been something like fifteen to twenty thousand people there all sitting on the hillside. It went up like this, and we were sitting down in here. The king [King Frederick IX] and queen [Queen Ingrid] of Denmark were there.

HAST: How lovely!

WARENSKJOLD: And a good many of the opera singers from the [Royal] Danish Opera were there along with me sitting in the front row.

HAST: Did your management arrange this? Or how did you--?

WARENSKJOLD: No, actually there was a friend of mine who probably was one of the ones who was in on the starting of it. Mr. Knudsen, Tom Knudsen, of the [Knudsen] Dairies. In

this area, everybody knows that. But the Knudsens were dear friends of mine, and they spoke about this at one time and said it would be awfully nice. "Even though you're not Danish, you're close enough as a Norwegian. If you'd like to do it," he said, "I'd like to present your name." So he must have carried through on it. So I went over for that. I was doing, I think, about three songs there, because everybody was doing something. The other opera singers were doing something, and there were a lot of speeches, of course. I do not speak Norwegian, and I don't speak Danish, either, but I prepared a few remarks in Danish and worked with somebody there in Denmark to make the right sounds.

HAST: And you have such a good ear for it. [laughter]

WARENSKJOLD: Well, I have a pretty good ear for it, but I find the Scandinavian languages very difficult, very difficult.

HAST: So do I. Impossible.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. So I spoke these few words, and I was fairly close to the end of the program, and there had been these speeches. One man got up, and he was so long. Everybody kept looking at their watches and trying to get him to go. He was reading a prepared thing, and they couldn't get him to go through pages and go to the end. He kept going on and turning the next page. It went on and on and on.

HAST: And you didn't understand a word of it, right?

WARENSKJOLD: No, not a word. Not a word. So this went on, and finally they got to my part of it. The skies had been getting darker and darker and darker, and the clouds were coming. Just as I came up, it started to pour. So somebody came over with an umbrella and held it over me while I was saying this. At that point I didn't sing all of the other things I was going to do. I sang "Summertime," by George Gershwin, [laughter] and they loved it. After I finished "Summertime," I bid them good-bye, and I think there was still something supposed to go on, but everybody ran for the hills and left after I finished.

HAST: What an experience.

WARENSKJOLD: It was amazing. And then it started to get muddy. We had to walk up the hill to get onto the other side where the cars were parked. Oh, we got so muddy. But it was quite an experience, I must say.

HAST: But this was just that one day? It wasn't like this over a series of days?

WARENSKJOLD: No, just the one day.

HAST: But weren't you also on a radio program in Denmark?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes. While I was there the Danish radio asked if I would do a program of Grieg songs, which I did. And this time I did them in Norwegian.

HAST: Really?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes.

HAST: So did you have to have a coach?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, I had coached some years before for when I did the Grieg centennial in San Francisco. In my early years, when I was still a student, I had done these songs for that, and I had coached very carefully with a Norwegian woman at that time, so I didn't need any more coaching at that point in those songs.

HAST: And you remembered that all that time later?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes. Oh, surely. Well, I had done them a few times on some of the programs, too. I kept the Norwegian end of it going.

HAST: And you said there were some other things in '54 that you wanted to mention?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, well, in '54, that was my first year with the Cincinnati Opera. Nowadays, of course, they have a regular opera house, but at the time I was there it was still done in the out-of-doors at the zoo. It was called the Cincinnati Zoo Opera. You know the old story about the *Faust* performance--it wasn't one that I was in; it had happened some years earlier--where Mephistopheles does his aria where he laughs, "Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha," and at the end you have another three laughs down there? And one of the ducks went "quack, quack, quack, quack" just absolutely in

time. [laughter]

HAST: How wonderful!

WARENSKJOLD: We'd hear the sounds of birds and other animals.

We'd hear the elephants trumpeting and all of that. It was fascinating. The stage was covered, and the audience was covered by the time I was singing there, I'm sure. In earlier times the audience was out in the open, too. But in Cincinnati the rains did come at times in the summer, but it was always so humid.

HAST: Oh, really?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, Cincinnati in the summertime is so humid. And the costumes that you have to wear in *Faust*, that I did there, and *Der Rosenkavalier* [by Richard Strauss] and--oh, what were some of the other things?--well, of course, *La Bohème* and *Martha* [both by Puccini] are so huge and completely covering that invariably you're just dripping perspiration. But it was a wonderful experience. I loved going to the Cincinnati Zoo Opera.

HAST: So how many years did you do that?

WARENSKJOLD: I did that for-- Yes, '54 was the first, and I did it for one, two, three, four, five years.

HAST: Really?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. I went back every year for five years.

HAST: When you perspire on the stage, it must be really

uncomfortable to know that the camera is zooming in on you if it's on television.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes. Yes, that is difficult.

HAST: I wondered if there were any rules about that in order not to embarrass the artist.

WARENSKJOLD: Well, when we were doing our television things-- They were maybe hour shows most of the time--the *Voice of Firestone* was a half-hour show--and you did one song, then you were off changing costumes, and then you came back. There was always somebody there to dry you off and to put a little more powder on and to make--

HAST: As they do in film.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes, to do that. If it's in an opera performance where you're really on stage and--

HAST: And if it's a live performance.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, that's what I mean, a live performance. It can be a little difficult, although I've been seeing that they don't get quite that close up on people anymore, which is good.

HAST: Yes, because some actors really perspire.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. In some of those early performances on television, these camera directors used to love to come right in when I was singing a high note and focus on-- [laughter]  
So you could almost see your tonsils!



HAST: I know. I think that's changed quite a lot. [laughter]

WARENSKJOLD: It has, yes. Yes. That was difficult.

HAST: So was there anything else that year you wanted to mention?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, let's see. It was just sort of more of the same, you know. I was doing the San Francisco Opera [Company] at that time. I did *The Marriage of Figaro* [by Mozart] with Cesare Siepi in San Francisco. And I did--oh yes--the *Turandot* [by Puccini]. I think I spoke about the story with [Fausto] Cleva after that. And then, let's see.

Oh, then this was the *Fidelio* performance with [Pierre] Monteux as the conductor in San Francisco. This was really rather interesting, because Monteux, who had been the conductor of the San Francisco Symphony [Orchestra] for some seventeen years by that time and had done every, every Beethoven symphony--I mean, he was steeped in anything like that. But he was French.

And we had as our cast Inge Borkh--I believe her background was Swiss, but German

Swiss--and her husband, Alexander Welitsch, whose background was German, too. Hans Hotter was in it, a marvelous German singer, and a couple of other Germans doing smaller roles.

And, of course, I was doing the Marzelline role. We had rehearsals, and we went through it, and something, I don't

know what it was-- There was the feeling on the part of Inge Borkh that she was German and she knew what Beethoven should be as opposed to a French conductor who couldn't possibly know what Beethoven was. She let this feeling come out in all of the rehearsals. And Monteux--who was a dear, sweet, little, roly-poly man--was in such control of this orchestra that he could just flick his little finger and they did exactly what he wanted. So he didn't really have to assert himself a lot, because he had his orchestra under his complete control.

None of us knew really what was underneath this man until toward the end, the day before we went into the performance, he called a meeting, and he said, "I want the whole cast here."

I think we knew, those of us who had been seeing this abrasiveness between the two of them; we knew what was going to be happening.

So he called this meeting, and she [Borkh] didn't show up for it. This was a rehearsal and a meeting. She did not show up, but her husband did, and all the rest of us did. Well, Pierre Monteux stood right there with all of us sitting around, and he proceeded very quietly and calmly to tell everybody what his background was in Beethoven, that he had done Beethoven before most of them were born, and that he had done this and this and this, very quietly, very calmly. He really just tore into them. Absolutely. I must say, Hans Hotter had no

feeling of that at all. He's a great artist and a wonderful gentleman, and I don't even feel that Borkh's husband was abrasive either. It was just the Borkh end of it. So everything that he was saying was directed to her, and she wasn't there. But her husband took it back to her.

Anyway, we finished with that meeting--

HAST: Doesn't that seem strange that he would have to justify himself?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, he had to stand up for-- Maybe I'm saying it wrong. I'm saying he wasn't justifying himself. He really wasn't. He was just standing up for himself and saying--

HAST: "This is who I am."

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. "This is who I am, and this is why I want it this way."

So we got into the first performance of it, and this feeling from inside of him, this energy, was still going. In the one part that they do in between-- You know, they do an overture in between some of the acts. Well, he started with that overture, and the electricity in the whole house-- Backstage everybody was [gasps] like this. The pit conductor-- What do you call him now? The prompter. The prompter [Glauco Curiel] was not in his place. He was backstage and telling everybody, "Look, look! Listen, listen! Oh, this is wonderful, this is wonderful!" And it was! The music was just absolutely

electric! The audience was feeling it; everybody backstage was feeling it. When he finished that, there was immediate applause that came up, and the whole audience stood up as one. The whole audience stood up.

HAST: How exciting.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, it was absolutely exciting! It was exciting. So that was-- [laughter]

HAST: Yes. But how did she react?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, I must say, this was the performance where she walked forward after her aria and took her bow and broke it up completely.

HAST: Oh, that was the one.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, she was the one who did that. But we had several other performances of it afterwards. I don't think they ever cleared the air between the two of them, but they got through the performances. And we did it. But I have never been in a performance that was as electric as that was, and this just came from this energy that he had still going.

HAST: Well, he was incredible.

WARENSKJOLD: He was a marvelous conductor, but he-- After the years-- He was in his late seventies by the time he got to that point, you know. Most of the time he was able to relax and the orchestra would do exactly what he wanted. But this time he was not relaxed. It was wonderful to see

and be a part of.

HAST: Yes. You don't forget that ever. [laughter]

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, you really don't forget that. No.

HAST: That sounds just great.

WARENSKJOLD: Then, of course, I did the opera in New Orleans at that time, I was doing my recitals, I was doing the *Standard Hour* on radio, and I was doing the [Voice of] *Firestone* hour on TV. All of this was going on at the same time.

HAST: Just a few things to keep you busy.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. [laughter]

HAST: While I'm thinking of it, I have another question, just to throw something totally different in here. There's been so much discussion about the primacy of the director and the primacy of the production manager. Does that detract from the music at all, do you think? For instance, director Peter Sellars. There's so much talk about him. I understand he's teaching at UCLA through [UCLA University] Extension, which I didn't even know. Is that right?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, is he? I don't know.

HAST: I just wondered--and as you know, I'm not professional like you are--whether these modern directors ignore the wishes and the directions of the composers and librettists. Do you think they do to a certain extent?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, that's hard to say. I personally don't like

this business of trying to be different for just being different's sake. It's very possible that if you're listening to one of these performances and not seeing what's going on onstage, it could still be true to what the composer wanted.

HAST: Musically.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, musically. It's possible. But when you have to see onstage that they're bringing things up to date and changing the whole idea of what the original story was, I don't think you can really listen to the music and concentrate on the music.

HAST: I wanted your opinion on that, because I saw something, and I just turned it off.

WARENSKJOLD: But we're living through different eras. There was the era of the virtuoso vocal performer, and the conductor had to do whatever the vocalist wanted. If the vocalist held a high note much too long, the conductor was there to hold the orchestra until the singer decided to come down, and that was it. That was the era of the vocal

performer, and the singers went too far with a lot of the things that they did. Then I think the next era was the virtuoso conductor, and the singer had to do what the conductor wanted.

If the conductor wanted to move it ahead and go past a high note that you wanted to hold, you pretty much had to go ahead and do it. The conductor was the one who really came out for the major bow at the end. [laughter] I think we're now

in the era of the virtuoso stage director, and hopefully we'll get through that shortly.

HAST: Yes. It just seems so strange to see modern gang members in an opera by Mozart.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, I know. That's what I mean, yes.

HAST: It's sad. But you think it's a phase we're going through?

WARENSKJOLD: I think so. Oh, yes, because we've gone through all of those other phases and then something else. What the next era will be I don't know. Whether it will go back again to the era of the singer or whether it will go into something else that I can't even think of at the moment I don't know.

HAST: Well, I just wondered what you think about the future of opera in this country and abroad, or Western Europe anyway, with the chaos that's reigning everywhere. Do you think that opera will survive somehow and we'll all get through that?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, I think it has to. It's getting more difficult because the audiences are not really growing. You have to have some kind of musical background either from family or from the schools.

HAST: You don't mean in size, you mean in education they're not growing, right?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, yes.

HAST: Because actually there are more people now interested in opera than ever before, don't you think, in this country,

for instance? Or don't you think so?

WARENSKJOLD: No, I really don't think so. I don't see it.

I think there are more people who are more knowledgeable about it, but not enough. You know, it's not spreading in interest, and in order to do that-- Of course, because opera is so expensive, it is getting awfully difficult for the normal person to go to an opera performance. When you have to pay \$75 for a ticket, and the husband and wife go, there's \$150, and they have to get somebody to take care of the children at home. It's one of these things where they say, "No, I just can't afford it. With that kind of money I could do this or that." But then some of the musicals are getting almost as expensive, and they find their way to those. So I think it has to do with some kind of background, and we're not getting it in the schools. It's getting smaller and smaller.

So I don't see that growing at all. I'm really pessimistic.

HAST: Television actually has helped, I think, hasn't it?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, yes.

HAST: And radio, also.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, yes. We have had some pretty good operas on television, and we've had some awfully good recitals on television. But you begin to wonder whether the audience that is looking at that is growing or whether that's still the same group of us who loved it all along.



HAST: Yes. In Europe tickets don't cost that much, do they?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, they didn't. I don't know what they are.  
I really haven't kept up on it.

HAST: Europe seems to be in such chaos, I just wondered whether music will survive as we know it. But then, we don't really know what's going to happen. I just wondered what you thought about it, because people who are interested in music are talking about it.

Was there anything else you wanted to say about any of these performances, because I have some other questions for you.

WARENSKJOLD: No, I don't think so. I can't think of anything right now.

HAST: All right. Well, I wanted to ask you, first of all, which were your favorite roles?

WARENSKJOLD: [laughter] I know, this is always a question that comes up, and it's one that is almost impossible for me to answer.

HAST: You have so many, right?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, it wasn't just that-- Yes, I have quite a few, but it always happened to be the one that I was working on at the moment.

HAST: That's nice. That's wonderful.

WARENSKJOLD: No, I mean, it really is. There was only one

role--I think we spoke about it before--that I never wanted to do again.

HAST: Oh, in *Werther* [by Jules Massenet]?

WARENSKJOLD: It was Sophie in *Werther*, yes. It just wasn't that interesting to me. But truthfully, I think if we're going to pin it down, I think probably Sophie in *Der Rosenkavalier* was probably the one. But then, I just adored doing Micaëla in *Carmen* [by Bizet], and I loved *Faust*. I just loved *Faust*.

The Micaëla I liked so much because most people did it as a little wimpy peasant girl, and I didn't see her that way. I saw Micaëla--the girl from Don José's home town that he was in love with, and she was in love with him before he left to go into the army--as being strong enough to come to the large city to give a message to him and to give a letter to him from his mother in the first place. I saw her also when she was in the-- Her entrance, before she saw Don José, she comes in, and the army people are sitting around, and they see her coming in, and they approach her. Most people played that as if she was afraid and she would back away from them. I played it as though she is the girl from this small town that was the most popular girl that all of the boys in the town fell for and she knew how to handle that sort of thing. She was in love with Don José, he was her one love,

but she had had all of these other people in the small town after her. So when these young army men came toward her, they were all people from small towns who had come in, too. She knew how to handle them, so she just fended them off and said, "No, I'll come back when he's here." So then she comes back and has her little duet with Don José, of course.

But then in the third act, how strong does she have to be to go up when his mother is dying? She wants to tell him his mother is dying: "She wants to see you once again before she dies." She finds out that Don José is up in the mountains with this-- He's run away from the army by this time. And she goes by herself up into the mountains into the midst of all of these people that she really is afraid of to find Don José. Now, she has to be a pretty strong character to do that, doesn't she?

HAST: Very courageous. Yes, indeed.

WARENSKJOLD: Absolutely. Yes. So I loved her character because of that, and that's why I loved doing her even though you would say it's a secondary role. It was the main soprano role, of course, in the opera, because Carmen is a mezzo-soprano or contralto. But that's why I loved doing her.

And Marguérite in *Faust*, I loved it because of the music. That is just so wonderful.

HAST: Her innocence and her naiveté. [laughter]

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, absolutely, yes.

HAST: It's very charming.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. And of course, the whole idea-- You know, I told you that when I wanted to coach with Georges Sebastian the first time, I said I wanted to work on *Rosenkavalier*.

HAST: Right, I remember.

WARENSKJOLD: So you see my love for *Rosenkavalier* at that time, so it--

Almost any of the things I've done. I loved [*La*] *Traviata* [by Verdi], I loved *Manon*, the Massenet *Manon*. All of these things from the musical standpoint I loved, I really did. And, of course, *Mimi*, *Bohème*. I loved that.

HAST: Well, you've had a very varied career, which is fantastic--I mean, that you could play these different roles.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, yes. I would love to have done some modern things.

HAST: I was just going to ask you. [laughter]

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, were you? I would really love to have done some modern things.

HAST: Like what, for instance?

WARENSKJOLD: I don't know at this point. I haven't really had a chance to look at them. But they were not doing them as much at that time.

HAST: Well, how modern do you mean? How modern? How late?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, I suppose *The Makropulos Case* [by Karel Jane\_ek] or-- I don't even know whether that would have been good for me. A new opera, perhaps, I would like to have done.

I would like to have created a role in a new opera. Somehow that just never came.

HAST: Well, it really takes us to something that I want to talk about, namely, what is the key to having a long reign at the top as an opera singer?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, I think you have to have a good, healthy voice in the first place, and I think you have to have had good training in the second place. The two really go together.

Then I think you've got to be a pretty good musician to be able to learn new roles all of the time and keep going forward.

HAST: How quickly should you learn these roles? Do you have to be careful not to learn too many too fast?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, yes, I certainly would say that if you're going to be doing a role, you should learn it and then sleep on it for a while and then go back to it

again--ideally this is. But what happens so much of the time is that young singers are given the opportunity to do a role, given the contract for something, and they don't know it.

They've got to learn it, and then they have to go ahead and do it. Maybe they can learn it musically easily, but the

interpretation-- Putting the music and the interpretation together is something that just takes some time. You usually see some young singers doing roles for the first time, and they're just getting through it. Maybe vocally it's very effective, but they have to do the role for five or six times before they start doing anything with it.

HAST: And not rush it and do it too quickly.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. I told you I had to do that *Falstaff* [by Verdi] very quickly, and it was wonderful, and I was very pleased that I was able to do it, but that's not the ideal way to learn anything.

HAST: And if a conductor asks a young singer to do a role that is wrong for the individual voice--?

WARENSKJOLD: That's awfully hard for young singers, awfully hard for young singers.

HAST: I would think so.

WARENSKJOLD: I was lucky in that my voice was what it was. I was a lyric soprano, pure and simple. I didn't have any of that little heavier voice, where some conductors or some people hear something a little bit more in your voice and they ask you to do something that's a little over your head vocally.

HAST: Yes, I think we did talk about that. You were lucky with that, I think. Maybe that is why some singers give up

their careers early, because they take the wrong roles and it damages their voices.

WARENSKJOLD: That's true, yes. There was a lot with-- Oh, what's his name? [Sol] Hurok. Hurok used to take on some young singers, and he would give them many too many recitals in a row and have them running from opera to recital on opposite ends of the country. There were a couple of voices that just couldn't stand up. Florence Quartararo from the San Francisco area was one who came up very quickly with a perfectly lovely voice. He had her under contract, and the voice just couldn't take it. It just went after a few years.

HAST: That's really sad. Well, on the next tape, I think I'd like to talk to you about what you do in midcareer and how long one can go. Thank you so much, Dorothy.

TAPE NUMBER: VIII, SIDE ONE

JUNE 12, 1992

HAST: I believe you wanted to insert something still about the *Standard Hour*.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes. I think it was the last year of the *Standard Hour*, or at least it was the last one that I did.

I believe it was the last year of the *Standard Hour*. It was a performance given around Eastertime, and Kurt Adler was the conductor this time. He told me originally what program he wanted to do--this was months and months in advance--and then he changed the program and said, "This is the final program."

I've forgotten what else I was doing. I got there for the rehearsal--I flew into San Francisco Friday night--

HAST: From Los Angeles?

WARENSKJOLD: No, no. I think I was in the Midwest or something like that doing recitals. I flew in because the *Standard Hour* was always on Sunday night.

So we were to have a rehearsal Saturday morning at Kurt Adler's house. I got there at ten o'clock in the morning, and we talked over the program. All of a sudden he mentioned this one particular work, and I said, "Well, you changed that.

You decided not to do that." This was Virgil Thomson's *Stabat Mater*.

He said, "Oh, no, no, no. I decided again to do it."



And I said, "Well, you didn't tell me, Kurt. I would have learned it for the performance."

And he said, "Well, it's all planned. The program is all planned for it. We have to do it." This was Saturday morning; I was to do it Sunday night. [laughter]

Now, I grant you that this was on radio before a large audience, but we were allowed to have music in front of us.  
HAST: Oh, you could have the score in front of you.

WARENSKJOLD: We could have the score in front of us, so that part was all right. But Virgil Thomson is a very difficult composer. So I couldn't get-- I said, "All right. Well, I'll do it. I'll have to work it--"

He said, "Well, I can give you a little bit of help. I have a recording of it."

And I said, "Fine. I don't have anything to play it on."

So he said, "Well, you can use my machine here."

I played it over a couple of times on his machine there, and then after our rehearsal on the other things I went home and had to learn it. The next night I did it.

HAST: Unbelievable.

WARENSKJOLD: Yeah. I still don't know-- [laughter] I have a recording of it, and it sounds pretty good!

HAST: I'm sure it's wonderful.

WARENSKJOLD: But that was typical of Kurt Adler.

HAST: Was it really? He did this--?

WARENSKJOLD: Just absolutely typical, yes. This is the thing I told you before.

HAST: He'd forget or--?

WARENSKJOLD: I suppose so. I'll give him the benefit of the doubt anyway.

HAST: Because I can't imagine he'd do this to you on purpose.

WARENSKJOLD: I can't see why he would, either.

HAST: It would hurt his reputation.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, it would hurt his performance, too. But I'm sure he just forgot.

HAST: It's terribly annoying, to put it mildly.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. But he did this sort of thing with contracts, I told you, too. [laughter]

HAST: Yes, you did mention that. Oh, that is too bad.

WARENSKJOLD: Then around that time--and I'm not quite sure what the dates were-- You know, when you're on television you get fan letters. I got a fan letter when I was on the [James] Melton show, the *Ford Festival*, from a man. You know, you don't think about it because you get so many, and they ask for pictures.

HAST: Well, that's interesting. Did you get a lot of fan letters?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes. Oh, yes.

HAST: You haven't mentioned it before.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, really? Oh, of course, yes.

HAST: Really?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. More on television than I did on radio, although there were a few people who wrote in on radio.

HAST: Well, because they could see you.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, that's right.

HAST: From all over the country?

WARENSKJOLD: All over the country, yes. Some of them were really very sweet and very nice, and I tried to write back when it was necessary. I tried to do that. Others, it was a matter of just asking for an autographed photo, and of course I always did that.

So this man, as far as I can remember, all he asked for was a photo. So I must have signed the photo and sent it to him. He came from Milwaukee, as I found out later. And then he kept writing, and his letters became more strange and more strange, and something evidently happened. I don't know whether he had written to Jim Melton and asked for that or whether he'd had some connection with Melton at some time.

I don't know. But all of a sudden he began to be very, very vocal in his attitude toward us and the program, so I didn't answer any of those letters. He kept writing again, and I

didn't answer, and--

HAST: That's dangerous, isn't it?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, I know.

HAST: Because you don't know if he's going to show up in the audience--

WARENSKJOLD: That's the thing. So what finally happened was that I received another one of these letters from him. In it was my picture torn up into little bitty pieces.

HAST: How sick.

WARENSKJOLD: And I was-- You know, you begin to wonder about somebody like that.

So he had come from Milwaukee. I was doing a recital in Milwaukee, and I had received a letter from him saying all kinds of threatening things. So when I got to Milwaukee, I contacted the police.

HAST: Well, I should hope so.

WARENSKJOLD: I did. I went in, and they were very nice in the beginning. Then they began saying, "Well, did you meet this man at a bar?" And I said, "How dare you ask me something like-- How dare you! Certainly not. I've never met the man.

He is a fan from a television show." And they just couldn't understand. Finally it came out: Well, they couldn't do anything until he--

HAST: He hurt you.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. So this was the whole thing.

HAST: Typical. That is typical.

WARENSKJOLD: So the people who were sponsoring the recital, I told them about it, and they were wonderful. They had extra security police around the outside. Of course, we didn't know what this man looked like. I had never seen him, so I didn't know if he could have come in or not. The president of the local association brought his dog, a big German shepherd, and it was backstage with me. But still, when I was out there on the stage, I was just-- Anybody could have taken a potshot at me.

HAST: How terrifying.

WARENSKJOLD: It really was. But we got through it, and there was no incident. Whether he was there or not I don't know.

HAST: Oh, he didn't show up, as far as you know?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, we don't know. We don't know. Of course, these were organized audience plans, and you had to have a little card to get in. You couldn't just buy a ticket and get in.

HAST: Oh, you couldn't.

WARENSKJOLD: No, not with this organized audience plan. So maybe he didn't--

HAST: Maybe the guards turned him away and you didn't even know it.

WARENSKJOLD: That could be, yes. Yes. So there were a few letters after that from--

HAST: Oh, there were more letters?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes. From different places. I did hear, I think, that he had been in some kind of an institution for a while. For a couple of years I didn't hear anything, and then I got a crazy letter two or three years later, and he was evidently out of the institution. But then it sort of died away, and I judged that he died, too. [laughter] But it really was a frightening thing. So when you hear about some of these people in the movies that have things like that happening--

HAST: Well, today it's very dangerous.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, you can understand what that was.

HAST: And they actually pursue them physically.

WARENSKJOLD: I know, I know.

HAST: This is horrifying.

WARENSKJOLD: So anyway, it was going on even then.

HAST: Oh, I'm glad nothing happened. [laughter]

WARENSKJOLD: No. [laughter]

HAST: That could have been really bad. Oh, my goodness.

Anyway, 1955 was your last year at the San Francisco Opera?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. And that was the year that I did the *Der*

*Rosenkavalier* [by Richard Strauss] performance in German again.

Remember, two years earlier we had done it in English. This performance was with [Elisabeth] Schwarzkopf, which was wonderful, because she was a delightful, is a delightful, person.

HAST: Is she living?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, yes, she still is. And it was rather interesting, because the-- And I don't think we've spoken about this on any one of the other tapes. But we had a German stage director, Paul Hager; we had Schwarzkopf, who was German but of course spoke beautiful English. Her husband--his name eludes me for the second; he was the head of Angel Records [Walter Legge]--was always traveling with her. He was a bother, I must say. [laughter] He was there at every one of the rehearsals and having to get his little two cents in about how this should be done or that should be done. Oh, unbelievable.

I can tell you about a recital that I saw her do in New York a little bit later, too.

Anyway, at the rehearsal-- There is a spot in the last act just before the trio comes. The three characters have to get themselves on the stage in a certain relationship, with Octavian in the center, Sophie on the other side, and the Marschallin on the opposite side. Before we get into that position, Sophie is on the opposite side of the stage,

and she has to get across to the other side. They were carrying on this long harangue; it went on for forty-five minutes.

HAST: The three of them?

WARENSKJOLD: This was Schwarzkopf--she wasn't doing it quite as much--Hager, and I believe his wife [Gita Hager] was there at that time, also--she was a choreographer, and she of course was speaking German--and Schwarzkopf's husband. They were trying to decide how I, playing the part of Sophie, was going to get over to the other side of the stage. So Frances Bible, who was the Octavian, and I were standing off to the side and just watching all of this going on. Finally, after forty-five minutes, I walked over and I said, "Why can't we just run through it and let me get over there? I will get there believably."

HAST: Wasn't there a stage director?

WARENSKJOLD: Paul Hager was the stage director.

HAST: Oh, he was the stage director.

WARENSKJOLD: He was the stage director, yes. So I said, "I will be where you want me for the beginning of the trio. So let's just run through it." What they were trying to get away from was just having Sophie walk upstage and around and come over to the other side. Well, naturally I wasn't going to do that. I was going to relate to what was going on, because there was some singing going on between Octavian and the



Marschallin at that point. So I walked around watching, and I would take a few steps, and then I would stop and watch the two of them as Sophie would be going through at this point.

HAST: Of course.

WARENSKJOLD: I got over to the other side, and all of a sudden they said, "Well, that's fine. All right, let's go on." Here we had wasted all that time. But he was at every one of those rehearsals and such a bother. I guess he was very good in his business of records, and he really made her career, but-- I told you I was at a recital of hers in New York. This was a year or so after that. Here she was on the stage with her pianist--this was at Town Hall--and her husband was out in the auditorium in the front row. Before every song that she sang, in German of course, he got up and stood at the front of the stage and read his translation in English while she stood up on the stage with egg on her face, really. How she stood it I don't know. I really don't know. It was embarrassing, absolutely embarrassing. Well, anyway-- [laughter]

HAST: What not to do. A good story for students to learn something from this.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. Oh, my gracious, yes. So anyway, that was the *Rosenkavalier* performance. That was with Otto Edelmann, who was a marvelous, marvelous Baron Ochs. It was a wonderful cast. It really was.

Let's see, then. What else went on in 1955?

HAST: Well, you said it was the last year because of the problems with Kurt Adler.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes. Yes.

HAST: Were you giving recitals at that time?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes. Oh, recitals were--

HAST: All the time.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes. Recitals and singing with orchestra and doing operas in other parts of the country. I did *Turandot* [by Puccini] in New Orleans, and I guess that was the only one I did in '55.

HAST: How was it in New Orleans? Was it a different atmosphere entirely?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. Well, yes and no. It's pretty much all the same. It was a good audience there.

HAST: All right.

WARENSKJOLD: And then, in moving-- Oh, it was in 1955 also that I did the second Capitol Records album. That was the solo recital album--*On Wings of Song* it was called. And I don't think we spoke-- I have a vague recollection--

HAST: We spoke about *Wings of Song*.

WARENSKJOLD: Did we?

HAST: Yes, we did.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. Anyway, that was done in 1955. And I was

doing recitals, and I was also doing the *Voice of Firestone* TV show during that year. That went on, too. And then we go on to '56, '57. From here on, the career is just going, you know. I think talking about a career is more interesting at the beginning and what happens at the end of a career than in the midst of the career, because you keep going on and doing the same sort of thing. You're doing operas and orchestras and recitals and all of that.

HAST: Which is a vital part of your career, of course.

WARENSKJOLD: Absolutely, yes.

HAST: Let me ask a question, then. How does one decide to stop performing or to slow down? How did you decide? I mean, you couldn't keep going like this indefinitely. How did this come about?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, no, a lot of things are different with different people. Nan Merriman, for instance, decided early in her career that she was going to stop when she-- I think she said when she was forty-nine or-- I've forgotten what the age was. And she did. She just stopped. Other people stop perhaps because something happens to the voice.

HAST: What are the signs of trouble? It's different for every singer?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. People right now, I think they go on much longer than they should. The voice doesn't go completely,

but it just is not the same. It just is a little ragged, and it gets wobbly, and people who are hearing these singers for the first time really don't know what they were in their prime. And yet I understand it's awfully hard to turn down a lucrative job. Some of these performers are getting \$25,000 and \$30,000 per performance. It's awfully hard to turn down.

HAST: But those are the really big singers, right?

WARENSKJOLD: Of course, of course. Those are the ones you hear about, and those are the ones who are going on past their prime.

HAST: Well, what is--? I mean, thirty, forty years for a career, do you think? Or is that too long?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, no. For a singer it doesn't usually last that long.

HAST: It doesn't last that long?

WARENSKJOLD: No, it really doesn't. Because as a singer you start much later than an instrumentalist does.

HAST: Yes, that is true, isn't it?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes. That's why it's hard for some of these people going into contests nowadays where they have to go in against instrumentalists--and there are some of those still--because instrumentalists, violinists or pianists, start when they're three or four years old. By the time they are seventeen or eighteen they are almost professionals, whereas

a singer really doesn't start to study before they're eighteen, nineteen, something like that.

Anyway, in my case it wasn't that I decided that I was going to quit at a certain time. I knew always that I would stop when I did not have my voice in the control that I would have liked. Because having studied the way I did, I knew how to sing, and when those muscles didn't do what I wanted-- I knew I would know when to stop no matter what the monetary involvement was.

HAST: Did you have a peak, do you think, in your career?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, it's hard to say. I think probably any singer has a peak up to about forty-eight, forty-nine, maybe fifty, and then chances are it's going to start coming down from that point on.

HAST: And you may have to sing different roles, is that right?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. Well, that is true, also. Regina Resnik, for instance, changed from a soprano to a mezzo. She was doing *Carmen* [by Bizet] later. The first opera that I did in San Francisco was *Falstaff* [by Verdi] with her as a soprano.

Then later she turned into a mezzo. Now she is a stage director.

HAST: Beverly Sills decided to get out and do other things, right?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. I hope Beverly Sills is never going [laughter] to read this or hear this--she's a wonderful person

and all of that--but both she and Joan Sutherland should have stopped before they did. Because they were both marvelous artists, and it just hurt me to have heard recordings of them or have heard them in person when they were on the top of their voice and then to hear it later when it starts to wobble and the quality isn't there anymore.

HAST: These are the danger signs, aren't they, of when it's time to quit?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes. Anyway, with me it was not that. I was still singing well.

HAST: Up to what year, would you say?

WARENSKJOLD: About '66, '67, something like that. What happened was that the world of music just was changing. I think we spoke once before about how there are cycles in recitals, for instance. There was a cycle of about twenty years of the pianist, and every series around the country had to have a major pianist on it--one or two, even. And then there was a cycle of perhaps another twenty years when it was the violinist. And this was the thing. Then there was the cycle of the vocalist, about a twenty-year cycle. That was a little different, because the vocalist cycle had to be divided between the sopranos and the mezzos and the tenors and the baritones, etc.

But then there was the change that happened when the next cycle was the group attraction. We always had them,

of course. There were always orchestras that went on tour, choral groups that went on tour, dance groups that went on tour. But then they began putting together other groups specifically for this purpose. While there were good ones being put together, there were many that were just thrown together because the organizations wanted a group on stage.

Somehow it got to the point where the more on stage the better.

[laughter] The more bodies on stage, the more they thought they were getting for their money. I guess that's what it was. So we began getting little groups of eight to ten people and putting together some kind of an idea for a program.

And they were not very good.

HAST: They weren't?

WARENSKJOLD: No. They would go out, and the audiences didn't like them too much, so it was going down and down.

HAST: What kind of music would they perform?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, sometimes they would do some really classical music, and they'd end up with musical theater and pop. But when you have all different kinds of people in your audience, you have to appeal to all the people who are going to be in your audience. So what was happening was that, where some years before I was doing, as I said, somewhere between thirty-five and forty recitals in a year, all of a sudden it started going down and down and down. And I began thinking,

"Is it me? I'm still singing well. I know I'm still singing well, so it isn't that. The audiences are still appreciative when I sing for them, so I know nothing's happening there.

What is the problem?" And you cannot-- Well, maybe you can, Sybil, but it's hard to understand how somebody whose life has been music and singing before audiences for years, what you can feel like when all of a sudden you think nobody wants you anymore.

HAST: It must be terrible.

WARENSKJOLD: It's terrible. It really is just terrible. Well, you say, "Is this the end of my career and I haven't even given a farewell concert?" [laughter]

HAST: Yes. So this was in the sixties, around '67 or so?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, yes. From about '65 on, the number of recitals that I was doing was gradually going down, and by '67 it was down to a point where I thought, "This is ridiculous. It's not a career anymore." I think I was doing twelve recitals.

HAST: Did you think of going abroad, maybe?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, no. I really had not thought of that.

But I looked into what was happening in the world, and suddenly it dawned on me that this is the time of the group attraction.

HAST: Well, your agent must have discussed this with you.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, we had spoken about it, and they said, "Yes, the group attraction is the thing." Originally, when



you had say five different attractions on a series, we used to have four soloists and one group attraction. All of a sudden it began to be four group attractions and one soloist, and that one soloist had to be divided between the pianist and the violinist and the cellist and all of the different types of singers. So you can see how it would have gone down.

Then, on top of that, it wasn't a tour anymore, because you were jumping from someplace in the East, in Pennsylvania, and coming out to Kansas, and then having to go back to Atlanta, Georgia, and then come out to California or someplace else on the West Coast. So you were jumping back and forth, and that's no career when you don't have a tour, either.

Anyway, with all of this going on-- And then I looked at the group attractions that were being sent out, and those that I had heard were not very successful. I thought, "Well, if this is what they want, why don't I put something together that is going to be a better group attraction?" So that's what I did. My management decided to call it Dorothy Warenskjold's Musical Theater.

HAST: Wonderful. So that's how that started. I see.

WARENSKJOLD: That's how that got started, yes.

HAST: And at the same time were there any operatic roles for you to sing in those years? Or did that fall down also?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, from about then I did-- Well, wait a second.

I was looking to see when I did-- Oh, there are a number of things we haven't talked about.

HAST: We'll get to that. Why don't we talk about the Musical Theater first.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, why don't we finish with this? Let's talk about that, because we'll have to go back to some of the other things that I was doing. Yes.

By this time I was really committed to doing this Dorothy Warenskjold's Musical Theater. What I planned was that the first half of the program was a shortened concert version of *Faust* [by Gounod] which used all of the solos and the duets and, of course, the trio. I had six men and two other women besides myself just with a pianist. So we did really all of the music from *Faust*. We had enough men to really make a good sound for the soldier's chorus. You'd be surprised how six men can really sound like a male chorus.

HAST: That's wonderful. It's always hard to get the male voices together, isn't it, too? There always seems to be more female voices available. [laughter]

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. But these were all professional people, and when you have six really professional-- Two tenors, two baritones, and two basses.

HAST: Oh, that's exciting.

WARENSKJOLD: So that was the first half. And I did that with a little scenery. I had something that looked like the era, you know--

HAST: Just as a backdrop on the stage?

WARENSKJOLD: No, it wasn't a backdrop. They were things that we carried with us. It was two set pieces with an arch over the top so there could be an entrance made. And it dressed up the stage.

HAST: So it was actually partially staged?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, yes. I said concert version, but it was staged in that way.

HAST: Well, that makes it interesting.

WARENSKJOLD: But we were not in costume.

HAST: Aha. Not in costume.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, not in costume. But everything was in black and white. The men were in tails, and the women were all in black and white. Then I had three different things for them to stand on that had covers that looked like rock formations.

These were all carried around with us and had to be taken in and set up.

HAST: Oh, my goodness. Did you plan all this yourself?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. I produced it. I planned the program, and then I produced it.

Just to finish this off, the second half was the story

of America's musical theater, and this was extremely interesting, too. We changed costume--I had the men in yellow tux jackets, and the women were in colorful evening dresses. And we partially staged this, too.

HAST: How interesting.

WARENSKJOLD: It really was. It was an awfully interesting program.

HAST: They don't have programs like this now, do they?

WARENSKJOLD: No, no, we don't.

HAST: Maybe you should start it again, Dorothy. [laughter]  
I'll be at your right side helping in any way I can.

WARENSKJOLD: Right. Anyway, they--

HAST: So was this all for one evening? Or was this separate evenings for *Faust*, and the--

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, no, no, no. The first half of the program was *Faust*.

HAST: So how long did the whole performance take in one evening?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, I would say about forty to forty-five minutes for the *Faust*, and about the same for that in the second half.

HAST: Well, that certainly must have interested a number of people in the audience.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, they loved it. Yes, yes.

HAST: All kinds of people.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. Now, the interesting thing is that from being just a singer who was booked by a manager for a tour and thinking that the manager was not really doing a good job for me because he hadn't gotten me enough recitals, all of a sudden I became the producer and I was on the other side of it. I began to see why this had happened. They paid me a weekly sum to put on this whole thing.

HAST: Who is they?

WARENSKJOLD: Columbia Artists [Management]

HAST: Oh, they did? Oh, I see. That was going to be my question. You were working with them still?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, of course, yes. They were booking the whole thing, of course.

HAST: See, that's important.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes. Yes. Well, I had to go back in 1968-- They have a conference in New York for all of the Community [Concert Association] representatives, and they give the artists a chance to sing or play or whatever to all these representatives who were then going to go out and sell you to the rest of the country. Of course, I had done that quite a number of times as a soloist. So my manager said, "All right, we're going to be doing this. I want you to come back here and present the idea. I know you can't bring all of your singers and everything like that, but I just want you

to come and talk to them and present the idea of what the program is going to be and how you're going to handle it for them." So I did that in 1968 at this conference.

HAST: And you sold them on it immediately.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. They all came up to me afterwards and said, "This is what we need. Oh, I'm so glad it's being done. And we know that you know what our audiences are, and you know what the audiences want." They went out and sold it just on my telling them about it, not seeing it.

HAST: Of course, they'd known you for years.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes, of course. Of course. We'd had a very good relationship for years. So what happened was that I was paid a lump sum every week, out of which I had to hire and pay the singers. I had to pay for their transportation, I had to pay for all of the music arrangements that we had made for the second half, all the choral arrangements, and that sort of thing. I had put together this *Faust* myself musically.

HAST: Did you have people to help you with the arrangements?

Did you have musicians who--?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes, yes, with the musical arrangements for the--

HAST: For the performances.

WARENSKJOLD: --for the musical theater part of it. We just

did it from the regular score for the *Faust*. So let's see.

Where are we?

HAST: But you had to hire--?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes, I had to do--

HAST: You had to do the hiring of the individual singers.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes. Oh, absolutely, yes.

HAST: That didn't go through Columbia?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, no, no, no. No, I was paid by Columbia--

HAST: To do this.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, to produce this show. So all of the money had to come in for the scenery that I had. Most of the men, even though they were semiprofessionals, did not have their own full dress suits, so I bought their full dress suits for them. I bought the yellow tux jackets for the second half because this was part of the show. I had to buy two vans, one twelve-seat van to carry all of the people around, and I had to buy another van to carry the clothes and our stage scenery.

HAST: Oh, so you went in two vans cross country?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes.

HAST: But you really had to be a businesswoman, didn't you?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, absolutely. Yes, yes. I had my personal representative [Dorothy Dietz] who had been with me for a number of years. She handled the paying of the checks at

the end of every week.

HAST: Oh, yes. You had to have help, for heaven's sake.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. And it wasn't just giving them a check, you know. They were in towns where nobody knew them. They couldn't cash those checks there. So I had to arrange for the cashing of their checks so that they could get the amount of money that they needed, and then they sent the rest of it home or whatever it was. All of this sort of thing had to be done. It had to be done with a CPA [certified public accountant] at home, of course, all of this-- It was a job.

HAST: Well, as you said, it was the other side that you really learned about.

WARENSKJOLD: Absolutely, the other side. And then, as far as the other side was concerned, also, because I was paid a lump sum by the week to produce this show, I then had to give them five performances a week for this.

HAST: I trust they paid you enough to do this. [laughter]

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes. Yes, they paid very well. Well, they paid well. I mean, they paid enough for me to make a little bit of money on it.

HAST: I should hope so.

WARENSKJOLD: It wasn't a fabulous amount, because I had to sing in the thing, too.

HAST: Exactly.



WARENSKJOLD: I thought, first of all, I could just produce it and go around with them, and they said, "Oh, no. We're selling it on your name. You've got to sing with it." So I had to get into the town the night before, get to the place to make sure that they set up the scenery the way I wanted it, meet with the local people, go to the party afterwards, and then a lot of times get into my van and go on to the next town that night so that I didn't have to get up so early the next morning. [laughter]

HAST: I wonder why that is.

WARENSKJOLD: I wonder why that is.

HAST: But that is a tremendous schedule.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. But, you see, what happens is that when-- These group attractions have to have-- Now, mine was a singing group, so I insisted that we do no more than five a week, because we were all soloists. Each one of them had to do solos as well as singing together.

HAST: But you really enjoyed the singing part, too, didn't you?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, surely. I enjoyed it, yes. But whereas there are choral groups that do six and seven a week, you know, these were all people who were doing solos, so we did only five. When you realize how many group attractions there were going on at that time, and each one of them had to do

at least five a week, you can see how that would fill up these series so that there was really no room for solo performers.

HAST: Oh, I see. So you saw that side of it.

WARENSKJOLD: I saw that side of it, yes. But for a while--

When I was just a singer and saw these recitals going down and down and down, I spoke with Brian Sullivan, the tenor, because I thought this was happening to me alone.

HAST: Oh, you did?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, surely. Yes. So I spoke with him about it. We did an Easter sunrise service at the Hollywood Bowl one time, and I spoke to him about it. And he said, "Oh, I'm so happy to know that it's not just me that this is happening to." So all of us were going through this same thing at that time. And he had a very difficult time. You know what happened with him some years later. He just couldn't handle it; he committed suicide.

HAST: Oh, he did?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes.

HAST: When was this? In the seventies or--?

WARENSKJOLD: I can't remember. I can't remember when. I guess it must have been somewhere around there, yes. [in 1969]

HAST: Oh, because he felt his career had gone down the tubes?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, yes. He was over in Switzerland, and

somehow he went out on a boat on the water and never came back. Anyway, you see how difficult that is.

Now, I looked around for something else to do. My management at this time was contacting me and saying, "Here we have two universities that are looking for somebody, and we mentioned you, and they said they would like to have you."

And I said, "I'm not a teacher. I'm a performer. I'm interested in performance. I'm not interested in teaching."

HAST: Yes, at that point, certainly.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, yes. So this went on that way, and I really wasn't. I thought I never would want to teach, because I didn't have the patience to have people come back time and time again and make the same mistakes. [laughter]

HAST: So did you book your company all over the United States?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes. We were up in Canada. So we did this for twelve weeks straight the first year, five concerts a week.

HAST: My goodness!

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, with all of the traveling in between. It isn't that you go into town for one whole week and stay there.

Every single night was in a different town.

HAST: That's very, very hard. You had drivers for the vans, of course.

WARENSKJOLD: Well, they drove their van. They took turns,

the singers took turns.

HAST: Oh, they did?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, surely. Oh, yes. And I didn't want to be traveling with them, so I drove the van that had the costumes and the scenery in it, yes. And then I was free to leave the night after the concert and drive for three, four hours or something like that and get in early in the morning.

HAST: Independent, as usual.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, absolutely. It was hard enough as it was to be mother superior and everything, to wipe the noses of all of these singers when they ran into problems with each other or this or that. [laughter] And there was an awful lot of that.

HAST: Yes, I imagine there was. There always is when you have a group like that. But now, how were things in Canada?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, they were wonderful audiences up there. We'd have a little group of towns in one portion of Canada, and then we'd have quite a distance that we'd [need to] go before we got to the next one.

TAPE NUMBER: VIII, SIDE TWO

JUNE 12, 1992

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, just to finish with this, we did this show for three years.

HAST: Three years.

WARENSKJOLD: Three years, yes. It was not night after night, and it didn't go on for months and months and months, but we did it the first year for twelve weeks. Well, that's--

HAST: That's a long time.

WARENSKJOLD: That's three months, isn't it?

HAST: I think so. [laughter]

WARENSKJOLD: [laughter] It doesn't sound so much when you say twelve weeks, but three months sounds longer. Then the second year I think we did it for eleven weeks. The third year I think we did it for eight weeks. Then I was sick and tired of the program by that time. [laughter]

HAST: Well, did you have different programs?

WARENSKJOLD: No, no. This was the same one.

HAST: Oh, the same program.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. We were doing it in so many different places, you see. We never did it in the same place twice.

HAST: All right. Well, may I ask something, then, which will tie in with some of the other things we've been thinking about?

If you take a role, whether it's on the opera stage or in

a recital, if you do the same piece over and over and over again, do you change it slightly every time you sing it? Or does it become so boring that it's all you can do to get through it?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, no. No, no, no.

HAST: Because if that were the case, you shouldn't be doing it, right?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, that's right. That's right. There was only one time when there was a song that I did on one of my recital programs that I was doing because the composer had asked me to do something, so I did one of her songs. I thought it was a nice song in the very beginning, but it got more boring and more boring and more-- Until I finally had to replace it. I just couldn't do it anymore. But no, as far as doing the same role in an opera, it's not quite the same as, say, doing a musical in New York where you're doing it night after night after night. I don't know that I could do that. I really don't.

HAST: Well, that is really my question. I don't know how people do that.

WARENSKJOLD: Although I really almost did it with this musical theater thing I did.

HAST: Yes, that's why I'm asking you.

WARENSKJOLD: I was doing it five nights in a row. But we

had really different audiences. And working with the eight other singers, also, things were different every single night. They really were.

HAST: And even the people on the stage with you may be different on different nights.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, of course.

HAST: So you have to react to them and be in tune with them.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, yes. Well, for instance, in the *Faust*, I was always Marguerite. I had to be, you know. I was always Marguerite. The two other girls traded off on the Siebel part. But I did my *Faust* every other night with a different tenor. See, I had two tenors. So one night I would do it with this tenor, the next night I would do it with that tenor, and then we'd go back to the first tenor. HAST: And it was different with each tenor.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, of course. And the two baritones were doing Valentin, so they were different each night, and then the Mephistopheles was a different one each night, also. Because I had two basses and two baritones and two tenors. But when you're doing it with exactly the same cast night after night, I don't know if I could do that. But then again, if you do it, you work around that and you make it new for yourself each night.

Now, when I was doing recitals, of course, I did the

same program. This is the wonderful thing about what we had in that era, that we were able to do the same program over and over and over again for different audiences around the country. This is the way you learn not only musically but stagewise how to get across to audiences with what you're doing. This is what you learn. Some of the young people nowadays who do one recital and then maybe two weeks later they have to do another completely different recital, they never get that chance to do the same recital again and again and again.

HAST: And to perfect it as they go along.

WARENSKJOLD: To perfect it, yes, yes.

HAST: That's very interesting.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, because you learn from your audiences, too. You learn reaction to audience. I remember at one time there was a song that I was doing, and it did not go over as well as I thought it would. So the next time, say two days later, I tried just a little harder to get it across to them, because it was a song I loved, and it still didn't get across. And I couldn't figure-- Then the third time I tried even harder to get it across until finally I thought, "This is ridiculous. Why don't I just relax and sing the song and find out if--?"

HAST: And enjoy it as you're doing it.



WARENSKJOLD: And enjoy it, yes. So I did. Probably I had been leaning forward and saying to them, "Don't you get it? Don't you get it?" And they were sort of pushing me away. When I just relaxed and went back and just sang the song, they got it, and they loved it. Then, from that point on, I was able to do it. So you see--

HAST: So you learned about that.

WARENSKJOLD: You learn from your audience. You learn--

HAST: That you don't try too hard.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, you can't. You can't. Your audience has much more sense than we think they have.

HAST: The interesting thing you've just said, though, is that it's very hard for young singers today to get that kind of experience often enough.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, absolutely. Because there are young singers now who are making whole careers--I think I've said this before--on five and six recitals. Maybe they're doing more opera because there is more opera now than there was at the time that I was doing it, more opera companies. But even if you do five or six, it's strung out over the whole year, and you do not get that idea of doing one on a Monday and then doing the same program again on Wednesday and then the same program again on Friday in a completely different town, a different audience. That's the way you learn, and

I was very lucky. I was very lucky that I lived during that era.

HAST: Well, it also takes a lot of discipline to be able to do it that way.

WARENSKJOLD: Well, of course it does. But it's worth it.

HAST: I like the idea very much.

WARENSKJOLD: So, let's see. We've sort of gotten off the track here. There were--

HAST: Yes, I'm sorry I interrupted you. [laughter]

WARENSKJOLD: No, no. There were a few little things. I think we were starting to say that in the middle of a career you sort of go on with the same sort of thing. But back in 1958--and I'm really going way back; now I'm going ten years back--in Cincinnati I did the opera again in the zoo, [laughter] the [Cincinnati] Zoo Opera. We did *Rosenkavalier* there, and if you can imagine in the kind of weather that they have there with those heavy costumes for *Rosenkavalier*--

HAST: Terrible, terrible.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, we were just expiring with perspiration.

Anyway, this was again with Frances Bible. She was *the* Octavian during that era, and she was a marvelous Octavian. The Marschallin there was Eleanor Steber. I had never worked with Eleanor before. I'd met her a number of times but we had never worked together before. She had been one of my

loves as far as beautiful singing was concerned when I was studying. I don't know whether I spoke about it, but before I was with the San Francisco Opera--I think it was about two years before I was with them--Eleanor Steber came out to the San Francisco Opera to make her debut, and we sat together at the opera gala. I sat right next to her, and, oh, imagine sitting next to Eleanor Steber! Because I had the few recordings that she had done at that time.

HAST: So she already had a big name.

WARENSKJOLD: She was young in her career, but she was really up and coming. She was doing Sophie in *Der Rosenkavalier*, and she was doing Micaëla in *Carmen* [by Bizet], all of the roles that--

HAST: All your roles.

WARENSKJOLD: That I was to do later. I remember sitting next to her at this opera gala, and we began talking about singing. She told me who she studied with at the New England Conservatory [of Music], and I told her who I studied with in San Francisco. I said, "Did your teacher work with [Nicola] Vaccai exercises?" And she said, "Oh, yes!" And the two of us sat there at this opera gala and sang through the whole book of Vaccai [*Metodo pratico di canto italiano*]. Now, these are exercises, vocal exercises, but with words, Italian words. It's the bible of the really good singer, because it teaches you how to sing

a legato line. You sing long vowels, and the consonants come at the end just before the next syllable. This is typical Vaccai, and anybody who has worked that way with Vaccai is a good singer, really. So this was fun. Well, that was just digressing for a moment.

HAST: That's very interesting, though. Do they still teach this method now?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, it's not a method; it's just a book of exercises.

HAST: It's not a method?

WARENSKJOLD: No, it's not really a method. I wouldn't call it a method. There are some teachers who give Vaccai to their students but don't talk at all in terms of what Vaccai really wanted. I mean, it starts with seconds and thirds and fourths and fifths and all of the special things that you have to know in music. But, good gracious, you learn that anyway. You don't need that for that. The main point in Vaccai is learning how to sing these vowels and quick consonants.

So getting back to Steber as the Marschallin in *Rosenkavalier*, she was-- This was quite a number of years later, of course, and she had put on quite a number of pounds, too. She had, I guess, fought the battle of the bulge all her life. And I don't really think I'm telling anything out of school when I say she liked her little drink, too. [laughter]

But anyway, at one of the rehearsals, the piano rehearsals-- And this happened to be Fausto Cleva again; he was conducting. We were sitting there, and he had a pianist, and he was conducting. And at one spot in the thing, evidently Eleanor was singing something a little too loud for him, and with the baton he stopped us and said, "Eleanor, you're too heavy." And she said, "I beg your pardon!" [laughter] She really was serious about it. She thought he was saying that she had too much weight on her. Then he had to say, "Oh, no, no, no, no. I mean vocally it's too heavy. You have to lighten it up a little bit." "Oh. Oh, all right," she said. [laughter] HAST: Oh, poor thing.

WARENSKJOLD: And then at the zoo itself, in between acts-- The dressing rooms were not all that great. There was one dressing room for the lead women singers. The front part of it was for one or two, and the back part was for one or two, with something in between. But we could hear everything going on in both of them. Well, through the first act we kept hearing "pop, pop," and corks were going. [laughter] Every time she'd come off stage there'd be a pop of the cork. This was champagne, so that evidently was her drink. It was so hot, and we were just dying of thirst, so we had ice brought in, and we had some Seven-Up there. So I said to Frances Bible, "Fran, how about a Seven-Up?" She said, "Oh, gosh,

yes. I'm dying of thirst." So ice went in over here and--  
So suddenly I thought, "Well, I can't just ignore Eleanor."

So I said, "Eleanor?" And she said, "Yes?" I said, "Would you like a Seven-Up?" And there was absolute silence. And she said, "Seven-Up!" [laughter] Fran and I were just dying in front, because we'd been hearing all of this cork popping. But with it all she sang like an angel.

HAST: Did she?

WARENSKJOLD: An angel. Oh, how I wish I had a recording of that performance, because that trio was the most beautiful vocally that I think I've ever been a part of and that I could have imagined. Oh, her voice was unbelievably beautiful. Just beautiful.

So let's see. Where are we now? Oh, yes, we're in--

HAST: We just went back in time a little bit. [laughter]

WARENSKJOLD: Well, let's go up a little bit in time. In the next year, in '59, I did *Carmen* in Chicago at the Lyric Opera of Chicago. Turn this off for just a second. [tape recorder off] Yes, this was the Chicago Lyric Opera, and it was a new production of *Carmen*, and all new scenery, new costumes.

I was not allowed to use my costumes. We had to use the costumes that were designed for the scenery. I have a vague recollection that I mentioned this before. It's so hard to remember what you say.

HAST: Very early on a tape we talked about costumes because you always had your own costumes, as I recall.

WARENSKJOLD: I think we did speak of this, then. This was the place where they did the *jupe bleue*, you know.

HAST: Oh, yes.

WARENSKJOLD: And I was in brown and yellow.

HAST: Yes. [laughter]

WARENSKJOLD: And here it's supposed to-- It says "blue" right there.

HAST: I remember this. That's funny.

WARENSKJOLD: So that was where that was. But this was the first and only place that I ever had any problem with a stage director. I always got along beautifully with stage directors.

This was a German woman, Margarete Wahlmann, who at that time was very well-known in Europe. She did a lot of first performances of operas in the major companies over there, so she was brought over to do this new production of *Carmen* in Chicago. She had been a ballet dancer originally, and then she was a choreographer. And from that-- She had had an accident, and we all used to talk about it. We never really knew, but because she was so miserable to work with we thought that in her ballet one time when some man was holding her up in the air he got fed up with it and decided to drop her.

[laughter] Her leg was broken, and she had a very bad limp

and always had to sit down. She always carried this--what did she call it?--"my shooting stick." This is one of these things that you open out. It's like a cane, but you open it out and there's a little seat on it and you can sit down.

So she always had that with her, because she couldn't stand for any length of time.

HAST: Well, she probably was in a lot of pain a good part of the time.

WARENSKJOLD: It could be, yes. And I suppose, with somebody like that who is in pain-- But after all--

HAST: Very hard to deal with.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, yes. Anyway, she was one of these people who was making up what she wanted to happen on stage at the moment. I don't think she had done any work on it before she got to Chicago.

HAST: How did she get this job?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, because she was well-known in Europe. So when they were going to be doing a new production they said, "Well, let's see, who can we get?" Now, this was beginning to be the era of the stage director, you see. Here it was starting.

HAST: Ah, yes. So what year are we now?

WARENSKJOLD: That was 1959, and it may have even been a year or so earlier than that.



Anyway, in the first act, where Micaëla comes on and-- We didn't talk about this did we? Micaëla comes on and asks for Don José of the other men on stage, and they say, "No, he's not here, but he'll be here later." Then she says, "No, no, no. I'll come back later." She starts to go off, but then she comes back and sings with them. [sings]

You remember that portion of it? Well, I started to run off, and then I was getting ready to turn back to sing, and she said, "Go, go, go. Go! Get off! Get off!" And I said, "Madam Wahlmann, I still have something to sing." And she said, "Ah. Oh well, then." She hadn't the faintest idea of what the characters were or what they were doing or what they were singing.

HAST: But this is why I wondered how she got to be a stage director and got the job.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. I don't know how she got it. She started out as a ballet choreographer, and from that--

HAST: Well, that's something else.

WARENSKJOLD: Little by little it worked into something like this. But, oh, dear!

HAST: Was this during rehearsal, I trust? [laughter]

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, indeed, it was during rehearsal. And then it was-- I've forgotten the tenor, well-known tenor. Again, I can give his name to you when it comes to me. But he was

an Italian, and he was on the downslope of his career at that time. Of course, he was still very well-known. Oh, it's right there but it's not coming out. [Giuseppe DiStefano] Anyway, he arrived about three days late for rehearsals, and nobody knew where he was or anything like that. So when he came in-- I don't know whether he was still there too early for him. He didn't want to come that early even though he was three days late. He was miserable to work with, also.

During rehearsals in this one spot-- He wasn't paying any attention to me when we were having our duet during rehearsals; he was just facing away from me. And at this one spot where I say, "Here is a letter from your mother," then he is to say, "Une lettre?" and take the letter from me-- Well, I took the letter out of my little bundle here and handed it to him, and he was facing away from me, and nothing happened. So I just dropped it on the floor and then went on singing.

[laughter]

HAST: What else could you really do?

WARENSKJOLD: What else could I do? But this is still rehearsal, you see. No, there's no difficulty there. Well, we did about five different performances over a period of a month of this. At the end of the duet, the tenor has to sing above the soprano, and it's supposed to be pianissimo, because the soprano is down in mid-range at that point. The tenor is

supposed to be singing pianissimo up there. Well, he evidently couldn't sing pianissimo at that point, and so he was always coming out full voice up there. There wasn't anything I could do. I came out as loud as I could, but I was down--I've forgotten what the note is but--around a B, you know. So this went on for the first four performances. The very last performance-- And I had said something to him about it. I said, "Can't you do it pianissimo?" And he said, "No, I-- [clears throat] No, I can't. [clears throat]" That sort of thing. The last performance, he pulled himself together and he sang it pianissimo, and it was lovely. And afterwards, when we were waiting to come out for our bows, he looked at me, and he said, "You see, I did do it, didn't I?" I said, "Thank you. It was lovely." Then that was it.

HAST: How nice. What happened with the letter in the meantime? Did he--?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes. Well, of course. When we were offstage--

HAST: He ended up taking it finally. [laughter]

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, of course. Oh, yes. No, he was just in a very bad mood during the rehearsals.

HAST: Well, does it ever happen during a performance that a singer won't relate to the person he should relate to? Then what do you do? You just have to pretend and go on?

WARENSKJOLD: I suppose that happens. I have never, never had that. I've never had that.

HAST: Well, that's good.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, yes. I've always had very--

HAST: It must be terrible if it doesn't work.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh! It would be horrendous, yes.

HAST: Indeed, yes.

WARENSKJOLD: But this Margarete Wahlmann-- I just have to finish this off. She left after about the first two performances.

HAST: Oh, she did?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes, because she was there just to set it up. Most stage directors don't stay around if they're doing just one opera. So they took her to the train, and they came back afterwards and told me what had happened. They were ushering her on, getting her on the train as fast as they could, you know, getting rid of her as fast-- Because she had evidently been miserable with everybody. And here the train was going out, and she was waving, and she said, "Ah!

My shooting stick! My shooting stick!" She had evidently left her shooting stick back someplace. [laughter] And

everybody was waving, "Goodbye, Madame

Wahlmann. Goodbye, Madame Wahlmann," as though they couldn't understand what she was saying. [laughter] I never did find

out whether she got her shooting stick back.

HAST: Whether they ever sent it to her.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes. So it wasn't just that I was having a bad time with her. She was miserable with everybody.

HAST: It's so unfortunate when you have to deal with people like that.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. I couldn't really have respect for the woman who hadn't done any work on it before she arrived at all.

HAST: Well, it was part of her insecurity maybe that she was so nasty to everybody.

WARENSKJOLD: It could be. That really could be, yes. That's right.

HAST: Very unfortunate indeed. So that was that experience.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. Then the next year--this was 1960--I did *Faust* with the Cosmopolitan Opera [Company] in San Francisco.

I think we spoke about that company that started up there.

\*[Campbell McGregor was president and principal backer of

---

\* Warenskjold added the following bracketed section during her review of the transcript.

the Pacific Opera Company. This company had been producing low-priced, low-budget opera in San Francisco off and on through the years with local talent. When in 1953 McGregor, the single angel, pulled his name and backing out, the Pacific Opera faded away. McGregor soon announced plans for the first season of his own Cosmopolitan Opera in 1954. Instead of local talent, they offered big-name artists who were given stupendous fees while overall production values were slighted. The big names came, of course, because of the fees, which were much more than the top fee paid by the San Francisco Opera. The Cosmopolitan proceeded to flourish and the deficit grew. Mr. McGregor picked up the tab. The deficit reached \$70,000 in 1959, and when it was more at the end of the 1960 season, he announced that he was withdrawing his support. Without him the company could not exist. Most San Franciscans felt this was a shame, because the Cosmopolitan's emphasis on vocal stars reflected a genuine enthusiasm of the operatic public.]

---

\* Warenskjold added the following bracketed section during her review of the transcript.

This was the last opera that [Jussi] Björling ever did. It may even have been the last performance that he ever did, because he went home and I think he died some three or four months later. But he was still singing like an angel, and he was the dearest, sweetest man to work with. You cannot imagine.

HAST: And his voice was beautiful.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes! People say that he was not a great actor, but there was something about him. Maybe in Puccini or something like that, some realism, maybe he wasn't. But for Faust, for that character, he had an elegance in every movement on stage that was absolute perfection. And then to sing with that voice, also, it was a wonderful experience.

HAST: What a lovely thing.

WARENSKJOLD: And never saw a thing in connection with his drinking too much, not a thing. We went to a party after the last performance that the head of the opera company gave. We were all sitting around the table. I was sitting next to him, and his wife [Anna Berg Björling] was there, also. And I don't even remember whether he took a drink or didn't.

HAST: Did they say he was an alcoholic in private?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, yes. Oh, yes.

HAST: How sad, yes.

WARENSKJOLD: He and his wife, too, I understand. What a shame.

But somebody who would drink as much as he did for as long as he did, you would have thought that it would have done something to the voice. But it was just as gorgeous that last time as it was in any of the recordings that you hear. It's amazing.

HAST: Yes. You'd think it would do something to the voice.

And I have another question: cigarette smoking. I cannot-- Well, you never smoked.

WARENSKJOLD: No, I never smoked.

HAST: But I know singers who smoke.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, I know.

HAST: And you just wonder. It must be--

WARENSKJOLD: And they still do. Even in this day and age they still do.

HAST: But it must be harmful.

WARENSKJOLD: Well, I was used to it. My father [William E. Warenskjold] smoked for years and years until he had a heart attack, and then he stopped. So I was used to having cigarette smoke around. My grandfather smoked a cigar, and that is the thing that just killed me.

HAST: It's the worst.

WARENSKJOLD: When I was at parties or when I would be driven to my recitals or whatever, sometimes people smoked. In those



days they didn't ask; they just took it for granted that everybody smoked. They didn't say, "Do you mind if I smoke?" So sometimes, if it was a car that was closed up, I would say, "Please, I'd prefer you didn't smoke." But I always said, "No, I don't mind a cigarette, please, as long as it's not a cigar. That I can't take." There was something heavy and oily about the smoke of a cigar that just did terrible things to me.

HAST: But it used to be the fashion. I mean, you were elegant and smart if you-- The "in" thing to do was to hold that cigarette.

WARENSKJOLD: You had to have a cigarette in your fingers, yes.

HAST: And to light it for the woman and so on and so forth.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, I tried it a couple of times when I was in my sorority house, Alpha Omicron Pi, at UC [University of California, Berkeley]. I finally found that I could only do it just before a meal to get that horrible taste out of my mouth. Oh, it was just awful.

Anyway, during that same year I also did a *Carmen* in Miami. This was kind of interesting, too, because it was with Risë Stevens. It was the only time I ever did *Carmen* with her. This was really very much toward the end of her career at that time. But I thought back to the time when I was a student in San Francisco and I was doing one of my

very first full recitals that I spoke about, and there were pictures in the paper. In the Sunday section--I think this was the *Oakland Tribune*--they would have pictures of people who were doing things for the coming week in the area. She was evidently singing a role in the opera, and Jan Peerce was doing a recital someplace that coming week, and I was doing my little recital, my very first solo recital, at Charles Mallory Dutton's. There was a picture of me here with Risë Steven's picture, the same size as mine, on the left and Jan Peerce's picture on the other side, the same size. And I thought, "Here I am in this company of these great singers!"

It was really quite exciting at the time. And these many years later I found myself singing Micaëla to her Carmen. Can you imagine?

HAST: Wonderful!

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. And then also, same thing, to find myself doing Mimi to Jan Peerce's Rodolpho [in *La Bohème* by Puccini], those many years later, too. So it's--

HAST: So it showed you you'd come a long way.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, indeed I had. Well, there were a good number of years in between, too.

Then we go on to 1961. In the summer of '61 I did *La Traviata* [by Verdi] at the Central City Opera Festival. You

never happened to have seen that, did you? It was fabulous.

It's in that little opera house in Central City [Colorado] that was built at the time when gold was being taken out of the hills. It's a historic little opera house, and they give an opera festival each year. This happened to be *La Traviata*.

It was for the whole month. And there were two casts. I did ten performances, and the other cast did, I think probably it would have been, nine. But as it turned out, the girl who did the other Violetta became ill. We spelled each other, you know, every other night. So the last three performances I did three performances of *Traviata* in three days at eighty-five hundred feet in altitude, because that's way up there.

HAST: That must affect your voice and your breathing--?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, we had to get there in advance. We rehearsed the opera in New York, and then we got out there ten days in advance of the first performance in order to become acclimatized. It was difficult, but it didn't bother me for some strange reason--I don't know why--as much as it did other people. But I was a little breathless, I must say, the third night of the "*Ah, fors' è lui*," those high C's up there. They always had to have oxygen for the dancers offstage.

HAST: Oh, is that right?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes. Every time they came off stage after

they did their dance, they reached for the oxygen immediately.

I never had any problem with that.

But it was a fascinating time. They made a house available for me, one of the old Victorian houses that was there at the time of all of this gold. Oh, it was just fascinating.

HAST: How interesting.

WARENSKJOLD: So then, let's see. Of course, I'm still doing recitals and orchestras, that sort of thing. Then, in 1962-- You know, you were talking in terms of how the repertoire can change over the years as you get a little older.

HAST: As you get older, yes.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. Early in my career I never would have thought of doing Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte* [by Mozart].

I never would have thought of doing that. By 1962 I was offered the role, and it seemed right for me. I'd done the arias with orchestra, so I knew they were all right. I looked at the rest of it, and I said, "No, this is all right. I can do this now."

HAST: Now, as you progressed in your career, did you ever get somebody else's opinion on how you were doing? Or did you now make your own decisions because you could listen to yourself and you knew what you were doing?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, whenever I was back in the San Francisco

area I always went back to my teacher, Mabel Riegelman.

HAST: Oh, you did?

WARENSKJOLD: I cannot remember at this moment when she passed away, but every time I went back, even after she had sort of semiretired and was not teaching too much, I always went back and sang for her.

HAST: To get an objective opinion.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. Because you can get into bad habits. And, of course, I was lucky, you see. I had my mother [Mildred Stombs Warenskjold] also with her marvelous ear. I don't think I ever got into musical bad habits like scooping and slurring and that sort of thing. I don't think I ever did that because I was so well trained in the beginning that you start right in the middle of a note and you don't let it drop in the middle. You have to use the support to keep it up there. But there are little things that you can do. I was lucky enough that whether it was my teacher, Mabel Riegelman, or whether it was my mother, if they would make a suggestion to me that I was doing this or that, I had had such good training that I could change it immediately.

HAST: That's extraordinary.

WARENSKJOLD: I just had to be made aware of it, because there are things that you do on stage, and there are things that

you do on stage as far as your movement also, that you have to have somebody who is really interested in you and who will say, "No, you do this now. That's becoming a habit. You shouldn't do that." And then you work to change that.

HAST: How about pitch? You never have any trouble singing--?

WARENSKJOLD: No, because that was another thing that was just dinned into me as--- Well, no. I must say that I think I had that already because I had studied violin. I think that's marvelous for any singer to study any kind of a stringed instrument, because you have to hear that sound in your ear, and then you have to make that sound on the instrument. It's entirely different from playing the piano, where you play the notes and if the piano's in tune it comes out right. As with a stringed instrument, you have to really be conscious of singing a proper pitch. My teacher was just adamant about that. You just didn't sing the right pitch, you had to sing right in the center of the right pitch.

HAST: I see. Well, now, when voices fade away or start to fade away, this is one of the problems, is it not, quite often, that the pitch isn't really correct?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. The muscles are not in tone and can't hold it. And I think a lot of times they don't use enough abdominal support of the tone, also. It becomes too easy, and they

just let it come out.

HAST: It's just painful to hear when a great singer gets to that point.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes it is.

HAST: And this is what you were saying, then, that when the time comes to quit you have to leave it.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, yes. With the singers that we were talking about before, I don't think it was ever a pitch problem with them. It got into a wobble, and that's another thing that drives me crazy.

Now, going on a little bit to some of the auditions that I judge, the thing that really hurts me is when I hear young voices already starting to have a wobble.

HAST: Can that be corrected?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, it depends. It depends on whether you get them early enough. Sometimes I think it has gone too far.

TAPE NUMBER: IX, SIDE ONE

JUNE 18, 1992

HAST: You were going to talk about something that you mentioned briefly to me.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes. The only time I ever had to cancel a performance because of illness--laryngitis, as a matter of fact, the only time I've ever had it in my life-- I had had a cold coming on for one of the recitals, and I got through that. The funny part of it is, when you have a cold, or a cold coming on, you sing better than ever. It seems to open up all of the passages in here. That's--

HAST: When they say singing above a cold--? I've heard that said.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, you can--

HAST: How do you actually do that?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, you can do that if it's in the nose. If it's down in your throat, no, you don't. You can't sing above a cold, no. But this one was just coming on. I hadn't really gotten the cold yet, and I sang really quite well. But that night I really felt it coming on, and the next day it came.

It was just a very bad cold. It wasn't flu or anything like that. And I had, oh, a week or so before I had to be in, I think it was, Oklahoma for a performance of *Carmen* [by Bizet].



This recital was up in the San Francisco Bay Area. I came down to Los Angeles to come home to see my throat doctor before I went off to Tulsa, Oklahoma. He looked in there, and I told him what I had coming up, and he said, "You're not going to be able to do that performance." And I said, "Oh, but I heal very quickly, Doctor. I've never had this before. If I have this week to rest, it will be--" He said, "This is a case of laryngitis. You've not had this before. You don't know how long it's going to take to get over this." So I still didn't believe him. I drove--as I was still doing at that time-- I drove to Oklahoma, because I was going on from there with some recitals afterwards. I got there, got into the rehearsal, and I still had real laryngitis. Of course, I was being careful at the same time--

HAST: I was going to say--

WARENSKJOLD: I wasn't forcing it through.

HAST: Doesn't that hurt the vocal cords?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, to try to sing over that?

HAST: Yes.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes, absolutely. So in rehearsals I didn't sing. I told them that I had laryngitis, but I said, "I'm sure--" And I went to a doctor in Oklahoma, also. He was watching it very carefully, and he said, "It doesn't look

good." And I said, "But I know it's going-- I'm sure."

[laughter] So we had about three days of rehearsal, and it just wasn't getting any better. I finally talked to them and said, "Really, we're going to have to get somebody, because I can't do it." And if you can imagine, this was Micaëla.

Can you imagine there was a difficulty in finding a Micaëla?

HAST: Well, at the last moment and on your level, I would think so.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, it really was about two days before the performance. So they called New York, and there wasn't anybody available. I contacted my mother [Mildred Stombs Warenskjold] out here in Los Angeles and said, "See if you can find somebody there who is capable of it." She found Maralin Niska, as a matter of fact, who was just starting in her career out here. I'd heard her and thought it was a lovely voice before.

So mother contacted her and asked her, and she said she knew the aria but she didn't know-- But she said, "I'll do it."

[laughter] She was going to do the role, the whole role, in that length of time.

HAST: But this was her big chance, wasn't it?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, of course it was a big chance for her, but she really didn't realize that you can't do it overnight.

You can't learn a role. Well, they did finally get somebody

from New York, flew them out for the thing. They were getting to the point where they were saying, "We'll have somebody here sing it offstage for you and you go through the action."

They really got to that point! I said, "Surely. I'll do anything because I feel so terrible about this, but there's just nothing I can do."

HAST: That's very unusual, isn't it, that they'd do that?

WARENSKJOLD: It has been done. It has been done when they do a role that is almost impossible--

HAST: You lip-sync it like--

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. Then the person offstage can do it with the score and there's no problem.

HAST: Oh, I see.

WARENSKJOLD: You see, that's the thing. But to get somebody onstage acting and all of that was difficult. Anyway, they did find somebody.

Well, a week later I was scheduled to do a recital in Great Bend, Kansas. I never will forget it. I still wasn't in good shape. It was a strange kind of thing. I could sing high notes and sing-- The middle range was a little fuzzy.

But I got there, and I was at the point of saying to the people, "I will come back. Because you will not hear the best of Warenskjold. I will come back for another one." I

went to the auditorium to see about setting up things, and the stage manager there, the one who was setting up the stage for me, was so miserable. I've never had that trouble anywhere.

Anywhere. He was the nastiest person. And I suddenly thought to myself, "I know this is terrible because the audience isn't getting the best of me, but I don't want to come back here and have to go through this with this man again." So I did the recital, and it was not the best thing for me to do, because I was having to push out the voice rather than letting it flow out.

Then the next thing, I had about three weeks before I had to go to San Francisco to do the Debussy, *La Damoiselle élue*. I got there and I went through it, but I was still at the point-- The quality was there excepting I could not diminuendo a tone. I couldn't go from a forte, then hold it, and diminuendo down to a pianissimo. And anything that was pianissimo just wouldn't come out. So that whole Debussy work was done mezzo forte and forte. [laughter] And of course, pianissimo was one of the big things in my voice.

HAST: Of course. When you have this kind of a throat, do you have to cough sometimes also?

WARENSKJOLD: No, no, no. It had nothing to do with a cough. No, this was just purely--

HAST: But for most people, when they have a cold, there's always other little--

WARENSKJOLD: When it was a cold, yes.

HAST: Clearing the throat and that kind of thing.

WARENSKJOLD: That's right. It depends if it's that kind of a thing. But this had nothing to do with--

HAST: So that was not a problem because--

WARENSKJOLD: No, it was just laryngitis, you see, the vocal cords.

HAST: Oh, I understand that, but I know when you have that drainage it's very likely that one would also have a cough.

WARENSKJOLD: No, this was--

HAST: This may sound like a silly question to you, but what does happen if you're in the middle of an aria and suddenly you have to cough? Does that ever happen?

WARENSKJOLD: You never do. You never do. That's the strange thing. The only time there is a possibility of a cough is when you take a big breath. Then that is difficult, before the phrase. In the middle of the phrase, that never happens.

And as far as a sneeze is concerned, somebody asked me one time, "What happens if you're sneezing in the middle of a high note?" And I said, "You never do. You never are." A sneeze could come between-- Luckily that never happened.

HAST: Never happened to you?

WARENSKJOLD: Never happened, no.

HAST: A cough in the wrong place or--?

WARENSKJOLD: No, I had a couple of little coughs in between that you sort of stifle, you know. Then you try to get it out between songs. But most of the time I was-- I must knock on wood.

HAST: I think you were so lucky!

WARENSKJOLD: I was so wonderfully healthy, and I really am knocking on wood, because there are a lot of people who have problems not only with colds and that sort of thing but have allergies, and allergies to dust. Of all things, to be an opera singer and have an allergy to dust when they're moving the scenery around the stage. I didn't have any allergies--I'm so grateful for that--and I was extremely healthy. I got few colds, and I took awfully good care of myself.

HAST: Did you take special precautions? I'm sure you continued sports in some way always, didn't you?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. Well, of course, when I was traveling so much I didn't get a chance, although we did-- We'd get in town the night before, and sometimes my accompanist and I would go bowling.

HAST: Bowling?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. Well, in these small towns--

HAST: That's all there was.

WARENSKJOLD: In the wintertime, when it's snowing outside, there's nothing else you can do, so we'd do that. But you never had time to play golf or anything like that.

HAST: Did you ever do gymnastics just to loosen up?

WARENSKJOLD: No, I didn't.

HAST: You didn't.

WARENSKJOLD: No, I didn't. But--

HAST: But you never had a weight problem either, did you?

WARENSKJOLD: No, I didn't, excepting that one time I think I told you about in New York when we were doing the *Ford Festival*-- Didn't I tell you about that? The Coca-Cola Company would put in one of these machines for free when we were having rehearsals. Everybody would come by at the rehearsal and they'd hand me a Coke as they'd go by, you know, back and forth. And I found that I was drinking something like twelve and thirteen Cokes over the morning and afternoon and evenings.

HAST: It's like an addiction almost, isn't it, with the caffeine in it?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, I don't know. I guess it was.

HAST: There's caffeine in it.

WARENSKJOLD: There's caffeine and sugar and all of that sort of thing. Then I'd get back to my hotel room at night just too late to get out to get anything decent to eat, and I was undressed. And I would have a package of Oreo cookies there.

I swear I ate a whole package of Oreo cookies one night in my room.

HAST: And another Coke. [laughter]

WARENSKJOLD: No, not in my room. This was only in the rehearsal.

But I did put on weight at that point, and then I very quickly had to do something about it. So I don't allow myself to get anything more than three, four pounds over what my ideal weight is. I did at that time.

HAST: So you did watch it consciously.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. I never dieted as such.

HAST: It wasn't really a problem the way it is with a lot of people.

WARENSKJOLD: No, it wasn't really. I just made sure, after that situation that I had, that I wasn't silly about my eating habits.

HAST: Right.

WARENSKJOLD: Anyway, the main reason that I was just bringing this up is the fact that you do have to take awfully good care of your voice when singing is going to be your life.



You have to be careful that if something isn't quite right you go and see a specialist immediately and find out what you have to do, whether you just have to rest for a while, take care of it that way. You have to be careful when you're on tour that you get a proper amount of sleep, and if you don't get the proper amount of sleep-- This was always the thing that was the bother to me. If I didn't get a full eight hours' sleep, I would have the feeling that I was coming down with a cold. Well, I would always carry my little bottle of Coricidin with me, and I would take two Coricidin--this is an antihistamine--at night. I guess it had aspirin in it also and would sort of put me off to sleep as well. So that helped me get some sleep, and usually by the next morning I was all right again. But the traveling that you have to do is deadly.

HAST: Well, let me ask you, along these lines-- Horst Günter--who gives some master classes also at UCLA, used to come regularly--before a recital or any kind of performance, he wouldn't talk the day before and certainly not hours before the performance. Is this something that you practiced also? Or not?

WARENSKJOLD: No, no. I didn't indeed. I always made sure that if I was doing a recital starting at, say, eight fifteen

that I ate dinner no later than five o'clock.

HAST: Oh, I see.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, I ate dinner.

HAST: But you ate a relatively big dinner then?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, fairly good. It takes a lot--

HAST: To give you energy.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes. It takes a lot of energy to do a recital.

HAST: Oh, of course. [laughter]

WARENSKJOLD: Absolutely. Without that, you know, I just couldn't do it night after night.

HAST: Yes. And then afterwards, would you be hungry again?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, absolutely. [laughter] And that was the nice thing about the--

HAST: When you have the high after the performance, yes.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. There were always parties after the recitals, and it was always sent out from my manager in a little note along with everything else that "Miss Warenskjold does not eat a great deal before the concert and so she is hungry after the concert, if you could have maybe a sandwich or something." But most of them would have a steak for me or something like that. They were wonderful. The party would be going on in the main part of the house, and I'd be there for part-- When it was ready they would come and get me, and

they'd say, "We have a little something for you, just specially for you and your accompanist."

HAST: That's wonderful. Well, some performers thrive on those parties afterwards and the accolades and so on.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes.

HAST: But then there are others who find it a real nuisance because they are tired.

WARENSKJOLD: I know. I honestly cannot understand how somebody can finish a recital and go back to his hotel room and--

HAST: It would be such an anticlimax, wouldn't it?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, absolutely. And just be all by yourself?

No, no, no. No, there is a high after it. No matter what the performance is, recital or opera or whatever it is, there is a high afterwards. Whether it is just the adrenalin and the energy that you put out in doing a recital-- I think it probably has something to do with the reaction from the audience afterwards. There has to be something there. It takes you several hours to let down, at which time you'd like to eat.

[laughter]

HAST: Well, when I interviewed Mehli Mehta he was saying the same thing.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, of course.

HAST: It's interesting. I can understand it. I've even watched our students after a performance, and they look like different people. They're so excited, even if the performance wasn't that great. [laughter]

WARENSKJOLD: I know. But it's the best they can do at that moment.

HAST: At that time, yes, so it's a good experience. I agree. But I just wondered if you did enjoy afterwards the--

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes. Oh, yes, indeed. I was always a very shy person, I remember telling you.

HAST: That's what you said. That's why--

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, absolutely. I was a shy person, and parties were kind of torture for me, as opposed to my mother, who was a party animal. She loved parties. But if I were just going socially to a party, I really was so shy it wasn't a real pleasure for me. But at these parties, you see, the difference was--

HAST: Well, at this point you knew a lot of people too, didn't you?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, I knew a lot of people lots of times. At most of these parties I didn't know any of them. I met them the day of the thing.

HAST: Oh, when you traveled.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. I met them the day of the thing and then the party afterwards. But the difference was that the party was given for me. I mean, isn't that funny?

HAST: Well, of course it makes a difference, Dorothy.

[laughter] That's not funny at all; that's absolutely natural.

After all, you had a big name and--

WARENSKJOLD: I could shine at that kind of a party, you see.

HAST: And put on another act. [laughter]

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, yes. Well, I really don't think I was putting on an act. I was really enjoying meeting people afterwards in that way.

HAST: And glowing.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, yes.

HAST: That's really nice. That sounds like a lot of fun.

And certainly I think that's the way it should be.

So, now, let's see. That takes us to-- Now, you were talking about when you finished the [Dorothy Warenskjold] Musical Theater. What made you decide to do that? That was in 1969?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, we started it in 1969, the first year.

Then it was--

HAST: Oh, and then it was five years.

WARENSKJOLD: No, no, three years.

HAST: Only three?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, my heavens, yes. Only three. [laughter]

HAST: I'm sorry.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, my gracious, no. No, they wanted me to go on after the third year. Well, I really would like to have gone on with something a little different. One of the main reasons for doing this, of course, was putting out a good product for the audience, something that the audience was going to enjoy. But the other main reason was to give an outlet for young talent to get experience. So I wanted to do not another thing exactly like this. I presented an idea to them, and they said, "No, we'd rather have the other one. Maybe you can use different music but keep the same format." And I said, "No, I really am not interested in doing that. Let's let it go for a year or so and see what happens after that." I had really had it at the end of that third year.

HAST: You were tired.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. Well, I'd had a lot of problems that third year. My personal manager [Dorothy Dietz], who was managing the tour for me as we were going along, had an accident with our van coming home after the first concert of the season. The van was totaled, and all of the scenery and everything. And all of us had to go on, fly up to, I think, Reno or something

like that for the next one to be done the day after. We had to do it without our scenery and all of that.

HAST: What do you do in a case like that?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, it was very fast. Of course, she was back here with a broken jaw, and she couldn't go on the rest of the tour with us. So one of the fellows who was a bass on our second year and was not with us this third year-- He was so helpful to me. I called him and asked him if he could go and see what he could do with the scenery. His wife is an artist, and so he has a background of that. So he got together all of the scenery. Before I left for Reno I went and bought a new van, and he repaired the scenery and made sure that everything was in working order for me and then put all of the stuff in the new van, all of the clothes that we wore on stage, and then he drove the van up to-- Pacific Grove was the next one. We had to go up to Reno to do one. Then we flew back down to Pacific Grove.

HAST: Where was that?

WARENSKJOLD: Pacific Grove in California, near Carmel. So he drove the van with all of this equipment up to Pacific Grove in California and met all of us who had come down from doing this other concert without any of this sort of thing. I guess they must have flown up with the clothes, because

we had to have all of that. So each one of them took his own, I guess, carried it on the plane with him. Anyway, we got together, and he had done a marvelous job with the scenery.

So from that point on I was handling the whole thing, and I had to pay them all, do all the work that-- Well, she was doing it back at home, you know, but then I would still have to do the actual paying there. Then I always had one man each day drive with me in the van from place to place.

I chose a different fellow each time, and then we'd have dinner the night we got in and all of that. They were really very helpful, but it was a strain. It really was a strain.  
HAST: Very stressful.

WARENSKJOLD: At the end of that tour I was really fed up with it, and I was physically tired, also. At the same time that I was physically tired, I still had to get through with setting up the stage, and I had to meet the people and go to the parties afterwards. And this was a party every night, not like when I was a soloist, where I sang only three times a week. This was five times a week. HAST: That's a lot.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. So when I got through with that, I said, "I've had it," and I closed up everything. I didn't open my mouth for three months for singing.



HAST: Well, that's probably a good rest. Did you go anywhere to relax?

WARENSKJOLD: I really don't remember at this time. I had a pool at home, and I think I pretty much stayed around. But at the end of the three months I sort of got back and started something again, and it really wasn't doing what I wanted.

HAST: Really? After three months?

WARENSKJOLD: The older you get, the more time it takes to practice and keep the voice, those muscles going. That's the strange thing.

HAST: Does it?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. You'd think it would be just the opposite.

HAST: Is that because the muscles age or--?

WARENSKJOLD: I'm sure it must be. It finally got to the point where I was thinking, "This is going to take me just too much time and effort to keep the voice going." So I let it go.

HAST: Is this around 1972 or so?

WARENSKJOLD: This was about '72, yes.

HAST: So what did you decide to do then?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, you don't really decide to do anything; at that point things just happen. I was extremely interested at the time in investments, my investments and my mother's

investments. It was just a fascination to me, had been for years and years and years. HAST: Yes, like a hobby.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. And I finally had the time to do it.

HAST: So you didn't give any performances, then, between--?

WARENSKJOLD: No, no.

HAST: --'seventy-two and--

WARENSKJOLD: Well, I did, yes. They had, I guess it was, the fiftieth anniversary of the San Francisco Opera [Company], and they asked me to come up. They asked a lot of former singers to come out for that. So I sang for that.

HAST: When was this?

WARENSKJOLD: This was-- Well, wait a second. Well, I guess it was '72. It was '72.

HAST: So they celebrated the well-known singers at the opera?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes.

HAST: Including you, of course.

WARENSKJOLD: At the Stern Grove--this is the outdoor concert that we had talked about--they had-- Licia Albanese came out for it from New York, and Frederick Jagel, who was quite a famous tenor, he came out from New York. Oh, quite a number of other people were out for that. So I sang the *Faust* [by Gounod] aria, the Marguerite aria, and I sang a duet with

a tenor--I've forgotten who it was.

HAST: And it went fine.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, it went fine.

HAST: And you enjoyed doing it?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, I loved doing it, yes. I loved doing it.

HAST: So that didn't make you feel you wanted to keep going and do more things?

WARENSKJOLD: I think I would liked to have continued, but it's very easy for me-- I guess it is for other people too, although I've often wondered about that. If I didn't have something to look ahead to as a performance, it was very easy for me not to work. I wasn't this kind of person who was just gung ho on practicing all the time. I practiced, and there was no end to my practicing hour after hour if I had something to work for. But if there wasn't a performance coming up, it was very easy for me--

HAST: But this was in the later years after--

WARENSKJOLD: No, no, no. It was the same--

HAST: Oh, always?

WARENSKJOLD: It was always that way.

HAST: Oh, but you always had something ahead, so it wasn't a problem.

WARENSKJOLD: That's true.

HAST: Because I think somebody asked [Luciano] Pavarotti, "How do you keep the voice going when you get older?" And he said something about just practice and practice and vocalize all the time, and remember your first lesson and what you learned from it.

WARENSKJOLD: But it's true. That's true; you have to do that. But you have to be the kind of person who can do that.

HAST: He does a lot of that, I understand.

WARENSKJOLD: I guess. Well, it's still a beautiful voice.

HAST: But he's in his fifties now, is he not?

WARENSKJOLD: I think so. And it's still beautiful. He can't do some of the high notes that he used to be able to do, but it's still beautiful.

HAST: So you didn't say to yourself, "Well, I think the time has come to retire."

WARENSKJOLD: No. Never. No, no, no. No, I had-- And I really rather missed that, because some people do say, "I'm going to retire at a certain time," and they give a farewell concert.

Some of them give five and six farewell concerts, you know.

[laughter] Year after year there's a farewell-- So I didn't do that. But I didn't really do a farewell concert or a farewell opera or anything like that. It just sort of happened, just as I think my career kind of happened.

HAST: Yes, it certainly did. It's wonderful.

WARENSKJOLD: It wasn't that I just made my decision, "I'm going to be an opera singer," and I worked for that.

HAST: But you took advantage of everything that came along.

WARENSKJOLD: I did. Yes, I did.

HAST: That was the smart thing. And you were very good about the business end of it. But then did you just have fewer and fewer engagements? Did you have some engagements still?

WARENSKJOLD: After that?

HAST: Yes.

WARENSKJOLD: No, there were no engagements after that. No.

HAST: So you actually stopped singing publicly.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. I stopped. Yes.

HAST: In '72.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes.

HAST: So then you were interested in high finance. [laughter]

WARENSKJOLD: Yes.

HAST: Then how did you get into teaching eventually?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, I had been doing master classes, and I had been working with individual people--not on a regular basis. That's the kind of thing that was boring to me, to have somebody come every week and make those same mistakes.

HAST: Well, there are an awful lot of singers and actors, people who are brilliant themselves, but that doesn't mean that they can teach. That's a very different thing, isn't it?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. Well, it is.

HAST: Do you want to talk about that? How did you discover that actually you are a marvelous teacher?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, I think I had such a background of study.

I think there are a lot of people who have natural voices, and all of a sudden they're given opportunities. They really don't know what they're doing technically, and when they run into problems they make compensations. Then they never know how to get back. Like you said about Pavarotti, you go back and remember what you did in the first lesson and then carry on from that.

HAST: So that's really good advice, isn't it?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, yes. So that is the problem, I think, with a lot of people who have made big careers. They just had these marvelous natural voices. But for them to teach somebody, you know, they are going to be teaching them maybe what they did, but also they're teaching them in later years, and they're teaching them the compensations that they have made as their

voice got older. They're not teaching from the fundamentals, you see. I had so many years of learning how my voice worked, how to use my voice, but at the same time, I was there in my teacher's studio for quite a number of hours. I would be there for two hours, say, before my lesson, and I would hear what she did with other students--people in the very beginning, people who were further along, all of the different things. And then I would be there after my lesson; I would hear what she did with people that way, too. So I was learning how she was teaching, not just with *my* voice.

HAST: But you were very open to this. I think that some artists just--

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. Oh, I was fascinated by this.

HAST: Yes, but that's unusual. And then you're very objective about yourself, about the way you were doing things.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, I'm not just interested in myself. I'm interested in what other people do as well.

HAST: But that's what a teacher needs to be able to do.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. And I found that with some of the people who came to me I would act as a coach, not a vocal teacher, a coach in--

HAST: Would you differentiate between--?

WARENSKJOLD: Define the difference between a coach and a

teacher?

HAST: Yes.

WARENSKJOLD: Well, I think I am both.

HAST: You're both, of course.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, right now I think I am both. But a voice teacher takes you right from the very beginning: teaches you how to breathe, how to support the tone, the importance of singing a nice long line that comes from vowels, the support of the tone that comes from energy, not tension, this sort of thing. Then the one thing that I got--not the one thing, but one of the main things that I got--from my teacher was this idea of singing right in the center of the tone, being so much on pitch.

HAST: You mentioned that. I'm fascinated by that.

WARENSKJOLD: Absolutely on pitch. All of these things. How to get this voice forward so that it isn't back in the throat and doesn't come out up through the ears and in back, so that it projects--

HAST: Technique is really what this is.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, technique. Absolutely. Now, that is a voice teacher.

HAST: And that takes the very special kind of training that you've had.



WARENSKJOLD: Yes, yes. Oh, yes, absolutely.

Then the voice coach-- There are several different things.

There is a voice coach who works on repertoire with you. There is also the voice coach who recognizes a vocal line and the fact that you're singing a little under pitch or something and tells you, "No, you're going to have to make sure that you're on pitch," but maybe could not teach you how to do it. You have to know yourself.

HAST: And tempo also, right?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes. Oh, of course. Everything to do with musicality, yes.

HAST: Right. Then often the coach is also an accompanist, or not?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, usually a coach is an accompanist.

HAST: Well, I know that is so at a university, but I just wanted to ask you.

WARENSKJOLD: Usually a coach is a pianist, yes.

Then, on top of that, the other interest that I had was in the stage presentation.

HAST: Well, that is your forte, or one of them.

WARENSKJOLD: And this is the-- It's like a three-legged milk stool. Without one of those three legs, it isn't a really good performance. For instance, you have to have your voice

in absolute control, and you have to have the intelligence to know the music school, the era, the style, and you have to understand poetry, everything that has to do with that part of it. And then, without knowing how to communicate that to the audience-- And communication is not just voice and interpretation, but communication is what you do with your body as well.

HAST: And you can stand perfectly still on the stage, as I've seen you do when you've taught this, and communicate without--

WARENSKJOLD: You can, yes. You don't have to make a lot of gestures. But you cannot stand absolutely still in one position and not move, because what you're saying does not call for that. There is very little movement that has to be made. I think we've spoken about that before. The movement of the body comes from the music, and a gesture comes from what the words call for. So there are going to be certain songs where it's not necessary to make any kind of a gesture at all. But there is going to have to be a change of body position, because the music calls for it.

HAST: Don't you agree that this is really the hardest thing to learn for young singers starting out?

WARENSKJOLD: It really isn't hard.

HAST: No?

WARENSKJOLD: It's just that they're not taught it. No.

HAST: Because I see this all the time, and I always think, "I wish Dorothy were here."

WARENSKJOLD: No, it's not hard at all. But most teachers do not have the time. You have an hour lesson with them, and you do not have the time to teach them how to use that instrument and all of the other things that go along with interpretation and still do this as well. There just isn't the time. And then I think it's probably true that there are a lot of people who don't know how to teach that, too.

If they did it themselves as performers, they sort of did it naturally and took it for granted. But I've sort of taken it apart and-- So they know what to do.

HAST: Yes. Well, this is your specialty, and you're teaching this at UCLA, also. But there is a difference between being on the stage for a song recital or having a part in an opera.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, absolutely.

HAST: Then you really have to act in a totally different way on the stage. Now, don't you need somebody to teach you that very carefully?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, you do. And that's another thing that they don't get. That's the one thing that I don't really like

about opera workshops, no matter at what level. They are so busy getting ready to do a performance that they are not able to take the time to give those fundamentals that you're talking about: how to walk across the stage, how to walk across the stage and sit down, how to get up, how to turn and walk upstage, how to relate to another character onstage. HAST: And how to carry off the costume if it's from another era.

WARENSKJOLD: Absolutely. Yes, yes. You see, these things are taught in England in all of the Shakespeare.

HAST: And I think in France and Germany, is that right?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, it used to be. I wonder if it still is. I hope it still is.

HAST: I know they used to teach it in France, but I don't know-- England for sure. We know about that.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, absolutely. And that's why the English actors are so marvelous, because they've had this background of technical training.

HAST: It's the little things that you pick up when they're so natural, isn't it?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. But you have to have the technique for doing what you want to communicate. This business of motivation that you hear all the time-- People think if you just have

the right motivation it's going to look good. It's not true.

I'm sure that a lot of people walking along the street have the right motivation for walking where they're going, but they're not thinking about how they look when they're doing it. Everything on the stage has to be in the ideal perspective.

You have to be the ideal of this character that you're playing.

HAST: You said this once, and I made a note of that for myself, because it's such a marvelous thing to transmit to a student.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, no matter what it is. If you're playing Rigoletto, you have to be the ideal of this hunchback. You have to play it in the ideal way. If you are a tenor, say, in *Faust*, you have to be the ideal. You have to stand in the way that a man of that era stood. I think we spoke a little bit about that when I was talking about Cherubino [in *The Marriage of Figaro* by Mozart]. That's exactly what it is. Whatever character it is you're playing on stage, you have to be the ideal of that character.

HAST: We did talk very briefly about that on another tape when we talked about Cherubino. The problem with most of the young students today is that they don't read; they don't have this outside knowledge. So if you're saying, "Play the ideal character of the nineteenth century--"

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, that's right.

HAST: How are they going to know? Or even the concept of love, say in the romantic period. Do you see?

WARENSKJOLD: They've got to learn to read.

HAST: Do you think that between the voice teacher and the coach this should be the kind of information imparted also? Or should you just encourage them to read? I mean, how do you get them to do this?

WARENSKJOLD: Truthfully, I don't know. I honestly don't know.

I think if there is really the wanting to do it so much, I think they're going to do it. There are only just so many places for people to perform, so not everybody who is learning how to sing, no matter how gorgeous the instrument, is going to make a career--for whatever reason, you know. Either they're not that intelligent to understand musically even though it's gorgeous vocally, or maybe they have those two things and they don't have the desire to make a career. There are so many reasons why people don't make careers. But I think the few people who are really going to make a career have something inside themselves, and as a teacher, as a coach, you have to help them focus that and say, "You've got to learn languages, not just the fundamentals of pronunciation, but the subtleties and the rhythm of different languages."

HAST: Well, I try, as you know--

WARENSKJOLD: I know.

HAST: The problem really--in all fairness to the music students at UCLA that I know best, but also at USC [University of Southern California] and other places--is they have so many academic requirements. I think those are important also, but there is never time. So I don't know what the solution is.

WARENSKJOLD: I really don't know either, because I didn't major in music, and I think maybe that's-- I don't think it was maybe that different in those days. I think if I were majoring in music maybe it would have taken me that much time, too.

TAPE NUMBER: IX, SIDE TWO

JUNE 18, 1992

WARENSKJOLD: We were talking in terms of how much time it takes now for them as music majors and the fact that I did not major in music. I think that they have such a lot of work to do. I honestly do not remember doing that kind of work when I was in college. Because I majored in languages; that may have been the difference. Then my vocal study was outside of college, and that was completely separate.

HAST: Right. But that kept you doubly busy, didn't it?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, yes. That was another whole life for me, really, yes.

HAST: Exactly. So you managed.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. Anyway, I lived in a time when there were, as we said, so many opera performances and so many recitals that I could go to. Because the way I was raised, we always went to every musical thing that was in the city. And because of my background, starting piano when I was three years old and violin and all of that, even though I didn't keep up either violin or piano-- I don't play as well as I would like--

HAST: But it gave you the basics.

WARENSKJOLD: It gave me the basics. And I was just surrounded with music and vocal music. So by the time I really started



to study voice I didn't have to work on all of that end of it, which most of the students now do. They have to work on their musicianship. Most of them come to UCLA and they cannot read a note of music. It's just frustrating, absolutely frustrating.

HAST: Now, you did all these things outside of school. You didn't have to get grades for it. You did it because you loved to do it, because your family encouraged you. And that makes a difference too, I think. Don't you think so?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, I think so, yes. Yes.

HAST: It just occurred to me that I think it must be--

WARENSKJOLD: That's right. If you're doing it because of a grade, it's different. That's true. I hadn't thought of that before.

HAST: That's really true. You have to pass, and you have other people with whom you compete. And this way you could really focus on your own interest.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, that's right.

HAST: Yes. And with the encouragement of your parents, which is so rare also. So I think that does make a difference. Anyway, to go on--

WARENSKJOLD: I've forgotten now what we were heading toward when we got to that point. [laughter]

HAST: Well, we were talking about teaching and getting the students to read music, and you said they can't even read a single note.

WARENSKJOLD: No.

HAST: What is the best way to learn to read music fluently, whether you're playing the piano or singing? Or is it a separate thing?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, I think you really have to learn to play the piano. I really do. I don't mean to be a pianist, but you really have to learn to play the piano. Not just the treble clef--most of them, if they can read at all, can work on the treble clef, because that's where their singing line is--but they have to be able to read the bass clef as well. You've got to be able to do it so that you can work out your own songs and work out your own opera roles.

HAST: So that if you don't have an accompanist for any reason you can at least help yourself?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, that's right. You've got to be able to know that "Here this chord is going to be under me at this point" so that you're expecting that kind of thing.

HAST: That's very useful information, yes.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes. You've got to have that sort of thing. It's marvelous if you play well, if you've kept it up. One

of my students this year, for instance, had thirteen years of piano. It's marvelous to work with somebody like that.

For one thing also, it gives a musicality. There is almost a natural musicality in her singing that you don't get with other people.

HAST: Is she a graduate student?

WARENSKJOLD: No, no, no.

HAST: Undergraduate.

WARENSKJOLD: She's going to be a junior next year.

HAST: So that's a pleasure.

WARENSKJOLD: It is a pleasure. And it is so, so seldom that you run across something like that. I've gotten a number of girls who have taken ballet lessons for thirteen years, and they're marvelous to work with also.

HAST: In a different way, yes.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, the discipline. The discipline.

HAST: Is that right?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, it's simply marvelous to work with somebody like that. Because then they can work on the musical end of it with the same discipline that they've been working with for years as a child in ballet.

HAST: And then when it comes to being on stage and performing they know how to move.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. So it's wonderful in that way. But for most of the young people who come to UCLA--and I'm sure it's not just UCLA, I'm sure it's-- Because there is no way that they have had this in their background. They don't get it in the schools anymore. And their families, their mothers and fathers, didn't get it in the schools, so they can't give it to them really as part of their life, either, so--

HAST: It's very sad, because now with these tremendous budget cuts in California and the rest of the country also, the first thing that usually goes is music.

WARENSKJOLD: Of course. Oh, yes. Music. Any of the arts. And yet it's so important. People realize in later years how important music is. Not just the music of rock and roll and jazz--I love jazz--but the background that they have of that doesn't lead into a better kind of music. It really doesn't. It sort of ends right there. So if they're going to be opened up to that, it has to be opened up in another way completely. It's another world. It doesn't evolve.

HAST: It does depend on the teachers again, doesn't it? It always comes back to that. How about jazz? Did you ever do anything with it yourself?

WARENSKJOLD: No, I never did any jazz. I sang a lot of popular songs--Jerome Kern and [Irving] Berlin and all of those--but

jazz, no. I love it.

HAST: You like to listen to it.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, I love it. I just love it. Every once in a while I sort of hum along with them and get this idea of how you work around, how you embroider a tune. It's fascinating. It is fascinating to me.

HAST: Yes, yes. It's another world again. [laughter] So obviously teaching was exactly what you should be doing.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. The funny part of it is-- You know, I told you that I did work with a few people who came to me--this is how we got into it--as a coach.

HAST: Right.

WARENSKJOLD: And people who had maybe some problem vocally. I seemed at that point-- I had an ear for what was happening inside their throat. When they were doing it I could feel in my throat what they were doing. I made suggestions to them, and it seemed to work out. I seemed to be able to do that with a sort of an empathy that I had for anybody else.

And this is why it's terrible for me to go to some recitals and have these horrible sounds coming out, because it hurts me, hurts my throat. I get all tied up in knots.

HAST: Dorothy, I have news for you: I'm not a singer, but it hurts me, too, when I hear it. [laughter]

WARENSKJOLD: It hurts you, too. I know, I know. So anyway,  
I--

HAST: There's a saying in German. I don't know if you have  
heard it. You probably have. My father used to say it. "No,  
no. I don't want to listen to her. *Sie singt aus dem Hals.*"  
"She sings out of her throat." [laughter]

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes.

HAST: So this ties in with what you're just saying, because  
it's all wrong--

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. It's all back in here, yes. It doesn't  
project. Anyway, I was working with some individual people,  
professional people, people who were out in the world of music  
and all of a sudden found themselves with a little bit of  
a problem. Then they would come to me, and most of the time  
I was able sort of to get them on the right track again.  
And then-- How did it happen? Our friend, Peggy [A.] Sheffield,  
I had lunch with her at the Faculty Center at UCLA.

HAST: When was this?

WARENSKJOLD: This must have been '84, I guess.

HAST: Oh, that late?

WARENSKJOLD: 'Eighty-four, yes.

HAST: So how long had you known Peggy?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, I'd known Peggy for years. Actually, one

of her boyfriends in years past was a beautiful bass singer.

HAST: Oh, Harold--

WARENSKJOLD: Harold Enns, yes. He worked with my mother.

HAST: Did he? I didn't realize that. He had a beautiful voice.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. He coached for a while with my mother.

And we knew Peggy from that time. Gracious, this must have been twenty, twenty-five years we've known each other. Anyway, I went over and had lunch with Peggy at the Faculty Center, and she said, "I hope you don't mind, but I mentioned to the chairman that you were coming for lunch, and he said, 'May I come and meet her?'" And I said, "Oh, no, I'd love to meet him." This was Tom [Thomas] Harmon.

HAST: Oh, that was Tom at the time.

WARENSKJOLD: Tom Harmon, yes. So he came over to the table and sat down and had lunch with us and began-- I didn't realize what he was doing. [laughter] He began drawing me out and saying, "Have you ever thought of giving of your expertise and experience?" and all of that. I said, "Well, I do a little, but--"

He said, "Say in an institution, have you ever thought--?"

I said, "No, I never thought of teaching in an institution, certainly." [laughter]

HAST: I bet good old Peggy talked to him before quite a bit, knowing Peggy. [laughter]

WARENSKJOLD: So before we left this rather long lunch, he said, "Well, as things are working out now, we are looking for somebody. There is a possibility. Would you be interested in full-time?" And I said, "Oh, good gracious! Absolutely not. Oh, absolutely not."

HAST: [laughter] I bet he doesn't hear that too often.

WARENSKJOLD: No. As a matter of fact, he was talking in terms of my being the head of the vocal department. I said, "Oh, gracious, no. I really wouldn't want to take on that responsibility."

So he said, "Well, maybe even part-time. Would you think about it?"

And I said, "Well, let me think about it, then. All right, let me think about it. I'll get back to you in a few days."

So I went home and I talked it out with my mother, and she said, "I don't know. Being in an institution, I don't know whether you're that kind of person or not, but think about it, think about it." Before I had a chance to call back, he contacted me again.

HAST: Did he really?



WARENSKJOLD: Yes, yes. I said, "Well, I have been thinking about it. Why don't we just give it a try for a year and let me see how I fit in."

So he said, "Well, would you mind coming over and meeting some of the faculty? And would you give a lesson to one of our students for us?"

I said, "Well, sure, I'd be delighted."

So they got somebody. This was in the summertime.

HAST: Yes. This was in '84?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. This was July, I think, in the summer, and somebody was still on campus, one of the Korean girls, I think; I've forgotten what her name was. I don't know whether Roger Malouf was playing for her [or not]. Somebody, anyway, was playing for her. So I gave a little demonstration, a lesson for them. Robert Winter was there, and Johana Harris was there--I mean, all of them. I'm sure Malcolm Cole was there, too. I can't remember at the time.

HAST: Well, we were still a big department in those days.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. So each one of them asked me a lot of questions. I remember one of the main questions that Robert Winter asked was, "We know you have done operas, we know you as an opera singer, but how about recitals?" And I said, "Now, if you want to talk about recitals--" So I began to

tell them how much I had done in the recital end of it.

HAST: So he actually didn't know that much about you, did he? [laughter]

WARENSKJOLD: No, no. So that next year, that was--

HAST: 'Eighty-five?

WARENSKJOLD: 'Eighty-five, yes. I was there, and I've been there since.

HAST: Yes. Thank goodness you thought it over.

WARENSKJOLD: And I really enjoy it. I really do, Sybil. Because these young people who come here to UCLA are so intelligent. I guess it's because we don't let people in if they are not. They have to be at a certain grade point average and all of the rest of those tests they have to take. They are so intelligent.

HAST: Well, they do appreciate you, because I meet them all. They think you're wonderful, and, of course, they should. I mean, you are a born teacher, which you didn't realize, but--

WARENSKJOLD: I didn't realize it.

HAST: You are a marvelous, marvelous teacher.

WARENSKJOLD: You know, the strange thing is, I find I do have the patience that I was worried about. But I have the patience because-- Though there are one or two who are

frustrating and really don't work. But the majority of them really work. And it's that one lesson a week, of course. That's all they can get, you know. They're not as lucky as I was.

HAST: Yes, this is only one lesson a week. How many students do you have on an average?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, I have nine now.

HAST: A week?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes.

HAST: But that's quite a lot to put effort--

WARENSKJOLD: I had twelve one year, and it was much more--

HAST: Too much.

WARENSKJOLD: Nine is more than I like, and I'm afraid I'm going to have really more than I like this year, too. But--

HAST: Well, I always send them to you if I possibly can.

[laughter] But I also always want to encourage them in this stage presence class that you teach.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. Well, I would like--

HAST: Now, when you work with these nine--excuse me, I'm sorry to interrupt you--students, you teach them voice production, right? That is what you teach.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes.

HAST: Now, your master classes in stage presence [the Art

of Vocal and Stage Presence], though, a lot more people sign up for that?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. I really haven't had the time to do that master class the past couple of years. I did it for--what?--two or three years in which they did not get any credit for it.

HAST: They didn't?

WARENSKJOLD: No credit for it. There were a few of them who showed up every time because they knew they were getting something out of it, and there were others who would come in at one time, and then they wouldn't be there for one or two, and then they'd come back again. Finally one year I said I will do it if they can have at least one unit of credit.

HAST: Yes, because without credit they are so overwhelmed and overburdened--

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. It's always something--

HAST: With requirements!

WARENSKJOLD: That's right. There's always something that calls them away. So the last time I did it, they had one unit of credit, and they showed up every single time.

HAST: They did?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. And the thing that was interesting was-- Not just for the credit but the times before, I thought that

the majority of these would be singers. But you'd be surprised.

Over half were instrumentalists who came for this.

HAST: Really? That is fascinating.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. Pianists, violinists. I had a bassoonist.

I had an oboist, clarinetist, a bass viol player, if you can imagine, and a percussionist. They were fascinated with it, as they should be. Because whereas the singer comes out and faces the audience and makes a connection and the audience can see facial expression, the pianist comes out and sits at the piano facing straight across, and all you see is the side of the face. So the pianist has to make that connection with the audience only when he or she is walking out onto the stage and takes the bow and when they get up afterwards to take the bow and walk off the stage again. You've got to make the connection with the audience at that moment, because when you're sitting at the piano, you have to do it all with your music. And the same thing with other instruments, too.

HAST: Well, yes, if you take a solo bow. But how about if you're in an orchestra?

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, well, no, that's--

HAST: Then it doesn't really matter, does it? Especially if you're in the pit or something like that.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, I think a lot of them could learn a little

bit--

HAST: Could do better. That's what I think also.

WARENSKJOLD: They could learn how to sit on these chairs.

HAST: And also to walk on maybe a little more elegantly.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, they could. But--

HAST: And then the conductor also has to know how to do it, of course.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. That's another thing. Conductors are usually so definite about themselves that they are not very open to suggestions about how they--

HAST: Oh, really?

WARENSKJOLD: The only conductor I ever knew who really did worry about that was Howard Barlow on the [*Voice of*] *Firestone* hour. His wife [Jeanette Thomas Barlow] was an actress, and she was always out there saying, "You've got to put your feet a little closer together, Howard, a little closer together."

And he had this beautiful head of white hair that was always coiffed beautifully. [laughter]

HAST: How nice.

WARENSKJOLD: But he was the only one. And of course, he was on television, so he was worried about that end of it.

HAST: Well, how about conducting, though? They're so different the way they conduct. Is that something where their

own personality just tells them what to do? Or do they actually think consciously of how they're going to look when they're doing it?

WARENSKJOLD: I have sometimes wondered. Of course, there are some who really choreograph almost every movement that they make. Sometimes it's just much too much. You're so busy watching them that you're not listening to the music. It's the same thing as a singer. If you make too many moves, you're watching that and not listening to what the singer is saying.

And then there are some-- [Carlo Maria] Giulini, for instance, who was here, drove me insane, because he would get on the podium, and he would spread his legs out until they were, I would say, at least two and a half feet to three feet apart.

And I kept wondering, "How is he ever going to pull himself together to get them together again?" And this is also rather bad, too, and something that they should think of, because when a conductor's legs are spread apart like this, no matter-- His were way too far apart. But sometimes, even if they are just, say, eighteen inches apart, the chances are that they're going to be swaying from side to side as they conduct, and this is very bothersome to an audience.

HAST: Yes, that's very true.

WARENSKJOLD: It can almost make an audience seasick.

HAST: Well, maybe he feels he's in touch with both sides.

WARENSKJOLD: No, it's just a habit. As a matter of fact, I worked with one of the men who was getting a Ph.D. at UCLA last year in Spanish music. He was going to be presenting a paper for some organization in which he and three other people were presenting papers. The best one was getting an award, a grant, so it was rather important. He had been a guitarist who played for one of my students some years ago, and evidently in my working with them on the program he realized that you had to do something different on stage. So he contacted me and asked-- He said that he had done this for some friends and for his wife, and each of them had said that it wasn't as good as it could be.

HAST: Musically or stagewise?

WARENSKJOLD: No, he didn't do anything musically. This was just a speech.

HAST: Oh, this was just presenting the paper, not as a guitarist.

WARENSKJOLD: Presenting the paper. No, not as a guitarist.

HAST: Because you face the audience as a guitarist.

WARENSKJOLD: That's right. No, he was presenting this paper.

So he said, "Could you work with me on that?" I learned myself really what the problem was, because he said that he was--and



I noticed it, too--swaying from side to side while he was giving this paper. It was very annoying. So I think I mentioned it before he even told me that other people had said the same thing. So we cleared that up immediately. Rather than have his feet directly apart from each other, I had one foot a little forward and one foot back. So even if he's going to move, he's going to be moving back and forward not from side to side, and it's not going to be as noticeable from out there.

HAST: But the other problem also--and this always amazes me with singers--is voice production and speech.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes.

HAST: They don't know how to do that.

WARENSKJOLD: No, that's true.

HAST: And maybe somebody with a powerful singing voice sounds--

WARENSKJOLD: Doesn't know how to use it.

HAST: --sounds dreadful speaking in an auditorium. So this is also something to be learned. Is that right?

WARENSKJOLD: Well, it should be. We're getting away from that so much now because--I've think we've spoken about that before--most people now are miked on stage whenever they have to do any speaking. In the musical theater productions they're all miked. So for the speaking voice, really you don't have to worry about projecting anymore.

HAST: But if you have to announce what you're going to sing, if it's a different kind of occasion--

WARENSKJOLD: Well, yes.

HAST: That's rare these days, too, I suppose. But it sounds so ridiculous if this--

WARENSKJOLD: I always tried to say something to my audience.

I tried to give one little story of one of the things that I did.

HAST: Yes, but you know how to sound interesting vocally when you speak also, and that's very hard for a lot of people to do, I think.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, it is. It is. They don't have the need for doing it as much anymore, but you do have to learn how to have inflection in the voice so that it isn't a monotonous sound.

HAST: Now, how about the facial expression of a conductor?

I watched Claudio Abbado, who is now with the Vienna Philharmonic [Orchestra]. They had a marvelous program on [televisionstation] KCET, and I sat there absolutely mesmerized for one solid hour without moving, because that face--

WARENSKJOLD: He made music with his face.

HAST: And I did listen to the music while I watched his face.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, but, you see, his face was what the music

was.

HAST: Ah! So that's the difference.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, yes. He wasn't doing more than the music with his face.

HAST: He was suffering at the same time. [laughter]

WARENSKJOLD: I know, but the music was suffering, too.

HAST: It was so beautiful. I wanted to talk to you about that, because now there are some conductors who make awful faces when they conduct. Is this something they should be taught also, do you think?

WARENSKJOLD: I should think that that would be--

HAST: It's part of stage presence, isn't it?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. I would think that that would be part of learning how to conduct. But I think it's the same sort of thing. When they learn how to conduct, they're not given that. They're not told how to stand on the stage. They're not told what they look like from the audience's standpoint.

HAST: From the back, yes.

WARENSKJOLD: That's the whole point. And they're really not told that you cannot direct an orchestra with your eyes shut.

You can't. You've got to make contact. Even if it's above the heads of the orchestra people, they have to be able to see the music and the life in your eyes. And I don't think

these things are taught to--

HAST: They're not?

WARENSKJOLD: No, no. They are taught the technique of how you beat certain things and how you do this. But that sort of thing they're not taught any more than singers are taught how to move for the opera stage. These are things that are just not thought of.

HAST: These are very important things. I'm so glad you talked of that, I really am.

I wanted to talk about something which is rather sad, because you were so close to your mother. In 1991, I believe, she passed away, right?

WARENSKJOLD: Yes.

HAST: And it was a very difficult time for you.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. Well, it was a difficult time for a couple of years. Difficult for her, too. But the wonderful part of it was that she was so healthy all her life, so even up to the very end she didn't have a bit of pain. No pain.

HAST: She didn't? Oh, that's wonderful.

WARENSKJOLD: No pain whatsoever. Absolutely wonderful. As the doctor said, it was purely a mechanical problem. Her heart had been perfect all her life, her blood pressure had been perfect all her life, her lungs had been perfect all

her life, and all of this. But she'd had a problem with the esophagus and had to have an operation seven years before, so part of her stomach was gone. She couldn't eat, and she loved eating--not a lot, but she had a taste for certain little things that just had to be right. She was a very picky eater.

But--

HAST: She was an extraordinary woman from everything you've said.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, she was extraordinary. But the main--

HAST: And you said she loved to gamble in Las Vegas. [laughter]

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, she loved the slot machines. Not gambling, no, just--

HAST: No, no. She just loved playing the slot machines.

WARENSKJOLD: The slot machines, which is gambling, of course.

But all through this, the last two years of her life, it was difficult for her, because she couldn't eat the way she wanted to. But up to the day before she passed away, mentally she was just as sharp as she ever was. And that was very lucky for me. I really feel for people who have family, mothers or fathers, whose minds go.

HAST: Oh, that's terrible.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, I just feel so terrible about that.

HAST: But you were so close to her, and she was such constant

support for you.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, yes. Absolutely.

HAST: And yet you said you made it clear that you had to be your own separate person at the same time.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, absolutely. Yes, yes. If I hadn't done that, it just wouldn't have worked for us.

HAST: But you did live together here in this nice house.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, but that made it possible for us to live together. If I had not stood up for myself as young as I did and become my own person, I would have had to move out and have my own place. But I felt completely independent, as she did. She was completely independent. She drove up until she went into the hospital, really; she drove her own car. But yes, it was difficult. But she was in and out of the hospital so much for those last eighteen months that when she died I really couldn't be sad in that way about it. I really couldn't. I think I'd gone through all of that in those months beforehand, worrying about-- They would try this and try that. Each time you'd say, "It's going to do it. No, it didn't do it." You're up and down and up and down.

She was up and down, too, as I was.

HAST: It was a relief for her, and that's what--

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, it was. Yes, it was. She said, "This is

no way to live. This is no way to live." That sort of thing.

HAST: But nevertheless, there's always that shock when it does happen.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes, yes. But I really had the feeling--and I'm so grateful for that--that I did everything that I could. I don't have anything to look back on now and say, "Oh, if I only had--"

Oh, I have a letter here. May I read it?

HAST: Please do.

WARENSKJOLD: You know the accompanist that I told you about, the nineteen-year-old whom I got out of college, Rollin Jensen?

HAST: Oh, yes, indeed.

WARENSKJOLD: Who traveled with me for a number of years? I lost track of him when he married. He married a woman, and they lived in Venice, Italy, for a number of years, and I sort of lost track of him. So his wife passed away just some months ago also, and I jotted him a note on that. And I received this back from him. I just thought you might enjoy it. Let's see. Oh, yes. He says: I can see your mother absolutely clearly in my mind's eye as if it were yesterday, her perfectionism, my despair at ever satisfying her, although I knew that all either of us ever wanted was simply to get it right for you.

[laughter] Isn't that wonderful?

HAST: That's lovely. I love that.

WARENSKJOLD: Then he went on:

It's a little harder to see your father because he always stood back a bit, being so crazy about you and your mother. But there you are. Having said that, now I see him clearly. Charming man, delightful, witty man. I remember his making the funniest pun I've ever heard in my life.

And then he went on to some other things about him. But I was very pleased at that, so I'm going to have to contact him when I go up to San Francisco. He's living in San Francisco.

HAST: But, you see, through this and the way you have conducted this whole interview, we see you clearly, too.

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, how nice.

HAST: And I think that's just been a wonderful thing.

I wanted to ask you just one last question. Do you think with opera nowadays, with all the problems we're having, that we still just have to keep going and--?

WARENSKJOLD: Is it going to keep going? Oh, I think it's going to go. Yes, yes. It's just so expensive, and people have to pay for it one way or the other. It's either with the very high prices for the tickets, or it's people who believe in it enough to give to it. The only problem that I see-- I don't see the problem for opera, because it's always going to be there. But the problem that I see is for the solo artist.

HAST: Oh, yes?



WARENSKJOLD: Because with opera, everybody knows that it's so expensive that it can't pay for itself. But when you have a solo recital, they say, "Well, it's just a solo recital.

There's no big amount of money that goes into it." But that's not quite true. You have to have the audiences for it, and the audiences have to have enough of it to know what a solo recital is and to want to go there. All of the publicity and hype for music goes into opera and the symphony orchestra, all the things that cost so much money. All of it goes into that. Consequently the solo artist is left out in the cold.

HAST: That doesn't seem to be true so much for country music and rock and--

WARENSKJOLD: Oh, no. That's growing. That's growing more and more.

HAST: Yes, which is growing and growing and which, of course, it doesn't take a lot of brains to perform. [laughter] That's probably being prejudiced. I mean, do you agree that good music just can't die at this point? I mean, is this going to have to continue, do you think?

WARENSKJOLD: No, I'm very serious about having to do something about that. Whether we start up some kind of a society for the preservation and presentation of solo recitals, or whatever it is, I'm going to be doing something about it. And I'm

working on--

HAST: Really? That's very interesting.

WARENSKJOLD: Yes. I'm working on starting some kind of a foundation that can-- Because it's not just that those recitals are not there for audiences, it's that they're not there for the artists as well. And when the artists sort of give up on solo recitals, then I think we've lost a whole part of our heritage. Because we talk about opera and how important that is, but the solo recital vocalist has so much more to give to an opera from the subtleties of the communication and the understanding of the poetic line and the musical line, rather than just trying to sing a big forte tone and sounding out over the orchestra. The singer who has done recitals is much more interesting on the operatic stage.

HAST: Well, you're the living example of that. Dorothy, it has been a delight working with you. It's really been a very special time in my life, and I want to thank you.

WARENSKJOLD: No, you have made it so easy and such a pleasant experience, really.

# INDEX

- Abbado, Claudio, 469  
 Adler, Kurt, 295-96, 297-98, 302, 363-65, 373  
 Agnini, Armando, 223-24  
 Albanese, Licia, 99, 118, 126, 128-29, 302, 438  
 Alvary, Lorenzo, 307-9  
  
 Bampton, Rose, 220, 221  
 Barlow, Howard, 465  
 Barlow, Jeanette Thomas, 465  
 Baum, Kurt, 133-35  
 Beethoven, Ludwig van;  
     *Fidelio*, 310, 347  
 Behymer, L.E., 51  
 Berlin, Irving, 455  
 Bible, Frances, 220, 221, 371, 398, 402  
 Bizet, Georges: *Carmen*, 86-87, 97-98, 99, 133-34, 135-36, 185, 191, 193, 194, 273, 299, 356-58, 376, 399, 402-3, 405, 406, 413, 414, 420, 422  
 Björling, Ann Berg, 411  
 Björling, Jussi, 410-11  
 Black, Frank, 165, 230  
 Blankenburg, Gayle, 332  
 Blankenburg, Heinz, 327, 332  
 Borkh, Inge, 310-11, 347, 348, 350  
 Breisach, Paul, 278  
 Brico, Antonia, 17  
 Britten, Benjamin: *Albert Herring*, 90-91  
 Burr, Raymond, 228  
  
 Capitol Records, 333-34, 340  
 Carmel Music Society of California, 58  
 Carter, Paulena, 109  
  
 Central City Opera Festival (Central City, Colorado), 414  
 Cincinnati Zoo Opera, 344-46, 398  
 Civic Music Association. See National Concert and Artists Corporation  
 Cleva, Fausto, 304-5, 306, 347, 401  
 Cole, Malcolm, 460  
 Columbia Artists Management, 157, 163, 164, 171-72, 173, 192, 237, 238, 242-44, 281, 384, 386; Community Concert Association, 172-79, 238, 243, 281, 283, 340, 385  
 Community Concert Association. See Columbia Artists Management.  
 Conrad, William, 228  
 Coppicus and Schang, 192. See also Columbia Artists Management  
 Coppicus, Francis C., 163, 164-65, 166, 192, 238  
 Cosmopolitan Opera Company, 409, 410  
 Cromwell, Oliver, 7-8  
 Crosby, Bing, 137  
 Crowe, Lee, 61-62, 113-14  
 Crutchfield, William, 146-47, 148, 149  
 Curiel, Glauco, 350  
  
 Debussy, Claude: *La Domoiselle élue*, 424  
 Diesel, Rudolf, 6  
 Dietz, Dorothy, 387, 434  
 DiStefano, Giuseppe, 406-7  
 Djanel, Lily, 102-3, 104  
  
 Domingo, Placido, 83-84, 85,

- 178  
 Donizetti, Gaetano: *L'Elisir d'amore*, 277  
 Dorothy Warenskjold's Musical Theater, 381-89, 391-93, 395, 433-36  
 Dunne, Irene, 201, 202  
 Duquette, Tony, 185  
 Dutton, Charles Mallory, 46-47, 49  
 Dvořák, Antonín, 333, 334
- Edelmann, Otto, 372  
 Edson, Eda, 276  
 Elizabeth Holloway School of the Theatre, 34-35  
 Enns, Harold, 457-58  
 Ettinger, Margaret, 196, 208  
 Ettinger Company, 196, 208-9  
 Evans and Weinhold, 192. *See also* Columbia Artists Management  
 Evans, Lawrence, 162, 163, 192, 237-38  
*Evening Concert* (radio series), 56
- Falcon, Marie-Cornélie, 71, 145  
 Fleischmann, Ernest, 146, 147-48, 189  
 Flotow, Friedrich von; *Martha*, 308  
*Ford Festival* (television series), 229-30, 238, 240-41, 246, 365, 427  
 Forman, Dorothy, 333  
 Frankenstein, Alfred, 48, 50, 56, 93, 97, 160, 161, 200  
 Frederick IX (king of Denmark), 341  
 French, Ward, 172-73  
 Frimi, Rudolf: *The Three Musketeers*, 228
- Giulini, Carlo Maria, 465-66  
 Glaz, Herta, 131
- Goldstein, Rose, 180, 181  
 Goldstein Costumers (San Francisco), 180, 181  
 Gorin, Igor, 268  
 Gounod, Charles: *Faust*, 65, 296, 309, 344-45, 356, 358, 381, 383-84, 386, 395, 409, 411, 438; *Romeo and Juliette*, 65  
 Greely, George, 334-35, 336-37  
 Green, Johnny, 273  
 Grieg, Edvard, 48, 56, 333, 334  
 Griffin, Francis J., 201  
 Guild Opera Company, 327, 329, 331-32  
 Günther, Hurst, 429  
 Gurley, Fred G., 201, 203
- Haakon VII (king of Norway), 7  
 Haas, Alexander, 169-70  
 Hager, Gita, 371  
 Hager, Paul, 370, 371  
 Hammerstein, Oscar, 273  
 Harmon, Charles, 109  
 Harmon, Thomas, 458-60  
 Harris, Johana, 460  
*Harvest of Stars* (radio series), 165, 200, 203, 233  
 Hayes, Helen, 106  
 Hollywood Bowl (Los Angeles), 266-68, 269, 273-74  
 Holt, Henry, 107-8  
 Hotter, Hans, 347-48, 349  
 Humperdinck, Engelbert: *Hänsel and Gretel*, 329-30  
 Hurok, Sol, 361
- Ingrid (queen of Denmark), 341
- Jagel, Frederick, 438  
 Janeček, Karel: *The Makropulos Case*, 359  
 Jensen, Rollin, 256, 282-83,

284-85, 286-87, 473-74  
 Judson, O'Neil, and Judd, 192;  
*See also* Columbia Artists  
 Management  
  
 Kaufman, Louis, 30, 174-75,  
 337, 339  
 Kern, Jerome, 273, 455  
 Kirsner, Ethel, 209  
 Kirsten, Dorothy, 26, 88, 180  
 Knudsen, Tom, 342  
  
 Legge, Walter, 370, 371, 372  
 Lehmann, Lotte, 160-61, 167  
 Levine, James, 81-82  
 Levine, Marks, 167-69, 237  
 Levy, Benn: *Mrs. Moonlight*,  
 61-62, 113; *The Rape of the*  
*Belt*, 114  
 Lippman, Samuel, 168  
 Los Angeles Philharmonic  
 Orchestra, 169, 189  
 Lyric Opera of Chicago, 402  
  
 MacDonald, Jeanette, 201  
 MacRae, Gordon, 227, 337  
 Mahler, Gustav, 245-46;  
*Symphony no. 2 in C Minor*,  
*Resurrection*, 245  
 Malouf, Roger, 460  
 Massenet, Jules: *Manon*, 64-65,  
 358; *Werther*, 87, 88, 298-99,  
 356  
 McGregor, Campbell, 409, 410  
 Mehta, Mehli, 83, 431  
 Mehta, Zubin, 189  
 Melton, James, 162, 163, 165,  
 200-201, 203, 226, 229-30,  
 233, 236-37, 241, 242, 365,  
 366  
 Merola, Gaetano, 74-75,  
 110-12, 113, 116-17, 118,  
 120, 122, 129, 133, 135,  
 161, 167, 195, 267, 273,  
 278-79, 293-95, 296, 297  
 Merriman, Nan, 374  
 Metropolitan Opera, 142, 242,  
 243, 244  
  
 Michaelis, Adrian, 93-94,  
 200  
 Mills College, 12, 15, 17,  
 19, 20, 27-28  
 Miss Wallace's School, 13,  
 16, 20, 33  
 Monteux, Pierre, 52-53,  
 97-98, 99-100, 347, 348-51  
 Moore, Grace, 26  
 Mozart, Wolfgang Amadeus:  
*Così fan tutte*, 89, 146;  
*The Magic Flute*, 73-74;  
*The Marriage of Figaro*,  
 150, 233-36, 347, 448  
*Musical America* (magazine),  
 156-57, 158, 159, 199  
 Music Center of Los Angeles  
 County, 84, 146, 148, 189  
  
 National Concert and Artists  
 Corporation (NCAC), 157,  
 167, 171-72, 173, 177,  
 192-93, 209, 236, 237, 281;  
 Civic Music Association,  
 170, 172-79, 209, 281  
 National Federation of Music  
 Clubs, 49-50  
 Niska, Maralin, 422  
  
 Offenbach, Jacques: *The*  
*Tales of Hoffmann*, 205,  
 220, 223  
 Opera Guild of Southern  
 California, 332  
  
 Pacific Opera Company,  
 409-10  
 Pavarotti, Luciano, 84,  
 439-40, 442  
 Pearce, Jan, 268, 413-14  
 Piedmont Musical Club, 53  
 Popper, Jan, 101, 107, 108,  
 273  
 Posz, Paul, 194-96  
 Previn, André, 189  
 Prey, Hermann, 70  
 Puccini, Giacomo, 111; works:  
*La Bohème*, 275, 276, 345,

- 358, 414; *La Fanciulla del West*, 88; *Gianni Schicchi*, 275; *Martha*, 345; *Turandot*, 299, 303, 347, 373
- Quartararo, Florence, 361
- Railroad Hour* (radio series), 203, 204, 226-27, 228-29, 246, 248, 283
- Raymond, Gene, 201-2
- Rebild Festival (Denmark), 341-43
- Resnick, Regina, 124, 125, 131, 132-33, 376
- Rethberg, Elizabeth, 164
- Riegelman, Mabel, 19, 21, 22, 23, 33, 68-69, 105, 416, 417, 418, 442, 443-44
- Rinder, Ruben, 36, 37
- Rodzinski, Artur, 220, 223
- Roger Wagner Chorale, 40, 41
- Romberg, Sigmund, 337
- Russel, Gilbert, 109
- Saint Luke's Episcopal Church (San Francisco), 37, 38, 225
- San Francisco Opera Company, 98, 102, 109, 110, 158, 193, 223, 298, 347, 369, 399, 437-38
- San Francisco Symphony Orchestra, 49, 97, 98, 109, 245
- Sayão, Bidú, 64-65, 277, 279-80
- Schneider-Siemssen, Günther, 187
- Schwabacher, James, 101-2, 305
- Schwarzkopf, Elisabeth, 370, 371
- Sebastian, Georges, 41, 149-56, 160, 220, 233, 358
- Sellars, Peter, 351-52
- Serafin, Tullio, 299
- Sheffield, Peggy A., 457, 458
- Shrine Auditorium (Los Angeles), 194
- Sibelius, Jean: *Kullervo*, 77
- Siepi, Cesare, 347
- Sills, Beverly, 377
- Simianato, Giulietta, 87-88, 298-99
- Slatkin, Felix, 335
- Slatkin, Leonard, 335
- Standard Hour* (radio series), 63, 87, 108, 109, 110, 133, 136-37, 140, 169, 200, 351, 363
- Standard Oil Company of California, 108
- Standard School Program*, 93-94, 96, 101, 108, 109
- Steber, Eleanor, 398-99, 400-402
- Steinberg, William, 119, 120, 121, 122, 124
- Stevens, Risë, 87, 413-14
- Strauss, Richard: *Der Rosenkavalier*, 78, 149-50, 156, 185, 220, 249, 275, 345, 356, 358, 370-72, 398, 399, 400; *Salome*, 102
- Sullivan, Brian, 389-90
- Sullivan, Noël, 58-59, 60-61, 160-61, 221, 222
- Sutherland, Joan, 377
- Tagliavini, Ferruccio, 275-77
- Tajo, Italo, 302, 303
- Tchaikovsky, Piotr Ilyich: *Romeo and Juliet*, 16-17
- Thomson, Virgil: *Stabat Mater*, 363-65
- Temple Emmanuel (San Francisco), 36-37, 225
- Tonight Show* (television series), 291-92, 293
- University of California, Berkeley, 18-19, 20

Vaccai, Nicola: *Metodo pratico di canto italiano*, 399-400  
 Valletti, Cesare, 299  
 Verdi, Giuseppe: *Falstaff*, 116, 117-19, 122-24, 128-29, 131-32, 133, 183, 187, 360, 376; *Rigoletto*, 268; *La Traviata*, 268, 358, 414-15  
 Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, 469  
*Voice of Firestone* (television series), 231, 232, 249, 283, 346, 351  
  
 Wagner, Richard, 78-79  
 Wahlmann, Margarete, 403-4, 405, 408-9  
 Walter, Bruno, 245-46  
 Warenskjold, Axelrod (grandfather), 2, 3-7, 53-55, 412  
 Warenskjold, Dorothy--recordings: *On Wings of Song*, 373-74; *Selections from the Student Prince*, 336-37; *Songs of Grieg and Dvořák*, 333-36  
 Warenskjold, Helen Mitten (grandmother), 2, 6  
 Warenskjold, Mildred Stombs (mother), 2, 7-8, 9, 21, 33, 49, 60, 119, 121, 123, 152-54, 157-58, 167, 216, 238-39, 251-55, 256-57, 281, 282, 299-301, 334, 416-17, 422, 432, 457-58, 459, 470-74  
 Warenskjold, William E. (father), 1, 2, 3, 6, 8, 12, 15, 17, 19, 21, 55, 60, 113, 152, 157, 160, 235, 238, 239, 251-55, 256-57, 299-301, 306, 412, 474  
 Weber, Carl Maria von: *Der Freischütz*, 101  
 Weinhold, Kurt, 163, 164, 192, 238  
  
 Welitsch, Alexander, 347, 348, 349  
 Willson, Meredith, 109  
 Winter, Robert, 460  
 Works Progress Administration, 17  
 Wymetal, William, 127-28, 183  
  
 Yeend, Frances, 188