



Ouida Mintz, at Tanglewood, with Aaron Copland,
David Glazer and Leonard Bernstein

My high school friend, Ouida Mintz,
looks back through rose colored glasses
at the happy days we shared in Brookline,
Massachusetts. I really enjoyed the nostalgia.

Mike Wallace

On a personal level, I was touched and amused by your memories of my father, Leonard Bernstein. Much of what you describe is news to me! I was delighted by the way you capture the energy, not only of the man, but of the times as well. Even had the book not concerned itself with Leonard Bernstein, I would have found it a most pleasing chronicle.

Alexander Bernstein
(son of Leonard Bernstein)

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PLAYING VIOLIN
WITH MIKE WALLACE

*We are such stuff as dreams are made on,
And our little life is rounded with a sleep.*

Shakespeare, "The Taming of the Shrew."

The "60-Minute" star, Mike Wallace, whom I knew as Myron, played a duet with me in a concert when we were students of Harry Ellis Dickson. Dickson is the father-in-law of Michael Dukakis, and was also assistant conductor to Arthur Fiedler at the Boston Pops. One time, Mike and I were supposed to play a duet at a recital at the home of our new teacher, Mr. Budd. We took a long street car ride to go there for the rehearsal. I must admit it was not easy working with Mike as he was very particular about getting the music just right. When the day of the recital arrived, on a beautiful Sunday in August, my parents gave me an option: would I like to go to Winthrop Beach with them to visit friends and go swimming, or would I prefer to play the violin duet with Mike at the recital? Well, of course, since it was a lovely summer day, there was not much choice as to which would be more fun. I suspect they would feel obligated to attend if I decided to play. Recitals are mostly for the purpose of allowing parents to observe the progress their children are making in their music lessons. I doubt that my folks wanted to attend, as they didn't drive and it would be a difficult trip. My mother called Mr. Budd who most accommodatingly agreed to play my part with Mike. I still felt guilty, but I guess that, with the participation of my folks, I came out looking like a spoiled brat.

I played first violin in the high school orchestra, but I was never an outstanding violinist, although I studied with two violin teachers during one year. It was rather confusing; my mom thought I'd learn twice as fast! One teacher played in the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

Now, these many years later, I have so much admiration for Mike Wallace's accomplishments. I always watch him on "Sixty Minutes," the award-winning news show on CBS, with a great deal of pride that I knew him when we played violin together, and later when we attended Brookline High School. We continued to play violin in the high school orchestra. I recall that when he was quite young he had a tendency to stutter, as did his sister, Helen. She later married the eminent first violinist of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Alfred Krips. By the time Mike was a senior, he was chosen to take part in several of the high school plays. He spoke flawlessly, which in retrospect seems to have been a portent of his future role on TV.

When he was in college he discovered that broadcasting was the medium for him. He wanted to be an announcer and do commercials, which he later did at WXYZ Radio in Detroit, and was the announcer on the "Green Hornet." During World War II he joined the Navy and was shipped to Australia where he acted in training films, in one of which he sold insurance to sailors.

After the war he went to Chicago where he did a radio series called, "For the Love of Mike." That was when he had decided to change his name to Mike, which fit him better than Myron. Among his many pursuits at that time were voice-overs on radio commercials, as well as announcing the Colgate Comedy Hour in 1951. Eventually, he graduated to television and did a show called "Nightbeat" where he did interviews. He said the show fit him like a glove. Some of the people he interviewed were Rod Serling, William Buckley, Adam Clayton Powell, and Hugh Hefner. When he asked "Hef" if he respected girls who would pose in the nude in his magazine, he answered, "Of course I do." Later Mike admitted that he must have been a prude for asking that. He also interviewed John Kennedy, Kirk Douglas, and Jack Benny, with whom he did a skit in which Mike grilled Benny about why he

MY WONDERFUL STUDENTS

Anyone with a good memory can be a good scholar.

William M. Blatt

What a privilege it is to influence the lives of children and young adults. It is so important for a teacher to give his student as much praise as possible. It is very rewarding to know one has changed so many young lives for the better. It gives me a little feeling of immortality, as I know that someday these young people will want their children to study music.

This is part of a letter I received from Linda Kaufman Schroeder: "Dear Ouida, I really have you to thank when I think of my love for music- between my choir that I'm in (and I have been singing for fifteen years), my piano playing, and my passion for listening to all kinds of music, you really were a big inspiration. I try to enhance my kids' lives with music too."

In the 60's and 70's, I taught ten families on Bengyfield Drive in Roslyn. One family told another and my students multiplied. The Ruiz family, from the Philippines, invited me and Sam to a barbecue and it was there that I met the Hamid family who became one of my favorite families. I must say a belated thank you to the Ruiz family, which I did in a way, when I helped them buy a gorgeous Baldwin grand piano at a bargain price before they moved out west to Iowa.

Electa Hamid, a pediatrician and mother of three girls, asked me if I would consider going to Garden City to teach her eldest daughter, Giselle, or "Gigi", as she was known. This young prodigy was truly amazing. She had perfect pitch and could name harmonies and all the notes

When I think about these warm, compassionate people with whom I spent so many years in their homes teaching their children, I get a sad feeling of loss. I particularly remember Dr. Ruiz who took care of my finger when I slammed the car door on it, Dr. Hamad who prescribed medicine for my sore throat, Dr. Rabin whose wife, Carol, noticed that I had a pink eye and asked her husband to look at it. Then there was Dr. Gade, the Director of St. Barnabas Hospital, who put an ace bandage on my hand after I had tripped and fallen in my bedroom. They made me feel as if I were part of their families and that I had made a difference in their children's lives. I try to keep in touch with them as much as I can, and when I have lunch with some of the mothers, I'm able to keep up to date on how their children are progressing.

At my annual student recital, in my house, I invite the parents and friends to be an audience. At one recital, a young girl had just finished playing her piece and the audience applauded enthusiastically. Her father then stood up and announced, "I'm glad you liked my daughter's performance, and I want you to know I figure that piece cost me about seven hundred and fifty dollars!" He sat down and the crowd fell over themselves laughing.

I am still in touch with Mary Finnerty who is a singer and had a trio. I taught her kids, Randi, Robby and Richelle, who are now productive adults. Their dad is Raymond, a charming man, and their four poodles' names all start with "R".

One of my ten year old students, who strongly resembles Robin Williams and has a similar sense of humor to boot, once greeted me by saying, "I'm not really here; I'm just a figment of your imagination" because he probably hadn't practiced for his lesson. When another boy saw his mother paying me for his lesson, he quipped, "Mom, do you really pay Mrs. Mintz to torture me?"

Sometimes a little incident happens that can brighten up your day, like the following: Once when I was on the way home from teaching, I stopped for a red light and another car pulled alongside mine. I thought he was going to ask for directions, but instead he called out, "Why don't you smile, you're too serious for such a nice day!"

And then there was the very young student who, when asked to describe J.S. Bach, said, "J.S. Bach had twenty children, and in his spare time he practiced on the 'spinster' in the attic."



Student recital in Ouida's studio



The Kroll boys
(left) Jonathan, now a lawyer
(center) Evan, now a rabbi
(right) Spencer, now a doctor