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**INTERVIEW WITH JANET GRAHAM DEWING**

by Carla Ehat & Anne Kent  
January 12, 1977

INTERVIEWEE: Janet Dewing (JD)  
INTERVIEWERS: Carla Ehat (C.E.) and Anne Kent (A.K.)  
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CE: Today is Wednesday, January 12, 1977. Continuing the Oral History program of the California Room at the Marin County Library at Civic Center, this is Carla Ehat and we have the pleasure today of being in the beautiful residence of Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Dewing at number 427 Woodland Road, in Kentfield, California.

We will be talking shortly with Mrs. Dewing who is known professionally as Janet Graham, distinguished California pianist, internationally famous for her outstanding performances in the great music centers of Europe as well as in America. For over thirty years, Janet Graham concertized professionally. Her warmly communicative style of playing has brought her beautiful concerts unusual success, being both convincing and enjoyable to the sensitive layman and the discriminating musician alike. Press enthusiasm in Europe includes among others the following, which I want to read into the record; Vienna says, (and these are all quotes) "Her playing contains that rare combination, amazing power, grace and poetry." Zurich speaks of her "profound depth of feeling." The Hague notes, "Classic piano controlled to perfection." Paris states, "she has a remarkable gift for exploring the subtleties of tone color, and her interpretations are profound and sincere." London: "Beethoven himself would surely have approved." In conclusion, from San Francisco, Alfred Frankenstein, the music critic has said, "Miss Graham is surely one of the most gifted, brilliant, and intelligent pianists in the West. People who write volumes of prose about the unearthly revelations of Beethoven's genius are certainly not on the wrong track, but a composer of such gifts needs interpreters equal

to the task that he sets them. Miss Graham indeed is one who possesses the secret." With her husband, Andrew Dewing, Janet Graham now lives quietly in Kent Woodlands, Marin County, where their friends gather frequently to share in her music making, performed in this beautiful redwood paneled room. Their house lies under the shadow of Mount Tamalpais and today, in this beautiful setting, we look forward to our visit with this talented and most gracious lady. Good afternoon, Janet.

JD: Good afternoon, Carla.

CE: We're certainly delighted that you have agreed to share with us today some of your experiences. How do you think you'll enjoy speaking rather than playing?

JD: Well in answer to that, may I tell a tale of the great opera star, Birgit Nilsson, who spoke to a small group of us recently, and she started, "I hope you will forgive my English, I do not speak very well; in fact really you must believe me, I sing very much better." Enough said.

CE: Enough said. Well, how did it all begin, Janet? You're from Berkeley I understand?

JD: I'm from Berkeley. I was born in Berkeley and I would like to start by outlining what I wanted to do today for you. It's a series of my experiences and then as I begin, if it seems to go back, I will tell you "now we are back thirty years," and so forth. In regard to experience, I have to tell you about my beloved Aurelia Henry Reinhardt who was the President of Mills College in the years that I was there as an under-graduate and many years after that. We had occasion, to go together to a quartet concert in a private home once in San Francisco. We came in a moment late and so they asked us during the slow movement of a Mozart quartet to please sit down in the hall. The only place to sit was one of those large box-things where you put coats and umbrellas, and we hoisted ourselves up onto it and I whispered "This is like sitting on a coffin," and she, quick as a whip came right back, "Your experiences were always were broader than mine." So my experiences begin there, and there is much that I would like to tell you.

Firstly, the greatest experience of my life is the contact through the years of a very, very, great artist, Artur Schnabel. This man, of course, isn't known to all of you, some of you are perhaps too young, but I would like to read what was said in our press at one time, that rather quickly summarizes his greatness. "During his lifetime, Artur Schnabel was acknowledged reigning king of the world's great pianists. His reputation flourished in an age when greatness, real or sham, was at every hand, from world's greatest banjo player to world's greatest tightrope walker. The early part of this century, in short, was a time of ballyhoo but Schnabel was no showman. While his asceticism may have cooled public response, it made him the darling of musicians and critics. When word of such uncompromising musicianship got round, his word became law. There is that debate about the little turn which ends the D Minor Movement of Beethoven's Sonata Number 15, where every pianist since heaven knows when played a B natural. Schnabel reached out from his throne and planted a thumb square on C natural, as though to remind us and Beethoven that B is foreign to the tonality of D minor. This rash stroke has toppled governments, caused suicides and divorces, and raised holy Ned in music academies. If Schnabel had his way, that C would be engraved on Beethoven's tombstone, and no one

would question it.” But before I talk more about him, may I go back to the skeleton of my early life?

CE: Please do Janet.

JD: I was born in Berkeley. My parents were devoted people who loved their two daughters very much, and gave them everything they could afford to give them, which wasn't much more than real love. My mother had had some background in music. She in fact had given up a fine position at the San Diego State College, where she was directing music and choral work, to marry my father. And my father at that time was teaching chemistry in the State College in San Diego. They moved to Berkeley and their children were brought up there. I graduated from the Berkeley High School a bit too young so Mills College wouldn't take me at that time and so my sister and I were sent abroad for a season, to enjoy the old world. Now my mother had enjoyed the old world when she was a little girl, slightly younger than we were at that time. She was in Weimar and in Dresden, and I have laid out today the cups that were bought for her at that time, for you to have your tea after I'm through chatting. This is old Dresden china, brought at that time in the 1880's back to America. Now during those years she used to go skating on the ice rink in the Belvedere in Weimar. She was probably about 11 years old, something like that, at this time. She was there some years, and old Abbey Liszt would take his morning walk when these children were on the ice pond. He was enchanted by this little girl and one time he picked her up and kissed her. And he said, "Now little girl, you must remember you are two kisses away from Beethoven, because Beethoven kissed me." So I am three kisses away from Beethoven. Carla is four kisses away from Beethoven.

CE: We'll pass it around later. That's a wonderful story.

JD: At that time, my mother used to be swathed against the frigid cold in a Sicilian hand loomed scarf of bright red. A painter saw her; I don't think she was a beauty but the scarf was beautiful, and he decided to paint her for one of his postcards, which he did, and placed it -it's right there, Carla, if you want to pass it to me, and the book- and it was placed eventually into this book which was found by Uncle Hubert Bancroft many years later, a generation later, and he recognized the scarf and the pose of the little girl and he said, " This is Florence in Weimar 40 years ago". And here is the scarf.

CE: Shall we pass this around?

JD: Well I don't think you have to; I can wave it like a flag.

CE: Beautiful.

JD: There it is and it shows the value of the beautiful Sicilian peasant dye. See how it held its color for a hundred years - and the picture on the outside of the book has faded to a light apricot.

CE: Beautiful, beautiful.

JD: -- young girlhood when I was playing more or less informally for the parents and the relatives and all the friends. I had my problems. My father, when asked one time, "How

did you like your daughter this evening, Mr. Graham?" and he answered, "Oh, she looked fine up there." I was crushed. My sister was asked and she said, "Oh, she does play Diddle Diddle faster than anybody I know." We have our problems, you see. So on arrival in Vienna, after I had graduated from Mills College, I had naturally a feeling I was pretty wonderful, and everybody around here thought I was pretty wonderful and when I arrived in Vienna the world of music surrounded me and I realized that I had had nothing, next to nothing, to do with music until then because I could diddle my fingers fast and efficiently as a little girl, but we had not been brought up with all the wonderful recordings of now-a-days. It was not the age of recordings and we had the Glow Worm and the prelude to Lohengrin and I think that was about it--and Liebestraum. We didn't have the money to come to San Francisco often for concerts. We heard them very occasionally. Much of the repertoire that I studied and played with my teachers in Europe was entirely new to me; I had never heard it and I recall saying to Schnabel one time when I was playing the Italian Concerto of Bach, I said, "You know I've never heard this piece before." And he stopped me - he said, "Don't begin. Wait a minute, did I hear you correctly?" He simply couldn't conceive of such a thing happening in those crazy far west states in America.

Well, the first time that I went to play for Schnabel, I took a three-movement work and started to play on a winter afternoon, about three o'clock in the afternoon, before an audience of about this number (twelve or fifteen). They were all first class musicians or public performers already, very few of them were students, as I was, and they sat there listening and never taking part. Whenever you had a lesson you brought your great work and you were given Schnabel's full attention. You had two great Bechsteins side by side, you played at one and he listened at the other and then began. I thought I had played it through rather well; I had certainly played it accurately. But when he took over I was sunk. Then the whole world of music was suddenly opened up and I realized what I had missed completely in the conception of so much of this great Bach work and I shall ever be grateful to Schnabel for that first lesson because as the hours went on--After an hour I began to get tired but, oh no, second hour began, it got dark, the light was failing. It never occurred to him to turn on the lights, I could hardly see the black keys from the white and the cigar smoke you could have cut with a knife. I asked him if we might have a little light, he got up to turn on the lights and I thought that would mean this is the end of the lesson, no, he'd just begun. So he went on for another forty-five minutes until I was ready to drop and all of a sudden, his cigar having gone out, he decided it was time to light it, and all of a sudden he came to. He had been so enchanted with this wonderful work that he wanted to work on it, and when he came to he suddenly got up and shook my hand, in other words, "You're through, get out," and it was over. I melted immediately, of course, into the crowd; feeling that I would never, never try to come back. This was not for me. I was bitterly discouraged. I had the feeling he was far, far beyond any conceptions that I knew anything about and that I would not continue on this track. Well, in a few minutes, he came over to me in the crowd, as they were milling around to rest before the next lesson began, and he said, "What will you play next time?" I was to come back in three weeks, which I did, and that he took for granted. I brought another major work in three weeks and that began a long, long years of association with Artur Schnabel. I worked with him whenever I had a chance, and also with his assistant Herr Gruenberg, who was, it so happened, a cousin by birth and also an excellent teacher and Schnabel suggested

that I work with Gruenberg every week and with Schnabel every three. This worked out very well except when Schnabel went on tour, which was quite often, and then if he came back to Berlin for the summers, we would then ask for perhaps ten lessons in a row, a repertoire that we had worked hard on for some four or five months. So that's a little bit of the picture for you as to what I ran into in Berlin when I first went to study with Schnabel. This was an association with him until his death in 1951. Hounded by the persecutors of the Jews, he finally went to Lake Como and established himself there and was thrown out eventually from there by Mussolini and came eventually, after very troublesome times during the war, to New York, and finally died in Switzerland. And we came back, many of his students, to sit at his feet again at Lake Como after he had left the Berlin scene that I have just sketched for you when I was a very young girl. At Lake Como we had the most delectable environment imaginable. The scene, of course, is esthetically beyond description, those of you who know the Italian Lakes. Schnabel had a villa up on the hill behind the Grand Hotel; you could hear him yelling (as they said) all over the lake. He would get so excited and so mad if anybody did something he didn't like. He'd say, "No, no, no, no, no" in English; many of us were Americans. And finally one of the American girls came rushing out and said, "You just wait when I get to heaven I'm going to find Schnabel there you see, you see if I don't, and God's going to be standing over him and he's going to be saying, 'No, no, no no,' " which we all rather hoped for.

Oh, I was going to tell you about Mrs. Prior whom I met there at Tremezzo. We happened to land in the same hotel, a beautiful little English woman from York. She had her young daughter with her; they were on holiday (as they say) and had the room, by chance, next to mine or the bathroom next to my room. And Mrs. Prior's bath, as she called it, was exactly next to my little rented upright piano in my hotel room. There was a thin wall between us. When she discovered it was I, she said, "Are you the pianist who's playing Beethoven next to my bath?" And I said, "Yes," and she said, "Well, my dear, I just have to tell you I never took so many baths in my life!" So it was years later that I went to London to play in Wigmore Hall and, so bless me, here I came out on the stage to find dear little Mrs. Prior complete with bucket hat and the rose on the side and her little false curls sitting right in the front row banging her hands together and all I could think of, as I sat down to open the program, was that bath.

Schnabel was a character and I could tell you just one or two things he used to do that were rather funny, which will give us a little moment of change here. He was playing in San Francisco once, in the Opera House, in a rehearsal, and Klemperer was conducting. They were preparing one of the big standard concerti for a performance here and I was there. Schnabel began to conduct the first violins behind his back. He was sitting at the piano. The violins were here and he wanted them to do this differently from the way the conductor was conducting. And Klemperer saw him: (knock, knock) "Mr. Schnabel, pardon me a moment gentlemen, I am Klemperer and I am here, you are Schnabel and you are there." And Schnabel said, "Yes, but where is Beethoven?" His opinion of Liszt would amuse you since we just had, last week, a Liszt piano concerto beautifully played in San Francisco by Andre Watts. Some of you probably heard it. And I was brought up by Schnabel and his assistant, Gruenberg, to have complete contempt for the showmanship of Liszt. We were more based on Schubert and Mozart and so forth. So

when I met Schnabel at the station here in San Francisco, when he came to play a Mozart Concerto with us, I said, "I noticed on the program for next week is one of your students, Leon Fleisher, going to play a Liszt concerto. How is this from you, a Liszt concerto from one of your students?" He said, "Yes, perfect for the fourteen year old mind." So that placed Liszt just where he belonged. One of the students, one time, when playing Liszt for Schnabel in the studio in Berlin or Como said, "Mr. Schnabel you're playing this Liszt piece so marvelously," he was at the second piano teaching it, "why do you never play it in public?" And Schnabel said, "Well, yes of course I could play it, but I'd have to practice it, and that I would never do." Schnabel wrote something once (and I'll be through with Schnabel shortly) that I liked. He says, "Music cannot hurt. Sunshine can burn you, food can poison you, words can condemn you, pictures can insult you, music cannot punish, only bless." Would that it were true. Drew and I went to a San Francisco Symphony concert when Zenakis, a Greek modern, was presenting a cacophony that we didn't like and it was so loud, so bangy, so atonal that it was beyond all our conceptions of beauty. And so Drew said, "Listen, I'm going to have an attack of angina, I can't take this." I said, "All right, let's leave." So we left, walked out and went to the bar, ordered a Scotch and soda apiece, put our feet up on the brass rail and thought "There - we escaped that." And at that moment, the bartender pushed the button so we could hear this Zenakis, and it blared forth at us, and we had achieved nothing.

I think you might be amused to hear a little bit about the living conditions as a student. I would like to divide this afternoon into really two parts: My life as a student and my life as a pianist on the concert stage. The living conditions of a student in Vienna (this is back now in 1927 to 28) were of course very, very primitive in a sense, they were still suffering terribly from poverty from the First World War. It was nothing like the modern world of Berlin at the same period. Vienna was poor and downtrodden, but we loved it. And we collected a boyfriend. My sister and I had a little apartment together and we collected a boyfriend, in his fifties, who wanted to practice his English. We were learning to speak German by this time, but faultingly, so he helped us both ways, and we helped him. And he took us skating on the skating rink. And they used to say of me, I couldn't skate at all, "Miss Janet, she doesn't skate, she sits." And I used to sit so constantly on the Vienna Skating Rink that the snowplow driver got used to me and he would always catch me in the snowplow and dump me in the far corner. And this became rather amusing to the watchers in the Concert House, which had its windows just above the Skating Rink, and in the intermission, the people at the concerts would come and watch the skaters dancing around and this little American girl over there caught in the snowplow. And the orchestra, of course, with the oomp bop bop, oomp bop bob and Acht Der Leiber Augustine and the beautiful Strauss Waltzes.

Now in Berlin, they didn't keep the coal in the bathtub. In Vienna the coal was kept in the bathtub. In Berlin, people got in the bathtub and this was really quite dramatic for me on arrival there. The second year I decided to go up there and play for Schnabel and see whether I could touch the stars. I was away now, I was alone. My sister had gone to Rome. I was away now, from the famous soccertorta and the hand-kissing of old Austria (what little that was left of the Empire days) and plunged straight in to the Sweigert home. Stats Secretariat Sweigert, who was in the (inner minesteria?). His daughter had recently married and his wife was lonely and they wanted someone to come and amuse

her. So I was to be the person to amuse her. They gave me two rooms, very tiny, a little bedroom, very, very pristine, in the back of the house; and a tiny living room in the front of the house, next to the front door, sort of ante-chamber, which they furnished rather charmingly with my little rented upright piano and a couch and a tea table, where I used to serve my friends coffee and enjoy a certain amount of life of my own.

Now the routine of living in this house of an old style German family would amuse you. This was way back in 1928-29 and '30, in those periods. I got up around eight in the morning or seven thirty, had a bath, just like a human being, and my breakfast was served in my own little living room in the front of the house at eight o'clock sharp (continental breakfast). Then at eleven o'clock we had second breakfast, which was open-faced meat sandwiches and a cup of hot chocolate. And then work again or go for what you have to do in town, or anything you want to do until dinner at two. The hot dinner was served in Frau Sweigert's big dark dining room, and just she and I were there in the middle of the day. And during this time I really had a good chance to at least try my feeble German because nobody in this house spoke either French or English. So that's the way to learn to speak a language, as Lucille knows. Now the Sweigert's daughter had just married and she had married into a family name you would know: Fischer-Dieskau. This is the name of the very famous internationally successful lieder singer who is on the concert stage today, probably the most beloved lieder singer in performance today. And he was the young half-brother (he was a child at that time) we called him little Deeter. And so you can imagine my amusement when I found this great six-footer on the San Francisco stage, with all the audience just like this, in reverence for his great artistry, because as a little child, this child showed no interest in music, and certainly the family showed little interest in music, only as any cultured German family would. The only trouble with Fischer-Dieskau is that when we go backstage, when we find him in concert somewhere, I don't know which one is his wife, because he changes one every time I go. He's working on his fourth now and I suppose that's the influence of the German Lieder Schubert used to do a good deal.

The Sweigerts suffered a certain amount during the pre-war years because of the Hitler situation. They were not Nazis, they were violently against but helpless social democrats. They were not Jews. So they left Berlin when the bombing came during the war, and of course I didn't see them again until after the war when my husband and I went back to see them and we found them in very happy situation in Bad Goedesberg, with beautiful furniture, beautiful rugs and linen and china. A few things I recognized from her mother, from the old days, but very few. And I said, "But Annie where did you get the money or the where-with-all to somehow get all of this?" And she said, "Janet, do you remember the food packages you sent us from San Francisco? That chair is your butter, that rug is half of your coffee," and right through the house she showed me what they had bought in the barter market with the food I had sent them. Of course they ate half of the food. Those were the times when the strain was becoming very great and they said to themselves, "Yes it's getting out of hand." And they were nervous before the war. It was not until after the war that we could talk with them, of course.

I've had several terrors to live through. The principle terror was, of course, Hitler in those days, and the fear of the great war that was coming, and the attempts to be friendly and

get my Jewish musician friends out of Germany. That was a real terror. The other terror was when I was told in recent years that a radical mastectomy was necessary to save my life, breast amputation. I was told at that time that I would not again, most probably, ever play Brahms in any big way, perhaps no music at all. So when the time came to come home to this room from the hospital, the first thing I did, as Drew and I came in the front door, each carrying a handle of the suitcase, I went straight to the piano. I started to play and I played something of Schubert and Drew, my husband, went immediately to the telephone, took it off the hook and dialed a number quick and said, "Listen," to a friend, "It's Janet playing Schubert."

Now we come to concert life, and this is really fun. My first public performance was under the auspices of the American Embassy in Berlin where I had been studying and living for some years and where I, of course, had many friends. So it was a fun project. I had an excellent manager and he immediately decided after that concert there should be further concerts all over Southern Europe, which we did. The Bechstein Hall where I first played had been dedicated in the 1890's by Brahms and Joachim. And I felt a tremendous responsibility. I was anxious to know what people thought of my work, naturally, so among others I asked my little maid, Greta, to go backstage and kind of listen, and listen in the lobby and tell me the next day what they said. And in her heavy Berlin dialect she said, "Ya, they like it, they liked you okay, but one man went backstage to get a closer look at your dress and he said it wasn't nearly as handsome as from a distance. But you sure couldn't say as much for her face." With weathering that blow I had a problem, so I started out with my head high in spite of that, and played in Southern Europe. And in Vienna, I happened to be there exactly to co-ordinate with the entry of Hitler's troops, the Anschluss. The spring of 1938, this was, and I recall the long night in the Imperial Hotel when I was trying to get sleep, the shouting and screaming, and roaring of the crowds marching by, all shouting, all of them shouting, "Heil Schuschnigg, Heil Schuschnigg," over and over again (Schuschnigg being the other party, of course). In other words, in opposition to Hitler, "Keep them out, keep the Hitler Storm Troops out, keep them out, Heil Schuschnigg" all night. The next morning Storm Troops crossed the border. The newspapers came out with one laughing, joyous, "Vienna, exuberant and grateful, welcomes the Fuhrer in The Anschluss."

At that time Frederick Reinhardt, the son of Aurelia Henry Reinhardt, who sat on the coffin with me, was now American Ambassador to Austria - no, he was First Secretary at that time. He was later American Ambassador to Italy and to the United Arab Nations, a very brilliant man. And he had said to his mother many years before, "Trouble with the world is there are too many people in it, and if there were more floods of the Yangtze River, we'd all get somewhere. This is really terrible. There ought to be a way of just annihilating millions." And his mother wondered how long this boy would feel this way. Well, it was the emigre problem in Vienna when he was First Secretary in the Embassy, handling immigration, that changed this man. And he was crushed beyond description, when I saw him, at the scores, everyday, of desperate men coming through his office saying, "Mr. Reinhardt, if you don't sign this for my application for my American visa to get my family out of Austria in the next month, I will take my life, I promise you this." And he would have to say, "I simply can't. I've given a hundred more or a hundred and

two more than I dare, and I simply can't." And he was absolutely crushed with the disaster that was at his fingertips to change, if he only could, and he couldn't.

Now in Berlin, I went right back and set my teeth to getting my friends out. I stayed an extra year at that time to do so. And here was where I had a good chance to get a look at Hitler, Hess, Goebbels, Goering, the whole crowd, in a concert once, when they sat in a box next to the box where I happened to have a seat, and they were here. And we followed them out, of course, into the lobby in the intermission, and got a closer look, and really this was a pretty horrible man. He was, however, less physically repulsive than you would think because he had a rather fresh color, almost a peasant's rosy cheeks, which never photographed. He photographed so pasty and horrid, and his little flip hand, you know, of Heil Hitler. We lived in an age of fear and we didn't get too near them, of course, because we didn't want anyone to think that we were that interested. And I had my lunch in a restaurant very shortly after that where I saw the example of what fear can do to just the ordinary man. The waiter came, he was taking the orders at various tables, each table he said, "Heil Hitler," which was of course was the greeting of "How do you do – what'll you have?" And everybody answered "Heil Hitler." And when he came to the English dowager sitting at a table alone, next to mine, he said, "Heil Hitler." She pushed her chair back and she pushed her glasses off and she looked at him and she said, "God save the King." Well, it's funny and we laugh now and half of us laughed, we couldn't help it, but that restaurant emptied in four minutes. Half of the people didn't finish their meals, they were so afraid that someone was going to run out and say, "Hey, there's a woman in there who's making people laugh," you see, and they wouldn't have it, and they left.

Fear is a terrible thing, I had a little student one time, a nine-year-old child, and I told her that I had seen Hitler in person and she said, "Well I just don't understand." I said, "What don't you understand, dear?" "Well, why you didn't catch him?" Nobody understands that.

Then came the war, and after the war, back again to concertizing in Rome, Stockholm, Zurich, Paris, London, all of them again and again. I'm sure you would be interested in the mechanics of touring and just what the difficulties are. I'm going to read this because I think it's quicker. I can save time. One of the greatest and most rewarding experiences for any performing musician is a well-managed concert tour. You have at least half a chance of playing well and you have the inestimable advantage of routine before audiences, any audiences. It was the critic Olin Downes who said, "Not until a performance is lifted out of the suffocating tensions of the studio and placed on the concert stage can it ever come to real flower." This is questionable but he said it and it's interesting and certainly partly true. I never planned to go on the concert stage, it just happened. There is sure to be someone around who urges you to go on to bigger fields. One is not just flattered but encouraged by the rewards, the reward of bringing this wonderful music to others, live, not through a machine. Let me say here, it is more rewarding to the audience to listen to a live performance because of the ever-present possibility that this may be the one time when genius shines through. It may also be the most boring performance of the artist's life. The finer the artist, the less fluctuation, of course, but they all have their off-times and a very few reach the stars. The problem is to

contact audiences who can recognize this; audiences who know there is a risk, who accept the challenge to recognize or miss greatness on this special night.

You might be interested to know the mechanics. The principle manager connects with the subsidiary managers in the other cities who have shown an interest in this artist's work. They arrange dates and halls and the availability of the finest nine-foot concert piano, Steinway or Bechstein in Eastern Europe and England, Pleyel or Gaveau in Paris. They write the blurbs, which relate who this is, if a newcomer, and what the critics in other centers have said. We'll have more to say about the critics later. Also arranged by the manager is the all-important rehearsal time. You usually have two hours in the hall to practice the program on the piano, the instrument having been transported to the hall from the piano factory, before this concert. One has to go to the factory on arrival in a city and choose the piano best suited for this repertoire from among those available. Then the tuner takes over after it's transported to the hall. I had an amusing situation in the city, in Vienna I think it was. I arrived for my rehearsal in Vienna to find all in readiness, the hall heated, the stage, the house lights on, an electrician in attendance to try out the spots and floods. The tuner was just leaving: "You can't practice here today." "Why not?" said I, "I have this rehearsal time reserved by my manager." "Well you can't have it, this is a mistake. I've just put this instrument into condition for Mr. Rachmaninoff whose concert is tonight. He practiced on it yesterday; you'll have to come back tomorrow." I was crushed, always being afraid of getting too tired the day of the concert, but there was nothing to be done, I had to come back. The next day, just three hours before my performance was to begin, I touched for the first time the instrument whose idiosyncrasies I had to master, now or never. But Sergei Rachmaninoff's sweat was still on the ivories. Rubbing it off with my handkerchief, I left just a tiny bit of the goo, in the humble hope it might absorb into my skin that night.

We spoke originally of great experiences and certainly everyone's life is full of the great moments. I would say that mine are related to people. I mentioned first Artur Schnaubel himself, his assistant, Herr Gruenberg, these two wonderful teachers. I would now like to mention three of the Ambassadors whom I met. Reinhardt, of course, I knew since he was a boy, so he wasn't particularly imposing but it was interesting to realize how this man kept his sense of humor into middle years. And when he came to visit in Palo Alto his brother, Paul, who is a doctor down in Palo Alto, he saw that his sister-in-law had too much to do, with each of them having four children and there was going to be a party. So he said, "Well, I can at least do the vacuuming," which he did. The telephone rang and Fred shouts out, "Tell them if that's for the Ambassador, he's vacuuming."

Then the other ambassador who had a nice sense of humor was Jim Bonbright. I was playing in Stockholm in the beautiful concert hootsit (my Swedish is poor), and after the autograph signing and the usual lines of people in the greenroom after the concert, I noticed a little man waiting in a corner, very modestly just patiently waiting. He didn't want an autograph, obviously, he wanted to speak to me. And finally he got a chance and said, "I'm Jim Bonbright." And I thought "Bonbright, who is he, oh dear?" because he acted as if I certainly should know. Well, I should, he was the American Ambassador to Sweden. I didn't know this until I woke up and I said, "Well, I am honored that you are here and I hope you enjoyed it." He said, "I've come to congratulate you on a very

beautiful concert. My wife was unable to be with me but she sends you the message, "Will you have dinner with us tomorrow at the American Embassy?" So I went. Arrived in a taxi to this enormous mansion. Came in to find these two modest little people living surrounded by liveried servants in every way inconsistent to their manner and style. And I looked at her, and I saw her beautiful paintings that she had hung and the walls, a little bit in the French impressionist style, and I said to her husband, "What did she say when she first saw this house?" "She said, 'My God.' And actually she had been saying it ever since," he said. Well, we had a delicious and modest lunch and enjoyed the wine very much and I missed my husband very much and I said, "Could I send the name of this wine in my next letter to my husband?" And Mr. Bonbright said, "I'll get you the label." And he got up and went into the pantry and brought back the label torn off the wine bottle. A few minutes later we went into the drawing room for our coffee and the maid came out and said, "The cook wants to speak to the madam." So madam went out and she came back just howling. "Cook's going to leave, she's furious. She says we shouldn't allow our little guest, like that little guy who came out in the pantry, to come out there and fuss around. She doesn't want strangers in her kitchen." She didn't know it was Mr. Bonbright himself.

Now they ask about stage fright. Of course it exists for everyone but it isn't actually fright. As you walk up the aisle of the big church to be married you're not frightened, you're thrilled but you're like this. And it's that kind of thing that one experiences in public performance, not always evenly. Some people are victims of stage fright always and that would be characteristic of, for instance, Horowitz. He has a really terrible time. I had a friend who knew him slightly and offered her San Francisco home to Horowitz to practice on the day of his concert at the San Francisco Opera House. This was some years ago and he came and spent the day. And she quickly phoned all her friends and said, "Come in the back door and come up stairs and we'll listen to him practice." All he did all day long, eight hours strong, was the Butterfly Etude, the little G flat etude of Chopin, nothing else. He was just killing time, anything to forget his fear. Then when it was time for him to go on the concert platform he turned deadly pale and he said to his manager, "I can't". And the manager said, "Well, all right you can't, but you'll have to go out and tell them, I won't." And poor Horowitz came out on the stage, sat down at the piano and plowed into his opening number and played gorgeously. He was over his stage fright when he saw there was no way out.

Now as for the critics, there's a great deal of feeling about people who say (I mean among musicians) about people who say, "He got a good review," "She got a good review," that settles it. He was marvelous if he got a good review, a good review. This is one man. If they would say all the reviews of an entire concert tour were very laudatory then you would have some basis to believe, but not from one newspaper in one town. And people quote just the newspaper they read and they say, "I heard it was terrible, it was an awful bore, he played very badly." And I am likely to pipe up and say, "Who are they who say this? They say he played very badly, who is they, one man." All right, that one man, I can think of one example who shall be nameless, has said to me that the greatest symphony of the nine of Beethoven is the Second. Now any musician of course would just say, "Well cross him off," but the public doesn't know that and so they accept when he downs the next artist who comes, although he hasn't the slightest idea the difference between the

Second Symphony of Beethoven and the Seventh or the Ninth. They think if a critic can write, he can write a good review. It isn't, of course, true.

The worst experience of my life was getting emigres out of Germany because you're really up against a steamroller when you're up against the Nazi machine. And I had three families that I wanted very much to do something about. One was a judge in the law courts, in Leipzig, with a wife who was a ballet dancer, and two growing daughters. Another was Hilda Vogelsdorf and her mother. Another was my teacher, the assistant to Schnabel, Gruenberg, and his wife. I lost the Vogelsdorfs, we never heard from them again after I came to this country. We were in constant correspondence trying to get them a visa, an American visa, so they could enter this country and save their lives. They were Jews, of course. The time came when suddenly the correspondence stopped. We wrote, of course, to many local friends who might know them, and they simply had disappeared off the face of the earth. And this happened again and again and again. But I was able to get the Caros out as far as Brussels. And then the war had begun and here was a French (no, a Belgian) authority preventing this German man (who was, of course, a German Jew fleeing) from entering Belgium because he was from an enemy country, which caught him in between the two walls with spikes in them. And the Belgians arrested him, sent him to Paris where the French sent him down to the Pyrenees, to a concentration camp run by the French, and he spent the whole war there. But I was able to get his wife and daughters over, and he has a nice position now as Librarian in Stamford, Connecticut.

Now for the Gruenbergs, there was a much bigger problem, of course, and that was trying to get them to England and wait there so that we could come eventually to America after his visa became due. I finally went back to Berlin, got the visa for them (because they couldn't go back, of course, they would be arrested) and brought them to this country. Was met in New York by Mr. Allen Carick's mother, who took us immediately to their home and took care of us, and he is now living in his 80's, in semi-retirement in San Francisco. So that's their story.

I've often been asked in regard to my many experiences as to what was the most rewarding experience. And I think that since I have written this down for someone else I'd like to read it to you. The great artist, pianist Myra Hess, had a very great influence in my life as follows. While I was still a very young pianist, nearly out of Mills College, I heard the great Myra Hess play the Brahms F Minor Sonata, in a San Francisco concert. Going home that night, starry-eyed with assurance, I shouted to all who would listen, "That I shall do". Years later, after almost a decade, growing up with many other great classics, I gathered courage to share the Brahms F Minor Sonata with a fast growing public. Sometimes with a sense of defeat, more often with a kind of philosophical "Well, perhaps somebody got something." We never know. Then suddenly one day in Washington, DC, Myra Hess herself walked into the drawing room where I was a fortunate guest. In a quick sentence I was privileged to tell her how truly her moving performance of the Brahms had been responsible for shoving me into the concert world. With her characteristic warmth, she grasped both my hands and then she went on to say how clearly she recalled that San Francisco appearance principally because it had not been a happy evening for her. Conflicts in the concert calendar, etc. had resulted in a rather meager response at the ticket office, compared to other recitals that season. And

worse still, she had fallen ill, tired, low, and she was convinced she had not quite lived up to her Brahms and Bach. After that concert she did not return to our city for many years. But she said, "What you have told me makes all struggles worth while. It gives me courage to go on because I never know but what one life somehow, somewhere may be affected, even influenced radically, because of that one performance, inadequate as it may seem to me." Then smilingly she said, "Strange coincidence the same Brahms is on my program Sunday, will you come?" Newark, New Jersey is not a very engaging place and I was all alone after riding tedious hours from Washington on a clammy, sooty, November day. But life seemed good as I listened again to this great artist as she made this piece roll on through its Sturm und drang. I was very subdued as I paced the lobby afterward, in the intermission, not at all noisy and self-assured as after that first time so long ago. Why, stabbed a little knife, did I ever think I could do that? What ever possessed me to do it in public; how shocking, never again, so help me. Fifteen years before, I had sturdily asserted, "That I shall do." Now frankly, and without bitterness, I knew (I was convinced) that this I shall never do. Suddenly, in the throngs streaming back into the concert hall, a very young girl touched my shoulder; a stranger quite unknown to me. "Aren't you Janet Graham? Do please forgive me but I just can't resist telling you, I am in New York to study piano, to go as far as ever I can go. Next season I am appearing in Town Hall and it's because of you. I heard this Sonata from you once in Portland, Oregon. Since that night, I play the piano."

CE: Thank you, Janet Graham Dewing, for sharing with us this afternoon some of your remarkable reminiscences.