

Maury Okun Interview Transcript

Sara Nishikawa (she/her): Welcome to CultureSource's Music Moment. Today we will be hearing from Maury Okun, President of Detroit Chambers Winds & Strings and Art Ops

Sara Nishikawa (she/her): What was the first album you bought or the first you know single you bought, what do you think about it, and when does it come up in your life?

MauryOkun: Yes, so you know, I was raised in a musical family my father was a music teacher, so the records in my life from my youth were all there before I got there and I should give a caveat which i'm not particularly proud of, but almost all about this thing is in the world of classical music is you could put on some pop music and I are contemporary music and i'd have a hard time identifying who it is. So by that I didn't really buy any music, although this immersed in it until I was in college, and I think the first, if I remember the first. Substantial recording that I bought it's going to sound really geeky, but it was recording and Bogner's ring cycle it's like a 16 disc compilation with the Vienna Philharmonic and towards the end it's really a famous recording. Like I had this recording and I had this box seven to like five years ago. When I moved and I was just getting rid of all my stuff and I don't know if you know Mark Striker, the arts writer for the Free Press, but he he took it because he's still doing vinyl in a way, that i'm just not and I know that sounds totally different first record, but if you're a young brass player in the 1970s, which is when I was buying this. tTat this could just Come on, and it was a transformative disk and he was the first time they really captured by music on record in such a way that was so impressive, and so I know that to totally geeky moment but that's my first disc

Sara Nishikawa (she/her): Does that come up you know to some music come up, often for years it's sort of a through line, for you know your work?

MauryOkun: yeah it's an interesting thing because when I think about it folks as it works out later in my life here one of our board members ss an amazing soprano by the name of Christine Goerke who recently moved to Detroit actually. What she's when people ask me about Christine Goerke do what I say, as both the last time, the metropolitan opera during cycle, she was Brünnhilde. And so it comes back to me through the lives of my life like much music it comes back to me now through the lives of my friends who are involved in it's either presentation or performance or composition. And so i've never played any of those any of those opposite MOT we did Flying Dutchman just kind of baby Bogner, maybe 15 years ago. And, but that's just posted I got to play a wonderful piece, but this type of music is so fantastic it's so great and it's so beautiful and it's so compelling that maybe sometime I get back that we should probably listen to all of that music again in one fell swoop.

Sara Nishikawa (she/her): yeah I love the way that it comes up is is you know your friends are performing it or you know it's so connected to to the Community that you felt.

MauryOkun: yeah well that's part of the answer to your question about how does it come up in the rest of music and the rest of my life which is that so much of my friends and my life is based around my friends and the music that they present it's a funny piece, because I came up as a musician I was promoting I don't know this, but I I, my training isn't trombone and I reason i'm in this position that because of some musician friends and I formed the organization to try chamberlain's 40 years ago that got to be big enough that somebody had to run it, and that was me and so that's how I come to be an administrator until maybe five or six years ago, maybe now seven or eight years ago at playing a trumpet playing the trombone was really how I define myself in an active way and more later on in my career, I became more of an arts administrator

and it's a funny piece, because I feel like it is sort of an ironic way I was a good trombone player, but in an ironic way I can make more more great music happen by my administration world and i'm sure you have similar feelings about some kind of art and where you are in the world as an administrator it's just funny how that sometimes that transformation takes place.

Sara Nishikawa (she/her): Was there, somebody in your life that was really influential in the way that you kind of approach?

MauryOkun: So it was definitely the most influential person in my musical life was my father for sure, my father was the kind of high school band director that either you were if you're in the path of them, you had a great ride, but if you weren't in the path with him, you better get out of the way and it was in a small town, at a time when the band directors and small towns, for the heroes of the town in the band director and maybe the football coach to really matter, and he was very, he was very interested in making good music and that was always part of my life, I actually don't remember a time when it wasn't and in my particular case i'm i'm the youngest of six children and my five older siblings are all girls and so that put me right in the apple of my father's I think that became part of the part of the process for me so that's that he was certainly the most influential person in the tech lead became a musician.