DORIOT DWYER - OCTOBER 10, 1986

I'm at Symphony Hall in Boston where Doriot Dwyer has agreed to speak with me about Mr. Powell.

BOB: Doriot, when did you first know there was such a thing as a Powell Flute?

DORIOT: Oh, that's a long time ago. I really reveal everything now. It was in 37, 1937, I think it was the year after the '36 World's Fair in Chicago. That is not New York, Chicago. That my mother, well------ I have to start at '36. There was the World's Fair in Chicago and I lived very near Chicago. That's nice, isn't it?. I was born very near Chicago and so it took us an hour and a half at top speed, 90 miles an hour, to get to the World's Fair. My mother and I regularly went up because there was not one, but two symphony orchestras playing,-- that was the Detroit and Chicago Symphonies. And my mother was also a flutist, a very fine flutist, terribly unusual. She was as good in her way as Mr. Kincaid or anybody you can think of. She was a self-taught flute player and so she could not sit down in an orchestra and really dash off all the things. But she had a very good technique. But what she had was a fantastic sound, just fantastic. And she was really like an opera singer on that flute. So I never had any doubt about my inheritance. The only thing she was a terrible teacher. And she could not tell, all she taught me was how to finger the flute and then having known how to finger the flute, she was shocked to see I played out of tune because apparently she picked it up and played it in tune from the word go. And she did everything right. And I mean everything that she had to do. And so anyway, I had a very terrible beginning at flute and nobody ever thought I would be the least, we were all very musical there were 4 of us, of children, and we thought that I would be the last one they expected to become a musician because I was really terrible as a beginner and every, every lesson I had with my mother would end in tears. Because I really couldn't understand her and she frightened me so because she'd say oh that's terrible, oh that's terrible. And it really was horrible. But she made us all listen to broadcasts a great deal and I was the only one that stuck around. The others went out to play and she noticed that, and I didn't seem to notice that I was still there. But it was at the Chicago World's Fair when I was listening to the Detroit Symphony and they played the William Tell Overture and all of a sudden everything I'd heard for years of music came together and I thought why that's beautiful. It's wonderful. And so right away she said, "you think so?". And I said, "yes". And she said "would you like to meet the first flutist?" I said, "sure." So that's what really got me started. And then she got the idea that maybe if I had another teacher I would make better progress. So here's where Mr. Powell comes in because later I was to go to Chicago for my lessons but at that time I was much younger. I won't say how young I was. But anyway, say I was terribly young and anyway, so she brought a flutist from the Chicago Civic Orchestra, if you know what that is, the training Orchestra for the Chicago Symphony, down to our little town of Streeter every other Saturday and she had a large class of flute students and she simply gave him her class because she really wasn't that interested in teaching. So he taught all day and I was the last pupil he had and he was from Boston and he studied with Lora and had one of those new fangled Powell Flutes which he was selling.
DORIOT: We didn't buy any, oh no, we were "dyed in the wool" Haynes people. But that's when I heard about Powell Flutes. And to the end of her days, I'm afraid my mother never liked the Powell Flute. She like a big, thick flute you could pound in, blow in, you know, and she was never concerned about getting a sound that carried because boy did it carry. I mean I remember her on a wooden flute, you know, no problem. And so but that's where I heard about Powell Flutes. And it wasn't, so the next thing we did, I think the next summer, maybe not that summer, but one of those summers close to that time, my father decided the family should go to New England and that involved. Mother said, "well if we go to New England I'm going to Boston and get a new Haynes Flute." So she did. But we went to see Mr. Powell because we heard he was quite a person and it was something we should do. My teacher said," now don't forget go see Mr. Powell. You don't have to buy a flute, go see him." So I did and I thought he was wonderful. And I had met Mr. Haynes and I subsequently studied with Barrere who was a great Haynes person, and I knew Mrs. Haynes for many years, and I liked them all very much. But and it wasn't until, then we have to make a quite segway to when I graduated from college. This is almost before I was in high school, so it was almost 8 years later that after college I went to Eastman School of Music.

BOB: You were playing on a Haynes Flute?

DORIOT: All this time.

BOB: All this time. Yes.

DORIOT: Actually it was my mother's Haynes Flute, the one she gave me when she got the new one in Boston when we were on that trip. So I had that one for eight years and so right after Eastman School my first job was, guess what?. What's everybody's first job? The National Symphony in Washington. Did you play in the National Symphony?

BOB: No, I never did.

DORIOT: Oh you missed it. Well, they had a story about them. Everybody that got fired from the National Symphony always got a better job. And some people went through that place and got a better job anyway.

BOB: I know a lot of people that have been there that did move into good jobs.

DORIOT: Well, so, it was when I was in the National Symphony that my flute was stolen and since I was in Washington, D.C., I remember calling up Mr. Kincaid because I was studying with him at the time, I was commuting on my days off to Philadelphia to take lessons from him. And so I always remember his story, it was very, very heart breaking. He said,"well you see, I only have three flutes," of course, he had more than that. But he said," I only have 3 flutes, now I have my second flute in case my first flute breaks, but what if my second flute breaks?, I won't have any flutes so I'm sorry, that's terrible," he said. So anyway, finally I called my pal who was in the Navy Band and he had a Powell Flute that the Navy owned. And he said," you can have this one because I have my own flute. But it's French Model, you
don't play French Model." I said, "no, but I'll learn," and I did learn it in about a day. And so that was my first Powell Flute. Of course, I gave that back to him but then my new flute was Powell and it wasn't, it really wasn't a very good Powell Flute I'm sorry to say. It was number 727, I still have it because it was my first Powell Flute and even so, it was fantastic to me how much easier it was to play- and the sound.

BOB: By comparison.

DORIOT: No comparison. I still feel this way. You want this a commercial for Powell Flutes, well, I'll tell you I really, I really think the world of Mr. Brannon and I immediately place an order with him when he seceded from the Powell Flute Company because I thought, I think he is extraordinarily talented. And he needed all the support he could get. So I said, "all right, I'll have two piccolos and two flutes, and I bought, subsequently I bought two flutes. Oh, then he was out of the piccolo business for a while. Now I'm really not that interested in piccolos. But I think they're just--

BOB: I saw you playing one today.

DORIOT: Oh yes, I have a Powell Piccolo. But, anyway I still think, I think the Brannon's are the present day Haynes flutes. But they're very, very fine. They are very close to Powell, but they're not Powell Flutes. And I don't know if there are any pure Powell Flutes now, I rather, I think it's rather doubtful. But they do have something. That is they followed the precepts of the old man as they say and they try. And occasionally they make it and when they make it it is totally different from any other flute, I think. You don't have to put all of this in that book.

BOB: No, I'm not looking for commercial really.

DORIOT: Because their trouble is they don't have a good head joint maker right now and they had a magnificent one but they got into an argument with her and that was that, but she was wonderful. And I love those head joints. So presently I have a Powell Flute body and a Cooper head joint which he copied an old one of Mr. Kincaid's old flutes which I managed to buy. He copied it and it was a magnificent copy. So that's what I have because my wonderful Powell Flute was stolen.

BOB: Stolen?

DORIOT: Yes, in Frankfort.

BOB: How long ago was that?

DORIOT: Three years ago. And.

BOB: Boy, that's something the way these instruments disappear.

DORIOT: Yes. Well, anyway, so then I met Mr. Powell and, of course, I got a flute. And even though at the time I didn't know whether it was a good Powell or not it was so much better and such a joy I had it. But then came, the next thing that happened, of course in that time I've been in many orchestras, many places, the next time I got a new flute was when I came to
Boston. And I was at that time, I was in California. Now this was in 1952 and I said it was a big, I was engaged only two weeks before the season began, though I was auditioned in July. And I really sweated bullets those weeks, seven, eight weeks.

BOB: That's what's called holding you off?

DORIOT: Yes, yes. Oh they weren't prepared for that at all. They thought there were just, they called it Ladies' Day, when they had a few of us female flute players auditioning. And I guess they thought they'd have a good laugh and Mr. Munch was such a ladies man. You know, he thought it would be amusing, amusement as he said. And so instead he got very interested. But what happened was maybe something similar to what happened in Philadelphia. He had in mind a flutist in Europe that he wanted but the union wouldn't let him bring him in. Thank goodness for that. And.

BOB: Yes, that happened. Yes it did. He wanted Jeffrey Gilbert at the time. (This in reference to Ormandy's wishes when Kincaid retired).

DORIOT: So when they finally had to give up, Mr. Munch said well, he wanted me. So I got the job, so two weeks before that I wrote, I sent my flute in and I said to him, would you please overall this flute and please extra good, extra good, and I'll be in Boston to pick it up myself. That's all I said because I wasn't supposed to tell anybody. And so Mr. Powell when I got there, had a brand new flute for me and he said, "Now, you don't have to pay for this, this is my idea. I think you should have a new flute", and, but I did pay for it, but anyway, I said, "How did you know." He said, "Well look, somebody doesn't write from California to say they'll be in Boston especially when they're playing all the time. You've always had a job somewhere." And he said, "They were being very closed-mouth and so I just simply called the personnel manager and I said, is Doriot coming to play first flute in the Boston Symphony." And the contractor said, "I am not at liberty to tell you who she will be." So he [Powell] said, "Well I have to know because I'm making her a new flute", and he said, "you go right ahead because I understand." And what he did was he changed the pitch. It was a 440 and BSO did play very high, still does, but not terribly high. I think there are even many big symphonies in the United States that player higher than we do. Now at that time it was something special, so I got a 442 Powell Flute. And the most remarkable thing was I never had to get used to it. It just was butter. I thought it was wonderful.

BOB: That's wonderful.

DORIOT: But actually that wasn't so great either. As time went on, I was not happy with it and then in this time, of course, the second flute player was Jimmy Papatsakis did you know him?

BOB: A little bit.

DORIOT: Well, Jimmy was one of these people that tried flutes and flutes and flutes, I mean he just had, I don't think he had wall to wall flutes, but he was constantly talking about them and over there all the time trying because he was very unsatisfied. And I did not want to get into this bind. One can do that as you well know. And once you start it never ends. And he did say
something that I thought was probably true. I don't know but he contradicted himself, he said, well Powell makes flutes for the people he has in mind and so Kincaid's flutes, he just adores that man, so his flutes will always be marvelous. And he said, but I can't get over it, he doesn't like me and he always gives me some kind of a flute and he said I pick up my pupils' flutes, of course Jimmy had an empire of pupils. And he mentioned a particular female flutist who was a very pretty girl, and he said you should see her flute. It's just unbelievable. And how he could do that for somebody who is not even playing in an orchestra yet.

But, well, I bided my time and I thought it's really more my responsibility what I get out of the flute than to get a different flute, but I never, never really bought any more Powell Flutes or did anything about it. I bought a Powell Flute for my mother. By this time my mother was getting much older and for the first time in her life she was having trouble with her breathe, so I said, why don't you play a closed-hole Powell Flute and you won't have to use so much breathe and you have so much more tone because her tone was breathy, everything went really down very much. And she said all right I'll try it. And so with that I took away her Haynes Flute and I gave her the new Powell Flute. I thought she'll never change if she has the two around at the same time. So it was about that time she stopped playing the flute and I'm very sorry I did that. That's one of my big mistakes in life. It didn't help her at all, she thought it was terrible. Well, a lot of people who have changed to Powell Flutes have this reaction and I remember my reaction too, is that you blow and nothing comes out because as far as I'm concerned, one is blowing too hard. And you have to blow, it's much more ear play, much more French style and then boom you start hearing this.

BOB: You get the projection.

DORIOT: Yes, and I just went through this last week with another pupil of mine who is auditioning for a symphony job and I said, here, take this Powell Flute, take it home to play. Give me that Haynes Flute, it was my Haynes. I bought a rather unusual, very old Haynes, so I buy a couple of flutes to loan to my students. I said give me that flute back and you take this one. I said you won't like it, she played and and said A. I said, yeah. You keep at it, and in about 4 days from now you call me and if you still don't like it, I'll trade you back. Why I never heard from her till her next lesson a week later and she said this is a wonderful flute. And it is. It's a very nice, old Powell Flute.

So well, but after many years in the Boston Symphony I was sort of ready for a new flute. But by that time Powell had died, I think, and I can tell you many stories. So once, of course, that I got a Powell Flute, and I was in Boston, this is what you really want to talk to me anyway about.

BOB: I know he thought a lot of you. And I think you probably went up there occasionally.

DORIOT: Oh, I went there many times. He was so funny. One of the funniest things he did was, one of the funniest things he said was that he always took his vacations in winter time and that was not good for the Boston flutists because that's when we were playing and we needed his help. I mean something might go wrong and I said, Mr. Powell, why don't you take your time off in the
summer. And he said, what, and miss all those flutists on summer vacation. He said that’s what I live for. And I thought that was wonderful. And he was not talking merely about business, though of course, he meant business.

**BOB:** He loved to see everybody.

**DORIOT:** He loved to wine them and dine them as he did me many times and he’d say, hey, Billy Kincaid’s in town, let’s go out Friday night. And we did that. And I’ll tell you about the Powell Flute I finally got of Kincaid’s was one he picked up in 1956, I think.

**BOB:** The one with the C-sharp trill key?

**DORIOT:** No, oh maybe so, maybe so. No it was another one, but it was his last Powell Flute, silver flute. The last Powell Flute he bought and he didn’t think so much of it. He told me he didn’t think it was not so good. Now gee if that’s not so good. Of course, by this time I had played many of his other flutes, he’d let me play on his flutes. And oh I do have to digress a bit. I’ll tell you what Kincaid said, it was awfully cute. The first trip we made to Philadelphia after I got in the BSO, he had me over to his house, and he was rather well along in his cups that night, and his wife was quite a character too as you know.

**BOB:** Also in her cups.

**DORIOT:** Oh yes, and so I went to his apartment and when I was first in the Boston Symphony, I came from a very straight-laced, te-totaling family, and I was still feeling ughhhh like this, in the presence of that element. So I’ll never forget there was this little silence and she said, "Well, do you have any questions for Mr. Kincaid?" And I said, "Questions?" She said, "Yes, you know he’s your teacher." And right away Bill said, what was her name, Helen. "Why, Helen, don’t you realize she’s my rival now?" And that ended that. I thought that was very charming.

Well, anyway, we did, we went out to dinner, Powell, Kincaid and I several times and we had a great time. But this one particular time, they were in the Powell factory, what you call these factories, a little hole in the wall, and they were joking about something or other and I didn’t know what the joke was, but and I was too polite to ask. And I assumed it was one of those male jokes that you’re not supposed to discuss, but they were doing this laughing you know. Then we went to dinner, we had a nice dinner. And that’s all. Well, I did play that flute too especially after he said he didn’t think much of it and I thought it was marvelous. I thought this is what Jimmy was saying. This is the Powell Flute that is made for somebody he considers a great player and this is what he can turn out. Boy, so I just gave it back and of course, Kincaid didn’t ask me what I thought. And so that was that and I remember other times, many times I’d go up and play duets with him and we’d discuss the little bamboo flutes he made especially for the Pastoral Symphony Messiah which is now of course is not authentic. They don’t do it anymore for flutes they give it to the violins, but anyway, he played his little bamboo flute which was charming. Did you every hear those or see those?

**BOB:** Yes.
DORIOT: I mean the way he played it. He was such a good flute player. And did you know Eddie Powell?

BOB: I met him at the flute convention, but I didn't know him. I knew who he was and used to hear him on radio occasionally.

DORIOT: Well, Powell had a very dual nature as Johnny Gillam would tell you. I'm not going to go into that.

BOB: I'm going to see John Gillam.

DORIOT: Well, there are lot's of stories I don't think you want to put in the book, but whatever you're writing don't, though you should, because it does explain the man. I met Mrs. Powell once or twice and she was kind of a formidable woman, I thought, but very nice, very witty and so was he, so I felt he's met his match. And boy did he meet his match. I should say so.

BOB: I never met her.

DORIOT: Well, she was very tall. In those days, that was in the 50's, we were wearing rather longish dresses and Mrs. Powell, I thought she must have gotten that dress out from the 1900's because it was way down to her ankles, and she had a big hat on. Then she had a blouse that looked sort of like a Gibson Girl blouse and so I thought she was a real vignette. But very witty. And well that's all I can say, she held her own.

And so anyway, well, I guess I had them over once and then I was married by that time and I remember that he would always say. I'd say well another time, Mr. Powell we have to get you to our house for dinner. We have a new house you know. And he said oh just a plate of beans will do. That's such a Bostonian remark, you know. Don't you find you're awfully hungry and everything after a concert?

BOB: Oh yes.

DORIOT: I'm not terribly hungry but this is just very nice.

BOB: I've been a little off my feed the last couple days.

DORIOT: So anyway, when he came to my house we had cocktails in the living room and then because my husband unlike me who was an Irish man and he always had his cocktail, and so I said well Mr. Powell, decided we're going to have dinner right here in the living room and so I'm going to bring your dinner first. I said it's ready and I'm going to bring it. He said, don't bother, bring them all together. I said, no, no this is very, very special. I want you to have it. So I brought him the biggest dinner plate I could find, the biggest, whitest, shiniest dinner plate with three tiny baked beans in the center. I said this is what you asked for.

BOB: Yes, that's great.

DORIOT: I said, if you want to join us in the dining room, we're having another dinner. And he'd go, well, and his little eyes sparkled so. It was very cute. I loved to see him. You know, Yaddie, his daughter had that look
in her eyes too. And of course in the old days she was there all the time and then she got married and she was not there. Well, then of course, I remember I thought I remembered all the flute makers and Johnny Gillum apparently was there forever, he still looks like he’s about 17 though he’s in his 70’s and I guess I said hello to him a lot but I really, he kept sending me Christmas cards and that’s another story. I don’t know if I told you that. But anyway, so we will segway to when he sold the business and.

BOB: That was a hard time for him, wasn’t it.

DORIOT: Oh, it was terrible. And he always talked about how they stole the business away from him and it wasn’t that at all. In fact, they wanted so badly to keep, not only to keep their jobs, but the integrity of the Powell Flute and they wanted to hold it together so much, that they formed a company and bought it from him at the price he asked for, I don’t think there was much haggling, but he settled on a very, probably reasonable price that was suitable for about 1917 and probably found out about real estate prices and everything else later and realized that they stole it from him and so he was a little bit bitter about that.

But anyway, I’ve been very, very busy so after that my next memory is that he was in a rest home, whatever you call it. Well, Mrs. Powell had died many years ago. She died and within the first 10-15 years after I came here in 52, and so, but when he got much older there was nobody to take care of him and so he went to live in the house of a women who was almost as old as he was, but she was very, very active. So it was nice he was living with somebody of his generation and he had a tiny little bedroom and she took very good care of him and he was happy and jolly there. It was more somber, of course, because he was lonely, but I went to see him there many times and I said, don’t you have any flutes around. And he said, no. I said, don’t you miss it. He said, well of course I do, but I’ve just given my flutes away or sold them. I said I have quite a few flutes at home, and I really would like to store one with you because what if they get stolen and I don’t think they’ll get stolen where there are people in the house all the time. So I brought my 727 and he said, that’s very nice of you. And I said I charge you what you said what do you charge. And I said you have to practice one note a week, that’s it. And he said, all right that’s not too much. So I’d call him up or go see him, then he died and they called me. And of course I knew the whole family quite well and they called me and said the funeral was going to be three days from then. So I said I’m glad you told me and I proceeded to call all the flutists all over the country that I could think of because I thought now this, after all the things he’s done for these people, the least they could do is come to his funeral or send flowers or send a telegram. Do you know and as it happened I was late to his funeral, but something told me I must get there at all costs. So I got there just at the end of the funeral, and they didn’t know I was late. They had plenty to do they were up there in the front part, so I went over and paid my respects to the body. And that’s the first time I ever... Everybody was waiting for me to say something and I thought, great, it has to be great. I didn’t know what to say. I was kind of horrified with all this business but I pulled myself together and I said, oh his hands were so beautiful and look how they’re tapered, just as he was lying there. But I always remember his tapering fingers and they said you said just the right thing Doriot. What if I’d said something else. I said, "right?, What do you mean?" And she said," well don’t you
remember how swollen Daddy's fingers were the last few years of his life." And
I didn't say yes or no. You know, before she went right on. Well, a week
before he died all the swelling went out and his hands became just as beautiful
as they were when he was a young man. And they were beautiful fingers.
They were very, very arthritic. Very long and tapered right at the end. And
so that satisfied them. They thanked me and I looked around,--there wasn't one
flute player there. There were a couple people from the Powell Company and
I will hand it to them, but not one Boston flute player. Not Boston.
And after all those calls I made, no flowers, no telegrams.

BOB: Surprising. A lot of people don't like funerals.

DORIOT: I guess so.

BOB: Can't bring themselves to attend.

DORIOT: Well, probably too busy, costs too much, they could send something.

BOB: True.

DORIOT: Because I told them where it was. That's all you have to know. So
anyway I must tell you, are you still on.

BOB: I'm still on.

DORIOT: Oh all right, this is one of my favorite Powell stories.

BOB: All right.

DORIOT: Well about Eddie. Eddie was, -- is Eddie still alive or did he
die recently?.

COLE: He died in March.

DORIOT: Yes, I thought so, very recently. Well, Eddie was a very good flute
player. I met him many times, but I heard about his playing from Julie Baker
because they played at CBS a great deal and so Eddie was apparently a very
good flute player and I heard him play. I remember I thought it was good. And
I liked him, I thought he was so nice. And you know Mr. Powell never shared
one thing about the marvels of the Powell Flute with him. And he would never
show anybody how he'd cut the head joint. When he cut his head joint, he'd
turn around the other way and shield all the vision with his back, including
his own son. And I always thought it was very ironic that Eddie Powell should
go into the business of making toy flutes. I mean there is something just so
sad about that.

BOB: Yes, I just talked to Dick Jerome last week and he was talking a
little bit about Ed and said he thought that's one thing that Eddie Powell
regretted that he'd ----

DORIOT: Of course.

BOB: He'd never been,--- didn't have the opportunity to get into the
business at the end, at least.
DORIOT: No, at any time. You know.

BOB: Some fathers are hard on their sons, especially the fathers that have real talent or real.

DORIOT: Achievement something.

BOB: Achievements.

DORIOT: I understand that because I have an older brother. I mean my oldest brother is the first born of four of us and he always enjoyed special privileges but also special burdens because he was the first born. He was expected to be an adult at all times and many things like this and he really suffered. My father didn't treat the rest of us like he treated that boy. And, of course, my father is now 96 years old and my older brother is wonderful to talk with him because he's the only one he'll listen to really now. But in those days, well, anyway at this point my brother doesn't remember any of the horrible things my father did to him.

BOB: That's nice.

DORIOT: But I remember them. So I was very sure to get out from under all that. But that's another story. But also I understood how Mr. Powell could treat Eddie that way, otherwise I mean there wouldn't never, no. And how, Eddie what you say, would not even remember that part. It's really too horrible to remember that your own father would cut you out of something like that. And I must say my mother didn't. She tried, she tried to share everything with me. She just couldn't, she was articulate and sometimes, strange to say, she wasn't interested. She wanted me to love music and play it beautifully and she loved all that, but outside of the family it was my father that brought records home for me to listen to. It was my father that helped me get my first job. He read about auditions in the Wall Street Journal and he called me up and he said, "say, you better go to New York City and see that man Hans Kindler and audition for him. He's holding auditions it says here. Why didn't my mother do that. Well, first of all she doesn't read the Wall Street Journal, but it's funny, it's really very strange how. You know, he did lots of musical things for me, and he was not a musician at all. But, so I understand about Powell. But anyway, back to the funeral. So there was Eddie and Yaddie and another brother.

BOB: George.

DORIOT: George, yes. And they were all staying around waiting for me to say something else again. And gee, I felt just terribly on the spot but also guilty because I missed the whole funeral, but anyway, Eddie said," by the way Doriot, Yaddie has your flute." He said, "how come my father had a flute of yours. Did you take it to him to fix." He was sort of incredulous and I said," no, didn't he tell you?". He said," no, my father could not remember except he knew it was your flute and there it was. He said, be sure and get that to Doriot. He said that five times on the way to the hospital before he died. I said, well, I'll tell you the story. So I told him how I'd left this so he'd have one of his own flutes to play and Eddie said, well, that's
very sweet of you. How nice, I knew it was something simple like that. He said, but then he got all flustered. I thought, oh dear, he lost it. And he said, but there is something I have to tell you. And I said, what. And he said, well, the D sharp leaked a little so I fixed it. I hope you don’t mind. And I said, to me myself, isn’t that a born instrument maker who would try it over, oh, it doesn’t work, fix it all up.

Well, I told this story at a party to Fritz Steinway, who was one of the Steinway younger people, and he said I love that, that’s perfect. He said, I’d do exactly the same thing. He said, you know our father made, apparently there were four Steinway boys, and he made them all go through the Steinway Factory and do everything connected with the piano and he said to this day, if I go in a friend’s house with a Steinway piano, I crawl under it, I bang this some, he said, I just have to. So that’s one of my favorite stories anyway. Well, I’ll finish this story. You know how I told you we went out to dinner and Powell had this private, big joke with Kincaid.

BOB: Yes.

DORIOT: Well, the joke was, I think the joke was really that they were whispering around me, they wouldn’t tell me, is that he took it out of order. Kincaid was not really up for another flute, but the thing was, he had promised Kincaid. Kincaid had an old Louis Lott Flute, 1784, and when 1784 came up in Powell Flutes, he promised he’d make a copy of that Louis Lott but use it in the 442 scale, which is what he did. And this is what Kincaid picked up and didn’t think much of. I thought it was marvelous. Well, I didn’t know any of this til, all right, so Mr. Powell died, but Mr. Kincaid by this time was probably retired, I don’t remember the exact dates, but anyway.

BOB: Kincaid retired in 1960.

DORIOT: 60. I don’t know when Powell died, do you?

BOB: I had a letter from him in October, 1962, and he had already broken his wrist. I think he lived at least 2 more years. He was 84 at that time, he said in the letter.

DORIOT: Well, maybe it was before, I thought it was after he died. It certainly after Kincaid died, that I got a letter from some flute player who said he had Kincaid’s 1784 flute that was the imitation of Louis Lott 1784 and he wanted to sell it. And he thought before I advertise it in the union paper, I thought maybe you’d like to have it. And oh, I remember that, oh, that flute and I dashed. Actually it was a man, a string dealer who was from Philadelphia and he had a place right near the Lincoln Center Auditorium. Locker, Sidney Locker was his name. So I called him up, I got the letter almost ten days late, you how the mail, and I was so afraid he had already sold it. I called him up and said, you still have that flute and he said, yeah, I knew you’d call. So I said. That was Thursday, I remember that. I said, I have the afternoon off, I’ll be right there. In those days, we didn’t play on Thursday night either. So I got the flute and he said, aren’t you going to try it. I said, no. He said, don’t you want to know if it’s in good condition. I said, I’m sure it is. If it isn’t, it doesn’t matter. Give it to me. Here and I left. And he could never get over that and that was the flute I really loved and I played, and played and played.
BOB: That's the one that was stolen in Europe?

DORIOT: Yes, yes.

BOB: Someone told me yesterday that Kincaid's platinum flute is now for sale.

DORIOT: Yes, it's going to be auctioned on October 18th, on a Saturday. Just when we have a recording session.

BOB: I won't be there either.

DORIOT: Well, the Philadelphia Orchestra flute players will be there because I understand they've been to New York to play the flute. It's wonderful.

BOB: It's a good flute.

DORIOT: Did you play it?

BOB: I've played it, yes.

DORIOT: You like platinum flutes?

BOB: I've played on a gold flute that I really prefer to that. I had 1111.

DORIOT: You mean you had one that you preferred to that.

BOB: Yes. For myself.

DORIOT: A Powell.

BOB: Yes.

DORIOT: What did you do with it?

BOB: My son has it.

DORIOT: Oh, he plays the flute.

BOB: He's the flute teacher at the University of Kentucky.

DORIOT: Oh, that's nice. They have a good music school there I understand. I knew a lot of musicians who taught there.

BOB: This is not Louisville, now.

DORIOT: Oh, no.

BOB: Lexington.

DORIOT: No, I don't know of Lexington. It's Louisville I'm thinking of.
BOB: Louisville has more of a connection with the Louisville Symphony, I think.

DORIOT: And Cincinnati, too. But anyway, that's nice. I'm not fond of gold flutes. There are exceptional ones.

BOB: This, I think was, is.

DORIOT: Well, I'm glad. I'm glad for him, but I've never gotten into the gold flutes because I don't find very many I like and I couldn't imagine ordering one.

BOB: Mostly they're stuffy compared to silver.

DORIOT: I'm sure. Oh, there was one marvelous gold flute that belonged to some amateur, again, maybe Jimmy was right. But it was man, it was a jeweler maybe that's why Verne knocked himself out for him. But anyway somebody in Florida, he made a wonderful gold flute for. I don't know where that is now.

BOB: Apparently Elaine Shaffer's gold flute is on at that same auction.

DORIOT: Oh yes, and one or two silver flutes. About four flutes at that auction.

BOB: Efrem Kurtz has turned them loose.

DORIOT: Yes. Yes.

BOB: Because Elaine had all of those.

DORIOT: Well, was her gold flute Kincaid's flute.

BOB: No, it was made for her. I'm sure it's a Powell.

DORIOT: I'm sure it is, yes. Well, I'm just trying to think what else I can tell you about Powell. Well, as I said I think his main virtue in making his flutes was the kind of sound he got and I think it had a lot to do with that he was not only a flutist but a good flutist and he wanted to get the right kind of sound. And I remember he would always give me a few little pieces of advice before I had a concerto to play. "Now, don't forget," he said, "Dame Nelly Melba when she sang in a big hall, she'd always turn to the far corner, now you do that tomorrow when you play with the BSO. Don't stand like this." Well, you know I don't remember to this day if I did it or not. But it was very, very interesting. He always had something worthwhile to say. And to do. And I was very glad for him that he had this period where all the first flutists played his flutes.

BOB: Yes, he certainly made an impact on the flute playing over that period from about 1930 to even now.
DORIOT: Yes. What happened was Dick Jerome was a magnificent imitator. He made some wonderful things and I felt that Dick always, if anybody had the secret of Powell head joints, Dick did. But he got more interested in the business end and then he got rid of the business, the whole thing and went to Vermont and back and forth. Anyway to make a long story short, you have to practice to make a head joint just like to play beautifully. You have to practice and make many of them and then you get a touch for it. You can make a terrific one in five minutes or you can ruin one. But he lost that touch apparently and he just didn’t want to go back and make them more. Get it back again. So then they had Alice Gobel. She’s the one I told you about. She was the silversmith and she really didn’t play but at that time they had a foreman who was a very good flute player, is, and he would test them all and tell her to make it more this way or more that way. And he knew so much about the mechanics at the same time that the two of them could get a head joint, bingo like that. All different kinds of head joints, but they all they had onderful sound sailing out. One of the most notable, notable that’s a funny one, but one of the most, to me, famous head joints, one of the best she made, was for Don Peck. I can always tell that head joint on the radio. And Dick copied mine for some Russian flutists that came over one day. The Moscow Chamber Orchestra came over. They had gotten flutists, I didn’t realize, I couldn’t understand why they had four or five flutists in a chamber orchestra yet they were from all over Russia and what they did in Russia is they got the best they could get to send over here and these people were dying for good flutes and so I took them to Powell. One of them had a Louis Lott head joint and I said well this man can really make one just like it for you. As much as anybody. And so, he did it very short time, three days, two days.

BOB: Wow.

DORIOT: And they were very happy with it. So, you know, I think that’s interesting and everything. But then the foreman who worked so well with Alice left and then there was some spat that went on. Alice can be very temperamental. So there was a disagreement and so she left. She’s lost her touch now and she’s not interested.

BOB: She’s not doing flutes anymore?

DORIOT: No, not at all.

BOB: That’s terrible.

DORIOT: I think her husband is in the Powell or somewhere doing flutes, but she isn’t. I called her and cajoled her and tried to get her interested again, but I can’t seem to move her. Well, she was really not in that business and she’d had it. But it’s a shame they don’t seem to have anybody right now. I think Dana Sheridan is very good. Have you seen his flutes? He used to be foreman at the Powell.

BOB: I know his name, he has his own company now.

DORIOT: You ought to take a look at those flutes. They’re very, very fine. And we, you can stop any time you want to go.
BOB: I'm fine.

DORIOT: Oh, no, I have a student at 5:30 so I have a few more minutes. What was I going to say. Dana, well, he was just one of these many flute makers that pulled up and went into business for himself, but he seems to have, oh, I know what I was going to say. He seems to have that secret too. I don't know I've only tried one or two of his flutes and I thought they were wonderful, but I don't know if all of them are like that. You know, of course, the old man always said, all my flutes are exactly alike.

BOB: That's right, I've heard him say that.

DORIOT: Yes, all. What are you talking about.

BOB: I'll give you what you paid for it. You don't like it.

DORIOT: Yes, that's right. I don't really have to go, I will tell him to warm up. Let's see, there was something I just wanted to say about Dana, oh, like so many very talented people, he said. I said, Dana you know, you have something very special. You make good head joints. And don't ever forget that and don't lose the touch. And he said, that's the easiest thing to do in a flute is make the head joint. And I said, yeah, tell me about it. And he said, well, what's so hard are the mechanics. You have to solder and all these. I said anybody can do that. That's hard, that's complicated, but it doesn't take any talent. This takes talent and you have the talent, that's why it's easy for you. And I said, but it's very, very special and he said, oh, I can do it in 5 minutes. Isn't that interesting, that's the way people handle sometimes a great talent. And that's how they loose it too. They underrate it.

BOB: That's more than fifty percent of the flute.

DORIOT: I should say so.

BOB: Eighty-ninety percent.

DORIOT: Cooper did a very clever thing. He doesn't make flutes any more. In fact, he may not even be making head joints any more, but he said, well, there are so many good flutes, why should I make a flute and waste my time. So he just makes head joints and he will make them to fit any flute. I think that's very clever.

BOB: That's smart.

DORIOT: Well, I'll go see my pupil and you think if there's any questions, you have to ask.

BOB: No, I think you've been a marvelous interviewee. Lots of good stories and really you've followed through from the time that you first met Powell.

DORIOT: To the last time I saw him.
BOB: To the last time you saw him. I can't really ask for much more than that. It's been great and I thank you very much.

DORIOT: Well, you're welcome.

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