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Vadim Mazo

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Oral History Interview with Vadim Mazo

On January 22, 2016 in the Hansen Student Center

Conducted by Meg Miner, Illinois Wesleyan Archivist

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00:03:52 - Mazo discussing Minor visiting him

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Meg Miner: This is Meg Miner. It is January 22nd, and I'm here in the Hansen Student Center with Vadim Mazo, a professor of music here at Illinois Wesleyan University. Please describe yourself...

Vadim Mazo: Yes

Miner: for us and please tell...

Mazo: I am Vadim Mazo. I am teaching violin, viola, chamber music, I am now teaching conducting and I have been involved with Minor since he is first arriving and actually I even started to communicate with Minor even without seeing him because first time in my life when I was still commuting in Milwaukee, he called me and we talked – I'm talking now ... the memory is still there because he talked with me about 45 minutes and I had a goosebumps. The president of university talks to you and he talks about something but you have to learn from the president of university who is not musician.

Miner: What year was this? You said you were in Milwaukee?

Mazo: 1994.

Miner: Okay. So that was before you were working here?

Mazo: No. He was – he was just hired, and see... I came here in 1997.

Miner: Okay.

Mazo: I believe it was '94. I could be wrong but this is what seems to me the dates.

Miner: Mm-hmm...

Mazo: And it was like, maybe early September, you know, I just came maybe for the Labor day weekend or something and so he talked with me and I could simply say that his influence and for many, many years even when Dick Wilson was still here, you know, I recall that Minor was my president...

Miner: Mm-hmm...

Mazo: ... if you're talking about – I'm not talking about president of the university when I – as a immigrant, I – I had a feeling for let say presidents of different people in United States.

Miner: Mm-hmm...

Mazo: And obviously, when our son graduated from Harvard and we went to his graduation and we saw Harvard president and I immediately said, "He's no local person, you know" because the statue of Minor is still... hahh... I could show you the picture. I make statue of this Minor here some later but I'll tell you more if you want me to go more in the question answer sessions. It will be my pleasure to open any specific discussions but one of the strongest component of Minor influence on me was inspiration. Then also was very valuable component of his curiosity. And so this is what I'm doing it because this picture

show that I support his passion and then I thought it may be good idea to show the new president because Minor statue obviously exaggerated heights.

Miner: aa-huh...

Mazo: So I thought maybe next day they'll have both presidents on my side and I will get a promotion.

Miner: So here's – so for the – so for the – the listening audience, because we're recording this audio only, I just want to say that the picture you just showed me is you standing behind the statue of Minor in front of the Ames library. So the famous statue where he has a violin and you have your hand on the violin supporting the violin.

Mazo: Yeah, supporting the movement.

Miner: Supporting the movement of Minor...

Mazo: And for the passion, yeah, that's why...

Miner: For the passion...

Mazo: Passion of the -

Miner: Because the statue is called, "What's your passion?" 'cause that's what he said to everybody.

Mazo: Exactly. Yeah.

Miner: Okay. I just wanna – because this is all on audio so...

Mazo: That's – that's – that's clear, so... again, this things I could continue talking.... Unlimited.

Miner: Sure.

Mazo: Minor was probably - and probably it's no a comparison – was the most visited my studio president in probably the whole, entire... not only my eleven but I know he was visiting some other studios but with my studios it was so much that sometimes I felt I have to find opportunities for him to have access to other people.

Miner: So he would come in while you were...

Mazo: And yeah, I was working and...

Miner: ...in a session.

Mazo: he asked me to play with him and I was – he also brought some manuscripts because you know the many different project like Hershel. William Hershel was very famous astronomers and musician and he collect this music. I still have this music from Berkley. They also had former president, you know, former prime minister. Minor was collecting Prime Ministers from different countries.

Miner: I didn't know that!

Mazo: Yeah – in – from – from Edward Heath was here and I performed Herschel world premiere concerto with my chamber orchestra here. And Minor and Edward Heath was the – in – in audience and we did it for Edward – his presence so -

Miner: -Okay so I didn't know when you said he was collecting prime ministers what you meant.

Mazo: He was collecting -

Miner: -okay -

Mazo: -prime minister from Macedonia...prime minister from ...[Miner giggles]... what was the – not Dominican republic – some of the

Miner: Brazil?

Mazo: Not only Brazil, but it was a – in the Caribbean was one of the president and – not – prime minister, former... especially some of them, he was interested in the former prime ministers...

Miner: Okay.

Mazo: ... and there were, you know, Minor had immense influence on me as a collector.

Miner: In what way?

Mazo: He opened – collector for several things. One of these things that was relate is the musical instruments. Minor collected musical instruments with historical dates, you know. If he had a violin, it'll say 1787 or something like that, so it was related with French revolution. Then he also collected silver. He collected ... I don't know what he was not collecting. (laughs) He collected special collections and then I was ... be very frank with you, I was not very happy that we could not save all of his collections in our library ...[overlapping]... and part of it could not be...

Miner: ...[overlapping]...Okay. Tell me more about that.

Mazo: Yeah – yeah – yeah – I felt and I, actually, I guess I'm not afraid to say now after so many years now – 11 – 12 years that we were somewhat disappointed that there is a decreasing interest in the people and the books and we have to do something special and hopefully you're doing this because books are a reflection of civilization.

Miner: Mm-hmm...

Mazo: If we will now neglect books and go all of this, you know, Encyclopedia Britannica on the internet then we losing some of the physical and emotional components which we are involved with knowledge. So my ... two cents about that that I believe, for example, if I listen things on YouTube or I listen to it live or I perform. it's – it's completely different experience.

Miner: Yes

Mazo: So the inner voice has to get out and his sense of curiosity moves me for – for – for many miles. I feel he encouraged me. He actually supported some of my personal interests as you could see this – a logo I guess, it's like a - I have a – my self-protection and protective -

Miner: It's a coat of arms.

Mazo: Yeah. Yeah,

Miner: You've just showed me a coat of arms which is something that Minor created for you.

Mazo: Yeah. He just came to my office and just give it, you know.

Miner: It's wonderful. And tell – and for – again, for the audio, I'll just say that there's like a medieval knight's helmet over a shield, kind of, in a U-shape and there is a sun shining down on a bridge. And you wanna tell our listeners what the bridge means to you?

Mazo: You know, for me, bridge is this is what I have – my geographical, cultural experiences gives me a strong feeling that bridges of Prague, bridges of St. Petersburg... of course, Venice, it's a different story completely. Of course, we've all because (unintelligible) but also I, you know, there is a famous composition by Gershwin, an American in Paris. So my goal was be American because I'm collecting also from AAA to WWW, so I collect three piece. So patience, persistence and pedagogy. But I also have a collection of admired, St. Petersburg, Prague, and Paris, so that's what I was going – that's actually Minor's influence. So, because...

Miner: ...hmm... what's underneath the bridge on that shield?

Mazo: I think it's very interesting to see. This is my name, obviously.

Miner: No, I mean the people – squiggles down below. Is that water? Is it...?

Mazo: I think it is water. He probably meant, you know, this is also could be like a musical instrument like a vibraphone you know.

Miner: I thought so too but since you're ...[overlapping]...

Mazo: ...[overlapping]...I like this idea. I also have in my office. I have more in some of these things he very much was supportive because we had a globe and we make bridges of the violin as a globe

Miner: Okay.

Mazo: ... so long story, He was quite enthused ...and what is the... positive, incredible was that he was very contagious and he never was tired to provide this kind of enthusiasm which we all got very ... we became his magnetism... giver/follow, like, you know, there is a very famous (unintelligible) picture like one of the person who see and he holds the hand and people blind follow him.

Miner: Yeah.

Mazo: This was Minor – a little ship but spiritual and also providing sense of curiosity for people who are in art and they are not very well oriented in that. So for me, if we could name – over the collections, I started to collect music instruments, music manuscripts, books, some special, unique types of things. I – he opened me interest in Japan, actually in Asia and that I started and now I am still continuing and I'm going every year. Twice per year, I'm going to Asia because for me it's – it's 'we must support eastern culture who is interested in the western culture' because we live on a globe which is unbalanced and we need to balance it and protect peace through the cultural relations.

Miner: Interesting

Mazo: And to me, this is what I'm doing and I hope I'm continue to do this as much as I can. Even sometimes it takes – like for instance, I just came back from Guanzhao and it was a little bit, you know, tiredness sitting in the flight...

Miner: Uh huh

Mazo: ...so 14 hours, it's – it's not very easy, but I'm not complaining because rewards I could show you just ... thousands of satisfactory communication with people through art and I have only the feeling for Minor influence vision to continue not just through us as a sort of a – he was our sensei or teacher, but his influence needs to be, thanks to you, restored even more appropriately because it has to go through the next generation.

Miner: Yeah.

Mazo: We need to learn how to pass this baton and this is what you're doing and what I'm – I'm trying to help you, so I just – I just could show you very brief, you know, some of the places like in Hainan province I was in university called Sanya University and there – see that pentagon?

Miner: mm-hmm...

Mazo: and then he held – hold it in my double cases. There's plenty of, like, food unique – my – my ...

Miner: So you're sharing your pictures from your trips which are to other Arabic – are they to conservatories? Are they to universities? Are they to individual?

Mazo: It's a combination.

Miner: Okay.

Mazo: I have universities. I have people who came to my recital. This is the music educators. Then was very unusual first time actually in my life, they made... kind of a wall from people who come to the concert and then make the wall and they sign.

Miner: And where was this at?

Mazo: It was at Shenzhen Guangdong province. It's a small city, about 4 million people.

Miner: So I'm gonna read this. This is a picture of you pointing to a banner of a wall like piece of paper and it says, "Musical bridges" which is the name of your program for a peaceful world. Vadim Mazo, (unintelligible) and Steven

Mazo: Yeah this is him. This is the – his full name. One of this names now – he is from Hong Kong. He took the ferry.

Miner: So he goes by the name Steven?

Mazo: Yes. Steven. Yeah. Stephan.

Miner: Okay. And where is he at?

Mazo: He's in Hong Kong. So I'm you know, just

Miner: This is a wonderful program. So this is something that influenced you by knowing Minor's interest in making these kinds of connections. Is that what you're saying?

Mazo: Some... no... he- he – he – no -

Miner: Okay.

Mazo: ...[overlapping]... he influence me to continue curiosity in search.

Miner: Okay. So did you already have this program in place when...?

Mazo: No. no. it was after, you know. I'm ... I just – I was strongly influenced by him, by his interest in global culture.

Miner: Okay.

Mazo: And the knowledge. And ... we went with him to Oxford ... Carnegie Recital Hall, you know, I – again – and I'm saying to you I'm a little bit of overwhelmed in just letting you know that this is not by accident. There is not like a one shot event. It was a life together and when, unfortunately, he got sick, it was so painful for me to kind of be around...

Miner: Yeah...

Mazo: ...so I feel sorry that his last days I just mentioned to his wife that I'm there with him etcetera, etcetera but then I still feel that what you're now doing and for example, what Bob Bray was doing keeping the bridge between the past which has to be present for the future.

Miner: Yes. Well, that's what we aim for.

Mazo: Right.

Miner: How long has Musical Bridges been going on then?

Mazo: Since maybe 1992, 93. Actually, it's a good question and because we had 150th anniversary of my school and I had ... Camerata, we had a chamber orchestra named Camerata. One of my alumni help me to organize this concert in last October. And that part of this program was still making bridges between different population of Illinois Wesleyan musicians and some of them are not necessarily professional musicians...

Miner: true

Mazo: but we had about 20+ alumni who played orchestra. So, and, I still feel it Minor had influenced not just on me, on my students and on the – one of the webpages, which she organized, she had a picture of Minor looking at me on the violin. So... Minor is still very alive surprisingly so strong that maintaining balance between curiosity artistic and humanitarian components in personal development, that's what to me is his strong influence. Not just on me but on the many, many peoples. And just remember today, when before I left from China, I said Minor expression. I said, "Let's do well but don't forget to do good." That's what I said before I left.

Miner: That stayed so strong with you. Do you think that resonated throughout the School of Music?

Mazo: Say it again, please.

Miner: That... that feeling of his connection with you, do you think it's as strong with others in the School of Music as well...[overlapping]...

Mazo: Yeah. Yeah. But personally I'm a little possessive. Personally, I know how much time we spent together...

Miner: Sure.

Mazo: ...of course, he was in very good relationship with many of my colleagues, you know Mario, uh Steve Eggleston, even Tom Streeter you know, Minor was a very visible in terms of the School of Music because he really believed in multicultural, multitalented ability of people.

Miner: Uh huh

Mazo: And so, to me, it was the ... a way of enthusiastic...uh, renaissance of bringing school on a different level...

Miner: Yes.

Mazo: ...what he did. And it's also tremendously helped us with recruitment.

Miner: Okay.

Mazo: Minor was very aware with what's going on. Of course, anybody – president of United States is not God, you know, he cannot cover every territories you know, so, but in most of the cases when I

wrote with Minor it was search for balance between creativity and reality. Still making creativity is like a credit to the (unintelligible) fester and make sure people are moving with that. And then, it's like a, kind of a in good healthy way of the chain reaction. It's not a pyramid but a chain reaction and Minor was also influenced from us, I hope, because he when visiting me and some other different studios on kind of a permanent basis. So it shows that it was something which influenced him to be more creative.

Miner: And he wanted to learn from you all, too, from your expertise.

Mazo: Yeah, he really wants, you know, we talked about some of that... his musician needs, so to speak because in ... he wasn't professional musician and so I felt very satisfied what we gave him when he came to Illinois Wesleyan. You know, if you are around some festivals, like Mendelssohn festival. I mean, no questions that music for Minor was his passion. No questions about that.

Miner: hmm... did you help him – you said – you mentioned collecting instruments. Did you help him...

Mazo: No

Miner: ...make purchases or...

Mazo: you know ... you know, he actually influenced me because at the time, he was mostly communicating with auction houses in London, and he communicated on the telephone. Of course, he asks sometimes my opinion but he had a special interest. He was interested in historical components of the instruments and he also was interested in unique things like ivory, ivory frogs in the bows so but he was not very much experienced to qualify the sound production – condition of the instruments. So that's helped me to learn what he did not know and then I had to incorporate. Then we also had somebody who graduate, Todd French and Todd became professional. He became connoisseur and he started to... Minor also had very strong influence on him. He and Todd started to be interested in collecting musical instruments.

Miner: So when you say historical components of instruments, I'm not a musician and I'm very unaware of that. What do you mean?

Mazo: You know, string instruments, and Minor not only collected string instruments, he collected old flutes. He collected harpsichords. He built harpsichords for the School of Music because of Minor...[overlapping]...

Miner: So he helped built... he helped to build these instruments...?

Mazo: Oh, yeah, yeah. He did not do it himself, but

Miner: Okay

Mazo: But he had somebody come over from Boston that was a contemporary maker who built harpsichords and so they also just... obviously as I said, you know, because some of the books which I purchased shows his very strong interest in specific areas like historical organ, historical keyboard instruments he played. Then we talked about historical, and you know what I am talking about? His

historical instruments, some of the instruments cannot be very strong in their usable quality but relationship is their predecessors or what will become, it will be important for him, you know. Some of the Baroque styles, some of the conditions of neck- some technical components.

Miner: So... the history of the development...

Mazo: Yes

Miner: ...of the instruments.

Mazo: Yeah, it could – it could...called history of the development and also he was interested in specific – eventually, in specific schools like he was more interested in English schools, let's say in Czech instruments like that's some of my expertise. So yes, and of course, this – the manuscripts – I never was curious about the manuscripts, including musical manuscripts. He just influenced... and then I went to Prague in time. I purchased some very, very, like first printing and then I gave the present to one of our – Michael Cooper, he was a musicologist I found one of the Mendelsohn song...one of the – one of the early pieces, so yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah... so just tremendous influence on the musicians. But in personal ways, you know, I could continue to talk about inspiration, and a sense of vision of liberal arts beauty and values. If I'm talking little bit of – from my restricted vocabulary, so...

Miner: What way would that manifest itself? Beauty and values – how would that manifest itself?

Mazo: Beauty means balance between, on this particular college, balance for fine arts and liberal arts colleges this ability and mutual support.

Miner: Okay. And how would that manifest itself in a practical way?

Mazo: Because multitalented people have to apply their abilities in many different areas.

Miner: Okay. And you – and the dialogue of multitalented people was present in...

Mazo: All the time. the issue was not always the dissolve because sometimes American families, and this may be subjective opinion, but American families are not anticipating earlier professional development because of the system, these high schools are, for example, music in high schools is general matters. It's not professional. So when I usually meet these potential students and their parents, I say, "In this country, parents pays a lot of money finally to know where their children don't want to do." ...[Miner laughs]... So, in Minor time, we had opportunities to summarize hopefully sooner what their children don't want to do. Then you have to start to focus a little bit on the issue don't waste family budget.

Miner: Interesting. Yeah.

Mazo: That's my subjective – as I said, you know-

Miner: Of course. Well, this is – we are – I'm asking. I've invited you and you agreed to be subjective with us. I can only – I mean, you can only understand the world through your lens, right?

Mazo: Yes.

Miner: So that's okay. I'm glad you're sharing that. So talk to me a little bit about manuscript collections versus book collections and how you understood Minor as a collector of those things. Can you talk a little bit about that? Do you know how he made his collection? Purchases?

Mazo: You know obviously...

Miner: Did he use them? Did he collect to use or did he collect as you said in instruments, collect to understand development?

Mazo: No. we used some of his instruments. But going back to this collection versus manuscripts, I think, first of all, my impression that he never was 'He just did not start it to be a collector.' He came already here as a collector...

Miner: ...[giggles]...yes

Mazo: ...and he already was expressing his knowledge and specific interest in specific areas

Miner: Okay.

Mazo: Because my impression because he was interested at the time, he started to discover Japan. He was kind of in a good sense, people called him renaissance man. He was reinvented his curiosity so he had interest in 'Oh, now I'm thinking. Now we have a School of Music. I could enforce some of the manuscript which never been performed,' and that was one of his motivation. He find some manuscript that could be performed and never performed. Like we did William Herschel compositions. Or some of these things – if he was interested in Japan, obviously he found very unique books and he was very particular in specific areas of what he was searching for.

Miner: Uh huh

Mazo: And in terms of number of books, I think he was interested in surrounding himself well with the opportunities to sit at home and open the book and be proud to present to somebody and discuss it and, you know, I was – number of the intellectual evenings parties – he sometimes asked me to play, sometimes it was a discussion which obviously at the time I was not very intellectually... high in terms of my English and so I was just listening all of the, you know... and then it was an Earl from England came you know, so you know, is it such a – such a – such an unbelievable varieties of the people from the highest intellectual spectrum and obviously Minor was interested in collecting books probably for the very sophisticated historical perception of English. Then he was interested. I don't know the details, obviously, this is the field which you are really comparing,

Miner: Uh huh.

Mazo: Yeah, but in terms of the musical manuscripts, I think one of the components to me was that he was interested to see if some of these things could be performed.

Miner: Okay. So to use them

Mazo: yes

Miner: 'cause that's one of the things that I [unintelligible due to overlapping]...

Mazo: ...yes...yes... I played many, many it matters with him.

Miner: Okay.

Mazo: you know, and he gave me when the postcards of the composer, you know. I could show you I still have a lot of this collection. It's kind of – I'm so happy that you are ... you are restoring that healthy memories.

Miner: good.

Mazo: we must... we must remember good things.

Miner: yeah.

Mazo: and then bad things disappear.

Miner: yeah... sometimes we have to understand the bad things too, you know ...

Mazo: sure... absolutely!

Miner: we cannot pretend that they are not there.

Mazo: we cannot be naïve to close our eyes. Oh...

Miner: Are you running out of time?

Mazo: I have to... I have... yeah.

Miner: Okay. Can we talk again?

Mazo: Yes. I will be very happy.

Miner: Okay. Thank you so much. We'll do this again.

Mazo: My pleasure.

Miner: Okay. So this is part II.

Mazo: Yeah, it was not the same piano but it was piano in this area.

Miner: Careful. That's a big reach. So we are in the office of Vadim Mazo and I am looking at – this is room 212 of Presser – and I'm looking at a 5' 7 frame portrait, when was this taken? Do you remember?

Mazo: It was definitely after 1994 and before his death, you know, so – and we were trying to confer some of the instruments because he was very much interested in instruments as I mentioned to you before, some of the old... dates on the instruments.

Miner: Yes. So tell me what you're holding.

Mazo: I'm holding my violin. It's a 1747.

Miner: Beautiful.

Mazo: and so...

Miner: And you have it here.

Mazo: Yeah. So and then he bought some instruments as a collector.

Miner: Yes.

Mazo: He bought some instruments, you see, this is even still there, yeah...

Miner: on the wall, yes.

Mazo: ...[unintelligible]...

Miner: So he brought one of his violins to ...

Mazo: ... to compare with the scroll because each maker has a little bit of the different way how they make the scroll of the ...

Miner: ... at the very end, is it this part at the end? Okay,

Mazo: It's a very... it has a kind of uniqueness in its individual, how high quality makers.

Miner: and this is a beautiful map that you have on, too.

Mazo: I collect – now I have, it's only here. I have couple, but I also collect – I have about 15 at home.

Miner: I have never seen these before. So these are like needle point ... felt...

Mazo: And I also collect them because they are supposed to have a monogram, initials

Miner: of the owner of the violin?

Mazo: of the owner, yeah, so...

Miner: okay.

Mazo: It seems like under this particular one it could be something old and so this is what people had the different pieces

Miner: So this would go in the case?

Mazo: My contemporary case which had a Chinese but this is contemporary case made in Italy and this gets only 15 uppers of this cases.

Miner: Oh, my. So it's limited edition.

Mazo: Yeah. Yeah.

Miner: So what would you call this? Is this...

Mazo: Cover. Violin cover on a piece.

Miner: So I'm gonna try and describe it a little bit because we're doing audio recording, right? So this is – or maybe you could just describe what it is what it's used for.

Mazo: In old period where violin cases were kind of shaping the shape of the instruments

Miner: Yes.

Mazo: They tried to use this cover to protect a violin from any kind of damage and also communication with the (unintelligible) because between violin and the (unintelligible) has to be something when you close it.

Miner: So you don't want them to touch each other or you don't want them to touch each other and you don't want the strings or the bridge of the instrument to touch the case. So it's like a padding, maybe a light padding.

Mazo: Yes, and the -

Miner: - And they're very decorative. This is a lovely needlework.

Mazo: Some of them are made by hands or might be (unintelligible) who knows but...

Miner: Yeah, sure. Sure. But the monogram, perhaps, of the owner, so that was something that you collected and you shared

Mazo: I have a couple unusual ones and because one was given to me by my former student. She created – she's Japanese – and she just created cover and it was so big that it also became cover for viola. And because I have viola students I will possibly show – I don't think I have ... I have this viola cover, I will show you very quickly. But we're talking about Minor so.

Miner: But that's okay. So you shared these ...

Mazo: Minor was in this – in this office like open – I have lot of manuscripts, for example, you see that?

Miner: Oh, wow

Mazo: So this is the viola. And this is ...

Miner: That's actually like a

Mazo: you don't have too many – and you see that monograph?

Miner: Yes. Like a crochet of ...

Mazo: and this is I found in Paris.

Miner: It's quite heavy.

Mazo: Yeah. It's protect, you see?

Miner: Yeah. Yes. I see that. So if I wanted to get a copy of that picture, could I do that? Get a copy of that picture?

Mazo: Of course. Of course. There is also one other picture was made. I don't remember who made this. Somebody made it. It was downstairs kind of atrium by School of Music.

Miner: Mm-hmm...

Mazo: Then what else we've been doing with him. You know, I could show you just a couple of the projects you know where he was working with me. He had also some of the old manuscripts – it's a long story but...

Miner: You have quite a cabinet of manuscripts there.

Mazo: this is – was – he discovered in University of California, Berkeley, and I played this concerto. This concerto...

Miner: So he...

Mazo: He did it himself.

Miner: He found it on a different trip or research trip or something?

Mazo: Yeah... yeah... and I played ... all ... all you know, and he made copies for – yeah he was proud.

Miner: Okay, so tell us what it is. It's a manuscript of...

Mazo: ...of concerto for violin and string orchestra by Hershel which was the astronomer...

Miner: Uh huh

Mazo: and he was obviously a – Minor was interested in multitalented people and

Miner: and this is 1760 so this is his era, right?

Mazo: So, that's actually after my violin, so and Minor was obviously a renaissance man. He was looking for unusual stuff. Again, I could go and point out specific, and of course, time went by, you know...

Miner: Yes.

Mazo: Minor was hired in I believe...

Miner: '89

Mazo: '89...

Miner: Mm-hmm....

Mazo: Yeah. And so during his tenure, we played a lot of...he mostly liked kind of baroque, early classics period because it was manageable for him but he was be able to – so I played with him a lot and sometimes he comes kind of a surprise and I have to be right there.

Miner: Just comes to your studio here.

Mazo: Yeah. Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. He was a regular visitor if I could say

Miner: Oh, my.

Mazo: So, and believe me, this is not just a one event or two events that you get some activities we travel to Lawrence we, we travelled to New York, because I believe he knew people from Andover and we – he connected us with their private – it's a very strong, internationally recognized school and we performed. We had master classes. I had a concert when he was – this is was – he came, we played this program-

Miner: -he came to Carnegie?

Mazo: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. We did this whole program. This was issue of peace.

Miner: The musical bridges – your program, yes!

Mazo: -and this is what I'm-

Miner: -The Wesleyan Camerata proudly presents Musical Bridges, and then the title of the program this time was Music for Peace-

Mazo: yeah

Miner: -and November 7th, 1993.

Mazo: Yes, and we used – yeah, go on, sorry-

Miner: Weill – Weill Recital Hall, is that right?

Mazo: Yes. Yeah yeah yeah. And we used composers which compositions was written in the second relationship like Barbara (unintelligible) in relationship for Music for Peace.

Miner: Yeah.

Mazo: So...

Miner: So who were all those composers? Can you just list them all for us?

Mazo: Carter, Britten, Shostakovich, Barber, Grokhovski, a friend of mine who wrote a composition called 'Balloon above the Bloomington'. He was – he was dedicated to me and of course we had the o, by the way, it was very interesting at the time when we travelled to New York. We stopped in Libertyville near Princeton

Miner: Mm-hmm...

Mazo: yeah. Libertville high school and Maria Pelusi at the time was director

Miner: Oh

Mazo: -of that music school and then he went on...I don't remember the order but we – final concert was in November of

Miner: 1993?

Mazo: '93. Yeah.

Miner: Oh, that's great.

Mazo: and again I would say more in the specific details, you know, for example, Minor encouraged me. This is – I collect this one was visit at John Wesley. So I collect at home and here I collect – this is like, for example, part of Minor influence, why I am sharing with you, because Minor always encouraged us to look. "What is this? What is this?" and that's what I started to collect a lot of different things.

Miner: What is that?

Mazo: This is sculpture I found in Czech Republic of Mozart so when my students are going to play concerto of Mozart when he was 13-14, I put it here so they could see what the influence-

Miner: Yeah. So the miniature bust of Mozart and so you – they have – they – he's looking down on them.

Mazo: Yes. Yes. And do you...[overlapping]

Miner: ...[overlapping]...

Mazo: exactly. And so-

Miner: -and so Minor collected that kind of thing and then you started too.

Mazo: Yes. He collected a lot of different things, from manuscripts to the instruments. From instruments he also collected prime ministers as you know.

Miner: yes.

Mazo: I – collect prime ministers, he also collected scientists. He had some friend who at the time was owner of Ovation magazine and that man came. I don't recall his name. that man came and he gave – I don't remember – oh, yeah, I think it was before we went to international travel, he gave us, and I hope I will be able to find this, let me find...if I'll be lucky. He gave us sort of kind of a mini review because he went also to New York and we had ... we had a bunch of – sometimes I don't collect so many programs but he had – all this comes not handy if I don't see

Miner: That's okay.

Mazo: some of the problems but that program was this promotion when we had travelled to international... there he used Ovation magazine promotion with Minor help us to...

Miner: ...to connect you with that person...

Mazo: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. And he was actually here because we had a festival, you know, some day maybe I'll go find it. I'm sorry because I wasn't as well prepared for you.

Miner: That's okay.

Mazo: So what else about his involvement... you know he made us very proud of our profession.

Miner: Okay. And you didn't have that sense before?

Mazo: You know, I'm proud – what I'm doing for like I guess global society, I guess global, and think locally, 'think global, act local' or something like that

Miner: yes. Mm-hmm...

Mazo: but we got impression that because you are musicians, he wished to be musician as well. For example, same thing with Einstein, you know. Einstein said, "If I will be not scientist, I will be musician."

Miner: Mm-hmm

Mazo: So what does it mean to non-musical world? Means that if we found our love, what we are doing and it was recognized, so it stimulates us in a geometrical progression.

Miner: Mmmm

Mazo: It's not just because we had to perform, we had to play, you know. His influence on the School of Music was tremendous.

Miner: Now when you say geometrical-

Mazo: -geometrical progression – when you go in progression small geometrical, you're doing three times more.

Miner: Okay.

Mazo: I thought it was a very clear expression used to be Russian language.

Miner: I'm not a musician. It's probably very ...

Mazo: Not musician

Miner: okay

Mazo: it's mathematical. Geometrical progression is not like this is more, you know,

Miner: it's not an incline, steady upward.

Mazo: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Miner: Yes. Okay.

Mazo: Three times step 2.

Miner: Okay. Yes. Wonderful. Well, what do you think that did for the School of Music, then? That kind of (overlapping)

Mazo: I think it's a lot because he was looking for our visibility. I think at the time, maybe I am wrong but it's approximately that time, he was looking for university visibility from regional to the national.

Miner: Yes.

Mazo: And that was part of the task and opportunities to perform in different places and not necessarily on the locally.

Miner: Yes.

Mazo: So and on some of the efforts we tried to manage not only necessarily Midwest but for Camerata, we were traveling in Soviet Union at the time. it was 1990 and the winter of 1991 because we still had (unintelligible) on tour on January 3rd. so still was challenging but everyone was, how should I put it, was on the same boat.

Miner: Did you have occasion to see any of his imprints of music? So not the manuscripts but the published books of music that he collected?

Mazo: Oh, I had plenty actually. I already have some at home. Last time when I promised you, I did not bring but this is some of this handwriting.

Miner: Oh, you got notes from them.

Mazo: Oh, yeah, and I have plenty. I have like, every concept, he makes me the note. He gives me, you know, all of the, yeah, yeah, here.

Miner: So read what that says. Who could ask for better friends, you read it.

Mazo: Oh, I – I'm embarrassed, you know.

Miner: no.

Mazo: I also, you know, you encouraged me to play Vivaldi and I – I cannot talk.

Miner: Can I – do you want me to read it? Is that okay? Do you mind if I share it?

Dear Vadim, who could ask for a better friend or musical friend. You encouraged me to play Vivaldi and I grow to do it. There is more growing to do but the rehearsal today points one of your bridges to the future but you have the group playing beautifully and you are totally amazing at Heartland. The whole thing was completely impressive. I see now, more clearly, a musical genius of real inspiration bringing others to do good things on two continents. How much we all must thank you. Sunday was superb. - Minor

It's one of his famous handwritten notes and a lovely compliment for some gift that you gave to him through your music. That's a lovely remembrance. (pause) So the musical books that are here -

Mazo: -I have, you know, at home, you know, you probably know more than anybody else that it was auction.

Miner: Yes.

Mazo: And one of the bigger buyers was me.

Miner: Yes, you bought some music.

Mazo: and so I have most of his, his areas of, for example, expertise of – he was interested, for example, and I even don't know if I have some of this – just so – like catalogs of the musical instruments. Even sometimes with his notes.

Miner: Oh, so this is an auction catalog that was in his collection?

Mazo: Yea. Yeah. Yeah, yeah., yeah.

Miner: Okay. And it's from Southeby's, what year was it?

Mazo: 1987

Miner: hmm

Mazo: So she and even – some of this – but again

Miner: why

Mazo: At home, I have so much his book. And I actually because some of this books was not necessary my field, for example, it was organ books. There is also books about old piano (unintelligible) and I gave already couple books to David Horine previous, so, and also gave some of the organ books to our colleagues because as you know, we are – we, in a different stage of our life, we have a different – I wouldn't say mission but in a way it is a mission, because if you do something for others because Minor strong influence was "Do good but do well."

Miner: Yeah. Yeah. That was a real resonant part of his time.

Mazo: It stayed with me (unintelligible)

Miner: I am sure it does. Why did he like bows?

Mazo: Bows?

Miner: Mm-hmm...

Mazo: actually I don't know all of the details but he liked specific bows which only had specific ivory. I'll show you.

Miner: Oh, so the parts of them?

Mazo: Yeah. And now because it's kind of against human... you know, love to animal etc etc

Miner: yes. Yes.

Mazo: this is not necessarily ivory but some of these things been done and specifically the old bows, he collect these old English bows and sold these and (unintelligible) so he had all of the catalogs. He had so many influence. Like even today as you can see. I'm looking on a – I was looking for one bow because there is a

Miner: a catalogue of a sale

Mazo: this is – this is the sale today and so I was looking for one specific bow because of his influence. We've been talking about how men could influence others.

Miner: So you weren't collecting bows before him?

Mazo: I tried to find bows which I needed

Miner: okay

Mazo: but over the years – oh yeah I could show you actually so you know what I am talking about in terms of the ivory because now ivory is kind of – you have a danger when you travel internationally. This is what I – this is the English bow ivory...

Miner: Mmmm

Mazo: ...but this is more contemporary. I could be down – I have no way of knowing sometimes if animal died and this is used as a special touch of the maker who made the bow and so it's all – but you know for example, this is completely different story but this is the old Bhutan was given to me. I believe this was in Spain.

Miner: Oh, that's beautiful.

Mazo: this is called old bhutan because I am doing some conducting classes.

Miner: so Minor collected bhutans, too?

Mazo: No.

Miner: Oh... [giggles]...

Mazo: I was collecting. So as you understand, this is the type of influence which kind of I'm trying to also convey to some of my students.

Miner: I was going to say, how does that work out with your students? Do you have conversations with them about the history of these pieces?

Mazo: I'm bring them in – not in a particular way – I'm bringing them and I'll say, this is my old lady. Or I'll say, this is my good marriage. You know, so ... I'm just trying

Miner: Between your bow and you...

Mazo: to convey to them ...[talking with student]... so to me his influence was so strong and sometimes even was difficult to maintain proper balance because he was so enthused with School of Music, so enthused. And not just with me. I was kind of like his first ... first may be a more direct communicator

Miner: yes

Mazo: because he played violin and viola and he also played piano so that was for him

Miner: he bonded very early on

Mazo: and you know his wife, Ellen, it was a concept at the time. I think I still was doing civic orchestra and I played Tchaikovsky Concerto, we had a visitor conductor from Peoria because I couldn't do both – play and conduct in the same token but his wife, Ellen, said to me "Do you believe he – before he went to – listen to you, he listened (unintelligible).

Miner: Oh... what do you make of that?

Mazo: yeah.

Miner: What do you – what do you – you made a face. Why do you make a face?

Mazo: He was very dedicated.

Miner: Okay.

Mazo: and you know some of the people on campus were different structured, you know. People had different approaches.

Miner: Of course.

Mazo: some of his enthusiasm was not necessarily for everyone

Miner: sure. 'cause they did not share those interests.

Mazo: right

Miner: but did you get a sense that that was a problem in his relationships with them or is it just different.

Mazo: I – you know – at the time, I never looked in kind of a keyhole

Miner: in that way

Mazo: I was on the very strong encouragement as a – as a faculty in School of Music, not only one but I felt I had a very strong influence because you never – president of university never comes to you and wants to rehearse.

Miner: right.

Mazo: yeah, and at the time, I told him. It was very new, young president of Bard college named Botstein, Botstein or something. He was hired as a president of Bard college when he was 28 and Minor knew about him because he was from east coast. So he always was enthusiastic to communicate with him and he was always curious about our craft.

Miner: Uh huh

Mazo: So it was not something what I could say ... I was curious about obviously his interests but his interests were so wide. And you know he brought a lot of people here as I told you.

Miner: yes. Yes. And what do you think that did for the campus? I mean, obviously he didn't do that just for you or just for the school of music

Mazo: no no no no

Miner: why do you think that was important to him?

Mazo: I think as one of the long-term strategist, I think he was – he wanted to improve intellectual health in terms of ... even better bridge between fine arts and liberal arts on our campus. To me, this was the example president was example of providing this kind of a liaisons. And we are not across the campus. We are on the same ground and so when he managed these kind of things – and in some cases Bob Bray collaboration with some other faculty. We did some very interesting things. Bob Bray I still remember him. We went to Chicago Art Institute. I had a program with Camerata called History of Concerto course and Minor was very involved with it. He let me borrow candles from Chicago symphony (unintelligible)

Miner: oh, boy!

Mazo: So in the museum, you know, so... then of course, our community – university community had to take care of the balance budget and of course, this – he – with his sudden death, everything was kind of just – I don't have to tell you, you understand but when – when Wilson came and obviously it was a completely different era. And it was probably at the time was a good one but Minor was a renaissance man. And so even he was slightly older than me I still felt like kind of his pupil, you know. He had a lot of strong influence on other people.

Miner: So you felt like you were his pupil?

Mazo: Yeah, but like in the terms of learning about love to something, you know.

Miner: of?

Mazo: beauty. Love for uniqueness. Going in ... somebody you know had already forgotten, you know like for instance, Ivory frogs. Who will be a president of university and be collecting ivory frogs. That was quite, quite interesting.

Miner: And that's what the ivory is called? Ivory frog?

Mazo: Frog, yeah, yeah, yeah. Because this part of the bow goes forward so and finally I feel like, for instance, he also brought curiosity on both sides of the campus. And then, was kind of a healthy period where you didn't have any major financial obstacles and building good facility, promoting school to the national level, then when you're talking about multi-talented people, this is what was his approach too. And so he encouraged us to be multitasking not only necessarily in our own field. That's what's in the – you know, and the president is the [talking to a student]... how do you call ... fire in the torch, you know.

Miner: Yes. He leads the way. Blazes the trail.

Mazo: That's what – that's what part of the leadership is all about. I mentioned when I went to my son's graduation in Harvard, and president of Harvard was doing speech. I said to my wife, "come on. Minor is, it's no comparison...Minor always was an inspiration, you know.

Miner: Two quick questions and then I'll get out of your way. So you know we held the auction 'cause you came, and you purchased things.

Mazo: Yeah, and I even have sculptures, you know at home.

Miner: Did you know that we kept some of his things?

Mazo: Yes, I know.

Miner: Okay. So what do you think he would have thought of that?

Mazo: In terms of the auction?

Miner: Yes.

Mazo: I don't think he would like it.

Miner: Okay. So you think he would have wanted what to happen ...[overlapping]...

Mazo: I decided to buy it because I feel it's not fair that he collected for years goes away and I was upset because – on a different issue – because after his death, Ellen asked me to help her with instruments. And I was very well helping her and then appraiser came couple times. Then I asked myself, "Why you didn't ask to purchase some of these yourself?" I was afraid I didn't want to..

Miner: Impose... yeah.

Mazo: So I just .. yeah.

Miner: I am just asking everyone so thank you so much for your time. thank you all for allowing me to interrupt.