

In Remembrance of Bernard H. Garfield (1924–2025) | IDRS Honorary Member



Garfield on stage at the Academy of Music, May 1960.
(photo courtesy of Robert Garfield)

Bernard H. Garfield passed away at home on April 29, 2025, at the age of 100. Bernie was a resident of Haddonfield, NJ for 66 years and is survived by his sons David (Ellen), Robert (Lois), Lawrence (Suzanne), and John (Janice), and his grandchildren Jeannine, Brian, Andrew, Allison, Broderick, and Joseph. He was predeceased by Betty, his beloved wife of nearly 70 years.

Born in Brooklyn, New York, Bernie was a child prodigy, mastering classical piano in his youth. As a teen, Bernie’s mother gave him a new Steinway grand piano and enrolled him in the famous High School of Music and Art in NYC. There, he was assigned to play the bassoon, and he quickly began mastering it. Bernie graduated in 1942, when World War II was unfolding. He enlisted in the U.S. Army, where his talents caught the attention of several music directors, who competed to have him transferred into their own military bands. Bernie played in the Army band, Army concert band, and the Army jazz band, both in the U.S. and in Europe. He played the organ during services for the advancing troops in the war-torn churches and cathedrals of France and Germany. Traveling during his enlistment brought him close to many of the major European cities where he’d eventually return to perform again decades later. Bernie understood that he was fortunate in his experience during the war, saying “I was lucky. Most musicians were forced to hand over their instruments and carry rifles instead.” Bernie did, however, qualify as an expert rifleman, always

understanding his need for preparedness. As WWII ended and Bernie was discharged, he had risen to the position of music director, and received a scholarship to attend the Royal College of Music in London, where he obtained an associate diploma in 1945. Upon his return to the States, Bernie earned a bachelor's with honors in English literature from NYU in 1948, and a master's in music composition from Columbia University in 1950.



Bernard Garfield's bassoon reed case, 1944 US Army.

Bernie loved to perform, and eagerly sought opportunities during his budding career. He organized, directed, and performed with the New York Woodwind Quintet, was principal bassoonist of the Little Orchestra Society of New York, and principal bassoonist of the New York City Ballet Orchestra. At Columbia, he met his future wife, Beatrice Hutton. Betty was a gifted pianist working on her master's degree in music education. Married in 1954, the two talented musicians became sounding boards for each other, enhancing their careers. Their deep mutual understanding of music history and classical repertoire knew no bounds. Betty utilized her exquisite conception of performance and her gifted ear to promote Bernie's signature style and musicianship, and Bernie was dedicated to a disciplined approach where no effort could be spared. Practicing without exception, nearly every day and often for hours on end, was integral to Bernie's success.

In 1957, Bernie was hand-selected by Conductor Eugene Ormandy, without audition, to become the principal bassoonist of the Philadelphia Orchestra. This began his forty-three-year tenure with one of the world's leading orchestras. Touring with the orchestra allowed Bernie to expand his horizons, and perform in the great concert halls and ancient theatres of major cities worldwide, which included concerts in Moscow behind the Iron Curtain and in Beijing during the Cold War era. He appeared numerous times as soloist with the Philadelphia Orchestra, performing a wide range of works by such composers as Vivaldi, Haydn, Mozart, Richard Strauss, and Karl-Heinz Köper, and the world premiere of Ezra Laderman's Concerto for Flute, Bassoon, and Orchestra. Bernie's numerous recordings with the orchestra are highly regarded as a pinnacle in bassoon performance, including his renditions of Mozart's Bassoon Concerto and Sinfonia Concertante, and Weber's Hungarian Rondo. While in Philadelphia, Bernie joined the Philadelphia Woodwind Quintet, which itself gained international acclaim. He worked personally with dozens of major composers of the twentieth century, and performed in countless smaller groups, trios, and chamber settings, further expanding the palate and texture of contemporary bassoon expression. Bernie's exceptional knowledge of composition added



Bernie and Betty at the wedding of Holly Blake and Mark Gigliotti. (photo courtesy of Holly Blake)

a quality to his large volume of performances that is appreciated to this day for its authenticity, technical facility, and beauty.

Bernie taught master bassoon students throughout his lifetime through his associations with institutions including the Yale School of Music, the Aspen Institute, the Boyer College of Music at Temple University, and the Curtis Institute of Music. Bernie loved his students, inspiring many to pursue their own successful careers in the music industry, and guiding many of them to achieve positions in major orchestras throughout the world.

With the addition of the orchestra's summer schedule at Saratoga, Bernie found a second home in the Adirondacks, spending fifty summers with his wife Betty and their pets at their vacation home on Lake George. There, during retirement, he returned to his life-long passion of composing, initially drawing upon his earlier works. He succeeded in finishing and publishing his book, *32 Etudes for Bassoon*, a selection of compositions concentrating on the mastery of the instrument Bernie held dear.

Among the many awards Bernie received throughout his prestigious career are the Lifetime Achievement Award from NYU, an Honorary Doctorate from the Curtis Institute, and an honorary membership in the International Double Reed Society. A lifelong pursuit of perfection, grace, and exquisite artistry places Bernie on the list of the world's foremost bassoonists. His multi-faceted legacy will perpetually resonate.

One year ago, Bernie had the great fortune of enjoying the magnificent celebration of his 100th birthday with a large group of loved ones, friends, and former students. Ever generous and kind, Bernie will be missed dearly.



Bernard Garfield in his studio,
May 2015.

Don Amadio | Bernie's Neighbor

I love this amazing man and his positive effect on me!! I didn't know or understand his true talent as a kid but I know he fixed my bike. Built things for us to enjoy like forts, slot car tracks and peddle car ramps off the front porch. Encouraged team building, neighborhood grass cutting teams, and leaf rakers. I was a raker. Encouraged sports, music, and art. His sense of humor was priceless! He had a workshop and a photo lab! A photo lab that I learned to use with the help of [Garfield's son] Bob! He also rightfully called me out when I was...rotten me... several times! Not to incriminate a certain Garfield son but he was in suspension and snuck me in to hang out and when Mr. Garfield sniffed out the trail, I jumped out a first-floor window and hooked my pants on the storm window that thankfully crashed behind me as I hit the ground. I worried for days as my dad was strict! He never called me out!!! He knew kids were kids!

Eric Arbiter | Associate Principal Bassoon, Houston Symphony (ret.)

I began playing the bassoon in 1962 and almost immediately Bernard Garfield began to influence my musical and personal life.

I discovered him through his recordings and broadcasts; at age 15, I audaciously wrote a letter to him in care of the Philadelphia Orchestra. To my amazement he answered me and thus began a lifelong relationship with this incredible bassoonist, musician, and human being who was generous to everyone he came in contact with.

I had been listening to Bernie's playing for years from middle school through college and finally got the chance to study with him during my second winter term at Oberlin. We stayed in contact throughout the years. He always wanted to know how I was doing both in the orchestra and in my life—this was an aspect of his relationship with his students; he saw us as people, not just bassoonists. I always was grateful for his teaching, support, and interest. We often talked about our other interests outside of the orchestra.

When I put together my thoughts about my gratitude to my teachers (especially Mr. Garfield) and what I learned about reed making into book form, once again Bernie was supportive in this project and he even contributed some stories from his early orchestra life as well as agreeing to write the preface for my book when it was finally finished.

A few weeks ago, I saw a Facebook post from Don Amadio, who grew up playing with Bernie's children. His description of the kind of neighbor Bernie was and how much he played with and supported his children, including Don, was truly heartwarming and spoke volumes about Bernie as a complete human, in addition to being the great musician and bassoonist we know.

Holly Blake | Contrabassoon, Philadelphia Orchestra

Bernie Garfield was my beloved teacher, my colleague, and my friend.

As a Philadelphia native, I first met Mr. Garfield as a 17-year-old high school senior at a side-by-side concert with All-City and the Philadelphia Orchestra, and that meeting changed the course of my life. He invited me to study with him at Temple University, and later at Curtis Institute. Eventually I began subbing with the orchestra, and ultimately won the contrabassoon audition and joined his section.

His resonant and ringing tone, his brilliant technique and unparalleled musicianship set the standard for late-20th-century bassoon playing. I was so fortunate to have experienced his teaching and mentoring firsthand, and his artistry remains in my heart and soul as the world's best.



The 1974 orchestra side-by-side where Holly Blake first met Bernie Garfield.
(photo courtesy of Holly Blake)

He was gracious, kind, humble, and approached life with a sense of humor and happiness which was evidenced by his smile, his quick wit, and the twinkle in his eye.

Thank you, Bernie, for your artistry and your friendship through the years, and most of all for your inspiration.

John Clouser | Principal Bassoon, The Cleveland Orchestra

It has been one of the great blessings and privileges of my life to know the unique and wonderful Mr. Bernard Garfield. His accomplishments need no reminder and speak for themselves in defining a life's work of immense meaning and lasting beauty. Rarely does a person accomplish so much over such a broad scope. Even more rarely do they set the bar of greatness for all others in everything they achieved. More than this though was the beauty of the man himself. He was at the same time disciplined and fun loving. Striving and practical. Lofty of vision and earthy of presence. Demanding of standard and forgiving of failure. He had an acerbic wit and a kind heart. He was capable of tough love and comic relief. He was generous, accurate, creative, critical, impish, funny, noble, humble, and wise.

He loved his family and went to work like every other father and husband to take care of them, not to pursue his star. His star rose just the same. It shines still. May it shine forever. Good bye dear Bernie. Thank you for everything you did for us. We will never forget you and we will always love you.

Ruth Dalphin | Professor, University of Delaware (ret.)

I first met Bernard Garfield when the Philadelphia Woodwind Quintet performed in Portland, Oregon. I was an undergrad and a bassoon beginner—WOW! A bassoon could sound like that?

Years later, I moved to Philadelphia with my then-husband, a violinist newly hired at William Moennig & Son. I began an MMus at Temple University and started studying with the source of that unforgettable sound. I heard Bernie perform with the Philadelphia Orchestra and, over time, occasionally played as a sub while building a freelance and teaching career.

After I played a decent, but insufficient, audition for the Philadelphia Orchestra and auditions for several other major orchestras, which didn't lead to a full-time job, I made a career transition that emphasized skills I had picked up while trying to de-stress from audition anxiety. I studied more yoga, meditation, and shiatsu and opened a wellness center and continued into acupuncture, my present profession.

Toward the end of my bassoon career, I invited a former teacher, a member of the Boston Symphony, and Bernie and Betty Garfield to dinner. It happened to be Bernie's birthday, and from then on, I sent him cards each year. Betty would address them; Bernie always added a note.

I hadn't seen him in years when a former student—also his student—told me about Bernie's 100th birthday celebration. I sent a video message and was later invited to visit. Thanks to his son Bob, I was able to see him a few times this past year.

What a gift—to reconnect with a wise, warm, funny man reflecting on a life well lived. I'm so grateful to have known this icon of musical excellence and beloved mensch.

Mark Eubanks | Principal Bassoon, Oregon Symphony (ret.)

My first contact with Bernard Garfield was his purchase of a cane sampler from my company, Arundo Reeds, and his subsequent purchase of all my stock of one particular batch of cane. I first met Bernie in person when the Philadelphia Orchestra was scheduled to perform in Seattle. The bus arrived with all the musicians, but without the necessary equipment because the orchestra's truck broke down and was delayed traveling from another city. The concert for that night had to be cancelled. During the wait I walked up to Bernie and introduced myself as the owner of Arundo Reeds from whom he had purchased his cane.

I had always admired Bernie's sound and artistry, so when as the new principal bassoon of the Oregon Symphony I was scheduled to play the *Rite of Spring*, I contacted Bernie about which recordings he recommended I study in preparation for playing. He was most generous to me as a young principal bassoon player. In response, he sent me a cassette tape with over 20 examples of the opening bassoon solo going back decades to some of the very first recordings ever made of *Rite of Spring*. Ultimately, I recorded the *Rite of Spring* with the Oregon Symphony, conducted by James DePriest.

In my quest to make ever better reeds, my research process included meeting many of the finest players at the time, and asking to be allowed to take measurements of used reeds they had played that they found worked well for them. He told me that while testing his reeds he set aside those that he felt would be the best for certain solos in orchestral works, and thereby kept a stash of specialty reeds as well as those he used for general playing. He sent me a small box of reeds that had worked well for him. His reeds were significantly shorter than those of other players.

Later on, I was delighted when one of my former students, Mary Harriswangler, had the privilege of studying with Bernie while attending Curtis. She and her husband Steve Harriswangler currently perform in La Orquesta Sinfónica de Galicia, based in A Caruña, Spain.

When I read of Bernie's recent passing, memories of his exceptional generosity to me came to mind. I went into my studio and found a box of reeds he sent me years ago for my study, along with a note. One of the reeds he sent me plays great to this day.

His musicianship and impeccable playing were always an inspiration and model for me.

THANK YOU, BERNIE!



Four of Garfield's reeds
(photo courtesy of Mark Eubanks)

Terry Ewell | Professor, Towson University

Bernard H. Garfield's work as a performer and teacher is of such importance that it is not surprising that his contributions as a composer are overlooked. Nevertheless, his compositions for bassoon, which include studies, chamber music, and solos, warrant mention. A quick Internet search yields twenty-seven works, all of which enrich the repertoire for

bassoon and other instruments. A number of his compositions are featured in an excellent recording led by John Clouser, one of Garfield's many students.

In 2010, as part of a three-part podcast project with the IDRS, I had the opportunity to ask Mr. Garfield about his compositions, his work with the Philadelphia Orchestra, and his recordings and performances. Part 1 presents his recollections of studying piano and bassoon, as well as his work with the Philadelphia Orchestra. In Part 2, Mr. Garfield discusses his performances of the Mozart Bassoon Concerto and Weber's *Andante and Hungarian Rondo*. In Part 3, he discusses the genesis of his compositions and the instrumentation of his works. While these recordings are no longer available on the IDRS website, I have been able to keep them available on 2reed.net. Mr. Garfield spoke so enthusiastically about his compositions that I know he would be pleased if IDRS members carried his memory forward by continuing to performing them regularly.

Martin Garcia | Associate Principal Bassoon, Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra

Like so many other bassoonists, it was a recording I heard of Bernard Garfield when I was 13 years old that made me decide that playing the bassoon would be my life. How lucky I was that the stars aligned for me to study with Mr. Garfield in Philadelphia and that he was a very patient teacher to someone who "sounded like he'd been playing trombone in an outdoor band in Texas" (which wasn't very far from the truth...).

We got along well, and he gently encouraged me to reassess my priorities; he also gave me advice on other practical matters related to navigating my way in the world. Musically speaking, he made sure I paid close attention to musical line, style, rhythm, dynamics, intonation, character, accurate translations, and details in the score. "Martin, you'll have to decide if you're the type of bassoonist who plays everything loudly, or will you be the type who plays things in context?" Among all these lessons, though, musical line and character stood out to me as being of particular importance to Bernie. He often demonstrated solo passages sung with great enthusiasm and his thumbs tucked behind imaginary suspenders, eyes twinkling.

Of course, Mr. Garfield was a wealth of information on the subject of playing bassoon in an orchestra of the highest caliber, with amazing stories, tips, and fingerings gleaned from his long and illustrious career. Bernie was an earnest and inspiring musician who showed us all what was possible from a life devoted to music and family, and I will be forever grateful for his example and support.

Anthony Georgeson | Associate Principal Bassoon, Atlanta Symphony Orchestra

I remember the first time I heard a recording of the Philadelphia Orchestra with Bernard Garfield as soloist. His golden sound both grabbed my attention and captivated my imagination. It was the Weber *Andante and Hungarian Rondo*, followed soon after by the Mozart Concerto, and it cemented in my mind the telos of bassoon sound.

He raised the bar in the 1950s and became in my and many others' opinion the standard bearer of the instrument, showing me (and all of us!) through his endless recordings (covering almost the entire repertoire) what is possible. Suave, sweet, piquant, nutty, round, buoyant,

blendable, thoughtful, full and projecting but never crass (never a “wooden trombone” as he would say), burnished, refined, a sound that doesn’t demand attention but draws the ear in (favorite examples still being his second movement and cadenza of K191, the Jolivet *Pastorales de Noël* (w/Philadelphia Woodwind Quintet), and the opening of Shostakovich Symphony 4, mvt. 3 (all heard best on vinyl of course).

I am equally inspired, if not more, by his “long obedience in the same direction,” not only excellence, beauty, and consistency over many decades, but as a faithful husband and loving father to four boys. He finished well and was not only a prince on stage, but to me and from all accounts that I’ve heard, off stage. Generous with his time and correspondence, full of good humor and a warm smile, and purely a kind man. I wanna be like Bernie when I grow up.

Juan de Gomar | Contrabassoon, Atlanta Symphony Orchestra

The passing of Bernard Garfield

The bassoon universe has lost one of its giants.

I was blessed to study with Bernie in the early 80s, and attempt to emulate the eloquence and artistry found in his playing to this day. His music making was evocative, nuanced, and had a level of sophistication that left the listener transported.

Upon my audition for him, he had me sightread a melody from a Haydn symphony slow movement. To paraphrase his words, he said as long as you play, this type of writing will be the most difficult thing to do....to play with style, with grace, and to communicate... always to communicate. He also used the word *suave* when referring to the level of artistry

I was also blessed to witness many performances of the Philadelphia Orchestra with Bernie and Richard Woodhams. One performance in particular still gives me chills as it did the day I heard it. It was Bernie playing the opening solo to Tchaikovsky’s 2nd Symphony “The Little Russian.” The playing was perfect! In every single way, in every shape and line of the phrase. When I think about it, I still get goosebumps.

Bernie was also an amazing communicator with anyone who would reach out to him, no matter how great or how small. For a time, he started sharing jokes and interesting clips with me. It would always freak me out a bit, the thought of this giant sharing something with the likes of me.

His passing has brought home the gratitude I have for having this force of love, kindness, and support in my life. I am blessed to have been witness to it and to have had Bernie as a friend.



Bernard Garfield photo art by
Juan de Gomar

Arthur Grossman | Bassoonist, Soni Ventorum Wind Quintet (ret.)

I first met Bernie when we played together in the Aspen Festival Orchestra in 1954. We remained friends throughout the 70 years since then. Whenever we were in the same city we would get together for duets and/or reed making and in the later years for barbecued salmon at my home. That summer in Aspen, he taught me the system of double tonguing that he learned from Raymond (yes, Raymond, not Maurice, Allard; Maurice was Raymond's nephew.) Raymond was principal bassoon in the Boston Symphony Orchestra for many years and one of the very few professional bassoonists in America who played French bassoon. The idea was to analyze the passage to determine where you would put in a slur if you could not single tongue all of the notes and replace the slur with the Ka. In the most common cases, that of groups of four notes, there would thus be only one Ka per four notes (usually the 2nd) rather than the usual two, giving an altogether smoother sounding result.

Mathieu Harel | Associate Principal Bassoon, Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal

I understood very early that I wanted to study with Mr Garfield, as he was such a bassoon hero. His playing has set a new standard that we all aim to reach and his legacy is such that he has been influential to all of us.

The great joy and excitement that I felt when I got into his class at Curtis can only measure to my gratitude and the hope to make him proud.

His lessons seemed to be more about philosophy than bassoon. He always made me ask the right questions, find the right angle. He made me trust what I valued about music and performance, and he gave me the confidence that I could be myself and accomplish anything. When I would ask him how should I play something, his answer was always, "Like Mathieu Harel the great bassoon player!"

Playing beside you at the Philadelphia Orchestra has been an incredibly memorable experience, and a great lesson of effortlessness and beauty.

Thank you, Mr. Garfield, for everything you have brought to the bassoon world, and from the bottom of my heart thank you for believing in me and making me become the musician I am today.

Darryl Hartshorne | Bassoonist, Philadelphia Ballet Orchestra

The greatest one-sentence summation of Bernie Garfield as a bassoonist, and maybe as a human, came to me one day in a lesson in my master's degree.

"When your audience forgets what instrument you're playing, that's when you're making music."

It's not about playing passages in a specific way. It's about taking your listeners to a different place.

Bernie Garfield did that every time he picked up his bassoon. And every time he taught a lesson.

Thank you, Bernie. You changed everything.

Leonard Hindell | Second Bassoon, New York Philharmonic (ret.)

Bernie was a superb bassoonist whose enthusiasm affected all of his musical endeavors: orchestral and chamber music performances, composing, and teaching and mentoring. His students are among the world's leading bassoonists.

He was generous and readily shared his musical insights that became revelations. How fortunate to have had him in our lives for such a long time.

I cherish the warm friendship I had with Bernie for many decades and will miss the conversations we shared and his humor-filled personality. Also, I cherish the memory of his life-long wife, beautiful Betty, who recently passed.

My condolences go to his sons, David, Bob, Larry, and Jack and to their families and to Bernie's extended family of students, friends, and colleagues.

Harrison Hollingsworth | Principal Bassoon, NYC Ballet

Bernie's style of pedagogy was verbally direct, highly creative, and deeply metacognitive. "Harrison, with some students, I try to get them to play with more expression. With you, it's about knowing when to hold back!" His illustrations could be teasing, even irreverent, "You always juice the last note of the phrase, like a violinist. Don't do it!"

My most memorable lessons were gauntlet rounds, with surprise sightreading of impossible facility passages from obscure repertoire, or of Bernie's own etudes composed to reveal the bassoon's structural difficulties. My pianist/conductor roommate enjoyed watching me learn under pressure from his piano bench. I returned the favor when Bernie inevitably had some sage wisdom for his accompaniment, "Hey Abrams, this is Mozart, not Shostakovich!"

Each of Bernie's students gained immensely from his musical insight and convictions, but none of us sounds "just" like him. His teaching was an embodied mindset that we caught, rather than an extracted method that he taught. He awakened our capacity to prune our own excesses and structure our own creative problem-solving. When I play Stravinsky at NYC Ballet, I think about how Bernie might have approached it (after all, he held the principal chair there 50 years before I did). But mostly I am grateful for Bernard Garfield, the wise, intense pedagogue who generated unique artists by exhorting us to grow into musical maturity with insights and convictions of our own.

This is the legacy of a wonderful pedagogue, person (and of course, player); may he rest in peace.

Michael Hope | Assistant Principal Bassoon, Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra

In Grade 8, I played clarinet in my school band—but it never brought the attention I craved as a young musician. That changed the day I discovered a Philadelphia Orchestra LP in the band room. On it was the Mozart Bassoon Concerto, played by Bernard Garfield. I was captivated. A few weeks later, I told my music teacher I wanted to switch to bassoon. He practically shoved one into my hands.

Years later, I auditioned for Curtis Institute. Meeting Bernie was thrilling—and terrifying. He didn't accept me at first, but weeks later, a spot opened, and I got the call: Mr. Garfield wanted me.

At Curtis, Bernie was warm but serious. “You’re musical,” he told me. “But you need discipline.” When I repeatedly forgot to use the E-flat resonance key, he snapped: “Why the hell won’t you? Just do it!” I never forgot again.

He taught me about sound—warm, characterful, never buzzy. “More English horn, less trombone,” he’d say. His humor, honesty, and insight stayed with me always.

Years later, I got to play *The Rite of Spring* and called Bernie in a panic. “Take a deep breath,” he said. Simple. And it worked.

We kept in touch for decades—through letters, emails, and visits. I’ll never forget singing one of his songs at his 100th birthday, surrounded by his students, each with that signature Garfield tone. His joy during our performance will stay with me forever.

Bernard Garfield passed away just shy of 101. He was a masterful musician, a dedicated teacher, and a wonderful friend. I was lucky to know him, to learn from him, and to carry his sound and spirit forward.

Thank you, Bernie.

Brian Kershner | Professor Emeritus, Central Connecticut State University

I first became aware of Bernard Garfield’s playing when I was an undergraduate student at Duquesne University. I had heard him on recordings with the Philadelphia Orchestra and was immediately captivated by the uniqueness of his sound and style of playing. A friend and colleague of mine at the time was always talking about “that sound.” That sound was, as I have written about often, so lean and yet so resonant, and at its core was precise intonation. It was truly remarkable. I was very fortunate to travel with a friend to hear the orchestra in Philadelphia in the middle 1970s and of all things, they were doing Beethoven Symphony 4. At the end of the performance, Ormandy gave him a bow, and he stood up and blew over the opening of the bell, as if blowing away smoke from the smoldering instrument.

I went to his home for a few lessons toward the end of my undergrad years, and he was always so kind and receptive to me. I remember very well showing him a Wind Quartet I had recently written, and he seemed to like it very much. This opened a new door, since he was also a composer, as everyone knows. When I went to NEC for my MM degree, I could have gone to Temple to work with Mr. Garfield (with his insistence that I also study composition with Clifford Taylor), but there were many reasons for my decision. When I arrived there, I expected to be studying with someone from the Boston Symphony, but was shocked to be assigned to Stephen Maxym. I phoned Mr. Garfield, and asked him his opinion on what to do, he said to me, “Brian, Maxym is Principal at the MET, study with him.”

He supported me and my works over the years, in multiple ways, and we stayed in touch until very recently. His influence shaped who I am and who I became, and I remain forever grateful to have been able to know him.

Michael Kroth | Professor and Associate Dean, Michigan State University**Lessons Beyond Words**

Mr. Garfield rarely brought out his bassoon during lessons. But when he did, it was always with purpose—either to illuminate a concept that wasn't quite clicking, or, memorably, to demonstrate the opening of *The Rite of Spring* starting on F4! Most often, he played to express something so subtle, so nuanced, that words alone couldn't convey it. My fondest memory of him comes from one of those moments.

We were working on the second movement solo from Tchaikovsky's Fourth Symphony. Things seemed to be going well. After a few attempts, he said, "It's close, Mike. Really close. It's just..." Then he reached for his bassoon, sat right beside me, and played the excerpt from beginning to end.

I was transfixed, caught in the depth and elegance of his playing. Sitting inches away, I listened to this exquisite, effortless rendition of the solo. When he finished, I was still searching for words when he quietly said, "Well, maybe before I die, I'll play that the way I really want to."

I remember thinking, *What?!* It was a moment of revelation. I suddenly understood what made him the musician he was. Even when his playing was already at the highest artistic level, he remained in constant pursuit of more—more refinement, more depth, more beauty. That relentless striving left a deep imprint on me, and it's a lesson I've carried with me ever since.

Julia Lockhart | Principal Bassoon, Vancouver Symphony Orchestra

Mr. G was everything I had hoped he would be as a teacher and mentor, and so much more. He clearly knew and valued what a big responsibility it is to be teaching, and he genuinely cared about all of his students. His teaching style was always direct and constructive, while his twinkling smile and wit made me feel instantly at ease in every lesson.

Mr. G's playing was the loveliest bassoon artistry you could ever hear: profoundly rich in its colour, warmth, and musical insight. His last concert with the Philadelphia Orchestra was Beethoven's Symphony no. 2, and I remember the final bow he was given in honour of his retirement. I'll always think of that moment when I hear or play that symphony. I'm so glad he had many more years to enjoy his next chapter with his family, to keep on composing for the bassoon, and to keep in touch with his students.

Everything I learned from Mr. G motivates me to this day to be the best I can be, as both a musician and a teacher. It comforts me to know that his legacy and light will continue indefinitely after his passing, in the hearts of everyone he guided and inspired.

Jeffrey Lyman | Professor, University of Michigan

Some of the greatest memories I have of Mr. Garfield are of his absolute joy in sharing treasures from his collection, memories from his career, or observations on his life as a musician. I can still see the manuscript he had of Eugène Jancourt's reworking of the cadenza from the second movement of the Weber Concerto. Before a performance of Barber's *Summer Music* with the Philadelphia Wind Quintet, he brought out a letter he received from Barber with an early sketch of a passage that Bernie successfully convinced

Sam to rewrite for the clarinet instead of the bassoon. He sheepishly recounted how, as a freelancer in New York at an early rehearsal of the new *Mass* by Igor Stravinsky, he had to tell the maestro that a passage in octaves for the two bassoons drifted one chromatic too low in his second bassoon part, and Stravinsky quickly changed the all-octave line to one with a single major sixth, thanks to Bernie. I remember how much he giggled when showing me a bocal that could play a high C one full octave above *The Rite of Spring* solo. Who can forget the cartoon he had in his basement studio of a conductor with a baton raised in his right hand and a smoking pistol in his left hand behind his back with the caption, “Now let’s try it WITHOUT the bassoon!”? But above all I remember Mr. Garfield’s example as a collaborator in every moment: excerpts were always about the orchestral context, never just the bassoon part. Solo parts in concerti and sonatas had to be learned from the score as well as from the bassoon part. Chamber music coachings focused on the constantly changing role of each player and our responsibilities to each other. And above all I thank him for repeatedly sneaking me into the back of the hall to listen to his rehearsals after my lessons. Nothing said in a lesson ever compared to the genius he shared from the stage. I am forever grateful to have been witness to his artistry and his kindness.

Nadina Mackie | Soloist and Recording Artist**Letter from May 25, 2024**

Dear Mr. Garfield,

I always looked forward to our lessons so much.

You taught and treated me with steady kindness and ready humor and were unfailingly demanding in ways that made me reach to be the best bassoonist that I could possibly be. You gave generously of your concepts yet always kept the door open to new ideas and absolutely encouraged us to develop our own tastes in technique, studies, and repertoire. You were not locked into quasi-religious systems and would bring diGerent study books to address diGerent aspects of playing. You gave us each a copy of the Waterhouse arrangement of *Flight of the Bumblebee* and I am still working on that. You would bring in new scores (e.g., Kalevi Aho) that composers sent to you, or you would bring in a challenging passage from your orchestral repertoire (e.g., Saint-Saëns Organ Symphony) to see if we could play it better (we couldn’t). You were open-minded, centred and strong, always there if we needed you but always giving us the tools to develop our own confidence. I went out into the world thinking all professional bassoonists were as centred and humane as you are.

You were always very busy, with a big job and a family and many students, so our lessons were tightly scheduled. We could utterly rely on you to be there for the hour but not longer. This made the time intense and focused and taught us the value of our time together. In my last year at Curtis, when I was playing the Mozart Concerto with the school orchestra, you raced down from the Academy to stand in the doorway to hear me play, waving slightly so that I could see you. I will forever have the image of you standing there, leaning against the doorframe of the hall, listening intently before going back to work.

You valued virtuosity and encouraged us to spend the time to pursue fluency of tone, intonation, and dexterity. You showed that great musicality blossomed from great understanding of the workings of our bassoons.

You always said that our real education would begin when we started working in the world, that our first orchestra jobs would be the real beginning of our educations, and you were right.

You were always readily amused yet deeply ethical. When I brought the contrabassoon in for some much-needed help, you started the lesson by ripping through Turkey in the Straw, then laughing so much before settling down to give fingerings and reed advice for the unwieldy-to-me instrument.

When I had a reed crisis after a Tchaikovsky 6 rehearsal, you let me take the train out to New Jersey for an emergency reed session in your home studio. You drove me to and from the train station. You were always aware of our personal safety and told me that you carried a length of lead pipe behind the driver's seat for when you had to drive on the Jersey Turnpike. I was both impressed with your dashing readiness to defend yourself and your awareness of the real dangers.

I was so grateful to you for your kindness that I gave you a drawing that I made of an immensely detailed and probably slightly odd horse, which I put in an oaken frame and delivered to you. True to your deeply kind nature, you praised me for the drawing and thanked me sincerely. I would forgive you if it went to the Goodwill store shortly thereafter.

When I was treated unkindly by DeLancie, you defended me. DeLancie disapproved of my sartorial choices (I think it was wearing a sleeveless T shirt aka wifebeater with army pants that somehow triggered him, or maybe my spotty success at playing a “ppppppppp” diminuendo on a tuning A that was the bane of my student life) and he felt I should be removed from the woodwind quintet that he was taking on tour to France and Italy. Because of the prompt action of you, and Anthony Gigliotti, I did the tour with the DeLancies and it was a wonderful experience. The following year, I won my first job with a big orchestra and started my first professional woodwind quintet. Your positive influence and your example of advocacy opened doors for me and gave me a better life.

Thank you for always replying to my letters after I left school and taking the time to listen to the recordings that I sent, and for giving me clear comments that illuminated what you valued most in the productions. I treasure all of these.

You always let us speak our minds... you were very secure, and I think you found it entertaining since we were just candid, open-hearted kids. And you wanted us all to thrive and grow. Got me in trouble when I went into the professional world and expected to be treated as an equal. Some lessons must be learned in the field!

You planted so many ideas that stayed with me for my whole career. Including the notion of developing our own technical exercises to better pinpoint necessary areas of development. I did exactly as you said, including developing many of my own ideas while keeping



Playing Vivaldi for Mr. Garfield
(photo courtesy of Nadina Mackie)

some of your excellent exercises. I published my first technique book in 2020 and have the material for second and third books. AND you permitted me to publish your excellent double-tonguing exercise with my developments that grew from your frank encouragement to use my own wit and imagination.

You gave me signed copies of your Mozart Concerto and I have that album to this day. Then hearing you play the Mozart live with the Philadelphia orchestra, and hearing you perform the Farago arrangement of the Paganini Etude 24 absolutely fired my ambition. I was so grateful to hear you as a soloist along with your beautiful ensemble playing in the orchestra seasons.

Truly great teachers ignite our ability to think for ourselves. Truly great teachers provide stellar examples of how to play and be in this world. Truly great teachers are our friends for life. You are the absolute best.

Love and thanks forever, Nadina.

Dennis MacMullin | Artist Teacher, The College of New Jersey

Mr. Garfield has always been good to me and especially FOR me. As I enter my 52nd year in Music Education I am so grateful for the lessons I have learned from him as to playing and TEACHING. I am proud of the bassoonists I have taught, the opportunities/venues I have played, and the numerous students I have taught that receive the wisdom I have received from Mr. Garfield.

His loss is significant but we can all appreciate the excellence he has instilled in so many.

Daniel Matsukawa | Principal Bassoon, Philadelphia Orchestra

Bernard Garfield was in a way like a second father to me and to many of us who were fortunate enough to have studied with him. He was always gentle and caring and said everything with a twinkle in his eye.

He was not just a great musician and teacher, which touched all of our hearts, but an extremely warm human being which went even deeper than music.

He will be remembered and missed as an extraordinary person on all levels.

David McGill | Principal Bassoon, Chicago Symphony Orchestra (ret.)

Bernard Garfield was my first bassoon hero. My mother's LP collection was filled with Philadelphia Orchestra recordings so his tone and style were in my ear from the beginning. Once, when I was a teenager, I was listening to his Mozart Concerto (my first bassoon LP—given to me at age 12) when my little sister opened the door to my room to say, "Why don't you sound like that?" That's exactly what I wanted to do! Although I was not a formal student of his, I was most emphatically his student regarding my concept of what a bassoon should sound like. I am grateful to have heard him perform live countless times in the Philadelphia Orchestra and with the Philadelphia Woodwind Quintet during my studies with Sol Schoenbach at the Curtis Institute of Music in the early 1980s. His influence on my development was immense. In writing to me in 2000 about my contribution to a

Festschrift compiled for his 75th birthday, he closed with these kind words: “I thank you with my best reed and warmest vibrato.” I would like to thank “Bernie” for his lifetime of inspiring music making.

Adrian Morejon | Executive Director & Bassoonist, Talea Ensemble

During my final semester at the Curtis Institute of Music, I was in the process of purchasing my first bassoon before heading to grad school. With Mr. Garfield’s guidance, my parents and I found a remarkable instrument, Heckel #6724. However, when my parents’ loan application was denied, I was left feeling helpless and deeply embarrassed. When I shared this with Mr. Garfield, he pulled out his phone, had a brief conversation with his family, and then turned to me and said he would personally loan me the money to buy the instrument. I still play on this instrument today, over twenty years later. I will always be grateful to have been one of Mr. Garfield’s students at Curtis. My time with him, both at Rittenhouse Square and at his home in Haddonfield, NJ, was filled with experiences that shaped not only my life as a bassoonist and musician, but also as a human being. Mr. Garfield was far more than an extraordinary musician and teacher of many accomplished bassoonists, he was a profoundly generous and compassionate person, always willing to help others without a second thought. I am forever thankful for all that he taught me, both in music and in life. Thank you, Bernie!

Lisa Knorr Naufel | Professor, Cal Poly

A Final Toast to Professor G.

It was my last lesson with Bernard Garfield before my bassoon jury at Temple University. I was preparing to leave for Eastman and wanted the lesson to be something special—more than just etudes and excerpts. Honestly, I didn’t want to play that day. I wanted to mark the moment.

So, I called his close friend, clarinetist Tony Gigliotti, and asked, “What’s Mr. Garfield’s favorite drink?” The answer came easily—Hennessy cognac.

I arrived at his home with a bottle of Hennessy, two snifters, and a small, checkered tablecloth tucked into my usual music tote. As always, I made my way down to the basement where our lessons took place. He glanced at what I was carrying and asked, “What do you have there?” I smiled and said, “We’re not playing my jury today.” He looked a little surprised—just for a moment—but then that familiar twinkle appeared in his eye, and he said, “Well then, let’s have a drink!” He picked up his bassoon case, set it on a chair, and we draped the tablecloth over it. It became our table, and we toasted to the future.

We didn’t play a single note. Instead, we talked. He shared stories—about his family, his extraordinary career, his time with the Philadelphia Orchestra, and his life in music. The afternoon was full of warmth, laughter, and the kind of connection that doesn’t need music to be meaningful. It was the lesson I didn’t know I needed—one in humanity, gratitude, and grace.

That was the last time I saw Professor Garfield in person. We kept in touch—through letters, emails, and the occasional phone call—but that afternoon stayed with me.

Every time I play, I hear his voice. I am a better musician—and a better person—for having known him, and the world is better for having had him in it.

Go with God, Professor G.

Richard Ranti | Associate Principal Bassoon, Boston Symphony Orchestra (ret.)

What a high honor and awesome responsibility it was to play second to Bernie for a few years in the 80s.

Growing up, he was my one and only. I wore out his recordings of the Mozart, Weber, and all those classic Philly recordings. Even through cheap speakers, his spirit, mouthwatering nutty resonant sound, and technical perfection were clear. He was the best, and remains our standard bearer. We all can strive, maybe match a few things, or do some things our own way, but we will not surpass this man's bassooning.

What I didn't know until I sat next to him was his humanity matched his playing. Consummate professional, a perfect gentle patient teacher, the rare combo of sharp intelligence and positive spirit, and darn fun to boot.

There is not a day in my life I don't thank my lucky stars that Bernie was (and remains) in my life.

Ryan Romine | Professor, Shenandoah Conservatory

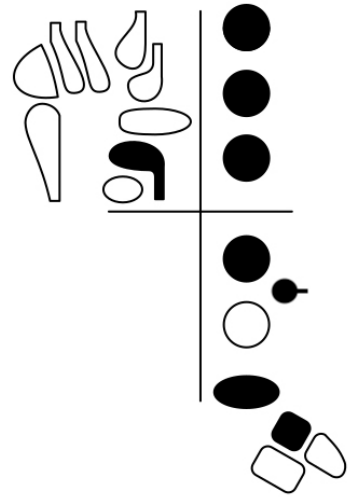
Anytime I took a lesson in grad school, there were two teachers in the room. There was Michael Kroth, whose humor, patience, diligence, and deep musicality created the model my classmates and I strove to emulate. And inside Michael's mind was the music and humanity of his teacher, Bernie Garfield. We learned to make the reeds that allowed us to play softly and to sing long lines without getting too tired. We practiced playing phrases with interest and direction. And we grew to be deeply proud that we were the grand-students of the legendary former principal bassoonist of the Philadelphia Orchestra. We received a top-notch bassoon education far from the hallowed halls of Philly, made possible by two teachers who communicated, one generation to the next, with a profound care for the study of music that was matched in equal measure by a consideration for people. It wasn't until years later that I learned that my dear undergraduate professor, Christopher Wait, had also taken lessons with Bernie in the early days. So here I am, a grand-student twice over of a man I never had the opportunity to meet in person, proudly teaching my own students about our shared musical heritage—all the while with Michael, and Chris, and yes, Bernard Garfield, echoing in my mind with every lesson I teach.

William Short | Principal Bassoon, Metropolitan Opera Orchestra

There are so many things that I admired about Mr. Garfield: his honest, virtuosic, unfussy way of making music; his remarkably ego-less teaching, which was always about the student, never about the teacher; his dedication to solving the inherent challenges of playing the bassoon (as exemplified by his seemingly-inexhaustible repertoire of fingerings)... But ultimately, what I most admired, and still seek to emulate, is this:

It seems to me that, in music, the closest we can get to perfection is to spend a lifetime in pursuit of an ideal. Mr. Garfield modeled this pursuit throughout his career. For as long as he performed and taught, he kept his nose to the grindstone in a way we all aspire to but few of us achieve. Until he decided it was time to retire, he put in the work necessary to uphold his (vertigo-inducingly high) standards, even as (in his telling) that work became harder and harder over time. One need only hear the *Rite of Spring* from his final season in the Philadelphia Orchestra, immortalized in the documentary “Music from the Inside Out,” to hear: His recordings from the end of his career are just as spectacular as from the beginning. We should all have such integrity and clarity, as a musician and as a person.

In his honor, a favorite C#4 fingering that exemplifies his creativity in pursuit of that gloriously clear, resonant sound I hear in my mind’s ear every day.



<https://fingering.bretpimentel.com>

Ryan Simmons | Second Bassoon, San Diego Symphony

Bernie was a fantastic person and teacher. He exuded class and style, and I gleaned that from him in my time as his student. He always encouraged me to bring out subtle musical nuances, sharing his uniquely invaluable knowledge from decades as a solo player in the Philadelphia Orchestra. I think of him and my lessons often, continuing to learn from the deep musical understanding he shared with me.

Michael Trentacosti

In my early years of bassoon studies, the first time I heard Bernard Garfield was when I purchased a recording of the Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Eugene Ormandy of the *Firebird Suite*. And then came the *Berceuse*.

Bernie opened up a whole new world of bassoon performance for me. The sound, the phrasing, the different color of the sound coming out of that 7-foot piece of wood. And how the orchestra followed him as if there was no conductor. Bernie is the master of rubato,

The way he changed the speed of his vibrato according to the harmonic rhythm of the music. I never heard anything like that. It gives me goosebumps just talking about it.

Being retired from Fox Products, my 36 years there gave me the opportunity to meet and work with many great bassoonists all over the world. (I thank Alan Fox for that when he hired me in February 1977.) Bernie is one of them. It was always a special time when he visited Fox and tried the bassoons. He always gave us constructive criticism and good advice.

After retiring from the orchestra, he got back into composing and came out with his 32 Etudes. I can't thank Bernie enough for writing me #9. I of course think it is the best of them all.

A few years ago, Bernie gave me a copy of a recording made in Russia during the 1958 tour of the Philadelphia Orchestra. The orchestra played at Tchaikovsky Hall in Moscow. On the program was the *Firebird* and Bernie was 36 years old. This live performance was outstanding. It equals the recording I mentioned earlier.

Thank you, Bernie, for all the music you have given to me. I will never forget you.

Rest in peace, my friend.

Obituaries

Marita Abner (1953–2025)

Jerry J. Cadwell (1934–2023)

Marita Abner (1953–2025)



Marita Ann Abner, of Kansas City, MO, passed away peacefully on June 8. She was 71. The second daughter of Marie (Ramsey) and Wilbur Abner, Marita grew up in Knightstown, Indiana. She was known to be a whiz in French class, and when she was 11 she took up the bassoon because the school band didn't have one. "I'll play it. What is it?" she said, and quickly became hooked.

After graduating as valedictorian of Knightstown High School in 1971, Marita went to Swarthmore College where she majored in music and continued her studies at Yale University where she received a Master's of Music in 1978.

She moved to the Midwest and joined the Kansas City Symphony in 1982, the year it was founded, and remained at the Symphony for 36 years. Marita was also a beloved bassoon teacher and faculty bassoonist at the UMKC Conservatory where many students remember her teaching with gentle guidance and inspiration.

Marita married Mike Schuetz in 2009. The couple enjoyed taking the pontoon boat out on the lake for evening picnics or to cool off with a swim. Marita shared her love of bird-watching with Mike and their house was encircled with bird feeders. To the consternation of the birds, Marita also adopted a stray cat, her beloved Rufus. Marita achieved a lifelong goal of seeing the blue-footed booby in its native habitat when she and Mike visited the Galapagos Islands in 2023.

Marita is remembered by all as an exceptionally kind-hearted and outgoing person who was devoted to her sister Sharon, as well as to Mike's four children and six grandchildren.

Jerry J. Cadwell (1934–2023)

Jerry J. Cadwell, 88, passed away in Oviedo, FL April 24, 2023. He is survived by his wife, Colette. His interest in the oboe began in his early teens. He studied with the principal oboist of the Kansas City Symphony. After his discharge from the US Air Force (1952–56) he entered engineering school, receiving a BSME from the University of Kansas in 1960. He worked in astronautics vehicle design. A fellow employee who at General Atomics was an oboist and an enthusiastic IDRS member. For several decades the two men and their wives enjoyed IDRS conferences together, enjoying the excellent programs and visits with vendors and other members. This inspired Jerry to draw up plans and procure materials to make an oboe using his engineering and music talents.

While fully employed, he entered the University of San Diego's 4-year night law school, and received a Juris Doctor Degree in 1975. Brookhaven National Laboratory hired him as a Nuclear Engineer with legal qualifications to review national standards for the nuclear industry. He was admitted to practice law in New York and Missouri. Jerry also enjoyed having oboe students and playing in local music groups, including the San Diego Symphony.

IDRS Associate Organizations

IDRS maintains diplomatic and editorial relations with double reed organizations from around the world including the following:

- | | |
|---|--|
| Association Bassons – France | FagotNetzwerk – The Netherlands |
| Associação Brasileira de Palhetas Duplas (ABPD) – Brazil | Finnish Double Reed Society – Finland |
| Asian Double Reed Association (ADRA) – Asia | Gesellschaft der Freunde der Wiener Oboe – Austria |
| Australasian Double Reed Society (ADRS) – Australia | Hoboplatform – The Netherlands |
| Association Française du Hautbois (AFH) – France | Japan Bassoon Society (JBS) – Japan |
| Asociación de Fagotistas y Oboístas de España (AFOES) – Spain | Japan Oboe Association (JOA) – Japan |
| British Double Reed Society (BDRS) – Great Britain | Norwegian Double Reed Society (DOR) – Norway |
| Chinese Association of Bassoon (CAB) – China | New Zealand Double Reed Society – New Zealand |
| Český spolek dvouplátkových nástrojů (CSDN) – Czech Republic | |