

Cellists' Corner

Brief Career Details of Important Cellists

prepared by David Johnstone from public information

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LEONARD ROSE

By Karel

Leonard Rose (1918-1984) was one of the very best American teachers and musicians of the twentieth century. Rose's parents came from Kiev, Ukraine; but Leonard was born on July 27th in Washington, D.C. His father was a cellist, and gave him his first lessons on the instrument. When he was ten he took lessons from Walter Grossman at the Miami Conservatory, and shortly after that studied with his cousin, Frank Miller, who was principal cellist with the NBC Symphony Orchestra in New York. When Rose was sixteen he began studying with Felix Salmond at the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia, and two years later became Salmond's assistant.

In 1936, at the age of 18, Rose graduated from the Curtis Institute, and began playing in the cello section of the NBC Symphony Orchestra, under the baton of Toscanini. In 1939 he became principal cellist in the Cleveland Symphony, directed by Artur Rodzinski. When Rodzinski became chief conductor of the New York Philharmonic in 1943, he took Leonard Rose with him to be principal cellist in New York. In 1946 he was offered a professorship at Julliard. In 1951, with the blessings of George Szell, Dimitri Mitropoulos and Bruno Walter, Rose decided to devote himself completely to teaching and concertizing as a soloist.

Rose's path led through many years of orchestra playing, before ending in a career as a soloist and recording artist, and he encouraged his students to follow in his footsteps. Lynn Harrell is one of Rose's students that followed that advice, and was himself principal cellist of the Cleveland Symphony for seven years, before become a touring soloist.

Lynn Harrell, Yo Yo Ma and Stephen Kates are but three of the fine cellists that were taught by Leonard Rose; and they all revered him as a wonderful teacher. Kates said that Rose had a wonderful ability to make his students perform at a higher level, and that one would exit a lesson with Rose *"...feeling like a million dollars. He had a wonderful way to make you play better that was not methodology, but he gave you confidence. He made you feel good about yourself when you were doing it."*

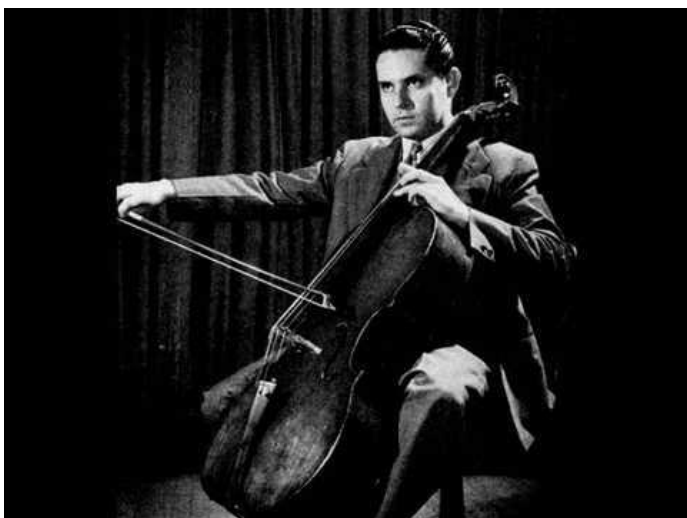
According to Yo Yo Ma, *"One of the marks of a great teacher lies not only in an ability to impart knowledge but also in knowing when to encourage a student to go off on his own. I remember vividly the day after a New York recital I played when I was fifteen: -- I came to a lesson and Mr. Rose said to me, 'You played very well but I would like you to take the Fourth Sonata of Beethoven and figure it out for yourself.' The Beethoven Sonata was an unfamiliar piece and, being a late work, is written very densely. The twists and turns of the writing are a real challenge to the imagination. It took many years before I was able to make sense of it. But it was the beginning of my conscious search for independence and individuality. It takes a great teacher to grant that kind of permission and encouragement."*

The many recordings of Leonard Rose are classics of the genre, and should be heard by all student cellists. Rose played on a beautiful Amati cello dated 1662. Rose's tone was likened to a "ribbon of spun gold." Leonard Rose died in 1984 at the age of sixty-six.

Mr. Rose's daughter has written us with the following additional information:

"He was Head of the cello department at Juilliard School of Music until his death. His music library which was originally left to him by Felix Salmond, and had been greatly expanded by my father, was donated by us to Juilliard. They have built a special room that houses all of it. Students are allowed to use any of it they need. His markings are in most editions."

"There is a scholarship fund in his name, set up for cello students at Juilliard, which Joseph Polici, Dean, oversees for us. His last wish was that this be done."



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